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# Knowledge Building as the Foundation For Literacy Learning (Part II)

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Gina N. Cervetti, University of Michigan  
Elfrieda (Freddy) H. Hiebert,  
TextProject

# Objectives

- Suggestions for ensuring students have numerous opportunities to interact with various text types in the classroom
- How to choose engaging and conceptually and thematically rich texts

# Knowledge Building & Vocabulary

- Knowledge building isn't simply teaching vocabulary from a text.
  - Introduction of vocabulary is useful for comprehending a specific text.
  - Such instruction does not ensure that students build anchored networks of concepts.
- Concepts and the words associated with concepts benefit from varied and multiple exposure.
  - Cervetti et al., 2023.
  - Adelman et al., 2006; Hoffman et al., 2013

# ROCKS AND FOSSILS



## 4 FOSSILS GALORE

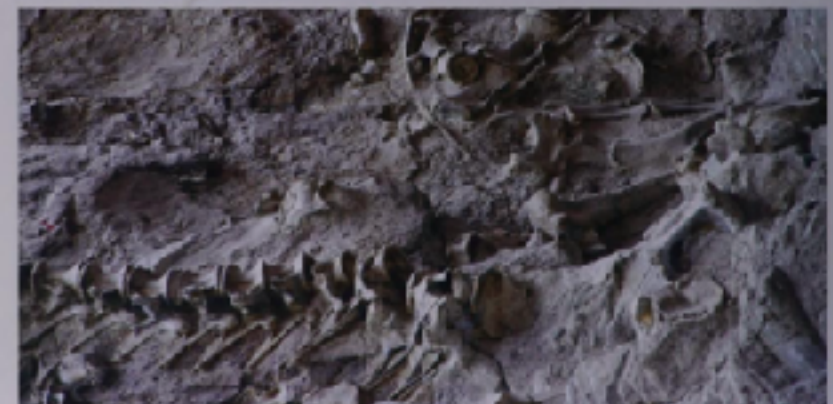
### What Are Fossils?

Fossils are traces or remains of living things that died long ago. Scientists use the word *fossil* for almost any evidence of ancient life that they find in the ground. Many fossils are themselves rocks. For example, a bone or other body part that has been turned into stone by chemical processes is a fossil. Also, a fossil is an animal footprint made in mud that later became sedimentary rock. Not all fossils are stone, though. Sometimes actual body parts survive. This happens most

often with hard body parts, such as teeth, bones, and shells.

Fossils have been found that are only a few thousands of years old. Some living creatures have changed in various ways in the quite recent past—changes that scientists can track by studying fossil remains. Much older fossils have also

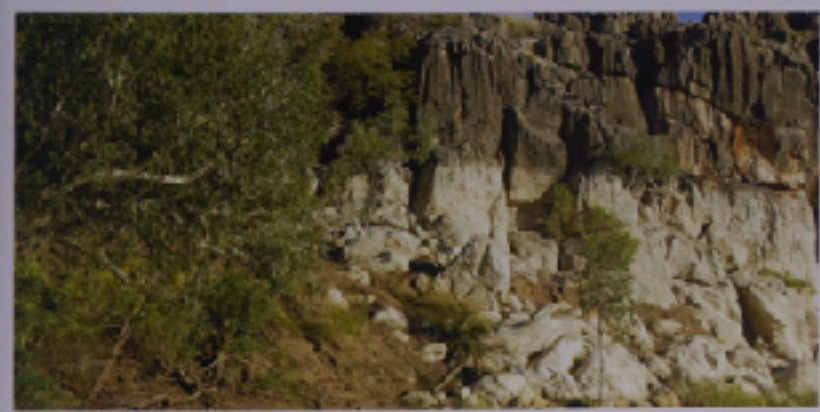
▼ Hard body parts, such as the bones shown here, are much more likely to be preserved as fossils than are the soft parts of an animal's body, which may leave only a hint of their existence, or nothing at all.



been discovered. In fact, scientists have found fossils from most of Earth's history. Among the oldest known fossils are sedimentary formations believed to have been made by tiny living things called cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae. These earliest fossils are more than 3 billion years old. This is just a few hundred million years younger than the oldest known rocks.

### Fossils Far and Wide

Such extremely old fossils are rarely found. Fossils from more recent periods are more common, turning up especially in sedimentary rock layers.



▲ The dark color near the top of this cliff in the Gaskie Gorge on Australia's Fitzroy River is cyanobacteria, tiny life-forms that, like plants, can get their energy from the Sun via photosynthesis. The oldest known fossils include sedimentary structures called stromatolites, which are thought to

### Fossil Tales

People began finding fossils in the ground thousands of years ago. To many, the finds seemed to be just rocks with weird shapes. A few people thought some of the discoveries, such as shells, might be from past creatures. Even those who imagined that the fossils came from living things did not realize how old the fossils were. In most cases, people did not understand what kinds of creatures made the fossils. When huge bones were uncovered, they were thought to be from monsters or human giants. Not until the past couple of centuries or so did scientists begin to understand the true nature of fossils.

### Looking for Fossils in Los Angeles

One of the oldest Ag Calverts. Plus, Denver contains the rocky blue quartz. It's into the presence of plants and have been specimens age. About boundary more than both were museum of the these in the area.

Scientists of mass reflects that they were the evidence eyes, what the of sediment or weather came indication pose a exploding. Many were the classroom.

ROCKS AND FOSSILS

Complete because step of it the leads the right made off from, not Earth's progression.

▼ The far across the north. The south is about 10

Contin to be this place as life. The and that that has desired gardens nature's presence remains that but all ages. I under so were the first time.



from

# Rocks and Fossils

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## Preview Vocabulary

As you read the excerpt from *Rocks and Fossils*, pay attention to these vocabulary words. Notice how they connect to the main idea and details of the text.

**minerals**

**particles**

**deposits**

**erosion**

**principles**

# mineral (min-er-al)

Types of Minerals

A *mineral* is a naturally occurring substance made of one or more elements. Most minerals are crystals, like diamonds.



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## Elements, Minerals, and Rocks

Elements and Minerals



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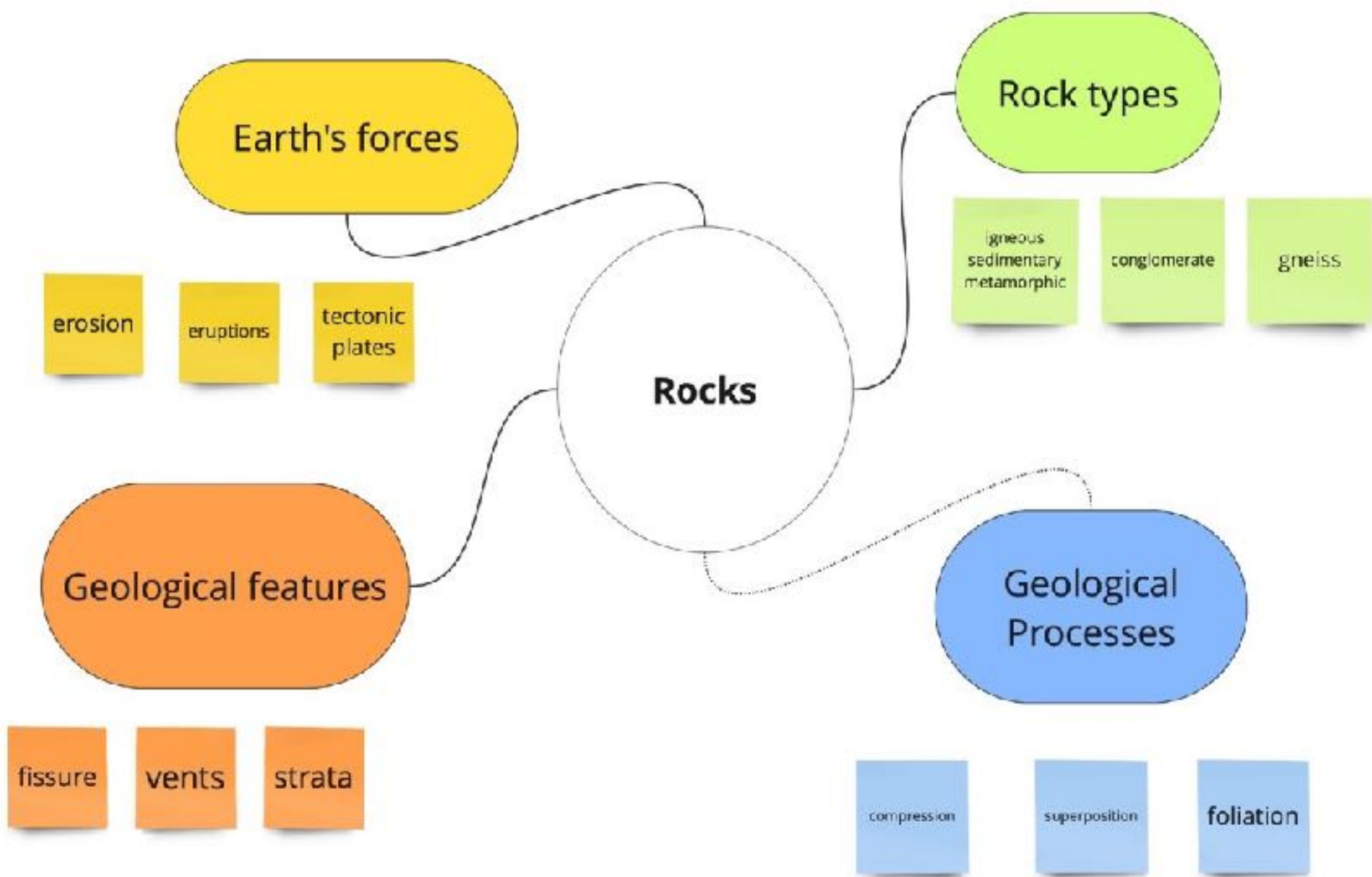
Types of Rocks and Gemstones

# fossil (fos-sil)

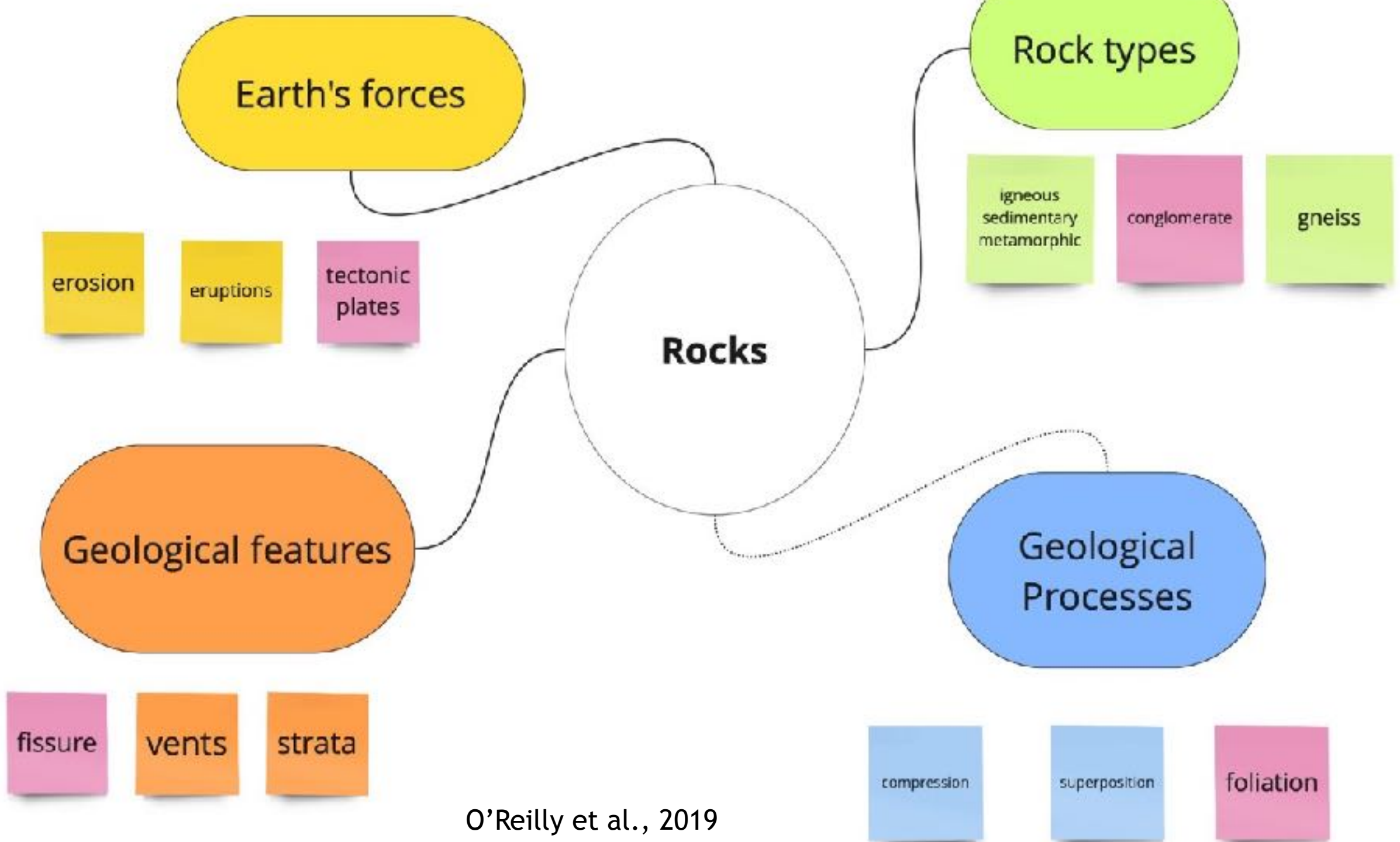
A *fossil* is something (such as a leaf, skeleton, or footprint) that is from a plant or animal which lived in ancient times and that you can see in some rocks.



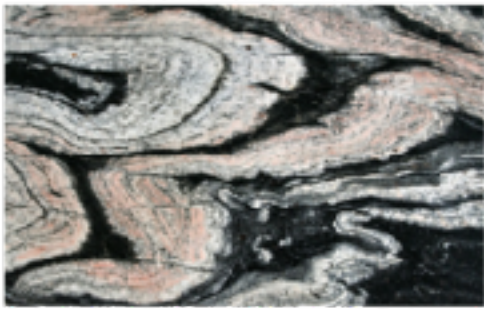
McKenna et al., 2015; Richards-Tutor et al., 2016







## Foliation and Gneiss



Rocks with layers like this one are called gneiss. The layers are called foliation.

Imagine you're hiking up a steep mountain, the sun shining bright overhead. As you climb, you spot a special rock among the others. It's not smooth like the ones in the river or rough like the volcanic rocks nearby. This rock is different. It's solid and strong, with layers that seem to sparkle in the sunlight. This kind of rock is called gneiss.

It's easy to notice gneiss because of its unique appearance. It's like a colorful puzzle with layers of dark and light stripes. These stripes are what we call foliation. Foliation is like the rock's signature pattern, showing how it changed over time. Some layers feel rough, while others are smooth. There may even be shiny specks that look like glitter!

Gneiss wasn't always a rock with layers. It started as a different kind of rock, maybe one that was made from sand or lava. But over a long time, it changed. It went through something called metamorphism, which is like a rock makeover. During metamorphism, the rock got squished and heated deep underground. As a result, it turned into the rock with the different layers that you see today.

Photo Credit: 409329744/ifts | Dreamstime.com

## Fissure



The fissure or crack in the rocks is so large that a canyon has been formed.

Imagine you're walking in the forest, and suddenly you see a big crack in the ground. It's called a fissure. Fissures can form because of things like earthquakes, where the ground shakes and shifts, or when molten rock, called magma, pushes its way up from deep inside the Earth.

Fissures come in all shapes and sizes. Some are tiny, like the ones you might see in rocks, while others can be enormous, stretching for miles! Sometimes, when fissures open up, they can even create new landforms, like valleys or canyons.

Photo Credit: 2092000 | Fissure © Leonid Andronov | Dreamstime.com

## Conglomerate Rock



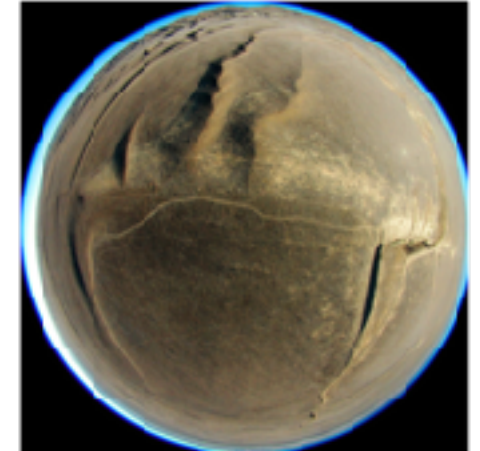
Over time, tiny, little rocks can stick together to form a conglomerate rock.

Think about what would happen if you used superglue to put these rocks together. You'd have a "conglomerate" rock. Nature doesn't use superglue but there are ways in which rocks get stuck together to form conglomerate rocks.

Usually, conglomerate rocks are born from tiny rocks that have been broken off of bigger rocks by water or wind. The little rocks are carried away by water and eventually settle into a riverbed or beach. As more layers of little rocks are added, the weight presses the little rocks at the bottom closer and closer. Over time, the minerals in the water act like cement. The little rocks are stuck together and become one big rock called a conglomerate rock.

Photo credit: 40124215 © Pavel Losovskiy | Dreamstime.com

## Tectonic Plates



This view of the earth from outer space shows the San Andreas fault, where two plates are alongside one another.

Picture the Earth as a big puzzle made up of huge pieces. These pieces are called tectonic plates. They're like giant slabs that fit together but can also move around. When these plates move, it's called tectonic activity.

These plates are always moving, very slowly, like slow-motion bumper cars. Sometimes, they move apart from each other, and new land forms in-between. Other times, they crash into each other, and that's when we get things like mountains. And sometimes, one plate slides under another, causing big earthquakes.

Photo from Public Domain: USGS: <https://www.usgs.gov>

Lesaux et al., 2010





Case 1: Using  
Narrative Text to  
Increase  
Background and  
Engagement with  
Informational  
Texts

## 4

## FOSSILS GALORE

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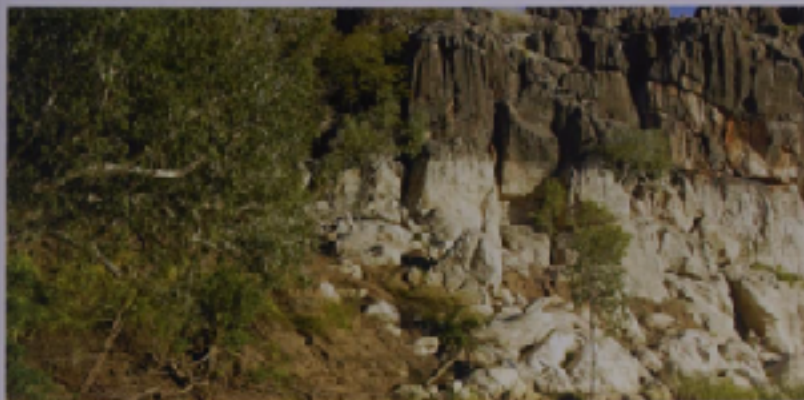
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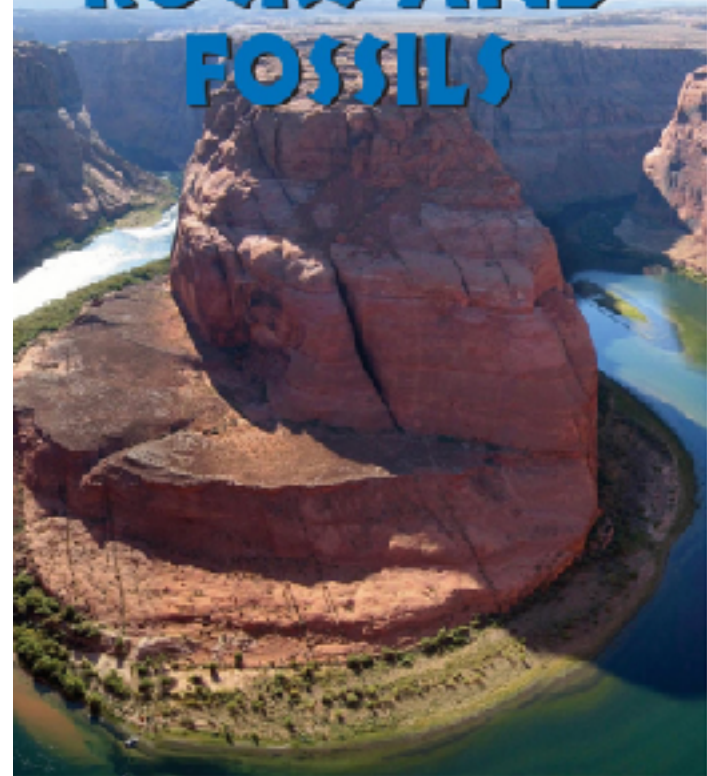


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**Fossil Tales**

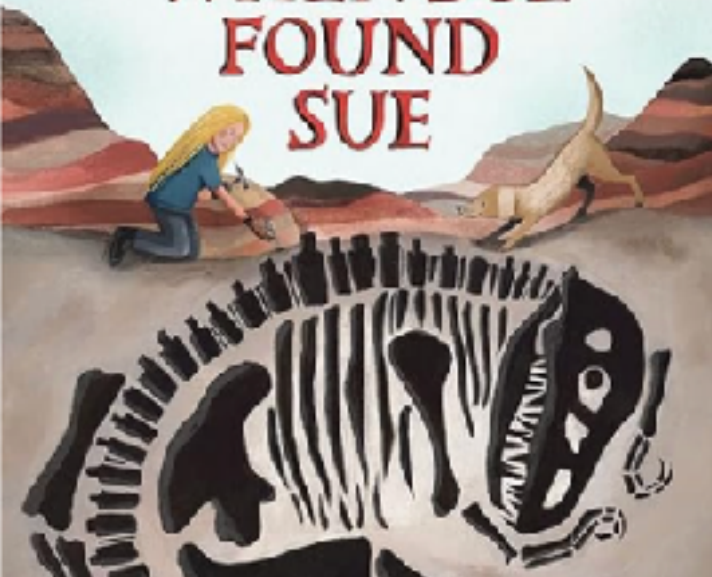
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# ROCKS AND FOSSILS





# WHEN SUE FOUND SUE

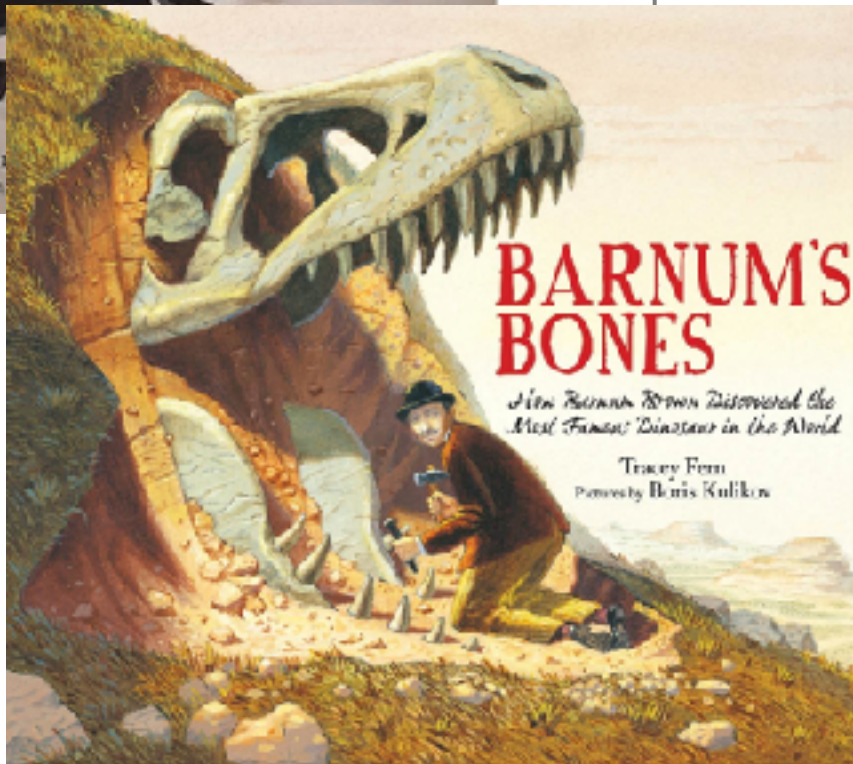


Sue Hen  
by T. B.

# BARNUM'S BONES

How Barnum Brown Discovered the Most Famous Dinosaur in the World

Tracey Fern  
Picture by Boris Kulikov



## Chapter 1: Lost in the Cave

The men peered down on him; they could hardly see. The two children ran through the heavy rain. They held their arms over their heads, but it was no use. "It's soaked!" Jerry yelled to Carlos. "My clothes are all wet!"

"Me too!" Carlos yelled back. "We've got to get out of this rain and away from the lightning!" He stopped his hat on his head. The two friends ran on down the muddy path.

Finally, they searched for somewhere to take shelter. All they could see was rainwater pouring down a grassy hill.

Carlos and Jerry were at science camp. They had taken a walk to the camp headquarters, just had a rain away. Now, coming back, the short walk seemed like a 10-mile trip. They could hardly see the path before them.

Deep thunder rolled overhead. "Look, Carlos!" shouted Jerry. She pointed to a shadow under a large, flat rock, sticking out of the hill. She ran over to the rock. Under it was a space not big enough to stand in. Jerry knelt down and crawled in. Carlos followed her.

Sitting under the rock, they caught their breath and rested. Their tiny shelter kept the rain off, but it was uncomfortable and small. Carlos turned his head and noticed a large hole behind them leading into the hill. "I bet it's nice and dry in there," he said. He crawled into the hole. Jerry shook her wet hair and crawled after him.

The dark shelter felt pleasantly dry and warm. "This is neat!" Carlos said.

"Caked!" Jerry cried. "Did you hear that echo?" They both listened.

... that echo ... echoes ... The sound bounced back and forth around them.

"Let's check it out," Carlos said. "That might be a CAVE! It's getting bigger, I think."

... bigger than ...

The children laughed to hear the echo again, and then a loud crackling echo. They crawled farther into the cave and soon they could stand up. They walked along a stone wall. Suddenly the light got dimmer and darker.

Carlos and Jerry turned around a rocky corner. Suddenly, they were in total darkness. They reached out to touch the wall. Instead, they reached empty space. They turned around and touched another wall. Was it the same wall? They couldn't tell. What was going on? Suddenly they couldn't find their way back.

Where was the cave entrance? They backed up, looking for something familiar. But everything was black. "Oops," Jerry bumped into Carlos, who fell down hard on the cave floor.

"Sorry, Carlos!" Jerry could hear Carlos breathing off his pants as he got up. "Here's my hand," she offered. Carlos gripped it in the dark until their fingers touched. "I'm scared, Jerry. I think we're lost."

They stood still, listening. They couldn't longer hear the sound of the storm. How had they come so far inside the cave so quickly? Which way should they go to get out?

Out of the silence they heard the trickling sound of water. It sounded like a small stream, along with dripping sounds. Was it raining that hard outside?

Flap! Flap! Flap!

"What was that?" cried Carlos.

"Something flew over my head!" Jerry screamed. "Something's flying around in here." She waved her arm over her head.

Speak! Speak! Speak! The two children looked up toward the sound. They couldn't see anything, but a tiny voice squeaked at them.

Calm down! I'm just over your head. Be careful!

"Who?" Carlos reached up. His fingers briefly touched a small, warm animal, with short, silky fur.

Don't touch me! said the squeaky voice.

"I don't want to touch you!" Carlos said. "What are you?"

I'm a bat, of course. Who else would be flying around in a cave? Batman?

Carlos and Jerry both laughed. They explained to the bat that they were lost and had to get back to science camp. Could the bat help?

There was a long silence. The two friends realized that this bat could be their only hope of getting out of the cave. Would he help them?

Finally, the squeaky voice replied, I guess I'll help you. I like talking to people. I can take you to another cave entrance that will be a shortcut to your camp. That way you can stay out of the rain. I can show you the rest of the cave, too.

Carlos wanted to go right back to camp, but he loved adventures. Besides, it was probably still pouring rain out there. "Go, bat, but would be great. I'd love to see the cave, too."

"Bat bat," promised Jerry, "how can we see the cave? We can't see anything in the dark. And aren't you blind as a bat? How can you see anything either?"

Great point, said the bat. But ... my eyes are quite good actually when there's some light. In the dark, I use another way of seeing ... my bat sense helps me find my way around. Maybe I can teach you to use it the same way you do.

"You gotta be kidding," said Jerry.

No, said Bat, just follow me!

The children heard that's wings flapping off into the darkness.

"Bat! Stop!" Jerry cried out. "We can't see you! How can we follow?"

Flap, flap, flap.

But slow back, I'm sorry he squeaked. I forgot. Can you twerk-hold hands and follow my directions?

Carlos was shy about holding hands, but he grabbed Jerry's belt and wailed. Bat told them to walk 10 steps forward.

Woody up, the bat squeaked.

BANG!

"Ow!" First it was Jerry, then Carlos. "I thumped my head on the cave ceiling! Bat, your directions are scary!"

Oh, I'm sorry again, the bat squeaked. I forgot how big you are. I just flew into this tunnel here. I forgot that you have to bend over to get in. Oh, I am so sorry.

Jerry rubbed her sore head and remembered hearing the bat flapping above their heads. Everything about bats and people seemed different. "It's OK, Bat," Jerry said. "Just try to remember that we can't see and we're much bigger than you."

OK, kids. Up ahead, you're going to have to bend down and crawl. It's a long tunnel and it's really dark because of the rain.

The children crawled through the darkness. Jerry complained about getting mud on her clean jeans. Carlos didn't like the muddy smell. They both hated the cold, stinky mud on their hands.

Stop! squeaked their tiny command. Jerry, look for a nice surprise on the floor just in front of you.

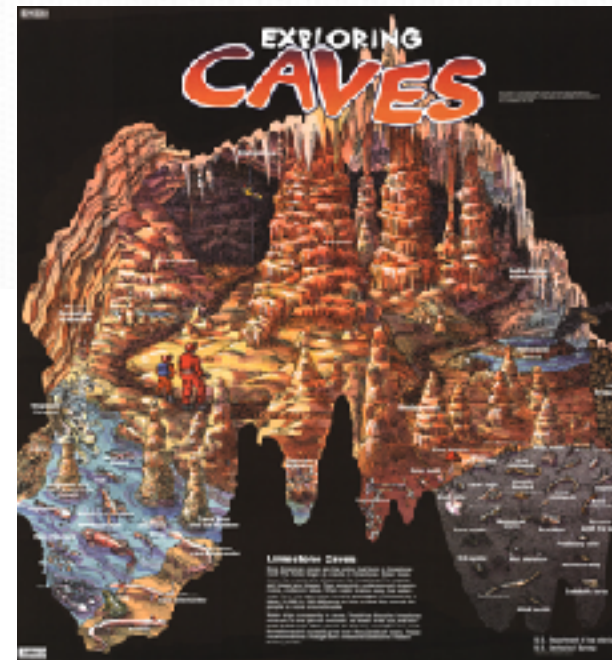
Jerry stretched out her hand.

"A flashlight!" she yelled happily. "Oh thank you, Bat! Oh I hope it works!" She wiped the mud off the flashlight with her T-shirt.

Flap, flap, flap. Time to rest. They heard that a voice from above them somewhere.

Some cave explorers were here a few weeks ago, drawing a map of the cave. They dropped the flashlight.

"Turn on the light, Jerry!" cried Carlos. "Turn it off! Let's see the cave!"



Case 2: Using  
informational  
articles to give  
background for  
content of  
narrative texts





## Red Alert! The British Are Coming!



As the British army marches over the hill, their guns are held high. The soldiers' bright red coats make the army look like a huge red wall. Sometimes it is

enough to scare their enemies into running away!

The British army did not always wear red coats. At first, the soldiers did not have uniforms, so it was hard to tell friends from enemies. Soon after the British government formed a national army it made a new law. Soldiers in the British army had to wear uniform and their uniforms had to be red.

Why did the British government choose the color red? Its purpose was to give soldiers a uniform that was clearly recognizable. At that time, soldiers used muskets, which produced black smoke. The muskets' black smoke soon made it hard for soldiers to see one another. The bright red coats kept British soldiers from being shot accidentally.

The nickname "Redcoats" was first used during the



American war for independence. Many Americans did not have uniforms, so the British soldiers with their red coats were easily recognizable.

The life of a Redcoat was hard. Being in battle far from home was dangerous enough, but the Redcoats also received very little pay. In addition, they had to buy their own food and uniforms.

After rifles were invented, soldiers' guns no longer made smoke. Soldiers could easily see one another in battle. The way armies fought also changed. At first, armies lined up in fields and charged each other. Later, soldiers began hiding and surprising their enemy. Soon, it became clear that uniforms should help soldiers blend into their surroundings.

Soldiers in the British army then began wearing tan uniforms. These uniforms made them less visible from a distance.

Today, British soldiers wear red coats only in ceremonies.



## REDCOATS AND PETTICOATS

by Katherine Kirkpatrick  
illustrated by Ronald Himler



## REVOLUTIONARY PRUDENCE WRIGHT



Leading the  
mute Women  
the Fight for  
Independence  
with Anderson  
and by Susan Cooper



## Stained Glass: Painting With Sunlight



Sunlight streams through colored glass and makes patterns on the walls and the floor. Reds, blues, and yellows seem to paint with the sun's light. This

beautiful art form is called stained glass.

Stained glass is an old form of art. Writers described colored glass that was made as early as the year 300! No one has found glass that old, though.

Some time later, writers described stained glass that was used to tell stories in churches. Most people couldn't read at that time, so the stories helped them learn about their religion.

The earliest stained glass window found dates to the 1100s. It was found in Lorsch, a town in present-day Germany. In fact, many artists made stained glass in France and Germany at this time.

One of the main ingredients in glass is sand. The sand is heated to such a high temperature that it becomes liquid. To make glass colorful, minerals, oxides, and

Volume 3  
Issue 11

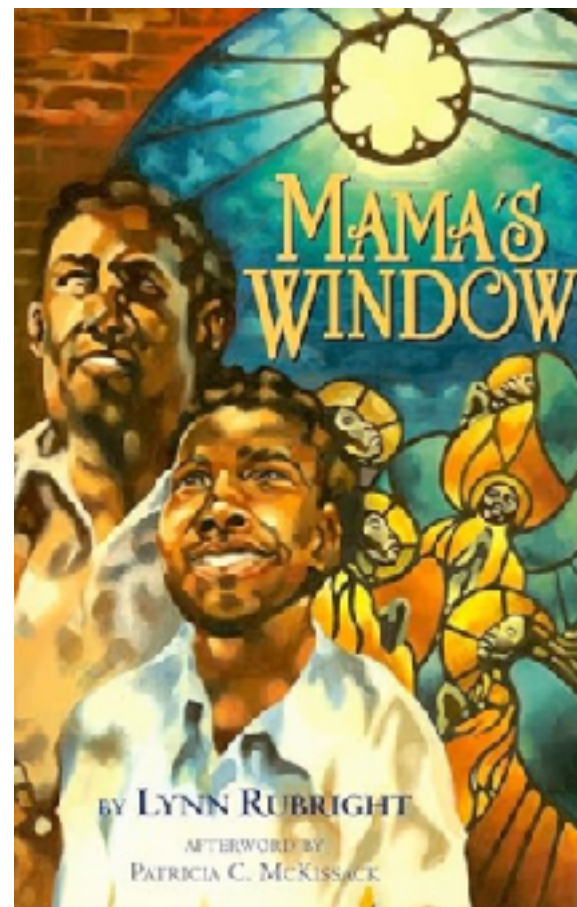


other ingredients are added to the sand. For example, copper salts make glass red.

Early artists created drawings that showed the color and the shape of each piece. Then the colored glass was made and cut into pieces. It takes a lot of skill to cut glass. Cutters used very sharp tools, being careful the glass didn't break. Finally, they placed the glass pieces into a frame. Sometimes artists also painted on the glass.

Stained glass is still made today, although new tools and technology have changed the process. It can be made more safely and easily now than it was in the 1100s. Today, in fact, many people make stained glass art to use in their homes. They

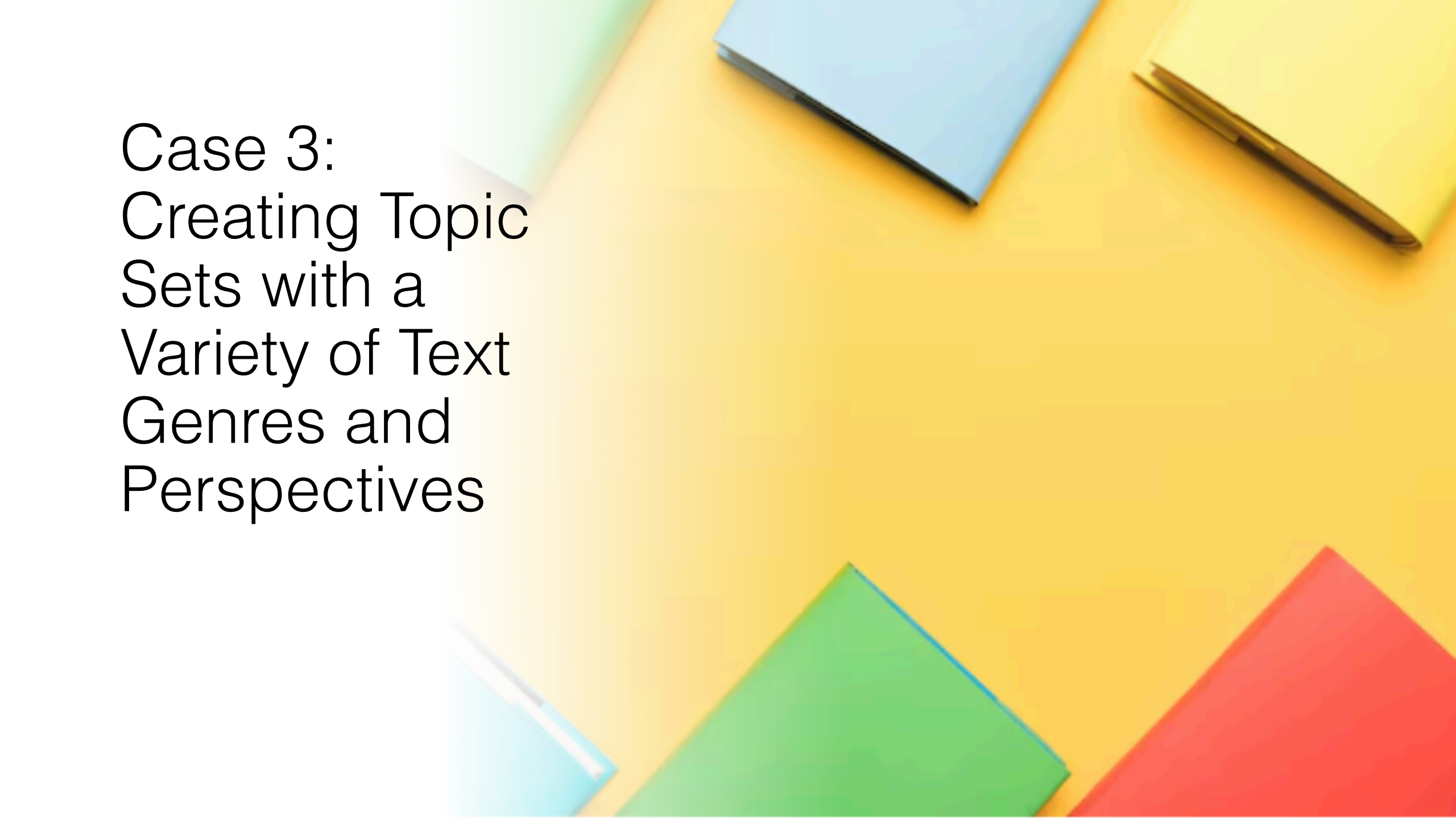
make objects that can hang in their windows or place on tables. Like the people many years ago, they love the way they can use the sunlight to paint their walls and floors.



BY LYNN RUBRIGHT

AFTERWORD BY

PATRICIA C. MCKISSACK

The background of the slide is a bright yellow surface. Scattered across the surface are several colorful sticky notes: a light green one in the top left, a light blue one in the top center, a yellow one in the top right, a light blue one in the bottom left, a green one in the bottom center, and a red one in the bottom right. The text is positioned on the left side of the slide.

Case 3:  
Creating Topic  
Sets with a  
Variety of Text  
Genres and  
Perspectives



# BIG Money

WHAT IT IS, HOW WE USE IT, AND WHY OUR CHOICES MATTER



AUTHOR OF TOTAL GARBAGE

Rebecca Donnelly

## Beatrice's Goat

WITH AN AFTERWORD BY  
MILLAY BOBBIN CLIFTON



Buying this book helps fund the book drive.

## Minding Your Business



Where do you buy chocolate? You probably go to a store near your home. It's there you might not get the special chocolate you like, but it's close to home.

Suppose a new candy store opens nearby, and the owner is making the chocolate you like. T, a owner doesn't know if the store will be successful. He will only a few types of chocolate, so he is taking a risk that people will buy the mix of chocolate he has chosen to make. He understands that he might not be able to stay in business because customers might not buy his chocolate.

T's person is a type of business owner called an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is someone who starts a business and is willing to risk losing money to try to make money. He must spend money on ingredients for the chocolate and for the store, pay for workers, and many other things. T uses all the costs. If he makes more money than he spends, that money is called his profit. Many people become entrepreneurs because they

think they have a good idea for a business. In fact, a man named Eliot S. Hanley was an entrepreneur in the late 1800s. He had opened several businesses that sold general candy. He had two businesses that sold milk chocolate, but his third business did. T, so he decided to add chocolate to his general candy. T, it was how the Hanley Chocolate Company started more than 100 years ago.

If you have ever opened an ice cream stand, you are an entrepreneur, too. You probably found that, in order to make a profit, you had to learn how many cones you could sell. Your customers probably included cones, cups, and cups. T, they might also have included posters and markers.

Entrepreneurs are hard workers who think they have good ideas. What new business might you be interested in starting?



JACQUELINE DAVIES

## Purchasing Power



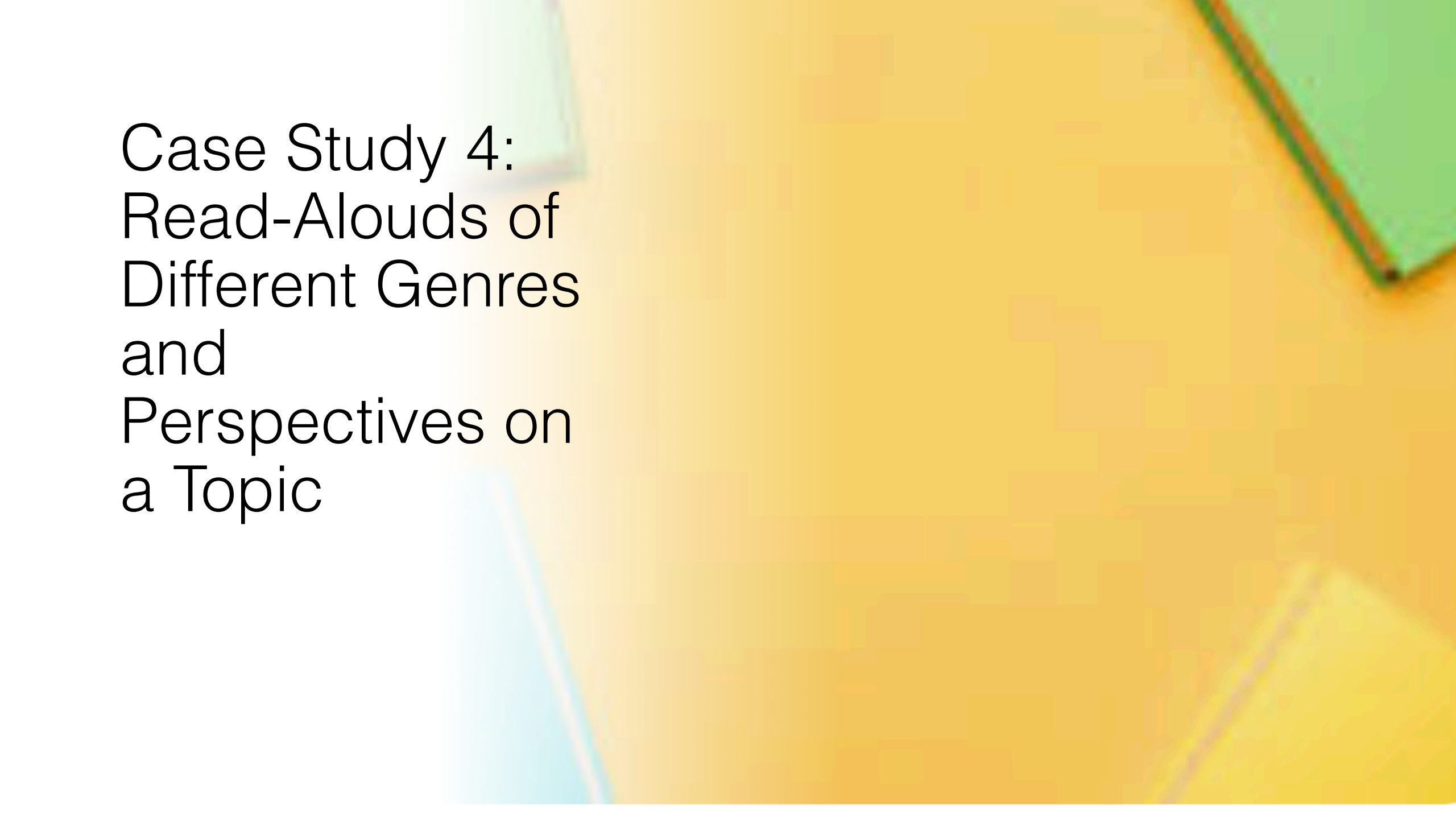
LEVEL P-2 • Written by Elifreda H. Weber

## Money



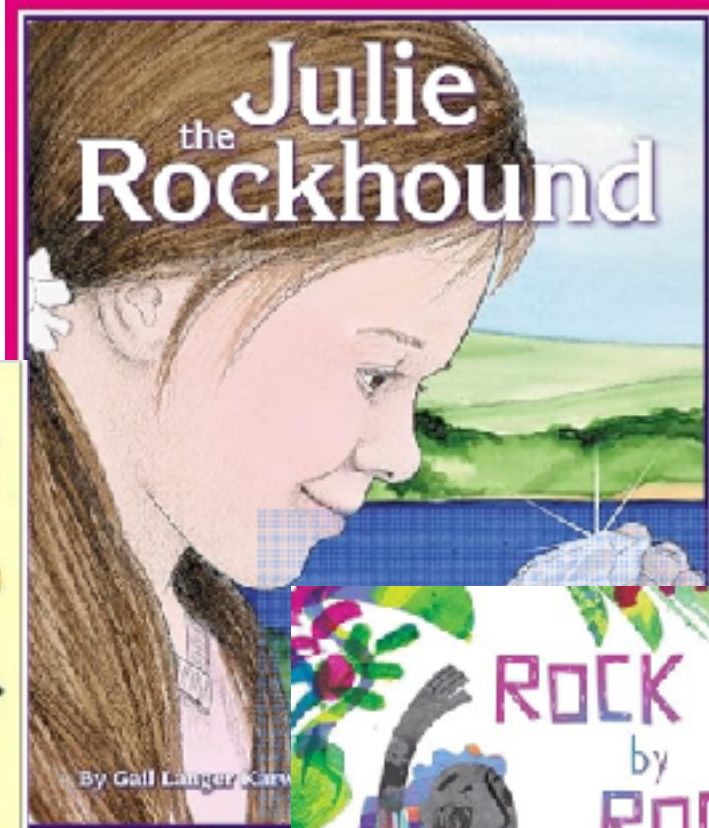
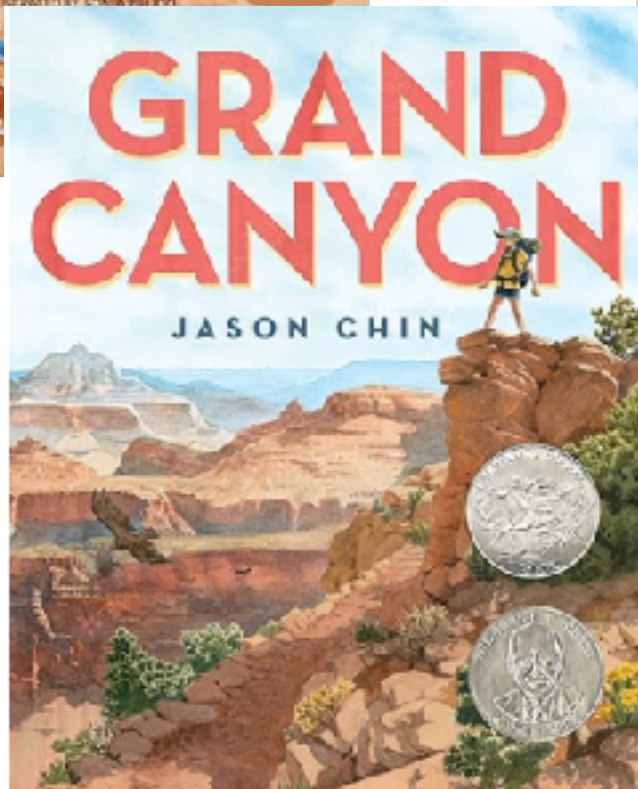
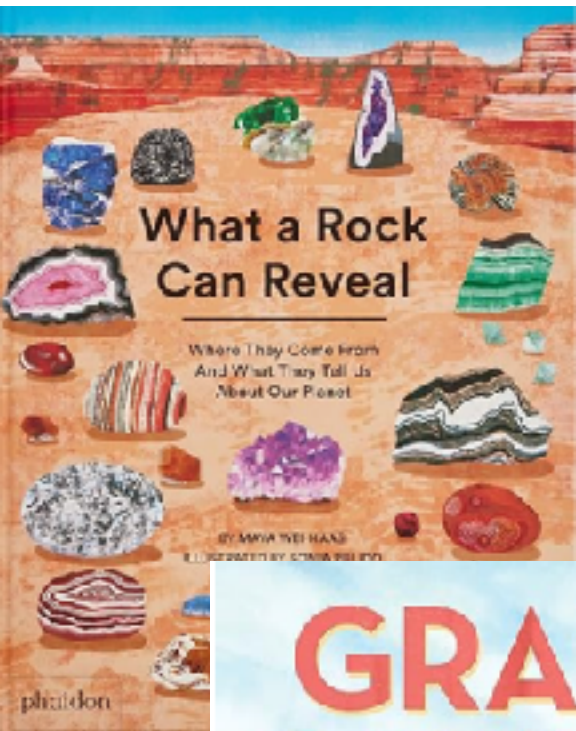
LEVEL B-2 • Written by Elifreda H. Weber

Lupo et al., 2018

The background features a light-colored grid pattern on a warm, yellowish-orange gradient. The corners of the page are decorated with overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in light blue, light green, and yellow, resembling folded paper or sticky notes.


# Case Study 4: Read-Alouds of Different Genres and Perspectives on a Topic





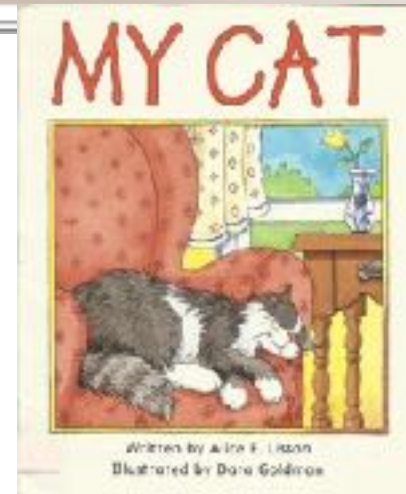
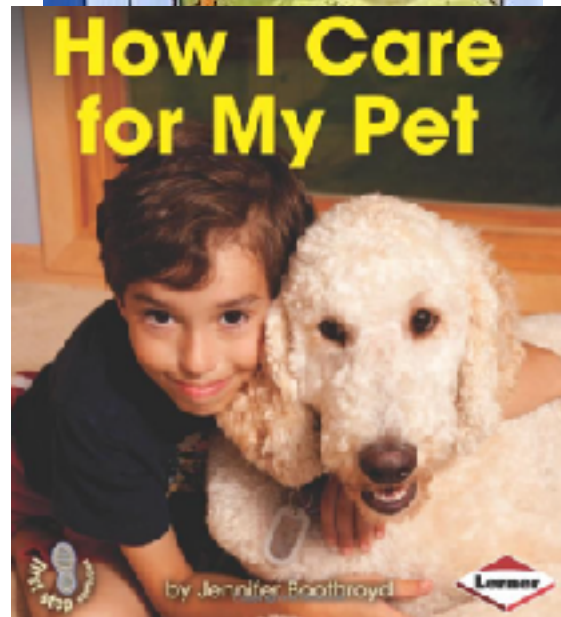
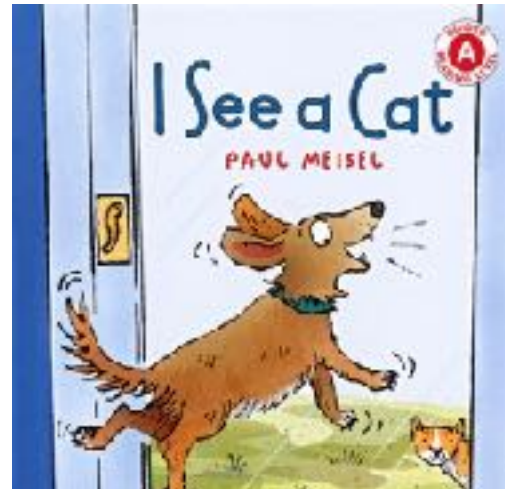
Silverman et al., 2013;  
Wright et al., 2022



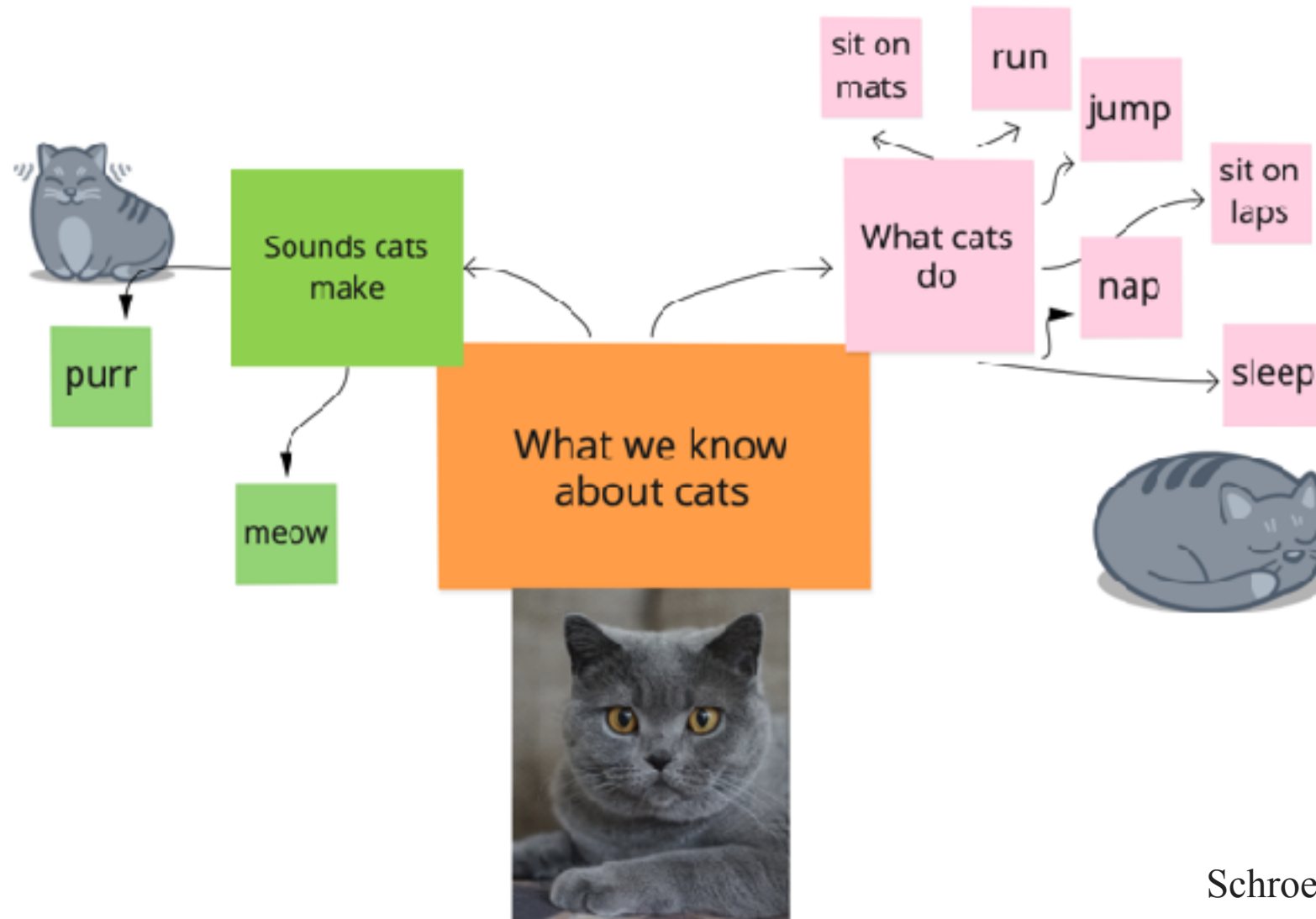


Case 5: Using  
Texts to Build  
Knowledge from the  
Start

# Sorting Student Texts by Topic



# Semantic Map from Student Texts

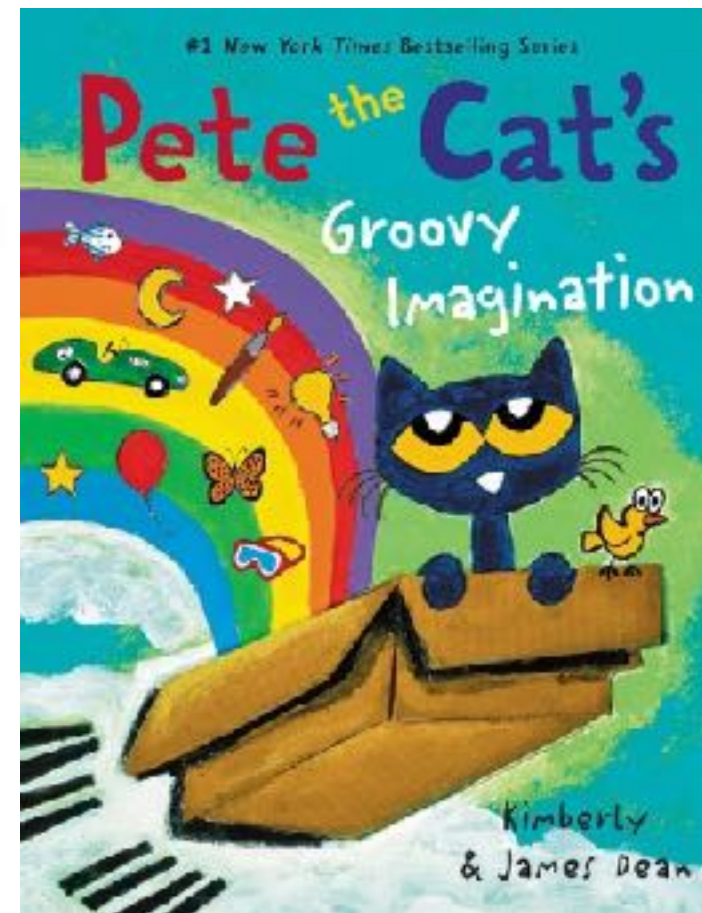
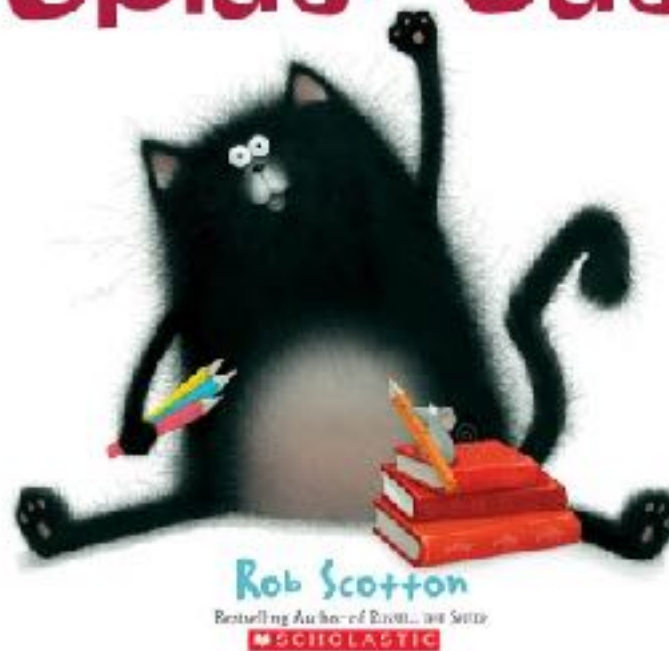




# Extending Topic Through Read-Alouds

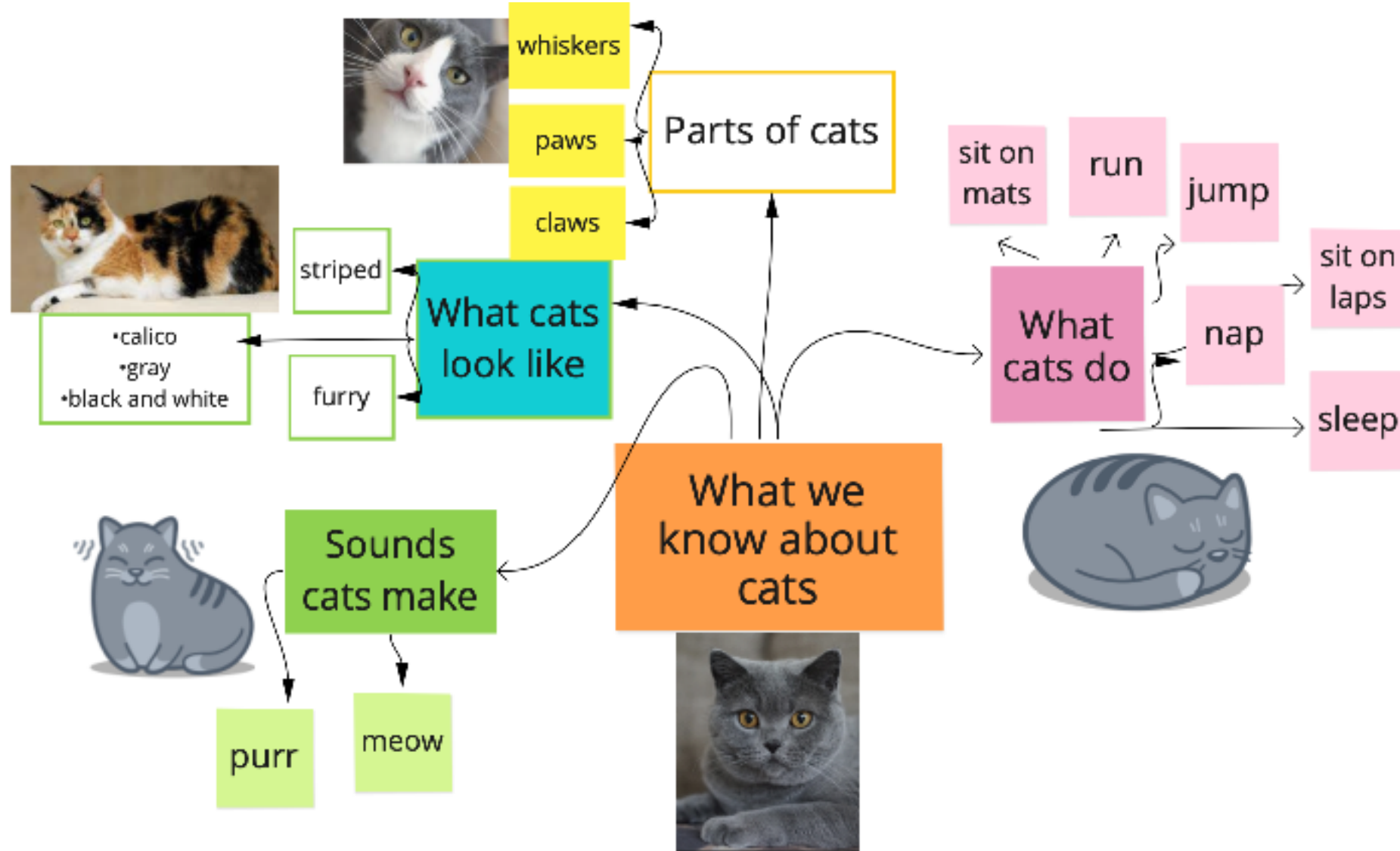


## Splat the Cat



Silverman et al., 2013

# Adding to Semantic Map from Read-Alouds

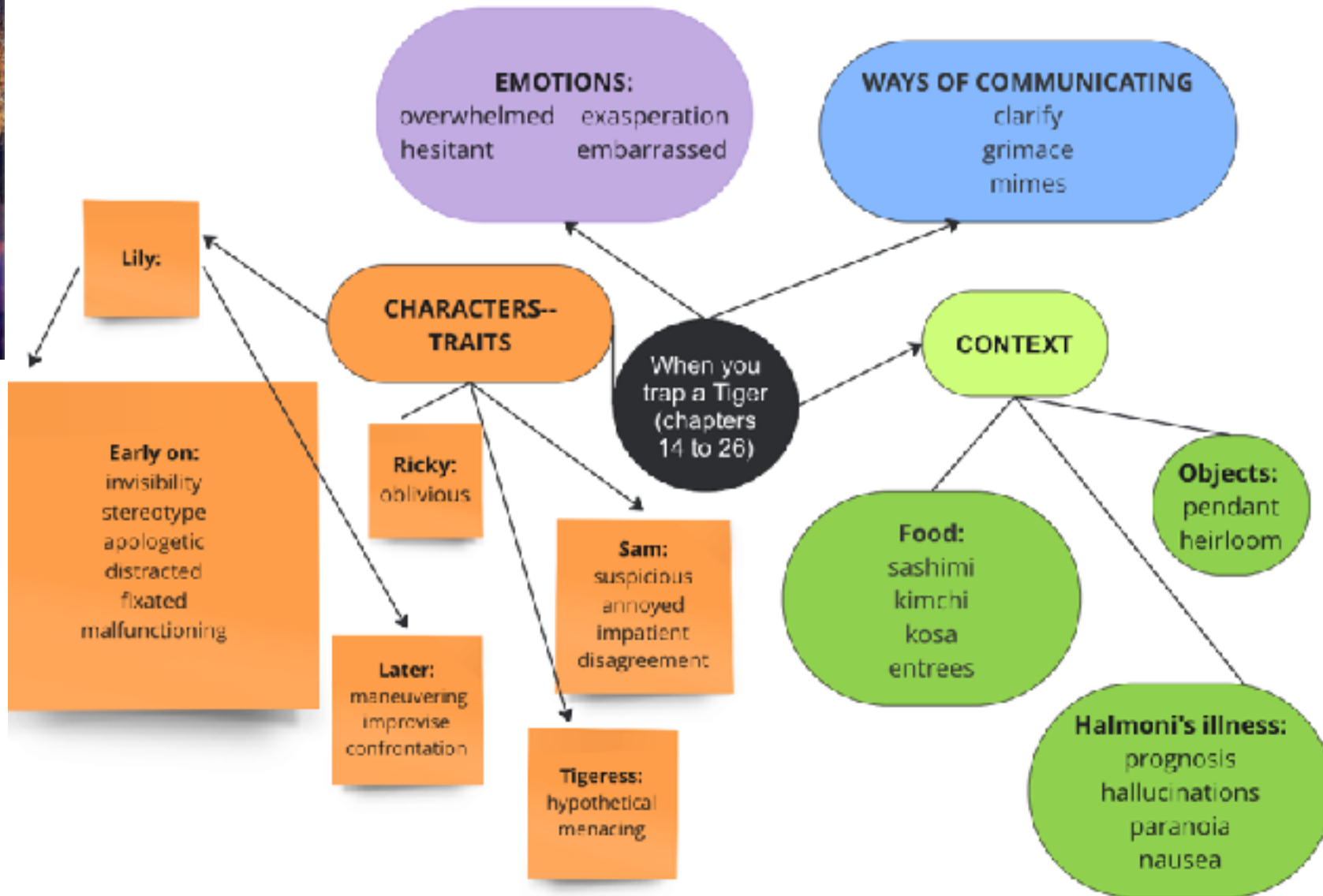
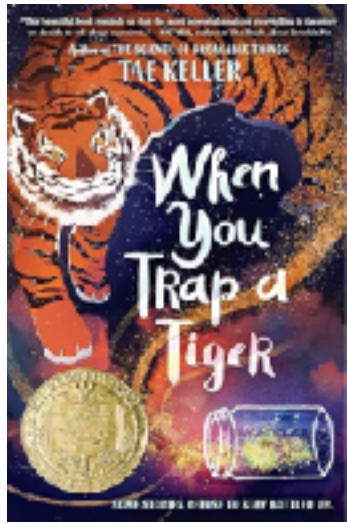


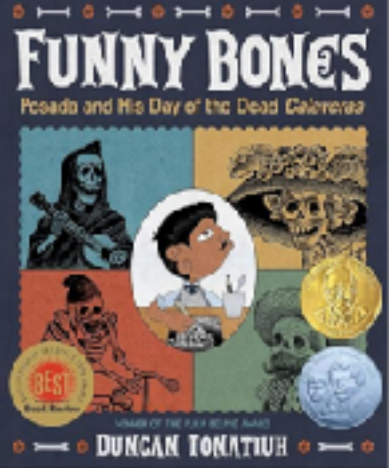


# Ways of Organizing & Remembering: Semantic Maps



Schroeder et al., 2018; Hiebert &  
Cervetti, 2012







<https://textproject.org/ila/>

## TextProject **OPEN-ACCESS**

### Resources

#### **VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION**

##### **The Core Vocabulary**

Core Vocabulary Word Zones

Core Vocabulary Word Maps

Core Vocabulary Word Pictures

##### **Academic Vocabulary**

Academic Word List

##### **Literary Vocabulary**

E4: Exceptional Expressions For Everyday Events

S4: Super Synonym Sets For Stories

##### **Content Area Vocabulary**

Content Area Word Pictures

#### **FREE STUDENT TEXTS**

##### **Grades K-1**

BeginningReads™

DecodableReads™

TopicReads™ – Primary

##### **Grades 2-5**

FYI For Kids

SummerReads™

Talking Points For Kids

##### **Middle School & Beyond**

Stories Of Words

TopicReads™ – Middle School

##### **All Grades**

Read-Aloud Favorites



TextProject



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