

# Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 3.A.2.a

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 2. Analyze and evaluate text features to facilitate and extend understanding of literary texts

Objective a. Analyze text features that contribute to meaning

Assessment Limits:

All organizational graphic, and informational aids that contribute to meaning

All organizational graphic, and informational aids that contribute to meaning

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## Advanced/Gifted and Talented Reading Grade 8 Objective 3.A.2.a

### Instructional Task

Students will analyze text features in order to facilitate the interpretation of a play. The students will take on the role of a dramaturge, one who studies a play to interpret it for a company of actors. The student dramaturges will interpret aspects of the play's production including set design, costumes, acting, and the play program. The teacher will organize a drama company meeting at which each dramaturgy team will defend its production plan based on an analysis of the text features. As an option, the drama company may perform the play for an audience of younger students (authentic product).

### Development of Task

1. The teacher will provide students with a play written at an appropriate level of complexity. The following activities may be completed after reading the first act of the play.
2. Before reading, the teacher will ask students to think about how a play is actually produced by asking, "What is needed for the production of a play?" (actors, costumes, sets, directors, publicity, etc.) The teacher will introduce the concept of dramaturgy, defined by Merriam Webster as "the art or technique of dramatic composition and theatrical composition." A dramaturge is one who studies a play to interpret it for a company of actors, answering questions about the text, language, historical period, clothing, customs and manners of the characters. A dramaturge may assume other roles such as researcher, playwright, critic, or publicist.
3. During reading, the teacher will ask students to note how text features are used to suggest elements of play production, such as how the actors speak and what they do. Students will identify examples of organizational, graphic, and informational text features in the play and explain what element of play production could be understood from those features (Objective a).
4. After reading, the teacher will organize the students into dramaturgy teams. Each team will analyze text features in order to create a plan for play production. Team members will select to create a (1) design plan, (2) character interpretation, or (3) play program (choice). Teams will complete the following tasks:

1. Analyze text features with a focus on organizational aids (titles, subtitles) and informational aids (footnotes, captions, biographical information, introductions, photographs) in order to create a design plan for the set and costumes. The dramaturges will explain to the company how they used text features to help them design the production (logical-mathematical intelligence).
2. Analyze the text features with a focus on graphic aids (punctuation, illustrations, print features) in order to interpret the characters. Each dramaturge will take the role of a character and present dramatic interpretations of brief selections from the play. The dramaturges will explain how the play's text features helped them interpret the characters and bring the characters to life (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence).

3. Analyze text features with a focus on organizational aids (titles, subtitles) and informational aids (footnotes, captions, biographical information, introductions, photographs) in order to design the play program. The dramaturges will design a cover illustration, list of scenes, characters and actors; background information about the author and play, photographs of popular actors that could play the characters, and advertisements. The dramaturges will explain how they used text features to design the play program (visual-spatial intelligence).

5. The teacher will organize a meeting of the drama company in which each team will present its work and explain how text features were analyzed to develop the production plan. Each team will act as critics, evaluating the extent to which the other team's plan is based on a thorough analysis of the text features (evaluation). After the presentations, the students will discuss: "How vital is the role of a play's text features in the world of theatre?"

## Lesson Seeds

### Reading Grade 8 Objective 3.A.2.a

#### Activities

The teacher will locate a short literary text which contains a range of text features such as quotation marks, exclamation points, hyphens, italics, illustrations, bold print etc... Students will read the text highlighting only those text features designated by the teacher. Next students will determine whether or not those text features affect the meaning of the text. For example, looking at a word or phrase written in italics, a student might speculate that the italics alter the standard meaning of the word or draw attention to the word which might be integral to the meaning of the text. As each designated text feature is analyzed, the student will record their findings on a quick reference text feature chart.

Text Feature	How does the text feature affect meaning?	Text Sample

After the chart is complete, place students with a partner and have them compare their findings.

Prior to reading a passage by a selected author, students will read a brief biographical sketch of that author which appears as an informational aid in the text. Students will discuss aspects of the author's life and experiences. As students read the author's passage they will note elements of the author's life and experiences that are apparent in the passage or how the author's life influenced his/her writing. Once reading is complete the teacher and students will record an element of the author's life and the portion of the passage which reflects it. Further discussion might lead to analyzing author's purpose as it relates to that author's experiences.

## Clarification

### Reading Grade 8 Indicator 3.A.2

To show proficiency of the skills included with this indicator, a reader will demonstrate knowledge of the **text features of a literary text** which are the elements by which a literary text is organized. Identification of each feature and its relationship to all other features assists a reader in comprehension of an entire text. As complexity of a text increases, a reader advances from identification to explanation and analysis of the features. Considering how all these features work together helps a reader to understand and evaluate a text.

To **identify, explain, and analyze how organizational aids contribute to meaning** of a literary text, a reader must first locate the title of the literary text and consider any information that a title might give about the content of a text. That information can help a reader predict the focus of the selection. After reading a whole text, a reader can return to the title to determine its role in the meaning of the text. For example, a title might relay or enhance information about any narrative element: character, setting, story events or theme.

In addition, a reader can **locate and consider the chapter titles**. They can define in smaller segments the character development or story events within that section. Subtitles or subheadings break the narrative elements into even smaller sections.

**Graphic text features** include pictures, illustrations, punctuation, and print features. Organizational text features include the title of the work, chapter titles, subtitles, and subheadings. Informational aids include footnoted words and passages, biographical information about the author, introductions, and photographs. These features assist a reader when constructing meaning of an entire text by providing an informal outline. A critical reader uses these aids to enhance understanding of an entire text by judging their relevance to the work.

To **identify and explain how graphic aids contribute to meaning**, a reader must locate these text features within a text. Pictures and illustrations extend a reader's comprehension by providing a visual that enhances a reader's understanding of a text. Punctuation can be a clue to tone, mood, or author's style. Print features such as font type or font color serve as signals that changes are occurring, conversation or interior monologue is beginning, or simply that this text is important.

To **identify and explain how informational aids contribute to meaning**, a reader needs to focus on the location of these features within a literary text. Each of these informational aids provides scaffolding for a reader to fully comprehend a literary passage:

- Footnoted words and phrases offer a reader more detailed information about terminology.
- Captions for pictures and illustrations emphasize information stated in the text or provide additional information that is not always contained within the body of a text.
- Biographical information about the author gives interesting or relevant details about the author's life and can, at times, offer reasons for the author's purpose in writing about a particular subject or event.
- Introductions to literary pieces help a reader make predictions about content or create a basis for fully understanding a text.
- Photographs of people and places aid a reader in visualizing as he/she reads.