

*Newspapers, the Ultimate Informational Text*



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# Teacher's Guide

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NEWSPAPER IN  
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# Newspapers as Informational Text

## WHY TEACH INFORMATIONAL TEXT?

*Informational text* and *nonfiction* are enjoying renewed interest and attention from the world of education. National and state standards place a high priority on students being able to read, write and think about informational materials. Many state assessments include high percentages of informational text. Standards require students to ask questions, locate information to find answers and evaluate sources of information. Educational publishers have recognized the demand and are providing many new materials for schools and teachers.

Until recently, much classroom reading instruction has focused on fiction and narrative texts. Many educators have believed that students prefer fiction and stories; many classroom libraries contain four to five times as many fiction books as nonfiction books. Current research disrupts those beliefs. Studies show that even primary students like nonfiction topics and texts. They like learning about the real world, and real-world reading requires the ability to read and understand informational text. What students need is instruction in how to read the expository text structures found in nonfiction and informational text.

The newspaper is the ultimate informational text. This teacher's guide provides educators with specific activities to help students develop and extend their ability to comprehend informational text structures and organization.

## INFORMATIONAL TEXT AND NONFICTION

The terms *informational text* and *nonfiction* can sometimes be confusing because they are often used interchangeably. One way to structure their relationship is to think of a first division between *fiction*, the narrative and not-true text of literature; and *nonfiction*, the literature of the true, or of fact. *Nonfiction* is seen as the product of an author's inquiry, research and writing. Its purpose is to provide information, explain, argue and/or demonstrate. Certainly, the newspaper meets all of those characteristics.

*Informational text* can be seen as a type of nonfiction. The characteristics of *informational text* are that it:

- Conveys information about the natural or social world;
- Is written from someone who knows information to someone who doesn't;
- Has specialized features such as headings and technical vocabulary.

The newspaper also meets these specific characteristics. It is a logical resource for information about the natural, social and political world. A chart illustrating how the newspaper matches specific characteristics of *informational text* is included in this teacher's guide (see pages 6-7).

# Characteristics of Informational Text and Newspaper Elements

Characteristics of Informational Text	Newspaper Elements
1. Conveys information about the natural or social world.	<p>Newspaper content provides information about the real world of the reader.</p> <p>International, national, state and local people and events are the subjects of news and feature stories every day.</p> <p>Anything that touches the lives of readers can be found in the newspaper, from weather reports, to stock prices, to community problems and solutions, to national decisions that affect the country and the world.</p>
2. Is written <i>from</i> someone who knows the information <i>to</i> someone who doesn't know the information.	<p>Newspapers see themselves as primary resources for many different kinds of information.</p> <p>News is gathered and written by professional journalists who operate under clear codes of ethics.</p> <p>Photographs and art elements are developed by professional photographers and artists.</p> <p>Advertising is created by professionals with degrees and backgrounds in business and marketing.</p> <p>Newspapers hold all of their employees to high standards of performance.</p>
3. Uses navigational aids such as indexes, page numbers and headings.	<p>The newspaper contains a variety of navigational aids to help readers quickly find information they are seeking.</p> <p>Newspapers are usually divided into specific sections – such as news, business, lifestyle and sports.</p> <p>Many times, the section has its own “front page.”</p> <p>Newspapers identify each page with a <i>folio line</i> which gives the name of the newspaper, the date, the section and the page number.</p> <p>Newspapers may include newspaper or section content previews with front page elements, such as “in this section” boxes which provide information about stories inside the section.</p> <p>The classified advertising section of the newspaper has its own index to help readers locate information quickly.</p>

4. Uses graphic devices such as diagrams, tables, charts and maps.	<p>The newspaper uses graphic devices wherever an editor thinks that information can best be provided in a visual format.</p> <p>News stories are often accompanied by locator maps, data charts and tables.</p> <p>Feature stories and how-to columns use diagrams and tables.</p> <p>Sports stories are accompanied by box scores in tables and data charts providing information about an individual or team performance.</p> <p>The weather page is usually dominated by national and/or regional maps with icons indicating specific weather predictions.</p>
5. Uses realistic illustrations or photographs and captions.	<p>The newspaper has a staff of professional photographers and artists who provide visual support for news and feature stories. Editors realize that photos and illustrations are efficient ways to transmit information.</p> <p>Newspaper photographers take photos of local and regional events; sometimes, photos accompany stories and sometimes, the photos and captions (called cutlines) are stand-alone features.</p> <p>Wire photos are used to provide information about national and international news events.</p> <p>Newspaper artists provide illustrations to add information and impact to news stories and features.</p>
6. May have comparative/contrastive structures.	<p>Newspapers provide many examples of comparative/contrastive text structures.</p> <p>The editorial and op-ed pages of the newspaper provide text in which different points of view are presented and debated. Many newspapers have regular science features, which often use comparison and contrast.</p>
7. May have classificatory structures.	<p>The newspaper categorizes its content in ways to make information easily accessible to readers.</p> <p>The newspaper categorizes news and features by topics.</p> <p>The newspaper has an index on page one which directs readers to appropriate information.</p> <p>The classified ad section categorizes ads by function.</p> <p>Within each ad category, information is usually arranged in a particular order. For example, autos might be listed by brand name and year.</p>

# Fiction and Informational Text: Reader Expectations

Fiction Expectations	Informational Text Expectations
<p>The work is untrue; it may be fantasy, historical fiction, contemporary realistic fiction, science fiction or any other genre, but it is not true.</p>	<p>The work is true and accurate; that truth is provided by the author.</p>
<p>The work contains specific elements: plot, characters, setting, conflict, resolution and theme.</p>	<p>You can choose to read only a part of the text.</p> <p>You have the option of starting at the front, back or middle of the text.</p>
<p>The first line is the "gateway" to the text.</p>	<p>Visual elements are present to help you access information. They can be read for meaning whether or not they are accompanied by words (photographs, illustrations, diagrams, maps, graphs, timelines).</p>
<p>You start reading at the beginning of the work and continue straight through until the end.</p>	<p>Running text may be interrupted by visual elements, so you don't always start at the top and go to the bottom; you don't always read left-to-right.</p>
<p>You begin reading at the top of each page and travel to the bottom.</p>	<p>Visual elements may be read bottom-to-top, right-to-left, in a circular fashion, etc., depending on the design of the publication.</p>
<p>Your eyes move left-to-right.</p>	<p>Captions under visual elements may repeat information from the text, contain new information, or describe how you should process the visual.</p>
<p>You can put the work down and pick it up later at the same point.</p>	<p>You judge the quality of the work on its content, accuracy and the extent to which it meets your needs.</p>
<p>You judge the quality of the work on the development of the plot, theme and characters and the extent to which it entertains or engages you.</p>	



# Lesson Plans & Student Activity Pages

# Lesson 1:

## How It Works—The Organization of the Newspaper

### *Informational Text and the Newspaper*

Your students may be familiar with the structure and organization of stories. They know stories have a beginning, middle and end. They know to look for setting, characters, problem/solution and theme. Your students are probably much less familiar with the structure and organization of informational text. The newspaper, for example, organizes information about specific topics; information related to a common topic is found in the same section of the newspaper. For example, the sports section of the newspaper contains stories about athletic contests, profiles of players, scores and schedules – all in one place. Even the ads in the sports section reflect the interests of sports section readers.

This lesson introduces students to the general structure of your newspaper. Before you conduct this lesson, become familiar with the specific sections and the way they're presented in your local newspaper.

### *Direct instruction*

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to look through the newspaper.
2. Show students copies of several days' worth of newspapers: e.g., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. Explain to students that there are many different kinds of information in each copy of the newspaper.
3. Explain that the newspaper is carefully organized so that readers can find the information they want. One way newspapers organize information is to put news about the same topic together. Show students the front section of the newspaper. Explain that here they will find the most important news of the day – whether it is local, national or international news. Point out examples of major stories.
4. In most newspapers, national and international news is in the front section of the newspaper. Show those pages to students. Then show them where other categories of news are located in their newspaper.

### *Guided practice*

1. Have students work in small groups to complete the activity sheet *The Newspaper Works for You*.
2. Have students share their responses with the class.

### *Assessment questions*

- Identify three things you noticed about the way the newspaper is organized.
- Discuss a part of the newspaper that reminded you of your own life.
- Discuss one type of useful information you found in the newspaper.

### *Elementary guided practice*

1. Give students single sheets of newspaper, several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity.
2. Have students work in small groups. Give each group several different colored markers.
3. For question #4 on the activity sheet, add the totals reported by the groups to arrive at a grand total. Then tell students how many stories were in the full newspaper that day. (You'll have to count the stories before the lesson.)

# The Newspaper Works for You!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### *About your newspaper*

The newspaper is designed to meet the needs and interests of a wide variety of readers. In your newspaper, information is organized around specific subjects: international news, local news, opinion and commentary, business, sports, entertainment, etc.

### *Use your newspaper*

Find examples of different newspaper content that would appeal to you, a family member and a friend. Write the headlines on the chart below and explain why each story or section would appeal to these different audiences.

PURPOSE/ HEADLINE	Why would it appeal to you?	Why would it appeal to a family member?	Why would it appeal to a friend?
Inform			
Entertain			
Persuade			

### *What do you think?*

What do you think is the most important section of the newspaper? Why?

# Lesson 2:

## Finding Your Way—Navigational Aids in the Newspaper

### *Informational Text and the Newspaper*

A key characteristic of informational text is the use of navigational aids to help the reader locate information efficiently. Many times, informational text is not read in its entirety – the reader often seeks specific information. Newspapers are designed to provide information for a wide range of readers. Few people read every part of the newspaper. The newspaper’s many navigational aids – section titles, page heads, page one index and folio lines – are there to help readers locate the information they want.

Before you conduct this lesson, make a list of the navigational aids you find, especially ones students may not notice, such as page headings. Identify the “anchored” features in your newspaper – features that are always in the same place. Often, a weather map may be anchored on the back page of a section; your editorial page may be anchored in the same part of the front section of the newspaper. These “anchored” locations are specific to individual newspapers.

### *Direct instruction*

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to look through the newspaper. Encourage students to notice elements that help them identify where they are in the newspaper.
2. Use a classroom textbook or nonfiction book to model navigational aids in nonfiction. Demonstrate to students the location and use of a table of contents, chapter titles, headings and subheadings in the text.
3. Ask students to name other parts of the book that will provide specific information, such as a glossary and an index.
4. Explain to students that newspapers are also informational text and the newspaper has its own specific aids to help readers locate information.
5. Point to the index on page one of the newspaper. Ask students to name the textbook element that is like the index. Point out section fronts and heads in the newspaper. Ask students to name the comparable component in a textbook (chapter headings).
6. Explain to students that some newspaper features are “anchored” – they are always found in the same spot in any copy of the newspaper. Ask students if they know to look for a specific feature based on its location. Point out some anchored features in your newspaper. Explain that the anchoring of features helps readers locate those features easily.
7. Now have students identify other navigational aids they can find in the newspaper.

### *Guided practice*

1. Have students work in pairs to complete the activity sheet Find It Fast.
2. Have student pairs share their findings with the class.

### *Assessment questions*

- Describe three different types of navigational aids you found in the newspaper.
- Discuss the efficiency of the navigational aids the newspaper uses.
- What navigational aid did you use most frequently? Why did you use that aid?

### *Elementary guided practice*

1. Give students single sheets of newspaper, several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity.
2. Have students work in groups of two or three. Give each group scissors, paste or glue sticks and construction paper.
3. Have students share their work with the class. You may want to display the papers on a bulletin board.

## Find It Fast!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### ***About your newspaper***

The editors and publishers of the newspaper want you to be able to locate information quickly. That's why the newspaper has many navigational aids to help you move through the newspaper efficiently.

### ***Use your newspaper***

Check to see if your newspaper has each of these elements. Mark a page number where you found each one.

Navigational aid	Page
1. Box telling what's in the newspaper	
2. Folio line (date and page number)	
3. Skyboxes (teasers above the newspaper name)	
4. Page head	
5. Section front	
6. "Inside this section" listings on section fronts	
7. Anchored features	
8. Large, dark headlines	
9. "Continued on page ..." lines	
10. Specialized headings for regular features	

### ***What do you think?***

What navigational aid do you use most frequently when you want to find something in the newspaper?

How are newspaper navigational aids similar to navigational aids in your textbooks?

# Lesson 3:

## Newspaper Connections

### ***Informational Text and the Newspaper***

Informational text provides content readers can use for personal or scholastic purposes. The newspaper, too, provides content that students can use to help them make text-to-text connections with other materials they have read, text-to-world connections to the community and world around them, and text-to-self connections to their personal needs or interests.

Before you conduct this lesson, plan some examples of text-to-text, text-to-world and text-to-self newspaper connections for yourself. Think about a story or feature that might relate to something you're teaching in the classroom, something that helps you understand or make decisions about the real world (this could be as simple as information about a community event), and something that will help you personally, such as a recipe or a how-to column.

### ***Direct instruction***

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage them to look for something that relates to their lives in school or at home.
2. Review with students that the newspaper provides information on a wide range of topics to meet the needs of many different readers. Explain how newspaper content can inform, explain, argue or demonstrate.
3. Review the three different "text" connections students might find in the newspaper: text-to-text, text-to-world and text-to-self.
4. Model for students your "text" connections. Share the stories, features or ads that you could use to make connections.
5. Ask students to identify the story or feature that caught their attention in today's newspaper. Ask why they reacted to that item and have them identify the kind of connection they made. Allow several students the opportunity to share their ideas.

### ***Guided practice***

1. Have students work individually to complete the activity sheet My Connections.
2. Have students compare their responses in small groups.

### ***Assessment questions***

- What relationship did you see between newspaper content and your school coursework?
- How can reading the newspaper help you with your school classes?
- What new understanding do you have about your community or country as a result of reading the newspaper?

### ***Elementary guided practice***

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity.
2. Have students work in small groups.
3. Have students share their work with the class.

# My Connections!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## *About your newspaper*

All of the information in the newspaper can help you make connections to your previous knowledge or experiences you've already had. When you connect to something you've read before, it's called text-to-text. When you connect to something you know about life, it's called text-to-world. When you connect to a personal feeling or experience, it's called text-to-self.

## *Use your newspaper*

Find newspaper stories that allow you to make these different text connections. List the headline and explain each connection.

Type of connection	Headline	What is the connection?
Text-to-text		
Text-to-world		
Text-to-self		

## *What do you think?*

Which type of connection was easiest to find? Why do you think that was so?

What connection surprised you the most?

# Lesson 4:

## The 'Why' of News Stories

### ***Informational Text and the Newspaper***

Informational text is purposive text: It provides information people can use to make decisions. Sometimes, readers use the text to expand their knowledge of a subject; sometimes, they use the text to find answers to a question or solutions to a problem. Information text is utilitarian in that sense. The newspaper also provides information which can expand knowledge or supply answers to questions or offer solutions to problems. Newspaper editors make decisions daily about what news is necessary, important and helpful to readers.

Before you conduct this lesson, find a newspaper story that will expand your knowledge or provide answers to a question. A story about a new shopping center or a new traffic light might affect the way you travel to school. The election of a local, state or national official may signal potential changes in your financial situation or working conditions. Select a story that is appropriate for the age and sophistication level of your students.

### ***Direct instruction***

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage them to look for a story that may affect them or their families in some way.
2. Show students the front page of your newspaper. Explain that the editors put what they think are the most important stories on page one.
3. Select one story. Model for students why you think it is an important story. Explain why the story is important to you as a citizen or for you personally.
4. Ask students to identify another story on page one. Have them explain why they think the editors placed the story there and how the story could impact them or someone they know.
5. Explain to students that the primary purpose of the newspaper is to provide news about events happening in the community and the world.
6. Explain that the newspaper editors have to decide every day which stories to put in the newspaper and where to place them. Are they important enough for page one? Should they go in a special section, such as community news or sports?

### ***Guided practice***

1. Have students work in small groups to complete the activity sheet Why This Story.
2. Have students share their responses with the whole class.

### ***Assessment questions***

- Make a statement about the range of topics covered in one issue of the newspaper.
- Explain why you think that range is important.
- Discuss something that surprised you about the content of the newspaper.

### ***Elementary guided practice***

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity.
2. Have students work in pairs or small groups. Give each group scissors and a sentence strip or other paper.
3. Have students put their stories and sentences on the bulletin board. Have each group talk about its stories.

# Why this Story?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ***About your newspaper***

Newspaper editors realize that readers want news they can use. However, what people need can vary greatly. That's why you'll find newspaper stories and features you like and some you might not.

## ***Use your newspaper***

You will find much information in the newspaper that will impact your life or the lives of your family. Try to find stories to match the situations listed below. Write the headline and explain why you think the information is useful.

Situation	Headline	How does it impact you or your family?
1. A story that impacts your family financially		
2. A story that impacts the safety and security of your family		
3. A story about the environment		
4. A story about a government decision		
5. A story about health or safety concerns		
6. A story about a local business		
7. A story about a local issue		

## ***What do you think?***

Which story do you think has the greatest impact on you or your family? Why?

What kinds of stories do not impact you or your family?

# Lesson 5:

## Our Right to Know

### ***Informational Text and the Newspaper***

In Lesson #4, students learned how informational text provides content that readers can use to make decisions about their community and their lives. The information provided by a newspaper in a democracy serves a very special purpose – it keeps citizens informed so they can understand their government and evaluate its leaders. Newspapers are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution so that citizens will always have a non-governmental, independent source of information. Members of the press, print and electronic, take this responsibility very seriously. They recognize their role as “the public’s watchdog.” Historically, government scandals and wrongdoing have not been brought to the public’s attention by government agencies; they have been brought to public light by the press.

Before you conduct this lesson, locate a story about a community, state or national governmental action that might be supported by some people but opposed by others. Be prepared to use this story as a discussion prompt for your class. Select a story that will elicit different points of view, but one that is appropriate for the age and sophistication level of your students.

### ***Direct instruction***

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage them to pay attention to stories about government bodies.
2. Write the following quote on the board: “... [W]ere it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them.” – *Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), author of the Declaration of Independence, third U.S. President (1801-09)*
3. Ask students to discuss Jefferson’s quote. Why do they think he considered newspapers so important? Allow students to discuss their ideas.
4. Show students a news story about a government decision or action. Ask them who might want citizens to get that information. Ask them to suggest who might prefer that people not learn about it.
5. Explain to students that people in power (those who hold office) don’t usually want to hear any criticism about their decisions. On the other hand, those people who are out of power (political opponents) want to hear only criticism about elected officials. Discuss how it is the newspaper’s responsibility to report what happens objectively so citizens can make up their own minds.

### ***Guided practice***

1. Have students work in small groups to complete the activity sheet We Need to Know.
2. Have students share their responses with the whole class.

### ***Assessment questions***

- Revisit Jefferson’s quote as it relates to a specific story in the newspaper today.
- Discuss the importance of having different sides of an issue represented in the newspaper.
- Discuss how and why our free press is different from the press in countries under authoritarian regimes.

### ***Elementary guided practice***

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity. Use pages that have stories about local or national leaders.
2. Have students share the stories about the leaders that they have found. Write their responses on the board.
3. Have students talk about the common qualities of the leaders, or why they are important.

# We Need to Know!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### ***About your newspaper***

The independence of all newspapers is guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The nation's founders wanted citizens to be able to report on government activities freely and without fear. The nation's press has a responsibility to report on government activities so citizens can make informed decisions at the ballot box.

### ***Use your newspaper***

Find newspaper stories about different levels of government. Explain why citizens should have this information and what might happen if they did not have this information.

Headline	Level of government	Why do we need to know?	What could happen if we didn't know?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

### ***What do you think?***

Which government story do you think will impact the largest number of people? Why?

Which story do you think government officials are not happy to have in the newspaper? Why?

# Lesson 6:

# The Marketplace of Ideas—Editorials and Commentary in the Newspaper

## *Informational Text and the Newspaper*

Good informational text provides content that is true and accurate. Readers can use what they learn from informational text to form their own opinions. The newspaper provides information in news and feature stories. It also provides a forum where individuals can present their opinions about news of the day. The editorial or commentary pages of the newspaper provide a place where the editors and publishers of the newspaper can present their opinion about a current topic, political writers can present arguments supporting one side of an argument, and newspaper readers can write letters to the editor presenting their opinions. One of the reasons the First Amendment was written into the U.S. Constitution was so that differing points of view could be debated in the “marketplace of ideas.” The newspaper commentary pages encourage the interchange of ideas. Opinion columns are written by professionals, but any citizen is free to support, defend or oppose a position by submitting a letter to the newspaper.

Before you conduct this lesson, select an editorial, an opinion column and a letter to the editor on the same subject. You may have to check the newspaper over several days to collect your examples, as letters to the editor are frequently responses to an editorial or column. Select a topic that is appropriate to the grade and sophistication level of your students.

### ***Direct instruction***

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage students to look at the commentary pages of the newspaper.
2. Review the topic of the public’s right to know with students. Remind them of the founding fathers’ purpose for protecting the press from government interference.
3. Explain that another reason the founders wanted to protect speech was to encourage open and free discussion of topics that affect the country and its citizens. Explain the expression “marketplace of ideas.”
4. Have students discuss how they think a marketplace of ideas would work. Allow several minutes for discussion.
5. Show students the editorial/commentary pages of the newspaper. Have them read just the headlines of editorials and opinion columns, and try to predict the writer’s point of view about each topic.
6. Share the editorial, opinion column and letter to the editor you’ve selected with the class. Point out differences in the opinions of the writers. Explain how citizens can use the information from news stories and the opinions from editorial/commentary pages to make up their own minds about important issues facing their community or country.

### ***Guided practice***

1. Have students work in pairs to complete the activity sheet Marketplace of Ideas.
2. Have students discuss their responses with the whole class.

### ***Assessment questions***

- Discuss why the newspaper puts opinions in a designated section of the newspaper.
- Discuss the differences between professional opinion columnists and the writers of letters to the editor.
- Discuss the role of the “marketplace of ideas” in a democracy.

### ***Elementary guided practice***

1. Give students the editorial and commentary pages of the newspaper.
2. Point out the letters to the editor. Read aloud one or two letters as models for students.
3. Discuss with the class some topics they could write about.
4. Have them complete the activity sheet individually.

# Marketplace of Ideas!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ***About your newspaper***

Newspapers provide a special place for readers to find different points of view on topics in the news. The editorial or commentary page of your newspaper has editorials, positions taken by the newspaper; opinion columns, written by people with particular political points of view; and letters to the editor, written by members of your community. Seeing different points of view presented helps readers sort through information and arguments so they can make up their own minds. Examine the way a current issue is discussed in your newspaper's editorial pages.

## ***Use your newspaper***

Select an editorial, an opinion column and a letter to the editor about a topic which interests you. Compare the information provided in each. Then compare your opinion with those you've analyzed.

What is your topic? \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Opinion piece</b>	<b>What does it say?</b>
Editorial headline:	
Opinion column headline:	
Letter to the editor headline:	

## ***What do you think?***

What is your personal opinion on the topic?

How have any of the other opinion pieces influenced your thinking?

# Lesson 7:

## Personal Progress

### ***Informational Text and the Newspaper***

Informational text can be used to help readers make weighty decisions about important matters. It can also provide information people can use to make their everyday personal lives better. The newspaper provides practical resources on a variety of topics. There are lifestyle features that deal with social relationships and health issues. There are advice columns for everything from personal relationships to car repair. There is information on travel destinations and performing arts events.

Before you conduct this lesson, select several features that you personally find useful. Include a movie or television review. Be prepared to make some recommendations from the newspaper that would be of interest to and appropriate for your students.

### ***Direct instruction***

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage them to look at entertainment and lifestyle sections.
2. Tell students that today you'll be looking at newspapers from a personal and practical point of view. They've spent time looking at news and opinions that have consequences for the country, but now you want them to focus on themselves.
3. Explain that they might not be aware of the different kinds of feature stories and columns in the newspaper that are not directly related to late-breaking news. Explain that newspapers also have a purpose to educate and entertain.
4. Share with students the items you have selected from the newspaper. Read aloud parts of each item and explain how you would use the information.
5. Share with students one or more recommendations of stories or columns you thought might be of interest to them.

### ***Guided practice***

1. Have students work individually to complete the activity sheet *It's All About Me*.
2. Have students share their responses with the whole class.

### ***Assessment questions***

- Discuss the variety of non-hard news sections in your newspaper.
- Discuss why you think the editors include this kind of information.
- Discuss one thing in the newspaper that had personal meaning or use for you.

### ***Elementary guided practice***

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity. Use entertainment and lifestyle pages from the newspaper.
2. Give students sticky notes. Have them complete the activity individually.
3. Have students share their responses in pairs.

# It's All About Me!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### *About your newspaper*

The newspaper contains many stories and columns about political and social issues of the day. However, it also has stories and columns that inform or entertain readers on a personal level. You will find information in the newspaper that appeals to you personally.

### *Use your newspaper*

Look through the newspaper for different types of information you can use. Identify the newspaper source and how you could use the information.

Type of information/headline or section	How could you use this information?
1. Advice on getting along with others	
2. A restaurant you would like to try	
3. A comic strip that reminds you of your life	
4. A review of a movie you'd like to see	
5. An ad for a product you would like to own	

### *What do you think?*

Which piece of information are you most likely to use in the near future? Why?

What information were you surprised to find in the newspaper? Why?

# Lesson 8:

## Look and Learn—Visual Elements in the Newspaper

### *Informational Text and the Newspaper*

A major characteristic of informational text is that it often includes data presented in visual and graphic displays such as diagrams, tables, charts, maps and illustrations. An illustration of a printing press, for example, can convey descriptive information more efficiently than a wordy narrative might. A map of a country presents a clear relationship between major cities in that country. The newspaper, too, uses visual information where appropriate. Maps are used to show where events took place; numerical data is presented in tables and charts. The weather map not only shows weather patterns and movement across the country, it is usually accompanied by tables and charts of places, temperatures and other pertinent information. On any given day, you will find several examples of visual and graphic texts.

Before you conduct this lesson, select several examples of visual displays from the newspaper to share with students. The weather map in your newspaper is a good starting point. Look also for sports data presented in tabular formats and diagrams that show individual items or processes.

### *Direct instruction*

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage them to look for information that is presented in a format other than text in paragraphs.
2. Ask students to identify any information they found that was not represented by text in paragraphs. Discuss their examples.
3. Show students the examples you have selected from the newspaper. Point out any titles or captions (cutlines) that help readers identify the information. On a graph, show students the labels for the two axes. Demonstrate how to read the data on the graph – a line that represents change over time, or bars or columns that show comparative information. On a table, show students the vertical and horizontal categories. Demonstrate how to read the data inside the table. On a diagram, show students how to read the labels and any directional arrows.
4. Discuss with students why some of this information is easier to understand using graphics instead of or in addition to words.

### *Guided practice*

1. Have students work in small groups to complete the activity sheet Look and Learn.
2. Have students share their responses with the whole class.

### *Assessment questions*

- Identify the different types of visual or graphic informational elements you found in the newspaper.
- What criteria do you think editors use in determining whether or not to print visual informational elements?
- Discuss the part you think technology plays in the creation of visual information elements.

### *Elementary guided practice*

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity. You may want to collect several days' worth of newspapers and save pages that have illustrations or charts or maps.
2. Have students work in pairs.
3. Have students share their work with the class.

# Look and Learn!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ***About your newspaper***

The newspaper conveys information by using thousands of words. However, the newspaper also uses visuals to give readers information. You'll find photos, illustrations, diagrams, charts, tables and maps in the newspaper. For example, TV schedules and sports statistics are often shown in tables.

## ***Use your newspaper***

Find an example of information presented visually in the newspaper. Attach the visual to this paper. Then:

● Write three statements about the data or information provided.

● Write three questions about the data or information provided. Have a friend answer your questions.

## ***What do you think?***

Why was this information better presented visually rather than verbally?

What types of visual information do you "read" regularly in the newspaper?

# Lesson 9:

## Goods and Services — Advertising in the Newspaper

### *Informational Text and the Newspaper*

One purpose of informational text is to help readers make decisions. For example, a menu in a restaurant is informational text; it tells you about products and prices. The newspaper has a great deal of information about goods and services in display and classified ads. Display ads promote products and services from local businesses and organizations. They include illustrations, photographs and special type. They are found throughout the newspaper. Classified ads are located in a special section of the newspaper. These ads are placed in specific categories such as automotive, real estate, employment opportunities, and lost and found. Few classified ads include visual information. The exception is the auto advertising that has historically been included in the classified section. Many people read the newspaper specifically to find information about products or services they need.

Before you conduct this lesson, select several newspaper ads for products you might buy. Find a classified ad for a car you would like to own. Select several ads that you think might have an appeal for your students.

### *Direct instruction*

1. Pass out individual copies of the newspaper to students. Allow several minutes for students to read the newspaper. Encourage students to look at the ads as they read through the newspaper.
2. Explain to students that newspapers divide information into two types: editorial and advertising. Editorial refers to all of the news and feature stories, columns and photos related to current events. Advertising refers to the business ads throughout the newspaper and the classified ads in the classified section of the newspaper.
3. Tell students that up until this point, they have been looking at editorial information in the newspaper. Today you are going to look at advertising. Point out the two different kinds of ads. Show examples of display ads and then show the classified section of the newspaper.
4. Ask students to suggest reasons for including ads in the newspaper. The two major reasons are that businesses pay to put advertising in the newspaper and that money subsidizes the cost of the newspaper. You may want to use the television commercial as an analogy. Another reason is that advertising provides information about the goods and services that are available to readers and where readers can find them.
5. Show students the ads you have selected. Explain how you can use the information in the ad.

### *Guided practice*

1. Have students work in pairs to complete the activity sheet *Get the Goods*.
2. Have students share their responses with the whole class.

### *Assessment questions*

- Discuss the role of ads in the newspaper and commercials on television.
- What do you see as the differences between the kind of information found in newspaper ads and television commercials?
- Discuss the efficiency of the indexing system used in the classified section of your newspaper.

### *Elementary guided practice*

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity. You may want to select pages that have ads that would be of interest to your students.
2. Have students work in groups of two or three. Give each group scissors, paste or glue sticks and construction paper.
3. Have students share their work with the class.

## Get the Goods!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### ***About your newspaper***

In addition to news and current events, newspapers also provide important information about goods and services available in your community. Many people use the newspaper regularly to find out about things to buy and sell. Local businesses use display ads to announce sales, show merchandise, and provide store locations and hours. The classified ads provide a place for individuals to advertise items to buy or sell. The classified section also provides information about employment opportunities and workers looking for employment.

### ***Use your newspaper***

Examine both types of advertising in your newspaper.

Find a display ad for a product you would like to buy. Attach the ad to this paper. Then describe how each of these elements was used to make the ad attractive:

- Type style or size
- Illustration or photo
- Catchy slogans or words
- Price information
- Overall design of the ad
- In what section of the newspaper was the ad located?

Examine the classified ads in your newspaper. Answer these questions about your classified section:


- Where is the index for the classified section?
- What are the major categories for goods and services in the section?
- What icons or art elements are used to identify categories?
- How is information organized within categories?

### ***What do you think?***

Why do you think newspapers put similar ads in the same section of a newspaper (e.g., power tool ads in the sports section)?

What is one thing you would change about the classified ad section of the newspaper?



- 
7. Write the headline for one of your items in the first row. Read your story or column aloud and have students suggest notes to put in each column.
  8. Explain to students that they can use the data collected to write a research paper. The information in each column can be used to write a paragraph. More advanced students will be able to use data across the columns to write a paper.

### ***Guided practice***

1. Have students work in small groups to identify a topic to research.
2. Have students collect newspaper stories, columns, editorial cartoons and letters to the editor over several weeks.
3. Have students work in their groups to complete the activity sheet Research and Report.
4. Have students discuss their charts with the rest of the class.
5. Have students use their charts to write individual reports on their topics.

### ***Assessment questions***

- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using primary source materials like the newspaper for research.
- Discuss the decision-making skills you use when you evaluate a news story or column for research information.
- Discuss the value of reading opinion columns as well as news stories to get information about a topic.

### ***Elementary guided practice***

1. Give students several newspaper sheets stapled together, or a newspaper section – whichever is appropriate for your grade and students – for the activity. You may want to select appropriate pages for your class. With very young students, you may want to have them collect data from photographs or comic strips. You can collect photographs of the community and identify appropriate categories (What happens here? Whom would you find at this place?). You can have students categorize people in comic strips by collecting data about women’s jobs, men’s jobs, children’s activities, etc. With young children, limit the data categories to two or three.
2. Have students work in small groups. Give each group a large piece of paper to create their charts.
3. Have students share their work with the class. You may want to display the data charts on a bulletin board.





# Instructional Aids

# Classroom Strategies for Guiding Newspaper Instruction

You may be familiar with the classroom strategies discussed here, but you may not have used those strategies with the newspaper. The newspaper contains nonfiction, informational text. You can use many existing strategies with the newspaper.

## READ ALOUD/THINK ALOUD

It is very important for students to hear informational text being read aloud. When students hear the text structure of nonfiction writing, such as that in the newspaper, they can develop appropriate schema. Generally, students have heard stories for many years. They know how story narration works. The structure is familiar to them when they encounter it in print. Most students have not had nonfiction and expository text read to them, so they experience difficulty when they encounter the structure in print. When you do a “think aloud” with a text, you model for students the way an experienced reader makes sense of that text.

When you read a newspaper story aloud to students, begin with the headline. Model your reading and thinking for them. After you read the headline, tell students what you think the news story might be about. Read the first sentence of the news story. Talk out loud about whether or not your ideas were correct. Make a statement about what you think the rest of the story will be about. Read the story aloud. Talk out loud about whether or not your ideas were correct. Explain to students that when we read, we are always thinking about what might come next. Then we check to see if we were right. Model “think alouds” with students regularly so they become familiar with the process.

## GUIDING READING

Help students learn to make predictions and verify their thinking as they move through a news story by using a modified Directed Reading and Thinking Activity (DRTA). Select a news story that is appropriate for the grade level and interests of your students. Have students read just the headline of a news story. Entertain predictions about what students think the story will be about. Then have students read just the first sentence of the story. Discuss their previous predictions. Have them predict what will happen next. Have them read the next paragraph. Stop and discuss predictions. Continue through the news story. After students are familiar with this process, you can have them read more than one paragraph at a time. Be sure to have them verify their predictions. You can have students go back and read the part of the story that supports their predictions.

### DISCOVERY CIRCLES

Discovery Circles are informal discussion groups where students read about a common topic and then get together to share their reading and look for common themes. With very young children, you can have each child in a group of four to six students read a different comic strip. Be sure to select comic strips with some elements in common, such as family life, school or animals. Each child reads his or her comic strip and talks about it with the group. With older students, give students different sports stories. Have each child read his or her story and then come to the group to discuss. With middle school or secondary students, you can have students read news stories or different opinion columns on the same subject.

The key elements of the discovery circle are:

- Students read independently.
- students share their reading with others.
- and students look for commonality in their reading.

### SHARED READING

One version of shared reading is to have students work in pairs to read and discuss the same story. Assign appropriate stories to students. Then have the students take turns reading one paragraph at a time out loud. After each paragraph is read, both students discuss what they know about the story so far. After students are familiar with the process, you can have them alternate reading aloud and asking questions of each other.

# Newspaper Discussion Cards

Cut out these cards. Put them on a ring or in a box. Use one or more cards as discussion prompts for students after they read a newspaper story or column.

<p>Tell me about your newspaper story (or column or graphic). What did you learn from your reading?</p>	<p>Whom do you think would also like to read this story? Why would that person be interested?</p>
<p>How does this story make you think about something you're learning in school?</p>	<p>What would you like to learn next about this topic?</p>
<p>Tell me about some of the new words you learned in this story.</p>	<p>Did this story have any visuals, like photographs or drawings? How did they help you understand the story?</p>
<p>Why do you think the editor put this story in the newspaper?</p>	<p>Tell me how this story made you think about your own life.</p>
<p>What questions do you have now about the topic of this story?</p>	<p>Tell me the who, what, when and where of this story.</p>

# Informational Text Reading Guide

Have students complete the first two columns before they read a newspaper story. Have them complete the last two columns after they read the story.

Before Reading		After Reading	
My thoughts about this topic	Questions I have about the topic	What I learned	New questions I have about the topic

# Newspaper Story Retelling Checklist

After a student reads a newspaper story or column, have him or her tell you about the story. Check off student behaviors in the "unassisted retelling." If student does not retell information in one of the areas, ask the student about it and mark responses in the "assisted retelling."

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Selection \_\_\_\_\_

The student ...	Unassisted retelling	Assisted retelling
1. Gives the main idea		
2. Identifies the who, what, when and where of the story		
3. Gives the why or how of the story		
4. Identifies key vocabulary words		
5. Understands the sequence of events in the story		
6. Uses prior knowledge to understand the story		
7. Relates the story to school or personal life		
8. Tells why the story is important		
9. Refers to any photos or visuals that accompany the story		
10. Draws conclusions		

Level of comprehension: Detailed \_\_\_\_\_ Partial \_\_\_\_\_ Fragmentary \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

# National Standards and Informational Text

The principles of multicultural literacy reflect the goals of national standards in many different content areas. These standards are reflected in the content standards of individual states. These standards include:

## STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

*(Sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association)*

- Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the work place; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
- Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

## MEDIA LITERACY STANDARDS

*MeREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)*

The student:

- Knows characteristics of a wide range of media (e.g., television news favors messages that are immediate and visual; news photographs favor messages with an emotional component).
- Understands the different purposes of various media (e.g., to provide entertainment or information, to persuade, to transmit culture, to focus attention on an issue).
- Understands how the type of media affects coverage of events or issues (e.g., how the same event is covered by the radio, television and newspapers; how each medium shapes facts into a particular point of view; how limitations and advantages of various media affect coverage of events).
- Understands various elements that recur across media (e.g., common features found in print and broadcast advertising; the layout of magazines and newspapers, including headlines, photographs, regular columns, feature articles and editorials).
- Understands aspects of media production and distribution (e.g., different steps and choices involved in planning and producing various media; various professionals who

produce media, such as news writers, photographers, camera operators, film directors, graphic artists, political cartoonists).

- Understands the ways in which imagemakers carefully construct meaning (e.g., idea and word choice by authors; images created by photographers; television programs created by groups of people; photos or cutlines chosen in newspapers).
- Understands influences on the construction of media messages and images (e.g., the historical period or place in which they were made; laws that govern mass media, such as truth in advertising; the socio-cultural background of the target audience; financial factors such as sponsorship; cause-and-effect relationships between mass media coverage and public opinion trends).

## Project Sponsors

Newspaper In Education Week is a joint program of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, the International Reading Association and the National Council for the Social Studies. It is observed the first full week of March. The goal of the program is to reinforce a positive lifetime reading habit in students by engaging them with an authentic text—the newspaper.

### ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

#### **Newspaper Association of America® Foundation**

The NAA Foundation is dedicated to developing future readers by encouraging them to acquire and value information from newspapers and other media. The Foundation will achieve this mission by:

- Promoting and operating programs that encourage newspaper use by young people;
- Forming strategic alliances;
- Bestowing targeted grants to leverage Foundation resources;
- Improving youth literacy through family and community initiatives.

The Foundation supports local Newspaper In Education efforts through curriculum development, consultation, conferences, awards programs, training, a quarterly magazine and computer services. The Foundation works cooperatively with state and local reading and social studies councils and newspapers throughout North America to promote NIE Week.

#### **The International Reading Association**

The International Reading Association is an organization of 90,000 members, including teachers, reading specialists, librarians, university professors, administrators, researchers, psychologists and others interested in promoting reading and better reading instruction. The IRA serves as an advocate and leader in the universal quest for literacy and is dedicated to service on an international scale. It has more than 1,300 councils functioning at the national, state and local levels. The IRA achieves its outreach through publications, conferences, journals and committees.

#### **The National Council for the Social Studies**

The National Council for the Social Studies is the largest association in North America devoted solely to social studies education. The NCSS serves as an umbrella organization for

elementary and secondary-level teachers of history, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology and law-related education. The NCSS has more than 26,000 individual and institutional members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and 69 other countries. Membership is organized into a network of more than 150 affiliated councils representing professionals such as classroom teachers, curriculum designers, curriculum specialists, university faculty and leaders in the various disciplines that constitute the social studies.

Additional information about NIE Week programs is available from each sponsoring organization:

● **Newspaper Association of America Foundation**

1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600  
Vienna, VA 22182  
(703) 902-1728  
[www.naafoundation.org](http://www.naafoundation.org)

● **International Reading Association**

P.O. Box 8139  
Newark, DE 19714  
(302) 731-1600  
[www.ira.org](http://www.ira.org)

● **National Council for the Social Studies**

8555 16th Street, Suite 500  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 588-1800  
[www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)

# Keep It Real

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*Newspapers, the Ultimate Informational Text*

*Ann*  
NEWSPAPER IN  
EDUCATION

# The Free Lance-Star



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