



Overview

This report describes some common spiders and insects found in New Zealand gardens. The author, an expert on spiders, considers the spiders and insects in his garden to be as exciting as wild animals in a jungle. As well as featuring diagrams, close-up photographs, and captions, this article includes an identification activity for students (with answers in the inside back cover of the journal).

The poem “Māra”, which is also in this journal, uses te reo Māori words for several common garden creatures, including some of those mentioned in “The Jungle in My Garden”.

The article requires students to “confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about” texts (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14).

A PDF of the text is available at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Other related texts

Information texts about insects, spiders, and/or other garden creatures: *Stick Insects* (Ready to Read, shared); *Extraordinary Earthworms* and *The White-tailed Spider* (Ready to Read, Gold); “Dancing Bees” (JJ 36); “Take a Closer Look” and “Look out for Monarchs” in *I Spy* (Connected, L2, 2013)

Information texts about gardens and plants: “Pōhutukawa” (JJ 45); “Helpful Trees and Plants” (JJ 48); “Dig In!” (JJ 52)

Poems about spiders: “Fred” (JJ 36); “Spider” and “Spider Work” (JJ 42)

Texts with a jungle setting: *Two Tiger Tales* (Ready to Read, Purple); “Too Many Mangoes” (a play, JJ 38)

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school, as they relate to this text, are shown in the boxes with the solid outlines. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

Visual language features clearly linked to the body text, including subheadings, labels and captions, enlarged photographs (and an actual-size drawing for comparison), a diagram, and an identification activity linked to answers in the back of the journal

A mix of explicit and implicit content that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to form and test hypotheses (for example, about the content of the article) and make inferences (for example, to visualise how a garden might be like a jungle)



The conversational style, with the writer addressing the reader directly and using the first person (“I”, “my”, “We”, “us”)

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, including subject-specific vocabulary and descriptive vocabulary (in particular, similes and metaphors), the meaning of which is supported by the context, the sentence structure, or visual language features

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences, so that students are required to notice linking words and phrases (for example, “so when”, “that”, “Next time”, “also”) and punctuation that clarify the links between ideas

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Science

Levels 1 and 2 – Living World: Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6).

Possible reading purposes

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

- To find out about spiders and insects in the author's garden
- To think about why the author says there is a jungle in his garden

Possible learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically about” texts?)

- They **make connections** between ideas in the text and between the text and the visual language features to **form and test hypotheses** and **locate and track** information.
- The students **make connections** between their prior knowledge (of jungles, gardens, and garden creatures) to **identify main points** and **visualise** how the insects and spiders catch and eat their food.
- They **make inferences** about how a garden might be like a jungle and form an opinion about (**evaluate**) the author's point of view.
- They **monitor** their reading, and when something is unclear, they take action to solve the problem, for example, by rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.



Text and language features

Possible supporting strategies

(These suggestions may be used before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar vocabulary including subject-specific language and descriptive phrases: “creatures”, “imagine”, “interested”, “aphids”, “sap”, “ladybird”, “brightly coloured”, “spinnerets”, “orb web spider”, “spokes”, “wasps”, “attached”, “sticky silk”, “trampoline”, “crab spider”, “camouflage”, “praying mantis”.

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- **when decoding:**
 - recognising word chunks or syllables within a word (“For-tu-nate-ly”, “lady-bird”, “scutt-ling”, “spin-ner-ets”, “at-tached”, “man-tis”)
 - using their knowledge of variations in the sounds of letters and letter combinations (usually, aphids; trampoline, imagine)
- **when working out word meanings:**
 - using the context of the sentence and the paragraph
 - making connections to their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings.

Note that readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. See suggestions in “Introducing the text” and “After reading”. For more ideas, see [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#).

Text features

- Connecting words, phrases, and punctuation that clarify the links between ideas, for example:
 - the pronouns “they”, “them”, “you”, “my”, “it”, “This”, “We”, “us”, “itself”
 - phrases that draw attention to the similarities between things (for example, “such as”, “just like”, “that looks like”, “the same way”, “the same colour”, “Like the crab spider”).

Select a few sentences that link ideas, for example, “Not all spiders make webs. The crab spider uses camouflage to make itself hard to see. It is the same colour as the green leaves it sits on” (page 21). Read the extract together, discussing the links, for example, what “itself” and “it” refer to. *Why does the writer start the paragraph with “Not all”?* Prompt the students to refer to the previous section, which is about spiders that *do* make webs, and draw out the idea that “Not all” is signalling a change to talking about spiders that don't make webs. For further suggestions, see “After reading”.



Metacognition

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE METACOGNITIVE

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

- What are some words in this paragraph that helped you track the ideas about ladybirds?
- What helped you understand the connection between the idea of the “king of the jungle” and the praying mantis?

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading. Choose from the following suggestions.

For English language learners, before reading the article with the rest of the group, you could use the illustration for the poem “Māra” to start a discussion about garden creatures and introduce their names. Then move onto the article and discuss the photographs, subheadings, and photo captions. If necessary, explain that the “ph” sound in “aphid” is the same “f” sound used in “phone”.

- Read the title and the author’s name. Discuss the possible meaning of the title: *Can there really be a jungle in the author’s garden?* In case the students are not sure what a jungle is, have some images to show them or use the illustrations from *Two Tiger Tales*.
- Have the students look through the article, using the photographs and subheadings, along with the title, to form hypotheses about (predict) what sort of text this is and what it will tell them. As they preview the article, draw out or feed in key words (such as “aphids”, “ladybirds”, “praying mantis”). Note that if you have students from North America in your group, they may know “ladybirds” as “ladybugs”.
- Have them read the first paragraph on page 16. (Expect them to infer that the “I” is the author, Dr Pollard). Draw attention to the phrase in the parentheses, which distinguishes between insects and spiders. This distinction may be new to students. *How will you find out more about this?*
- Return to the question of having a jungle in a garden. Encourage the students to share their ideas about the possible link between spiders and insects and a jungle.
- Share the reading purpose(s) and the learning goal(s).
- You could provide the students with sticky notes, or some other tool, to note ideas or questions about spiders and insects and how a garden can be like a jungle.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column of the table below.

Select from and adapt the suggestions according to your students’ needs. These suggestions may apply to the first or a subsequent reading.

Encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it’s clear that a student needs help. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word-solving and comprehension on subsequent readings.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until after they have read the text and you are discussing it as a group.

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The students use the text box to clarify the difference between spiders and insects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Remind them to use the text box to clarify their understanding. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">On page 17, they begin to notice and record references to the “jungle” idea. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Remind them of their reading purpose(s) and that they can use their sticky notes to mark or record ideas. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">They make connections between the phrase “eat to live” and the ellipsis at the end of the last paragraph to infer that the following pages will have information about how the insects and spiders in the author’s garden also “eat to live”. (They may also notice this link to the idea of wild creatures in the jungle.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draw attention to the ellipsis. Prompt the students to think about the link to the last sentence of the previous paragraph. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The students make connections between the life-size drawing of the aphid, the information about aphids living on leafy plants, the reference on page 16 to making photos look bigger, and (possibly) their prior knowledge, to infer that the photograph on page 18 has been enlarged. They build on this thinking (and their prior knowledge of ladybirds) to infer that the page 19 photograph has also been enlarged. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">If necessary, draw attention to the statement on page 16 and to the labelled drawing of the actual-size aphid. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">They infer from the final sentence on page 19 that spiders eat ladybirds and predict that the next section of the text will be about spiders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prompt them to make connections between ideas: <i>I notice the author has used another ellipsis here. What does this suggest to you about what he is going to tell you about next?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The students demonstrate monitoring and self-correction. For example, on page 20, they use the contrast between “crawling” and “flying” to help clarify the meaning of “scuttling”; and they use surrounding words in a sentence (“to make a web”, “spins silk out of”) and the photograph to attempt the meaning of “spinnerets”. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Remind the students of the strategies they can use when meaning is unclear. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">They make connections between the information on page 20 and the supporting explanation in the first paragraph on page 21 to visualise how the spider catches insects in its web. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">If necessary, point out that the information about how the orb web spider catches insects continues on page 21. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The students attempt the identification activity on page 23 then look in the back of the journal to check their answers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage the students to try the identification activity. |

Discussing the text after the first reading or subsequent readings

You can revisit this text several times to focus on different aspects. Several suggestions are given here. After initial discussion and perhaps some teacher modelling, the students could work on most of these tasks as independent after-reading tasks.

- The students identify main points about spiders and insects and share their questions on what they want to find out more about.
- Using their sticky notes as a guide, the students identify ideas about the garden as a jungle. For example, there are many references to hunting and eating and the idea of the praying mantis as a “king of the jungle”. They express their opinions about the author’s idea.
- The students locate and track information about a particular creature.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose: *What did you find out? Any surprises?*
- Prompt them to think critically: *How did the author try to persuade you that his garden is like a jungle? Do you agree with him?*
- Together, identify and summarise the information about one of the creatures mentioned in the article. Create a summary chart (such as the partially completed one on the left) that the students can use as a model or add to later (see “After reading”).

Name of creature	What it eats	How it catches or eats its food	What it is eaten by
aphid	leaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lives on leaves • sucks out the sap from leaves (and sometimes kills the plant) 	ladybirds
ladybird	aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can eat fifty aphids in an hour 	spiders

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students identify a challenge in the text and explain how they solved it, for example, using the context of the sentence to infer the meaning of “pests” and rereading the previous sentence to confirm.
- The students describe strategies such as rereading, looking for words that link ideas, and/or making connections (for example, on page 21, drawing on their own experiences of using a trampoline).

Remind the students of the learning goal(s).

- Have the students share with a partner one or two words or phrases they found difficult and the strategies they used to work them out. Listen in to the discussions and note anything that may need to be followed up.
- *What helped you visualise how orb web spiders catch insects?*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this text as well as other texts about insects, spiders, or the jungle (see “Related texts”).
- Have the students work in pairs to add information about the other creatures in the article to the summary chart. Discuss the chart together, noting any patterns and similarities in the behaviours of the creatures and any gaps in the information for following up later. The students could use the headings on the chart to find information about other insects or spiders.
- Have the students find out more about a spider or insect and create a simple report with such information as: what it looks like, how big it is, what it eats, where it lives, how it catches its food, and how it is helpful or unhelpful to humans. Students from other countries might like to find out and share information about insects and spiders from their home country.
- The students could create their own identification activities using photographs and labels.
- The students could explore further examples of enlarged photographs of spiders, insects, and other small creatures. There are examples in *Extraordinary Earthworms* and *The White-tailed Spider* (which also includes several life-sized images of a spider as a comparison). Students with a particular interest might also enjoy the comparison diagram in “Haast’s Eagle” (JJ 51).
- Go on a “jungle adventure” around the playground to look for insects and spiders. The students could take photos and present the photos with some facts.
- Have the students identify verbs from the text that describe movement. Encourage them to act them out to clarify the meaning and to generate further examples.
- Explore word structure. Record the verbs from the previous activity in families, for example:

Verb	Other forms of the verb		
		scuttling	
	sits		
grab			grabbed
fly	flies	flying	

Use the chart to build awareness of verbs, such as “sit” and “fly”, that are irregular in their past-tense form (“sat”, “flew”) and of the need to adapt word endings (for example, removing the “e” from “scuttle” to form “scuttling”, doubling the “b” in “grab” to form “grabbed”, and changing the “y” in “fly” to form “flies”). To support English language learners, create oral sentences together to help students identify which endings are in the present tense and which are in the past.

- Practise reading aloud together some multi-clause sentences, using punctuation and the linking words to support phrasing and intonation. (For example, “Like the crab spider, this creature uses camouflage by matching the colour of the leaves it sits on.”)