

Non-Fiction

Author Studies



by Kelly Hill



Melvin and Gilda Berger



Melvin Berger

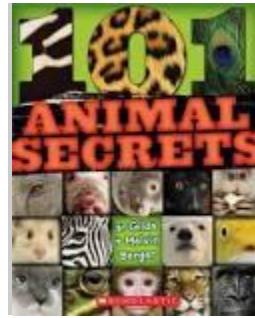


Gilda Berger

Melvin and Gilda co-write many non-fiction books for children. They have authored many informational series such as: Scholastic Question and Answer, Scholastic True or False, and 101 Animal books.

Melvin and Gilda are married and live in New York. Melvin went to school to be an engineer; he later became a music teacher. Gilda was a special education teacher. They love to research topics for new books!

Books by Melvin and Gilda



We notice these crafts:

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Teacher Tips:

Melvin and Gilda have many different series of books. Here are some examples:

-Scholastic Question and Answer Series (2-5 grades, depending on the class)

Crafts to note & notice:

- Question and Answer format (true to the series title)
- Non-fiction features: Contents, Index, Diagrams, Tables, Labels, and about the Author / Illustrator
- Illustrations (rather than photographs)

-Discover Readers (great for 1-2 grades)

Crafts to note & notice:

- Question the reader (craft)
- Non-fiction features: Index, Diagrams, Tables, and Labels
- Illustrations (rather than photographs)

-Discovering My World (great for K&1)

(Often available through scholastic book clubs)

Crafts to note & notice:

- Question the reader (craft)
- Non-fiction features: Index, Diagrams, Tables, and Labels
- Photographs

-Now I Know (great for K&1)

Crafts to note & notice:

- Question the reader- "Did you know?" (craft)
- Ellipses (craft)
- Non-fiction features: Close-ups & Glossary
- Photographs

Websites:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/bookwizard/books-by/gilda-berger>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/bookwizard/books-by/melvin-berger>



Nic Bishop



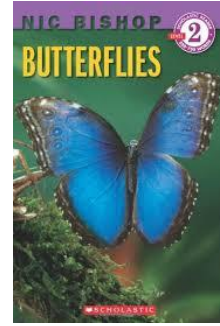
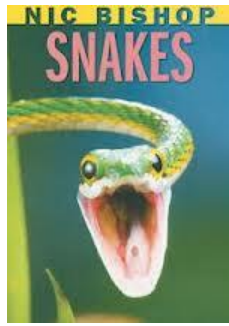
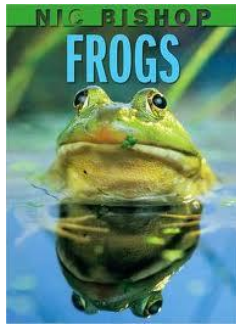
Nic Bishop

This is Nic Bishop. Nic is a biologist and a professional photographer. He writes nature books for children. Both of Nic's parents were biologists. He moved a lot when he was young. He lived in Bangladesh, the Sudan, New Guinea and lots of other cool places! When he was very young he began to develop an interest in nature, especially animals. When he was 9 years old, he started taking pictures of plants and animals.

He started writing for adults, but then realized kids were really interested in his pictures of small animals like spiders, frogs, and snakes. He has written many non-fiction books and uses his own photographs in them.

He now lives in Boston with his wife, who is also a biologist. They have lots of little critters as pets, including a tarantula!

Books by Nic



We notice these crafts:

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Teacher Tips:

An author study on Nic Bishop could work in any grade depending on the text you choose.

FYI-

Nic was the photographer for Joy Cowley's non-fiction books *Red Eyed Tree Frog & Chameleon, Chameleon*.

Some of Nic's unique crafts include:

- Writes mostly about small animals
- Word placement and font (BOLD, color, italics - each book is different)
- Non-fiction features: Contents, Photo Index, Glossary, and About the Author
- Photographs (close ups)

Website: <http://www.nicbishop.com/>



**Gail
Gibbons**

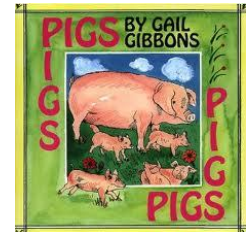
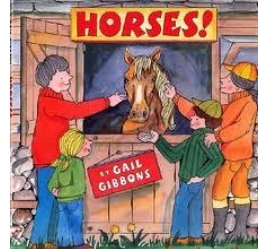
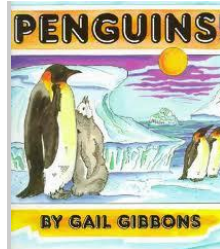
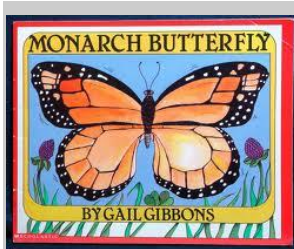


Gail Gibbons

This is Gail Gibbons. She writes and illustrates many informational books for children. She has published over 170 books and won many awards! Even as a young girl, Gail loved making books. She also asked a lot of questions when she was little. All of her questions now help her to research on the topics of her books. She gets to travel all over the world to research! She has an art degree and has been a cartoonist, illustrator, sculptor, and model builder. Because she has a background in art, she can illustrate her own books.

Gail lives with her husband in Vermont. They have two children, a dog, and a cat.

Books by Gail



We notice these crafts:

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Teacher Tips:

Some of Gail's unique crafts include:

- Illustrations are often in several boxes on the page to show a process or order (text structure - sequence)
- Use of temporal words
- On the last page of most of her books, she has some kind of wrap-up, fact sheet, extension, etc.
- Non-fiction features: Labels, Captions, Cross-sections, Charts, & Diagrams (different in each book)
- Illustrations rather than real photographs (Some children form a misconception that a non-fiction text with illustrations is not as "good" as one that uses photographs. See if students can connect Gail's history as an artist to the reason why she uses illustrations rather than photos.)

Lesson ideas:

Harvest -

Use the three texts *Apples*, *The Pumpkin Book*, and *Corn* to delve into a harvest unit. You can use the 3 way chart with big ideas (what is similar from all 3) sheet below! ☺

Animal Classification -

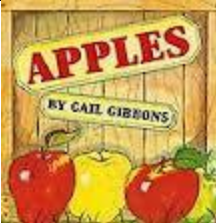
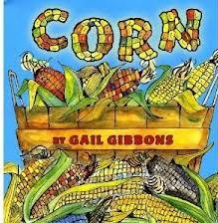
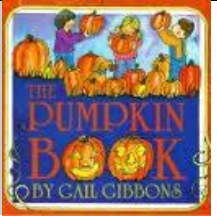
Choose different animals to research and classify. Student groups can choose from different animal types based on Gail's books (arctic animals, marine animals, insects, amphibians, etc.) or choose random ones that spark an interest! See the classification sheet below (adapted from Jenkins & White *Nonfiction Author Studies in the Elementary Classroom*, 2007).

Website: <http://www.gailgibbons.com/>

***Go to the "Teacher's Guide" tab on the website; there are so many fantastic printable pages and graphic organizers!!!!

Gail Gibbons - Harvest

What have we learned from each book? What do they all have in common?

		
<p>What's the Big Idea?</p>		

Gail Gibbons - Animal Classification

Research 4 animals and record your findings.

About the animal...				
Habitat				
Body Covering				
Movement				
Communication				
Diet				
Enemies				
Prey				
Babies / Young				
Interesting Facts				



**Steve
Jenkins**



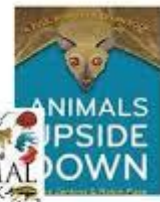
Steve Jenkins

This is Steve Jenkins. Steve writes many informational books for children. He has won the Caldecott Honor Medal for his excellent illustrations.

When Steve was young, he moved around a lot because his father was in the military. Later his father became a physics professor and an astronomer. This is one reason why Steve is so interested in science! Steve thought he would be a scientist too, but at the last minute decided to go to art school instead.

Steve lives in Colorado with his wife, Robin, who is also an author and illustrator. They have even written some books together. They have 3 children. Many of Steve's books are inspired by the questions his children ask.

Books by Steve



We notice these crafts:

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Teacher Tips:

An author study on Steve Jenkins could work in any grade depending on the text you choose.

Some of Steve's unique crafts include:

- Question the Reader (*What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?*)
- On the last page of most of his books, he has some kind of wrap-up, fact sheet, etc.
- Non-fiction features: Labels, Headings, Captions, Cross-sections, Charts, Maps & Diagrams (different in each book)
- Ellipses (*Animals in Flight*)
- Illustrations (collage) rather than real photographs (Some children form a misconception that a non-fiction text with illustrations is not as "good" as one that uses photographs. See if students can connect Steve's history as an artist to the reason why he uses illustrations rather than photos.)

Lesson ideas:

Word Usage -

Vivid Verbs - *Move!*

Superlative Adjectives - *Biggest, Strongest, Fastest & Actual Size*

Illustrations-

Use *Looking Down* and *Actual Size* to explore how Steve uses the perspective of space and size to illustrate with clarity!

Website: <http://www.stevejenkinsbooks.com/>

*Check out the "Making Books" tab to learn more about Steve's process as a writer... it is SO COOL!



**Jim
Arnosky**



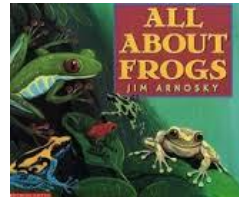
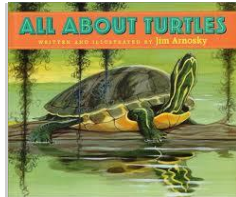
Jim Arnosky

This is Jim Arnosky. Jim writes many fiction and nonfiction books for children. He has won many awards for his books.

Jim is a self-taught writer, artist, and natural scientist. Most of his nonfiction books are about animals and nature. He loves fishing, farming, boating, and playing guitar.

He lives in Vermont with his wife, Deanna. They live on a farm. They grow all of their own food, keep bees for honey, and raise sheep for the wool. Jim and Deanna have two daughters.

Books by Jim



We notice these crafts:

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Teacher Tips:

An author study on Jim Arnosky works best in grades 2-5 depending on the text you choose.

Some of Jim's unique crafts include:

- Question the Reader (almost all of the "All About.." books start with questioning the reader)
- Non-fiction features: Labels, Headings, Captions, Charts, Maps & Diagrams (different in each book)
- Illustrations rather than real photographs (Some children form a misconception that a non-fiction text with illustrations is not as "good" as one that uses photographs. Have students analyze why Steve uses illustrations rather than photos. Hint: this may have something to do with the structure of his texts! ☺)

Lesson ideas:

Nonfiction feature analysis (see the printable on the next page).

Use Jim as a mentor author and launch an "All about books" writing unit.

Website: <http://www.jimarnosky.com/>

Nonfiction Feature Find!

*Choose 3 texts and see which nonfiction features you can find. Check the features you find.

Look for a pattern... that may tell you about the author's craft!

Author: _____			
Title:			
Nonfiction Features	<input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents <input type="checkbox"/> Index <input type="checkbox"/> Glossary <input type="checkbox"/> Bold Words <input type="checkbox"/> Headings <input type="checkbox"/> Maps <input type="checkbox"/> Captions <input type="checkbox"/> Diagrams <input type="checkbox"/> Timeline <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations <input type="checkbox"/> Labels <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents <input type="checkbox"/> Index <input type="checkbox"/> Glossary <input type="checkbox"/> Bold Words <input type="checkbox"/> Headings <input type="checkbox"/> Maps <input type="checkbox"/> Captions <input type="checkbox"/> Diagrams <input type="checkbox"/> Timeline <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations <input type="checkbox"/> Labels <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Table of Contents <input type="checkbox"/> Index <input type="checkbox"/> Glossary <input type="checkbox"/> Bold Words <input type="checkbox"/> Headings <input type="checkbox"/> Maps <input type="checkbox"/> Captions <input type="checkbox"/> Diagrams <input type="checkbox"/> Timeline <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations <input type="checkbox"/> Labels <input type="checkbox"/> _____
What did you learn about this author's craft?			



Seymour Simon

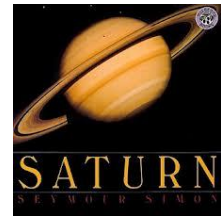
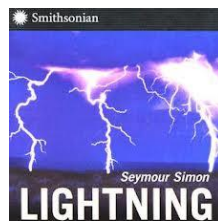


Seymour Simon

This is Seymour Simon. He has written almost 300 books! He has written more informational science books for children than any other author. He has won many awards for his outstanding nonfiction children's books. He was a middle and high school science teacher for 23 years.

He currently lives in New York with his wife, Liz. They have two children and four grandchildren.

Books by Seymour



We notice these crafts:

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Teacher Tips:

An author study on Seymour works best in intermediate grades.

Some of Seymour's unique crafts include:

- Non-fiction features: Labels, Cross-sections, Captions, Charts, Maps & Diagrams (different in each book)
- Real photographs

Lesson ideas:

Seymour DOES NOT use some of the common nonfiction features such as: table of contents, headings, glossary, and index. This is important to his craft and structure of his text. Discuss with students why he might make this choice in his writing. Have students try to add these features to the text.

Seymour writes on a wide range of science topics. Have students categorize some of his texts (ex. Human body, planets, natural disasters, animals, etc.). Have children see if there is a pattern with the publications (in other words... did he get on a roll with a topic and work on several titles around the same time).

Website: <http://www.seymoursimon.com/>