

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 2.A.5.a

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 5. Analyze purposeful use of language

Objective a. Analyze specific word choice that contributes to the meaning and/or creates style

Assessment Limits:

Significant words and phrases with a specific effect on meaning or style

Figurative language

Idioms and colloquialisms

Connotations of grade-appropriate words

Technical or content vocabulary

Denotations of above-grade-level words in context

Discernible styles, such as persuasive, informal, formal, etc.

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## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 8 Objective 2.A.5.a

#### Activities

Prior to students reading an informational passage, the teacher will preview the text and select several words that are essential to the understanding of the text. Before students begin reading, the teacher will share these words in context with the class. Students will use context clues to suggest a meaning for each word. Students will be instructed to read the text with the purpose of determining whether or not the meaning suggestions proved valid or needed to be adjusted. After reading is complete teacher and students will review the words, determine a correct meaning for each, and discuss how knowing the meanings of those words is essential to understanding that informational passage.

Prior to reading an informational text, with teacher direction students will preview the text with the purpose of identifying its genre and predicting the type of language that will be used in that type of genre. Suggestions for type of language may include formal, informal, persuasive, descriptive etc...As students read they should be aware of language and circle or use post-its to identify words that indicate a specific style. Once reading is complete, assign each student a partner, have them review their marked texts, and determine the type of language used. Selected partners should share their findings with the class telling the style of the language and supporting that assertion with text support.

The teacher will provide students with a series of advertisements. With teacher direction students will identify words within the advertisement that are intended to persuade a reader. Next, students will identify the specific purpose of the ad. A sample student response should begin..."This advertisement persuades me to believe...." Finally students will analyze the words they have already identified as persuasive. In a teacher-directed discussion, students will determine the finer points and subtleties of each persuasive word looking at the associations the words evoke and their layers of meaning. For example, if a product or idea were to be associated with the word "springtime" in an advertisement, the word could be associated with ideas of rebirth, newness, change, etc...

The teacher will instruct students to read an informational passage. After the initial reading is complete, the teacher will select one sentence from the text which contains a word essential to the understanding of the text. Students will be asked to brainstorm other words that might replace the essential word. After a series of words has been suggested, the teacher and student will determine how the different word alters the meaning of the passage. A final determination will be made with the original word and its effect on the meaning of the passage.

## Clarification

### Reading Grade 8 Indicator 2.A.5

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will be able to identify, explain, and analyze an **author's use of language**, specific words or phrases that contribute to the meaning of a text or to the creation of an author's style. Author's style is the way an author uses language to express his/her thoughts. This may include word choice and figurative language. These words are purposeful and give clues to readers about the meaning and tone of a text or portion of a text. Used in conjunction with other text elements, the author's use of language assists readers in constructing meaning.

**To identify, explain and analyze specific words or phrases**, a reader must distinguish among the different types of word choices in texts or portions of texts. Word choice can make a point, set a tone, or reveal an author's style. By recognizing the different types of word choices, clarifying their purpose, and examining their implications, readers are better able to construct meaning from text.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Significant Words               | words that are necessary to a reader's understanding of a text   |
| • Figurative Language             | language that relays a meaning beyond a literal meaning  |
|                                   | Simile: stated comparison of two things that have some quality in common using the words like or as  |
|                                   | Metaphor: stated comparison of two things that have some quality in common <u>not</u> using the words like or as   |
|                                   | Personification: stating that an inanimate object has lifelike characteristics   |
| • Idiom                           | phrase/expressions whose meaning cannot be understood from the literal meaning of the words in it Hold your tongue is an English idiom meaning keep quiet. |
| • Colloquialism                   | familiar, informal, everyday talk Movies is an informal term for the more formal term cinema.  |
| • Connotation                     | idea or feeling associated with a word in addition to its literal meaning  |
| • Technical or Content Vocabulary | words that are specific to an area of study  |
| • Denotation                      | literal, dictionary meaning of a word  |
| • Discernible Word Style          | words associated with persuasive, formal, or informal writing  |

**To identify, explain, and analyze language that creates tone** a reader must first know that tone expresses the author's attitude toward his or her subject. The language, punctuation, and details a writer chooses help create the tone which could be serious, playful, angry,

sad, etc... In addition to specific word choices the inclusion of specific punctuation helps relay an author's attitude. A reader identifies words or phrases in a text that, in conjunction with the content of the text, signal the author's attitude toward the subject of that text. Once those words have been identified, a reader can tell how those words create a specific tone. Ultimately a reader can examine the specific words an author uses to create a specific tone. A critical reader examines word choice, punctuation, and content to determine if a particular tone is appropriate to a subject. For example, in an editorial that addresses the aftermath of a natural disaster, the tone would be serious or thoughtful.

To identify, explain, and analyze the effects of repetition in a text, a reader becomes aware of the repeated use of words and phrases in a text. A critical reader notes the portion of a text where repetition occurs and determines why an author draws attention to and what is important about that portion of text. An author may slightly change the repeated words and phrases to draw continued emphasis to the ideas in that portion of text. Finally, a critical reader uses repetition or altered repetition to focus on those ideas that help a reader construct meaning of an entire text.

Public Release #1 - Selected Response (SR) Item

Handout(s):

- Wang Yani

Reading Grade 8 Objective 2.A.5.a

Read the story 'Wang Yani' and answer the following question. In paragraph 3, the author most likely uses the word inspired instead of motivated to emphasize the —

- A. unusual style of Yani's work
- B. connections Yani has to other artists
- C. early start to Yani's career
- D. delight painting brings to Yani

Correct Answer:

D

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

### Question

Read the article 'The Sharebots' and answer the following question.

Explain whether the author's choice of words and phrases effectively describes the robots and their behaviors. In your response, use words and phrases from the passage that support your explanation. Write your answer on your answer document.

### Annotated Student Responses

yes,  
 She uses words that we  
 can relate to everyday.  
 For example, she compares  
 the robots to a flock of  
 birds. Also, she describes  
 their size as the size of  
 a shoe box.

Annotation: The reader agrees that the author's word choice is effective because "she uses words that we can relate to everyday." This is supported with the comparison of robots to a flock of birds and their size to a shoebox. However, the reader does not explain the relationship between the familiarity of flocks of birds and the size of a shoebox to "everyday" things. The reader might extend the idea of "everyday" to include the simplistic, accepted behaviors the robots are programmed to execute.

I believe that the author's choice of words effectively describe the robots. First, she described the robots as a migrating flock of seagulls when Ataric moves them across her lab on command. This describes the robots effectively because it shows that they moved in unison and respectively to each other as birds do. Also, the author said Ataric gave the robots basic behaviors. When the robots were given pucks for collecting the pucks, they began fighting over them. The robots became greedy, and that's how humans behave. As you can see, the word choice effectively describes robot behavior.

Annotation: The reader agrees "that the author's choice of words effectively describes the robots" and explains this by describing the robots "as a migrating flock of seagulls" and "it shows how they moved in unison ...to each other as birds do." The reader also explains that the robots took on human characteristics when collecting the pucks by "fighting over them" and becoming "greedy."

I do believe the author used effective  
phrases. The phrases she used like "To  
disperse when they're too crowded to avoid  
collision" uses more advanced terminology  
instead of saying "To move apart so they don't  
crash." Also when she described exactly  
what ~~the~~ robots looked like with four  
characteristics and what she nicknamed  
them, which was the "Nerd Herd." She also  
went on to explain what the two way radio  
did. The author of the story used a lot  
of descriptive words and phrases, making the  
story very effective to the reader.

Annotation: The reader agrees that "the author used effective phrases" and describes them as "more advanced terminology." The reader supports this statement with the author stating "to disperse when they're too crowded to avoid collision" instead of "saying move apart so they don't crash." The reader continues by referring to the "four characteristics" of the robots, their nickname "Nerd Herd," and the explanation of the two way radio but does not relate any of these references to the idea of "advanced terminology."

## 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.

## The Sharebots

When robots go to kindergarten in Maja Mataric's lab, they learn an important lesson about how to get along in robot society.

No man is an island, and Maja Mataric thinks no robot should be either. Mataric, a Brandeis University computer scientist, believes robots will do their best work only when they begin to work together. "How do you get a herd of robots to do something without killing each other?" she asks. According to Mataric, you have to put them in societies and let them learn from one another, just as seagulls and baboons and people do. Mataric has already made an impressive start at teaching robots social skills. She has gotten 14 robots to cooperate at once—the biggest gaggle of machines ever to socialize.

The Nerd Herd as Mataric calls them, are shoe-box-size machines, each of which has four wheels, two tongs to grab things, and a two-way radio. The radio allows them to triangulate their position with respect to two fixed transmitters as they wander around Mataric's lab. It also allows them to broadcast their coordinates and other information to their neighbors. Infrared sensors help the robots find things and avoid obstacles; contactsensitive strips tell them when they've crashed anyway.

<sup>3</sup>Each robot is programmed with a handful of what Mataric calls behaviors—sets of instructions that enable the robot to accomplish a small goal, like following the robot in front of it. Set one robot on the floor with its wheels turned permanently to the left and program the others to follow and they will all drive in a circle until their batteries go dead. But Mataric can get more interesting actions out of the herd by programming them to alternate among several behaviors. By telling them to home in on a target, to aggregate when they're too far from one another, to disperse when they're too crowded and to avoid collisions at all times, she's been able to get scattered robots to come together and migrate across her lab like a flock of birds.

More important, the robots can also learn on their own to carry out more complex tasks. One task Mataric set for them was to forage for little metal pucks and bring them home to their nest in a corner of the lab. To give the task a natural flavor, Mataric gave the robots clocks; at "night" they had to go home and rest, and in the "morning" they looked for pucks again. In addition to five basic behaviors they could choose from, she endowed them with a sort of prime directive: to maximize their individual point scores. Each time a robot did something right, such as locating a puck, it was automatically rewarded with points; each time it committed a blooper, such as dropping a puck, it lost points.

After some random experimentation, the robots soon learned how to forage—but not very well, because they tended to interfere with one another in their selfish pursuit of points. "Why should you ever stop and let someone else go? asks Mataric. "It's always in your interest to go—but if everybody feels that way, then nobody gets through and they jam up and fight for space." To make her creatures more efficient, though, Mataric found she didn't have to program them with a God's-eye view of what was good for all robots. She just had to teach each robot to share—to let other robots know when it had found a puck, and to listen to other robots in return. "I put in the impetus to pay attention to what other robots are doing, and to try what other robots are trying, sharing the experience," Mataric explains. "If I do some thing that's good and if I say, 'That was really great,' then you may try it."

<sup>6</sup>With this simple social contract, the robots needed only 15 minutes of practice to become altruistic. They would magnanimously announce their discovery of pucks, despite having no way of knowing that this was good for the herd as a whole. At times when two

robots lunged for a puck, they would stop and go through an "After you!" "No, after you!" routine, but eventually they figured out the proper way to yield. With social graces, the robot herd brought home the pucks twice as fast as without.

Mataric thinks she'll be able to produce more complex robot societies. "I'm looking at getting specialization in the society so they can say, 'I'll do this, and you do that.' If one of them has a low battery, it may become the messenger that doesn't actually carry things. And I imagine one robot might emerge as a leader because it happens to be the most efficient. But if it stops being efficient, some other robot will take over."

## 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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