

Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 2.A.4.c

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 4. Analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Objective c. State and support main ideas and messages

Assessment Limits:

The whole text or a portion of the text

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Lesson Seeds

Reading Grade 8 Objective 2.A.4.c

Activities

- Provide students with informational text/s. Explain to students that they are able to better understand an author's most significant points in written text by identifying the main idea of each paragraph. As students read their individual texts, they are instructed to underline the main ideas or supporting details of at least four different paragraphs. Classroom discussion should lead them to the following conclusions: The main idea may be stated at the beginning, middle, or end of the paragraph. It may also not be directly stated, but suggested by details.
- Provide students an informational passage from which all subheadings have been removed and replaced with numbers. Have students read each section and write a subheading that captures the main idea of that section. Share the subheadings with the entire class to determine their accuracy or appropriateness.
- Teacher will provide students with an informational passage. Before reading provide students with the topic of the text's message. As students read, they should highlight, post note, or record any information relating to the topic. Once reading is complete, discuss with students everything the author says about the topic. From this information conclude the author's message.
- Read an informational passage. After reading is complete, show students a list of statements drawn from the passage which include statements of detail, example, main idea, and message. Have students categorize the statements according to their purpose. Share the results and discuss any conflicts to ensure understanding. Take message statement/s and return to the text to find supporting details.

Clarification

Reading Grade 8 Indicator 2.A.4

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in the text, which are **the important ideas and messages**. These are sometimes directly stated in the text, but for more complex texts, a reader will determine the implied, important ideas and messages by synthesizing ideas across the text(s).

In order to understand important ideas or messages in a text, a reader should **determine the author's apparent purpose for writing**. The author's purpose, either implied or directly stated, is the main reason for the text. Most authors write to inform, persuade, or to express personal ideas relative to his or her selected topic. Authors write for different audiences; an author's intended audience should be apparent through the author's choice of topic, diction, organization, and graphic aids. Knowing these features and the intended audience for a text helps a reader determine a purpose for reading, which will enhance a reader's understanding of the text as a whole.

Once a reader understands an author's or text's purpose, he or she can speculate as to **how someone might use the text**. To do so, a reader explores the application of the text to personal or content-specific use. A critical reader applies the text for personal or content specific use and to determine issues and ideas within a text or across texts and their personal and societal implications.

The ability to **distinguish between facts and opinions** is a prerequisite reading skill for **identifying and explaining an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective**. A fact can be defined as something that can be proven true while an opinion is a belief or feeling about a subject. Authors use a combination of facts and opinions in their writing, most often using facts to support their opinions. Once a reader can identify an author's opinion on a topic, the main idea or message can be more clearly understood. An author's opinion with the evidence, details, and examples used to support the opinion become the **author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective**.

When **stating and supporting main ideas and messages**, a reader must first identify the main idea of the text. To do so, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text, which is often evident in the title or first paragraph(s) of an informational text. Then, after reading an entire text, a reader must identify the main point that the author/text makes about the topic or subject. The author's message is the same thing as the main idea; however, a message is usually present in more complex, subjective text. A message is often more author-centered, whereas a main idea is more text-centered. If the main idea or message is not directly stated in the text, a reader must use the details and information in the text to infer the main idea or message. A reader supports the main idea or message by using details from the text that relate to it and that help him/her understand the main idea. This process can be done for the entire text or for a small portion of text.

Summarizing or paraphrasing a text or a portion of a text is an essential skill for a reader when comprehending informational text. A reader is better able to determine the important ideas and messages in text if he/she is able to summarize it. To do so, a reader must state the main idea in his/her own words and then select only details from the text that contribute to the identified main idea. Paraphrasing, when a reader restates an idea in his or her own words, is a key step to summarizing a text. This can be done for a small portion of text, such as a paragraph, as well as for a chapter or the entire text.

Authors use details and examples in their writing to clarify, highlight, or enhance their ideas. A critical reader will be able to identify **information not related, or peripheral, to the main idea of a text**. Doing so will help a reader disregard redundant as well as extraneous information when summarizing the text or identifying the main idea or message. Especially for complex text, a reader may analyze the effect this extraneous information has on the main idea or message and make decisions or draw conclusions about why an author used that information. This skill is useful as readers develop their own opinions and ideas relative to a text.

When a reader compares and contrasts textual ideas, elements, and features within and across texts, he/she is **identifying relationships between and among ideas**. Authors also organize their ideas to show a sequence of ideas or to show cause and effect. Once a reader identifies a relationship that exists among ideas in a text, he/she can think more analytically about that relationship. A critical reader will also make **connections to prior knowledge**, which are the beliefs or background a reader brings to a text.

In order to **draw conclusions about and make generalizations from informational text**, a reader should first be able to state the main idea as well as to summarize a text. When a reader draws conclusions, he/she uses information from the text—such as the text patterns or text features—that can be either stated or implied. A reader makes a judgment or a decision that is new to him or her since it is not directly stated in the text. A conclusion or generalization is dependent on the information in a text but is external to it.

An ability **to connect text to prior knowledge or experience** helps a reader identify personally with a text. A reader identifies similarities between what is being described, explained, or narrated and what he or she has experienced, heard or read about. A critical reader forms opinions about the content within a text during and after reading and is then able to develop his or her own ideas about information from a text.

As readers have more experiences with these skills and with increasingly complex texts, their cognitive abilities will increase as well. Experienced readers will be able not only to determine a main idea or message, but also to develop skills at **analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a main idea or message** by making connections to ideas and messages expressed in other texts or to their personal experiences.

Public Release Item #1 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

Question

Read the story 'Wang Yani' and answer the following question.

What advice would Yani probably give to young people? Use details from both the article and the quotation to support your answer.

Write your answer on your answer document.

Annotated Student Responses

Yani would most likely tell a young person to find what they love to do and pursue it. Yani says, "I do not paint to get praise from others, but to play a game of endless joy. This quote proves that Yani believes that anyone can be happy doing what they love. She would urge kids to follow their dreams with determination so they can have joyful and fulfilling lives.

Score for Sample Student Response #1: Rubric Score 3

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text. The student identifies Yani's advice to be, ". . . find what they love to do and pursue it." The student effectively uses text-relevant information to explain why Yani would give this advice: "Yani believes that anyone can be happy doing what they love." The student interprets that Yani's advice would help a young artist "to follow their dreams with determination so they can have joyful and fulfilling lives."

The advice that Yani would probably be, to paint not to get praise, but to play the endless game of joy, she would say this to help young people relax and have fun when they're painting.

Score for Sample Student Response #2: Rubric Score 2

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates general understanding of the text. The student identifies advice given by Yani: ". . . paint not to get praise, but to play the endless game of joy." The student uses text-relevant information to explain how young artists would use this advice: ". . . relax and have fun when they're painting."

IF Yani gave advice to other young people, she would say something about letting your creativity come out. I know this from reading her quote, which talks about using your imagination, and individuality.

Score for Sample Student Response #3: Rubric Score 1

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text. The student identifies advice given by Yani, ". . . letting your creativity come out." The student uses minimal text-relevant information to support Yani's advice: ". . . [she] talks about using your imagination, and individuality."

The advice that Yani would give to young people is the very first paragraph, which is a quote about art from Yani. The quote would be great advice since it will really help artists improve their work. Throughout the article, Yani has been great. The quote is really good.

Score for Sample Student Response #4: Rubric Score 0

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response is irrelevant to the question. The student locates the advice in the text but does not identify the advice Yani would give.

Handouts

Wang Yani

1975–

Painter China

By Amelie Welden

When you pick up a brush, don't ever ask anyone for help. Because the most wonderful thing about painting is being left alone with your own imagination. I do not paint to get praise from others, but to play a game of endless joy. —Wang Yani

Wang Shiqiang couldn't believe his eyes—his painting was ruined! And the culprit? His two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Yani. She had gotten into his oil paints while he was gone and used them to create her own "masterpiece"—right over her father's careful brush strokes. Wang Shiqiang was angry at first, but Yani explained, "Papa, I was helping you paint. I want to paint and paint." At that moment, Wang Shiqiang knew that his daughter's talent and desire would make her an amazing artist.



Wang Yani was born in Gongcheng, a small town in southern China. She expressed an interest in painting at a very young age, and her father, an art teacher and a painter, gave her the materials she needed. By the time she was three years old, Yani had already created paintings in the bold, dynamic style that would characterize all her work.

³This young, inspired artist was only four years old when she held her first art exhibition in Shanghai. By age six, Yani had completed over four thousand paintings, and when she was eight, one of her paintings was made into a Chinese postage stamp.

Over the next few years, Yani's work was shown throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. Then, in 1989, she achieved something truly unheard of in the art world: at just fourteen years of age, she became the youngest person ever to have a one-person show at the famous Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Her exhibition was called "Yani: The Brush of Innocence."

⁵Amazingly, Yani has never had any formal art training or painting classes. She paints just because she loves it. Her painting has been called "fresh" and "vigorous." Although her style is unique, she paints with traditional Chinese materials: brushes, inks, pigments, and special paper. Yani relies on her memory of real life experiences for inspiration, but she also uses her imagination to bring the paintings to life.

Before starting a painting, Yani tries to clear her mind. Often she listens to music while she works—Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is her favorite. After deciding what to paint, Yani begins to work, sweeping her brush smoothly across the paper.

Usually it takes Yani about thirty or forty minutes to complete a painting. When she's done, she marks the painting with her personal red seal, which, like the signature, identifies Yani as the artist.

Yani's favorite subjects in her early paintings were animals, especially cats and monkeys. She paints these animals playing and being mischievous. Yani's later work portrays landscapes and people, and many of her paintings tell a story. She often uses her art as a way to communicate. Once, to show her mom that she was hungry, Yani painted a picture of a monkey eating fruit.

Yani devotes a lot of her time to painting. Even when she was in school, Yani managed to paint about three pictures a day. But she also made time for her other hobbies and interests, like singing, dancing, reading, writing, sports, and music. Yani's talent has brought her international acclaim, but it's her love for painting that inspires her to keep creating new work.

Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant¹ information to clarify or extend understanding

Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant¹ information to show understanding

Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.²

Notes:

¹ Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

² An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

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