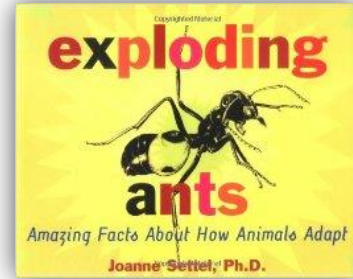


**Title:** Exploding Ants:  
Amazing Facts about How Animals Adapt  
**Author:** Joanne Settel, Ph.D  
**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



### **SUMMARY**

How would you like to read about blood suckers, dog mucus, and brainwashing worms? Sounds like a book you can't put down! Joanne Settel has written a book that compiles some of the grossest examples of animal adaptation one could find, making it a perfect read aloud to be shared with a 4<sup>th</sup> grader. Exploding Ants does not just go for the gross factor; it explains scientific concepts in an accessible way. This book is sure to engage and inform the entire family.

### **QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WHILE READING**

#### **VOCABULARY**

It's important to make sure that your child has an understanding of key words in the book. Talking about words while reading is a great way for your child to learn new words.

In this book, you might talk about these words:

- specialize (pg. 6)
- proposition (pg. 10)
- sound (pg. 14)
- inject (pg. 14)
- sterile (pg. 16)
- deposit (pg. 23)
- development (pg. 25)
- dislodge (pg. 25)
- regurgitating (pg. 29)
- fuse (pg. 34)

You might use questions like:

*In the book, what does the word specialize mean? Where might you use the word in speaking and writing?*

#### **KEY IDEAS and THEMES**

In addition to words, it's important to talk about key ideas and themes and how they develop over the course of the book. Here are some examples to get you started:

1. Consider all of the different adaptations mentioned in the book. Sort all of these types by their purpose. For example, what are the various ways animals have adapted to ensure they or their young will eat, have shelter, and reproduce? Discuss the specific examples and myriad ways animals survive and thrive.



2. Settel was very creative with her page titles. Flip through the book, reading each one, and discuss which words were key in grabbing your attention and why. Consider how these words relate to the information found under the heading.
3. Talk about predatory animals. Why is it important they eat various things? Show information from the book that supports your answers.
4. All living things must have shelter in order to survive. *Exploding Ants* provides examples of unusual shelter. Talk about this expanded idea of shelter being more than a structure. Find examples in the book to talk about.
5. In the chapter entitled, Dog Mucus and Other Tasty Treats, the focus is on parasites. Talk about parasites and their adaptations.
6. Who knew romance could be so interesting?! Discuss the fact that courtship behaviours are considered an adaptation and what variations in these behaviours are found in the animal kingdom.

### EXTRA ACTIVITY

Since parasites are the cause of many diseases worldwide, research them further. Investigate the vaccinations and treatments that are given prior to world travel to prevent parasites coming on board the human body. You might research the work that former U.S. president Jimmy Carter has done to eradicate the Guinea Worm disease—a parasitic disease—in Africa.