

# Making good decisions: Best practices selecting informational text

Presented by: Sarah Novy &  
Jenny Meyer

# Welcome

- Introductions
- Research
- Choosing Info & NF titles
- Book Recommendations
- Q & A

# Who Are We?

- Sarah Novy- 20+ years classroom experience, MA Curriculum & Instruction
- Jenny Meyer- 5 years classroom experience, MA Teaching

How often in a single week do you read nonfiction books in your classroom?



Always  
Often  
Sometimes  
Rarely  
Never

POLL

The partners sing a last duet.



Then the young female joins  
a line of female emperors  
marching away from the colony.  
She too has a job to do.

When using nonfiction, do you use narrative nonfiction like this book *A Mother's Journey*?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

POLL

## All about emperor penguins

There are many types of penguins.

Emperor penguins are the largest.

They are good swimmers that live in Antarctica's cold ocean waters.

Size of adult emperor penguin



6

When not in the water, they spend their time on huge sheets of floating ice.

sheet of ice

ocean

7

Or when using nonfiction do you use titles that look more like this book *Penguin Chicks*?

Always  
Often  
Sometimes  
Rarely  
Never

POLL

# Why Read Information Text

- Success in later schooling
- Helps prepare for real life reading
- Sparks interest in reading
- Student's questions and interests are addressed
- Builds background knowledge
- Increases vocabulary
- Links child to real world

(Nell K. Duke, Ed.D. and V. Susan Bennett-Armistead (Scholastic, 2003).

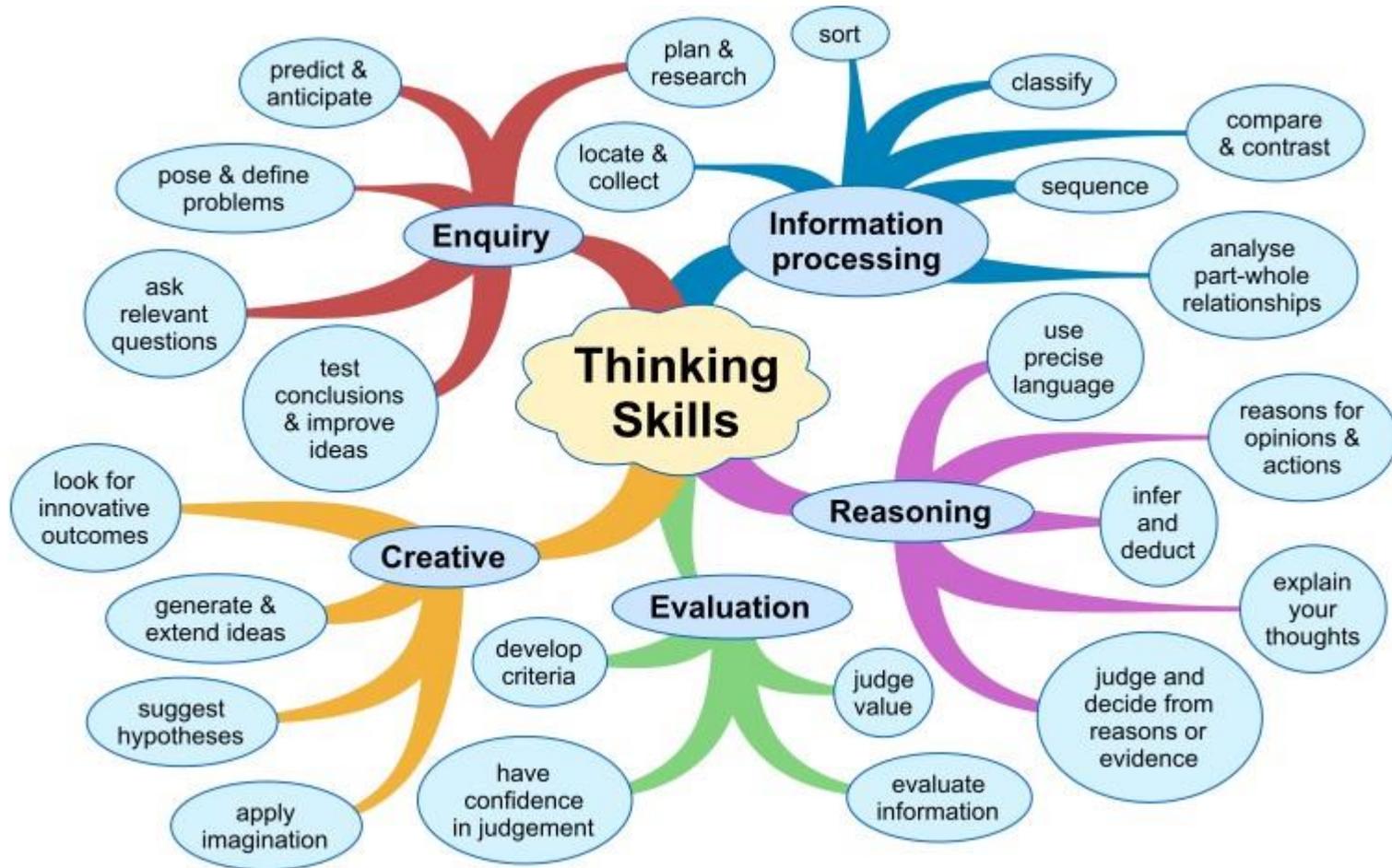
# Why Read Informational Text

- Other researchers found:
  - Develops organizational techniques (Schickedanz, 1999)
  - Exposure to expository texts (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000)
  - Motivates & develops reading skills and comprehension (Morrow, 2009)

# Benefits of Informational Text

- Foster critical thinking skills
- Increase comprehension
- Increase background knowledge
- Make connections to the world
- See other cultures and types of people

# Informational Text on the Brain



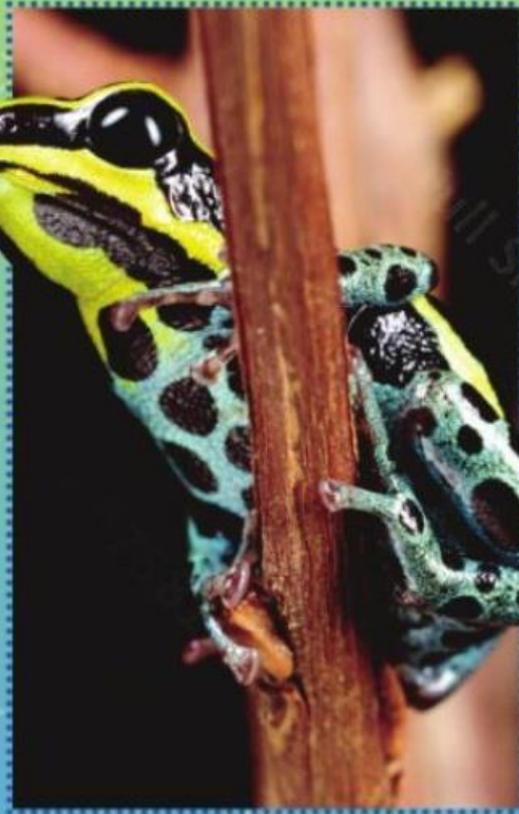
# What is Informational Text?

- Text that is not in narrative format
  - Expository, argumentative, or persuasive formats only
- Contains various text features:
  - Index, glossary, heading, subheading, diagrams, tables, charts, content sidebars, table of contents, bolded key words, etc

**ZOOM**  
In on  
Animals!

# Poison Dart Frogs

UP CLOSE



Carmen Bredeson

# Informational Text

## FROG VOCAL SAC

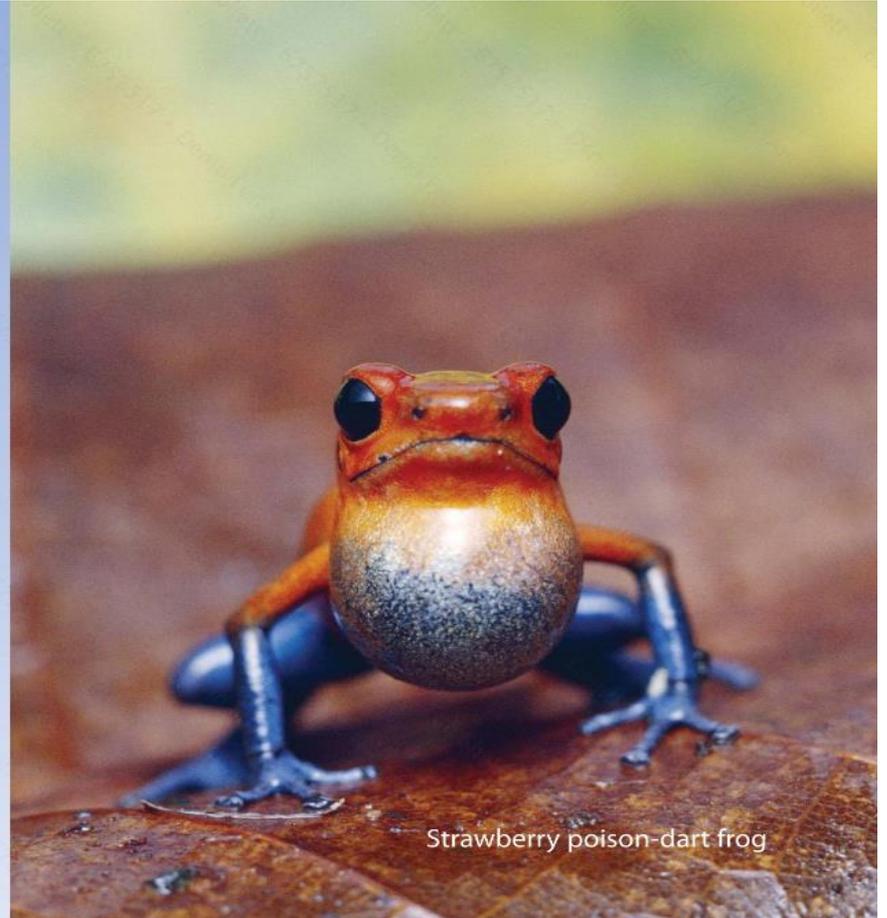
UP CLOSE



Phantasmal  
(fan TAZ muhl)  
poison frog

A male poison dart frog pushes air into his **vocal sac**. The sac blows up like a balloon. When the air comes out, the sound is very loud. The call of a dart frog sounds like a buzz or chirp.

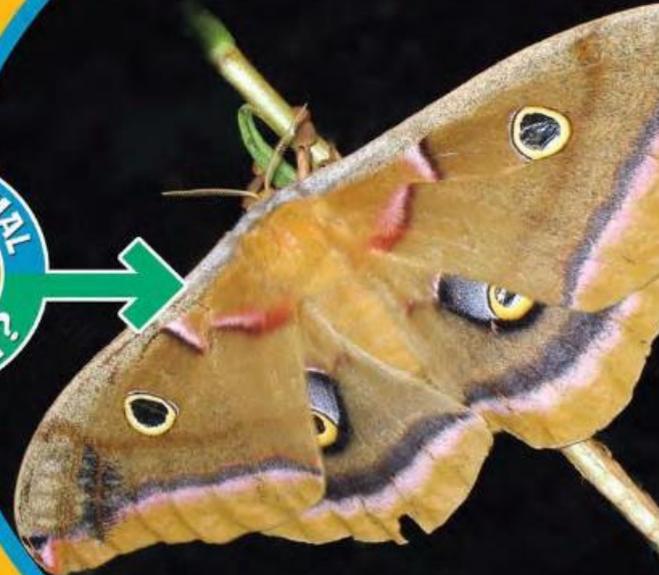
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Strawberry poison-dart frog

# Butterfly or Moth?

*How Do You Know?*



Melissa Stewart

# Knobs or No Knobs?

Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly

A butterfly has two **antennae** for smelling. They are long and thin. Each one has a round knob on the end.

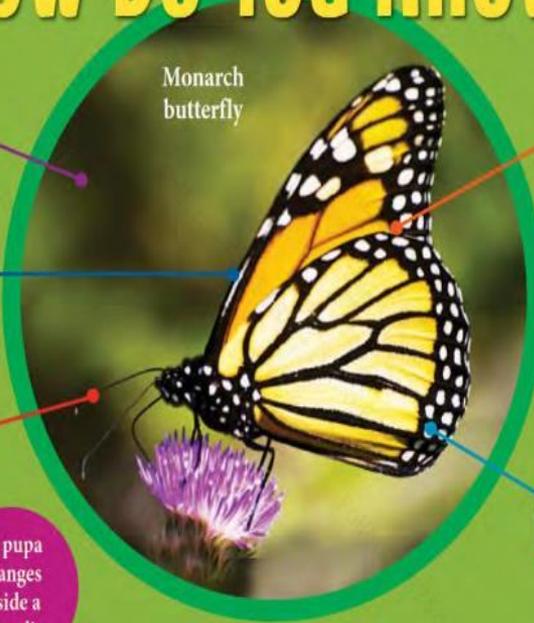


Eggar moth

A moth's antennae are short and feathery. They help a moth smell and fly.

# Now Do You Know?

Monarch butterfly



This insect flies during the day.

It has bright, colorful wings.

It has long, thin antennae with knobs on the ends.

Its pupa changes inside a chrysalis.

It rests with its wings closed.

It has thin, smooth scales.

## It's a butterfly!

Polyphemus moth

This insect flies at night.

It has dull, gray wings.

It has short, feathery antennae.

Its pupa changes inside a cocoon.

It rests with its wings open.

It has a thick, fuzzy coat of scales.

## It's a moth!

We All Come from

# Different Cultures



by Melissa Higgins

Gail Saunders-Smith, PhD, Consulting Editor

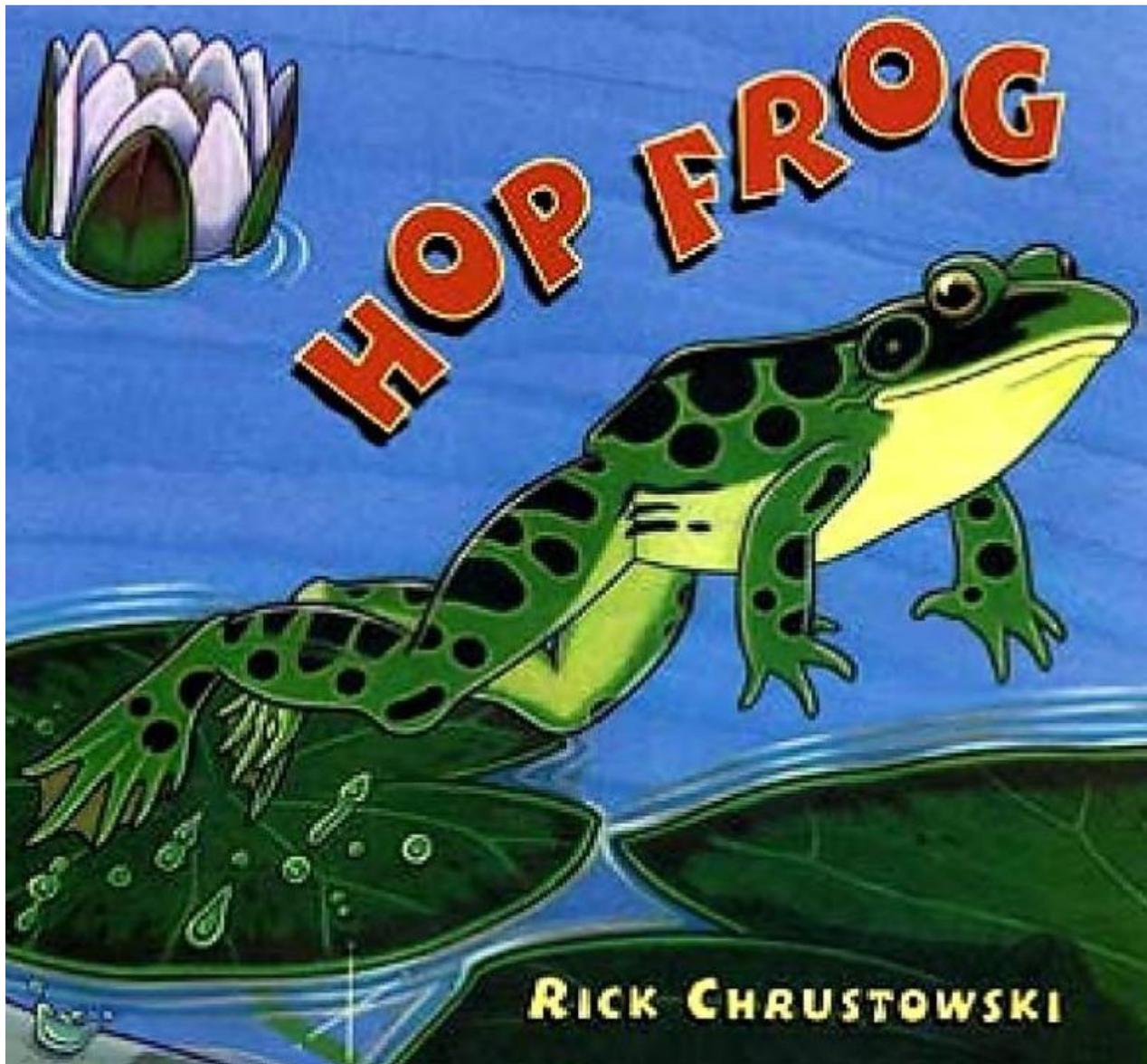
Pebble<sup>®</sup>  
Plus

Chinese New Year lasts two weeks. A dancing dragon and popping firecrackers bring good luck to everyone.

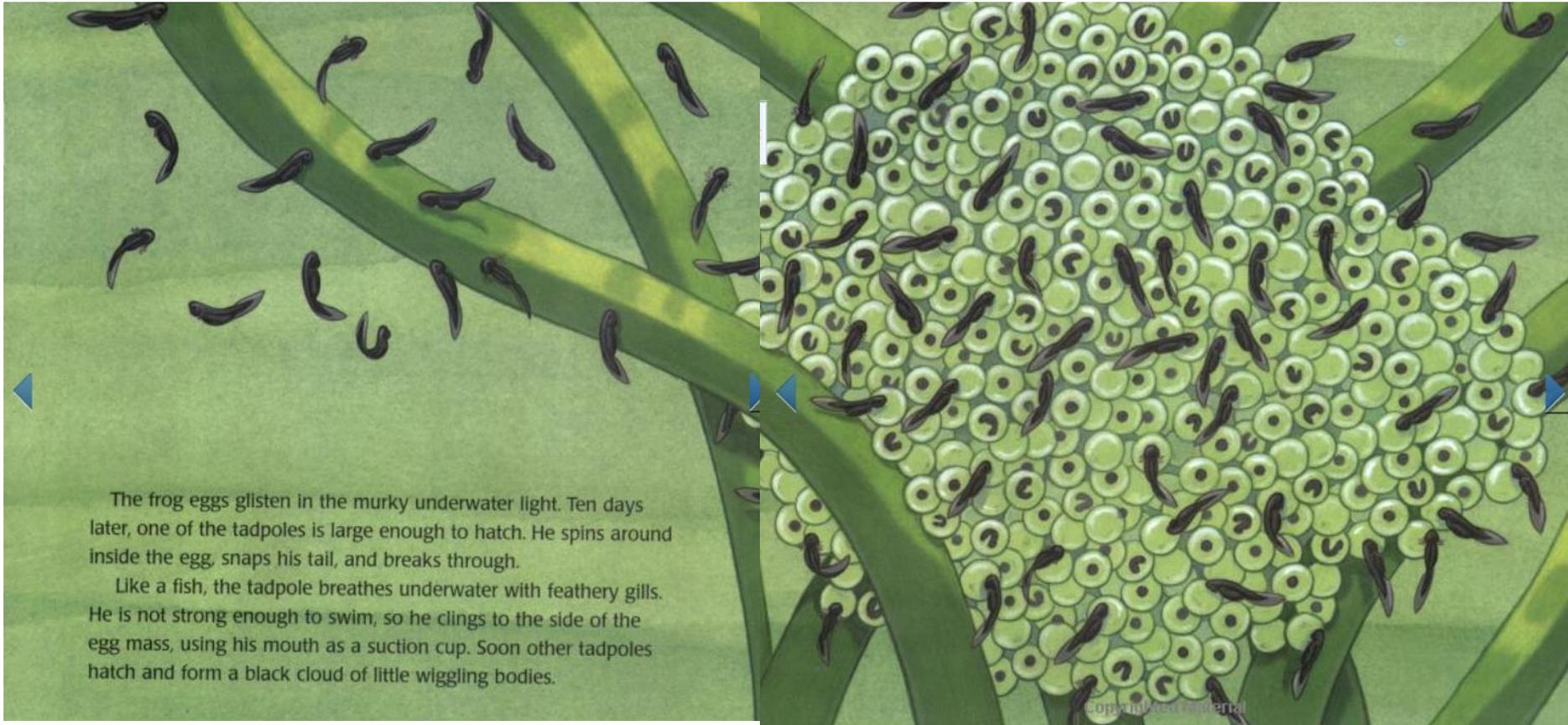


# What is Narrative Nonfiction?

- Written in a narrative format
- Usually written to entertain
  - Descriptive; showing rather than telling
- Contains story elements such as voice, theme, characters, etc
  - Can contain first or third person point of views
  - Story is thoughtful; may include dialogue



# Narrative Nonfiction



The frog eggs glisten in the murky underwater light. Ten days later, one of the tadpoles is large enough to hatch. He spins around inside the egg, snaps his tail, and breaks through.

Like a fish, the tadpole breathes underwater with feathery gills. He is not strong enough to swim, so he clings to the side of the egg mass, using his mouth as a suction cup. Soon other tadpoles hatch and form a black cloud of little wiggling bodies.

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# IT'S OUR GARDEN



From Seeds to  
Harvest in a  
School Garden





**T**he school bell sounds . . .

and the classrooms explode with the noise of books closing, chairs sliding on the floor, and kids chattering. It's time for recess! The students head outside to the school garden.

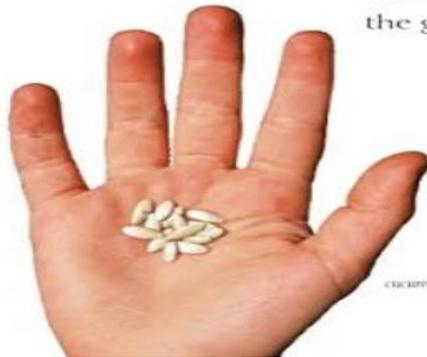


pea seeds



sunflower seeds

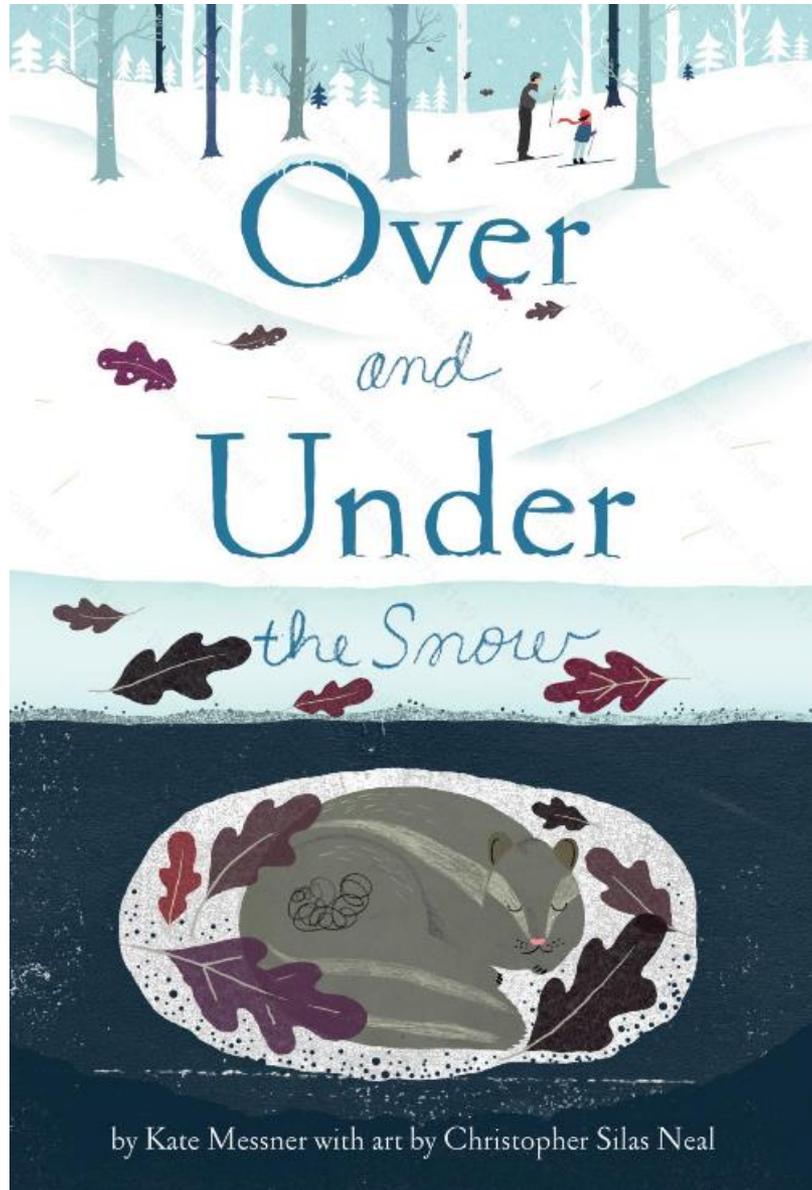
Springtime is planting time.  
These are a few of the seeds  
that will be planted in  
the garden.



cucumber seeds



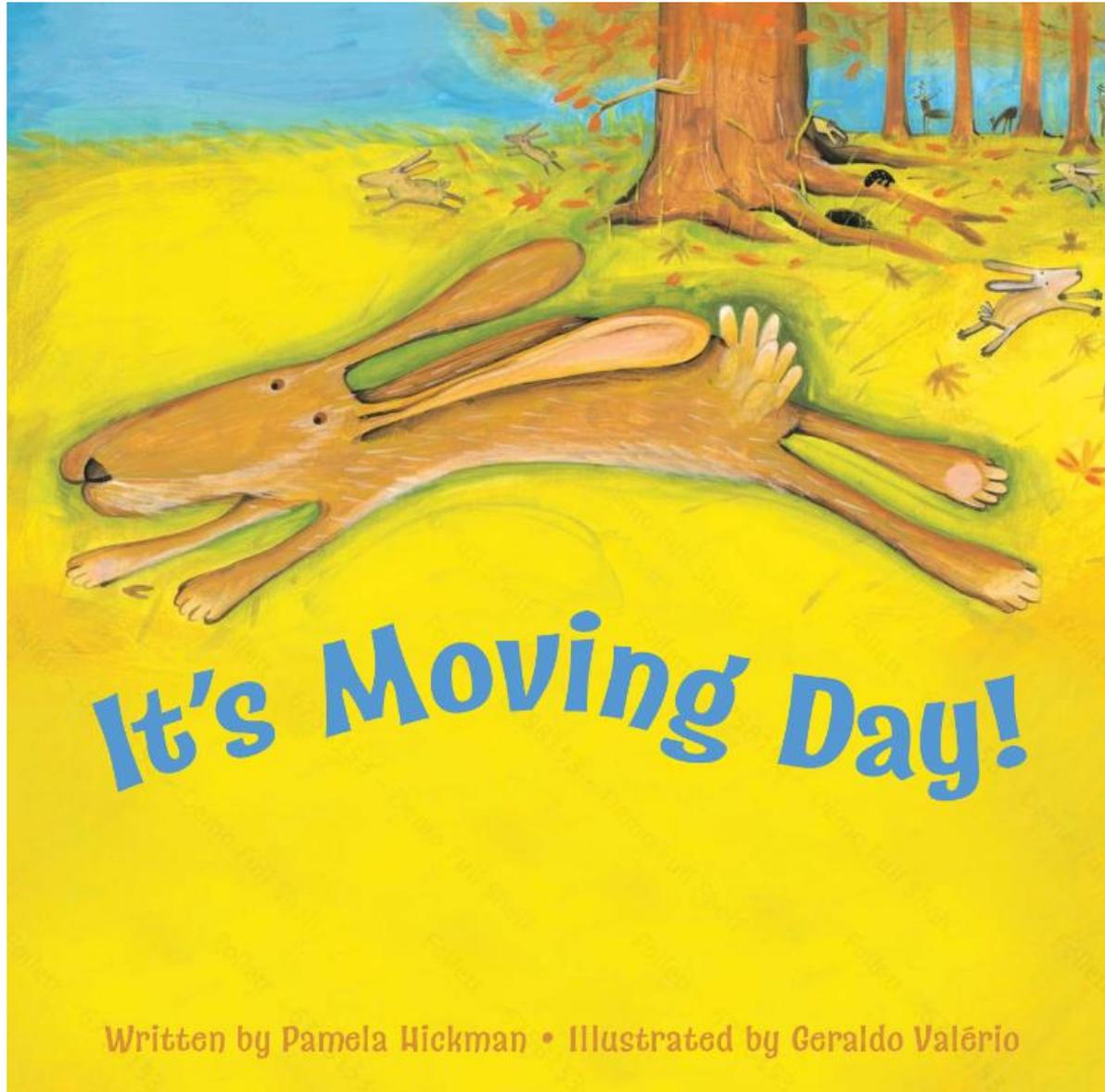
seed potatoes





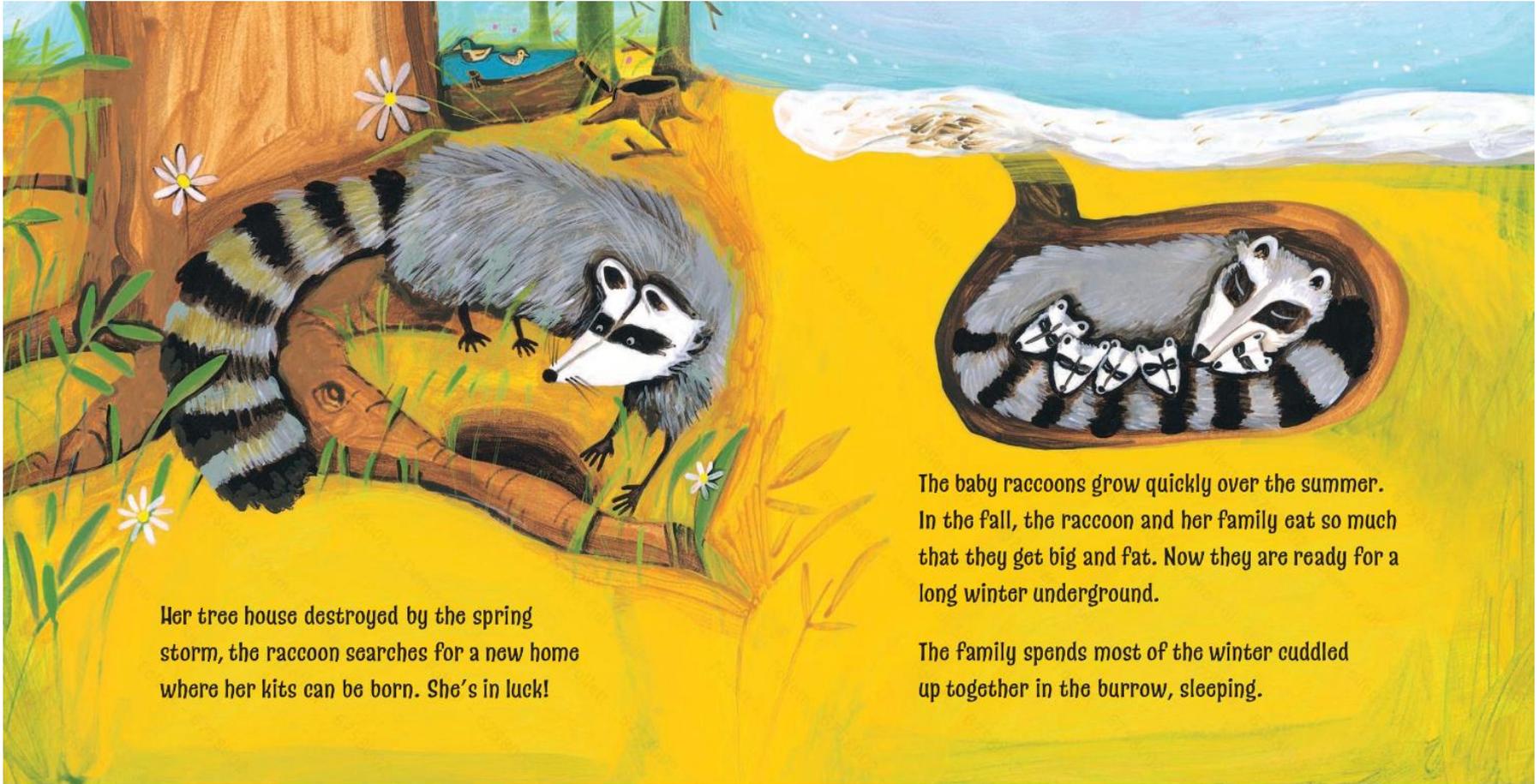
Over the snow I climb, digging in my edges so  
I don't slide back down.

Under the snow, voles scratch through slippery  
tunnels, searching for morsels from summer feasts.



# It's Moving Day!

Written by Pamela Hickman • Illustrated by Geraldo Valério



Her tree house destroyed by the spring storm, the raccoon searches for a new home where her kits can be born. She's in luck!

The baby raccoons grow quickly over the summer. In the fall, the raccoon and her family eat so much that they get big and fat. Now they are ready for a long winter underground.

The family spends most of the winter cuddled up together in the burrow, sleeping.

# Informational Text vs. Nonfiction

## Body Changes for Hibernation

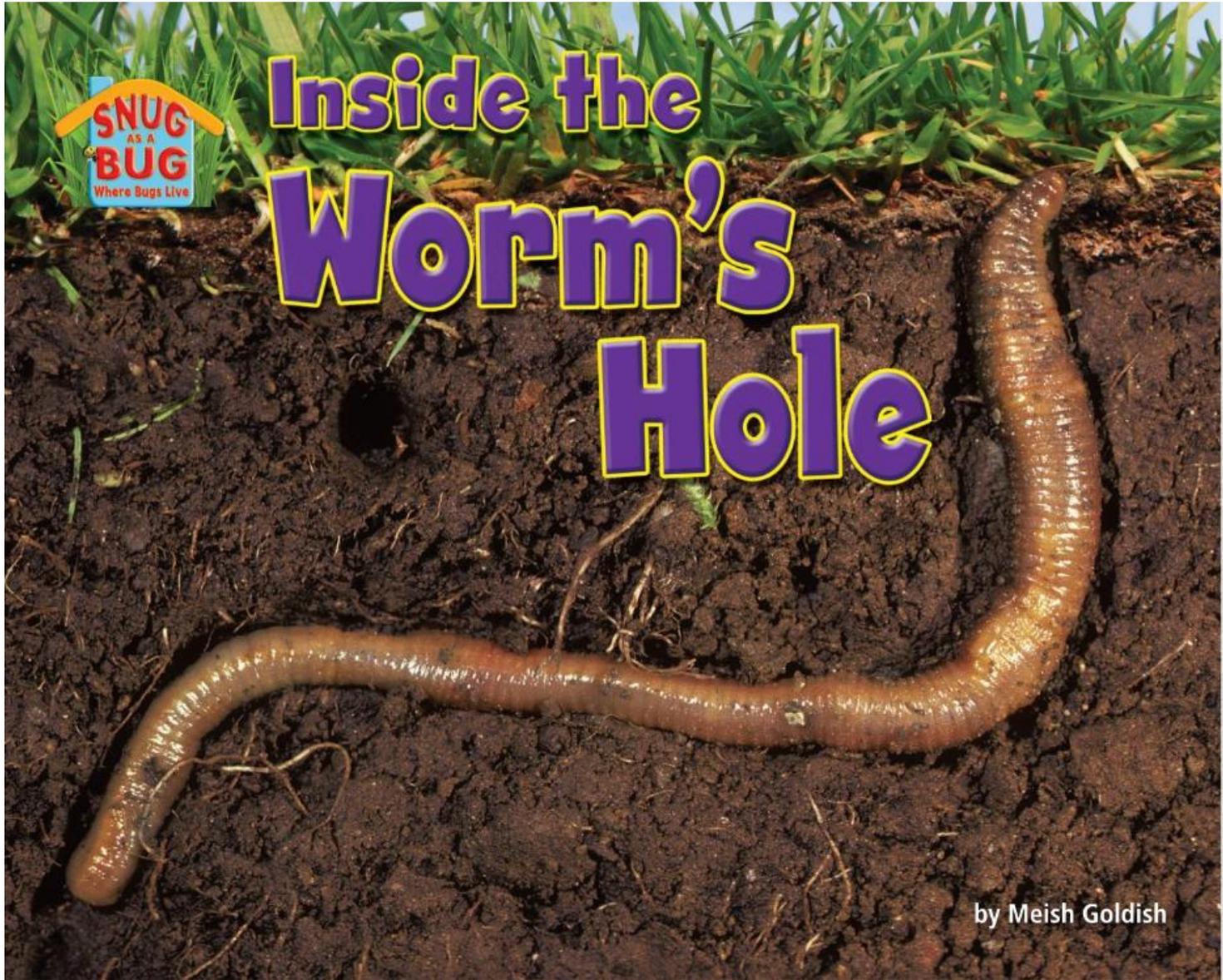
During hibernation, animals live in slow motion. Their heart slows down. Their breathing slows down. Their body temperature drops.



"Under the snow is a whole secret kingdom, where the smallest forest animals stay safe and warm. You're skiing over them now."

# Choosing Informational Text

- Books that are **ENTICING!**
  - What's going to draw the kids in?
- Books that are **ENGAGING!**
  - Will it generate questions?
- Books that are **ENJOYABLE!**
  - Am I going to enjoy reading this?



**SNUG**  
AS A  
**BUG**  
Where Bugs Live

# Inside the Worm's Hole

by Meish Goldish

## Moving Forward

As a worm moves through the ground, it makes tunnels.

Although the worm's body is soft, it can still push itself through the soil.

The worm crawls by first stretching out the front part of its body.

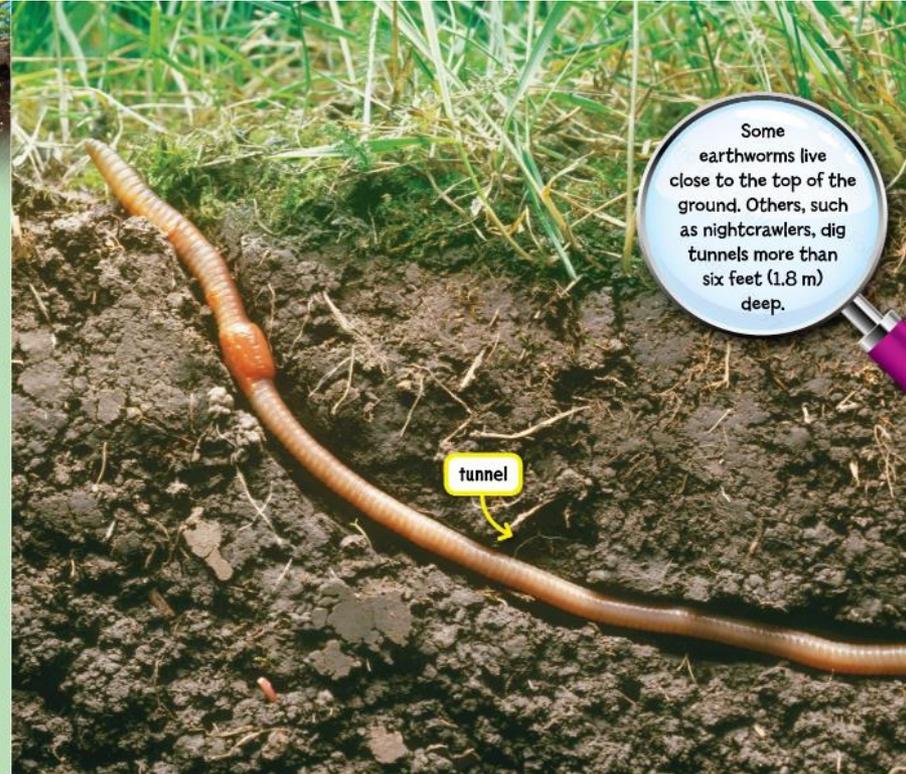
Then it pulls its tail end forward.

Tiny hairs on the worm's skin, called **setae**, grab the dirt to help the worm move forward.



setae

close-up of a worm



Some earthworms live close to the top of the ground. Others, such as nightcrawlers, dig tunnels more than six feet (1.8 m) deep.

tunnel

# Eating Along the Way

A worm finds food as it moves through the dirt.

It eats soil and tiny pieces of dead plants.

The food the earthworm eats passes through its body.

Then the food comes out of the worm's tail end as droppings, or **castings**.



How do you think the worm's castings help plants grow?

# Worm Droppings

A worm's castings are filled with **nutrients**.

The nutrients come from the different plant parts that the worm ate.

Castings make soil rich and healthy.

They help the plants that live around a worm's hole grow bigger and taller.



grass growing in worm castings



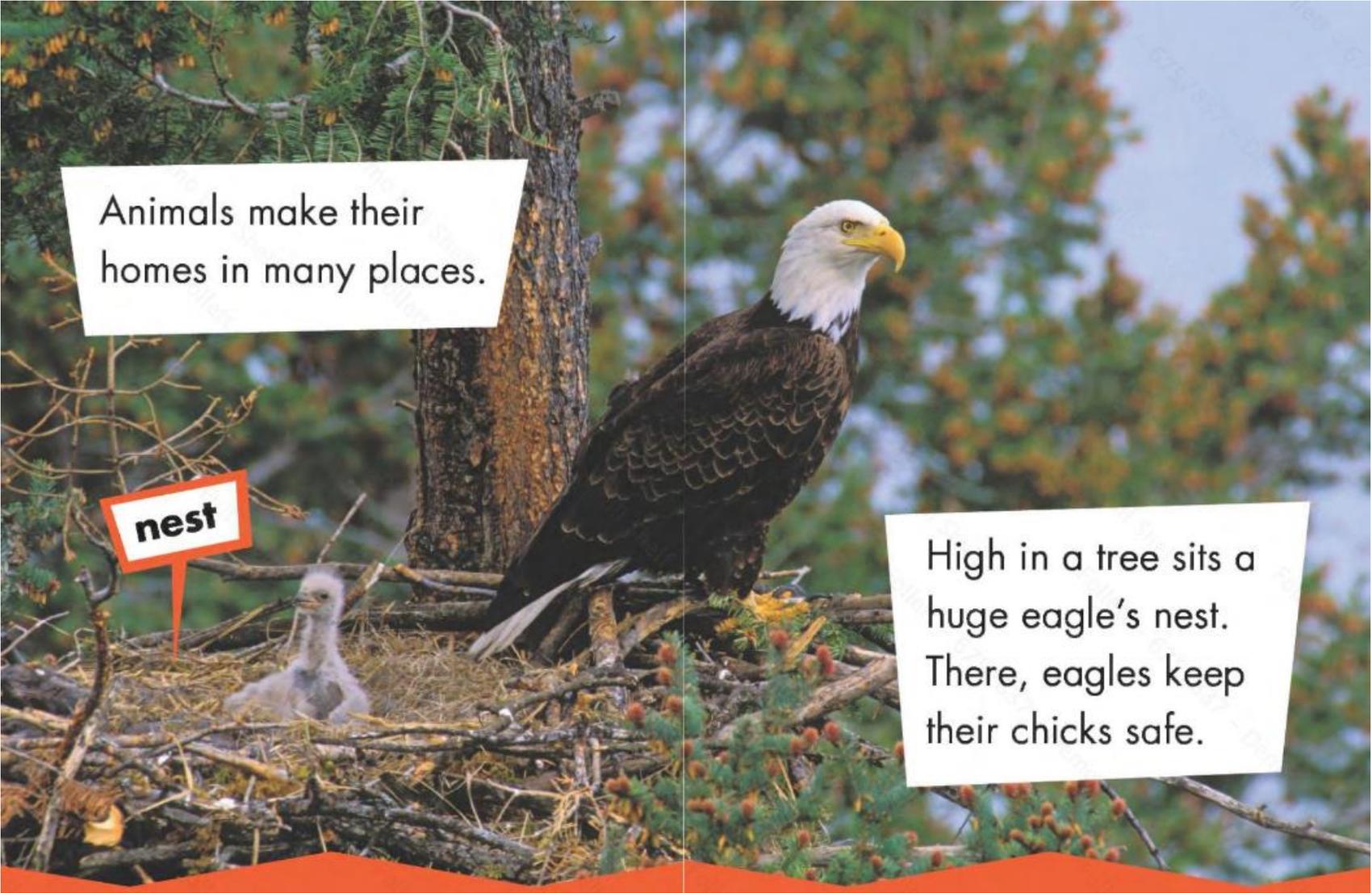
After eating at night, a worm uses its castings to cover the entrance to its home. The castings hide the worm's hole.

castings at the entrance to a worm's hole

Why do you think a worm hides the entrance to its hole?

# Features to look for

- Clear, large photographs
- Focused text that matches photographs
- Builds vocabulary
- Contains features such as: table of contents, glossary, index, bolded key words, captions, labeled pictures, tables, graphs, diagrams, maps, etc



Animals make their homes in many places.

nest

High in a tree sits a huge eagle's nest. There, eagles keep their chicks safe.



**The statue is  
a woman.**

**It is made of metal.**



## Food for All

Animals in a group help each other hunt and gather food. Meerkats live in **colonies** of up to 40 animals. They hunt for scorpions, grubs, and beetles during the day. Guards sit at the highest point searching for enemies. At the first sign of danger, the guards bark out a warning. The entire group zips down into their burrows.

### Animal Fact!

When danger threatens, hippopotamuses go to deeper water. Young hippos climb on their mother's backs for safety.

**colony:** a group of the same kind of animal



The dogbane beetle is named for the kind of plant it likes to eat



Beetles are insects. They have three body parts and six legs. Beetles have two **antennae** (*an-TEH-nee*). Most beetles have two pairs of wings. The front wings are thick and hard. They cover the thin back wings. The back wings are used for flying.



A beetle's front wings spread apart when it flies



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# Words to Know



**antennae** (an TEN ee)—Two structures on the head of insects and some other animals. They help animals sense the world around them.

**chrysalis** (KRIS uh liss)—The hard outer skin on a butterfly pupa.

**cocoon** (kuh KOON)—The silky case spun by a moth caterpillar. The moth pupa lives in it while it changes into an adult insect.

**insect** (IN sekt)—An animal with three body parts and six legs. Most insects have two pairs of wings.

**predator** (PREH duh tur)—An animal that hunts and kills other animals for food.

**pupa** (PYOO puh)—The third part in the life cycle of some insects. A pupa changes into an adult.

**scale** (skayl)—One of the thin, flat, skinlike plates that cover the wings of butterflies and moths.

# Informational Text & You

- Children will be engaged with informational text
- Make the reading exciting and interactive
- Use informational, narrative non-fiction and fiction texts

# Conclusion

- It is evident that “incorporating informational text in the early years of school has the potential to increase student motivation, build important comprehension skills, and lay the groundwork for students to grow into confident, purposeful readers.” (Duke, 2004, 43)

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