**Expert Pack: The African Savanna (Upper)**

Lexile Range: 720-1240

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| **Topic/ Subject:** Biomes/Science |
| **Text/ Resources**  Book   1. *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals* by Deborah Hodge & Pat Stephens   Articles   1. “Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna” 2. “Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web”   Other media   1. “Photo Gallery: Savannas” 2. “African Savanna; Media Spotlight” (Labeled Illustration) |
| **Rationale and Suggested Sequence for Reading**  This text set begins with a quick overview of what the environment of the African Savanna is like; students will learn about the climate and the types of plants and animals that live in the savanna. Although *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals* is below reading level for students, it will provide important information that will support the other texts in this set. In “Photo Gallery: Savannas,” students will not only get a clear picture with real photos of the environment of the savanna, the plants and animals that live there but will also learn random facts about the savanna through reading the captions. In “Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna,” students will read about some of the human danger that is causing problems on the savanna, before they see the way that plants and animals live together in this labeled illustration (“African Savanna; Media Spotlight”) of the environment. Finally, in “Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web,” students will see how important it is that all of the plants and animals live together in this ecosystem, as they explore the ways that they interact with one another. |
| **The Common Core Shifts for ELA/Literacy**   1. Regular practice with *complex* text and its academic language 2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in *evidence* from text, both literary and informational 3. Building *knowledge* through content-rich nonfiction |
| **College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading Literary and/or Informational Texts**   1. *Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it*; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. 2. *Determine central ideas or themes of a text* and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. 3. *Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.* |
| **Annotated Bibliography**  **720L *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals.***  Author: Deborah Hodge & Pat Stephens  Genre: Nonfiction Book  Length: 24 pages; use pages 4-5 for this part of the text set  Synopsis: Students will learn what defines the savanna, otherwise known as the grasslands. These climates are home to many animals.  Citation: Hodge, D. & Stephens, P. (2009). *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals.* Pages 4-5. Kids Can Press. Library and Archives. Canada.  Suggested Activities: Wonderings  **n/A “Photo Gallery: Savannas”**  Author: National Geographic  Genre: Photographs with Captions  Length: 6 images  Synopsis: There are many different species that live in the savannah. There are more different animals than plants. This is because the climate is so dry there are not a lot of plants that like to call this habitat home. Many animals rely on these plants to sustain themselves.  Citation: National Geographic. (n.d.) Photo Gallery: Savannas. Retrieved on Dec. 31, 2016 from <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/photos/savannah/#/giraffe-kenya_168_600x450.jpg>. National Geographic. United States.  Suggested Activities: Quiz Maker  **1160L “Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna”**  Author: Lindsay Evans  Genre: Nonfiction Article  Length: 2 pages  Synopsis: The savanna is home to 45 mammal species, 500 bird species and numerous plants. Though the savanna is still a popular tourist destination for visitors who wish to experience a safari, some of the flora and fauna from this diverse region are considered endangered as of 2011.  Citation: Evans, L. (n.d.). *Endangered Plants and Animals of the African Savannah.* Retrieved on Dec. 30, 2016 from <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/endangered-plants-animals-african-savanna-63668.html>. USA Today Online.  Suggested Activities: A Picture of Knowledge  **n/A “African Savanna; Media Spotlight”**  Author: Tim Gunther  Genre: Illustration: Media Spotlight (and labeled Key)  Length: 2 pages – use only “African Savanna Ecosystem: Labeled” and “African Savanna Ecosystem Illustration Key”  Synopsis: This illustration helps students to see the habitat called the savanna and the plants and animals that live in this space. Kids will also be introduced to new vocabulary words that help them understand the role of each of the organisms that live in the savanna.  Citation: Gunther, T. (n.d.). *African Savanna; Media Spotlight.* “African Savanna Ecosystem: Labeled” & “African Savanna Ecosystem Illustration Key.” Retrieved on Dec. 30, 2016 from <http://nationalgeographic.org/media/african-savanna-illustration/>. National Geographic. United States.  Suggested Activities: A Picture of Knowledge  **1240L “Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web”** (although this text seems significantly above level, because of the photo images as well as the familiar vocabulary that has already been explored in this text set, students will be able to access the content of this text.)  Author: Wild Nature Institute  Genre: Nonfiction Article  Length: 1 page  Synopsis: Scavengers are animals that eat dead animals; there are many of them that live in the African Savanna. Even though the lion also hunts, it can act like a scavenger when there is food to scavenge. The hyena and the jackal are both land scavengers. The vulture and the Marabou Stork are both avian scavengers.  Citation: Wild Nature Institute. (July 2012). Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web. Retrieved on December 30, 2016 from <http://www.wildnatureinstitute.org/blog/scavengers-in-the-savannas-food-web>. Wild Nature Institute.  Suggested Activities: Wonderings |

### Supports for Struggling Students

By design, the **gradation of complexity** within each Expert Pack is a technique that provides struggling readers the opportunity to read more complex texts. Listed below are other measures of support that can be used when necessary.

* Provide a brief **student-friendly glossary** of some of the academic vocabulary (Tier 2) and domain vocabulary (Tier 3) essential to understanding the text
* Download the Wordsmyth widget to classroom computers/tablets for students to access student-friendly definitions for unknown words: <http://www.wordsmyth.net/?mode=widget>
* Provide brief **student-friendly explanations** of essential background knowledge not easily learned from the text
* Include **pictures or videos** related to the topic within and in addition to the set of resources in the pack
* Select a small number of texts to **read aloud** with some discussion about vocabulary work and background knowledge
* Provide **audio recordings** of the texts being read by a strong reader (teacher, parent, etc.)
* **Chunk the text** and provide brief questions for each chunk of text to be answered *before* students go on to the next chunk of text
* Pre-reading activities that focus on the **structure and graphic elements** of the text
* Provide **volunteer helpers** from the school community during independent reading time
* Use expert Packs as the **resources for Guided Reading** with a small group of students

Why Text Sets Support English Language Learners

Those acquiring English as a second language have to learn many words in English to catch up with their English-only peers. Vocabulary builds at a much quicker pace when reading a set of connected texts. Text sets are an adaptable resource perfect for building knowledge and vocabulary. Student use of text sets can vary in terms of independence or teacher supports based on the individual needs of the students in the room. Activities found within the text set resources reflect several best practices for English Language Learner instruction including:

* Providing brief, engaging texts that provide a high volume of reading on a topic.
* Providing web-based resources and/or videos that are tied to the content of the texts students are reading.
* Providing opportunities for students to learn new vocabulary through the use of student-friendly definitions in resource-specific glossaries.
* Allowing for options to reinforce newly learned vocabulary and/or content through graphic organizers.
* Providing opportunities for students to reinforce new vocabulary through multi-modal activities including written work, group discussion, viewing visual content, and reading texts that feature the vocabulary.

Teachers of ELLs may use the protocols on the following pages to provide additional support to students who are struggling to access the content within text sets because they are new to English.

ELL Text Set Protocol Grades 3-12

The goal of text sets is to help students build knowledge through a volume of independent reading, and it is important that educators provide scaffolds to allow English Language Learners to be successful in engaging meaningfully with the texts, even as students are still developing English language skills. The protocol below can be used for teaching with text set resources as a full class. Students can also be trained on the protocol so that they can utilize text sets in small groups or partnerships as a resource for independent or reciprocal reading and study.

Please note that this protocol includes options for teachers. Individual decisions should be made considering the needs of the students and the demands of the content, keeping in mind that the goal of each scaffold is to allow students to meaningfully access the text and move toward independent, knowledge-building reading.

**Step one: Build knowledge and vocabulary.**

Introduce students to the overall topic/content of the text set, including knowledge demands needed to engage in the content, and domain-specific vocabulary necessary for comprehension. This should be done prior to engaging with the texts themselves; time allotted to this activity should reflect student needs (anywhere from 5 minutes prior to reading, to a full day’s lesson is appropriate).

*Options for this step include:*

* Engage students in reading and discussing auxiliary texts (of lesser complexity) and resources (illustrations, photographs, video clips) on the topic of the text set.
* Pre-teach a few key content-specific terms prior to students engaging with a text set. (Ideas for text-focused vocabulary instruction can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Selecting%20and%20Using%20Academic%20Vocabulary%20in%20Instruction.pdf).)
* Provide the student-friendly glossary included in the text set prior to reading each text.
* When possible, allow students to read texts in their home language about the topic under study.

**Step two: Read text orally.**

Focusing on one resource at a time, allow students to listen to a fluent read of the resource, while following along with their own copy of the text.

*Options for this step include:*

* Have a fluent reader model the first read of a text or resource.
* Have students engage in a buddy/partner read.
* Use recordings of the text to provide additional opportunities to hear expert reading.

**Step three: Engage in group discussion about the content.**

Allow students time in partnerships or small groups to discuss the content of the resource.

*Options for this step include:*

* + Allow for discussion/conversation (in the students’ home language if possible) with a small group of students reading the same text set prior to writing or provide heterogeneous language groupings to talk about content and discuss what students are learning.
  + Have students refer to the student-friendly glossary included with each text set to identify meanings for new vocabulary necessary for comprehension.

**Step four: Write about what was read.**

*Options for this step include:*

* Use the “Rolling Knowledge Journal” and/or “Rolling Vocabulary Journal” as a shared writing routine/ graphic organizer to help to scaffold the writing process and capture student knowledge over time.
* Provide students with several supports to help students engage in writing/drawing about what they read:
  + Use mentor texts about which students can pattern their writing.
  + Allow them to write collaboratively.
  + Show students visual resources as prompts, etc.
  + Provide language supports such as strategically chosen sentence starters.

**Repeat steps one through four with each resource in the text set as appropriate.**

**Expert Pack: The African Savanna (upper)**

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| **Learning Worth Remembering**  **Cumulative Activities –** The following activities should be completed and updated after reading each resource in the set. The purpose of these activities is to capture knowledge building from one resource to the next, and to provide a holistic snapshot of central ideas of the content covered in the expert pack. *It is recommended that students are required to complete* ***one*** *of the Cumulative Activities (Rolling Knowledge Journal or Rolling Vocabulary) for this Expert Pack.* |

**1. Rolling Knowledge Journal**

* Read each selection in the set, one at a time.
* After you read each resource, stop and think what the big learning was. What did you learn that was new and important about the topic from this resource? Write or list what you learned from the text.
* Then write or list how this new resource added to what you learned from the last resource(s).

**Sample Response:**

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| **Title** | **Write or List** | |
| **New and important learning about the topic** | **How does this resource add to what I learned already?** |
| 1. *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals.* | Many animals have adapted to the harsh environment of the savanna. The grass is an important part of life in the savanna. |  |
| 2. “Photo Gallery: Savannas” | Savannas do not typically support diverse plant life, because so few plants can live in the harsh conditions. Almost all life in the savanna depends on the grass. The carnivores lurk in the grass and stalk the herbivores. | Even though there are not as many plants as animals in the savanna, the plants are just as important because they feed the other animals. Both plants and animals rely on each other to live. |
| 3. “Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna” | There are many things that put the savanna habitat in danger. From a dwindling habitat to climate change and poaching, some of the plants and animals of the African Savanna are considered endangered species. | Since both plants and animals are important to this ecosystem, it is worrisome that so many of them are endangered. If they cannot be saved, it might put even more plants and animals at risk. |
| 4. “African Savanna; Media Spotlight” | There are many types of plants and animals that live on the African savanna; they rely on each other to live. | You can identify the different parts of the environment that are most important to the animals. The giraffe lives on the floor, but can reach the tops of the trees. The lion doesn’t need to reach the tree tops because it hunts on the floor. |
| 5. “Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web” | Scavengers are important to the African savanna ecosystem. If there were no scavengers, dead animal bodies would take a long time to decompose. There are land scavengers, like the hyena and jackal, and avian scavengers like the vulture and the Marabou Stork. | Even though the lion also hunts, it can act like a scavenger when there is food to scavenge. Animals and plants adapt, but without some of them, others become in danger as well. Animals all have a different role as a part of the ecosystem that they live in. |

**2. Rolling Vocabulary: “Fabulous Five”**

* Read each resource then determine the (up to) 5 words from each text that most exemplify the central idea of the text.
* Next use your 5 words to write about the most important idea of the text. You should have as many sentences as you do words.
* Continue this activity with EACH selection in the Expert Pack.
* After reading all the selections in the Expert Pack, go back and review your words.
* Now select the “Fabulous Five” words from ALL the word lists.
* Use the “Fabulous Five” words to summarize the most important learning from this Expert Pack

**Sample Response**

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| **Title:** | **Five Vocabulary Words & Sentences** |
| *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals.* | Words: savanna, habits, suited, lush, plain   1. The savanna is home to many exciting plants and animals. 2. The habits of some animals are to travel together in a herd, something they do often. 3. Some animals are suited for living in the warm climate. 4. The grassy plain is home to many savanna animals and not many trees. 5. The savanna is lush and green after it rains. |
| “Photo Gallery: Savannas” | Words: sparse, drought, variety, support, habitat   1. Giraffes feed on the sparse, small tree populations of the savanna. 2. Seasons of rain and drought are a part of the savanna climate, typically with more dry months than wet. 3. A variety of different animals make their home in the savanna. 4. Not enough rain falls regularly to support full forests in the savanna. 5. More than half of the world’s savannas are in Africa, but there are also savanna habitats in South America, Asia, and Australia. |
| “Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna” | Words: endangered, diminishing, habitat, climate change, threatened   1. Some of the plants and animals from this diverse region are considered endangered since there aren’t many around. 2. The number of cheetahs, black rhinoceros, and African wild dogs are diminishing and decreasing over time. 3. The greatest threat to cheetah populations lies in a dwindling habitat and place to live. 4. Lion populations are most in danger due to habitat loss and diseases related to climate change. 5. Plant life is also threatened and put in danger because of the lumber trade. |
| “African Savanna; Media Spotlight” | Words: ecosystem, food chain, community, organisms, consume   1. The savanna is an ecosystem where animals depend on the grass. 2. The savanna makes up multiple food chains, where organisms interact with one another to get food and energy. 3. On the savanna, the word community is used to refer to a group of animals and plants living in the same region. 4. Many species in the savanna live off of and consume plants, though some eat meat. 5. The primary consumers are organisms that eat plants, while the secondary consumers are organisms that eat meat. |
| “Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web” | Words: scavenger, ecosystem, avian, carcass, predator   1. Scavengers are animals that eat dead animals. 2. Scavengers play an important role in the savanna ecosystem. 3. Avian scavengers, like White-backed Vultures and Marabou Storks, have no feathers on their heads unlike other birds. 4. A carcass, the body of a dead animal, can be a source of disease. 5. The presence of scavengers helps scientists to locate recent predator kills so they can document life and death in the savanna. |
| **Fabulous Five** | Words: savanna, habitat, drought, producer, climate change  The **savanna** is home to many exciting plants and animals.More than half of the world’s savannas are in Africa, but there are also savanna **habitats** in South America, Asia, and Australia.Contrasting seasons of rain and **drought** characterize the savanna climate, typically with more dry months than wet.Grass that grows in the savanna are **producers**; they produce their own energy and nutrients; all of the animals in the savanna rely on this to eat and survive. Lion populations are most threatened by habitat loss and diseases related to **climate change**. |

**Student Copy**

**1. Rolling Knowledge Journal**

* Read each selection in the set, one at a time.
* After you read *each* resource, stop and think what the big learning was. What did you learn that was new *and important* about the topic from *this* resource? Write or list what you learned from the text.
* Then write or list how this new resource added to what you learned from the last resource(s).

**Sample Response**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Write or List** | |
| **New and important learning about the topic** | **How does this resource add to what I learned already?** |
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**2. Rolling Vocabulary: “Fabulous Five”**

* Read each resource then determine the 5 words from each text that most exemplify the central idea of the text.
* Next use your 5 words to write about the most important idea of the text. You should have as many sentences as you do words.
* Continue this activity with EACH selection in the Expert Pack.
* After reading all the selections in the Expert Pack, go back and review your words.
* Now select the “Fabulous Five” words from ALL the word lists.
* Use the “Fabulous Five” words to summarize the most important learning from this Expert Pack.

**Sample Response**

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| --- | --- |
| **Title:** | **Five Vocabulary Words & Sentences** |
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| **Fabulous Five** | Words: |

**Learning Worth Remembering**

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| **Singular Activities** – the following activities can be assigned for each resource in the set. The purpose of these activities is to check for understanding, capture knowledge gained, and provide variety of ways for students to interact with each individual resource. Students may complete some or none of the suggested singular activities for each text. Singular activities should be assigned at the discretion of the teacher. |

**1. Quiz Maker – (**Recommended for “Photo Gallery: Savannas”)

* Make a list of questions that would make sure that another student understood the information.
* Your classmates should be able to find the answer to the question from the resource.
* Include answers for each question.
* Include where you can find the answer in the resource.

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |

**2. A Picture of Knowledge** – (Recommended for “Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna” and “African Savanna; Media Spotlight”)

(see graphic below)

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**3. Wonderings – (**Recommended for *Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals* and “Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web”

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| **I’m a little confused about:** | **This made me wonder:** |
| On the left, track things you don’t understand from the video and the article.  **I am confused about or do not understand….** | On the right side, list some things you still wonder (or wonder now) about this topic.  **I wonder or would like to learn more about….** |

**Expert Pack: The African Savanna (upper)**

Expert Pack Glossary

***Who Lives Here? Savanna Animals.***

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| *Word* | *Student-Friendly Definition* |
| habits | A way of behaving that is repeated |
| grass-eaters | Animals who do not eat meat, only grass and plants |
| lush | Grows green and healthy |

**“Photo Gallery: Savannas”**

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| *Word* | *Student-Friendly Definition* |
| baobab | A short tree that lives in the savanna; has a thick trunk, edible fruit, and it lives a very long time. |
| characterize | To describe the normal features of someone or something |
| climate | The main weather conditions in a specific place |
| drought | A period of time with very little rainfall |
| lurk | To hide so that you can ambush, or attack something |
| region | A specific area with clear boundaries |
| silhouetted | The outline of something that makes it visible against light |
| sparse | A small amount; to be spread or scattered |
| variety | To have many different kinds; to be divers |

**“Endangered Plants & Animals of the African Savanna”**

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| *Word* | *Student-Friendly Definition* |
| acacia | A tree with extremely hard, dense wood |
| climate change | A change in the climate, or weather, caused by increased pollution |
| dwindling | To get smaller in size or amount |
| endangered | A species of plant or animal that is at risk of becoming extinct |
| fauna | The animals in a specific habitat or region |
| flora | The plants in a specific habitat or region |
| habitat | The natural home or environment of a plant or animal |
| harems | Animal group consisting of one or two males, a number of females, and their offspring |
| mammal | Animals that nourish their young with milk |
| poaching | To hunt illegally |
| subsist | To continue to live with as little as possible |

**“African Savanna; Media Spotlight”**

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| *Word* | *Student-Friendly Definition* |
| decomposer | Organisms that break down dead plant and animal material and waste and release it as energy and nutrients in the ecosystem |
| insectivore | An organism that mostly eats insects |
| omnivore | An organism that eats a variety of organisms, including plants, animals, and fungi |
| primary consumer | An organism that eats mainly plants |
| producer | An organism on the food chain that can produce its own energy and nutrients |
| scavenger | Animal that eats dead or rotting animal flesh |
| secondary consumer | An organism that eats meat |

**“Scavengers in the Savanna’s Food Web”**

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| ***Word*** | ***Student-Friendly Definition*** |
| avian | A bird; something that flies |
| carcass | The dead body of an animal |
| ecosystem | A community of plants and animals and the environment or habitat that they live in |
| fungi | A group of organic, spore producing organisms |
| predator | An animal that preys or hunts other animals |
| tissue | The flesh or organs of a dead animal |

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