



Orientation

Ensure that you have read about using the plan in the Program Guide.

Book summary

Read the following summary to the student.

That summer there were ants everywhere, and alien tracking devices picked up unusual signals from outer space. Could these events be related? Valerie thinks so, but her brother, Michael, is not so sure ...

Introduction

Foster interest and activate the student's background knowledge. Be concise – focus on motivating and involving the student. Encourage prediction by using the text and illustrations on the cover of the book. Discuss new vocabulary and remind the student to use the glossary (when applicable). Also remind the student to ask him/herself questions before, during and after the reading.

Read the title of the book and discuss the cover picture together. Discuss what an alien tracking device might be, what it might be used for, and what it might look like.

Ask the student what they know about ants, including where ants live, how they behave, and what they eat. Discuss how the invasion of ants and the unusual alien signals could be related.

Discuss challenging vocabulary in the text. This may include “malfunctioning” (not working properly), “entomologist” (a person who studies insects), and “surveillance” (to watch closely).

Conferencing

Check how well the student reads

When you are conferencing, the student reads all or part of the book to you. Then:

- praise, pause, and prompt appropriately;
- check for accuracy (by counting mistakes) and fluency;
- check for understanding by using one or more of the following methods:
 - asking the comprehension questions provided and any others that seem necessary;
 - asking the student to retell the story in their own words;
 - asking questions about and discussing aspects of the story, such as the theme, plot, main ideas, sequence and characters;
 - encouraging the student to confirm the predictions they made during the orientation.

Decide what the student does next

Next recommend that the student:

- practices some more on the same book, with or without the audio;
- completes one of the activities provided that is related to the book;
- practices with another book from the same level; or
- is assessed for promotion to the next level.

Comprehension questions

1. Why did Valerie drape blankets across her bedroom ceiling?
2. How were the ants different from normal ants?
3. As you were reading, did you think the ants and the signals from outer space were related? What evidence in the story supports this?
4. What else could have caused the plague of ants?
5. Why do you think the author ended the story like this?

Answers to the Comprehension questions

1. So that the aliens/ants couldn't watch her.
2. Accept any of the following: they were living in the corners of the ceilings; there were lots of them; they flashed rather than fell when sprayed.
3. Answers will vary. Evidence may include: when Michael sprays the ants there is a flash; Valerie thinks that the aliens would find out about a planet before invading it, and they might be mobile transmitters.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.

Supporting English Language Learners

The following are suggestions for optional lessons to take with your English language learners. See the overview chart in the Program Guide for a summary of the text features of this book.

Purpose

Asking and answering questions

Introduce the concept and practice

Asking and answering questions will help the student think more deeply about the text and its wider context.

When the student has read the book, role-play a TV interview with Valerie. Explain that, first, you will be the reporter and the student will be Valerie. Ask the following questions: When did you first start to worry about the ants? What unusual ant behaviors have you noticed this summer? How have you dealt with the ant problem? Next, swap roles. Help the student to write questions to ask Valerie. Prompt by suggesting they ask “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” “who,” and “how” questions. Complete the role-play.





Name: Date:

Introduction: That summer there were ants everywhere, and alien tracking devices picked up unusual signals from outer space. Could these events be related? Valerie thinks so, but her brother, Michael, is not so sure ...

Errors
M S

“Disgusting!” my sister said loudly. “This is weird.”

“What’s _____?” I shut the refrigerator _____ and turned around. A _____ was making its way _____ the counter. “They’re ants,” _____ said, shrugging. “We always _____ ants in the summer.”

“_____ this many, Michael!” Valerie _____.

“There’s something strange going _____.” That summer, there did _____ to be more ants _____ usual. Long trails of _____ swarmed up walls, over _____, and under doors. They _____ in stores, on sidewalks, _____ up streetlights. They were _____.

Supermarkets sold out of _____ spray. The exterminators were _____ busiest they’d been in _____, investigating and spraying, but _____ they did made any _____. Then people had other _____ to worry about. Alien _____ devices picked up unusual _____ that had never been _____ before. The scientists tried to keep it quiet, but the media found out.

Accuracy Chart (Exact word replacement only)

Words Entered	Score	Level
More than 11 correct		Independent
10 or 11 correct		Instructional
Fewer than 10 correct		Frustration

Errors

M = Meaning (makes sense) ____ **S** = Syntax (sounds right) ____

Heard Seen Unseen

Comments:





That summer, there seemed to be more ants than usual. The exterminators were the busiest they'd been in years, but nothing they did made any difference. Then people had other things to worry about. Alien tracking devices picked up unusual signals.

The signals had never been registered before. The scientists tried to keep it quiet, but the media found out. Some of the signals came from outer space, but others were coming from Earth, and people believed aliens had landed. The alien invasion scare had started.

The police and fire departments took lots of calls about suspected alien sightings. The events always seemed to be something that could be explained – a small plane flying low, fireworks exploding, or an emergency flare set off by mistake. Dad had his own theory about what was happening.

“The alien tracking devices are probably malfunctioning,” he said. “Has anyone thought of that?” “Maybe,” said my sister, Valerie. “I just wish they'd stop spending money on outer space and spend it on getting rid of these horrible insects!” “Ants aren't horrible,” I informed her.

We'd done a school project on ants, so I knew all about them, but Valerie thought they were disgusting and weird. One day, she showed me the ants in her room and how they'd all gravitated to the corners of the ceilings. “Ants don't usually live on ceilings,” she said.

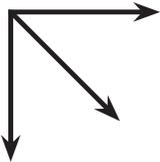
Valerie insisted that somehow the ants were surveillance devices for the alien invasion. The top scientists decided that the alien tracking devices must have been malfunctioning. Valerie doesn't believe them and I'm not sure. Ants are just insects ... aren't they?





Name: Date:

Words can be found in these directions:



The letter in each square can only be used in one word.

e	i	n	v	a	s	i	o	n	a	t	t	a	c	k	a
x	e	i	m	p	o	r	t	a	n	t	t	c	a	s	l
p	i	v	d	t	b	b	e	f	o	r	e	o	l	o	r
r	m	u	e	e	h	e	h	o	h	i	s	c	w	m	e
e	a	s	a	r	c	o	l	a	v	s	o	o	a	e	a
s	g	u	t	b	y	i	u	i	d	e	s	u	y	t	d
s	i	a	h	h	o	t	p	s	e	w	r	l	s	h	y
i	n	l	e	i	s	u	h	h	a	v	e	d	m	i	w
o	a	l	o	p	n	s	t	i	e	n	e	i	y	n	e
n	t	y	r	s	c	a	r	e	n	r	d	e	r	g	i
u	i	a	y	p	e	o	p	l	e	g	o	w	n	d	g
n	o	u	n	u	s	u	a	l	a	r	o	u	n	d	h
d	n	d	i	f	f	e	r	e	n	c	e	w	a	s	t
e	m	i	s	t	a	k	e	p	c	o	u	n	t	r	y
r	p	l	a	g	u	e	h	o	r	r	i	b	l	e	u
i	t	s	t	r	a	n	g	e	i	h	o	u	s	e	p

Words to find:

- | | | | | |
|---------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| about | decipher | important | people | to |
| already | difference | in | plague | under |
| always | everything | invasion | scare | unusual |
| around | expression | it | so | up |
| attack | had | mistake | something | usually |
| before | his | my | strange | was |
| believe | horrible | over | theory | weight |
| could | house | own | thousand | weird |
| country | imagination | | | |

Use the letters that are left to make the word that tells what was in the photographs on the Internet.





- ★ Spin the numbered spinner.
- ★ The highest number starts.
- ★ You need to spin the exact number to move onto the END square.

START This summer there seem to be more ants about than usual.	1	2	3 Nothing the exterminators do makes any difference to the ants. Miss a turn.
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19	20 Your dad thinks the alien tracking devices are malfunctioning. Go on to 25.	21	22	4
18 Most of the alien sightings reported can be explained. Spin again. If you spin a 3 or a 5, go on to 21.	END Your sister doesn't believe the scientists, but you're not sure. After all, ants are just insects ... aren't they?		23	5
17	30	24 Your sister shows you how the ants all gravitate to the corners of the ceiling. Go back three spaces.		6
16	29	25		7 Alien tracking devices pick up unusual signals. Go on to 10.
15	28 The scientists decide that the alien tracking devices must have been malfunctioning. Spin again. Go forward that number.	27	26 Your sister thinks the ants are surveillance devices for the alien invasion. Spin again. Go back that number.	8
14 Some of the alien signals are coming from Earth. Name two numbers. If you spin one of them, go back to 10.	13	12	11 The scientists try to keep the alien signals quiet, but the media finds out. Go back to 8.	10
				9





Name: Date:

Identify the strengths and weaknesses in Valerie's argument that the ants were alien invaders. Write your opinion about her reasons.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were more ants than usual. <hr/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could be many reasons for more ants, like a larger food supply. <hr/>

I think

because

Write on the back of this page if you need more space.



Use specific examples from the text to justify Valerie's thinking and to show the weaknesses in her argument.

