

Power Lessons - Year 4

Parts of a Book

Objective: To help students identify the table of contents and index and their uses.

Materials: Any non-fiction book with a table of contents and an index, such as *Coral Reefs* by Katy Pike and Garda Turner (4.6).

Optional Materials: An overhead projector and transparencies of the table of contents and index.

Lesson:

1. Hold up the book you have chosen and ask students to imagine that they are looking for a book that covers particular topics. For example, if you are using *Coral Reefs*, you might say, “Imagine that you are looking for a book about coral reefs. You want to know about the fish that live of a coral reef, what coral is and the different types of coral reefs. How could you tell if this book is for you?”

Possible student responses might be:

- You could begin reading
- You could look at all of the pages
- You could check the table of contents.

Help students understand that the table of contents is a great tool to get a quick glance at what the book covers.

2. Open to the table of contents, showing students that it is in the front after the title page. (If you made transparencies, project a table of contents for students to see in more detail.) Point out that the table of contents lists chapters and the page on which each of the chapters begins. Read the chapter titles aloud. Ask, “Would this book likely have the information that you would need?” (yes).
3. Say, “What if I wanted to know if this book had very specific information about a certain topic? For example, what if I wanted to know if this book on coral reefs had information about the Great Barrier Reef? Where would I look then?” (The index).
4. Open the book or show the transparency of an index. Tell students that the index lists all of the topics in alphabetical order and can be a good help in locating specific information. Point out that the numbers next to the topics show on what page or pages the information can be found. Ask, “Can I find the information I was looking for in this book?” (Yes).
5. Tell students that using both the table of contents and the index can help them select books and find the information they are searching for.

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Status of the Class

Follow up: As you take the Status of the Class, ask:

- Does the book you are reading have a table of contents or an index?
- If you were wondering if a sports book had a chapter on netball, in what part of the book would you look? If you were wondering if a book mentioned a netball team, where would you look?
- Have you ever used the table of contents or index of a book? What were you looking for?

Added Practice: Challenge groups of students to a research scavenger hunt. Make a list of topics, both broad and specific, that you are currently studying. Have students find books that contain information on those topics.

The next time your students write about a non-fiction topic, ask them to include a table of contents and an index. Developing an index helps students consider which key words might be useful for a reader and helps them to understand which words may reasonably be found in an index.