Text features are special parts of a passage that organize information for readers. You can use text features to quickly locate facts and details in a passage.

Read the passage below. It has many text features that organize the information.

**Long Live the Lungfish**

If you had to be a fish, you might want to be a lungfish. Why? Because the lungfish can do some amazing things that most other fish cannot.

**A Fish out of Water**

The lungfish can breathe air. If its lake or river dries up, the lungfish drags itself over land until it finds water in which to live.

**A Fish Under Ground**

If the lungfish can’t find water to live in, it digs a hole in the ground and sleeps there until the water returns. This type of sleep is called estivation.

If you want to learn more about lungfish, visit our website: www.ilovelungfish.org.

Now read the chart. Use it to label one example of each text feature in the passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Feature</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>tells what the whole passage is about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>tells what a specific part of a passage is about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key word</td>
<td>calls attention to an important word using bold print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidebar</td>
<td>gives more details related to the main topic by boxing or highlighting information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperlink</td>
<td>takes readers to information in another location, such as a website: <a href="http://www.pbskids.org">http://www.pbskids.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning how to use text features will help you find facts about a topic quickly. It is a skill that every good reader learns over time.
Read the first part of a science passage about polar bears.

**Brrr . . . Polar Bears in the Arctic**  
*by Devonte Thomas*

Polar bears live in the Arctic. The Arctic is one of the coldest places on Earth. How do polar bears survive in the ice and snow?

**Built for Living in the Arctic**

Polar bears have thick, white fur. The outer layer of fur is made of oily, hollow **guard hairs**. These hairs keep the bears dry. The inner layer of fur next to their skin acts like a sweater. It traps in heat and keeps them warm. Under their fur, polar bears have a thick layer of fat. Also, polar bears have black skin and black noses. The color black **absorbs**, or takes in, more of the sun’s heat.

**Explore how to answer this question:** “Which text features help you find details about how polar bears survive in the Arctic?”

Look for text features that help you search for information about how polar bears survive.

**One example is listed in the chart. Write two more examples on the lines.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Feature</th>
<th>Example from the Passage</th>
<th>Purpose in the Passage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td>tells what paragraph 2 of the passage is mostly about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words</td>
<td>guard hairs, ____________</td>
<td>calls attention to words that are important to the topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do these text features help you find details about how polar bears survive in the Arctic?

**Fill in the blanks below to write about text features in this passage.**

The heading __________________________ tells me that this part is about how polar bears have special bodies for living in the Arctic. The key words _______________ and _______________ help me locate details about how polar bears survive in the Arctic.
Continue reading about polar bears. Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question below.

(continued from page 96)

**Behavior**

Polar bears have other ways to cope with the cold. They stay in a **den** all winter. Their body functions slow down. They do not eat or drink. For more polar bear facts, go to this website: [http://www.polarbearsinternational.org](http://www.polarbearsinternational.org).

**Fast Facts Sidebar**

**Baby, It’s Cold Outside!**
The Arctic is a cold, snowy region around the North Pole. In winter, the temperature can drop as low as $-40^\circ$F.

Choose the correct answer.

Where in this passage can you find information about Arctic weather?

A the heading  
B the key words  
C the sidebar  
D the hyperlink

**Show Your Thinking**

Look at the answer that you chose above. Describe the information in this text feature.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Pick one answer you did not choose. Tell your partner why this answer is not a text feature that helps you learn about Arctic weather.
Read the science passage. Use the Study Buddy and Close Reading to guide your reading.

I'm going to look at the headings and key words to quickly find out if this passage has information about desert plants with seeds that live a long time.

How Plants Live in a Desert
by Rafael Sanchez

1. A desert gets less than 10 inches of rain per year. It can get as hot as 100 degrees in the summer. Yet at night, it can be quite cold. It's not easy to live in a desert, but some plants do.

Cactus Plants
2. Many cactuses have a waxy coating. The wax helps keep water in the cactus by preventing it from evaporating, or escaping through tiny holes in the plant. Cactuses are good at storing water. When it rains, a cactus stores water to live on during dry periods. For more information on cactus plants, go to http://www.desertmuseum.org/kids/oz/long-fact-sheets/.

Plants with Long Roots
3. A second type of desert plant, such as the mesquite (meh SKEET) tree, grows very long roots. These roots find water deep in the ground. Some mesquites have roots that are 80 feet long!

Plants with Hardy Seeds
4. A third type of plant grows only in the spring, following winter rains. It grows quickly. Soon it drops seeds. These seeds can live for a long time. If the following spring is wet, the seeds will grow. If not, the seeds may wait two or three springs to grow.

Deserts Around the Globe
There are many deserts around the world. The Sahara Desert is in Africa. The Gobi Desert is in Asia. The Great Basin and Mojave (moh HAHV ee) deserts stretch across the American Southwest.
Hints
What type of text feature directs you to information found in another location?

Review the chart of text features and their purposes on page 95. Then look back at the text features you underlined in “How Plants Live in a Desert.”

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

1. Which text feature would be most useful for finding out more about cactus plants?
   - A the hyperlink at the end of paragraph 2
   - B the sidebar “Deserts Around the Globe”
   - C the key word *mesquite* in paragraph 3
   - D the heading “Plants with Hardy Seeds”

2. Name a desert plant that has very long roots. Then tell which two text features in the passage helped you locate this information.

   Type of desert plant that has very long roots:
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

   First text feature that helped me find this information:
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

   Second text feature that helped me find this information:
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

3. By reading the sidebar in this passage, you can find out about
   - A plants in the Sahara Desert.
   - B plants in cool, wet climates.
   - C deserts around the world.
   - D different kinds of cactus.
Read the science article. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “Crazy Critters”

by Fran Downy and Peter Winkler, National Geographic Explorer

1. Some animals look really crazy! Their odd looks fit their wild lives perfectly.

2. How do creatures last in the wild? They have adaptations. These are things that allow an animal to live. Sometimes, adaptations are body parts. Other times, they can be ways of acting.

3. Long ears are adaptations. Big bills and blue feet are too. So are running, jumping, and flying. Most adaptations seem normal. Others look odd. They all allow creatures to live.

4. Now let’s meet some animals that look crazy. We will see how their strange looks help them live in the wild.

Extra Eye

5. We will start with the very rare tuatara (too ah TAH rah). It lives on small islands in New Zealand. That is a country in the Pacific Ocean.

6. The tuatara looks like a lizard. Yet it is not. Lizards have ears. It does not. Lizards like warmth. It does not. Lizards come out during the day. It does not.

7. This animal is a bit odd. You see, it has a third eye. The eye sits on the top of the animal’s head.

8. What does this adaptation do? We do not really know. It may help with seeing in the dark. Or it may help the animal tell time or the season.

Using Their Heads

9. The hornbill also has an odd head. The bird looks like it is wearing a hat! It is made of the same stuff as the nails on your fingers and toes.

10. The hat might help the bird make noise. It may also help support the bird’s long bill. The bird uses its big mouth to eat fruit.
11 The chameleon has an odd head too. It holds a tongue that stretches longer than the animal’s body!
12 A chameleon uses its tongue to catch dinner. The animal likes to eat bugs, birds, and other lizards. It flicks its tongue at prey. It then pulls the prey into its mouth.

Crazy Colors
13 Color helps animals in many ways. Mandrills are monkeys in western Africa. The males have bright red noses. They have blue cheeks. The females like those colors. They pick males with the most colorful faces.
14 The mandarin (man duh rihn) fish lives in the Pacific Ocean. It is blue, green, orange, and yellow. The males show off their colors. The colors make a big splash with the females.
15 The zorilla of Africa is mostly black. It has white stripes on its back. Other animals know this animal by color. They see the zorilla’s stripes as a warning. Zorillas make an awful smell when they are in trouble. The smell keeps this animal safe.

Forever Young
16 Now it’s time to meet one of the oddest animals. It’s a salamander. Most salamanders are born in water. They grow up and move onto land. Not the axolotl (ax oh lot ul).
17 It never grows up. It spends its whole life in Mexican lakes. Pink gills help it breathe.
18 What caused this adaptation? No one knows for sure. Yet this strange animal does well in the wild. How? Adaptations, of course!

Cool Chameleon Facts
• A chameleon’s tongue can hit a bug in just one-sixteenth of a second.
• A chameleon can move each eye separately. It can look backward and forward at the same time!

1 Which heading would be most helpful for finding facts about animals with oddly shaped heads?

A Extra Eye  
B Using Their Heads  
C Crazy Colors  
D Forever Young
2. What can you learn more about by reading the sidebar in this article?
   A. salamanders
   B. tuataras
   C. chameleons
   D. mandarin fish

3. Which text feature helps you understand why the axolotl is odd?
   A. the key word “stripes”
   B. the heading “Extra Eye”
   C. the key word “gills”
   D. the title “Crazy Critters”

4. Name one animal in the article that uses color to help it survive in the wild.
   Then tell what text feature in this article helped you find this information.

   Name one animal that uses color to help it survive in the wild.
   ____________________________________________

   Tell what text feature in the passage helped you find this information.
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
Lesson 10  (Student Book pages 95–102)

Text Features

LESSON OBJECTIVES

• Identify common text features.
• Understand that text features organize text and make it easier to locate information.
• Use text features to locate information in a text.

TAP STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

• Tell students they will be learning about how to use text features to help them find particular facts and details as they read. Explain that text features include titles, headings, and key words in bold print.
• Display a science-related nonfiction book organized into chapters. Point out the title and then the table of contents. Remind students that a table of contents is a text feature that shows how the book is organized.
• Ask students what it would be like to find specific information if there was no table of contents. (It would take a long time to look through the whole book.)
• Explain that, in a similar way, information in shorter texts, such as magazine or website articles, is often organized into sections with headings similar to the chapters or sections of a book. Ask students why this is helpful. (It makes it easier to find information.)
• Next, ask students what a sidebar is. (It is a section that is set off from the main text that usually tells more about a detail from the text or gives an interesting fact.) If possible, show students a sidebar from the nonfiction book and discuss its content.
• Tell students that a hyperlink is a link to a website. Have students explain why an article might include a hyperlink. (To tell where to go for more information)
• Guide a discussion about how students would research a topic, using text features to help them find relevant information.

THE LEARNING PROGRESSION

• Grade 2: CCSS RL.2.5 requires students to know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.
• Grade 3: CCSS RL.3.5 builds on the Grade 2 standard by requiring students to efficiently use additional text features, including search tools, to locate information relevant to a given topic.
• Grade 4: CCSS RL.4.5 requires students to expand their understanding of basic organizational patterns in a text to include chronology, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution text structures.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

• Identify common text features, such as bold print, headings, glossaries, and indexes.
• Use text features, such as bold print, captions, headings, electronic menus, and icons, to locate key facts or information in a text.
• Have a basic understanding of how to use digital tools to locate information.

CCSS Focus

RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS: RI.3.1; RI.3.2; RI.3.3; RI.3.4; W.3.2; W.3.7; SL.3.1; SL.3.4; SL.3.5; L.3.1.b; L.3.2.d; L.3.4.a

(See page A39 for full text.)
Lesson 10
Part 1: Introduction

AT A GLANCE

By reading a short science text, students explore the idea that certain features of print and digital materials help readers find information more quickly.

STEP BY STEP

• Tell students that text features are special parts of a text that organize information. Those same text features can help them find information.

• Tell students they will read a short science text called “Long Live the Lungfish.” Tell students that this text contains many text features, and that those text features help organize the information.

• Have students read “Long Live the Lungfish.” You can also read the passage aloud or have volunteers read different parts of the passage.

• If necessary, explain that estivation in lungfish is like hibernation in bears. The difference is that estivation occurs in hot, dry places, and hibernation happens in cold places.

• Now explain that the chart below the text names several common text features that students will come across in nonfiction books and articles.

• Read each feature and its purpose aloud. Then have students complete the activity by labeling one example of each text feature they find.

• Ask a volunteer to explain how to use a hyperlink on a computer or a tablet. (On a computer: Use a mouse to move an arrow over the link, then click the mouse. On a tablet: Tap the link with a finger.)

• Ask students to share other text features they know about and have used to find information. (table of contents, index, glossary)

• Remind students that using text features will help them save time searching for information when they are researching a topic.

Genre Focus

Informational Text: Science Article

Tell students that in this lesson they will read informational texts that give facts and details about plants and animals. Explain that the study of living things, including plants and animals, is a part of science called biology. Tell them that science articles are one kind of informational text and that informational texts do the following:

• They inform (tell) or explain, rather than entertain or give an opinion about something.

• They provide facts and details about a topic.

• They answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how.

• They often include text features, such as headings, sidebars, hyperlinks, photos, charts, and diagrams.

Explain that the passages in this lesson are science articles that tell about some ways plants and animals adapt to harsh conditions in order to survive. Because science articles may contain words, terms, or ideas that are new to students, tell students to mark the places in a passage that present unfamiliar words and ideas. Paying attention to text features will help them better understand a science article.
AT A GLANCE

Students read the first part of a science passage and use the text features to find specific information.

STEP BY STEP

• Remind students that they just identified several different types of text features in a science text.
• Tell students that in this lesson they will learn to use text features of informational passages.
• Read aloud the first part of the passage.
• Then read the question: “Which text features help you find how polar bears survive in the Arctic?”
• Now, tell students you will perform a Think Aloud to demonstrate how to use text features to find information.

Think Aloud: The question is about finding information that explains how polar bears survive in the Arctic. I see the heading, “Built for Living in the Arctic.” That’s helpful because it tells me this section will be about what makes it possible for polar bears to live in the Arctic.

• Direct students to the chart and ask a volunteer to read the first row of information under the headings “Text Feature” and “Purpose.”

Think Aloud: In the “Built for Living in the Arctic” section, I see some words in bold print. They stand out and get my attention. These must be key words to know. I read and see that these words are details about the polar bear’s fur, skin, and nose.

• Ask students to fill in the missing information in the second row of the chart.

• Finally, guide students to fill in the blanks to answer the question at the bottom of the page. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class.

Tier Two Vocabulary: Feature

• Point to an object in the room and describe its physical features. Say, for example, “This apple is bright green and has a long stem.” These are some of its features.” Invite volunteers to describe physical features of other objects.

• Point out that features help to set plants, animals, people, and other things apart from one another. For example, a person’s face has its own features, such as blue-green eyes, a small chin, high cheekbones, etc.

• Direct students’ attention to one of the instances of the word feature in the chart headings. Have students tell what feature means. (“an important part of something”) Then ask students what feature means in the context of this lesson. (“a part of a text that helps to organize and highlight important information”) Emphasize to students that the word feature is found in many different kinds of text and that its meaning depends on context. (RI.3.4; L.3.4.a)
Students continue reading about polar bears. They answer a multiple-choice question and explain how they selected the correct answer.

STEP BY STEP

- Tell students that they will continue reading about polar bears.
- Close Reading will help students focus on the text features in this passage. The Hint will help them understand what the question is asking so they can select the correct answer.
- Have students read the passage and circle the text features they come across, as directed by Close Reading.
- Ask volunteers to name the text features they circled. Discuss the purpose of each feature. If necessary, tell students that behavior refers to a person’s or animal’s actions.
- Have students circle the answer to the question, using the Hint to help. Then have them respond to the prompt in Show Your Thinking. Place students into pairs to discuss the Pair Share prompt. Guide them to talk about what information each of the other text features helps them find.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

Choice A is incorrect. The heading “Behavior” tells that the part that follows gives information on how polar bears act, not on Arctic weather.

Choice B is incorrect. The only key word in the passage is den, which is a cave bears live in. It does not give information about weather.

Choice C is correct. The sidebar is the only text feature in the passage that tells about Arctic weather.

Choice D is incorrect. The text says the hyperlink will take you to more facts about polar bears, not necessarily about Arctic weather.

ERROR ALERT: Students who did not choose C may not have read the sidebar carefully. Have students reread the passage and the sidebar. Then ask, “Which text feature gives facts about Arctic weather?”

ELL Support: The Possessive Its

- Explain to students that possessives are words that show who or what owns something. To make a singular noun a possessive noun, add an apostrophe and s. (bear’s)
- Work with students to make possessive nouns. Write tree, sun, and flowers on the board. Identify each noun as singular or plural. As you form the possessive, explain how it is done. (tree’s and sun’s: add apostrophe and s; flowers': add only apostrophe)
- Also tell students that the pronouns my, his, her, their, and its show possession. Point out it’s in the sidebar title. Explain that this is an exception. The word its without an apostrophe is a possessive, meaning “belonging to it.” The word it’s with an apostrophe and an s is a contraction, or shortened form, of the two words it is. (L.3.2.d)
Students read a passage about desert plants twice. After the first reading, ask three questions to check your students’ comprehension of the passage.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Have students read the passage silently without referring to the Study Buddy or Close Reading text.
- Ask students the following questions to ensure comprehension of the text.

  What kinds of text features are included in the passage? *(The passage includes a title, headings, key words, a hyperlink, and a sidebar.)*

  What is the passage mostly about? How do you know? *(The passage is mostly about desert plants because the title is “How Plants Live in a Desert.” The passage includes information about how cactuses, plants with long roots, and plants with hardy seeds live in deserts. I know this because of the headings.)*

  How is the information in the sidebar related to the topic of the passage? *(The passage is about plants that live in deserts. The sidebar relates to the topic by including the detail that there are deserts all over the world and giving the names of some of them.)*

- Then ask students to scan the headings and key words in the passage and look at the Study Buddy think aloud. What does the Study Buddy help them think about?

**Tip:** Learning to use the text features of informational articles will improve students’ research skills. Understanding that they can scan, or look quickly at, an article’s text features will help them decide more quickly if a text has information they need when doing a research project.

- Have students read the rest of the passage. Tell them to follow the directions in the Close Reading.
- Finally, have students answer the questions on page 99. When students have finished, use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct and incorrect responses.

---

**How Plants Live in a Desert**

1. A desert gets less than 10 inches of rain per year. It can get as hot as 100 degrees in the summer. Yet at night, it can be quite cold. It’s not easy to live in a desert, but some plants do.

2. Many cactuses have a waxy coating. The wax helps keep water in the cactus by preventing it from evaporating, or escaping through tiny holes in the plant. Cactuses are good at storing water. When it rains, a cactus stores water to live on during dry periods. For more information on cactus plants, go to http://www.desertmuseum.org/kids/oz/long-fact-sheets/.

3. A second type of desert plant, such as the mesquite (meh SKEET) tree, grows very long roots. These roots find water deep in the ground. Some mesquites have roots that are 80 feet long.

4. A third type of plant grows only in the spring, following winter rains. It grows quickly. Soon it drops seeds. These seeds can live for a long time. If the following spring is wet, the seeds will grow. If not, the seeds may wait two or three springs to grow.

---

**Deserts Around the Globe**

There are many deserts around the world. The Sahara Desert is in Africa. The Gobi Desert is in Asia. The Great Basin and Mojave (moh HAHV ee) deserts stretch across the American Southwest.

---

**Close Reading**

Which text features point you to information about plants that have long roots? Underline each of these text features.

What information do you learn from reading the sidebar? Draw a box around this text feature.

---

**Tier Two Vocabulary: Evaporating**

- Tell students that one day there may be lots of puddles on the road, and the next day the puddles may have disappeared.

- Explain that water in a puddle disappears because it evaporates into the air, or changes from a liquid to a vapor, which is many tiny droplets of water in the air.

- Guide students to the key word evaporating in paragraph 2. In this context, what does evaporating mean? (“water that turns to a vapor when it escapes through the holes in a cactus”) *(RI.3.4; L.3.4.a)*
STEP BY STEP

• Have students read questions 1–3, using the Hints to help them answer those questions.

Tip: If students have trouble answering question 2, suggest they follow these steps: 1. Read the question and notice it has three parts; 2. Find the relevant section of the passage; 3. Match the text features they underlined in this section with the chart on page 95.

• Discuss with students the Answer Analysis below.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

1. The correct choice is A. The hyperlink at the end of paragraph 2 takes the reader to a website about cactus plants. Choice B is not correct because the sidebar provides information about deserts around the globe. Choice C calls attention to mesquite, but does not call the reader’s attention to cactus plants. Choice D is not correct because the heading “Plants with Hardy Seeds” tells the reader that this part of the passage is about a different type of desert plant.

2. Sample response: The mesquite tree is a type of desert plant that has very long roots. First text feature: I found this information in the passage by using the heading “Plants with Long Roots.” Second text feature: I found this information in the passage by using the key word “mesquite.”

3. The correct choice is C. The sidebar names well-known deserts and tells where they are located around the world. Choices A, B, and D are not correct because the sidebar does not give any information about plants, including cactuses.

RETEACHING

Use a graphic organizer to verify the correct answer to question 1. Draw the graphic organizer below. Work with students to find clues in the passage that tell what each text feature is about. Samples are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Feature</th>
<th>Sample Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hyperlink</td>
<td>“For more information on cactus plants…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sidebar</td>
<td>“Deserts Around the Globe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key word</td>
<td>“A second type of desert plant…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“mesquite”</td>
<td>“A third type of plant grows only in the spring…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third heading</td>
<td>“A third type of plant grows only in the spring…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integrating Standards

Use these questions to further students’ understanding of “How Plants Live in a Desert.”

1. Why is it helpful that cactuses store rainwater? Support your answer with a detail from the passage. (RI.3.1)

   It is helpful that cactuses store rainwater so they can live on it during dry periods. The first sentence of the passage tells that “a desert gets less than 10 inches of rain per year.” Paragraph 2 of the passage states that water inside the cactus is kept from evaporating because the plant has a waxy coating.

2. What is the main idea of the section “Plants with Hardy Seeds”? (RI.3.2)

   The main idea of this section is that the seeds of hardy plants can live a long time.
AT A GLANCE
Students independently read a longer science article and answer questions in a format that provides test practice.

STEP BY STEP
• Tell students to use what they have learned about reading closely and text features to read the passage on pages 100 and 101.
• Remind students to underline or circle any text features they come across.
• Tell students to answer the questions on pages 101 and 102. For questions 1–3, they should fill in the correct circle on the Answer Form.
• When students have finished, use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct responses and the reasons for them. Have students fill in the Number Correct on the Answer Form.

ANSWER ANALYSIS
1 Choice B is correct. The heading “Using Their Heads” is the only heading that refers to an animal’s head. The heading in choice A refers to an animal’s eye. The heading in choice C refers to an animal’s colors. The heading in choice D refers to an animal’s age or stage of life. (DOK 2)

Theme Connection
• How do all the passages in this lesson relate to the theme of how nature adapts?
• Recall the adaptations of the polar bear, desert plants, and unusual animals. Which plant or animal adaptation do you find most interesting, surprising, or important? Tell why.
2 Choice C is correct. The sidebar “Cool Chameleon Facts” provides additional information about chameleons. The sidebar in this article does not give any additional information about the animals listed in choices A, B, or D. (DOK 2)

3 Choice C is correct. The key word gills in paragraph 17 calls attention to how the axolotl differs from other kinds of salamanders. Unlike other salamanders that move onto land, the axolotl has gills that allow it to live its whole life in the water. The text features in choices A, B, and D do not draw attention to facts that help explain why the axolotl is unusual. (DOK 2)

4 Sample responses: The zorilla is an animal that uses its color to help it survive. It is mostly black with white stripes on its back. The zorilla smells bad, and animals see its stripes as a warning to stay away. The heading “Crazy Colors” helped me find this information.

Under the same heading “Crazy Colors,” students may also choose to name the mandrill monkey, which has a colorful face, or the mandarin fish, which is blue, green, orange, and yellow. (DOK 2)

Integrating Standards

Use these questions and tasks as opportunities to interact with “Crazy Critters.”

1 Use details from “Using Their Heads” and the sidebar to name two adaptations of the chameleon and explain how they help it live in the wild. (RI.3.1)

The two adaptations are a very long tongue and eyes that move separately. These adaptations help the chameleon catch food. Its long tongue allows it to reach a long way to catch prey. Its eyes help it locate prey that is in front of it or behind it.

2 What is the main idea of the section “Extra Eye”? (RI.3.2)

The tuatara is an odd animal with a strange adaptation.

3 What is the effect of the zorilla’s color pattern? (RI.3.3)

When animals see the zorilla’s black and white striped color pattern, they know to stay away to avoid the zorilla’s awful smell.

4 Discuss in small groups: What are other examples of living things with unusual adaptations, and why do they need them to survive? (Examples may include insect-eating plants; skunks; kangaroos; deep-ocean animals, and so on.) (SL.3.1)

Discussions will vary. Encourage students to go beyond naming living things to discussing why they need their adaptations to survive. For example, skunks are slow-moving animals that would be easy prey were it not for their ability to shoot a foul-smelling liquid at their enemies.
**Writing Activities**

**Write a Sidebar that Gives Information (W.3.2)**
- Have students review the different animals described in “Crazy Critters.”
- Challenge them to choose one animal from the article and write a sidebar about it for another article about unusual animals.
- Have them write a short sidebar about the animal. Tell them to add a fun title and include information from the first four paragraphs of “Crazy Critters” as well as from the section that includes their animal. Remind them to use their own words. Allow time for students to share their sidebars with the class.

**Regular and Irregular Plural Nouns (L.3.1.b)**
- Review how to form regular plural nouns by adding -s or -es to the word. Then point out the plural noun lives in the first sentence of “Crazy Critters.” Have students name this noun’s singular form. (life) Explain that for nouns ending in -f or -fe, you change the f to a v before adding -s to form the plural. Point out feet in paragraph 3. Tell students that some irregular plural nouns must be memorized. Other irregular plural nouns are children and mice.
- Have students write two sentences based on the article and include a regular and an irregular plural noun.

**LISTENING ACTIVITY (SL.3.4)**

**Listen Closely/Do a Newscast**
- Have students choose an animal from “Crazy Critters” to create notes for a newscast.
- Invite students to use their notes to do a newscast announcing the discovery of the animal and its unusual adaptation.
- Students can be creative and embellish their newscasts with information about the setting or circumstances of the discovery, for example, as long as the essential facts are correct.
- The rest of the class listens closely, making sure that the “newscaster” reports the facts correctly.

**DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (SL.3.1)**

**Talk in a Group/Compare and Contrast Passages**
- Have students form small groups to compare and contrast “How Plants Live in a Desert” and “Crazy Critters.” If necessary, share these prompts with groups: How are the passages alike? How are they different? Which style do they think works better?
- Appoint one member of each group to take notes. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. Then have each group share its results with the class.

**MEDIA ACTIVITY (SL.3.5)**

**Be Creative/Draw a Picture**
- Review that the photo of the tuataras in “Crazy Critters” helps readers know what the animals look like.
- Have students read the description of a mandrill in paragraph 13. Tell students that a mandrill is a kind of baboon, which is a large monkey.
- Invite students to use their creativity to fill in other details and draw a picture of what they think a mandrill looks like.
- Have students display their drawings.

**RESEARCH ACTIVITY (W.3.2; W.3.7)**

**Research and Present/Give a Presentation**
- Ask students to use the information in “Brrr . . . Polar Bears in the Arctic” to write a report on polar bears.
- Have students research additional information on polar bears. They might include facts and definitions about what polar bears eat or how they hunt their prey.
- Tell students to include some text features in their reports, such as headings, key words, and sidebars.