



What's that pong? Incredible plants

Samantha Montgomerie

Focus phonics

l written as al as in colossal, animal, animals, finally

Tricky words

again, any, because, once, their, there, through, two, where, who, would

Book summary

We look at lots of clever things that plants do and why they do them, including plants that pong like rotten meat to attract pollinators, and plants that eat animals.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the phoneme /l/ spelt al in the text and extend to other known words with the same spelling of this phoneme, e.g. fatal, final, medal, nasal, loyal, royal, oval.

Comprehension:

- Retrieve and record information/key details from the text
- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Summarise main ideas
- Make inferences from the text
- Make predictions that fit with information given in the text
- Make connections
- Ask questions
- Visualise

Fluency:

- Read at a natural speaking pace with minimal sounding out
- Pay attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate
- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the cover and read the title together. What does "pong" mean? (a nasty smell) Do you think a plant would have a nasty smell? What does "incredible" mean? (unbelievable, amazing, outstanding, different) Ask: What do you see in the picture? Could this be a smelly plant? (it is smelly, it is the corpse flower) Look at the title page. Could this be another smelly plant? Who is the author? (Samantha Montgomerie) Ask: Why do you think Samantha chose this title? (to catch the eye of students and show them that it will be a fun book to read) Have you read any other books by Samantha and what did you think of them? (in the Reading Road series, Samantha has written Rock it!, Tip that hat, Kick Fly Draw Drum) Read and

discuss the blurb on the back cover. Flip through the book to get a sense of the contents. Ask: Has anyone been near a smelly plant? Share any prior knowledge. Ask: Is this a fiction or non-fiction book? How do you know? Make predictions about what kind of information might be given in the text. Keep a note of predictions and return to them later.

Quick phonics warm-up: Read the words on the inside front cover together, with the focus phoneme of /l/, written as al. Flip through the text to find and read words with this focus phoneme and spelling. Discuss the meaning of these words. Build the focus word *animal* with letter cards. Think of words that rhyme with *animal*. List these to read together. Sort these words into /l/ spelt al and /l/ spelt le, e.g. petal, usual, little, middle, cattle, riddle, vocal, vital, apple. Then read the words.

Vocabulary check:

pong p 2 unpleasant smell

pitcher p 16 large jug

Morphology: incredible – impossible to believe. The prefix in- means not. The root word “cred” comes from the Latin meaning to believe. The suffix -ible means able to be. Altogether “incredible” means “not able to be believed”.

Etymology: Cactus p 8 c1600, in the classical sense, “cardoon, artichoke” from Latin cactus, from Greek kaktos, name of a type of prickly plant of Sicily (the Spanish artichoke).

Tricky word practice: Display the tricky words *once* and *again*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words?

once – the tricky parts are on which says /w/ /u/; and ce which says /s/ – /w/ /u/ n/ /s/.

again – the tricky parts are a which says /u/; ai which says /e/ – /u/ /g/ /e/ /n/.

Practise reading and spelling these tricky words.

During reading

Read the story: This book may not fit into a single reading session. The end of p 13 is a good point to break the reading. Students can finish the book in a second group session or for homework.

Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start by reading the text with students, then invite them to take over the reading. On p 2, ask: How does a rose smell? (sweet) On p 3, ask: What does corpse mean? (dead body) Why is this plant called a corpse lily? (it looks like a dead animal and smells rotten) On p 4, ask: Why has this flower got the corpse name as well? (it smells of rotting flesh) How often does it flower? (once in 5-10 years) How high does it grow? (up to 3 m) What does “colossal” mean? (huge) Where have you seen this flower already in the book? (on the cover) Compare the two pictures on p 4 and the front cover. Discuss the differences.
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each student in turn as they read a brief passage.
- Divide the book up between students; they read a section each using the headings and then summarise the ideas to report back on it.

Phonics support: Remind students to sound out and blend the letters as necessary to read any unfamiliar words, but encourage them to read words with familiar letters and sounds fluently on sight if they can, without sounding out. If students get stuck on a word, model how to sound out and blend the sounds in the word. Encourage students to help each other with sounding out and blending and praise good use of this strategy, especially words with the focus phoneme of

/l/ written as al. Practise making the focus words with letter cards, e.g. colossal, finally, animal, animals.

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the story and encourage students to find and retrieve key details from the text, e.g. at the end of p 6, ask: Why do insects go to the dragon arum lily? (it smells like a meal to them) On p 7, why do these plants smell so bad? (to attract insects that will spread their pollen) On p 11, what clever things do cactus plants do? (they store water and have prickles to scare away animals that want a drink)

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What new information have you learned about incredible plants? Which plant is your favourite? Why do you say that? What did you think of the speech bubbles in the book? Did they help you understand things? What did Samantha (the author) need to know before writing this text? How does it compare to any of her other books? Is it similar or different?

Comprehension: Review the predictions made earlier. Were they correct? Were there any surprises? On p 11, what does "sinister" mean? What do you notice about the phrase "meat-eating munchers" on p 14? (it has alliteration of "m", it has a compound word with a hyphen, it sounds funny; it also is a good introduction to what a venus fly trap does) Why is the venus fly trap a sinister meat-eating muncher? (its main aim is to trap flies for food) What are booby traps? (hidden traps – the fly doesn't see the whiskers in the venus fly trap)

Discuss the questions on the inside back cover.

Ask students to choose a heading and retell part of the text.

Look for synonyms in the text for the word *pong*. (stench, stinky, bad smell)

Find words in the text that end in -ible like incredible, horrible, terrible, possible, and discuss their meaning. Count and clap the syllables in each.

Find the meaning of the following words in the context of the text and discuss: complex, triggers, nectar, segments.

Sometimes two words sound the same but their meanings are different, e.g. meet, meat. They are called homophones. Think of other examples, e.g. pour, poor; here, hear.

What do you notice about the words "survive and thrive" on p 25? (They rhyme. This is an example of assonance which the author uses to make the text interesting. Alliteration (e.g. in meat-eating munchers) is for the same reason.) What helps the plants to survive and thrive? (seeds being spread far and wide)

Find words in the text with adjacent consonants, e.g. flesh, storing, plant, clever, blow, prickly, spines. See who can find the most.

Fluency: Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. (echo-reading) Students choose another brief passage and read it in the same manner, then swap over. (Make sure they change tone as appropriate for the speech bubbles.) Students practise speed-reading the focus words from the inside front cover to encourage automatic recall (words that can be recalled automatically have been orthographically mapped to students' long-term memory).

Spelling and writing through dictation: Read out the following passage for students to write. It uses words and sentences from the text as these are decodable. The focus is on encoding (spelling) rather than creating content.

(page 2)

There are some incredible plants on our planet. Let's take a look at some clever things that plants do, and why. Not all plants smell sweet like a rose. Some can make a terrible pong. Hold your nose! You are going to meet some stinky plants and find out why they smell so bad.

(page 3)

The corpse lily is red and has bumps on it. The bumps make it look like meat. Inside, it has hairs. It looks like a dead animal. It smells like rotten fish.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

/l/ spelt al.

Write words.

Dictated sentences.

Write sentences.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Vocabulary work.

Complete sentences.

Write a book review.

Worksheet 3: Science/Our Living World

Name the plants and write facts about them.

Worksheet 4: Science/Information Organisation

Draw flow charts.