

**Unit 3: Nonfiction: Spotlight on Determining Importance and Synthesizing (7-8 weeks)**

**Rationale**

*Why is this unit important and appropriate for this grade level and at this time of the year?*

Facility with determining importance and synthesizing are crucial to efficiently engage with nonfiction texts. This becomes particularly important as students prepare for middle school.

**Learning Outcomes**

*What do we expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit?*

Students will:

- Use a variety of strategies to preview and prepare for reading a new text
- Determine the most important information in a text
- Recognize and revise thinking as necessary while reading about a topic across texts
- Synthesize the main ideas in nonfiction texts
- Demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives/points of view for a given topic

**Minilessons/Notes/Tips**

*What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?*

Possible Minilessons:

- Activating prior knowledge around specific genre and using that understanding to navigate texts
- Exploring and identifying the different structures (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of expository texts
  - Comparing and contrasting the events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts
- Noticing and using headings, subheading, front differences and other visual cues to preview texts
- Anticipating how the text might go and what the text might be trying to teach the reader to preview texts
- Recognizing that thinking about what they already know will help them understand new information
- Accessing prior knowledge about a topic before beginning a new text
- Predicting content by accessing prior knowledge
  - What do I *think* I know about this topic?
  - Will this text have the usual categories (body parts, eating habits, predators, etc.) of information about the topic?
  - What do I think I'll learn about the topic?
- Modeling the ongoing practice of confirming, revising, and adding to initial expectations of the text while reading on
- Merging thinking with new information as a way to synthesize the text/texts
  - Integrate information from several texts on the same topic
- Noticing how our thinking evolves and changes as we read
- Reading interpretively and creating text-sets that go together
- Exploring and learning from primary and secondary sources
- Exploring an event or topic using multiple print and/or digital sources
- Demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly and accurately
- Exploring multiple perspectives around a topic
  - Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic and identify important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

## 2014-2015 Grade 5 Reading Units of Study

- Paraphrasing in the margin (chunking text) to summarize sections of the text
- Retelling to summarize information
- Recognizing misconceptions and allowing new information to change thinking
- Finding important information rather than just one main idea
- Distinguishing between key topics and supporting details
- Summarizing the content of a piece of text and responding personally
- Using a variety of strategies to figure out unfamiliar words (e.g., academic and domain specific)
  - Substitute the hard word with a synonym and then read on to see if it makes sense
  - Break up the work into its root, prefix and/or suffix
  - Read on to see if the word is defined in the follow up sentence
  - Use the text features (e.g., illustration, timelines, charts, maps, quotes, photographs) for clues and explanations of difficult words or concepts in texts
  - Use technical content specific words in jottings and in conversations with partners as a way to take ownership of these words
- Checking what was read against expectations for predictions about what would be in the text
  - What I thought I would read and learn about was...but what I actually learned about was...
- Modeling reading a mentor text searching for main idea and supporting details
  - Explain how the author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text
  - Identify which reasons and evidence support which point(s)
  - Use a graphic organizer to identify the main ideas and supporting details
    - Notice the boxes and bullets infrastructure of expository text
    - Ascertain the main idea (box) and the supporting details (bullets)
- Differentiating the writer's big ideas from what the reader thinks is important
- Breaking text into chunks and identifying what that part was teaching the reader
  - After reading a chunk, ask and jot down on a Post-it, "This part teaches me..."
- Discussing, "What is the one main idea this chunk of text is teaching and how do the supporting details connect?"
  - As reader reads across a book look across the main ideas of chunks or sections and ask, "How does this all fit together?"
- Looking for a stand-out sentence that summarizes the content of a passage, which may or may not be the first sentence
- Identifying when paragraphs build on previous paragraphs and when they present new information
- Paraphrasing to summarize expository text
- Summarizing the content of a piece of text and responding personally
- Reading for the gist of the text
- Synthesizing learning by working with a partner and teaching them, create a "Tips for Teaching Your Partner" anchor chart
  - Point out the details in the pictures or diagrams that highlight what you are saying
  - Link previous learning to the new information that you just encountered by flipping back and forth to show pictures that build off of each other and by explaining how those pieces go together
  - Add gestures to your explanations and use your voice to emphasize what's important
  - Act out what you have learned and invite your partner to join in
- Celebrating the end of the unit. Possibilities may include but are not limited to the following:
  - Students will write a brief piece about a topic they have read across a series of texts. The piece would require the student demonstrate the strategies of determining importance and synthesis.
  - Students who read about similar topics gather together to share their new learning.
  - Students work in small groups and take turns teaching one another about their topic.
  - Have students complete a nonfiction study reflection. (What did you learn about reading nonfiction that you did not know before? How can you apply what you have learned about reading nonfiction to all of your reading? Be as specific as possible. How can you apply what you have learned about reading nonfiction to the nonfiction you write? Be as specific as possible.)

### Notes/Tips:

- **Students should build reading stamina by reading independently for a minimum of 45 minutes.**
- Meet with guided reading groups consistently as a way to differentiate reading instruction for all students.
- Many students' independent reading level for nonfiction texts will be slightly lower than their fiction independent reading level.
- Students should spend time reading nonfiction texts (20-25 minutes) as well time reading just right

## 2014-2015 Grade 5 Reading Units of Study

chapter books daily during independent reading to maintain reading stamina.

- Some teachers merge this unit with the class' work around a content area theme.
- Guided reading groups meet frequently to promote differentiation of reading instruction.
  - Use nonfiction texts in guided reading to support students.
  - Have students read articles as well as texts. In addition to the Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis articles (see professional resources) there are archived nonfiction articles (e.g., Time for Kids) available on the district website. There are also a host of articles available on the district online databases (e.g., Searchasaurus, Pebble Go, World Book Online, Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia). To access online databases login to eChalk, select My Account, click on Applications.
  - Other websites that have articles for students to use for guided reading and independent reading include the following sites:
    - [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
    - [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)
    - [www.sikids.com](http://www.sikids.com)
    - [www.stonesoup.com](http://www.stonesoup.com)
    - [www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com) (Archived articles are available on eChalk)
    - [www.worldkidmag.com](http://www.worldkidmag.com)
    - [www.zoobooks.com](http://www.zoobooks.com)
    - [www.sciencenewsforkids.org](http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org)
    - [www.readworks.org](http://www.readworks.org)
- It will be critical to model the strategies of the unit across a range of nonfiction texts during read aloud, shared reading and minilessons.
- It may be beneficial to use excerpts from middle school textbooks for some of this work so that students gain experience using comprehension strategies with this genre of text.
- Nonfiction picture books are recommended for read aloud and shared reading.
- Read aloud and shared reading provide daily opportunities for students to turn and talk which will prepare them for engaging in conversations about texts read with reading partners and book club members.
- When reading aloud the teacher will use his/her voice to help students understand the structure of expository texts. Use intonation to emphasize main ideas and vary intonation where supporting details appear.
- During several different read-alouds and shared reading sessions model using the boxes bullets structure. Use a graphic organizer (or other tool) to record the main idea and supporting details. For example:
  - Owls don't build their own nests
    - They move into abandoned nests.
    - They live in holes in the ground.
    - They live in holes in trees.
- Allow opportunities for students to act out new learning as they explain information to partners during read-alouds and shared reading. Acting out part of a text read helps student visualize.
- It is helpful if students have time to work with partners every few days as a way to synthesize their learning and teach their partner about the topic being studied. When partners read about a similar topic they are able to work collaboratively to develop an inquiry stance which often results in increased student engagement, motivation and learning.
- Teachers should confer into partnerships to support the strategies the students are practicing.
- Teachers College has compiled a wealth of social studies resources that teachers use during the nonfiction and historical fiction units of study. The social studies resources include the following: annotated list of museums and historical archives, list with direct links of recommended magazines. To view resources use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/social-studies-resources.html>. Teachers College has also gathered text sets around time periods students are learning about as part of the social studies curriculum. To support students in doing cross-genre, cross-text work and have texts available for independent reading during the nonfiction and/or historical fiction units of study use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-libraries/text-sets.html>.
- To view recommended genre specific texts for read aloud and independent reading use the following link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-libraries.html>.
- **To view Grade 5 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 5 reading/writing page. Select "Resources" from the top nav bar. To access the units of study website use the link [http://ww3.mamkschools.org/units\\_of\\_study/](http://ww3.mamkschools.org/units_of_study/).**

**Professional Resources**

*What professional resources will be helpful in planning the unit?*

- *The Common Core Lesson Book K-5* by Gretchen Owocki
- *The RTI Daily Planning Book* by Gretchen Owocki
- *The Comprehension Toolkit* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (Strategy Guide 5 Determine Importance, Strategy Guide 6 Summarize and Synthesize)
- *Toolkit Texts: Grades 4-6: Short Nonfiction for Guided and Independent Practice* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis
- *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project 5th Grade Reading Curriculum Calendar 2010-2011*
- *Strategies that Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis
- *Non-Fiction Matters: Reading, Writing and Research in Grades 3-8* by Stephanie Harvey
- *Units of Study for Teaching Reading Grades 3-5* by Lucy Calkins and Kathleen Tolan (Navigating Nonfiction in Expository Text: Determining Importance and Synthesizing, Volume 1)
- *Teaching for Comprehension and Fluency* by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell
- *The Next Step in Guided Reading: Focused Assessments and Targeted Lessons for Helping Every Student Become a Better Reader* by Jan Richardson