

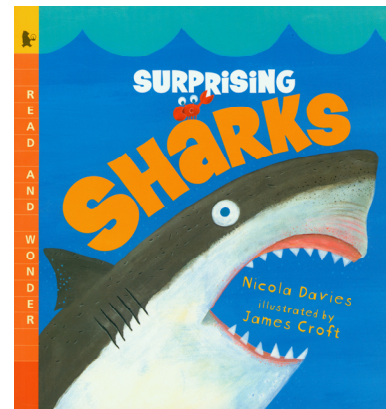
Ideas and Activities to Use with
Surprising Sharks

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Ideas and Activities

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with thanks to Marlene Iversen for art ideas



Themes: sharks, informational writing, diagrams

Before Reading:

1. Either individually or as a class, complete the **What's the Truth about Sharks?** (included) Explain that this is just to get them thinking about sharks and they are not expected to know the answers. After they finish they can compare answers with a partner. They will get a chance to change their answers after they hear this book and other books. When reviewing the answers, emphasize that there are many kinds of sharks and only a few kill humans but if you swim where those are you need to be careful.
2. Ask students to look at the cover. What might be surprising about sharks? What do students wonder about? What would they like to learn? Make a list. Explain that this kind of writing is called informational or nonfiction.
3. Show the endpaper illustrations and ask students what they notice (size, shape, color, etc.) Read the names and measurements aloud. Compare some of the larger sharks with something in the room (length of wall, height of ceiling). Don't mention the Dwarf Lantern Shark yet.

During Reading:

4. After reading the first page, show the illustration and how the text is written. Point out the two kinds of text. Reread each and see if students notice a difference. Why has the author done that? Ask students who the narrator is (who is telling the story).
5. On pages 10-12, read all the larger text first so students hear the flow of the sentence. Then back up and read the details in the smaller text.
6. After reading pages 14-17, talk about the diagrams, labels, and enlarged details. Note the graph paper and the blue background (similar to architects' blueprints).
7. After reading the first paragraph on page 18, repeat the word "sharkish." Ask students if they think this is a word. Do they know what it means? Note that authors sometimes make up words if they can't find ones that fit their purpose. They need to be sure, though, that readers will understand the meanings of the words. Shakespeare is said to have made up around 10,000 words of which about 1,500 are commonly used today. Sharkish is not in a regular dictionary but can be found in an urban dictionary with a slightly different meaning: "to behave in a predatory manner."
8. Share the end papers in the back, read the names and measurements, and make some more comparisons.

After Reading:

9. Notice the index. Explain the purpose of an index if students haven't used one. Note that the entries are in alphabetical order similar to a dictionary or phone book.
10. Read the author's note and discuss the purpose. Older students might try to find author's notes in other books. This is something they might keep in mind for their own writing.
11. Have students pair up and talk about what they learned and what surprised them. Come back together to share and make a list of surprising facts.
12. Use the **What I Know About Sharks** form or the **KWLS** to let students record some of this information.
13. Discuss the different ways to read informational text (jumping in and out, skimming and scanning, reading various parts of the pages first, not reading everything) and some of the features of this type of text that make it different from narrative such as bold and different sized fonts, diagrams, sidebars, graphs, captions, etc.
14. Review the vocabulary by playing the game "**I Have . . . Who Has.**" Cut the cards apart horizontally. Each player has a card with an answer on the left and a question on the right. The first player starts with the question "Who has the part of a plant or animal . . .?" and the person holding the card with "organ" answers and then proceeds to read the question on that card. The play eventually ends with the person who started. There are only 14 cards, so students will need to take turns. The game can be played several times.
15. Talk about ways to make informational writing interesting. Give students the **Ways to Spice Up Expository Writing** page. Reread the book to see which of these techniques the author used or if she used any not on the list. Have the students raise their hands when they notice the use of a technique while you are reading and have them put a check by it. If they don't notice it, you may need to reread and point it out. This book uses the first eleven on the list. You might want to put post-its in the book beforehand to mark where the techniques are used.
16. Read another book or two about sharks. Compare the facts with those in *Surprising Sharks*. Are there any new ones? Look at **Ways to Spice Up Expository Writing**. Use a different color or symbol to check off the techniques used. Are there other features such as an index, table of contents, author note, headings, diagrams, captions?
17. Look at **Writing Techniques** page with the *Cactus Soup* activities. If you have already used it with *Cactus Soup*, then do a quick review to make sure the students are familiar with the terms. With younger students you may want to stop with simile. Read one or more of the books about similes listed on the related books list. With older students you can explain the difference between simile, metaphor, and personification.