

Conference—Doing Additional Research

Third Grade

SARAH: Mohammed, what are you writing about today?

MOHAMMED: Sea otters.

SARAH: Would you go ahead and share with me what you have written so far?

MOHAMMED: “Sea otters have the thickest fur than any other animal. Otters can live on land or water. Many people kill otters and take their fur away. Otters are smart for [sic] their tools. They use rocks to break the clam, then take it as food. When the enemies of a otter comes, the mother will jump to him or her and let out a huge roar. Otters don’t build houses. When the beaver leave their homes, otters move in.”

SARAH: Good. It looks like you have a lot of good facts written down. I notice that you’ve got some lines there. Are you starting to put your information into categories? What kind of categories have you decided on so far?

MOHAMMED: Looks and fur, protect, walls and houses.

SARAH: As a reader, can I make a suggestion? In your category of looks and fur, you tell me up here that, “Sea otters have the thickest fur than any other animal.” What other information do you have so far about how sea otters look, and about their fur? Do you have any other information in here so far?

So can I make a suggestion—maybe to add more facts about how a sea otter looks? Did you get a lot of information in your writer’s notebook?

MOHAMMED: Not that much.

SARAH:

Not that much? So, do you maybe need to use a book to help you find more information about how they look? Why don't you—I put some books right at this table; why don't you grab one of the sea otter books, and I'll help you find some information in the book.

Let's look at this book about sea otters and see if they have a section about how sea otters look.

If you go back to where the table of contents is—because remember, with nonfiction books, we don't have to read the whole book. From their table of contents, do you think they have a place about their fur? Let's go ahead and turn to page 18.

Do you think you can learn some facts on these two pages, about their fur? OK, if you find something that you think is interesting, you can add it to your discovery draft, or you can just put it in your writer's notebook. Because as a reader, I'm curious to know about their fur. OK?

Good work. Keep working.