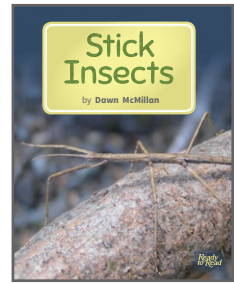


# Stick Insects

by Dawn McMillan



## Shared reading

Shared reading provides students with opportunities to behave like readers and to engage in rich conversations about texts that they are initially not able to read for themselves. It encourages enthusiasm for and enjoyment of reading, builds knowledge, strengthens comprehension, and fosters understanding of the features of a wide range of texts (including narrative, poetry, and non-fiction). It gives students access to texts that would otherwise be too difficult for them to read independently.

Shared reading involves multiple readings of a text, led by the teacher, with increasing interaction and participation by students. After many shared reading sessions, students become able to read, with increasing independence, the small books that accompany the big books.

## Overview

This simple report describes what a stick insect is, where it lives, what it eats, how it keeps safe, and what its life cycle is. As well as reading this book for interest or to support specific curriculum topics, you can use it to familiarise

students with the format of a report and the features of non-fiction.

Because of the teacher support provided by shared reading, this text can be used right from school entry.

There is an audio version of the text as an MP3 file at [www.readytoread.tki.org.nz](http://www.readytoread.tki.org.nz)

## Cross-curriculum links

Science (Living World) – levels 1 and 2 –Life processes: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive;

Recognise that living things are suited to their particular habitat;

Recognise there are lots of different living things in the world and that they can be grouped in different ways.

## Related texts

- Non-fiction related to a life cycle: *Watch Me!* (shared)
- Stories involving insects: *Haere Atu!, I'm the King of the Mountain*, *The Ant and the Grasshoppers* (shared); *Old Tuatara* (Magenta); *In the Bush* (Red 3)

## Text characteristics

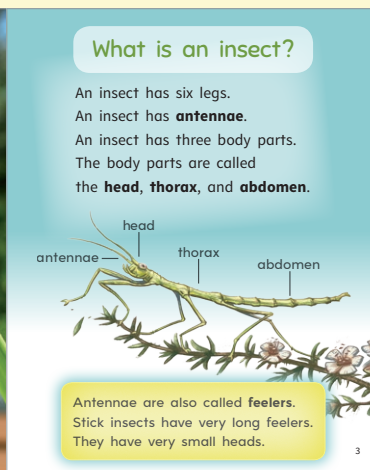
Unlike guided texts, shared reading texts are not levelled and may be used with a wide range of students. Many of the text characteristics of *Stick Insects*, as described here, are similar to but more complex than those in texts for guided reading.

The format of the text as a report, with an introduction, a series of main points organised under headings (some of which are questions), and a conclusion

Most content explicitly stated but some implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make inferences (for example, the reason for the name “stick insect”)

Some contexts that may be outside the students' prior knowledge but can be easily related to it

Visual language features such as a contents page, headings, labelled diagrams, text boxes, and key words in bold print (with supporting information nearby)



Sentences that run over more than one line but do not split phrases, supporting return sweep and phrasing

Many high-frequency words as a support for independent reading

Some new subject-specific words (“abdomen”, “antennae”, “camouflage”, “feelers”, “female adult”, “hatch”, “life cycle”, “moulting”, “nymph”, “possums”, “rō”, “thorax”, “wasps”) and descriptive language (“long”, “lots of spines”, “prickly”, “rough like a branch”, “small”, “smooth like a leaf”) that are supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the images

A variety of sentence structures, including questions

Non-fiction language structures, for example, the use of the continuous present tense and phrases, such as “It is”, “an insect has”, “is called”

## Reading purposes and learning goals

*(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?)*

**Select from and adapt** the suggestions in this teacher support material according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1-8, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6*).

Each reading purpose is accompanied by learning goals. The learning goals are the sorts of behaviours that you want your students to demonstrate after multiple readings of this text.

Often the first reading of a shared text will be with the whole class. The focus is on making meaning. The teacher leads the reading, with students invited to join in as they feel confident, so that the students can focus on responding to the content and thinking about the topic or main idea. Further reading to develop understanding of the topic, and deeper exploration of word and text features, can be left for subsequent readings.

## A suggested purpose for the initial reading

To find out about stick insects

### Possible learning goals

During the first reading, the students can:

- **ask questions** about aspects they are unsure of and look for answers in the text
- **identify** some facts about stick insects
- **notice** some ways the text and visual language features work together to help the reader.

## Introducing the text

- Collect any resources that you think will support the reading. Ideally you will be able to show the students a real stick insect, perhaps outside on a plant. Otherwise, look for video clips of stick insects (and photos of wasps or possums if you think students will need this support for page 5). Try to find an example of a smooth leaf and a rough leaf or piece of bark.
  - To provide support for English language learners, make time to explore the photographs and illustrations and introduce some topic vocabulary before you read the book with the wider group.
  - When you read the book with the wider group, expect the students to infer from the title that the creature in the photo is a stick insect. Confirm that this is a non-fiction book that will give them information about stick insects. Together, set the purpose for the reading.
- Find out what the students already know about stick insects. Some may have read the Ready to Read book *In the Bush*, which is about the discovery of a stick insect. *Why do you think it’s called a stick insect?* Encourage them to share any questions they have. You could start a KWL chart recording what they already know and what they want to find out.
  - Read the headings on the contents page. Some of them may match the students’ questions on the KWL chart and some may prompt further questions.

## Reading and discussing the text

- Many of the ideas in this text are likely to be new and of great interest to students. Allow plenty of time for discussion and to explore the photographs and the illustrations. You might want to spread the first reading over more than one session.
- Turn to pages 2 and 3, briefly noting the visual language features (the headings, the photograph, the labelled diagram, the bold print for some words, the text box). Read the heading on page 2. Prompt the students to notice it is the same as in the listing on the contents page.
- Use the pointer to help the students track the print as you read. Emphasise the words in bold print and explain that they are in bold print because they are important. At the end of page 2, stop and allow time for students to discuss the ideas (for example, that insects have legs and sticks don’t; that a stick insect is a particular type of insect). A question that may arise is “What is an insect?”, which leads naturally into the next heading.
- Page 3 – Read the heading. Draw attention to the question mark. Ask the students what they think the answer might be, then read the page to check. Allow plenty of time for the students to explore the diagram and practise saying the new (bold) words.
- Read the extra facts in the text box. You could add any relevant information or new questions to the KWL chart or wait until the end of the reading to do this.
- Page 4 – Read the headings and encourage the students to predict the answers from the photograph and illustration before you read to confirm.
- Page 5 – This page introduces a sequence of ideas – not just about how stick insects keep safe but what they need to keep safe from. If the students aren’t sure what wasps and possums are, show them photographs so they can visualise the danger they might pose to a stick insect.

- Pages 6 and 7 – Read the information about the eggs hatching, then demonstrate how the arrows point to the next stage of the diagram. Allow plenty of time for discussion. Draw out the idea that the cycle has no end.
  - The photographs on page 8 are all of stick insects found in New Zealand. Have the students think, pair, and share which stick insect they think is the most interesting and why.
  - Remind the students of the reading purpose. Before updating the KWL chart, give them a chance to clarify their thinking by sharing with a partner one thing they have found out about stick insects.
- Reread page 3 and prompt the students to notice the links between the bold word “antennae” and the visual language features (the diagram and the text box). *What does the diagram tell you about antennae? What did this sentence in the text box tell you?* Repeat this activity with the bold words for the body parts. As a follow up, you could have the students match labels to an unlabelled printout of the page 3 diagram.
  - As you read and discuss the life cycle diagram on pages 6 and 7, use the illustrations, captions, and arrows to help with the meaning of new words (for example, “hatch”, “female adult”, “skins”, “moulting”). Have the students choose a word that interests them and support them to write a sentence that uses or explains the word.

## Suggested purposes for subsequent readings

You can return to this text many times with the same purpose or a different purpose. Subsequent readings of the big book may be with a group of students who have similar learning needs rather than with the whole class. **Select from and adapt** the following suggestions.

## Suggested reading purpose

To look at some of the ways language, illustrations, and photos are used in this report

## Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- **identify** new words about stick insects
- **identify** how the writer describes stick insects
- **explore** how the illustrations and photos support the meaning.

Choose or adapt one of the suggestions below for each session.

- As you reread *Stick Insects*, encourage the students to identify new and interesting words. Support them to notice how the surrounding sentences and the illustrations help with the meaning of new words. For example:
  - Explore the words in bold print on page 2. Reread down to the bold word “insect” and use intonation to confirm the idea that the photograph is not of a stick! (This is also signalled by the word “but” in the first paragraph.) *What tells you that this is an insect and not a stick?* Prompt the students to notice the two references to legs (in the heading and in the first paragraph). Read the next line, emphasising “stick insect”. Draw out the idea that the extra word “stick” tells the reader that this is a special kind of insect (one that looks like a stick – but with legs).
- As you reread the text together, prompt the students to notice how the author uses descriptive language to help the reader visualise what the stick insect is like. For example:
  - the similes on pages 2, 5, and 8 (“like a stick”, “like the plants they live on”, “smooth like a leaf”). *What picture can you see in your head when we read this sentence? Draw their attention to the words “like” or “looks like”.*
  - the descriptive phrases (“very long” and “very small”) in the text box on page 3.
- Have the students choose one of the photographs in the book (they could use the small versions) and orally describe to a partner what it looks like, using adjectives and similes. Listen in and provide support as needed. Alternatively, you could create a barrier game to support the use of precise descriptive language. In barrier games, students work in pairs with a barrier, such as an upright book, between them. Give one student a set of four or five photos from the book and the other student just one photo. The student with the single photo describes it and the other student tries to identify the correct one. Tasks like these encourage precision with language because there are no visual clues to rely on.

## Suggested reading purpose

To notice parts of this book that help us find information

To think about the structure of this report

## Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- **explore** the link between the information on the contents page and the rest of the book
- **identify** questions within the headings and the answers in the text
- use the headings to help **identify main points** about stick insects (**summarise**)
- **explore** the organisation of ideas within the report

Choose or adapt one of the suggestions below for each session.

- Focus on the contents page. *What does the contents page tell us?* Expect the students to notice that each heading has a page number. Ask them to turn to the relevant pages and match the headings. Choose a heading. *What does this heading tell us about this page (or section)?*
- Focus on the use of questions as headings. *What do you notice about these words (what, where, how)?* Draw out the idea that the report includes different kinds of information about stick insects. Reread pages 3, 4, and 5 to clarify the link between the headings (which are questions) and the answers that are provided on the pages.
- Reread the book, then use the headings as a guide to summarise the main points. For example, reread the heading on page 2 and ask: *What is the heading telling us about stick insects?* Record a summary of the main ideas on a chart. A partial example is provided below.

Heading	Main idea
A stick with legs!	A stick insect looks like a stick, but if you look closely, you can see that it has legs.
What is an insect?	An insect has six legs, antennae, and three body parts.

- Tell the students that a report usually has three parts – a beginning, a middle, and an end. Reread pages 2 and 3 and support them to identify the main idea (what a stick insect is). Start filling in a chart to show the text structure (see the example below). Move onto the “middle” of the report. Reread pages 4–7, supporting the students to identify the types of information on these pages (lives, eats, keeps safe, grows), then read the ending on page 8 (a general comment or interesting idea about stick insects).

Stick Insects		
The beginning	The middle	The end
What are stick insects?	Some facts about stick insects.	There are many kinds of stick insects.
A stick insect is an insect that looks like a stick with legs.	Stick insects live on plants and trees.	Stick insects can be smooth, rough, or prickly. They all look different.
Insects have legs, feelers, and three body parts.	They eat ... They keep safe by ... They have a life cycle that looks like this ...	

- The students can use the summary, as in the examples above, or the headings as a model to write a simple report about another insect or small creature they know well. Use a shared writing approach to provide appropriate support for younger students. The students could include a labelled drawing of their insect based on the example on page 3.
- Focus on the life cycle diagram on pages 6–7 and direct the students’ attention to the arrows indicating sequence and direction. Draw out the idea of the cycle continuing indefinitely. You could print out the four pictures of the stick insect life cycle and have the students recreate it on a larger piece of paper that only includes the arrows.