

TEACHER'S GUIDE



Spectacular Spots

Written and illustrated by Susan Stockdale

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Ages 2–6 • Nonfiction • Animals • Habitats

GRL H; Gr 1

ABOUT THE BOOK

Nature boasts a variety of patterns in ecosystems around the world. Animals exhibit patterns as well, and are found in wide-ranging habitats.

Spectacular Spots, a companion to *Stripes of All Types* (Peachtree, 2013), explores the many ways in which animals across the globe benefit from their spots. The rhyming text briefly describes each creature in action: “Napping fawn/and strutting fowl./Grazing cattle,/swooping owl.” The final page brings the reader back home to children interacting with rollicking spotted Dalmatian puppies.

Animals are depicted in bright, bold colors in environments ranging from the ocean to the African plain to the farmland. A picture glossary identifies each animal, its class and habitat; and describes how its spots help it survive, from helping it hide from enemies to warning other creatures to stay away. A matching game encourages close observation, asking readers to match the 20 different spot patterns to their respective animals.

THEMES

- animals
- habitats
- world environments

SKILLS REINFORCED

- compare and contrast
- listening
- main idea
- nonfiction in literature
- recalling details
- rhyming
- vocabulary development

BEFORE YOU READ

- Show the endpapers. Discuss what pattern the students see and the animal to which it might belong.
- Show the half-title page featuring the fawn. Talk about what other animals have white spots.
- Have the students name other animals they know that have spots of other colors.
- Review the meaning of fiction and nonfiction. Ask the students if they think this book about animal patterns is fiction or nonfiction, and why. Tell them it is nonfiction.
- Remind them to listen for important details as you read the book. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL #7; SL-3**

MEETING THE STANDARDS

The activities in this guide directly address a variety of standards across the curriculum. Following each activity, you'll find an abbreviation for the standard(s) it supports.

AS YOU READ

- Ask the students to take notice of the actions of the different animals. There are verbs that may be new to children, such as “scouting” and “strutting.” Ask them to name other animals that act in the same way, e.g. swim, dash, graze and swoop. You can chart these answers on paper and talk about them afterwards.
- Remind them to think about the book’s main idea.

AFTER YOU READ

- Show pages on the last spread of the book and identify the animals depicted in the thumbnail images.
- “Picture walk” through the book. Discuss the actions of each animal and what surrounds the animal in its environment.
- Discuss the main idea of the book and the main events that took place using the questioning strategy *who, what, where, when, why, and how*.
- Identify the animals and their settings.
- Identify the story as nonfiction. Discuss what makes it nonfiction. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #2, 3, 4, 6 & 7**

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Read through the book again and have the students raise their hands when they hear an action word. List those words and discuss their meaning. Use the animals and pictures to supply context clues. Assign one of the verbs to small groups and have them work together to plan a way to act it out. Ask groups to take turns acting out their word while the remaining groups guess the word. **CCSS.ELA-CCRA #4, Literacy.RL #4, Literacy.RI #4**
- Use the back matter pages to identify each animal. Ask each student to choose an animal and write words that describe it. Next, ask them to write about the animal’s habitat as depicted in the illustration. Then ask them to combine their ideas and write a short paragraph about their animal. Have them share their writing with a partner and make any needed changes. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #7, Literacy.W #2 & 5**
- Read the book and ask the students to listen for words in phrases that begin with the same letter. Have them raise their hands when they hear one.
- Choose several alliterative phrases such as “charging

cheetah” from the book and write them so everyone can see them. Discuss how those phrases help the book sound like poetry. Have students take turns pointing out their favorite phrase and saying it aloud. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL #4**

- Locate the rhyming words and write them as pairs. In groups, assign 2-3 words from the book and have students think of other words that rhyme with those words. See how many they can find. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL #4**
- Perform the book as a reader’s theater. Use the artwork from the art activity section in this guide to show the images they drew as each group speaks its part. Record the performance and show it to the class. Talk about what makes a good performance. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL #5**
- Ask the librarian to help you find books about some of the animals that are appropriate for the grade level you teach. Read the books to the class and identify facts and text features that provide more information about the animal. [You may see a bibliography, a close-up, a text box, a heading, the main text, glossary, table of contents, or charts, graphs, or maps, among other things.] Use the information they have learned from the nonfiction book or prior research to create a text feature to accompany one of the pages from the book. You might want to choose one spread and have everyone create a text feature for that spread. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #5**

WRITING

- Group the students and assign each group an animal to observe and discuss. Use the book, other nonfiction books, and websites to learn more about the animal. Have each group generate two lists: one with adjectives describing the animal and one with verbs that apply to the animal. Individually, have each student write a paragraph about the animal. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W #2**
- Ask older students to research an animal from the book using several sources. Have them share information with others researching the same animal. Individually, ask them to write a report on the animal using grade level writing conventions. Include appearance, habitat, behavior, diet, and lifecycle. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W #7 & 8**

SCIENCE

- Discuss the main idea of the book. Then review the meaning of *camouflage* (defined as “to disguise”) and

how the animals in the book use color and pattern to camouflage themselves as you picture walk through the book. Include ways these animals are alike and different. Then ask the children to look at the colors of their clothes and think about how those colors could provide camouflage outdoors. For example, a white shirt blends with the snow; brown pants blend with the ground; a green dress blends with the grass; and a red jacket blends with red flowers in a garden.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #2, 3 & 6; NGSS. LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms; ESS3.A: Natural Resources; LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms; LS3.A: Inheritance of Traits; LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

- Read another book about animals and camouflage coloring. Compare and contrast the main point from each book using a Venn diagram. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #9; NGSS. LS1.D: Information Processing**
- Post a class list naming all the animals in the book. Classify each of the animals into groups: Backbone (Vertebrates) such as the jaguar and cow and No Backbone (Invertebrates) such as the snail and ladybug. Categorize the groups further: Amphibians, Reptiles, Fish, Birds, Mammals, Arthropods (insects). (Animal classifications are provided in the back matter.) **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #4; NGSS. ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions; LS1.A: Structure and Function; ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions; ETS1.C: Optimizing the Design Solutions**
- Choose an animal and make a simple lifecycle diagram in four stages: birth; growth; maturity; and death. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #3; NGSS. LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms; ESS2.E: Biogeology; ESS3.A: Natural Resources; ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions; LS1.A: Structure and Function (1-LS1-1); LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms; (1-LS1-2); LS1.D: Information Processing; LS3.A: Inheritance of Traits; LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems; (2-LS2-1); (2-LS2-2) ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions**

MATH

- Look at the patterns on the last two pages of the book. Discuss what a pattern is and use one of those in the book to show the students how to identify it. Then examine the patterns in the back of the book, one at a time, and leaf through the book. Have the students raise their hands as you locate the animal to which it belongs. Follow up with a patterning practice. Set up a pattern of animals for younger children — two birds and two fish, repeating, and then ask the students which animal comes next.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #5; CCSS.Math.Content.K.G.A.1 Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes, and describe the relative positions of these objects using terms such as above, below, beside, in front of, behind, and next to;

CCSS.Math.Content.1.G.A.1 Distinguish between defining attributes (e.g., triangles are closed and three-sided) versus non-defining attributes (e.g., color, orientation, overall size); build and draw shapes to possess defining attributes;

CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality

- In groups, look up the average height or length of one of the animals in standard units. Record the data on a chart. Then order the sizes of the different animals researched. **CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.A.1; CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.A.2; CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.A.1; CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.A.2**

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Select five animals from the book and find the location of their native habitat on a world map. Use the map to write the name of the animals and their country of origin. Without a map, write the animal and country and continent as a group. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #3**

ART

- Have the students create their own pattern of spots inside a square of paper, filling the page. Use two or three colors to reflect the patterns in the book. Count their spots and compare them as a group. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.5**
- Discuss perspective and review some of the animals in the book. Compare and contrast the different views of the animals. Discuss proportion as you compare two very differently sized animals, such as the ladybug and the cheetah. Ask students to draw their own ladybug and cheetah using the same proportion. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #3 & 4**
- Review text features in nonfiction books. Identify the text features in the book. Look through the animal pictures. Have students choose and draw an animal with spots, and then create a diagram to show its different parts. Alternatively, use a preprinted picture and have the students create the text feature. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI #5**

MOVEMENT

- Ask children to describe and then imitate the movement of each animal from the book. Have

them show and tell what the animal is going to do next. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL #4**

- Even the most effective camouflage can fail if a hidden animal suddenly moves and catches the enemy's eye. Demonstrate this by showing how movement can attract predators' attention. Ask two or three student volunteers to be "hawks." The rest of the class will be prey. Have the class move about the room while pretending to be small animals, such as songbirds and squirrels. When you call out "hawk!" the prey must freeze. The hawks will then visually search for movement; any child that moves even slightly must take his or her seat. Afterwards, discuss with the class what would really happen in the wild, and why camouflage alone does not provide the animals with enough protection. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL #4**
- Set up a starting and finish line. Name an animal and have children discuss and practice how to walk like it. Then have the children line up and race in the style of that animal's motion. Repeat the race with other animals.
 1. Crab Race: Racers are on all fours (hands and feet), and must move sideways.
 2. Chimp Race: Racers hold their ankles with their hands or drag their knuckles on the ground.
 3. Frog Race: Racers squat in frog position and hop.
- Let the children think of other animals to imitate in their races. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL #4**
- Animals hide from predators by using cover, such as bushes, trees, and rocks. Have younger children make their own cover by draping a blanket over a table and hiding under it. Ask them to be still for a period of time, like animals are.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Read a nonfiction book about one of the animals from this book. Write a comparison of the two books and the approach the author took. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.9**
- Perform the story as a reader's theater with students. Record and play back the recording for the class. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.5**

REVIEWS

"Clustered in big, flat, cleanly drawn scenes reminiscent of Nancy Tafuri's, creatures from leopard to sea slug, fawn to ladybug pose in artfully variegated natural settings.... [A] spot-on animal gallery for budding naturalists." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Characteristically eye-catching illustrations. A book to please and inform." —*Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Stockdale is an author and illustrator of children's picture books that celebrate nature with exuberance and charm. Her books have won numerous awards and her distinctive animal

imagery is also featured on calendars, puzzles and other products sold worldwide. She lives with her husband and two cats in Chevy Chase, Maryland and speaks frequently at schools and conferences.

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prepared by Shirley Smith Duke

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