



# **NCSC Curriculum Resource to Prepare Students for AA-AAS**

## **Language Arts Content: Reading Informational Texts**

All materials in this resource have been approved for public distribution with all necessary permissions. Selected excerpts are accompanied by annotated links to related media freely available online at the time of the publication of this document.



National Center and State Collaborative

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is applying the lessons learned from the past decade of research on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) to develop a multi-state comprehensive assessment system for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The project draws on a strong research base to develop an AA-AAS that is built from the ground up on powerful validity arguments linked to clear learning outcomes and defensible assessment results, to complement the work of the Race to the Top Common State Assessment Program (RTTA) consortia.

Our long-term goal is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. A well-designed summative assessment alone is insufficient to achieve that goal. Thus, NCSC is developing a full system intended to support educators, which includes formative assessment tools and strategies, professional development on appropriate interim uses of data for progress monitoring, and management systems to ease the burdens of administration and documentation. All partners share a commitment to the research-to-practice focus of the project and the development of a comprehensive model of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supportive professional development. These supports will improve the alignment of the entire system and strengthen the validity of inferences of the system of assessments.



The contents of this Resource Guide were developed as part of the National Center and State Collaborative by Special Educators Angel Lee, M.Ed., Diane Browder, Ph.D., and validated by Jean Vintinner, Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for under a grant from the Department of Education (PR/Award #: H373X100002, Project Officer, [Susan.Weigert@Ed.gov](mailto:Susan.Weigert@Ed.gov)). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and no assumption of endorsement by the Federal government should be made.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

These materials and documents were developed under the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) General Supervision Enhancement Grant and are consistent with its goals and foundations. Any changes to these materials are to be consistent with their intended purpose and use as defined by NCSC.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

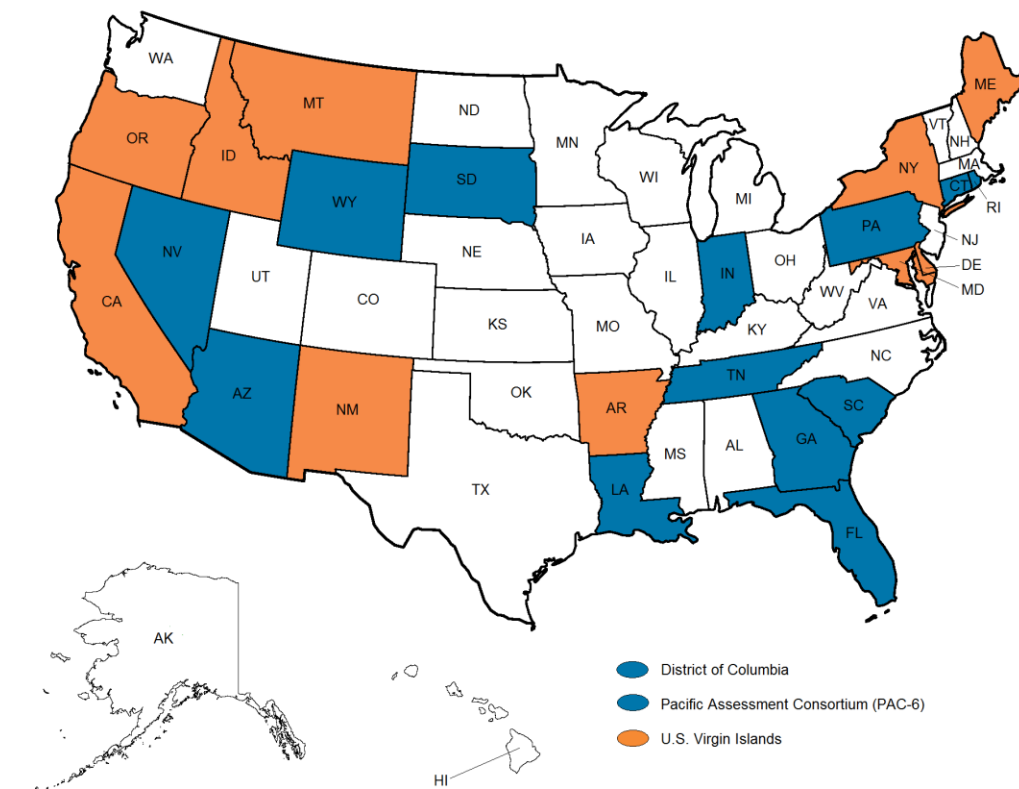


National Center and State Collaborative

NCSC is a collaborative of 15 states and five organizations.

The states include (shown in blue on map): Arizona, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6)<sup>1</sup>, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

Tier II states are partners in curriculum, instruction, and professional development implementation but are not part of the assessment development work. They are (shown in orange on map): Arkansas, California, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and U.S. Virgin Islands.



\*Core partner states are blue in color and Tier II states are orange in color.

<sup>1</sup> The Pacific Assessment Consortium (including the entities of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands) partner with NCSC as one state, led by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (CEDDERS).



National Center and State Collaborative

The five partner organizations include: The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota, The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment), The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, The University of Kentucky, and edCount, LLC.



150 Pillsbury Drive SE  
207 Pattee Hall  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Phone: 612-708-6960  
Fax: 612-624-0879  
[www.ncscpartners.org](http://www.ncscpartners.org)



National Center and State Collaborative

# **NCSC Curriculum Resource to Prepare Students for AA-AAS**

## **Language Arts Content: Reading Informational Texts**

September 2013

## Table of Contents

1a. Key Ideas and Details .....	7
1b. Craft and Structure .....	9
1c. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas .....	11
2. What are some of the types of activities general educators will use to teach this skill? 12	
2.1 Activities from General Education Resources .....	12
2.2 Links Across Content Areas .....	14
3. What Connectors to the Common Core Standards Are Addressed in Teaching “Reading Informational Texts”? .....	14
4. What Are Some Additional Activities That Can Promote Use of these Academic Concepts in Real World Contexts? .....	18
5. How Can I Further Promote College and Career Readiness when Teaching “Reading Informational Texts”? .....	18
Ideas for Promoting Career/ College Ready Outcomes .....	18
6. How Do I Make Instruction on “Reading Informational Texts” Accessible to ALL the Students I Teach? .....	19
6.1 Teach Prerequisites Concurrently While Teaching Skills Related to Reading Informational Texts: Remember that students can continue to learn basic literacy skills in the context of this grade level content. ....	19
6.2 Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in planning, and provide for additional Differentiated Instruction when Teaching Reading Informational Texts ....	21
7. Where Can I Get More Information on the topics covered in this Curriculum Resource Guide? .....	23
7.1 Content Modules .....	23
7.2 Additional Resources .....	23
References .....	25

# Curriculum Resource to Prepare Students for AA-AAS

## Language Arts Content: Reading Informational Texts

---

### The purposes of the Curriculum Resource Guides Are:

- To provide guidance for teaching the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SWSCD) that both aligns with these standards and provides differentiation for individual student needs
- To serve as a companion document to the Progress Indicators for the CCSS found in the NCSC Learning Progressions
- To help educators build knowledge of the essential content reflected in these Progress Indicators of the CCSS
- To delineate the necessary skills and knowledge students need to acquire to master these indicators
- To provide examples for differentiating instruction for a wide range of SWSCD. These examples can be used in planning specific lessons, alternate assessment items, and professional development.

Teaching informational text is a broad topic with an increased focus in the Common Core State Standards. The topics of focus for the Curriculum Resource Guide are categorized by the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading. The skills described under each heading are not comprehensive but are intended to represent the curricular emphasis seen in general education texts.

### 1a. Key Ideas and Details

*What are “main ideas” and how are they taught in general education settings?*

The main ideas of informational text are the most important points that the author is trying to make about a specific topic. Identifying and categorizing main ideas within informational text is critical to successful readers because it allows readers to prioritize information in text.

#### **Common misunderstandings**

Students may have difficulty determining what essential information is. Students often misinterpret details as being the main idea and need to be guided to see the author’s overall point or the ‘big picture’. It is also important to note that the main idea is not simply what the text is about (e.g., informational text covering the

discovery of electricity; Benjamin Franklin was key in its first applications, but he is not the main idea).

**Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Distinguish fiction from nonfiction
- Identify the author’s key points
- Summarize text
- Comprehend text
- Identify supporting details

***What are “supporting details” and how are they taught in general education settings?***

The supporting details of informational text are information that help to clarify the readers’ understanding of the most important points that the author is trying to make about a specific subject. Identifying and categorizing main ideas within informational text is critical to successful readers. You support your main idea by explaining it, describing it, defining it, or otherwise giving information about it.

**Common misunderstandings**

- Not all information in text is considered supporting details. Authors sometimes provide additional details that are not essential to the understanding of the main idea.

**Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Determine the main ideas within a text
- Summarize text
- Comprehend text

***What is “inference” and how is it taught in general education settings?***

Inference is using the information gained from the text along with background knowledge to figure out something that the author doesn’t explicitly share. Making inferences significantly boosts comprehension as it makes the reader draw on prior knowledge and make personal connections for greater recall.

**Common misunderstandings**

Often, being taught how to make inferences is overlooked and thought to be implicitly learned. Also, we often assume as teachers that all students have the



same or similar prior knowledge; we must be diligent to provide examples and background understanding.

**Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Identify clues given that help the reader determine an idea/theme/conclusion that is not explicitly stated
- Comprehend text

***What is “summarizing” and how is it taught in general education settings?***

Summarizing involves determining the essential information within a text and putting the big ideas or most important concepts of a text into one’s own words. Summarizing is an important skill because it helps students remember what they have read.

**Common misunderstandings**

- Teachers sometimes mistakenly believe that students have the ability to determine what is essential within a text. Often this requires explicit teaching for students to learn this skill.

**Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Comprehend text
- Determine main ideas

## **1b. Craft and Structure**

***What is “text structure” and how is it taught in general education settings?***

Text structure refers to how an author has organized the information presented in his/her text. Understanding the various ways content area texts are organized and written is essential for students to be able to readily identify key concepts and relationships, anticipate what’s to come, and be able check their comprehension as they read.

Types of Text Structure used in Informational Texts:

1. Description: a detailed description of something to give the reader a mental picture
2. Sequence: gives readers a chronology of events or a list of steps in a procedure
3. Problem and Solution: sets up a problem or problems, explains the solution, and then discusses the effects of the solution

4. Cause and Effect: presents the causal relationship between a specific event, idea, or concept and the events, ideas, or concept that follow
5. Compare and Contrast: examines the similarities and differences between two or more people, events, concepts, ideas, etc.

### **Common misunderstandings**

Text structure is often part of reading instruction that teachers presume their students will inherently learn. Believing that students will come to understand and identify text structure through exposure alone to informational text is a misconception. Explicit text structure instruction and activities can be incorporated into teaching literacy and substantially help students with organizing their thoughts and increasing their comprehension. It is also important that students learn when and how to choose appropriate flow charts and organizers to match the text structure they are currently reading.

### **Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

#### ***In general education, the student typically will need to know:***

- Identify signal words that indicate which text structure is being used (e.g., first, next, then, last, because, alike, differ, etc.)
- Comprehend text

### ***What are “text features” and how is it taught in general education settings?***

Text features are various ways of manipulating and placing text to draw attention to or emphasize certain points or ideas (e.g., bolding or boxing questions, italicizing key vocabulary, listing, bulleting, numbering). Understanding how to navigate through informational text, quickly find key concepts, identify what the author feels is most important are all essential to effective readers.

Some of the most important text features include:

1. Title
2. Table of Contents
3. Photos
4. Captions
5. Diagrams
6. Headings
7. Sub-titles
8. Bold Print
9. Date Line
10. Glossary
11. Index

## **Common misunderstandings**

Not all highlighted, italicized or bolded words need to have explicit instruction. The reader may already know some of these words. In addition, some of these words may appear in the text infrequently. Teachers need to be selective when choosing which words to explicitly teach, making sure that they are important words that will likely appear again later in the text.

## **Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Comprehend text
- Scanning the text for key words the author believes are most important
- Using the glossary, table of contents and index to find specific information without reading entire sections
- Understanding that captions are important to extended understanding of photos, diagrams, etc.

## **1c. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

***What is “gaining information from visuals” and how is it taught in general education?***

Visuals used in informational text may include charts, graphs, tables, timelines, or diagrams.

### **Common misunderstandings**

Teacher may overlook visual in instruction. Remember that comprehension can be supported by visuals, explicitly teach ways that visuals support reader understanding of text rather than being superfluous to the content.

### **Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Differentiate between text features
- Gain meaning from images

***What are “fact and opinion” and how are they taught in general education settings?***

Fact versus opinion is a concept that is generally taught and supports student’s ability to determine what can be supported by facts and evidence and what is simply based on personal opinion. Understanding fact and opinion is essential for a reader’s comprehension of informational text. A fact is an objective piece of information that can be verified and is usually expressed by numbers or quantities,

weights or measures, and in concrete language. An opinion is a subjective piece of information that is primarily based on an individual's values and perspectives.

### **Common misunderstandings**

Simply because many people believe in something, does not necessarily make it a fact; it only means that a lot of people share a common opinion although opinions can be based on fact.

### **Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Recognize key words and phrases for fact such as: according to, it has been proven
- Recognize key words and phrases for opinion such as: may have, it is believed, appears, seems like

## **2. What are some of the types of activities general educators will use to teach this skill?**

### **2.1 Activities from General Education Resources**

#### **Determining main idea**

- Read text in segments, stopping to allow students to identify the main idea. Use a graphic organizer to list main ideas and details. Full lesson plan available at <http://betterlesson.com/lesson/33460/main-idea-strategies>
- After reading informational text, present students with three sentences. Ask students to select the sentence that gives the main idea.

#### **Selecting supporting details**

- **Reading Guides.** The teacher determines the major ideas from a book and then writes questions or statements designed to guide readers through the major ideas and supporting details of the text. Guides may be phrased as statements or as questions. Initially, teachers and students work together to respond to statements or questions on the reading guides during the reading process. Teachers should monitor and support students as they work. As students gain proficiency at completing reading guides, they may design their own guides and provide support for one another. More information on guides can be found at: [http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reading\\_guide/](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reading_guide/)

#### **Making inferences**

- **Two-Column Notes.** T-notes provide students with a means of citing evidence/taking notes while listening or reading. T-notes are generally created by dividing a sheet of notebook paper in half. While listening or reading, students record evidence (e.g., record facts from the text that the author provides) in the right column. Students use the left column to make inferences, ask questions, or draw pictures to clarify their evidence. See *freeology* and *reading lady* graphic organizers (Sanda, Havens, & Maycumber, 1988).

## Summarizing

- **Summarizing and Note-taking** Students must possess the ability to synthesize information in order to summarize and take notes. Details will help tell you about the main idea (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Students should be reminded not to confuse a text detail with the main idea.
  1. During the oral reading, model using think-aloud multiple times. Include statements such as: “This detail tells me...” “The text is mostly about...” “This is a very important detail...” “This passage talks about...”
  2. Post at least four sentences that all students can see. Use a think-aloud approach with the students and explain why the central ideas are central and why the others are details. It is important for students to hear your thinking.
  3. Explain why finding the central idea is an important skill. Show students how to record the main idea/details in a graphic organizer.
  4. Model and practice in small groups numerous times before students try it independently.
  5. There are a variety of graphic organizers that can work for this skill depending on the length of the text.

## Identifying text structure

- **Text Structures.** Discuss how writers use text structures to organize information. Introduce students to the different types of text structures in the following order: description, sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect, and compare and contrast. As students encounter different texts, note the signal words that accompany the different structure. Teach and model the use of graphic organizers that go with each text structure. To practice identifying different text structures, have a Treasure Hunt with a newspaper, magazine, nonfiction book or textbook chapter (Dymock, 2005).

## Using visuals to gain information

- **THIEVES.** THIEVES stands for *t*itle, *h*eadings, *i*ntroduction, *e*very first sentence in a paragraph, *v*isuals and vocabulary, *e*nd-of-chapter questions, and *s*ummary. The teacher guides students through a preview of a nonfiction text. Then, partners work together to use the strategy to preview a chapter from a textbook. Students discuss what information they “stole” from the chapter. They also discuss how the strategy was useful and allowed for better understanding of a text by looking at different formats (e.g., text vs. graphs/tables/charts) (Manz, 2002). More information can be found at:  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson112/elements.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson112/elements.pdf)

## Distinguishing fact and claim

- **Discussion Web.** This strategy helps students visualize the important points of an issue and quickly identify opposing points of view on the subject. The teacher selects a reading that elicits clearly defined opposing viewpoints. The reading is passed out or read aloud. A graphic organizer can be used by the student/small

group to identify the main question of the text. The student/small group will note the pros/cons from the reading on the graphic organizer; as they will also list their final conclusion. Conclusions will also be placed on index cards. Cards will be collected and the results will be tallied. Results should be shared with the class; then list the most common pro and con reasons for these decisions (Alvermann, 1991).

## **2.2 Links Across Content Areas**

- Reading for information is important in language arts, but equally important in all curricular areas. Once a student learns how to read, organize, understand and collect valuable information from reading text, those skills can then be utilized in all subject areas. It is important that teachers in all of the content areas to support the ideas and skills taught in this module. It will increase the student's ability to quickly find necessary information within any text to be a successful learner.










## **3. What Connectors to the Common Core Standards Are Addressed in Teaching “Reading Informational Texts”?**

- The Core Content Connectors (CCC) are categorized into four strands: Reading at the Word Level, Habits and Dispositions, Reading Literary Texts, and Reading Informational Text. Each strand provides the CCC as well as the aligned grade-specific CCSS.
- CCCs relevant to this curriculum resource guide can be found in the Reading Informational Text strand.
- These CCCs can be accessed via the NCSC WIKI at [https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/mediawiki/index.php/Curriculum\\_Resources#Content\\_Modules](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/mediawiki/index.php/Curriculum_Resources#Content_Modules)

**Performance Examples for Priority CCCs**

Grade 4

CCC	Performance Example	Essential Understandings								
<p>4.RI.h4 Use information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) to answer questions.</p>	<p>A) The county fair is coming to town soon. Many students have a favorite ride at the fair. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at Star Elementary School asked each fourth grader what their favorite ride was. Use the graph below to decide which ride most of the fourth graders said was their favorite.</p> <div data-bbox="430 435 1176 782" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <caption>Favorite Rides at Star Elementary School</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Ride</th> <th>Number of Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>race cars</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ferris wheel</td> <td>70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>merry go round</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>B) The favorite ride among 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Star Elementary school was:</p> <div data-bbox="430 922 1402 1188" data-label="Image"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="457 927 726 1130"> <p>Race cars</p> </div> <div data-bbox="768 927 1066 1149"> <p>Ferris Wheel</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1094 927 1388 1138"> <p>Merry Go Round</p> </div> </div> </div>	Ride	Number of Students	race cars	10	ferris wheel	70	merry go round	20	<p>EU: Distinguish between text and illustration (e.g., map, photograph, graphic).          THEN          Identify basic text features (e.g., charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, maps).          THEN          Locate information within a simplified chart, map or graph.          THEN          Identify which source (visual or text) provides given information.          THEN          Recall information from a text feature (e.g. map, photograph, graph).          THEN          Explain the purpose of a given chart, map or graph.          THEN          Describe the purpose of a specified aspect within a chart, map or graph.</p>
Ride	Number of Students									
race cars	10									
ferris wheel	70									
merry go round	20									

Grade 6								
CCC	Performance Example	Essential Understandings						
8.RI.k4 Identify an argument or claim that the author makes.	<p>A) Flying Kites People love to fly kites. It is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. In the USA alone, there are over 50 million kites sold every year. While you can fly a kite in almost any season, fall is the best season for kite flying.</p> <p>B) Answers</p> <p>Which of these sentences is a claim that the author makes?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="348 521 711 922">  </td> <td data-bbox="716 521 1079 922">  </td> <td data-bbox="1083 521 1503 922">  </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="348 925 711 1167"> <p>While you can fly a kite in almost any season, fall is the best season for kite flying.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="716 925 1079 1167"> <p>In the USA alone, there are over 50 million kites sold every year.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1083 925 1503 1167"> <p>It is one of the fastest growing sports in the world.</p> </td> </tr> </table>				<p>While you can fly a kite in almost any season, fall is the best season for kite flying.</p>	<p>In the USA alone, there are over 50 million kites sold every year.</p>	<p>It is one of the fastest growing sports in the world.</p>	<p>EU: Identify a fact from the text. THEN Identify a claim from the text. THEN Differentiate a fact vs. a claim.</p>
								
<p>While you can fly a kite in almost any season, fall is the best season for kite flying.</p>	<p>In the USA alone, there are over 50 million kites sold every year.</p>	<p>It is one of the fastest growing sports in the world.</p>						
<p>*Kite facts obtained from <a href="http://www.kiteman.co.uk/DidYouKnow.html">http://www.kiteman.co.uk/DidYouKnow.html</a></p>								



Grade 11-12					
CCC	Performance Example	Essential Understandings			
<p>1112.RI.b2 Determine which piece(s) of evidence provide the strongest support for inferences, conclusions, or summaries of text.</p>	<p>A) Listen to this passage. After I read the passage you will select the best summary.</p> <p><b>How Does Infrastructure Help a City Run Smoothly</b></p> <p><b>The Transportation System</b> Cities depend on <b>transportation systems</b> <i>because</i> people need to travel from one place to another. The transportation system includes roads, bridges, trains, and in some cities subways. We can see the transportation system as we move through a city. The Brooklyn Bridge in New York City was once called the eighth wonder of the world.</p> <p><b>The Water System</b> The <b>water system</b> is important to a city <i>because</i> people depend on water to drink, cook, and clean. Many parts of the water system are underground and not visible to the people living in the city. The water is kept clean by treatment plants.</p> <p><b>The Communication System</b> Cities must have an effective <b>communication system</b> <i>because</i> many people work in the city. They depend on things like phones, computers and fax machines in order to do their jobs. Communication systems are operated through cables that are usually buried underground. Also, satellites that are hundreds of miles overhead allow people to use the internet.</p> <p><b>The Power System</b> Possibly the most important part of a city's infrastructure is the <b>power system</b>. The power system is important <i>because</i> all of the systems mentioned above require power. Without power traffic lights could not work; treatment plants could not make the water safe to drink. People could not operate appliances, turn on lights or watch TV. We get power from power plants. Sometimes we can see wires and cables that provide power along the sides of the streets on poles.</p> <p>B)Answers Which is the best summary</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="373 1138 1451 1442"> <tr> <td data-bbox="373 1138 730 1442">A city has important infrastructure systems such as the transportation system, the water system, the communication system, and the power system. These systems help the city run smoothly.</td> <td data-bbox="730 1138 1087 1442">The power system is the most important system. It is important because so many people depend on power. They need to watch TV and turn their lights on.</td> <td data-bbox="1087 1138 1451 1442">A city depends on many things to run smoothly. It depends on infrastructure. It also depends on the people who live there and pay taxes. Cities depend on special attractions, for example Disney World.</td> </tr> </table>	A city has important infrastructure systems such as the transportation system, the water system, the communication system, and the power system. These systems help the city run smoothly.	The power system is the most important system. It is important because so many people depend on power. They need to watch TV and turn their lights on.	A city depends on many things to run smoothly. It depends on infrastructure. It also depends on the people who live there and pay taxes. Cities depend on special attractions, for example Disney World.	<p>EU: Make an inference from an informational text. THEN Identify a conclusion from an informational text. THEN Identify a summary from an informational text. THEN Identify details to support the inference, conclusion, or summary.</p>
A city has important infrastructure systems such as the transportation system, the water system, the communication system, and the power system. These systems help the city run smoothly.	The power system is the most important system. It is important because so many people depend on power. They need to watch TV and turn their lights on.	A city depends on many things to run smoothly. It depends on infrastructure. It also depends on the people who live there and pay taxes. Cities depend on special attractions, for example Disney World.			

## 4. What Are Some Additional Activities That Can Promote Use of these Academic Concepts in Real World Contexts?

- Conduct research in order to make informed decisions regarding what jobs or colleges to apply for.
- Read and review tips for better interviews at: <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewsnetworking/a/teeninterview.htm> then practice interviewing.
- Review samples of resumes; begin resume building.
- Apply an understanding of text structure, especially cause/effect or problem/solution to current events articles. Discuss the issues. Generalize issues to local issues or aspects of daily life.
- Summarize real life activities or events using main idea/supporting details.
- Draw connections from informational text to real world current events. This allows the student to see the word used without the context of the book or text. This supports students understanding of the relevance of content and will increase engagement.
- Apply an understanding of text features when using the Internet.
- Use informational texts to promote good citizenship (e.g., choosing to recycle based on evidence that it is good for the environment).
- Use knowledge of current events, world wide (e.g., state of the economy, price of new shoes) or local (e.g., stats from the last football game), to facilitate relationships with typically developing peers.
- Apply the ability to evaluate evidence and distinguish fact from claim to daily lives (e.g., determine where you stand on gun control, decide whether or not it makes sense to purchase organic fruits and vegetables).
- Increase vocabulary and contextual understanding by grouping according to real world context: countries, activities, cleaning, cooking, and conversations. Use newly acquired vocabulary in relevant activities (e.g., vocabulary needed for successful job interview: professional, resume, references, etc.; develop an understanding of the vocabulary while conducting mock interviews in the classroom).

## 5. How Can I Further Promote College and Career Readiness when Teaching “Reading Informational Texts”?

### Ideas for Promoting Career/ College Ready Outcomes

Communicative competence: Skills related to increasing overall communicative competence include an increase in the student’s vocabulary that is relevant to daily life. Students may express opinions and back up opinions with facts or evidence. Students may increase their ability to communicate factual information (e.g., personal information, community information). Through instruction that focuses on informational text, students develop an ability to understand and utilize information presented in various formats.

Fluency in reading, writing, and math: When students are provided with repeated exposure to informational text they may demonstrate increased fluency in reading writing and math. Students are presented with opportunities to comprehend information presented via text, text read aloud, via media, or via a speaker. Students may demonstrate increased fluency in math with increased opportunities to comprehend information presented visually such as in charts, graphs, or diagrams. For students who cannot read the text fluently, the ability to utilize text features enables these students to gain the most important information.

Age appropriate social skills: There are many age appropriate social skills to be gained via instruction using informational text, especially for older students. Students increase their self-advocacy and self determination skills by recognizing persuasion, and fact/opinion. Reciprocal communication may be enhanced by knowledge and understanding of world events/global awareness. Appropriate social skills are often the topic of information text at all ages. For example at the elementary level students learn appropriate behavior from books such as *Time to Say Please* by Mo Willems. For older students appropriate social skills can be gained from books such as *How Rude!: The Teenagers' Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out* by Alex J. Packer.

Independent work behaviors: Student's independent work behaviors may be enhanced by students increased abilities to: read independently, answer factual questions and provide information, both personal and work related. Most jobs require students to follow a sequence of steps. In addition, students can increase their independent work behaviors and increase successfulness by using graphic organizers to compartmentalize work task.

Skills in accessing support systems: Reading informational texts, regardless of how it is presented may help develop problem solving skills as often identifying a problem and finding a solution is modeled within the text. When students are able to use a search engine to find information, they can often find ideas or suggestions regarding support systems (e.g., a student can use the internet to learn how to take the city bus).

## **6. How Do I Make Instruction on “Reading Informational Texts” Accessible to ALL the Students I Teach?**

**6.1 Teach Prerequisites Concurrently While Teaching Skills Related to Reading Informational Texts: Remember that students can continue to learn basic literacy skills in the context of this grade level content.**

Basic literacy skills that can be worked on as a part of a lesson relating to informational text:

- Answering literal recall questions
- Making inferences that are relevant and meaningful, possible not related to written text
- Determining the main idea or the most important events in a personally relevant stories (e.g., auto-biographies)
- Differentiating between nonfiction and fiction texts

- Identifying author's purpose
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Using visual cues to find important information (e.g., highlighting or added visuals)

## 6.2 Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in planning, and provide for additional Differentiated Instruction when Teaching Reading Informational Texts

Some examples of options for teaching vocabulary and acquisition skills to students who may present instructional challenges due to:

	<b>Sensory Differences such as Blindness, Visual Impairment, Deafness, or Deaf/Blindness</b>	<b>Physical Disability or Motor Differences (such as weakness or motor planning difficulty)</b>	<b>Extremely limited evidence of experience/skill or motivation/attention</b>	<b>Limited or no speech</b>
<b>Representation</b>	Use a talking device such as an avatar; use large print text, raised text or Braille; use objects and images to represent vocabulary words and answers to questions; use online dictionaries that will pronounce the words and read the definitions aloud; use matching picture cards with words and their meanings; add sound effects when appropriate (e.g., sound of a whale, busy city streets, a tornado); preteach basic concepts of a topic using objects; color photos related to topics; Smartboard can be used during instruction.	Student scans an array of possible options and uses a switch to select the correct vocabulary word or answer to questions; use computer representation of word meanings that can be manipulated with switch; place response options on a slant board or eye gaze board; create a vocabulary matching exercise in the classroom that the student can walk or ride on in wheelchair to find the matching words and meanings (this can include picture clues or objects).	Use motivating objects (e.g., pizza, coloring markers in a box, piece of a Lego set) to incorporate key vocabulary and details from text; incorporate technology including computer representations, videos, animations, and talking avatar; allow students to self-select topics for study; use You Tube that is related to instruction; Smartboard can be used during instruction.	Have student use online dictionary to pronounce and define words; use online visual dictionary to increase vocabulary; students can use one to one correspondence to match words or objects with definitions; preteach vocabulary using AAC devices; highlight vocabulary words within the context of the print, keep to one vocabulary word per page and keep an AAC device with matching word with the text; use an iPad during instruction. *Suggestions from other columns may be applicable here.

	<b>Sensory Differences such as Blindness, Visual Impairment, Deafness, or Deaf/Blindness</b>	<b>Physical Disability or Motor Differences (such as weakness or motor planning difficulty)</b>	<b>Extremely limited evidence of experience/skill or motivation/attention</b>	<b>Limited or no speech</b>
<b>Expression</b>	Student states answer; use voice output devices for student to select the correct answer; teach tangible symbols to represent vocabulary; incorporate vocabulary into comprehension questions.	Provide AAC devices to indicate correct answers, devices can be positioned using universal mounts that will allow students to press a switch with whatever part of their body that they have independent control of (e.g., hand, knee, head...); provide an eye gaze board to select answers; use a blink response to count parts or select answers; phrase questions so that they require a “yes/no” response and can easily be answered using an eye gaze, head turn, two switches, etc.; accept any meaningful and purposeful motion to indicate a response.	Have students express word meanings or answers to questions with images, drawing, interactive computer programs, etc.; provide options for topics or response options for questions on a Smartboard or iPad; use a computer for typing resume or personal information; find topic related information in magazines or on internet; selection of correct answer is done after a model.	Consistent opportunities to use AAC devices; student selects vocabulary words or meanings versus orally stating them; student answers “yes/no” questions using AAC devices or eyegaze board or iPad. *Suggestions from other columns may be applicable here.

	<b>Sensory Differences such as Blindness, Visual Impairment, Deafness, or Deaf/Blindness</b>	<b>Physical Disability or Motor Differences (such as weakness or motor planning difficulty)</b>	<b>Extremely limited evidence of experience/skill or motivation/attention</b>	<b>Limited or no speech</b>
<b>Engagement</b>	Teach students to use their hands to scan the raised outline photos; use items that are familiar and reinforcing to students; color photos or objects related to topics can be used; create activities that are multi-sensory in nature engage more than one sense at a time (e.g., when reading about growing vegetables, smell and taste the vegetables that you are reading about); Smartboard can be used during instruction if student has functional vision.	Use bright colors to call attention to vocabulary words used in informational topics; use a computer with assistive technology device where the student can click to answer; use response cards that are large enough to accommodate the movements that the student is able to make; pair student with another student without a physical impairment and have them work together to create word and meaning matches.	Create games in which students interact with partners to determine word meanings for the informational topic (i.e., word matching game like Memory); Smartboard or iPad, or You Tube can be used during instruction; use computers during instruction and for independent practice; pair student with a typical student for activities; have topic related objects on hand for students to interact with (e.g., a kite when reading about the Wright Brothers); plan activities that are physically engaging (e.g., have a giant map of the US, ask individual students to go and stand on a named state.	Consistent opportunities to use AAC devices; student uses online dictionaries that pronounce the words and read the definitions. Smartboard or iPad, or You Tube can be used during instruction. *Suggestions from other columns may be applicable here.

## 7. Where Can I Get More Information on the topics covered in this Curriculum Resource Guide?

### 7.1 Content Modules

- There are relevant content modules on: Text Structure, Summarizing, Author’s Purpose, Main Idea and Theme, Vocabulary and Acquisition, Persuasive Writing, Narrative Writing, and Informational Writing. These content modules can be accessed at:  
[https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/mediawiki/index.php/Curriculum\\_Resources#Content\\_Modules](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/mediawiki/index.php/Curriculum_Resources#Content_Modules)

### 7.2 Additional Resources

- The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects  
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

- The National Council of Teachers of English  
<http://www.ncte.org/standards/common-core>
  - Offers books, online learning, articles, lesson plans and more
- International Reading Association  
<http://www.reading.org/resources/ResourcesByTopic/CommonCore-resourcetype/CommonCore-rt-resources.aspx>
  - Provides online articles and blogs that are free to access



- A variety of resources to meet the diverse needs of people with disabilities:  
<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/web-resource-directory/>
- Common Core teaching and learning strategies. This resource provides strategies and formative assessment suggestions for each CCSS standards. It is also hyperlinked to additional resources.  
[http://www.isbe.net/common\\_core/htmls/resources.htm](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/htmls/resources.htm)
- A great website with worksheets and graphic organizers:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/>
- PowerPoint on informational text features:  
<http://languageartsvmsa.wikispaces.com/file/view/Text+Features+Powerpoint.pdf>
- PowerPoint on teaching text structure:  
<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCwQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sandi.net%2Fcms%2Flib%2FCA01001235%2FCentricity%2FModuleInstance%2F45680%2FteachingTextStructure.ppt&ei=gzYqUpq8J-fU2AWUpoCABw&usq=AFQjCNFUYqG8BBctll-2PGbB1vMjatvaKA&sig2=hEpjZKp5tqqwByOpcYCOkw>

## References

- Alvermann, D.E. (1991). The discussion web: A graphic aid for learning across the curriculum. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(2), 92-99.
- Dymock, S. (2005). Teaching expository text structure awareness. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(2), 177-181.
- Marzano, R.J., Pickering, D.J., & Pollock, J.E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Manz, S.L. (2002). A strategy for previewing textbooks: Teaching readers to become THIEVES. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 434-435.
- Weber, E.M., Nelson, B.A., & Schofield, C.L. (2012). *Guided highlighted reading*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Publishing Inc.
- Sanda, C.M., Havens, L.T., & Maycumber, E.M. (1988). *Project CRISS— Creating independence through student-owned strategies*. Kalispell, MT: Kendall/Hunt.