DISCUSSION GUIDE

Grades K–3

Pairing Fiction and Nonfiction with The Magic School Bus®



Meets Educator Standards Including Common Core—SEE INSIDE

History of The Magic School Bus

Scholastic first introduced children around the world to Ms. Frizzle and her magical bus in 1986 with *The Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*, written by Joanna Cole and illustrated by Bruce Degen. Each book in the series takes students on a scientific adventure with the wacky teacher Ms. Frizzle and combines factually accurate scientific lessons with humorous plot lines and beautiful illustrations. The Magic School Bus brings humor and true kid-like curiosity to science and learning—encouraging kids to "take chances, make mistakes, and get messy!"

"Children delight in the energy and imagination of The Magic School Bus series. We are happy that the series continues to attract the support and enthusiasm of parents and teachers too, by encouraging children to explore, discover, and learn about the world around them."— Deborah Forte, President, Scholastic Media

"Just as *Sesame Street* revolutionized the teaching of letters and numbers by making it so entertaining the children had no idea they were actually learning something, so the 'Magic School Bus' books make science so much fun that the information is almost incidental."— *The New York Times*

About Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen

Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen, the author and illustrator of the books, have collaborated for more than twenty-five years. In 1994, Scholastic Entertainment, with support from The National Science Foundation, introduced *The Magic School Bus*® animated television series, starring Lily Tomlin as the voice of Ms. Frizzle. Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen have received numerous awards for their work, the most recent being the National Endowment for the Arts Foundation Award for Outstanding Service to Public Education. Joanna Cole lives in Key West, Florida, with her husband. Bruce Degen lives in Newtown, Connecticut, with his wife.

Magic School Bus



Photo © Scholastic Inc.



Photo © Scholastic Inc.

Introducing Magic School Bus Presents

Inspired by the work of Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen on the classic series, Scholastic introduced Magic School Bus Presents, a new nonfiction series that features vivid full-color photographs that are accompanied by illustrations of the beloved Ms. Frizzle and other familiar characters. The books in this series can be used as companions to the original Magic School Bus titles and will help further students' interest in and knowledge of science concepts.

Spotlight on the Author *R.6, R.9*

As students prepare to read, guide them to think about the author's purpose for writing the book. Before reading a book aloud or asking students to read independently, flip through and ask the following questions about the author's purpose and text type.

- What do you think is the main purpose of each book?
- Does the book present facts, a fictional story, or both?
- Why did the author choose the type of images in each book?



Frizzle Focus

After reading a book, ask students to distinguish their own point of view from that of the author, narrator, or characters.

Text Structure under the Microscope *R.5, R.9, R.10*

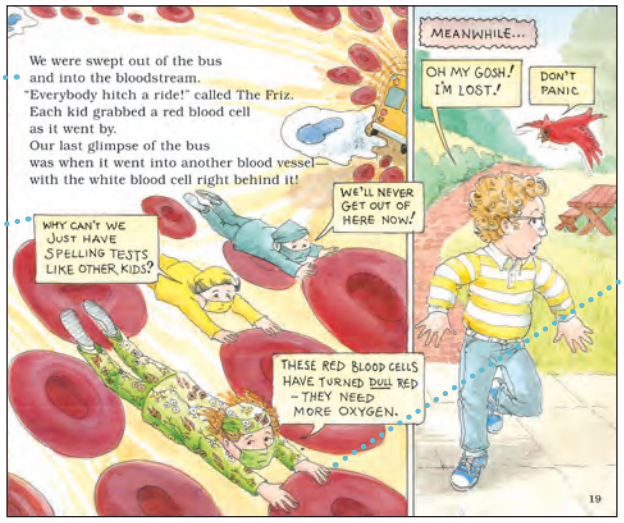
Learning the structure and text features of books will help students know the purpose before they read the text. Students will form a concept of what the book is about and will better understand the text when reading. Teach students the differences between fiction and nonfiction books—see examples of these differences below. Flip through both types of Magic School Bus books and guide students to notice the differences.

Fiction Example

From *The Magic School Bus: Inside the Human Body*

Story:
Fiction books explain an event that is not real and usually has a beginning, middle, and an end.

Dialogue:
Many fiction books contain conversations, or dialogue, between the characters. In The Magic School Bus, the dialogue sometimes appears in speech bubbles.



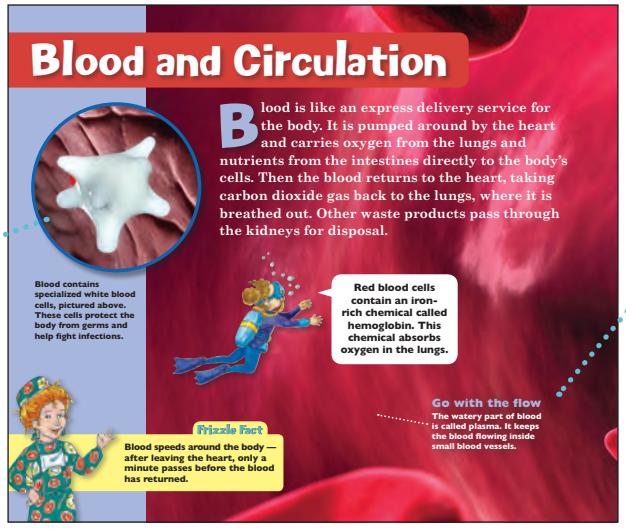
Characters:
Fiction books usually have characters. The characters in The Magic School Bus include Ms. Frizzle, Arnold, and the other students in the class.

Nonfiction Example

From *The Magic School Bus Presents: The Human Body*

Heading:
Text in nonfiction books is separated by headings, which summarize the focus of a section.

Caption:
Nonfiction books frequently contain captions to give context to the photographs and illustrations.



Labels:
Detailed information about part of a picture or illustration is explained through labels.

Frizzle Focus

Give students a list of various text features and ask them to race a partner to find the most text features in a book!



What a Pair! *R.5, R.6, R.7, R.9*

Pairing fiction and nonfiction text helps students fully understand a topic. In order to build background knowledge, read the classic Magic School Bus book first. Then read the related nonfiction Magic School Bus Presents book to teach content-area knowledge and encourage further exploration.

Use this chart to help students compare and contrast fiction and nonfiction books, or consider creating your own comparison chart with your students to define fiction vs. nonfiction. Ask students to choose a Magic School Bus book and the corresponding Magic School Bus Presents title and identify how elements of each fit into these categories.

(Hint: The original Magic School Bus books have elements of nonfiction as well as fiction!)

	Fiction	Nonfiction
Author's main purpose	Tell a story to entertain	Present facts to inform
Text structure, format, and layout	Paragraphs, speech (in quotations or speech bubbles), a storyline	Headings, captions, labels, table of contents, glossary, photographs
Contents	Characters and events from the author's imagination	Includes factual information about a topic

Fiction Example
From *The Magic School Bus: On the Ocean Floor*



Nonfiction Example
From *The Magic School Bus Presents: Sea Creatures*





Frizzle Focus

Have students look closely at the pictures in The Magic School Bus classic texts to see which aspects of the illustrations are true and which are not.

Anchor Standard: Writing

W.2, W.8, W.9, W.10

Teach students to use writing as a way to demonstrate their understanding of what has happened in their reading and to convey real and imagined experiences.

Framing It!

Many students need more practice writing informational text. After reading a Magic School Bus book, ask students to write down important information about the topic, explaining what they have learned. Guide students to introduce a topic using facts, definitions, and details from the book. Provide lists of linking words, such as also, another, and, more, and but.

Try these sentence frames to get students started:

This book tells us that…

This section of the book is about…

We should care about this because…

I learned that…

In my own words, I can explain that…

I want to learn more about…

One concept I am confused about is…

Following the Evidence!

Help students convey their understanding of informational text by teaching them to present and organize evidence clearly in their writing. Guide students to create a title, find the main idea and supporting details, and sum up the information in a concluding sentence.

Title: Describe what your piece is about using only a few words.

Big Idea: Based on the evidence in the text, describe the main idea of the topic you are writing about.

Supporting Details: Find evidence from the text that proves the main idea.

Concluding Sentence: Write a statement that explains why the information is important.

Title: Harmful Hurricanes!		
Big Idea: Hurricanes are very strong storms with winds and rain.		
Detail 1: Hurricane winds can rip trees from the ground.	**Detail 2:** If the wind blows faster than 74 miles per hour, then it is a hurricane.	**Detail 3:** Waves during a hurricane are 20 feet higher than normal waves.
Concluding Sentence: The strong winds and rain of a hurricane can cause a lot of damage if it hits land.		

Frizzle Focus

Teach students to paraphrase the main idea and the key details by summarizing the text in their own words.



Text-to-Text *W.8*

As students prepare for college and a career, they need to use more than one resource to conduct research. All Magic School Bus books contain factual information. Remind students to look at the back of the Magic School Bus Presents books to learn more about experts and careers in that field and about words and terms used in the book.

When reading the Magic School Bus classic titles, ask students if the text is part of the made-up story or if it is stating an important fact. Point out that the yellow student reports contain facts.

Encourage students to use cross-text analysis by asking them to answer an important question about the text. Show students how to keep track of the information and write a final statement. Below is an example to help students keep track of information found in multiple resources.

Question: Is it possible to dig to the center of the earth? Why or why not?

	The Magic School Bus: Inside the Earth	The Magic School Bus Presents: Planet Earth
Clue 1	Ms. Frizzle puts a drill on the bus and they drill to the center of the earth, but since the center is made of solid metal, I think it would be hard to dig through it!	People in Russia tried to dig the deepest hole, but had to stop because the drill started to melt! They dug 7.5 miles down.
Clue 2	The author says it gets hotter the closer they get to the center of the earth.	The book says that no one can go inside the earth to see what it looks like.
Clue 3	I know it's getting hotter since one student says that they are lucky the bus is air-conditioned!	It says that the outer core is hot liquid iron and the inner core is solid iron. I don't think anyone could dig through that!
Statement	Even though Ms. Frizzle takes a field trip to the center of the earth, I think it's too hot for people to actually go there.	The facts tell us that it is not possible to dig to the center of the earth!

More Crazy Chronicles

Use The Magic School Bus classic books as a model for students to write their own narrative text. Read the books and point out features for students to include in their own writing, like dialogue and words that describe the characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings. Let students practice incorporating these qualities into their narrative writing by providing writing prompts for the Magic School Bus classic books.

Inside the Human Body If the Magic School Bus drove around your stomach today, what food would the class find?

Lost in the Solar System What other games would your class want to play on the moon?

On the Ocean Floor Describe what it might feel like to swim with a whale shark.



Frizzle Focus

Ask students to write their own Magic School Bus book. Walk students through the main plot of the books: Ms. Frizzle takes Arnold and the class on a scientific adventure! Help them conduct research on their topic using books and the Internet.

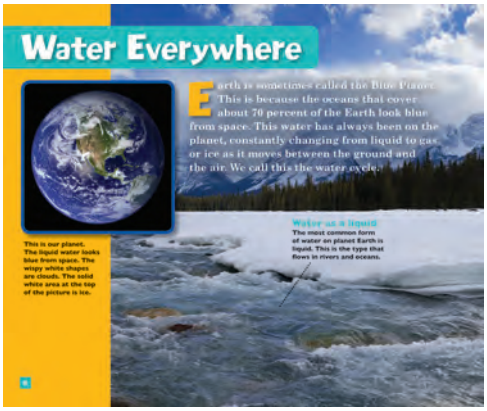
Anchor Standard: Speaking and Listening

Looking at the Whole Picture *SL.2*

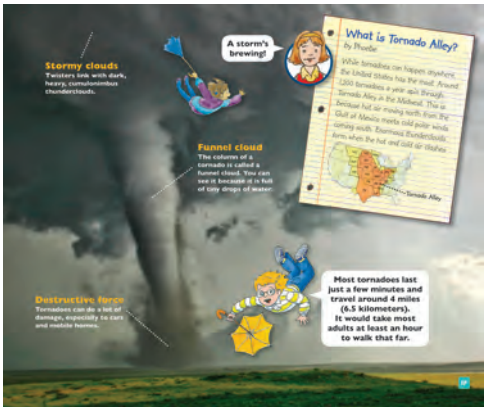
Not only must students learn to read the text in books carefully, they must also learn to gather meaning from visual representations. Graphs, charts, diagrams, and other pictures are frequently found in nonfiction text and help to explain information more deeply.

Students need practice "reading" visual cues in books. Teach students to ask themselves questions that will help them do so, such as:

- What do you see in the picture?
- What is happening?
- How does the picture relate to the text?
- Why is this important?
- Explain it to a partner in your own words.



From *The Magic School Bus Presents: Wild Weather*, p. 8



From *The Magic School Bus Presents: Wild Weather*, p. 17

Anchor Standard: Language

True-or-False: Domain Specific Words *L.4*

The books in The Magic School Bus Presents series contain a glossary of important words from the book. Teach these words explicitly so students can understand the text more deeply.

1. Give students an index card for each word in the glossary.
2. Ask students to write the word on one side.
3. Ask students to change half the definitions so that they are false. For example, a false definition for *desert* might be: a wet area where many plants grow because there is so much rain.
4. Partner students, or allow them to work independently to sort cards into TRUE and FALSE piles.
5. Have students correct the false cards by referring to the text and using context clues if necessary.
6. Ask students to check the glossary to ensure they are correct.

Frizzle Focus

Guide students to use these new words in conversations and in writing so they'll feel comfortable using the words through repeated exposure.





The Magic School Bus Classic Titles

The Magic School Bus: In the Time of the Dinosaurs
PB: 978-0-590-44689-1 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)



The Magic School Bus: Inside a Beehive
HC: 978-0-590-44684-6 • $15.99 (CAN $19.99)
PB: 978-0-590-25721-3 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)



The Magic School Bus: Inside a Hurricane
HC: 978-0-590-44686-0 • $15.99 (CAN $19.99)
PB: 978-0-590-44687-7 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)



The Magic School Bus: Inside the Human Body
HC: 978-0-590-41426-5 • $15.99 (CAN $19.99)
PB: 978-0-590-41427-2 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)



The Magic School Bus: On the Ocean Floor
HC: 978-0-590-41430-2 • $15.99 (CAN $19.99)
PB: 978-0-590-41431-9 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)



The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System
HC: 978-0-590-41428-9 • $15.99 (CAN $19.99)
PB: 978-0-590-41429-6 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)



The Magic School Bus: Inside the Earth
HC: 978-0-590-40759-5 • $15.99 (CAN $19.99)
PB: 978-0-590-40760-1 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)

The Magic School Bus Presents Nonfiction Titles



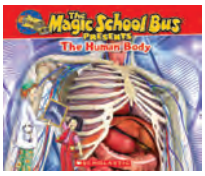
The Magic School Bus Presents: Dinosaurs
PB: 978-0-545-68583-2 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)
EBK: 978-0-545-68594-8 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)



The Magic School Bus Presents: Insects
PB: 978-0-545-68587-0 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)
EBK: 978-0-545-68599-3 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)



The Magic School Bus Presents: Wild Weather
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EBK: 978-0-545-68592-4 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)



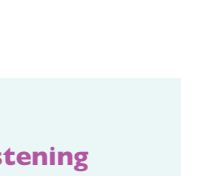
The Magic School Bus Presents: The Human Body
PB: 978-0-545-68364-7 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)
EBK: 978-0-545-68590-0 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)



The Magic School Bus Presents: Sea Creatures
PB: 978-0-545-68366-1 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)
EBK: 978-0-545-68589-4 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)



The Magic School Bus Presents: Our Solar System
PB: 978-0-545-68365-4 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)
EBK: 978-0-545-68591-7 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)



The Magic School Bus Presents: Planet Earth
PB: 978-0-545-68012-7 • $6.99 (CAN $7.99)
EBK: 978-0-545-68588-7 • $6.99 (CAN $6.99)

Visit scholastic.com/magicschoolbus for a listing of all Magic School Bus titles and more book-related resources!

Common Core Anchor Standards Found in This Guide

Anchor Standards for Reading
Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5, 6

Anchor Standards for Writing
Text Types and Purposes: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2
Research to Build and Present Knowledge: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8, 9
Range of Writing: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10

Anchor Standards for Speaking & Listening
Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Anchor Standards for Language
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4

About the Writer of This Guide

Suzanne Lauchaire is a former New York City teacher and reading specialist who taught second-grade students in the Bronx. She graduated from Manhattan College with a major in Early Childhood Education and Sociology. She received her Master of Arts from Teachers College, Columbia University, focusing on Applied Educational Psychology. Lauchaire has been associated with Scholastic for the past ten years, working for both the media and education departments, and most recently as a free-lance writer. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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