

# Ranger Rick's

## Reading Adventures

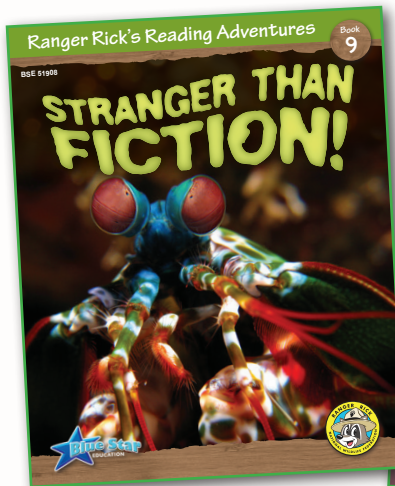
A Wild Reading, Writing,  
and Science Journey  
with  
Ranger Rick and Friends!





## Nonfiction Readers

Take a look inside the readers!



- Amazing, real-life photography to engage readers
- Exciting, relevant content written at appropriate grade levels
- Special text features that support and enrich content
- Vocabulary practice to strengthen reading comprehension
- Discussion questions to summarize the reading content
- Fun activities to extend students' reading experience





The lessons and activities in the 10-unit Teacher Resource are designed to inspire curiosity of the natural world. Each unit features step-by-step reading, writing, and science lessons as well as engaging student activities that will foster their understanding of Earth's diverse wildlife while encouraging them to unplug from screens and venture outdoors. This program will motivate students to embrace the wonders of nature and gain a lifelong appreciation for the environment.

**Content goals** inform teachers about the subject matter and the learning objectives covered in the unit.

**Summaries** show and explain the various activities included in each of the three sections (reading, writing, and science) of the unit.

**The materials list** informs teachers of the student pages needed to complete the unit.

**Reminders** from Reggie Otter help teachers get the most out of every lesson.

## Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

### Unit Overview



#### Content Goals

In this unit, students will be studying ten animals that are so strange, it is hard to believe they are real. From the Australian platypus, which seems to combine the body parts of many different animals, to the Philippine tarsier, whose eyes are bigger than its brain, these surreal animals and their strange characteristics will intrigue and delight students. Through various activities and assessments, students will gain an in-depth understanding and appreciation that "weird" is a wonderful way to be.



#### Reading Summary

Students will participate in vocabulary and pre-reading activities. Students will perform a close reading of the text, answer comprehension questions, and refer to key details and examples in the text to explain what the text is saying. They will do this by completing the graphic organizer pictured on the right.



#### Writing Summary

Students will learn about sentence fragments and complete sentences, and will write personal narratives about an experience with an unusual animal. The graphic organizer used for this lesson is pictured on the right.



#### Science Summary

Students will participate in an experiment involving ants. Students will conduct a study to find what type of foods ants prefer (salty, sweet, natural, or processed). Will the results be stranger than fiction? Students will record their observations and discuss their findings as a class.



### Materials

- ✖ copies of *Stranger Than Fiction!* reader
- ✖ copies of *Boomer Badger's Word App* (page 229)
- ✖ copies of *Background Information* [optional] (page 151)
- ✖ copies of *Ranger Field Notes* (page 154)
- ✖ copies of reading activity sheets (pages 155–156)
- ✖ copies of writing activity sheets (pages 158–160)
- ✖ copies of science activity sheet (page 162)
- ✖ copies of assessments (pages 163–165)



### You "Otter" Remember ...

- ✖ For additional adventures, check out *Ranger Rick's Adventure Cards* and associated activities (see page 183).
- ✖ Have students be super adventurous and creative by writing their own adventures with *My Ranger Rick Adventures* (see page 208).
- ✖ And don't forget, there is more fun to be had in the *Extension Activities* section on page 227.



## Teacher Resource

**Vocabulary words** and various **vocabulary activities** increase depth and understanding of the content vocabulary for each unit.

Each **reading lesson** includes clear and concise steps to guide the teacher seamlessly through the pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities.

Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

### Reading Lesson

#### Reading Objectives

- Students will read and comprehend informational text independently and proficiently.
- Students will demonstrate understanding by answering comprehension questions and determining key details and examples in a text to explain its meaning.

#### Teacher Summary of *Stranger Than Fiction!*

In this book, students learn about wonderfully weird animals. These animals are so strange that it is hard to believe they are real. There is the platypus, which looks like a bunch of different animals rolled into one. The yeti crab has strangely furry legs, while the honey-pot ant has a bulging belly. The tufted leaved seadragon blends in with seaweed, and the naked mole-rat burrows underground. The thorny devil has vampire-like fangs, while the saiga sports a droopy nose. The thorny devil is a trickster with deer has vampire-like fangs, while the saiga sports a droopy nose. The thorny devil is a trickster with its fake head. The aye-aye has long, bony middle fingers, and the tarsier has eyes bigger than its brain! Get ready to meet a collection of quirky creatures!

**Note:** The multiple-choice quiz on page 164 may be administered as a pretest to assess students' prior knowledge.

#### Procedure

**Step 1:** Distribute copies of *Stranger Than Fiction!* to students. Take students on a picture walk of the book. Look at the subtitles, illustrations, and photos. Have students make predictions about the text. Write these predictions on the board.

**Step 2:** Ask students the "Pre-Reading Discussion Questions" (page 153). Ask students if they have any additional questions. Next, introduce the "Themes to Look For" (page 153) and write them on the board. Explain to students that they should be on the lookout for text relating to these themes as they read the book.

**Step 3:** Read the *Stranger Than Fiction!* book aloud to students. Stop to answer questions as they arise.

**Step 4:** Distribute copies of the *Ranger Field Notes* activity sheet (page 154). Have them complete the sheet as they read the book a second time independently. Have them complete the sheet as they read the book a second time independently.

**Step 5:** Distribute copies of the *Wacky Wheel* graphic organizer (page 155). Have students complete the organizer in pairs or small groups. The *Weird & Wanted* activity sheet (page 156) may be used as an extension activity.

**Step 6:** Select a "Wrap-Up Activity" for students to complete (see page 153).

#### Assessments

The running-record assessment, multiple-choice quiz, and the *Stranger Than Fiction!* quiz will be given at the conclusion of this section or upon the completion of the unit.

#51674G Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures 152

Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

### Key Vocabulary

#### Procedure

**Step 1:** Review the following vocabulary words and definitions with the class. Read each sample sentence aloud.

Vocabulary Word	Definition
arches	bends into the shape of an arch or curve <i>Sample Sentence:</i> Whenever my cat gets frightened, he <i>arches</i> his back and hisses.
bacteria	very small, one-celled living organisms, many of which can cause disease <i>Sample Sentence:</i> Washing your hands with soap and warm water is a good way to kill <i>bacteria</i> .
droopy	hanging down or sagging <i>Sample Sentence:</i> Whenever my dog is sad, his tail gets <i>droopy</i> .
migrate	to travel from one region or area to another <i>Sample Sentence:</i> I hope I get to see a pod of orcas when they <i>migrate</i> up the coast.
mucus	a thick liquid that is produced in parts of the body such as the nose and throat <i>Sample Sentence:</i> I have a horrible head cold that is filling my nose with <i>mucus</i> .
rodents	mammals (such as rats, mice, squirrels, or beavers) that have sharp front teeth <i>Sample Sentence:</i> Some <i>rodents</i> must have eaten all the birdseed out of the birdfeeder!

**Step 2:** Distribute copies of the *Boomer Badger's Word App* activity sheet (page 229) to students. This sheet can be utilized in different ways.

- You may divide the class into six groups and assign each group one word. Have groups share their completed activity sheets with the class.
- Place students in groups of six and assign each student one word. Have students share their completed activity sheets with their groups.
- You may wish for students to work independently. In this case, have each student choose a word from the glossary that he or she considers to be the most challenging. Ask student volunteers to share their completed activity sheets with the class.

**Step 3:** If time permits, try some of the fun vocabulary activities listed below.

- Have students write a fictional short story from the first-person point of view of one of the animals in the book. Challenge them to use as many vocabulary words as they can.
- Have students create an infographic about some of the animals in the book. Challenge them to include at least three of the vocabulary words.
- Place students in pairs and have them take turns quizzing each other on the vocabulary words.

#51674G Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures 150 ©Blue Star Education

Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

### Comprehension Connections

#### Discussion Questions

**Pre-Reading**

- What "strange" fictional animals can you think of?
- What characteristics would make an animal "strange"?
- Have you ever seen a "strange" animal? Describe what it looked like.

**Guided**

Pages 4–5 What animals does the platypus resemble?  
How did the yeti crab get its name?

Pages 6–7 Why do honey-pot ants store liquid in their abdomens?  
What purpose do the leaf-like growths on the leafy seadragon serve?

Pages 8–9 Why will you most likely never see a naked mole-rat?  
Why do tufted deer have sharp teeth? What do they do with them?

Pages 10–11 How does the droopy nose of the saiga help it survive?  
What does the thorny devil do when it's threatened?

Pages 12–13 What does the aye-aye do with its long, bony fingers?  
How do the tarsier's large eyes help it survive?

**Post-Reading**

- Why do you think the platypus has a beaver-like tail?
- What physical characteristics make the naked mole-rat look so strange?
- How do the saiga's droopy noses help them in the winter season?
- Why does the thorny devil have a fake head?
- Which is your favorite strange animal from the book and why?

#### Wrap-Up Activity

Select one activity sheet from the list below. Students may complete the activity sheet independently, in pairs, or in small groups.

- Becky's Blog** (page 230): Students will answer questions about their favorite parts of the *Stranger Than Fiction!* text. They will be challenged to create a new cover for the book.
- Reggie's Recap** (page 231): Students will write summaries of the *Stranger Than Fiction!* text. Students will be challenged to draw a picture that summarizes the text, as well.
- Scarlett Fox's Fast Facts** (page 232): Students will list the top-five most interesting facts they learned from the *Stranger Than Fiction!* text. Students will be challenged to create a quiz based on those facts.

#51674G Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures 153

The before, during, and after reading **discussion questions** scaffold students' learning and help them activate prior knowledge, engage with the text, and think critically about the text.

**Wrap-Up activities** include engaging and fun sheets students can complete independently, in pairs, or in small groups.



## Teacher Resource

Each **writing lesson** is designed to improve students' writing skills and knowledge of the English language.

Each hands-on **science lesson** highlights and further supplements the science content for the wildlife topic covered in the reader.

### Science Lesson

Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

#### Science Objectives

- Students will learn that some animals adapt to survive in their changing environments.
- Students will demonstrate understanding by performing an experiment in which they study the eating habits of ants.

#### Background

It seems that if any kind of human food is left out long enough, it will attract ants. But, why is this so? In nature, it seems as if ants eat pretty much anything. Just a few of the things they are known for eating include leaves, seeds, insects, nectar, and honeydew. Some ants even prey on small mammals, reptiles, and birds. When these foods are not readily available, do ants look for other sources of nutrition and energy? We know from experience that they will eat the same food we eat if they can find it. But, of the food we eat, do they prefer one type of food over another? If given the option, would they choose a food that was salty, sweet, natural, or processed?

#### Materials

- plastic lids or dishes
- salty potato chips
- sweet, sugary candy
- fresh fruit
- seeds

#### Procedure

**Step 1:** Begin the lesson by rereading page 6 of the *Stranger Than Fiction!* book aloud to the class. Ask students if they have ever seen ants at their homes and if so, what were the ants eating? Have students share with the class their experiences with ants.

**Step 2:** Have a class discussion about what ants eat. Explain that they eat leaves, seeds, insects, and nectar. Some even eat small mammals, reptiles, and birds. But, we all know ants also eat our food. Why? Discuss with the class how animals adapt to survive in different environments. Read the background information above aloud to the class.

**Step 3:** Tell the class that they will be conducting an experiment to see what type of foods ants prefer when given a choice. Have them adapted to prefer processed human food or natural non-processed foods? Do they prefer sweet or salty foods?

**Step 4:** Take students outside along with your food samples (the food samples and lids in different areas around the school need to leave them longer if no ants have arrived.)

**Step 5:** Distribute copies of the *Food for Thought* activity sheet. Have them take notes and make observations.

**Step 6:** Return to the classroom and hold a class discussion based on student observations.

#### Scarlett's STEM Challenge

Challenge students to build an ant farm.

©Blue Star Education

### Writing Lesson

Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

#### Writing Objectives

- Students will learn about sentence fragments and complete sentences so they can improve their writing.
- Students will demonstrate understanding by writing personal narratives about a time they encountered an unusual animal.

#### Procedure

**Step 1:** Share a short personal narrative from your own life. Include lots of sensory details. Be as descriptive as possible. At the conclusion of your story, have students draw pictures illustrating your story. Ask students what helped them to visualize your story.

**Step 2:** Tell students they will be writing their own personal narratives about an experience they have had with an unusual animal. It could be about their wacky dog or a silly cat in their neighborhood. Or, maybe they met a strange animal on a hike or at a zoo. Tell students that it is okay to elaborate or add fictional details to their stories to make the stories more descriptive and exciting. If students do not have an experience to write about, tell them it is okay to make one up as long as it is detailed and engaging.

**Step 3:** Explain to students that before they begin brainstorming ideas for their narratives, they will first be reviewing sentence fragments. Remind students that a complete sentence expresses a complete thought. It must have at least one independent clause. It needs to contain a subject and a verb. Just because a sentence has a capital letter at the beginning and a period at the end does not mean it is a complete sentence.

**Step 4:** Distribute copies of the *Silly Sentences or Funny Fragments?* activity sheet (page 158) to students. Have students complete the activity independently and then have them go over the answers with a partner. Answer any additional questions students may have regarding sentence fragments.

**Step 5:** Distribute copies of the *Sorting My Story* graphic organizer (page 159) to students. Tell students to focus on one particular small event having to do with an animal. Tell them to include sensory details (what they saw, heard, touched, tasted, smelled). Encourage them to use dialogue or internal monologues. Remind them that adjectives and transition words are their friends.

**Step 6:** When students have completed their graphic organizers, have them write rough drafts of their narratives. When students have finished their drafts, have them trade with partners to proofread. Remind them to be on the lookout for sentence fragments.

**Step 7:** After students have made corrections to their rough drafts, distribute copies of the *Animal Tales* sheet (page 160). Instruct them to write the final drafts of their narratives using their best penmanship. Have student volunteers share their narratives with the class.

©Blue Star Education 157 #51674G Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures

### Running Record

Unit 9: Stranger Than Fiction!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: *Stranger Than Fiction!* Results: \_\_\_\_\_

Text	Errors	Self-Correction Meaning/Structure/Visual Clues
Have you ever heard a story or seen a picture that you knew was just too strange to be true? What fact? Sometimes things are just too strange to make up! Meet ten animals that are almost too weird to believe. You'll discover that for these—way to be!		
The peacock mantis shrimp has the fastest punch of any living animal—and can hit hard enough to break glass.		
<b>Platypus</b> Your eyes aren't playing tricks on you; the platypus is a real animal! <b>People</b> once believed that this Australian mammal was a fictional beast that was assembled by combining the bodies of several different animals.		

Comprehension Questions	Responses
What kind of animals is this book about?	
How many animals does this book feature?	
What is a platypus?	

Analysis of Reading Behaviors	Recommendations
Reads with understanding easy instructional difficult	
Self-corrects always mostly sometimes	
Self-corrects using mostly meaning structural visual clues	
Reads fluently easy instructional difficult	

©Blue Star Education 163 #51674G Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures

A running record allows the teacher to note errors and the self-correction process as a student reads the first 100+ words of the text. This sheet assists the teacher with analyzing data, evaluating reading behaviors, and making recommendations.





## Science Activity Sheet

## Multiple-Choice Quiz

**Directions:** Select the best answer for each question.

- What is "strange" about the yeti crab?
  - A. It stores food in its abdomen.
  - B. It has white, hairy claws.
  - C. It lives in the snow.
  - D. It has a tail like a beaver.
- What does the lumpy, droopy nose of the saiga do?
  - A. It cleans the air.
  - B. It stores food.
  - C. It scares off predators.
  - D. It sucks up food.
- Where would you need to travel in order to find a tarsier?
  - A. Australia
  - B. Madagascar
  - C. the Philippines
  - D. Antarctica
- The platypus lays eggs. Why is this strange?
  - A. because it swims
  - B. because it eats eggs
  - C. because it is a mammal
  - D. because it lives in the water
- Where do honey-pot ants get their name?
  - A. from being the color of honey
  - B. from being shaped like little honey pots
  - C. from their love of eating honey
  - D. from their abdomens, which look like little pots of honey
- What strange feature do male tufted deer have?
  - A. vampire-like teeth
  - B. tufted tails
  - C. beaver tails
  - D. fake heads

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit 9: *Stranger Than Fiction!*

## Short-Answer Test

**Directions:** Use evidence from the *Stranger Than Fiction!* text to help you answer the questions.

1. What makes the platypus such a “strange” animal?

---

---

---

---

---

2. What key details about the naked mole-rat does the author include in the text?

---

---

---

---

---

3. What physical characteristics does the thorny devil have in order to fight off predators?

---

---

---

---

---

4. What do the aye-aye and tarsier have in common?

---

---

---

---

---

Cibola Star Education

165

#51674G Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures

## Adventure Cards Activity Sheet

Ranger Rick's Adventure Cards

Bennie and the Bog

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Turtle Talk

**Directions:** Write the main idea of *Bennie and the Bog* on the log below. Then, write details that support the main idea in the turtles' speech bubbles. When you have finished, use the graphic organizer to write a brief summary of the story on the back of this sheet.

The graphic organizer consists of a horizontal log at the top with the text 'Main Idea' written on it. Below the log are three large, empty speech bubbles. Each speech bubble is accompanied by a line drawing of a turtle. The first turtle is on the left, the second is on the right, and the third is on the left. The entire page is framed by a green border.

#51674G *Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures*

186

©Blue Star Education

Bennie and the Bog

Ranger Rick's Adventure Cards

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bennie and the Bog Quiz

**Directions:** Use the *Bennie and the Bog* adventure card to help you answer each question.

- Which sentence best describes the main idea of this story?
  - Boomer spends too much time on his phone.
  - Bog turtles are rare and need to be saved and protected.
  - Goats are mean animals.
  - Thieves steal turtles to make money.
- What does Bennie think Ranger Rick and his friends are going to do to him?
  - Sell him as a pet.
  - Help him save his trapped friend.
  - Play a game with him.
  - Leave him alone.
- What do the turtle thieves compare a trapped turtle to?
  - a rat in a cage
  - a diamond in the rough
  - buried treasure
  - a hog in the bog
- Why are there goats around the bog?
  - to scare off the thieves
  - to feed the turtles
  - they are lost
  - to save the bog by eating trees and bushes
- Boomer did not listen to Ranger Rick's instructions. What evidence from the text supports this detail?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

©Blue Star Education

187

#51674G Ranger Rick's Reading

## My Ranger Rick Adventures

Adventure #6

My Ranger Rick Adventures

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ranger Rick's ADVENTURES

The comic strip is titled "Ranger Rick's ADVENTURES". It features Ranger Rick and his friends in a river. The comic is divided into several panels. Ranger Rick is in a canoe, and his friends are in smaller boats. They are talking and having fun. The comic ends with a large splash of water.

©Blue Star Education

219

#516740 Ranger Rick's Reading Adventures