

Knowledge Building with a Model Lesson

Why build knowledge with model lessons?

Lessons that exemplify high-quality literacy instruction are anchored in complex grade-level text. A high-leverage, evidence-based strategy to support students in accessing complex text is to anchor that text in a conceptually coherent set of resources that build needed knowledge and vocabulary. This work is particularly critical for students not yet reading at grade level.

What is included in a knowledge-building model lesson?

Each knowledge-building model lesson includes a close-reading model lesson paired with a short set of knowledge-building resources and tasks. Educators can engage in knowledge building with any close-reading lesson, so long as this lesson is centered on a complex grade-level text and series of text-specific oral and/or written tasks.

The knowledge-building resources follow similar guidance for more extensive text sets, but on a much smaller scale. The selection of resources follow a quad text set model developed by Comprehensive Reading Solutions and based on the article by Sarah Lupo and colleagues, "Building Background Knowledge Through Reading: Rethinking Text Sets." In a quad text set model, three to five texts are selected that help students develop knowledge critical to the complex text at the center of the close-reading lesson. Each of these supplemental texts is paired with a lightweight text-dependent task to support students' comprehension and knowledge-building work.

How might a teacher use a knowledge-building model lesson?

Educators can use the knowledge-building resources in the order indicated in the "Quad Text Set with Text-Dependent Tasks" table to help build knowledge and vocabulary when engaging with a close-reading model lesson. Implementing these knowledge-building texts and tasks can be done in a variety of ways; they are lightweight enough to be done either during short portions of class or as homework. For example:

- If completed as homework, the partner portion of each task can be completed in class.
- If the whole class (or majority of students) has little to no knowledge of the topic under study, the text set could be used in whole-class instruction.
- If there are just a few students who have little to no knowledge of the topic of study, the text set could be used in small groups with teacher guidance.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Educators should use their judgement about student needs to determine how best to use the resources.

Building Knowledge with a Close-Reading Lesson “Living Like Weasels”

This set of resources is designed to build knowledge in support of the close-reading lesson on [“Living Like Weasels” by Annie Dillard©](#), available on [achievethecore.org](#).

I. Anchor Text

“Living Like Weasels” by Annie Dillard

Lexile: 1010L–1200L

Grade: 11

II. Knowledge and Language Demands:

- The text is moderately complex for knowledge demands; it contains discipline-specific content knowledge on weasels, suburbia, and the innate biodiversity behind ponds.
- The text is significantly complex in its language because it contains significant amounts of abstract and figurative language. Language is ambiguous because of the various connotations in the figurative language.

III. Quad Text Set with Text-Dependent Tasks

The table below details the knowledge-building resources to use in support of the close-reading lesson: what text to use, in what order to use it, details about the text, and a text-dependent task to support knowledge building. The resources are listed below in their suggested order for use. Task directions have been written in student-facing language and teacher notes added in italics when necessary. Links to full task descriptions have been provided when possible

Title	Resource Type	Lexile Level	Summary	Task
"The Weasel Is an Insatiable Serial Killer"	Video (1:55)	n/a	This video provides background knowledge on the weasel, particularly how fierce and strong it is, despite its small size.	<p>Pay close attention as you watch the video. As you watch the video, jot down three things you learn about the weasel.</p> <p>After watching the video, share an interesting fact with your partner.</p> <p><i>Teacher preparation: have students engage in a Think-Pair-Share with each of the questions listed below.</i></p>

				<p><u>Think-Pair-Share</u></p> <p>-Why does the weasel sometimes have 50 carcasses? Would this be considered a positive or negative trait? Provide evidence from the video.</p> <p>-What is the characterization of the weasel in this video?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think: What evidence from the text helps to answer this question? What ideas do you have? 2. Pair: Turn to your partner and let them share their answer with you. Share your answer with them. Discuss the similarities or differences between your responses. 3. Share: Take the most interesting part of your answer to the question and share it with the rest of the class.
<u>"10 Things Animals Can Teach Us About Being Human"</u>	Opinion Piece	1010L-1200L	The text provides a variety of lessons we humans can learn by observing animals.	<p><i>Teacher preparation: pair students up and provide them with a Venn diagram to complete as a partnership.</i></p> <p><u>Venn Diagram</u></p> <p>On your section of the Venn diagram, summarize in five bullet points the lessons humans can learn from animals. Once complete, compare your bulleted lists with a partner and work together to compile a main idea statement together in the center of the Venn diagram.</p> <p>Discuss what lessons from this "10 Things" text connect to what you learned about weasels. Be prepared to share key findings from your partner work in a whole-class discussion.</p>
<u>"The Fish"</u>	Poetry	1210L-1400L	In this poem, the narrator catches a fish. After the narrator analyzes the	<p>Text-Dependent Question in a Small Group</p> <p>Read the poem "The Fish."</p> <p>As you read, consider the following questions:</p>

			<p>fish, she decides to let the fish go. This poem pairs well with “Weasels” as it gives students an at-bat with figurative language analysis and determining what an author respects/appreciates about an animal.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the narrator feel about the fish? Which lines show you this and why? 2. Why does the narrator decide to let the fish go? What evidence do you have for this? 3. What images and metaphors does Bishop use? Why? What is the literal meaning of the figurative language? <p>Annotate the text with the answers to these questions. Consider where in the text the answers are found. Write your explanation in the margins.</p> <p>When you are done, form groups of three.</p> <p>Discuss each question, sharing your evidence and discussing your annotated answers.</p>
<p><u>“Living Like Weasels”</u></p>	<p>Anchor Text</p>	<p>1010L-1200L</p>	<p>In this essay, Annie Dillard describes her encounter with a weasel. She developed a great admiration for the weasel's way of life and the behaviors that weasels display out of pure necessity.</p>	<p>See the text and sequence of tasks provided in the close-reading model lesson here.</p>