

Reading Toolkit: Grade 8 Objective 2.A.1.a

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 1. Apply and refine comprehension skills by selecting, reading, and analyzing a variety of print and electronic informational texts

Objective a. Read, use, and identify the characteristics of primary and secondary sources of academic information

Assessment Limits:

Textbooks

Trade books

Reference and research materials

Periodicals

Editorials

Speeches

Interviews

Commentary

Non-print materials

Online materials

Other content-specific texts

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Lesson Seeds

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Activities

Through a concept attainment activity, students will review the differences between fiction and nonfiction text. The teacher will sort several books into a fiction group and into a nonfiction group. Following the teacher's modeling, students will be asked to sort remaining texts. When this activity is complete, teacher and students will discuss how the two groups were categorized. After the discussion, the teacher will focus student attention solely on nonfiction texts and with student help will list characteristics of some of the representative nonfiction texts. Next each student will work with a partner and read an assigned or a portion of an assigned nonfiction text. Each set of partners will list three pieces of information they have gathered from their reading.

Prior to this procedure, the teacher will create stations in the classroom. At each station, the teacher will place a particular type of informational text and a poster or newsprint sheet where student comments can be recorded. Students should be placed in pairs or in small groups. Each student pair or group should be supplied with a different colored marker. Using a carousel method each student group should visit each station where they will review the representative informational material. After their review each group should record a comment about the text's organization, features, or content and one comment about the possible use of the text. Once the rotation is complete, the teacher will gather the comment sheets and review the collective information with the entire class.

Prior to the activity the teacher will create mixed sets of notecards which display the names of a variety of primary and secondary sources of information. Each student, pair of students, or small group of students will be given a set of notecards. Through instruction the teacher will assist students in categorizing the cards into primary and secondary sources and discussing possible uses for each source. Next the teacher will randomly distribute a series of primary and secondary sources to each learning group. Using the information from instruction, students will determine the particular source through its characteristics. Once identifications are complete, each learning group will report out justifying their identification with the source's characteristics. Extension: This same type of activity may be conducted with an online source like SIRS. After the initial instruction, students could be given several types of primary and /or secondary sources to find online. First, they would locate the source, review it to check its characteristics, and then determine a use for its content.

The teacher should collect a variety of sources about a single topic. For example, one could begin with a biography about Benjamin Franklin, a selection from his autobiography, a journal entry that he wrote, a newspaper article which mentions Franklin, a letter penned by Franklin, a text book excerpt about him etc...On the board or overhead the teacher should identify the different types of sources students will be accessing. Place students in small groups and give each group a packet of the aforementioned materials. Students should identify the type of material, list the characteristics of the material that led them to this identification, and detail the type of information one receives from that type of source.

Title of Source	Type of Source	Characteristics	Information Type

Before this activity is conducted, the teacher will organize two identical sets of primary and secondary source materials. Next the teacher will divide the class into two teams for a game of Line of Approval and assign one student as scorekeeper and one student as document keeper. The document keeper spreads both identical sets of sources on a flat surface and then turns his/her back to the documents. Next, the teacher will place a single document (they may be different) in a folder for each group and announce that the team is to decide whether the enclosed document is a primary source. For each round the teacher selects the source type. At a signal from the teacher the document keeper passes the document folder to the first person on each team. Without speaking the first person on each team reviews the document and nods approval or shakes his/her head in disapproval to the document type stated by the teacher. During this process no one may speak until all members of the team have reviewed the document and indicated their choice. Finally the last person returns the document folder to the teacher and states the type of document. The team who first correctly makes identification is awarded those game points. A brief discussion about the features of these documents should conclude each round.

Clarification

Reading Grade 8 Indicator 2.A.1

In order to demonstrate proficiency of the skills in this indicator, a reader should be able to **develop, apply, and refine comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and electronic informational texts. It is essential that a reader have the prerequisite knowledge of the characteristics of informational text.** To do so, a reader must have the ability to recognize factual information, determine the organizational structure, and interpret the text features of a non-fiction text.

When a reader accesses a variety of **informational primary and secondary sources**, he or she must focus on identifying information in those texts that contributes to their meaning. Knowing the functions of print features, graphic aids, informational aids, organizational aids, and online features assists a reader in selecting information and using it purposefully to construct meaning.

Primary Sources

• Personal Narratives	true stories
• Diaries/Journals	daily personal accounts/records
• Letters	written communications
• Research documents	factual investigations
• Historical documents	dated proof of facts
• Speeches	formal, public talk
• Interviews	formal questioning for information
• Commentary	explanation/interpretation
• Editorials	article expressing editor's/publisher's opinion

Secondary Sources

• Textbooks	books used for study of a subject
• References	dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases
• Biographies	account of a person's life
• Newspapers	accounts of current information
• Articles	passage in a periodical
• Web sites/Online materials	information available electronically
• Trade books	booksellers' published materials
• Non-print materials	pictures, drawings, illustrations
• Content-specific texts	texts related to a content/subject
• Periodicals	information published at regular intervals

When a reader accesses **functional, workplace, or other real-world documents**, applying the knowledge of text features assists a reader in constructing meaning from those documents.

• Direction	instructions to complete a task
• Science investigations	organized inquiries
• Atlases	books of map

• Posters	large, displayed notice
• Flyers	handbill
• Forms	printed papers with blanks to be filled in
• Instructional manuals	handbooks to help readers understand something
• Menus	lists of available food items
• Pamphlets	booklet with information of current interest
• Rules	statements governing behavior
• Invitations	social requests for attendance
• Recipes	instructions for preparing food
• Applications	requests for employment
• Announcements	information made known
• Questionnaires	list of questions to sample opinions
• Surveys	formal inspections
• Schedules	list of when things will take place
• Job descriptions	outline of work requirements
• Technical manuals	handbooks to help readers understand a mechanical or industrial item
• Advertisements	announcements recommending products or services

When a reader selects **informational texts based on personal interest**, using knowledge of text features will help a reader understand the purpose of those texts and construct meaning from them.

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

Question

Read these articles about a secret language, 'Codetalking' and 'The Navajo'. Then answer the following.

Explain whether knowing that the passage from "The Navajo" is non-fiction makes the article easier to understand. In your response, use information from the article that supports your explanation. Write your answer on your answer document.

Annotated Student Responses

Knowing that The Navajo is nonfiction makes the article more easier to understand because you know that the stuff is not made up and this is how they really talk.

Annotation: The student answers that "Knowing that The Navajo is nonfiction makes the article more easier to understand" because a reader would know information "is not made up and this is how they really talk." The student does answer the question and minimally uses text support with "how they really talk." To improve this response, the student should cite some of the information from the article that is true and be more specific about the language of Native Americans. Finally the student should draw a conclusion about how specific nonfiction information about Native American language and its use during World War II could help a reader to construct meaning from the passage.

It was obvious
 the information was true because they
 gave specific dates and amount
 of men killed. They gave very
 accurate information and knew
 exactly how to explain the events
 such as: fewer than 50 non-Navajo
 people could speak it.

Annotation: The student answers that "It was obvious the information was true because they gave specific dates and amount of men killed" and continues that the information was "accurate" and that explanations were clear. The student concludes by citing text that supports the idea of clarity. The student does not answer the question directly and uses text to support the idea of accuracy. To improve this response, the student should focus the answer on how the accuracy of the nonfiction information could make the text easier to understand. For example the student cites the text "Fewer than 50 non-Navajo people could speak it." The student could explain how knowing that statement was factual could help a reader more easily understand why the military would find the Native American language useful in wartime.

Knowing that the passage from The Navajo
 is nonfiction does make it easier to understand.
 For example, it is hard to believe that a group
 of Navajo volunteers came up with over four
 hundred Navajo words to use for military purposes.
 Also, since fewer than fifty non-Navajos could
 speak it, that seems completely unimaginable—
 just look at how many people can speak English who
 aren't of England origin! Some people could read
 this passage and, because the facts are so astounding,
 think that it is someone's work of imagination and
 they may have a hard time understanding it, but we
 know it is nonfiction & that helps to understand it.

Annotation: The student answers that the passage is easier to understand when a reader knows that it is nonfiction. The student elaborates that it is difficult "to believe that a group of Navajo volunteers came up with over four hundred Navajo words" and that it might seem "unimaginable" that less than 50 non-Navajos knew the language. The student continues that the facts in the article are "astounding" but knowing they are nonfiction makes understanding easier. The student does answer the question, offers text support about the Navajo language and its speakers, and concludes that knowing that information which could be the work of imagination is true makes comprehension easier.

Handouts

From Top Secret

By Paul B. Janeczko

Codetalking

Some codes work better when they are spoken. In fact, during both World Wars, the United States used Native Americans as "codetalkers."

The number of these codetalkers rose from thirty at the beginning of World War II to more than four hundred by the end of the war. They originally served in the Pacific, but before too long, Native Americans were serving as battlefield "codetalkers" in North Africa and Europe. These soldiers—from tribes like the Choctaw, Comanche, Navaho, and Hopi—used their tribal languages to transmit secret messages from field telephones.

Native American languages are well suited for this sort of secret activity. The languages are very difficult to learn and speak correctly. Like other languages they rely on vocabulary, but these Native American languages are also affected by voice inflection and space between words. This last feature made it very difficult for a nonspeaker to learn the language well enough to fool—or even communicate with—a true speaker. For this reason, Native American codetalkers usually worked in pairs. And ultimately, these Native American codes have become known as some of the few unbreakable codes in history.

From The Navajo

By Patricia Cronin Marcello

The Navajo Code Talkers were a group of Navajo volunteers who devised a dictionary of over four hundred Navajo words to represent military language. They called a captain besh-legai-nah-kih, which means "two silver bars," the insignia a captain wears on his uniform.

The Code Talkers also devised an alphabet whereby each letter in English was represented by a Navajo word. For instance, the Navajo word be-la-sana, which means "apple," stood for the English letter A. In this way, a string of Navajo words could be used to spell out one word in English.

Since Navajo is a complex language that was not written down until modern times, fewer than fifty non-Navajo people could speak it. The Japanese were never able to break the codes. For this reason, the Code Talkers were in charge of communications for every major assault in the Pacific—Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Tarawa, and Peleliu. An Air Force Times article by William Wrigg states, "According to Marine Corps high command, the Code Talkers saved thousands of American lives." The U.S. Marines called the Code Talkers their secret weapon.

In fact, the Navajo code was so successful that the government kept the entire operation a secret until the 1960s, in case the military needed to use it again. The Code Talkers were finally recognized in 1989, when a statue was erected in Phoenix, Arizona, to honor the 420 men, 11 of whom were killed in action. Likewise, on September 17, 1992, a Code Talker exhibit was dedicated at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, outside of Washington, D.C.

Some Navaho Code Talker Words and What They Mean

English word	Navajo word	pronunciation	Translation
alert	ha-ih-des-ee		alert
America	ne-he-mah		our mother
battle	da-ah-hi-dzi-tsio		battle
booby trap	dineh-ba-whoa-blehi		man trap
corps	din-neh-ih		clan
dive bomber	gini		chicken hawk
fighter plane	da-he-tih-hi		hummingbird
Germany	besh-legai-a-la-ih		iron hat
lieutenant	besh-legai-a-lah-ih		one silver bar
major	che-chil-be-tah-ola		gold oak leaf
platoon	has-cish-nih		mud
Russia	sil-a-gol-chi-ih		red army
submarine	besh-lo		iron fish

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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