

# Desert Safari



## → FOCUS STRATEGIES

### → Metacognitive Skill Making Connections to Prior Knowledge

Good readers make connections as they read between what they already know about a topic and new information in the text. This helps them be active readers and increases their understanding of the text. Students need to be shown the cognitively active processes, such as connecting to prior knowledge, that good readers utilize as they interact with the text. They can use a KWL chart to list their prior knowledge and add to it and clarify ideas as they learn new facts. As you preview the book with students, use a think-aloud to model how you make connections between information in the book and your knowledge and experience.

### → Comprehension Skill Sequence Events and Information

Many texts—especially nonfiction texts that provide explanatory sequences and recounts—describe events in a particular sequence. It helps students understand the text if they can place events in the order in which they happened. This is particularly important in a book such as *Desert Safari*, which is a recount that details the events in chronological order. Many sequential texts use words that signal changes in time, and students can learn to be aware of these words and what they indicate. Students can look out for the signal words *later*, *last night*, *then*, *as*, *after*, *when*, as well as the section heads that indicate each new day.

### → Vocabulary Skill Verb Tense

Students must be able to identify the verbs in a text and be aware of when the tenses change and why. Different text structures and different writing purposes require different forms of verbs. In this book, students can see how past tense is important when recounting events in a journal. They can compare how past tense is used to recount events that have already happened with how timeless present tense is used to make generalized statements about the features and conditions of the desert. Day one of the journal is written as if it is happening now, which provides an opportunity for students to compare the way tense is used when describing the different days of the safari.

#### Focus Vocabulary Skill: Verb tense

Day One	Page	Day Two	Page	Day Three	Page	Day Four	Page	Day Five	Page
use	4	scurried	10	headed	16	felt	22	camped	24
have	4, 6, 8	spotted	10	rolled	16	threw	22	hummed	24
can be used	4	is	10	wear	16	eat	22	toss	24
left	4	get	10	have	18	are going	23	fear	24
packed	6			flops	18				
spent	6			were coming	20				
burrow	8								

# X-zone

## → SUMMARY

*Desert Safari* is a recount of a five-day trip into the Sahara Desert. Each day is described, starting with day one, and includes some background information on the desert. Students will read about many of the amazing desert creatures that are adapted to survive in the harsh climate of the Sahara.

## → OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand that reading is an active process requiring the reader to make connections between prior knowledge and new information.
- Identify the sequence of events in each day.
- Recognize changes in verb tense.

## → ASSESSMENT

- Monitor students' responses and review their completed graphic organizers to determine whether they correctly sequence the events of the desert safari and record the most important details of each day's trip.
- Note whether students can make connections between what they already know about the Sahara Desert and the new information in the text by completing KWL charts.
- Note whether students recognize when verb tense changes and understand the reason for the change.
- Use the quiz at the back of the book to assess students' understanding of the text.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

# Desert Safari

**Directions:** Write what happened on each day of the safari.

List the events for each day in the order they happened.

Look for words such as *later*, *then*, and *after* to determine when the events are happening.



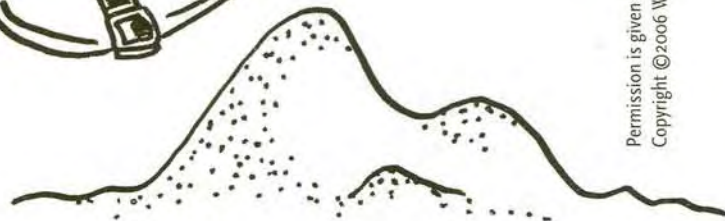
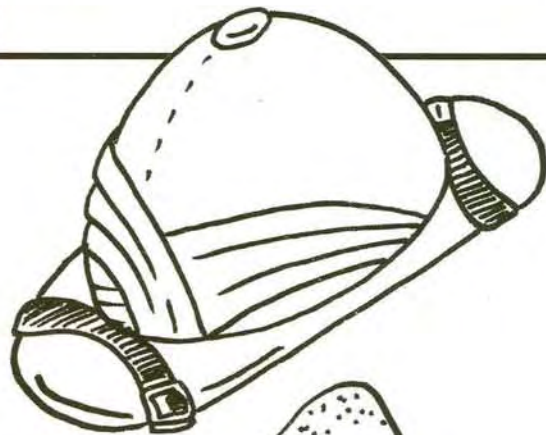
Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Day Four

Day Five



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# Before Reading

## → Preview the Book

### Build Background

- Give students a couple of minutes to think about what they know about deserts. Then ask them to take a minute to think about the Sahara Desert.
- Pair students and have each pair complete the first two columns in a KWL chart, writing in what they know and what they would like to know about the Sahara.
- Have students share what they know and their questions. Have students find the Sahara on a map.

### Apply Metacognitive Strategies

- Have students preview the cover and the table of contents. Ask students what kind of book they think this is. Reinforce that this is a diary and explain that it will be told in first person.
- Model making connections to prior knowledge.

**Think-Aloud:** Whenever I read a book, I think about what I already know about the topic. This is a very useful reading strategy that helps me make sense of text as I read. I already know something about deserts, which gives me a head start on making sense of the text. For example, I think the section called *Waterfalls in the Desert* will describe an oasis. Since I already have an idea what an oasis is, it will make it easier to understand the new information in the book.

- Ask students what they think they will read about in the different chapters. Ask if they think any of the chapters will answer questions they wrote on the KWL chart.
- Preview the book with students, encouraging them to draw on any prior knowledge as they view the photos.

### Preview Text Features

- Point out the glossary and index. Tell students to first try to use the context to work out unfamiliar words before checking the glossary.
- Point out the critter comments and *fact zone* sidebars and explain their purpose.

## → Introduce the Focus Vocabulary Skill: Verb Tense

- Have students turn to **page 4** and follow along as you read the first sentence for day one. Ask students whether this event has happened, is currently happening, or will happen soon. Then read aloud the section on the plastic bags. Ask students what tense is used here. Point out that the use of plastic bags described here isn't just something that happened already, but something that continues to happen, even after the author has left the Sahara. The author uses present tense to describe something that is and continues to be.

## → Set the Purpose

**Teacher Tip:** This lesson pertains to **pages 2–13** of *Desert Safari*.

### Sequence Events and Information

- Tell students that they will be reading the first three sections of the book. When they are finished reading, they will list the events that happen in the order that they happen.

### Making Connections to Prior Knowledge

- Remind students to be active readers by monitoring whether their reading makes sense and by making connections between the text and their prior knowledge when they can.

### Word Skills

- Remind students to be aware of changes in verb tense and to think about the purpose of the changes in tense.

# During Reading

## → Focus the Reading

- Provide prompts every few pages and have students read silently to find the answers to your/their questions. Briefly discuss feedback before providing another prompt and having them continue reading.

**Pages 2–3:** Review what students wrote in the K column of their charts. Then have them read the first section to see if they can confirm the details they know about the Sahara.

**Pages 4–7:** Have students predict what preparations need to be made for a journey into the Sahara. Then have students read this section silently to find out if they are correct. When students finish, ask whether they can confirm any points listed in column one or answer any questions from column two.

**Pages 8–13:** Have students predict what animals might come out at night and why. Have them read to find out. When they are finished, have them confirm details or answer questions on their charts.

- Have students reread **pages 2–13**, either silently or with a partner. Monitor their reading and provide support if you feel students are having difficulty.

# After Reading

## → Reflect on Reading Strategies

- Ask students to share parts of the text that contained information they were familiar with. Have them point to details in the K column that were confirmed by their reading. Discuss how having some background knowledge of the topic helped them understand what they read.
- Have students share any difficult words they found. Use this as an opportunity to teach word attack strategies using the words students list as models for teaching.
- Ask students to share strategies they used when their reading didn't make sense.

## → Introduce the Focus Comprehension Skill: Sequence Events and Information

### Model

- Explain that some texts are written in a sequential format. They describe events that happen, one after the other. Point out that in this book, the events happen in a day to day sequence, with sequential events also happening within each day.

**Think-Aloud:** The headings of each section of the journal tell me the order of events. Within each day, the author also gives me clues as to when things are happening by using time signal words such as *later, morning, after breakfast, then, and so on.*

### Guided Practice

- Give students copies of the graphic organizer. Explain that they are going to write in the events for each day. Within each day, they are to sequence the events in the order in which they happened that day. They will be able to sequence events for days one and two, and after they finish reading the book, they will be able to complete days three–five. Before students begin, ask them to look at the section at the beginning of day two. Ask when this event actually happened (the night before, day one). Have them remember to put the information into the correct day.

## → Independent Practice

- Have students continue with the next day of the safari independently. Provide support as needed.

## → Vocabulary Skill: Verb Tense

- Have students find and read the section on the fennec fox in day one. Ask students to identify the tense used. To reinforce the concept of timeless present tense, ask students if these foxes still burrow underground or whether they no longer do this.
- Make a chart on chart paper with the following headings: *Page Number, Tense, Purpose.* Pair students and have them make a similar chart. Then ask them to find examples of different tenses in the section of the book they have just read. Have them record the page number and tense and explain why this tense is used in this section of the text. Have the pairs share what they found while you record their findings in the group chart.

## → Apply the Lesson

- Have students read the rest of the book independently. When they are finished, they can complete their graphic organizers.
- Remind students to make connections to what they already know about the Sahara as they read. When they have finished, have pairs check their KWL charts to confirm details in column one, place check marks next to questions that were answered from their reading, and write in new facts they learned.
- Encourage students to be aware of tense changes as they read.
- For students who need more support, guide them to read another section of the book, using this lesson as a model.