

free-market ideologues, whose values are frequently mingled with the science. The ultimate nemesis of science is power, not religion: another important lesson for students. The seven vivid and engaging historical cases in this book are valuable teaching resources. Explicit reflection on them can foster students' skills in analyzing the political structure of contemporary – and future – science “controversies.”

Merchants of Doubt is alarming, yet important. It may remind teachers that, despite standardized tests, they have a civic responsibility to nurture scientifically literate citizens, else sheer economic power eclipses science.



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READING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Snakes and The Extraordinary Everglades (All Aboard Reading Series). By Jeff Corwin. 2009, 2010. Grosset & Dunlap (ISBN 9780448451770, 9780448451763). 48 pp. Paperback. \$3.99. Ages 6–8.

With over 40 photographs and cool facts about snakes, Corwin's contributions to the “All Aboard Reading” series are to be applauded. In *Snakes*, independent readers aged 6–8 can drift from Spitting Cobras to Black Mambas, learning about adaptations that range from spraying venom more than 10 feet to grabbing bats and birds right out of the air.

In *The Extraordinary Everglades*, Corwin guides us through the “watery wilderness” from the inland wet prairies and pinelands to the coastal brackish mangrove swamps and out to Florida Bay. Throughout the tour, he highlights plants and animals that make up this protected area, from the endangered Florida Panther to the non-native Burmese python. Ecological concepts are discussed in simple

terms that make complex ideas such as human interference with wilderness approachable to younger children.

Corwin draws readers in with his enthusiasm about the animals and then backs it up with photographs on every page. Vocabulary words are italicized and defined within the context of the sentence, making for quick and easy understanding. These would be great read-aloud books for curious 3- to 5-year-olds or introductory ecology books for older students learning how to read English.



Animals and Habitats of the United States. By Jeff Corwin. 2009. Puffin Books (ISBN 9780142414057). 126 pp. Paperback. \$9.99. Ages 8–12.

Corwin focuses on four of his favorite ecosystems in this book. After a brief introduction defining an ecosystem, he dives into the first of the four areas: Yellowstone. The chapter drifts from one species to the next, taking the reader on an armchair guided tour of the region. Corwin pauses to highlight interesting facts about one species before tying it to the next and moving on.

Throughout the tour, he visits themes related to human interference with natural ecosystems (errors that we have made in the past followed by changes we have made as we have learned more about nature). For example, after teaching us about the wolves' role in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, he reminds us that humans once worked hard to successfully exterminate all the wolves in the area. He then goes on to show that 50 years later, with more scientific knowledge, scientists have established and continue to monitor a wolf reintroduction program.

Ensuing chapters (Monterey Bay, The Sonoran Desert, and The Everglades) continue with the tour-guide approach to a particular ecosystem, threading in ecologically related themes such as the connectivity of nature. “Each living thing, simply trying to do what

it needs to – eat enough to survive or scatter seeds so more plants can grow – contributes to the health of the desert ecosystem” (p. 79).

Corwin sometimes returns to species in order to thread in a variety of ecological connections. In the chapter on the Sonoran Desert, he revisits the coyote more than once to show that it engages in predator–prey relationships with animals as diverse as the Gila monster, grasshopper, jack rabbit, and antelope.

While the book is certainly informative and easy to read, there are some distracting elements that may tie back to Corwin's first mode of communication: TV. He is best known for his work as a host of multiple shows on Animal Planet, Discovery, and Disney cable television. Perhaps that explains the distractions in the book: fascinating fact boxes and thumb-tacked side notes dot the pages, making focused reading somewhat difficult at times. Because of the higher reading level of this book, the depth, and the somewhat distracting nature of the extras, this book is less easy to recommend because I think it is suitable only for a narrow audience. It would be a good book for expanding the knowledge base of an eager student who is a strong reader or an introductory ecology book for older students of English as a second language.



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