



Running words: 303

Book Summary

This book describes the life of Mary Anning, who as a child collected fossils with her brother on a local beach and started selling the fossils with her father in their shop. She became the first in the world to discover certain fossils and went on to become a famous fossil hunter.

Themes

Discovery, Earth science, Animals, birds and insects

Features of the Book

- The information contained in illustrations and photographs
- Content words for discussion: *ancient, discover, flippers, fossils, lizard, remains, reptile, scientists, skeleton, snout, uncover*
- Phonics and phonemic awareness: consonant digraph *sh*
- Pronunciation guides, such as *ik-thee-oh-saw*

Strategies

Mary Anning: Fossil Hunter introduces and reinforces the following strategies:

- finding main ideas
- making inferences
- summarising

Materials

- copies of the BM, pencils

Mary Anning: Fossil Hunter

by John Lockyer

Introducing the Text

Begin by asking the students if they have ever heard of a fossil hunter. Talk about how some people collect things such as fossils as a hobby and that some people collect them to study or sell.

Reading the Text

Ensure each student has a copy of the text. Make sure that the content words (*ancient, discover, flippers, fossils, lizard, remains, reptile, scientists, skeleton, snout, uncover*) are integrated naturally into the discussion. An understanding of these terms will help the students appreciate the author's purpose. Encourage the students to use the information in the illustrations and text to determine the strategies of finding main ideas, making inferences and summarising as you work through the book.

Cover

Together, read the book's title and the name of the author. Point to the illustration and say:

- *This is Mary Anning. What is she holding in her hand? (a pick axe)*

Encourage the students to think about why she might need a pick axe (to chip away at the rock to uncover the fossils). Together, read aloud the preview question on the back cover: What is a fossil? Ask the students what the word *fossil* means (the remains or traces of an animal or a plant from millions of years ago, preserved as rock).

Title Page

Explain to the students that a Contents page appears at the start of a book. It lists each section of the book and tells you which page the section starts on. Ask:

- *What section is on page 2? (Finding Fossils)*
- *If I wanted to learn about an exciting discover, which page would I turn to? (Page 6)*

Page 2

Look at the illustration again, but this time ask the students about how Mary Anning is dressed. Ask:

- *Does Mary Anning look like she is dressed for fossil hunting on a beach?*

Read the caption with the students to give them some background into Mary's life and how unusual she was for the era that she lived in. Then read the body copy text with the students. Point out the two bolded words and explain that this means that you can find them in the glossary on page 12. Ask them to provide a definition of the word *fossil* and *skeletons*. Then turn to the glossary and have the students check their definitions. Explain to the students that the main idea of a page is usually in the first sentence. The main idea of this page is that Mary Anning was a famous fossil hunter. The other details on the page usually support the main idea. Ask:

- *What are the supporting details on page 2? (Mary found skeletons of many ancient animals. She also was unusual for a woman who was born in her day.)*

Page 3

- *What are the children doing in the illustration and who do you think they are? (Mary and her brother are looking for shells and rocks on the beach)*
- *Have you ever done this? Did you find anything interesting? (Answers will vary)*

Read the text with the students. Confirm that the children are looking for unusual shells and rocks.

Page 4

- *What does it look like Mary is doing in the illustration? (selling fossils on a wooden stall)*
- *Why would Mary sell the fossils? (She needed the money./Her family was poor.)*

Read the text together to confirm the

Mary Anning: Fossil Hunter

students' predictions. Talk about the strategy summarising. Explain to the students that when you summarise, you decide the most important ideas in the text and ignore the irrelevant information. Ask the students to re-read all the text on page 4 and have them summarise it. Ask:

- *What is the most important idea?* (Mary's family was poor, so they sold fossils in their shop.)

Page 5

Point to the photograph that shows a fossil of a fish embedded in the rock. Tell students that this fish once lived millions of years ago, but when it died, its remains become a fossil over time. Explain to the students that fossils are the remains or traces of animals, but also of plants, from millions of years ago. Ask the students if they have seen a plant fossil or animal fossil before.

Pages 6/7

Read the heading on page 6 to the students. Ask:

- *Why do you think the discovery will be exciting?* (Answers will vary.)

Together, read the text on page 6. Ask:

- *Why do you think the author said that the skeleton was mysterious?* (because it was unusual and not like anything anyone had seen before)

Read the body copy text and caption on page 7 with the students. Ask:

- *Why do you think different people thought the amazing discovery was a giraffe, gorilla or crocodile?* (It was unusual and because it resembled all three of these known animals.)
- *Why did Mary draw a picture of the unusual skeleton?* (to show where the individual pieces were located when she found it)

Page 8

Read the first sentence with the students. Ask:

- *Why would people come from far*

away to see the skeleton? (It was unusual, so people wanted to see it for themselves.)

Together, read the remaining text. Stop at the pronunciation guide for the word *ichthyosaur*. Explain to the students that the letters in the parentheses stand for the different sounds and tell the reader how to say or pronounce the word. Read the last sentence with the students to find out why Mary's discovery was amazing.

Page 9

Point out the picture on page 9 and read the labels to the students. Ask:

- *Which animals does the ichthyosaur look like a combination of?* (Answers may vary, but might include dolphin, shark and crocodile.)

Together, read the heading and the body copy text.

Page 10

Read the heading and body copy with the students. Now take some time to explain to the students that we can make inferences when we read text, which is like reading between the lines because the author does not spell it out for the reader. We can draw conclusions about the text's meaning based on what we know from our personal experiences and what is in the text. Together, read the caption. Then say:

- *In Mary's day, only men wore top hats. What does this tell you about Mary's character?* (She does not care what other people think of her and that she wore the top hat from a purely practical reason to protect her head from falling stones.)

Page 11

Point out the pronunciation guides on lines 2 and 4 and practise saying these words before you beginning reading. Then read the body copy at the top of the page and the caption with the students. Pause to see if the

students have any questions. Then continue reading the body copy at the bottom of the page, which is the concluding paragraph of the book.

Page 12

Look at the glossary and index. Ask the students what they notice about them. (They are both in alphabetical order). Tell the students that a glossary explains the meaning of words, whereas an index shows you where to find things in a book.

Revisiting the Text

- Choose ten words from the book and write their pronunciation guides in parentheses. For example, the word *fossil* would be (*foss-uhl*) and *famous* would be (*fay-muhss*). Then use a dictionary to check the answers.
- Talk to the students about the consonant digraph *sh*. Explain that when the letters *s* and *h* are together in a word, they usually make a new sound */sh/*. The */sh/* sound can be found at the beginning of words, as well as in the middle and at the end. Write the word *she* on chart paper or the board. Say the word and emphasise the */sh/* in the word. Have the students repeat it. Then ask them to find all the other words in the book that contain the sound of */sh/* (*shells, shop, fish, sharp, washed*). Point out that two of the words have *sh* at the middle and end. Encourage the students to say other words that contain *sh*: (*shed, shock, shack, dish, dash, wish, fresh, brush, rush, rash, etc.*).

Following Up

- It is believed that Mary Anning was the inspiration for the tongue twister "*She sells sea shells by the seashore.*" Create another tongue twister using words that begin with the letter *f*, including fossils, fish and finds. Practise saying the tongue twister as fast as you can.
- Give the students copies of the BM for this title.