



Teaching with

Mighty Ants

Exploring an Ant Colony

978-1-63440-274-3 (HC) 978-1-63440-276-7 (SC)

Preview

- Read the title, including the subtitle.
- Have students use the title and cover illustration to predict the focus of the book. Ask them to support their predictions by stating clues (details) in the title and illustrations.

Prepare

- Discuss with students how to navigate the text. For example, suggest that they read the main text first on each page, then closely examine the picture and any special features (e.g., "It's a Fact"). Remind them to think about how these special features illustrate the text, clarify ideas, or add new information.
- Have students browse the book, noticing any special features. Ask them to generate questions they have about ants and ant colonies that might be answered in the text.
- Activate prior knowledge by having students turn to a partner and name two or three things they know or have observed about ants.

Vocabulary

- **Academic Vocabulary** Preteach the following academic words using the Define-Example-Ask Routine: *communicate*, *mighty*.

Define: *Communicate* means "to talk" or "to express one's thoughts, feelings, and information."

Example: *We can communicate with our words and actions.*

Ask: *How do you communicate to a friend that you are angry?*

Define: *Mighty* means "very strong."

Example: *The mighty ant carried a heavy piece of food in its jaw.*

Ask: *What other animals are mighty? How are they mighty?*

- **Additional Words** Use a student-friendly definition, the illustrations, and context clues to highlight these words while reading: *industrious*, *colony*, *search*, *scout*, *pounce*, *intelligence*, *obstacles*, *nursery*, *chamber*, *offspring*, *intruder*, *defend*.

Close Reading

Guide students through a reading of the book to increase overall comprehension and develop generalizable reading skills.

Text-Based Questions Ask the following questions while reading. Have students provide evidence in the text and illustrations to support their answers.

(page 6) *How has Soñia's size changed? What clues in the text and illustration show this?*

(page 7) *Why did Soñia say, "Now I see what Dad meant"? What is she referring to?*

(page 10) *Why did the authors include the "It's a Fact" feature? How does it relate to the text?*

(page 13) *What clues in the text and "It's a Fact" box help you determine the meaning of "prey"?*

(page 14) *What do the authors want you to know about the importance of an ant's antennae?*

(page 21) *On page 16, Soñia compares the ant colony to a city. After reading pages 16-21, do you agree with this comparison? Why or why not?*

(page 25) *What do the authors want you to know about the queen ant? Why is she so important to the ant colony?*

(page 29) *What does Soñia mean when she says, "They have a lot of mouths to feed!"?*

Reinforce Vocabulary

- **Content Vocabulary** After reading, review the following content words using the glossary on page 31: *abdomen, antennae, mandibles, predator, prey*. Have partners read each word and definition, then find the sentence in the book containing the word.
- **Build Vocabulary Strategies** Increase student's general word awareness skills using the following words: *larvae, scent*.

larvae (context clues): Explain that authors give clues, such as definitions or examples, in a sentence or the sentences surrounding a word to help readers figure out the word's meaning. Read the paragraph on page 22, and ask students to listen for clues to the meaning of the word *larvae*. Point out that the authors give a clue in the third sentence to make sure readers understand what *larvae* are ("Like tiny fat worms"). The word "like" is a clue that an example is being provided to help readers understand the word. Repeat using the word *creatures* on page 13. Guide students to use the word *like* to connect the word *creatures* to the examples of its meaning.

scent (homophones): Explain that some words are pronounced the same, but have different spellings and meanings. These words are called homophones. Write the words *scent, cent, and sent*. Direct students to reread the "It's a Fact" box on page 10 to determine the meaning of the word *scent*. Guide students to notice the clues the authors provide (e.g., "ants leave a scent on the trail," "they can't smell the trail"). Then discuss the meanings of *sent* and *cent*. Remind students that they have to think about the context to decide which spelling to use when writing homophones. Repeat using the words *ant/aunt, way/weigh, piece/peace, prey/pray, here/hear, pail/pale, break/brake, and one/won*.

Use the Tools Discuss why the authors included each of these nonfiction tools and how students can use them to better understand the text.

- **Table of Content** Review the Table of Contents on page 3. Explain that readers use this feature in informational text to quickly find the facts they need (or sections of text they want to read or reread). Point out that, unlike fiction, readers don't always read an entire nonfiction book (e.g., when doing research).
- **Labels** Ask students to find and record the labels in the illustrations (e.g., food storage, diggers, cleaners, nursery, Queen's Chamber). Ask: *Why did the authors put these words in the pictures? How do they relate to the text? Do they add information?*
- **Index** Review the Index on page 32. Model how to read the index. Explain that the index is in alphabetical order to easily find the topic a reader is looking for. Each topic is followed by the page number or numbers where readers will find information about the topic. Provide topics for students to find the corresponding page numbers. Ask: *Why did the authors include an index? How can an index help a reader writing a report on ants?*

Imagine This! Build comprehension using the interactive game. Share with students the directions below.

Players: 2

Materials: plastic cup, penny, place marker for each player

To Play:

- 1 Each player in turn shakes the penny in the cup, then spills it out. If the penny lands on heads, the player moves 1 space. If it lands on tails, the player moves 2 spaces.
- 2 The player then answers the question. If correct, the player stays on the space. If incorrect, the player skips a turn. Players landing on a penalty square only incur the penalty once, even if they land on the square again. Also, players can challenge their opponent's answer, then check the book to confirm.
- 3 Each player continues in turn. The first player to reach the WINNER space wins.

Extend

- **Ant Farm** Set up an ant farm in your classroom. Provide magnifying glasses and paper for students to observe and record their findings. Take a photo each day of the farm to show how it changes over time. Print the pictures to use during classroom discussions about ant colonies.
- **Book Jacket Blurbs** Have students write a book jacket blurb to invite others to read *Mighty Ants*. Suggest that they include the three most interesting things they read about ants.
- **Research It** Have students use the books or web sites on page 32 to learn more about ants. Suggest they make a set of Ant Worker Fact Cards to summarize their findings about each ant job.



START

Why do ants like picnics?

Name 3 predators of ants.

What's the meaning of **mighty**?

Ant crossing!
Go back 1 space.

What's a synonym for **mandible**?

What are 3 chambers in an ant nest?

Follow the scout!
Go ahead 1 space.

Why are an ant's antennae so important?



Leaping lizard!
Hide!
Miss a turn.



Why do ants make new tunnels?



Which ant lives the longest?

Explore the colony!
Take an extra turn.

What word is the opposite of **predator**?

Give 2 examples of ant teamwork.

Yes or No?
Ants are strong.
Prove it.



Name three stages in an ant's life cycle.

Help the diggers!
Take an extra turn.

What is the ant queen's job?

Tunnel! Whoosh!
Take an extra turn.

Tell 2 ways ants **communicate**.

Shhh! Ants napping!
Miss a turn.



True or False?
Ants are industrious.
Explain.

How long have ants lived on Earth?

Ants working!
Wait!
Miss a turn.

What's an example of ants intelligence?

Tell 4 jobs that worker ants do.

WINNER



Imagine That!