

Lesson Plan

Supporting Statements

Book: *Bird Nests*

Series: Animal Engineers

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice identifying and evaluating the evidence that an author uses to support claims.

Supplies

- *Bird Nests* book

Before the Activity

Read through the *Bird Nests* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

Chapter 4 (“Learning from Birds”) of *Bird Nests* talks about the ways birds and their nests impact the other plants and animals around them. The author talks about ways that bird nests can be helpful. But she also mentions that bird nests can cause problems. She supports both these statements with specific facts or examples. In this lesson, students will take a closer look at the way the author supports these statements.

Have students read Chapter 4 again. Then call on students to answer the following questions:

- The author writes, “Sometimes bird nests cause problems.” What facts does the author give to support this statement? (Answers: Birds might make nests on or in buildings, woodpeckers can damage trees with their holes, and some birds hurt trees by pulling off their leaves to make nests.)
- What are the advantages of listing several facts to support a statement? (Possible answer: The author can show that there are a variety of reasons for readers to agree with the statement.)
- What are the disadvantages? (Possible answer: The author can’t explain the reasons in much detail.)
- Later, the author writes, “However, bird nests can also help the land around them.”
- What example does the author give to support this statement? (Answer: Birds can help spread seeds.)
- What are the advantages of giving one example to support a statement? (Possible answer: The author can explain the example in greater detail.)

- What are some disadvantages? (Possible answer: The author can only talk about one of several possible examples.)

Next, have students turn to a neighbor and answer the following question:

- Which evidence did you think was most convincing? Why?

Give students a minute or two to talk in their pairs. Then come back together as a group. Take a vote, with students raising their hands to see which argument they found most convincing. Most likely, students will be split between the two statements. Ask students to list a few reasons why people can read the same information but come to different conclusions.

Evaluation

Could students answer the questions about how the author supported her statements?

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 4 (RI 4.8).