

Most Wanted: Deadliest Ocean Creatures

by John Perritano

Beneath the calm surface of the ocean, many of the world’s most dangerous predators roam, seeking their unsuspecting prey in this thrilling nonfiction book.

Learn about the most deadly creatures—from the great white shark, three times the length of a human adult, to the golf ball-sized, blue-ringed octopus.

Create Successful Reading Habits

Academic language is a critical component of vocabulary development, oral language, and developing a student’s ability to read, think, speak, and write about a topic. By guiding students to develop their academic language skills, teachers can mitigate some of the challenges that students encounter when learning to comprehend text.* Students should engage in a variety of activities that purposefully support the development of their academic language. Inferential language instruction can be helpful when learning about figurative language because it supports a student’s ability to think critically, make inferences, connect ideas, and determine the deeper meaning of the text.

* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse. (n.d.). Practice Guides. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

SCIENCE OF READING – ASSESSMENTS

Assessments measure what children have learned or are able to do. Assessments can be divided into two broad categories: **formal** and **informal** assessments.

Formal assessments are usually standardized; that is, they have been administered to a large sample of different students in a uniform, consistent manner.

- Norm-referenced tests compare students to their peers—how do they compare to other students their age or in the same grade?
- Criterion-referenced tests indicate if students have accomplished certain formalized academic objectives or benchmarks, such as state standards—which learning goals have they met?

Formal assessments are often used for **screening, diagnostic, or outcome/summative assessment** purposes.

Informal assessments are not standardized but can be used by teachers to make instructional decisions.

Some examples of informal assessments include:

- running records
- timed readings
- teacher anecdotal records
- book logs
- informal reading inventories
- phonics surveys
- Informal assessments can be used for **progress monitoring** or **formative purposes**. Teachers use these to decide the next steps for instruction. Teacher-created assessments are also often used as **outcome measures** to determine if students have learned instructional objectives.

WORD WORK – SUFFIXES

Help students identify suffixes to read and understand unknown vocabulary words.

A **suffix** is a word part that when added to the end of a base word, changes the meaning of a word. Base words are single words that cannot be broken into smaller word parts and still have meaning. Here is an example of how the meaning of the base word *friend* changes when the **suffix** *ly* is added to the end of the word.

Base Word	Suffix	New word	New Meaning
friend	ly	friendly	Like a friend

Here are some examples of **suffixes** from the book and a description of what they mean.

Example from the Book	Suffix (Meaning)	Meaning
dangerous (p. 4) venomous (p. 11)	ous (is full of)	full or danger full of venom
deadliest (p. 3) largest (p. 4)	est (is the most)	most deadly most large

Find more opportunities to practice identifying and analyzing words with **suffixes -ous** and **-est** as you read the book together.

ELA.4.F.1.3: Use knowledge of grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills to decode words.


a. Apply knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to read and write unfamiliar single-syllable and multisyllabic words in and out of context.


ELL and SWD suggestion:


Create flashcards or a memory game that incorporates root words, affixes, and their meanings. Students can then use the cards to manipulate words in order to build their understanding of how affixes are added to words and how they change the meaning of the root word.


TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

Tier 2 vocabulary words can be used for explicit vocabulary instruction. When teaching vocabulary, it is important to create and share student-friendly definitions that are appropriate for the level of your students. Help students make connections to the word by providing contextual information that relates to the text being read and builds upon their background knowledge. Here are some examples of Tier 2 vocabulary words from the book:

 **severe** (p. 8): If something is **severe**, it is extremely harsh or serious. Many deadly creatures can cause you **severe** pain just by touching you.

 **victim** (p. 24): A **victim** is someone who has been hurt or killed. The saltwater crocodile grasps its **victim** with its strong jaws.

 **thrives** (p. 12): Something that is **thriving** does well and is healthy and strong. Moray eels **thrive** in warm waters.

 **concealed** (p. 19): If you **conceal** something, you cover it or hide it carefully to prevent it from being seen. Toadfish **conceal** themselves among rocks to avoid danger.

Extension Activity: Create a vocabulary notebook with students to keep track of all the new vocabulary words they are learning. Students will use the notebook to record each word, provide a student-friendly definition, and use the word in a sentence. Teachers can also use the notebook to have students record word parts, parts of speech, nonexamples, or other important vocabulary features. If you are able, provide a small incentive like a sticker or a classroom shout-out to encourage students to use the word in the correct context in their everyday language.

ELA.5.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Reinforce students' understanding of vocabulary by asking them to generate synonyms for the new words they are learning. This allows them to interact with new vocabulary in a meaningful way. Assist ELL students in recognizing cognates in their native language that correspond to the meaning of the word in English.

READ FOR MEANING – SUPPORTING CLAIMS WITH EVIDENCE AND REASONING

ELA.5.R.2.4: Track the development of an argument, identifying the specific claim(s), evidence, and reasoning.

- **Clarification 1: A claim is a statement that asserts something is true. A claim can either be fact or opinion. Claims can be used alone or with other claims to form a larger argument.**

ELA.5.C.1.3: Write to make a claim supporting a perspective with logical reasons, relevant evidence from sources, elaboration, and an organizational structure with varied transitions.

Before: Building Background

- **Brainstorm:** Provide students with the opportunity to think about what they know about the topic of **deadly sea creatures**. Brainstorming is one way that teachers can help students activate their prior knowledge and allow them to share what they know with others.
 - Divide students into groups of two to three.
 - Provide each group with a list of three to four animals that are mentioned in the text.
 - Give students five to ten minutes to go through the list and write down as much information as they can about these animals.
 - Each group will share what they know. Then invite students to add to their thinking.

During:

- In this book, the author claims that these are some of the deadliest creatures that live in the ocean. The author provides evidence and reasoning to support their claim. The following definitions are from the glossary provided within the B.E.S.T. standards:
 - A **claim** is a statement that something is true, or is a fact, although other people might not believe it.
 - **Evidence** is source-based information, including facts, figures, and details used to support the writer's claim (supporting data and details).
 - **Reasoning** is the process of thinking about something in a logical way in order to form a conclusion or judgment (the "how" or "why" the evidence supports the claim).
- For each creature, students will identify:
 - the BEST piece of evidence the author uses to support their claim.
 - two reasons used by the author to support their claim and evidence.
- Use the gradual release process to model thinking, provide guided practice, and allow for independent application.

READ FOR MEANING – SUPPORTING CLAIMS WITH EVIDENCE AND REASONING

CLAIM: The creatures described in this book are some of the deadliest animals in the ocean.

Creature	Evidence	Reasoning
great white shark	Great whites are the largest predator fish in the ocean.	1. Weighs five thousand pounds. 2. They stalk their prey.
barracuda	The barracuda has two rows of sharp fangs in both its upper and lower jaws.	1. Can use teeth to rip a fish to shreds. 2.
box jellyfish	Scientists say that the Australian box jellyfish is the most poisonous marine animal on the planet.	1. 2.
sea anemone		1. 2.
moray eel		1. 2.
piranha		1. 2.
striped surgeonfish		1. 2.
oyster toadfish		1. 2.
Indonesian needlefish		1. 2.
textile cone snail		1. 2.
saltwater crocodile		1. 2.
blue-ringed octopus		1. 2.
pufferfish		1. 2.

After:

- Students will use the chart above to determine which sea creature they think is the deadliest.
- Students will make a claim that states which animal they think is the deadliest.
- Students will write two paragraphs explaining why the creature they choose is deadlier than the other creatures mentioned in this book. Each paragraph will include:
 - a topic sentence that includes **ONE reason** why their creature is the deadliest.
 - Paragraph 1 - reason 1 from the chart
 - Paragraph 2 - reason 2 from the chart
 - **evidence** to support their reason.
 - a two to three sentence explanation of how their reason and evidence prove that their creature is deadlier than all the rest.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Support students in identifying evidence and reasons by using a color code system. Provide students with a printed version of the text, and ask them to highlight evidence in one color (yellow) and reasons in another color (green). Using a color code can help students visualize the difference between the two concepts.