

Reading Toolkit: Grade 4 Objective 2.A.4.j

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 4. Determine important ideas and messages in informational texts

Objective j. Connect the text to prior knowledge or experience

Assessment Limits:

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

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Lesson Seeds

Reading Grade 4 Objective 2.A.4.j

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 4 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 "Chinese Almond Cookies" and answer the following question. Would making these cookies be easy or difficult for a fourth grader? Use information from the recipe to support your answer. Write your answer in your answer book.

Annotated Student Responses

I think that it would be hard for some 4th graders because it measures in fractions and it has some words that we don't know like yields. That might make things more complicated for a 4th grader to use this recipe, unless they were smart and had a big vocabulary.

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 states that it would be "hard for some 4th graders" and effectively uses text-relevant information to clarify this idea. The recipe's use of "measures in fractions and ...some words ...like yields...make things more complicated for a 4th grader." The student extends this idea by stating that a 4th grader would need to be "smart and have a big vocabulary," in order to use this recipe.

It would be difficult for a 4th grader because we can't do all of those things. For example, in the directions it says to use a paring knife and we are too young for knives. Also, it says to put cookies in the oven and again we can't use an oven because we are too young.

Score for Sample Student Response #2: Rubric Score 2

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates a general understanding of the text. The student states that the recipe "would be difficult for 4th graders because we can't do all of those things." The student uses text-relevant information to list the things that cannot be done by a 4th grader: "use a paring knife...and put cookies in the oven... because we are too young."

This recipe wouldn't be hard for hardworking 4th grader because a 4th grader could follow each steps carefully. Plus they would have adults help too.

Score for Sample Student Response #3: Rubric Score 1

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text. The student states that the recipe "wouldn't be hard for hardworking 4th grader because a 4th grader could follow each steps carefully." The student uses only minimal information as support: "they would have adults help too."

Making these cookies to easy or difficult because its a opinion.

Score for Sample Student Response #4: Rubric Score 0

Annotation, Using the Rubric: This response is irrelevant to the question.

Handouts

Chinese Almond Cookies

By David C. King

Each region of China has its own special style of cooking. When Chinese immigrants began arriving in the United States in the mid-1800s, they brought with them many of the delicious recipes from their homeland. Some of the immigrants established restaurants and bakeries. Chinese food soon became popular throughout the country. In traditional Chinese cooking, the main meal of the day would usually include fruit for dessert. Sweets, like the tasty cookies you'll make in this recipe, were usually served with afternoon tea.

INGREDIENTS

1/4 pound butter or vegetable shortening,
softened
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon whole milk or light cream
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
dash of salt (about 1/8 teaspoon)
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon almond extract (available in the
spice section of supermarkets)
36 blanched almond halves or 18 whole almonds
cut in half

EQUIPMENT

measuring cup
measuring spoons
2 medium-size mixing bowls
wooden mixing spoon
eggbeater
2 cookie sheets
paring knife (to be used by an adult for
cutting whole almonds)
teaspoon
adult helper

YIELDS

about 3 dozen cookies

STEPS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Place the softened butter in a mixing bowl and stir it well with a mixing spoon to make it creamy. If you use vegetable shortening, you won't need to stir it much.
3. Add the sugar to the butter or shortening, a little at a time. As you add the sugar, stir constantly. Keep stirring until the mixture lightens in color.
4. Add the egg, vanilla, and milk or cream. Beat the mixture well with an eggbeater until all the ingredients are blended.
5. Place the flour, salt, and baking powder in the other mixing bowl. Stir the mixture with a clean, dry spoon.
6. Add the flour mixture to the first mixture, a little at a time, stirring constantly.
7. Add the almond extract and mix the ingredients well with the eggbeater.
8. Using one slightly rounded teaspoon for each cookie, place the dough on ungreased cookie sheets. Flatten each cookie a little with the spoon and allow about an inch of space between them.
9. Press a half almond onto the center of each cookie. If you use whole almonds, ask your adult helper to cut them in half the long way with a paring knife.
10. With the adult's help, bake the cookies for 8 to 10 minutes. Check the cookies frequently. They're done when they turn golden brown.

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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