

Worms at Work

Written by Mary-Anne Creasy

Photography by Michael Curtain

Level 21

Before using this book with students you may like to collect some worms and to write these words on a chart: *castings, nutrients, Compost Worms, moisture, pulps, acidic, sour, lime, breeding.*

Getting ready for reading

Bring some worms into the classroom. Ask the students to think about what these worms would need to stay alive in the classroom. List their ideas on a chart. You may like to have them draw a picture of a good home for a worm prior to the guided reading session. Their pictures can then be compared with the worm farm in the book.

Talking through the book

Give each student a copy of the book. Ask: *What kind of book do you think it will be? Why do you think this?* You may like to show the students the list of words you prepared prior to the class and tell them that these words are in the book. Read through the list to ensure that the students can pronounce them. You may like to ask the students to look out for these words in the book, as you will discuss their meaning after they have read it.

Reading the book

Students read the book individually while the teacher observes each student's reading behaviours and prompts students to use cues to read unfamiliar words. The teacher may select an additional teaching focus based on these observations.

Returning to the text

Select the most appropriate teaching focus for the learning needs of the group. Choose one or more of the following.

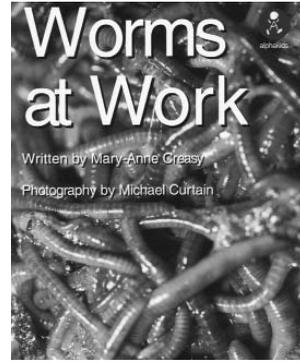
Being a meaning maker

Encourage the students to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions.

How do you keep worms in a worm farm?

What do worms eat?

What do worm farmers sell?



TEXT FEATURES

- **This book is an information report about worm farming.**
- **It is written in the first person.**
- **Colour photographs enhance and extend the text.**
- **Labels and pointers are used to identify objects in the photographs.**
- **Technical language is used and explained.**
- **A glossary is provided. Glossary words are highlighted in the text.**

Being a code breaker

Discuss:

What do you do when you come across a word that you don't know the meaning of when reading?

Return to the list of words discussed prior to reading the book. Ask the students to find these words in the book and to suggest a definition for each word. You may like to discuss how to use the context of a word to help work out its meaning. You may also like to discuss how to use a glossary when reading, to assist with understanding.

Being a text user

Discuss:

How do you know that a word will be in a glossary?

How are glossaries organised?

When do you need to use them?

Being a text critic

Discuss:

Who do you think the author thought was the audience for this book?

What tells you this?

Has the author written the book in a way that makes you want to read it?

If so, how have they done this?

Literacy learning centres – follow-up activities

T TEXT CENTRE 1

Students could list the top ten reasons for being a worm farmer.

T TEXT CENTRE 2

Students could design their own worm farm. They could use design drawings to show the construction, features and materials.

WRITING CENTRE

Students can write about the hobbies and activities that they do now and what they might like to do later, when they grow up.

INTERACTIVE LITERACY CENTRE

Students could work in cooperative pairs to make a chart to show how to be a worm farmer.

WORD CENTRE

Students could investigate words in the book that have an /er/ sound: *worms, earth, workers, layers, underneath, higher, summer, moisture, green-grocer, matter, over, every, never, metre, winter, crawler, fibre.*

These could be added to and sorted by the letter patterns used to represent the sound. Students could look at the most common representation 'er' and less common 'ur', 'or', 're'.



Keeping track

Observing students' ability to explain how a particular feature of a text is used and why this is useful provides insight into their understanding about how texts work.