

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Benchmarks: Second Grade Comprehension: Identify and Discuss the Author's Purpose

Preparation/Materials: Preparation/Materials: large graph, large copy of each story, highlighter, pictures of a U.S. map, a checkers game, a bird

(Prerequisites: can identify expository and narrative text, story grammar, compare and contrast, main idea, and summarization)



- *Italicized sentences are what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say
- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slides finger under underlined letter(s) or word(s)



NOTE: Some reading programs differentiate between text that informs and text that explains. Both types of text are expository text and will be considered together in this routine.

TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to identify the author's purpose for writing the text. The author is the person who wrote the text and the purpose is the reason or why it was written.

TEACHER MODELS TASK

Authors write for different purposes....to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. For this routine, we're going to focus on expository text written to inform.

Expository text is factual or true. When we read expository text, we often stop to study captions, headings, illustrations, and vocabulary specific to the topic.

To help us identify the author's purpose for writing, we can preview a text. By looking at certain text characteristics, we are better prepared to read. This graph shows some characteristics of expository text written to inform or explain.

Point to and read the information for each characteristic. Explain all the information and examples on the graph to students as part of a pre-reading activity.

First, we read the title. Most often, the title is realistic and gives some idea of what factual information or explanations will be given in the text. Let's look at some examples of titles: Directions to the Zoo (this would explain how to get to the zoo), The Earth (this may have facts about the earth), Crazy Cats (while the title sounds silly or whimsical, it may have facts about how cats behave).

Second, we look at and read the illustrations. This may be realistic photos or it may be the use of bold print, headings, maps, charts, and graphs. Illustrations help to focus our attention on the important facts in the text.

Third, we look at the text for facts, explanations, specific vocabulary or directions. We can read the first sentence or page through the text to get an idea of the author's purpose. Expository text that informs or explains is found in science and history books, recipes, or directions.

Characteristics	Expository Text that Informs
1. Title	Factual or True Examples of Titles: Directions to the Zoo, The Earth, Life in Africa, How to make cookies, Crazy Cats
2. Illustrations	Realistic Examples of illustrations: bold print, headings, maps, charts, graphs, photos
3. Text	Facts, Explanations, Specific Vocabulary, Directions Examples of expository texts: science books, history books, directions, recipes

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TEACHER MODELS TASK (continued)

Now, I will use this graph to preview a paragraph about Florida. Then, I will read the entire text.

Display "Florida".

Florida

Florida became the 27th state in 1845. Florida is a state in the southern part of the United States. The capital is Tallahassee. The state flower is the orange blossom. Many people come to live in Florida because of the warm weather and sandy beaches.

Point to the title.

The title is "Florida". It is true; there is a state called Florida.

Point to the illustration.

The illustration is a map of the US. It is realistic.

Point to the text. Read the first sentence out loud.

The content of this first sentence has facts about Florida.

Point to some specific words in the paragraph (e.g., capital, state flower).

In the rest of the paragraph, I see specific vocabulary about the state of Florida.

Based on these characteristics, I predict that the author's purpose is to inform about the state of Florida. However, it is necessary to read the entire text in order to confirm or know the author's purpose.

Now I will read about Florida.

Read and point to each word as you read "Florida" aloud.

Based on what I just read about Florida, I can support my prediction that the author's purpose was to inform. I do this by giving some facts from the text: the date it became part of the United States, the capital, the state flower, and its climate. *Underline or highlight these facts in the text.*

This confirms my prediction that the author's purpose is to inform about the state of Florida.

When we can predict the author's purpose for writing based on a few characteristics, we are better prepared to read and understand the text.

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

Let's begin by reviewing. Authors write for different purposes....to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

What are the different purposes authors use to write?

- They write to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

I am going to read expository text written to inform.

What type of text am I going to read?

- You are going to read expository text written to inform.

Let's look at our graph to review the characteristics of expository text that is written to inform. *Refer to the large copy of the graph. Read and point to the information for each characteristic (e.g., title, illustrations, text). Then ask the students to repeat it with you. Use the following pattern of review as an example.*

We know that the title is probably factual.

What do we know about the title?

- The title is probably factual.

Some examples of factual titles are: Directions to the Zoo and the Earth.

What are some other examples of factual titles?

- Life in Africa, How to Make Cookies, Crazy Cats (*accept new titles from students, if appropriate*)

Continue this way with Illustrations and Text.

I am going to read a paragraph about "How to Play Checkers." Before I begin to read, we will use the graph to preview the paragraph.

Display "How to Play Checkers."

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TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

How to Play Checkers

The game of checkers is played with two players. There is a board with 32 dark and 32 light squares. Each player gets twelve game pieces. Players take turns moving diagonally on the dark squares. A player can capture an opponent's piece by jumping over that piece. When the piece is captured, it is removed from the board. A player wins when the opponent cannot make a move or has lost all his pieces.

Point to the title.

The title is "How to Play Checkers."

What is the title?

- "How to Play Checkers"

Point to the illustration.

The illustration is a game of checkers. It is realistic.

What is the illustration?

- The illustration is a game of checkers. It is realistic.

Point to text. Read the first sentence out loud.

The first sentence explains how many players can play checkers.

What do we know about the first sentence?

- It explains how many people/players can play checkers.

Point to and highlight some specific words in the paragraph (e.g., game board, squares).

In the rest of the paragraph, I see specific vocabulary words about playing checkers. Here are the words, game board and squares. What are some specific vocabulary words about playing checkers?

- The words are game board and squares.

Based on these characteristics, we can predict that the author's purpose is to explain how to play checkers.

Based on these characteristics, what can we predict?

- The author's purpose is to explain how to play checkers.

Now listen and follow along as I read aloud, "How to Play Checkers." *Point to each word as you read "How to Play Checkers" aloud.*

We can now support our prediction that the author's purpose is to inform or explain. We do this by giving facts from the text. *Underline or highlight these facts in the text.*

How do we support our prediction?

- We give facts from the text.

The facts are: 12 pieces, a game board, moving diagonally on dark squares.

What are the facts?

- The facts are: 12 pieces, a game board, moving diagonally on dark squares.

This confirms my prediction that the author's purpose is to inform.

Now it is your turn to identify the author's purpose for writing.

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

Remember, authors write for different purposes...to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

What are the different purposes authors use to write?

They write to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

I am going to read expository text written to inform.

What type of text am I going to read?

You are going to read expository text to inform.

Yes. I am going to read a paragraph about birds. Before I begin to read, we are going to use the graph to preview the text. *Display "Birds".*

Birds

Animals are divided into categories. They are grouped according to things they have in common. One category is birds. All birds have feathers. They are warm-blooded. Birds lay eggs and they have wings. Most birds fly, but there are some that do not.

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STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

Point to the title.

What is the title?

The title is “Birds.”

Is this title probably factual?

Yes.

Point to and highlight some specific words in the paragraph (e.g., feathers, warm-blooded, lay eggs).

In the rest of the paragraph, I see specific vocabulary words about birds. Read these words with me:

Feathers, warm-blooded, lay eggs, and wings.

Based on these characteristics, what can you predict about the author’s purpose?

The author’s purpose is to inform us about birds.

Now I will read “Birds”: *Read and point to each word as you read “Birds” aloud.*

Based on what I just read about birds, can you support your prediction that the author’s purpose is to inform using facts from the text?

Yes, we can support it.

What facts can you give from the text?

Birds have feathers, they are warm-blooded, they have wings and lay eggs.

Fantastic work. You did a nice job predicting the author’s purpose for writing a text based on a few characteristics. Thinking about these characteristics prepared you for understanding the text and knowing why the author wrote it.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When students consistently identify the author’s purpose in different texts, provide opportunities to practice individually or in pairs using examples of ‘text that informs’ or ‘text that entertains’. Call on students in an unpredictable order, calling more frequently on students who made errors.

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

Verify that students are able to use the graph for initial characteristics during the pre-reading activity and correctly confirm their prediction after reading the text. Sometimes the author intentionally writes it to entertain and inform. When this occurs, it is important to explain this to students. If students are struggling with author’s purpose, it is important to know if they have these preskills: can identify expository from narrative text, fact from fiction, story grammar elements, main idea, and summarization.

Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:

- If students are having difficulties with this routine, review the Empowering Teacher’s routines for story grammar, compare and contrast, main idea, and summarizing. Also review the concepts for fiction and nonfiction.
- If students are not able to read the details on the graph during Student Practice Task, the teacher should read and point to the details while the students look and listen.
- Provide a highlighter for the teacher or students to mark the characteristics in the story. This could be the character, setting, problem and solution for ‘text that entertains’ and specific vocabulary or facts for ‘text that informs’.

For further independent practice, refer to the following Second and Third Grade FCRR Student Center Activities at http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/2-3Comp_3.pdf

- C.023 This activity also includes text that persuades so remove those cards.

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