

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 2.A.4.i

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 4. Analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Objective i. Connect the text to prior knowledge or experience

Assessment Limits:

Prior knowledge that clarifies, extends, or challenges the ideas in the text or a portion of the text

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## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 8 Objective 2.A.4.i

#### Activities

- Have students choose a topic of interest, such as skateboarding, horseback riding, playing basketball etc. Have students list their prior knowledge and experience related to this topic. Have students use online resources and/or informational texts to locate information on the same topic and determine how their prior knowledge relates to the resources that they located and explored. Ask students to suggest additional information that they feel should have been included in the resources they used. Students may also share what items could be deleted from those same sources that would not change the meaning of the selection.
- Students complete a KWL organizer on a topic selected by the teacher. The teacher will select informational passages that contain text/print features, include: titles, subheadings, bold print, italics, etc. Students are directed to review the text and think about what they already know or have read about the topic. Students will share their knowledge with a partner or a small group. The students will read the text. As a group students will determine which text is the best developed text, or the text that provided them with information that extended their understanding of the topic.
- Provide students with informational text. Prior to reading the text have students share their experience/s and prior knowledge that they possess with the given topic. Students will read the text and complete a graphic organizer. They will combine prior knowledge and experience with information from the text to draw a conclusion about the text.



- The teacher will present students with a topic that appeals to the students' age and interests. Students will brainstorm their collective knowledge and experience with this topic. Next students will read an assigned informational text on the topic. After reading students will list any new information about the topic they learned from the text. Share their new learning with the remainder of the class.

## 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.

Think about one of Wang Yani's qualities. Explain how someone you know or have read about also has that quality. Use information from the article to support your answer.

Write your answer on your answer document.

### Annotated Student Responses

my sister, like Yani, is very devoted. Yani is devoted to her paintings and my sister is devoted to basketball. Both of them make time for other things but always try to use their "talent and desire" to excel. The two of them paint and play because they love to and not because it gives them recognition.

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 compares Wang Yani's devotion to painting to the devotion of "my sister" to basketball. The student effectively uses text-relevant information to explain the qualities of the two people by describing that ". . . they always try to use their, 'talent and desire' to excel" and by identifying what motivates them: "The two of them paint and play because they love to and not because it gives them recognition."

Wang Yani has desire because she loved to paint even at an early age. When she was only 4 she had her first art exhibition. Thomas Edison also had a desire, his desire was inventing. At the end of his amazing career he had over 1,000 patents for his inventions. Both Wang Yani and Thomas Edison had a desire.

Score for Sample Student Response #2: Rubric Score 2

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates a general understanding of the text. The student compares Thomas Edison's desire to invent to Wang Yani's desire to paint. The student uses text-relevant information to show that these two people have a similar desire to achieve: "When [Yani] was only 4 she had her first art exhibition. . . . At the end of [Edison's] amazing career he had over 1,000 patents for his inventions."

my mom's friend is very good at drawing +  
 painting. she listens to music to clear  
 her mind like Yani does. Also in school  
 she would keep that A in Art because  
 of her drawings + paintings.

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 the quality of a good artist in both Wang Yani and in "my mom's friend." The student uses some text-relevant information to show how the two are similar: "She listens to music to clear her mind like Yani does."

she drew a picture of  
 a monkey eating fruit.

Score for Sample Student Response #4: Rubric Score 0

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response is irrelevant to the question. The student identifies something that Wang Yani drew rather than a quality of Wang Yani.

## 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.

<sup>3</sup>This 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."

<sup>5</sup>Amazingly, 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-relevant<sup>1</sup> 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-relevant<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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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