



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 5: Module 2A: Unit 1: Lesson 2

Reading an Interview: “Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin”



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Reading an Interview:
“Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin”

Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

- I can compare and contrast the organizational structure of different informational texts. (RI.5.5)
- I can determine the main idea(s) of an informational text based on key details. (RI.5.2)
- I can determine the meaning of academic words or phrases in an informational text. (RI.5.4)
- I can determine the meaning of content words or phrases in an informational text. (RI.5.4)
- I can use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) to help me understand the meaning of a word or phrase. (L.5.4)
- I can connect my questions and responses to what others say. (SL.5.1)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can describe the features of an interview as an informational text.
- I can determine the gist of an interview with scientist Bryson Voirin.
- I can determine the meaning of new words from context in an interview with scientist Bryson Voirin.

Ongoing Assessment

- Journal (Informational Text chart, glossary)
- Annotated text
- Rainforest KWL and Features of Informational Text charts
- Exit ticket



Reading an Interview:
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| Agenda | Teaching Notes |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Opening</p> <p>A. Engaging the Reader: Rainforests of Panama (5 minutes)</p> <p>B. Review Learning Targets (5 minutes)</p> <p>2. Work Time</p> <p>A. How Scientists Communicate Their Work: An Interview (10 minutes)</p> <p>B. Guided Practice Reading for Gist: “Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin” Interview Introduction and First Question (10 minutes)</p> <p>C. Vocabulary Work: Starting a Glossary (10 minutes)</p> <p>D. Further Reading and Vocabulary Work: “Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin” Interview Second and Third Questions (10 minutes)</p> <p>3. Closing and Assessment</p> <p>A. Debrief: What Have We Learned about the Rainforest? (10 minutes)</p> <p>4. Homework</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Either have a wall map available in the classroom or print out a world map and a map of the Western Hemisphere. Be prepared to help students locate Panama on the map.• In this lesson, students set up their glossaries at the back of their journal. This is, in effect, a vocabulary notebook for the module. Students will keep important unfamiliar words, both general academic vocabulary and domain-specific science words. (Note that many actual glossaries heavily emphasize domain-specific terms, but students’ glossaries have two sections to purposely include a specific academic vocabulary glossary.) Students will start from the last page of their journals and work their way back to the front, in order to have plenty of room to add many words throughout the module.• Academic vocabulary is the vocabulary critical to understanding the science concepts in texts. In identifying academic vocabulary for instruction, remember that not all terms are of equal importance. Some terms are critically important, others are useful but not critical, and others are interesting but not useful.• This lesson also introduces the homework routine of daily response questions. Choose either to have students respond in their journals or to give students a printed handout of the Homework: Journal Response Question (see supporting materials).• During this lesson, students read only the first three questions and answers of the interview. They will finish reading the rest of the interview in Lesson 3. |



Reading an Interview:
“Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin”

| Lesson Vocabulary | Materials |
|---|--|
| describe/description, features, interview, determine, gist, context, glossary; biologist, ecology, sloths, radio-collars, track, algae, occur, mammals, benefit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political Map of the World (one for display)• Map of North and South America (one for display)• “Interview with Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin” (one per student)• Informational Text anchor chart (from Lesson 1)• Features of Informational Text anchor chart (new; teacher created; see Work Time A)• Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart (from Module 1)• Sticky notes or index cards (one per student)• Rainforest KWL anchor chart (from Lesson 1)• Journal Response Question (Homework for Lesson 2) (one per student) |



Reading an Interview:
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| Opening | Meeting Students’ Needs |
|---|--|
| <p>A. Engaging the Reader: Rainforests of Panama (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the Political Map of the World and the Map of North and South America. Show students where the Western Hemisphere is on the world map. Orient them to where New York is located within the Western Hemisphere. Use this as a brief geography “teachable moment” about the Eastern and Western hemispheres. • Point out to students where Panama is located on the map. Ask students to notice where it is in relation to New York. Remind students that they are studying about rainforests, which are located all over the world. Nevertheless, in fifth grade in New York, the focus is on the geography of the Western Hemisphere, so they are going to study closely the scientists and living things in those particular rainforests. | |
| <p>B. Review Learning Targets (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the learning target: “I can describe the features of an interview as an informational text.” Ask students to think about the words <i>describe</i>, <i>features</i>, and <i>interview</i>. Say: “What does it mean to <i>describe</i>?” Allow some students to share, listening for responses such as: “to tell about something using details.” Then ask students what <i>features</i> are. Have them examine the things about the interview text that stand out. Examples might include: bold type, questions, answers, and spaces between questions and answers. Finally, have students consider what an <i>interview</i> is. Ask for student responses and listen for ideas such as: “One person asking another person questions about his/her work.” Reread the learning target and ask students to show a thumbs-up, thumbs-sideways, or thumbs-down to demonstrate how much they understand the target. Clarify as needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students developing academic language will benefit from direct instruction of academic vocabulary. |



Reading an Interview:
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| Work Time | Meeting Students’ Needs |
|---|--|
| <p>A. How Scientists Communicate Their Work: An Interview (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute the Interview with Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin to students. Remind students that often with new texts, it is helpful to skim the text quickly just to get a sense of it. (Remind students that they did this the first time they read the UDHR, during Module 1.) • Give students a minute to skim the article and notice how interviews are laid out on the page. Cold call a few students to share out what they have noticed about the structure. • Ask students to focus back on the Informational Text anchor chart from Lesson 1. If an interview is not already listed, add this to the chart. • Create a new Features of Informational Text anchor chart. Ask students to create a similar page in their journal. • Draw 3 columns. Label the first column “Type”, the second column “Features,” and the third column “How Does It Help the Reader?” Tell students that throughout this module they will be reading different types of informational texts, with different features or elements, so they will need to think about and look closely as they read to determine how each type of informational text uses similar and different elements to help the reader more easily understand the information. • Ask students to begin a new page in their journals. Model how to fill in the chart. • Ask members of the class what type of text they are reading today. Write <i>interview</i> in the first column as students record that word in the first column of their journal pages. • Then ask them to look for and share out the features (structural features) they can see in the Bryson Voirin interview, listening for responses such as: questions, answers, short paragraphs, bold print, etc. Have students add these to the second column of their journal charts. • Finally, ask students to consider how these features may help them read and understand the text. Listen for responses such as: “The way it’s broken into parts helps me tell where one question/answer ends and a new one begins,” “shorter paragraphs help me focus on one idea at a time,” etc. Add these ideas to the anchor chart as students add to the third column of the chart in their journals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals can help ELLs and other students comprehend questions and discussions. Chart main points in answers and post all questions asked to students. • Students needing additional supports may benefit from partially filled-in graphic organizers. |



Reading an Interview:
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| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the class to think about why scientists might choose an interview to communicate their research. Cold call students to share out their ideas. Listen for ideas such as: “The information comes right from the scientist,” “The question-and-answer format is easy to follow,” “The writing is like people talk, which can be easier to understand,” “Someone else does not have to figure out another way to say what the scientist said. The reporter can just write down the words the scientist says,” “Both the interviewer and the scientist can make sure that each understands what the other is saying right away,” “the interviewer can get more specific details from the scientist,” etc. | |



Reading an Interview:
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| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
|---|--|
| <p>B. Guided Practice Reading for Gist: “Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin” Interview Introduction and First Question (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the learning targets: “I can determine the gist of an interview with scientist Bryson Voirin,” and “I can determine the meaning of new words from context in an interview with scientist Bryson Voirin.” Focus students on the words <i>determine</i>, <i>gist</i>, and <i>context</i>. Say: “Remember one strategy for determining the meaning of a word is to first figure out the part of speech of a word. What type of word is <i>determine</i>?” Listen for students to say it is a verb, a doing word. Then prompt, “Which word is <i>determine</i> referring to?” Ask the class for suggestions, listening for a response with the word <i>gist</i>. Say: “So what do you think it means if you are reading to determine the <i>gist</i>?” Listen for replies such as: “<i>Determine</i> means to figure something out or decide, and <i>gist</i> means to get the main, or most important, ideas. So we need to figure out what the interview is mostly about.” • Ask students to remind the group what context means. Listen for comments such as: “<i>Con</i> means with, and <i>text</i> means words on the page, so reading other words or sentences near an unfamiliar word can help me figure out what the word means.” Say to the class: “You may find some unfamiliar words while you’re reading this interview, but try to use context clues to help you figure out their meanings. This will help you understand the text better.” • Remind students of the close reading they did in Module 1 around the UDHR and <i>Esperanza Rising</i> (or refer to readings completed earlier in the year). Refer back to the Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart (from Module 1) or create a new anchor chart, making sure to list strategies such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Using context by reading sentences and/or words directly before or after the unfamiliar word * Thinking about what type of speech the word is (verb, noun, adjective) and how it connects to/describes other words in the sentence * Breaking the word into familiar parts and determining meaning based on what part(s) can be defined easily * Looking for repeated words, which usually indicates this is an important word, etc. • Tell students that they will be reading this interview across two lessons. For now, ask students to just focus on the first interview question and answer. Have them read it for gist, underlining any words they don’t know. • Ask the class to share out what they think the gist of this first interview question is. Listen for ideas such as: “It is about a scientist who studies sloths: how they act, what they eat, and where they live.” Have students write the gist in the margin of the interview, next to the first question. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use vocabulary learning strategies to support all learners: prefixes, root words, suffixes, parts of speech, and context. • Provide anchor charts for processes such as Close Readers Do These Things. This would include question words with nonlinguistic representations (e.g., picture of student reading for <i>readers</i>) and/or a question frame: “What is she doing?” • When possible, provide text or materials in students’ L1. This can help students understand materials presented in English. • Some students may be unfamiliar with Tier 2 vocabulary words (e.g., <i>meaning</i>, <i>type of speech</i>, <i>connects</i>, <i>describes</i>, <i>familiar</i>). Clarify vocabulary with students as needed. |



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| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
|---|--|
| <p>C. Vocabulary Work: Starting a Glossary (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold call students to share out the words they underlined and listen for the words <i>description</i>, <i>biologist</i>, <i>ecology</i>, and <i>sloths</i>. Ask students: “Could you figure out the meaning of any of these words by using context clues? If so, what other words and/or sentences helped you determine what the word meant?” • Listen for students to share out ideas such as: “I think a sloth is a type of animal because it says he is studying ‘two- and three-toed’ sloths, and I know animals have toes.” If students are unable to determine the meanings of these words, model other strategies, such as looking for the word root (e.g., <i>bio</i> means “life”). • Explain to students that in this module they will be focusing on two different types of words, scientific (words about science) and academic (other words that help them understand concepts) words. Knowing which words are which types helps them determine the importance of vocabulary and understand texts better. Remind them that informational text often has a glossary, a place that lists words and definitions. Explain to students that they will be creating their own glossaries to keep track of academic and scientific words that will help them become better readers. • Ask students to turn to the last page in their journals. Tell them this is where they will begin two separate glossaries of new words that they will add to throughout the module. Invite students to write this heading at the top of their journal’s last page: Scientific Word Glossary. Explain that they will build this glossary backward in the journal to maximize pages for other things in the front of their journal. Have students count at least 5 pages from the back of the book and write the heading: Academic Word Glossary at the top of that page. Tell students they will work backward in their journal to have room for lots of new words they will learn during this module. • Have students set up a four-column chart on both Glossary pages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Column 1: Word * Column 2: Synonym * Column 3: Definition * Column 4: Picture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing extra time for tasks and answering questions in class discussions. Some students need more time to process and translate information. • Consider partnering an ELL with a student who speaks the same L1 when discussion of complex content is required. This can let students have more meaningful discussions and clarify points in their L1. • Consider allowing ELLs to draw their observations, ideas, or notes when appropriate. This allows students to participate in a meaningful way. |



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| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
|---|-------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to add the words description, feature, and interview to the first Academic Word Glossary page and to write a synonym, short definition, and/or picture for each word to help them remember the meaning. Ask students to add the words biologist, ecology, and sloths to the first Scientific Word Glossary page, making sure to write a synonym, short definition, and/or picture for each of these words. Let them know that they may not get finished with all columns right now, but they can go back to it when they have more time to add more information or the picture. | |
| <p>D. Further Reading and Vocabulary Work: “Sloth Canopy Researcher: Bryson Voirin” Interview Second and Third Questions (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students that they will now do the same process with the next chunk of the interview. • Ask them to independently read the second and third questions of the interview, underlining any words they don’t know. • Ask students to determine the gist of the second and third interview questions with their partner. Cold call a few of them to share their thoughts, listening for ideas such as: “why sloths move so slowly,” “how algae helps sloths,” “trees in rainforests are some of the tallest in the world,” and “Bryson Voirin climbs trees to get closer to sloths so he can study them.” After students share aloud, have them write the gist for each interview question in the margin of the text. • Ask students to share and compare with a partner the words that each underlined as an unfamiliar word. Then invite a few partners to share out the words they discussed. Listen for mention of <i>radio-collars</i>, <i>track</i>, <i>algae</i>, <i>occur</i>, <i>mammals</i>, and <i>benefit</i>. Once again ask the members of the class if they were able to determine the meaning of any of these words through context and to explain what parts of the text helped them figure out the meaning of these words. Also ask students to identify the type of word it is, scientific or academic. If there are any words no student was able to define by using context or identify then define, provide the definition for the class. Prompt students to add these words to their glossaries in their journals, and to write a synonym, short definition, and/or picture next to each word. | |



Reading an Interview:
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| Closing and Assessment | Meeting Students’ Needs |
|--|---|
| <p>A. Debrief: What Have We Learned about the Rainforest? (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the learning targets by reading aloud and pausing after each one to ask students to show one finger if they did not get the target at all; two fingers to show they almost understand; and three fingers to show they completely get it. (Make a note of students showing one or two fingers, in order to offer additional/ongoing support as needed.) Exit ticket: Distribute a sticky note or index card to each student. Ask them to respond to this question: “What is one thing you learned about the sloth? Give specific details.” After students record their ideas onto the note/card, have them share what they wrote with a partner. Call on students to share with the whole class. Add students’ ideas to the Rainforest KWL anchor chart and have them record the responses in their journals as well. Collect exit tickets and students’ annotated interviews. Distribute Journal Response Question. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in with students who struggle with language individually during debrief. Consider allowing students who struggle with language to dictate their answers to a partner or the teacher. |
| Homework | Meeting Students’ Needs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer the journal response question: “What did you learn about the rainforest from this interview? What text features in informational texts help you as a reader learn more about a topic?” <p><i>Note: Look over students’ annotated interviews and exit tickets to check for understanding. Note which students may need reteaching (based on student texts with no annotations, student gist statements that aren’t about the text, or tickets that are off topic).</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students needing additional supports producing language, consider offering a sentence frame, sentence starter, or cloze sentence to provide the structure required. |



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Supporting Materials



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Political Map of the World



Produced by the US Central Intelligence Agency. Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries. Public Domain.

Map of North and South America



Public Domain map produced by the Military Education Research Library Network (MERLN). Courtesy of the National Defense University Library.

Interview with Sloth Canopy Researcher:
Bryson Voirin

What is your job description?

I am a biologist studying the behavior and ecology of two- and three-toed sloths. Right now I am studying biology and ecology at New College of Florida, and working in the rainforests of Panama with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

What do you study now?

Basically I am trying to understand why sloths move so slowly, as well as a few other weird things about them. We use radio-collars to track sloth movements in the algae that (exist) inside the hairs of sloths, something that normally does not occur in any other mammals. I am looking to see if maybe there is some benefit for the sloth to have algae.

What is the best thing about your job?

The best part of my job is getting to climb trees in the rainforest. Trees in the tropics are some of the biggest in the world, reaching over 150' tall. The view from the tops of the trees is amazing. A lot of times when I am up there troupes of monkeys come climbing by, sometimes stopping to look at me and wonder what I am doing up there with them.

What is the worst part about your job?

The worst thing, or hardest thing, is actually finding the sloths to start with. Sloths are very good at hiding. They usually live at the tops of trees, and can have greenish fur. We have to walk through the forest all day with our heads tilted up, looking for dark spots with hair. Sometimes it can take us weeks to find a single sloth.

What inspired you to first study science?

Ever since I was little, I was always fascinated with National Geographic magazine. I used to imagine I was one of the scientists in each issue, exploring unknown lands or catching wild animals. I always knew that was what I wanted to do.

What do you do in a typical day?

On a typical day working in Panama, I go out into the forest looking for sloths. I usually hike with someone else, and we use binoculars to look for the animals. When we find a sloth, I use my tree climbing gear to go up and catch it. Even though sloths are pretty slow animals, it can take hours to catch one once I am in the trees. They can move about as fast as you can walk fast, so in a tree 150' tall, it can be hard to catch them.



Interview with Sloth Canopy Researcher:
Bryson Voirin

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a biologist?

I would tell anyone interested in working in biology to go outside and explore things. Walk through parks and natural lands. The things you can find in your own backyard can be really cool. If you start exploring young, it will stay with you forever.

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Journal Response Question
(Homework for Lesson 2)

“What did you learn about the rainforest from this interview? What text features in informational texts help you as a reader learn more about a topic?”
