

BY THE END OF YEAR 6

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

The student by the end of year 5 is guided in her use of strategies to understand the information and ideas in the text and to generate questions, related to her specific purpose for reading, within the science context.

The student by the end of year 6 deliberately selects and uses strategies such as skimming and scanning to locate, evaluate, and integrate common themes relating to endangered species.

“Plight of the Sea Turtle” (School Journal, Part 3 Number 2, 2008)

Noun frequency level: 10–12

By the end of year 6, students are required to use a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts to locate, evaluate, and integrate information and ideas in order to meet the reading demands of the curriculum, drawing on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes described for the end of year 6 in the Literacy Learning Progressions. The

curriculum tasks will also involve the students in generating their own questions as well as answering questions from the teacher.

The students in a year 5 and 6 class are involved in a science investigation to discover how environmental causes and human actions have led to many animals becoming endangered and to identify a range of actions that individuals and organisations can take to restore the habitats of these endangered species.

“Plight of the Sea Turtle” deals with the decreasing numbers

of sea turtles in the Pacific and describes some initiatives to prevent their extinction. The information is logically organised, and the text is well supported by photos, a map, captions, and easily identified information boxes. (This is a relatively short text. Students in year 6 will often be required to read texts that are longer.)

The teacher chose “Plight of the Sea Turtle” because the text features (such as the title, opening paragraph, subheadings, and topic sentences) support students in using speed-reading strategies (including skimming and scanning the text) to locate, evaluate, and integrate information that is relevant to their questions. Examples of such questions could be “What are the threats to turtles’ nesting sites?” and “What human actions threaten turtles’ existence?”

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

Hotels, sea walls, and marinas, usually built for tourists, are destroying nesting sites.

And even though turtle products have been banned, illegal trade in their shells, meat, and even eggs continues.

High tides, erosion, cyclones, and drought all destroy nesting sites – and predators such as dogs, rats, and pigs raid turtle nests for eggs.

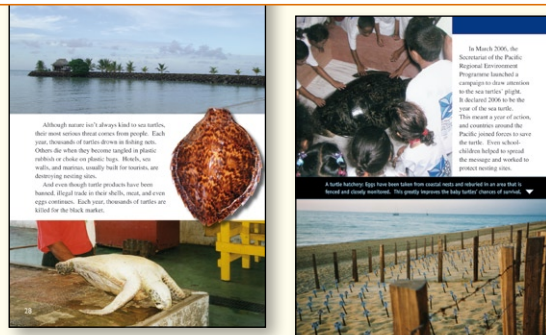
Eggs have been taken from coastal nests and reburied in an area that is fenced and closely monitored.

Each year, thousands of turtles drown in fishing nets. Others die when they become tangled in plastic rubbish or choke on plastic bags. Hotels, sea walls, and marinas, usually built for tourists, are destroying nesting sites.

Each year, thousands of turtles are killed for the black market.

In March 2006, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme ... declared 2006 to be the year of the sea turtle.

The student skims the text to locate information relevant to his first question and generates further questions as he scans the text. Examples of further questions could be “Why do only a tiny percentage of baby turtles survive?” or “What can be done to protect nesting places?” The student makes connections between the human, environmental, and animal causes of the destruction of turtle nests and sites and makes inferences about difficulties in protecting turtles’ nesting environments. He also makes connections to other texts, such as “Tigers on the Prowl” (School Journal, Part 3 Number 2, 2006). He evaluates whether keeping turtles in captivity would be a good way of protecting turtle populations, using information about the turtle hatchery in “Plight of the Sea Turtle” to support his conclusion. He develops further questions to investigate on the Internet, such as “What is the biggest threat to nesting sites?” and “What are some other methods for protecting these sites?”



The student scans the text to find information related to his questions about human actions that have made turtles endangered and what can be done to save them. He uses prior knowledge and context clues to help him understand the abstract idea of “the black market” and makes inferences about the laws that protect the turtles. He goes to the Internet to see if “the year of the sea turtle” provided new information. He organises information from the text about human actions into categories, for example, pollution, illegal trade, fishing technology, and tourist demands. He then searches for more information about the impact of these on other endangered animals around the world and how this impact is being addressed.