

Paired Nonfiction Articles for Cross Text Reading

Explicit Comprehension Instruction for Nonfiction

SAMPLER GRADE 3

TEXT CARD: LEVEL K

4A: One Tree, Three Branches Government in the United States

4B: Who Makes the Laws?

TOPIC/THEME: Social Studies/Government

TEXT TYPE: Explanation (4A) Explanation (4B)

COMPREHENSION SKILLS:

Session 1: Comprehension Monitoring

Session 2: Determining Importance

Session 3: Summarizing and Synthesizing

LESSON PLAN FOCUS BY SESSION:

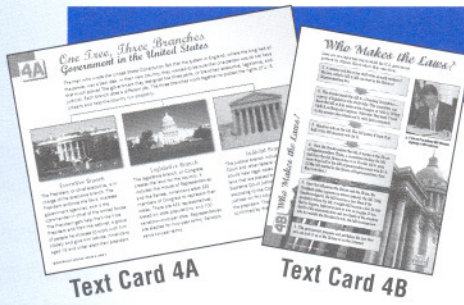
1. Reread to clarify meaning or concepts
2. Locate details in text to support and justify main idea
3. Interpret visual information, such as graphs, diagrams, photographs, process steps, and tables, and link with text to form new understandings

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Students read about the three branches of government: executive, legislative, and judicial. Then they read about how laws are passed.

SESSION 1: TEXT CARD A

TEACHING FOCUS

To help students reread to clarify meaning or concepts

INTRODUCING THE TEXT



- Provide each student with Text Card A. Guide students to scan the text and activate prior knowledge. Then introduce the focus.

Read the title and scan this card to see what it's about. What do you already know about the U.S. government? (possible responses: we elect the President; the President lives in the White House; Congress makes laws.) Excellent! You know some things about the topic, but you will be reading a lot of new information today. As you read this article, I'd like you to stop periodically to make sure it's making sense. Where do you think might be some good places to stop? (possible responses: at the end of each section; if I read something I don't understand.)

READING THE TEXT



- Set the focus for reading Text Card A, reminding students to reread any difficult parts to be sure their comprehension is on track.

As you read this article, stop at the end of each section and ask yourself, "Does this make sense?" If it doesn't, what can you do? (possible response: try rereading a section.) How do you think rereading can help? (possible responses: maybe you missed some details; you might understand it better the second time you read; maybe you forgot some parts.) Good ideas. Now you are ready to give this strategy a try.

DISCUSSING THE TEXT



- Guide the discussion, focusing on places where students did not understand. Encourage students to reread passages that were especially problematic. *Who will share an example of a place where you weren't sure you understood the text? (possible response: I wasn't sure I understood what it said about what the President does.) Let's reread that section. Then we'll discuss how rereading was helpful. (possible responses: When I reread, I noticed more details; I thought about what was most important.) Did anyone stop to reread someplace else? (possible response: I reread the paragraph at the top of couple times.) Great! Good readers stop and reread all the time to make sure they're getting the message.*
- Review the focus on rereading, encouraging students to use it during future reading of similar nonfiction.

Let's share how rereading helped us. (possible responses: it helped us find ideas we might have missed or forgotten; it helped us find answers to questions during discussion; it made me go slowly and carefully.) Sometimes students think that rereading is "cheating" or "breaking the rules." In fact, rereading is something good readers do all the time. Difficult text often cannot be understood the first time you read it. Stop and reread whenever you find yourself a little confused.

LEVEL K

GUIDED READING

4A One Tree, Three Branches: Government in the United States

4B Who Makes the Laws?

SESSION 2: TEXT CARD B

TEACHING FOCUS

To help students locate details in the text to support and justify the main idea.

INTRODUCING THE TEXT



- Have students preview Text Card B and activate prior knowledge. Help students articulate the main idea, and introduce the teaching focus. *Take a few moments to scan the text and illustrations. Let's share what we already know about making laws. (possible response: card A told us that Congress makes the laws, and the courts and President enforce them.) In this article we will learn more about how laws are made. As you read, look for details to support the main idea. Let's work together to figure out the main idea. Read the introduction and look at the way the text is set on the page. What do you think? (possible response: the article will explain the steps the government goes through to make a law.) Keeping this in mind, what types of details will you look for when you read? (possible response: what happens at each step.)*

READING THE TEXT



- Restate the utility of the teaching focus and remind students to look for details to support the main idea as they read the text. *Let's share our ideas about why it's helpful to look for details to support the main idea. (possible response: details help us understand or remember the main idea.) How do you go about finding details that support the main idea in the text? (possible responses: identify big ideas first, then look for examples or smaller pieces of information about the big idea; ask myself, "Does this relate to the main idea?") Good! Take a few moments to read the article. Look for details about how laws are made as you read.*

DISCUSSING THE TEXT



- Discuss details students noted that helped them understand the main idea, and guide them to understand the value of the strategy. *Who will share some details they found about how laws are made? (possible responses: a bill comes from a senator or representative; a committee studies it; the House and Senate vote on it; the President either signs or vetoes it. Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds vote.) Who can share a detail that did not support the main idea? (possible response: you can look up the law in the library.) How did you know this was not an important detail? (possible response: it isn't about how to make a law.) Good! How did looking for supporting details help you as you read? (possible response: I understood better how a law is made.)*
- Re-articulate the focus and remind students to apply it to their future reading of nonfiction articles. *When you read nonfiction articles, you usually notice many details. Some are important, and others are not. Important details are the ones that support the main idea. As you read, ask yourself, "How is this detail important? How does it relate to the main idea?" If it doesn't relate to the main idea, it might not be so important.*

VOCABULARY

Point out that sometimes common words take on a new, specialized meaning in a new context. In this article, the words *bill* and *table* have special legal meanings. Discuss the meanings of *bill*, *table*, *veto*, and *override* as used to describe making a law.

COMPREHENSION SHARE

Students often focus on the details that they personally find interesting, and fail to distinguish between interesting details and important ones. An essential task when reading nonfiction is to determine which details are important. Asking, "What's the main idea?" and "Does this detail support the main idea?" are two ways to determine importance.

SESSION 3: TEXT CARDS A AND B

REFLECTING ON THE TEXT CARDS



- Invite students to reread or scan both text cards and reflect on what they learned. Encourage them to collaborate to summarize the contents of each card. Expand on their comments, insuring they cover the major points. *Look back over these two cards and think about what we've learned. Who can share ideas about what makes a good summary? (possible responses: includes the most important ideas; told in sequence.) Who would like to begin to summarize the first card? How about the second card?*

CROSS-TEXT ANALYSIS



- Building from summaries, guide students in interpreting the visual information in the two texts. *What did you notice about the ways in which the information was presented on these two cards? (possible response: card A shows the three branches of government by using lines drawn to three columns of text and three pictures side-by-side; card B uses boxes and arrows to show the order of steps in making a law.) Those are interesting observations. How do the lines, pictures, and arrows help you understand the information? (possible responses: they split up the information into three parts; they organize the information; they help me see the order things happen in.)*
- Guide students to connect the visual information to the text on the cards. *Often pictures and diagrams have information that is either not in the text, or that makes it easier to understand the text. How did the diagram with three photos on Card A help you better understand the text? (possible responses: helped me picture how the three branches have different jobs; helped me remember what the three branches are.) Great! Who can share a way the diagram on Card B helped you understand the text? (possible response: helped me see the number of steps and their order.) Let's think about how these two text cards together help us understand the U.S. government. What do you think? (possible response: They showed how the parts of government work together to run the country.)*

REFLECTING ON THE LEARNING



- Review what students have learned. Encourage students to discuss not only the social studies content they learned but also the strategies they learned for gaining meaning from nonfiction text and graphics. *Let's talk about what we learned from these two text cards. Who has a thought? (possible responses: the three branches of government have different jobs but work together; it's important to stop and reread when things don't make sense; the most important details are the ones that support the main idea; we can use photos and graphics to help us understand the information in a text.) Good ideas! Remember these strategies when you read nonfiction on your own.*



Use the blackline master on page 4 of this lesson plan to provide guided or independent practice in synthesizing information from two articles.

TEACHING FOCUS

To help students isolate and interpret visual information, such as graphs, diagrams, photographs, process steps, and tables, and link with text to form new understandings.

WORD WORK

The word *legislative* has the Latin root *legis*, meaning "law." Other words with this root are *legislation*, *legislator*, and *legal*. The suffix *-ive* means "related to." Discuss how this information, plus the context, can help you figure out the meaning of the word.

ELL SUPPORT

Have small groups of ELL and non-ELL students work together to role play the process of creating a law. Encourage students to use new vocabulary, such as *Congress*, *Senator*, *Representative*, *bill*, and *veto*.



Making Text-to-Text Connections

Name: _____ Date: _____

Complete the following outline using information from both text cards.
You may include more than three points for some parts.

The Three Branches of Government

I. Executive Branch

- A. _____

- B. _____

- C. _____

II. Legislative Branch

- A. _____

- B. _____

- C. _____

III. Judicial Branch

- A. _____

- B. _____

- C. _____

One Tree, Three Branches Government in the United States

The men who wrote the United States Constitution felt that the system in England, where the king had all the power, was a bad idea. In their new country, they wanted to be sure that one person would not have that much power. The government they designed has three parts, or branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. Each branch does a different job. The three branches work together to protect the rights of U. S. citizens and help the country run smoothly.



Executive Branch

The President, or chief executive, is in charge of the executive branch. The President enforces the laws, oversees government agencies, and is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The President gets help from the Vice President and from the cabinet, a group of people he chooses to work with him closely and give him advice. Americans aged 18 and older elect their president.



Legislative Branch

The legislative branch, or Congress, creates the laws for the country. It includes the House of Representatives and the Senate. Americans elect 535 members of Congress to represent their states. There are 435 representatives, based on state populations, and 100 senators—two per state. Representatives are elected for two-year terms. Senators serve six-year terms.



Judicial Branch

The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court and other federal courts. The courts hear legal cases and interpret the laws that are passed by Congress. The Supreme Court justices interpret the law according to the Constitution. The nine justices on this court are nominated by the president. Then they must be confirmed by the Senate.

Who Makes the Laws?

Laws are one important way in which the U. S. government protects its citizens. Here's where they come from.

1. A senator and his or her staff write an early version of the law, called a bill. A bill can start in the House of Representatives, too.

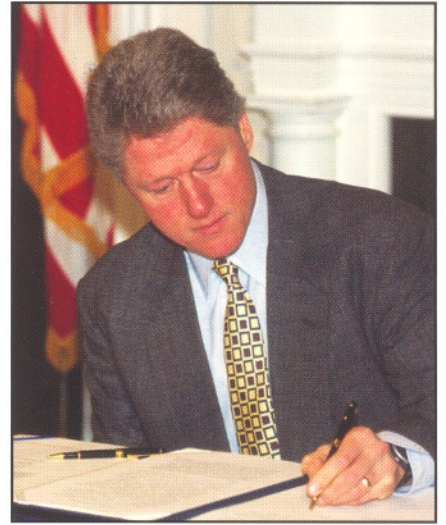
2. The senator sends the bill to a Standing Committee—a group of legislators who study bills. This committee can leave the bill as it is, make some changes, or table it. If they table it, nothing else happens. Otherwise they send it back to the senator who introduced it, with their comments.

3. Senators vote on the bill. The bill passes if more than half of the 100 senators vote for it.

4. Once the Senate passes the bill, it moves to the House of Representatives. There, a committee studies the bill, and then the full House votes on it. For the bill to pass, more than half of the 435 representatives must vote for it. (If the bill started in the House of Representatives, then they vote first.)

5. Once the bill passes the Senate and the House, the President either approves or vetoes (rejects) the bill. If the President signs it, the bill becomes a law. Even if the president vetoes the bill, it might still become a law. But for that to happen, legislators have to vote on it again. If two-thirds of the representatives and two-thirds of the senators vote to override the President's veto, the bill becomes law.

6. The government prepares and publishes the law. Now you can look it up at the library or on the Internet.



▲ Former President Bill Clinton signing a bill into law

Who Makes the Laws?

4B

#	Theme/Topic	Level	Title	Text Type	Comprehension Skills
12A	Social Studies/The Bill of Rights	L	The Right to Privacy	Explanation	Determining importance, Answering and generating questions, Making connections
12B		L	Trial by Jury	Explanation	
13A	Science/Magnets (force and motion)	M	The Floating Train	Report	Recognizing text structures, Making inferences, Summarizing and synthesizing
13B		M	Finding Your Way	Procedure	
14A	Social Studies/Citizenship	N	Chardonnay Houlette: Washin' for the Weary	Transactional	Determining importance, Making inferences, Making connections
14B		N	Craig Kielburger: Free the Children	Biography	

GRADE 3

1A	Science/Cycles	J	The Four Stages of the Water Cycle	Explanation	Making inferences, Making connections, Making connections
1B		J	From Egg to Frog to Egg Again!	Explanation	
2A	Social Studies/Volunteerism	J	Habitats Aren't Just for Animals!	Report	Making inferences, Answering and generating questions, Making connections
2B		J	Greenpeace	Report	
3A	Science/The Sun	K	Cool Facts About A Hot Topic	Report	Comprehension monitoring, Determining importance, Making connections
3B		K	Solar Power is for Everyone!	Report	
4A	Social Studies/Government	K	One Tree: Three Branches	Explanation	Comprehension monitoring, Determining importance, Summarizing and synthesizing
4B		K	Who Makes the Laws?	Explanation	
5A	Science/Important Living Scientists	L	Meet Dr. Molina	Transactional	Comprehension monitoring, Determining importance, Making connections
5B		L	Black Coffee With Ants, Please!	Transactional	
6A	Social Studies/Holidays	M	Labor Day in the United States	Report	Recognizing text structures, Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing
6B		M	Labour Day in Canada	Report	
7A	Science/Environmental Science	M	To Bottle or Not to Bottle	Persuasive	Visualizing, Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing
7B		M	Plastic on Parade	Persuasive	
8A	Social Studies/Citizenship	N	Citizenship Q&A	Explanation	Recognizing text structures, Making connections, Summarizing and synthesizing
8B		N	Journal of a New Citizen	Transactional	
9A	Science/Properties of Light	N	Prism Power	Procedure	Making connections, Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing
9B		N	Fun House Science	Explanation	
10A	Social Studies/American Indians Today	O	Inuit Tradition Lives On	Transactional	Making inferences, Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing
10B		O	The Mascot Issue: What Do You Think?	Persuasive	
11A	Science/Simple Machines	P	Simple Machines Can Get Complex	Report	Determining importance, Comprehension monitoring, Making connections
11B		P	Wacky and Wonderful Rube Goldberg	Transactional	
12A	Social Studies/Economics	Q	Barter: Why It Worked	Persuasive	Answering and generating questions, Determining importance, Summarizing and synthesizing
12B		Q	Barter: Why It Didn't Work	Persuasive	
13A	Science/Adaptations	Q	No Water? No Problem!	Explanation	Summarizing and synthesizing, Making connections, Summarizing and synthesizing
13B		Q	Animal Foolery	Explanation	

#	Theme/Topic	Level	Title	Text Type	Comprehension Skills
14A	Social Studies/Freedom Fighters	R	Mary Ann Shadd Cary	Memoir	Making inferences, Making inferences, Summarizing and synthesizing
14B		R	Dolores Huerta	Biography	
GRADE 4					
1A	Social Studies/Native Americans	O/P	Masks: A Native American Tradition	Report	Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing, Summarizing and synthesizing
1B		O/P	Preserving Pacific Northwest History Through Totems	Report	
2A	Science/Mammals	O/P	SIT! Your Puppy's First Command	Procedure	Recognizing text structures, Determining importance, Summarizing and synthesizing
2B		O/P	What Dogs Knows	Procedure	
3A	Science/Natural Disasters	O/P	Water Supply Emergency Plan for the City of Preito, Nevada	Transactional	Comprehension monitoring, Comprehension monitoring, Making connections
3B		O/P	Smoking Out Forest Fires	Transactional	
4A	Social Studies/Civil Rights	O/P	Young Ruby Bridges Steps Into History!	Report	Determining importance, Making inferences, Summarizing and synthesizing
4B		O/P	Ruby Bridges: Reflecting Back on 50 Years	Memoir	
5A	Social Studies/Inventors	O/P	Jan Matzeliger Shoes the Masses	Biography	Making inferences, Comprehension monitoring, Summarizing and synthesizing
5B		O/P	Henry Ford: Getting America Rolling	Explanation	
6A	Science/Rivers	Q/R	Settling the Mighty Misi Sipi	Report	Determining importance, Making inferences, Summarizing and synthesizing
6B		Q/R	Saving the Columbia River Salmon	Transactional	
7A	Science/Minerals	Q/R	Five Precious Stones	Explanation	Visualizing, Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing
7B		Q/R	Ten Fun Facts About Fossils	Report	
8A	Social Studies/Volcanoes	Q/R	Circling Crater Rim Drive	Transactional	Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing, Making connections
8B		Q/R	The Hawaiian Hotspot	Transactional	
9A	Social Studies/Regions	Q/R	The Big Cheese	Report	Summarizing and synthesizing, Determining importance, Making connections
9B		Q/R	A Reflection by Harriet Robinson, New England Mill Girl	Memoir	
10A	Science/Nutrition	Q/R	Fuel for Your Growing Body	Explanation	Summarizing and synthesizing, Visualizing, Summarizing and synthesizing
10B		Q/R	Nutrition Facts? Debating Junk Food	Transactional	
11A	Social Studies/Money & Finance	S/T	Is There a Horse in Elise's Future? Preparing a Budget	Explanation	Comprehension monitoring, Determining importance, Summarizing and synthesizing
11B		S/T	Credit Card Perils	Explanation	
12A	Science/Weather	S/T	How a Meteorologist Forecasts the	Explanation	Summarizing and synthesizing, Making inferences, Making connections
12B		S/T	Storm Chasers and Tornado Forecasters	Report	
13A	Social Studies/Immigration	S/T	Graphing Immigration to America	Report	Summarizing and synthesizing, Answering and generating questions, Summarizing and synthesizing
13B		S/T	The Faces of New York City	Report	