

Snails

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Photography by Michael Curtain

Level 13

Getting ready for reading

It can be useful to bring some snails into the classroom for children to closely examine. They can safely be kept in an aquarium. Ensure that the snails cannot escape by preparing a closely fitted mesh lid for the aquarium. Provide rocks or small flowerpots for the snails to hide under. Feed them on scrap leaves such as lettuce and cabbage leaves. Spray the tank regularly to keep the snails moist. Encourage children to show care and respect for other living creatures.

Ask: *What do you know about snails?* List responses on a chart.

Ask: *What questions do have about snails?* List these on another chart.

Talking through the book

Turn through the book. As you go, introduce terms that the children may be unfamiliar with such as *skeleton, muscle, mucus, breathing hole, feelers*.

Reading the book

Children read the book individually while the teacher observes each child's reading behaviours and prompts children 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

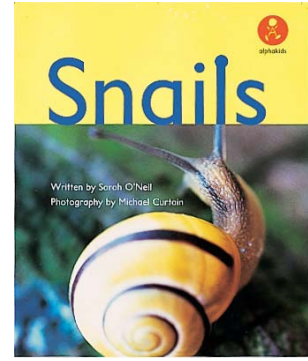
Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions.

How do snails breathe?

How do snails eat?

Where would you be likely to find a snail in the schoolyard? Why would the snail live there?

Where else can snails live?



TEXT FEATURES

- **This is an information report about snails.**
- **It uses headings to begin each section.**
- **Labelled photographs enable close examination of a snail's body.**

Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore the following language features:

- the onset /sn/ in words such as *snails, snake, sneeze, snow*.

Being a text user

Refer to the questions children posed before reading the book.

Discuss:

Which questions did the book answer?

Which questions were not answered?

Being a text critic

Discuss:

Which information about snails has the author chosen to include in the book?

What other information could have been included?

What research did the author need to do to write this book?

Literacy learning centres – follow-up activities

INTERACTIVE LITERACY CENTRE

Children can work in cooperative pairs to make a labeled model of a snail from playdough, using the book as a reference. 

WRITING CENTRE

Children could design and make a ‘lift-the-flap’ book or poster to display the range of information contained in the book. They will need to work collaboratively to decide how many flaps they will have, what will go on top of the flap, what will go beneath it, and so on.

BOOK BROWSING CENTRE

Microcosmos is available on video. Filmed entirely in macro, this is a magnificent look at the insect world, where snails are truly beautiful.

Keeping Mini Beasts: Snails and Slugs by C. Henwood (Franklin Watts) is a photographic look at snails and how to keep them.

Children might also enjoy reading A. A. Milne’s ‘Four Friends’ in *When We Were Very Young*, as well as other Alphakids books about living things, for example: *Plants, Beaks and Feet, Sleeping Animals, Animal Skeletons* and *Tarantula*.

Keeping track

Children’s portfolios can be considered over time with the child, to act as a focus for self-reflection and goal setting.