

The Power of Corn

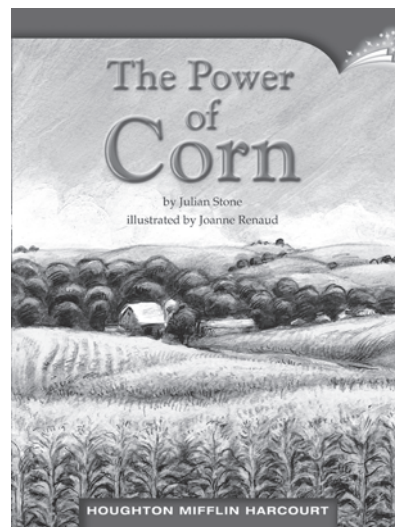
by Julian Stone

Fountas-Pinnell Level P

Informational Text

Selection Summary

In the United States, more corn is grown than any other grain. Corn has changed from maize, which Native Americans introduced to settlers, but the plant parts are the same. A new plant grows from a kernel, and new kernels grow on an ear after the silks receive pollen. Most corn becomes animal food, and the rest is used for thousands of products.



Number of Words: 1,091

Characteristics of the Text

Genre	• Informational text
Text Structure	• Paragraphs with main ideas and supporting details • Many paragraphs with sequence structure
Content	• Economic and historical importance of corn • Parts and growth of corn plant
Themes and Ideas	• Corn is one of the most important crops in the United States, used in thousands of products. • Over time, people have changed the corn plant, its uses, and the ways it is harvested.
Language and Literary Features	• Conversational tone • Writer addresses reader: <i>you</i>
Sentence Complexity	• Variety in sentence length and complexity • Items in a series with commas: <i>Peanut butter, salad dressing, cookies, baby food, soup, and many other foods have corn products in them.</i>
Vocabulary	• Agricultural and corn-related terms: <i>stalks, crops, acres, bushels, grain, harvest, kernel, shoot, ear, minerals, tassel, husks, silks, pollen, cobs</i> • Some pages dense with terms, most explained
Words	• Mostly one- and two-syllable words, some longer • Words with endings, such as <i>harvesting, healthier, invented</i>
Illustrations	• Drawings support and extend the content.
Book and Print Features	• Twelve pages with illustration on every page • Many illustrations have captions and/or labels.

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The Power of Corn by Julian Stone

Build Background

Name common foods made with corn, and have students add their own ideas. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: *What do you know about corn? Have you ever seen corn growing?* Read the title and author. Tell them that this is an informational text, so it will have facts.

Introduce the Text

Guide students through the text, noting important ideas and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so that they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 3: Tell students that this book gives information about corn.

Suggested language: *Turn to page 3 of this book. Let's read the last sentence of paragraph 1 and the first sentence of paragraph 2: Corn is one of America's most important products. Corn is also one of the oldest crops in America. Why do you think corn is such an important product?*

Pages 4–5: Draw attention to the illustrations and read the captions. *About eighty million **acres** of corn are grown every year in the United States. An acre is about the size of a football field. According to the caption, how many bushels of corn can grow in one acre? Imagine how much corn is grown each year in our country!*

Pages 6–7: *Some English speakers call corn maize, based on a Native American name for the plant, which was first grown in the Americas. How do the illustrations on pages 6 and 7 show different ways that early Americans grew maize?*

Page 10: Use the illustrations to discuss the plant parts: *tassel, husks, ears, kernels, silks, pollen*. Have students read aloud this sentence in paragraph 2 and restate its meaning: *Once pollen lands on the silks, the kernels begin to grow inside the husk.*

Now turn back to the beginning of the book and read to find out about the importance of corn.

Expand Your Vocabulary

acres – property consisting of land, p. 4

husks – thin dry outer coverings, p. 10

kernel – a whole grain or seed, p. 7

maize – Native American corn, p. 6

settlers – people who settle in a new region, p. 3

Read

Have students read *The Power of Corn* silently while you listen to individual students read. Support their problem solving and fluency as needed.

Remind students to use the Question Strategy  **TARGET STRATEGY** and to think of questions as they read.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response

Invite students to share their personal responses to the book.

Suggested language: *Why is corn such an important product in the United States?*

Ways of Thinking

As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

Thinking Within the Text	Thinking Beyond the Text	Thinking About the Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American farmers harvest billions of bushels of corn every year.• Corn is used mainly in animal feed, but also in thousands of products.• Corn began as a Native American crop.• The kernels are the seeds that grow on ears.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of corn has evolved throughout history: early Native American farmers used corn to feed themselves, but modern American farmers use it for other purposes.• A single crop can have effects on the whole world.• Farmers can change how plants grow and look.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The author did research to find facts.• The author's attitude is that corn is an important product in the United States and has played an important role in the history of the country.• The author chose to tell about the history of corn, along with scientific information about plant parts.
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Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite students to choose a passage from the text to read aloud. Remind them to stress the proper words in a sentence to convey meaning.
- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.
- **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Use the word *unloaded* on page 11 to point out the prefix *un-* meaning "the opposite of." Explain that *un-* can also mean "not." Have students add *un-* to each of these words from the text, and explain how the prefixed word changes the sentence meaning: *important* (page 3), *learned* (page 7), *ready* (page 10).

Writing about Reading


Critical Thinking

Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 18.9.

Responding

Have students complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Text and Graphic Features  **TARGET SKILL** Tell students that when they use text and graphic features, they get information from both words and pictures. Model the skill, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud

The illustrations in this book are packed with information to help me learn about corn. Some pictures have labeled parts, like the diagram on page 8 showing how roots grow. Some have sentence captions that sum up what is shown, like the caption on page 5. Some pictures show what the paragraphs explain, like the illustrations of different corn on page 13. Sometimes a picture adds information to the text, like the picture of the Native American digging tool on page 6.

Practice the Skill

Have students write two sentences to tell what they learned from the illustrations on pages 10 and 11.

Writing Prompt: Thinking About the Text

Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think about the text, they think about the language the author has used, the genre of the text, the author’s purpose, and how the text is organized.

Assessment Prompts

- In the paragraph on page 6, what is the main idea?
- Which word on page 11 helps the reader know the meaning of *harvesting*?
- Complete this sentence in your own words: This book was mainly written to

English Language Development

Reading Support Make sure the text matches the student's reading level. Language and content should be accessible with regular teaching support.

Vocabulary Use the illustration on page 10 to have students point to these: *soil, ear, husk, tassel, silk, kernel, stalk, leaves*. Then have students say each name.

Oral Language Development

Check student comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches your students' English proficiency level. **Speaker 1** is the teacher, **Speaker 2** is the student.

Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/ Advanced
<p>Speaker 1: What part of the corn plant do people eat?</p> <p>Speaker 2: the kernels</p> <p>Speaker 1: What do the husks do?</p> <p>Speaker 2: cover the ear</p> <p>Speaker 1: What is most corn used for?</p> <p>Speaker 2: to feed animals</p>	<p>Speaker 1: What are some uses for corn?</p> <p>Speaker 2: feeding animals and people, making food products, making fuel for cars and trucks</p> <p>Speaker 1: What does the tassel do?</p> <p>Speaker 2: It holds pollen that falls on silks to make kernels grow.</p>	<p>Speaker 1: Why is corn such an important plant?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Billions of bushels are produced each year in the United States. Corn is used in animal feed and in thousands of products. It was also important in American history because Native Americans grew it, and later settlers learned from them.</p>

Responding

TARGET SKILL Text and Graphic Features The author uses text and graphic features to explain facts about corn. Copy this chart. Then write two more features. Under each feature, explain that feature's purpose.

Feature diagram	Feature ?	Feature ?
Purpose shows how roots grow	Purpose ?	Purpose ?

Write About It

Text to Text Think about a science book you have read about a food crop. Describe a problem about growing the crop. Explain how farmers or scientists solved the problem.

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Name _____ Date _____

Lesson 18
BLACKLINE MASTER 18.9

Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

- Think within the text** How was the maize planted by Native Americans different from the corn grown today?
Possible response: Maize plants were shorter and the grains were smaller.
- Think within the text** How has the growing of corn changed over the years?
Possible response: Farmers learned how to make corn grow faster and bigger.
They also learned how to make it last through the winter and how to harvest it using machines.
- Think beyond the text** The title of this book is *The Power of Corn*. What is so powerful about corn?
Responses will vary.
- Think about the text** Look at the drawings on pages 8 and 9. Do they help you understand how corn grows? Explain your answer.
Responses will vary.

Making Connections Corn is used to make many different kinds of products we use every day. Look at the labels on food packages in your home. Which ones contain some form of corn?

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.

Read directions to students.
Critical Thinking
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Grade 3, Unit 4: Extreme Nature

The Power of Corn

Thinking About the Text

Think about the question below. Then write your answer in one or two paragraphs.

What do you think the author's purpose was in writing this book? Use details from the book to support your answer.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Critical Thinking

The Power of Corn Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

- 1. Think within the text** How was the maize planted by Native Americans different from the corn grown today?

- 2. Think within the text** How has the growing of corn changed over the years?

- 3. Think beyond the text** The title of this book is *The Power of Corn*. What is so powerful about corn?

- 4. Think about the text** Look at the drawings on pages 8 and 9. Do they help you understand how corn grows? Explain your answer.

Making Connections Corn is used to make many different kinds of products we use every day. Look at the labels on food packages in your home. Which ones contain some form of corn?

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.

The Power of Corn • LEVEL P

The Power of Corn Running Record Form

page	Selection Text	Errors	Self-Corrections
4	Today corn is more important than ever. About 80 million acres of corn are grown every year in the United States. Farmers pick about nine billion bushels. That's more than twice as much as any other grain crop.		
	Americans make more things from corn than you ever imagined. More than three thousand different products come from corn.		
5	Of course, you can eat corn just as it is, but there is corn in other things you eat, too. Peanut butter, salad dressing, cookies, baby food, soup, and many other foods have corn products in them.		
	Comments:	Accuracy Rate (# words read correctly/94 × 100) _____ %	Total Self-Corrections _____

Behavior	Code	Error
Read word correctly	✓ cat	0
Repeated word, sentence, or phrase	® cat	0
Omission	cat	1

Behavior	Code	Error
Substitution	cut cat	1
Self-corrects	cut ^{sc} cat	0
Insertion	the ^cat	1
Word told	Ⓢ cat	1

