

# EFFECTIVE & ENGAGING NONFICTION READ-ALoud QUICK TIPS



## Select informational texts with your students in mind.

Read-aloud informational books on a variety of topics, with a variety of structures. Try to find informational books that engage, inspire, inform, and appeal to your students. Look beyond the resources in your reading program! Enhance your curriculum with highly engaging nonfiction texts. Listen for your students' interests and curiosities. Find out what matters to your students. Ask them what topics they want to learn more about! Observe what they enjoy!

## Consider literacy skills you can teach, support, and extend.

Nonfiction books offer abundant opportunities to strengthen students' skill sets for reading and writing including: word study (phonics/phonological awareness); fluency; comprehension and meaning making; vocabulary acquisition; oral language development; concept and general knowledge building; writing craft and organization; and so many more. Any nonfiction read-aloud has the potential to introduce, teach, and consolidate reading and writing skills while building vocabulary and background knowledge.



## Coach through conversations about nonfiction texts.

When we read-aloud nonfiction, we model the habits and behaviors of skilled readers. When we use texts as foundations for conversations, we support students' abilities to develop and express their thinking; to defend their ideas and to disagree with ideas of others; to articulate evidence; to extend their vocabularies by using domain specific and Tier 3 terms; to build concept knowledge, to increase conversation stamina; and to comfortably talk about complex topics.

## Build layers around nonfiction texts.

We can create multiple entry points, or layers, for students to think, talk, write, and engage with the book:

**Life Layers** - SEL, curiosities, connections

**Classroom Layers** - small groups, book clubs, projects

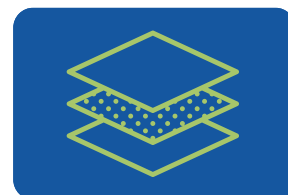
**Book Layers** - text sets, genre studies, multimodal connections

**Writing Layers** - mentor texts, craft explorations

**Literacy Layers** - decoding, fluency, comprehension

**Identity Layers** - tastes, preferences, literacy goals

Every nonfiction book is multi-layered and offers opportunities to engage learners in many ways.



## Revisit texts to engage more with topics, craft, and vocabulary.

We can repurpose nonfiction read-alouds for many reasons. We can revisit read-alouds to solidify content knowledge, to extract information, to expand vocabularies, and to build background and schema and conceptual understandings. We can reread like writers, studying author's craft, analyzing the structure and organization, and to do research. We can reacquaint ourselves with vocabulary, main ideas and supporting details. We can study excerpts to work on particular literacy skills.

## General Considerations

Your live, in person read-aloud creates community and engages students much more effectively than outsourcing the moment to an on-line resource, such as a video of a read-aloud. It's important to set clear expectations and to conscientiously build children's stamina for read aloud experiences and conversations. Book choice is essential! Head to the library or independent book store to find your next great nonfiction read-aloud...and when in doubt, talk to a librarian!!! Read-aloud could be the best part of your school day!



# EFFECTIVE & ENGAGING NONFICTION READ-ALOUD QUICK TIPS



Why did you select this nonfiction text?

What literacy skills can you teach, support, and extend?



What kind of conversations might you coach into?  
What conversation skills could you build?

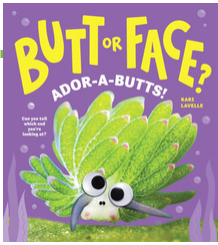
What layers could you add to the nonfiction read-aloud experience?



How might you revisit this nonfiction text?

Other Considerations





# Ador-A Butts, by Kari Lavelle

Source Books, 2026, 9781464233067

## Life Layers - Invitations for Discussions

- Lead students in discussing their most surprising discoveries.
- Have you ever guessed something that turned out differently?
- Why is curiosity important for readers, scientists, and learners?
- How can slowing down help us notice more in the world around us?
- Invite students to share their “wow” fun facts.

## Classroom Layers - Invitations For Ways to Learn From and Enjoy This Text

### Whole Class Read Aloud

This series is big hit with students of all ages. This hilarious ‘guessing game’ also provides opportunities to explore inferences and evidence of thought.

### Small Group Instruction

Expand on information found through nonfiction text features, identify main idea, supporting details and author’s purpose.

### Independent Choice Reading

Students can practice making inferences and predictions using text evidence. They can work to monitor their understanding, read to adjust their thinking, and revise predictions as they read more.

### Mentor Text for Writing

This serves as a great model for kids to share information through categories. They can continue this concept or expand on other topics of interest.

## Literacy Layers - Invitations for Supporting Readers and Writers

### Phonics

Through the repetition of the words butt or face, students can build their understanding and recognition of those letter sounds.

### Verbs

Readers and writers can explore the action-oriented verbs associated with animal movements and behaviors. and build on concepts such as discover, reveal, and camouflage.

### Vocabulary

Explore puns and figurative language to show double meaning. Bonus wordplay includes visual puns like sacrific-ice (re penguins) or portmanteau as in shell-a-brate (re: armadillo) and tree-mendous.

### Structure

The series uses a repetitive predictable question-answer format which supports predicting, inferring and engagement with this text. This structure can strengthen readers’ nonfiction comprehension skills

### Fluency

Revisit the hidden puns to discover the play on words connected to sounds and the use of conventions to illustrate those meanings.

### Craft

Writers can explore a question- answer pattern or use a different pattern to compare/contrast and share information on a subject of interest.

## Book Layers - Invitation for Creating a Multi-Modal Text Family Tree

- Poems: *26 POEM-STORIES ABOUT ANIMALS, A to Z, Aardvark to Zebra: Fun and Funny Poems Telling Real Stories About Real Animals* (Pettit & Pierson)
- National Geographic Kids: [Matching Animals](#) - Find pairs, spot differences (Select level of difficulty)
- Videos: Meet the Author: Check out [this video / read aloud](#) first book in this series with creator Kari Lavelle
- Other: [Explore an Educator Guide provided by Kari Lavelle and Sourcebooks.](#)
- More Books: *Sleepy: Surprising Ways Animals Snooze* (Ward & Page), *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This* (Jenkins & Page)

### About the Authors

**Kathy Collins** and **JoEllen McCarthy** are educators, authors, and literacy coach/consultants who believe in the power of read alouds and thoughtfully selected children’s literature to foster literacy growth, critical thinking, and human connection. They are informed by classroom teachers’ expertise, students’ interests, research and evidence-based practices as they create engaging, joyful, instructive learning opportunities.