Lesson 3.2
How the Sparrow Learned Its Song
Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students read the book *How the Sparrow Learned Its Song*, an informational text that explores examples of traits that are determined by an organism’s environment. Partners use the table of contents to prompt their thinking about other ways that organisms can get traits besides being inherited. Students are reminded of the importance of asking questions as a sense-making strategy when reading informational text, and partners ask questions as they read. After reading, the class reviews several organisms in the book to discuss the idea that traits can result from the environment. At the end of the lesson, students connect the idea of organisms learning from the groups they live with in their environment to Wolf 44. The purpose of this lesson is for students to understand that some traits result from the environment.

Anchor Phenomenon: A wolf at Graystone National Park does not have the same fur color as the rest of its pack, but does have the same fur color as a second pack. The wolf’s hunting style is like its own pack, but not like the second pack.

Investigative Phenomenon: A young sparrow sings a song like the songs of adult sparrows around it.

Students learn:

- Organisms stay in groups in order to obtain food and meet their needs. The number of organisms in a group varies.
- Some traits result from the environment.
Partner Reading

Partners read *How the Sparrow Learned Its Song* and are introduced to the idea that some traits result from the environment.

Instructional Guide

1. **Set the purpose for reading.** Read aloud the Investigation Question.

   Recuerden, ustedes decidieron que iban a averiguar qué cosa, aparte de la herencia, puede determinar los rasgos. Leer este libro puede darles algunas nuevas ideas acerca de dónde más pueden venir los rasgos.

2. **Introduce notebook page.** Have students turn to page 58, *Asking Questions When Reading: How the Sparrow Learned Its Song*, in their notebooks. Remind students that when they read, they ask questions about what they wonder and record their questions in their notebooks. Students should complete all three columns during their reading.

   Mientras leen, piensen en hacer preguntas que les ayuden a entender mejor cómo obtienen sus rasgos los organismos. Recuerden, en la Columna 2, apunten ideas del texto que ayuden a responder sus preguntas. En la Columna 3, apunten ideas para otras maneras de investigar sus preguntas.

3. **On-the-Fly Assessment: Students ask questions as they read.** Give students time to read the rest of the book with their partners and ask questions. As students work, circulate and listen to whether they are able to identify what, other than inheritance, can determine traits.

4. **Discuss students’ responses from the notebook page.** Call on a few students to share their questions and the information they found in the book that answers their questions. Have students point out the page numbers so their classmates can turn to those pages as students explain their answers. If needed, remind students that answers to questions cannot always be found in the text. Therefore, thinking of other ways to investigate the question is important in order to keep working on finding answers.

5. **Discuss Column 3.** Call on a few students to share other ways to investigate their questions. Accept all responses.
Embedded Formative Assessment

On-the-Fly Assessment 10: Asking Questions About Where Traits Come From

Look for: At this point in the unit, students have had several opportunities to ask questions when reading and investigating. In this activity, students are continuing to investigate what, other than inheritance, can determine traits. As you circulate, make note of whether or not students are asking questions about the environment.

Now what? If students are struggling to identify the environment as another way organisms get their traits, students will have explicit instructions to return to the text in the class discussion that follows. The class will discuss the decorator crab and the bear as examples of organisms that have traits that result from the environment. You may wish to broaden students definition of the word environment if they are having trouble understanding how the environment can affect traits. Depending on how many students need this support, you could work with students individually, in a small group, or with the whole class.

Teacher Support

Rationale

Literacy Note: Approach to Asking Questions
Skillful readers use the sense-making strategy of asking questions to actively engage with the text. With each book, the reading scaffolds are lessened, which allows students to read more independently as the unit progresses. At this point in the unit, students have had several opportunities to ask questions, and they have become increasingly familiar with how to ask relevant scientific questions. In the first two chapters of this unit, students were provided with a high level of modeling and support in asking questions. In this chapter, students begin to ask questions more independently, as in this lesson when they read How the Sparrow Learned Its Song.

Possible Responses

Asking Questions When Reading: How the Sparrow Learned Its Song (page 58)

Answers will vary. Examples:

Row 1
Do humans learn to sing from their environment?
Pages 8–9: Sparrows practice the songs they hear adult sparrows in their environment singing. Babies learn songs they hear their parents singing, so I think humans learn to sing from their environment, too.
Talk with my parents about how I learned to sing songs.
Row 2
What other organisms make alarm calls to warn others of danger?
Read about ways that organisms protect themselves from danger.
Asking Questions When Reading:  
*How the Sparrow Learned Its Song*

**Directions:**

1. As you read the book, record questions you have in Column 1.
2. If you find the answers to your questions as you read, record your answers in Column 2. Be sure to include the page number from the book where you found the information so you can discuss these ideas with the class.
3. In Column 3, record other ways you could investigate your questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Information from the book that helps answer my question</th>
<th>Other ways to investigate my question</th>
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Partner Reading

Partners read *How the Sparrow Learned Its Song* and are introduced to the idea that some traits result from the environment.

Instructional Guide

1. **Set the purpose for reading.** Read aloud the Investigation Question.

   Remember, you decided that you were going to figure out what, other than inheritance, can determine traits. Reading this book may give you some new ideas about where else traits can come from.

2. **Introduce notebook page.** Have students turn to page 58, *Asking Questions When Reading: How the Sparrow Learned Its Song*, in their notebooks. Remind students that when they read, they ask questions about what they wonder and record their questions in their notebooks. Students should complete all three columns during their reading.

   As you read, think about asking questions that will help you better understand how organisms get their traits. Remember, in Column 2, record ideas from the text that help answer your questions. In Column 3, record ideas for other ways to investigate your questions.

3. **On-the-Fly Assessment: Students ask questions as they read.** Give students time to read the rest of the book with their partners and ask questions. As students work, circulate and listen to whether they are able to identify what, other than inheritance, can determine traits.

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Row 2
What other organisms make alarm calls to warn others of danger?
Read about ways that organisms protect themselves from danger.
**Instrucciones:**
1. Mientras lees el libro, apunta preguntas que tengas en la columna 1.
2. Si encuentras las respuestas a tus preguntas mientras lees, apunta tus respuestas en la columna 2. No olvides incluir el número de la página donde encontraste la información, para que puedas discutir estas ideas con la clase.
3. En la columna 3, apunta otras maneras en las que podrías investigar tus preguntas.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pregunta</th>
<th>Información del libro que ayuda a responder mi pregunta</th>
<th>Otras maneras de investigar mi pregunta</th>
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