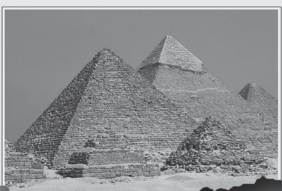


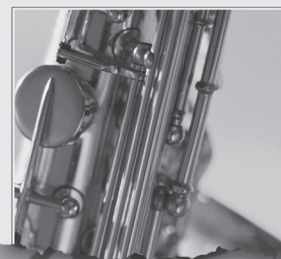
Improving Comprehension With Newspapers

2007 NIE Week Teacher's Guide: Now I Get It!

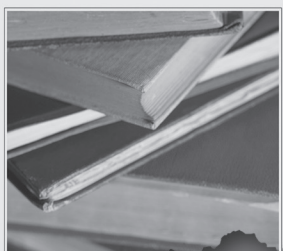
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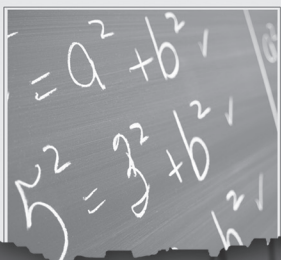
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Now I Get It!
Improving Comprehension With Newspapers

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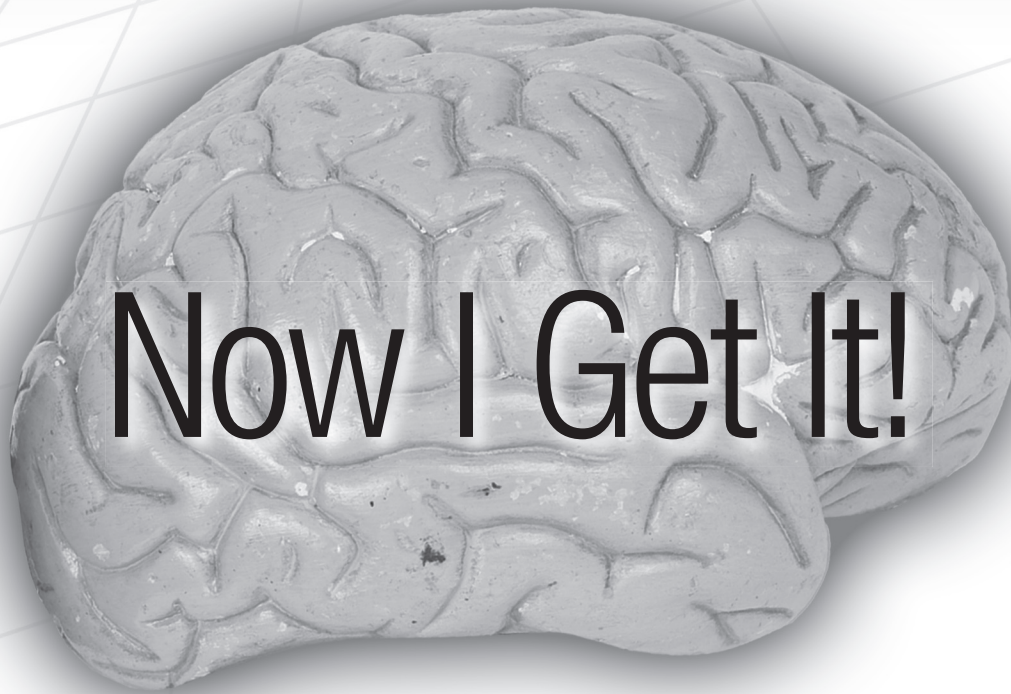
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2007 NIE Week Teacher's Guide



Now I Get It!

IMPROVING COMPREHENSION WITH NEWSPAPERS



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About NIE Week

NIE Week 2007 Sponsors

Newspaper In Education Week is a joint program of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation and the International Reading Association funded by Abitibi Consolidated. It is observed during the first full school week of March; in 2007, NIE Week takes place March 5 through 9. The goal of NIE Week is to reinforce a positive and relevant lifetime reading habit in students by engaging them with an authentic text – the newspaper.

About the Organizations

Newspaper Association of America Foundation

The Newspaper Association of America Foundation strives to develop engaged and literate citizens in our diverse society through investment in and support of programs designed to enhance student achievement through newspaper readership and appreciation of the First Amendment.

The Foundation's programs and products emphasize the use of newspapers and other media by young people. Foundation support is concentrated in three primary focus areas:

Newspaper In Education (NIE) – The Foundation maintains a nationwide system of cooperation between newspapers and schools designed to enhance student achievement and appreciation of the First Amendment in a variety of subject areas through the use of newspapers and other media. The Foundation provides resources and training on using newspapers in schools and helps newspapers develop strategic plans for providing NIE services to educators.

Youth Content – The Foundation supports the Youth Editorial Alliance, a nationwide coalition of newspapers dedicated to advocating the value of content targeted toward youth.

The Foundation provides resources and training in the development of youth content in newspapers; serves as a clearinghouse for youth readership initiatives; and helps newspapers plan and evaluate youth features and content.

Student Newspapers – The Foundation encourages collaboration between newspapers and schools to support student-produced media. The Foundation works with scholastic media associations nationwide to provide training and resources, with an emphasis on enhancing appreciation of the First Amendment.

The NAA 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 classroom teachers, reading specialists, librarians, university professors, administrators, researchers, psychologists and others who are interested in promoting reading and improved reading instruction. The IRA serves as an advocate and leader in the 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.

Additional information about NIE Week programs is available from the sponsoring organizations:

Newspaper Association of America Foundation

1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600
Vienna, VA 22182
(703) 902-1726

After January 2007:

4401 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22203
(571) 366-1007
www.naafoundation.org

International Reading Association

P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714
(302) 731-1600
www.ira.org

To the Teacher

This guide provides a variety of lessons and activities to help students develop their comprehension skills. It also includes information about current comprehension skills research and national standards for reading comprehension. The material is appropriate for students in both middle school and high school. Special activities are included for elementary students.

Lesson Plans

There are 12 lesson plans, each with accompanying student activity sheets. The lessons contain background and instructions, and have the following components.

- ✎ **Newspaper Focus** – The newspaper genres used in the lesson are clearly identified. Many lessons refer to “news stories” and “feature stories.” The variety of topics students can read about is almost limitless. There are news stories about international, national, state and local events. There are news stories in the business section, the arts section and the sports section. There are also feature stories throughout the newspaper. When selecting stories for your students, you can choose ones that relate to their experiences and interests. Be sure to let them sample stories from different sections of the newspaper.
- ✎ **Background** – This section provides the overview and rationale for the lesson.
- ✎ **Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson** – This section provides suggestions to help students activate prior knowledge that will help them make connections to the lesson.
- ✎ **During Reading: Direct Instruction** – This section provides step-by-step suggestions to help students understand the concepts of the lesson, and directs their learning activity.
- ✎ **After Reading: Reflect and Review** – This section provides suggestions for helping students bring closure to the lesson.
- ✎ **Performance Rubric** – This rubric allows you to evaluate students’ performance on the activity in the lesson. It has three levels: *exceeds expectations*, *meets expectations* and *revisit*.

Primary Student Pages

This section contains 12 primary-level activity pages for younger students. The activity pages parallel the lesson plans and activities in the guide.

Think-Alouds and Modeling Activities in the Lessons

It is important for students to hear text being read aloud by a skilled reader. They need to experience what good reading sounds like. It also enables them to concentrate on the meaning of the text while they are listening. Use this sequence as you demonstrate *think-alouds* and *modeling* strategies.

- 1) 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 story might be about.
- 2) Read the first sentence of the story. Talk about whether your ideas were correct. Make a statement about what you think the rest of the story will be about.
- 3) Read the story aloud. Talk about whether your ideas were correct.
- 4) Explain that when we read, we are always thinking about what might come next. As we read, we must check to find out if we are correct. Model think-alouds with students regularly so that they can become familiar with the process.

Comprehension Today

Reading comprehension is receiving renewed and well-deserved attention among literacy professionals. While comprehension – making meaning of text – has long been the stated goal of literacy instruction, it has not been researched or studied to the same extent as more discrete reading skills, such as phonemic awareness and phonics.

Comprehension and the National Reading Panel – This refocusing on comprehension is primarily the result of two national, large-scale efforts. The first was the work of the National Reading Panel (NRP), a congressionally-mandated project to evaluate research-based knowledge of the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. The panel was established in 1997 and its report was issued in 2000.

The panel's findings focused on five areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Virtually all commercial reading programs are now organized around these five areas. While the NRP recognized the importance of comprehension instruction, it also found that much more research was needed in this area. A limited number of comprehension studies met the necessary criteria for inclusion in NRP analysis. The panel did, however, identify a few general findings:

- Specific strategy instruction can help students learn to monitor their comprehension and understanding;
- Explicit instruction in comprehension can be effective, especially with lower-performing students;
- Teaching students to identify the text structure of different content areas and genres can be beneficial; and
- The role of vocabulary instruction in enhancing comprehension is complex.

The RAND Reading Study Group – The lack of comprehension studies led to the establishment of the RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG) in 2001. The RRSG developed a

framework to look at comprehension: a triangular relationship between the reader, the text and the activity, all of which are influenced by the context of the reading situation.

In discussing the reading triangle, literacy educators explain that the reader, text and activity are interrelated dynamically and change across time.

- ☞ The **reader** comes to the reading task with certain cognitive, motivational, linguistic and nonlinguistic capabilities. The reader comprehends text by acquiring, confirming and creating meaning.
- ☞ The **text** varies in elements such as content, vocabulary load, discourse style and genre.
- ☞ The reading **activity** may have an external or internal purpose. The reader-text-activity paradigm takes place within the context of social interaction and instruction.

Other literacy specialists, writing about best practices in comprehension, identify specific comprehension *processes* that students need to acquire: prediction, questioning, imagery, relating to prior knowledge, monitoring reading, seeking clarification, and summarizing. Literacy specialists note that students need strategies for both narrative and informational text, and teachers should provide direct explanation and modeling of specific strategies.

The relationship between vocabulary and comprehension continues to be explored. The National Reading Panel found that direct, explicit instruction in vocabulary improves both vocabulary and comprehension. Vocabulary should be taught in a rich context with the active engagement of the learner.

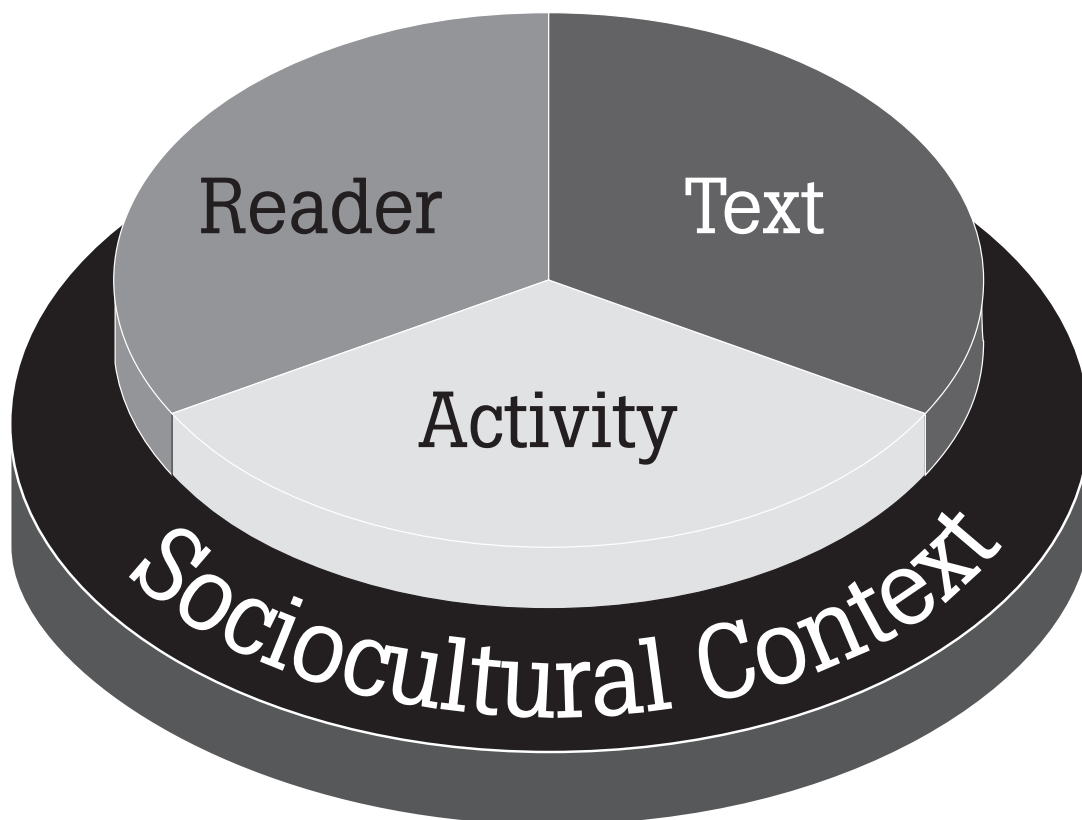
What Does This Mean for NIE?

The value of the newspaper as an effective instructional tool to help students develop comprehension skills can be explained in the reader-text-activity paradigm.

- ☞ The reader is already familiar with the content of the newspaper because it references local people, places and events.
- ☞ The newspaper contains both linguistic and nonlinguistic texts to inform the reader.
- ☞ The newspaper includes a variety of genres, discourse structures and visual elements.
- ☞ Reading activities that use the newspaper encourage thinking at many different cognitive levels.
- ☞ The sociocultural context of the newspaper is familiar because it reflects the reader's daily life and experiences, and serves the reader's needs. Therefore, the newspaper is a highly motivational text.

The Reading Triangle

The most current research in reading comprehension is being analyzed and conducted using a three-part model: the *reader*, the *text* and the *activity*. All three elements must be evaluated within the *sociocultural context* of the reading task. The interaction among these elements determines comprehension. It is helpful for teachers to understand and evaluate their students' reading performance in terms of this three-part model. That way, if students are having difficulty comprehending, teachers may be able to identify the source of the problem.



What Do These Elements Represent?

Reader – What the reader comprehends depends upon many variables, such as memory, critical thinking skills, ability to attend, visualization ability, motivation and experience. Students' knowledge of language and text structure affects the effectiveness of their reading. Students' previous instructional experiences, skills and strategies also influence comprehension.

Text – The nature of the text to be read influences students' comprehension. Some texts are clearly written and generally easy to understand. Others are poorly written and confusing. Some texts contain many specialized or technical vocabulary words. Some pack many new concepts into a few sentences. Narrative text follows one organizational pattern, while expository text may be presented in a variety of patterns, such as cause/effect, problem/solution, process/sequence and category/examples. Text structures that are unfamiliar to students are much more difficult for them to comprehend.

Activity – The type of reading task affects students' ability to comprehend. Do students understand the purpose for which they are reading: skimming to get a general idea, or study-reading to remember as much as possible? Do students read to find information to solve a problem, or to acquire information? Or do they read for pleasure and enjoyment?

Sociocultural Context – What are students' personal, social and cultural experiences? Do they live in a low-income area with few educational resources? Is their first or family language something other than English? What school experiences have they had – cooperative grouping or whole-class instruction? Are they familiar with technology? Are they in a school that places high expectations on their academic achievement and provides support for them to excel?

What Do These Elements Mean for Your Students and the Newspaper?

Reader – Newspaper activities build on students' knowledge and interests because newspaper content is about their community as well as events and people of interest to them. Newspaper activities can be used to help students develop better vocabulary and comprehension skills. Newspapers are highly motivational for young people because they are seen as an adult medium and include something of interest for a wide range of readers.

Text – Each newspaper section has its own text structures. News stories are different from feature stories, which are different from editorials and opinion columns. These structures

are predictable. When students become familiar with text structures, they will have better control over them and will find it easier to read the newspaper.

Activity – The activities in this teacher’s guide are focused on helping students improve their reading comprehension. The activities include teacher modeling and scaffolding of instruction. The teacher controls the difficulty of each activity through individual selection of newspaper texts to be used for each activity.

Sociocultural Context – The newspaper reflects the sociocultural world of the students and the school. Students will be able to see themselves, their families and their friends reflected in the stories, photos and features in the newspaper.

Comprehension and National Standards

Comprehension skills are included in a variety of national reading, language arts and media literacy standards. These same skills are reflected in the standards of individual states. The activities in this guide address the following national standards.

Standards for the English Language Arts

National Council for Teachers of English and International Reading Association

Reading for Perspective

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 workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Evaluation Strategies

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Communication Skills

Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Evaluating Data

Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Applying Language Skills

Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion and the exchange of information).

McRel Media Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

Students know the characteristics of a wide range of media.

Students understand the different purposes of various media (e.g., to provide entertainment or information, to persuade, to transmit culture, to focus attention on an issue).

Students understand how the type of media affects coverage of events or issues (e.g., how the same event is covered by radio, television and newspapers; how each medium shapes facts into a particular point of view; how limitations and advantages of various media types affect coverage of events).

Students understand the ways in which image-makers 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).

Students understand 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 sociocultural background of the target audience; financial factors such as sponsorship; cause-and-effect relationships between mass media coverage and public opinion trends).

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: **Understanding the Reader**

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background — Students have many different, unformed and incorrect perceptions about what it means to comprehend text. Many students think that they are supposed to soak up the information they encounter in their reading. They are unaware of the conscious activity that comprehension requires. Good readers make connections between what they already know and new information. The first activity, *Think About Yourself*, requires students to identify their familiarity level with the topics they will encounter in the newspaper. The second activity, *Think About the Newspaper*, has students anticipate where they can find different kinds of information in the newspaper.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to think about the expertise some of their classmates or family members have in different areas: sports, video games, rap groups, cooking, etc. Have them identify individuals they would go to if they had questions about those areas.
- 2) Have students discuss what those friends or family members have done to become knowledgeable (e.g., watch TV, look up information on the Internet, read magazines or newspapers, go to events, meet with others who have similar interests, etc.). Write their comments on the board and discuss.
- 3) Explain that their interest in and knowledge about different topics play an important part in their being able to understand what they read. The more they know about the topic, the more they will be able to understand what they read.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Hold up a newspaper and show students a news or feature story that is related to one of the areas the students discussed.

- 2) Ask students to name people who could read and understand that story easily. Guide the discussion so students identify the friends or family members they named in the introduction activity.
- 3) Ask students to explain why they think those people would have an easier time understanding the story. Guide the discussion to include knowledge of specific vocabulary words, individuals or concepts related to the topic because of the experiences these people have had.
- 4) Model how you read and understand a news story. Select a story about a topic that may be unfamiliar to students. Do a “think-aloud” to show how you make connections between your prior knowledge and experiences and the new information in the story.
- 5) Distribute the Lesson 1A activity sheet, *Think About Yourself*. Have students complete the sheet independently.
- 6) Have students share their responses. Ask a volunteer to identify one of his/her top seven areas of familiarity. Ask for a show of hands from those who identified the same area. Repeat the procedure several times.
- 7) Introduce students to the Lesson 1B activity sheet, *Think About the Newspaper*. Have them complete the sheet independently.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Do a quick “hands up” survey to see how many students selected news stories for one of their topics. Repeat the survey with the other newspaper sections identified on the Lesson 1B activity sheet: editorial/opinion, lifestyle/modern living, arts/entertainment, sports, and comics/puzzles. Ask if any other sections of the newspaper besides these were selected.
- 2) Discuss with students how their knowledge of the newspaper helped them find the information they wanted. Explain that the more familiar they are with the newspaper, the more efficiently they will be able to read it.
- 3) Discuss how each person may understand the same story differently because of past knowledge and experiences with the topic. Explain that reading the newspaper is a good way to learn about many different topics.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectation | Meets expectation | Revisit |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Identify seven areas of familiarity | | | |
| Identify appropriate newspaper sections related to areas of familiarity | | | |
| Indicate knowledge of newspaper organization | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 1A: Think About Yourself

You will be a better reader if you can make connections between what you already know and the new information you find in newspaper stories and features.

- ☞ Who you are plays an important part in how you understand what you read. What experiences have you had? What topics and activities interest you? What topics or subjects do you know about? What new and unfamiliar areas would you like to explore?
- ☞ Look at the list of topics in the chart below. Put a check mark in the column that tells how much you know about each topic.
- ☞ Finally, circle the seven topics that you know the most about. Share with classmates how you learned about those topics.

| Topic | Not very familiar | A little familiar | Very familiar |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. My community | | | |
| 2. My state | | | |
| 3. The country (nation) | | | |
| 4. Other countries | | | |
| 5. People in music, TV or movies | | | |
| 6. People in sports | | | |
| 7. People in politics and government | | | |
| 8. Local sports teams | | | |
| 9. Professional sports teams | | | |
| 10. The weather | | | |
| 11. Science and technology | | | |
| 12. Health and fitness | | | |
| 13. Getting along with others | | | |
| 14. Improving my life in some way | | | |
| 15. Video and computer games | | | |
| 16. Television programs and movies | | | |
| 17. Concerts and plays | | | |
| 18. Puzzles and games | | | |
| 19. Good prices on clothes, games, electronics, restaurants, etc. | | | |
| 20. Careers/part-time jobs | | | |
| 21. Other _____ | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 1B: Think About the Newspaper

You will discover that the newspaper has many kinds of information in it once you know how to find what you need in its different sections.

- ☞ Look at the topics you checked on the *Think About Yourself* activity sheet. Write your top seven topics in the first column below.
- ☞ Circle the newspaper section where you think you might find information about each of your topics.

| Your Top Topics | Newspaper Section Where do you think you could find information about your topic in the newspaper? <i>Circle your choices. You may choose more than one section.</i> | | | |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |
| 2. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |
| 3. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |
| 4. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |
| 5. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |
| 6. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |
| 7. | News | Editorial/Opinion | Lifestyle/ Modern Living | Arts/ Entertainment |
| | Sports | Comics/Puzzles | Other _____ | |

Lesson 2: Understanding the Newspaper

Newspaper Focus: Identifiable Sections (national, state and local news; lifestyle; business; arts and entertainment; sports; specific-topic sections such as science, food, travel, etc.).

Background — Your students will be somewhat familiar with the newspaper even if they have not studied it in class or if they don't read it on a regular basis. They may have a limited understanding of headlines and news stories, but they may be unaware of the depth and breadth of information available to readers in each day's newspaper. The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize students with the newspaper in preparation for the other lessons that follow. This activity has two parts. In the first, students will go on a scavenger hunt to find specific newspaper elements. In the second part of the activity, students will analyze elements they find in one section of the newspaper. They then will share their findings with the class.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to name some of the elements they would expect to find in the newspaper, such as headlines and stories. Accept students' responses.
- 2) Tell students that they are going to use the newspaper to improve their comprehension skills, but they first must become familiar with what is in the newspaper and how it is organized.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Identify several elements on a newspaper page: headline, news story, page heading, advertisement, and so on.
- 2) Tell students that you are going to challenge their knowledge of the newspaper by having them go on a scavenger hunt.
- 3) Assign students to groups. Distribute the Lesson 2A activity sheet, *Find These Newspaper Elements*. Instruct the groups to complete the assignment by labeling the elements in their newspapers with markers or sticky notes.
- 4) Review newspaper language with students as they share results of the scavenger hunt.
- 5) Direct students' attention to the elements they see on page one of the newspaper. Write their responses on the board. Explain that the newspaper has many different kinds of information – some is presented in words; some is presented visually in photos, illustrations, tables and graphs. Explain that their next task is to analyze their newspaper thoroughly.
- 6) Assign students to groups. Distribute the Lesson 2B activity sheet, *Analyze the Newspaper*. Give each group a specific section or pages to use in completing the activity sheet.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students share the results of their analysis. Guide the discussion to emphasize the elements that are predominant in different sections, such as tables and charts in the sports section, or illustrations in the lifestyle section.
- 2) Ask students to reflect on how the layout and elements of the newspaper help readers locate information easily.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Locate and identify newspaper elements | | | |
| Identify components in assigned newspaper section or pages | | | |
| Discuss benefits of newspaper sections and layout | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 2A: Find These Newspaper Elements

Here are some newspaper terms that will help you use the newspaper. Find an example of each element in your newspaper. Label each element with a sticky note or marker.

- 1) **Byline:** tells who wrote the story; may include the writer's title.
- 2) **Classified ad:** an ad that appears in the classified or "want ad" section of the newspaper.
- 3) **Column:** a vertical division of the layout that helps give structure to the pages. Newspaper stories and images are measured in column inches: the number of columns wide by the number of inches long.
- 4) **Cutline/caption:** explains what is happening in a photograph or illustration. The use of "cut" dates back to a time when images in the newspaper were printed from carved wood and etched metal. A cutline or caption sometimes may include a photo credit, the name of the person who took the picture.
- 5) **Dateline:** the location (and sometimes the date) from which a story was sent, usually given at the beginning of a story. The term was first used at a time when news often took days to reach a reader, so the date and location of the event were included in the story.
- 6) **Display ad:** an ad for a business or organization that appears on a newspaper page.
- 7) **Editorial:** a type of story on the editorial page that expresses an opinion of the newspaper and encourages the reader to take some action.
- 8) **Flag/logo:** the name of the newspaper as it appears at the top of page one.
- 9) **Folio line:** the date and page number that appears at the top of each newspaper page.
- 10) **Headline:** large type written and designed to summarize a story and get the reader's attention.
- 11) **Index:** tells the reader where regularly featured pages, such as sports, weather and local news, can be found.
- 12) **Jumpline:** the line that tells the reader on which page the story is continued.
- 13) **Lead:** the beginning of the story, which summarizes it and/or grabs the reader's attention.
- 14) **Masthead:** the formal statement of the newspaper's name, officers, management and place of publication. It usually appears on the editorial page.
- 15) **Wire story:** a story written by a reporter for a news service, such as The Associated Press or Reuters.

Student Activity Page 2B: Analyze the Newspaper

Good readers know about the different kinds of information that can be found in the newspaper.

- 🔍 Your group has been assigned a section or certain pages of the newspaper. Look at all the pages you have been assigned.
- 🔍 Record your findings on this sheet.
- 🔍 Be prepared to discuss what you found in your section or pages with the class.

| Exploration | Response |
|---|----------|
| 1. How many different pieces of information did you find in your pages? Include all stories, opinion or advice columns, tables or charts, graphs and ads. | |
| 2. How many ads were there? | |
| 3. How many photos were in your section or pages? | |
| 4. What did you find in the section or pages that you expected to find? | |
| 5. What did you find in the section or pages that surprised you? | |
| 6. What pieces of information were presented in a visual or graphic way – an illustration, table, chart, graph, map or diagram? | |
| 7. Why was some information presented visually or graphically instead of in words? | |
| 8. Who would be interested in the news or information in your section or pages? | |
| 9. Who would be interested in the ads in your section or pages? | |
| 10. Why were ads for certain products or services placed in this section or pages? | |
| 11. What was the most interesting thing you found in your section or pages? | |
| 12. Why does the newspaper include this section or these pages? | |

Lesson 3: Making Predictions

Newspaper Focus: News Stories

Background – Anticipation and prediction are key characteristics of effective reading. Efficient readers develop ideas about what to expect next in the text. They modify their expectations as they obtain additional information while reading. When the text suddenly stops making sense, good readers go back and reread. Making predictions becomes automatic to good readers, but it is a skill that can be taught and developed. In this lesson, students will practice making predictions as a deliberate and intentional process. As they practice, predicting will become more automatic as they read.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to think about an activity they participate in on a regular basis, such as going to a fast-food restaurant, attending a soccer game, brushing their teeth, etc. Have a student recount an experience with such an activity. Write and number the steps of his/her experience on the board.
- 2) Ask students to confirm, add to or delete from the sequence. Also ask students to discuss how they go through a sequence in a familiar activity without thinking because they have a sense of what is coming next.
- 3) Describe how readers also make predictions about what they expect to find when they read. Explain that as they read, they confirm or modify those predictions.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to a story you have chosen in advance for a “think-aloud.” Have students cover the story with a card or piece of paper, showing only the headline.
- 2) Model your thinking processes for students. Read the headline aloud and make a prediction about the story. Have students uncover the first paragraph of the story. Read it aloud and discuss whether your prediction was accurate. Then make a prediction about what you expect to find next as you read. Continue modeling the prediction process throughout the rest of the story.
- 3) Explain to students that each news or feature story answers the “Five Ws and the H”: *who* the story is about, *what* the story is about, *where* the story takes place, *when* the story occurs, *why* the story is important and *how* the events in the story happen.
- 4) Select a second story to analyze with the class. Have the students go through the “think-aloud” process with you as they read the story paragraph by paragraph.

Distribute the Lesson 3 activity sheet, *Make Good Predictions*. Have students complete the activity independently.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students share their experience making predictions.
- 2) Guide students in discussion about where they made good predictions and where their predictions were less accurate. For example, was the subject of the news story something they had heard or read about previously? Have they had any experiences that relate to the story?

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Make appropriate predictions from headlines | | | |
| Make appropriate predictions throughout the body of the story | | | |
| Evaluate appropriateness of his/her own predictions | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 3: Make Good Predictions

Your understanding of what you read will improve as you make predictions about what you will read next in the newspaper.

- ✎ Pick a news story from the newspaper. First, look at just the headline. Write the headline on the line provided.
- ✎ Make a prediction about the newspaper "Five Ws and the H" *before* you read the story.
- ✎ Now read the story paragraph by paragraph. Make a prediction about what you will read about in each paragraph *before* you read it.
- ✎ Then write down what you learned after you read each paragraph. Also write down the "Five Ws and the H" as you find them in the story.
- ✎ Analyze your predictions by answering the four questions listed in the chart below.

Headline _____

| Story part | Prediction: before you read | What you learned: after you read |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Based on the headline, predict the who, what, where, when, why and how of the story | | |
| Paragraph #1 | | |
| Paragraph #2 | | |
| Paragraph #3 | | |
| Paragraph #4 | | |

How many of your predictions were correct?

Which, if any, of your predictions were not correct?

How well did you make predictions?

What do you think would have helped you to make better predictions?

Lesson 4: Generating Questions

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background – Generating questions works hand-in-hand with making predictions. Good readers are inquiring readers. They ask questions of themselves and the writer as they move through the text. While teachers often use the newspaper “Five Ws and the H” – *who, what, where, when, why, how* – as a comprehension aid, it is important for students to think beyond those questions. In this activity, students will begin with the basics, the Five Ws and the H, and then generate their own questions. Generating additional questions encourages students to think more deeply about the meaning of the story they read.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to think about a story, movie or television program that left them with unanswered questions. Suggest examples, such as why a particular character made that decision or what would have happened to the character if the story had continued.
- 2) Explain how we often want to know more about the story’s characters and events when we are engaged in reading. Readers can improve their comprehension by asking questions as they read.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 3) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to a story you have chosen in advance. Have them read only the headline.
- 4) Model the questioning process. Write several questions on the board that you thought of when you read the headline. Ask students to add any questions of their own.
- 5) Read the story aloud. Comment on parts of the story that answer any of the questions. As you read, generate other questions that arise from new information in the story.
- 6) Discuss your process after you finish reading the story. Describe how the questioning carried you through the story and kept your interest and attention.
- 7) Distribute the Lesson 4 activity sheet, *Inquire and Investigate*. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students share the stories they read with the class. Encourage them to discuss some of the questions they asked and whether the questions were answered in the story.
- 2) Ask students to describe how the questioning strategy kept them involved and interested in the story.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Write questions related to the story | | | |
| Generate appropriate questions not answered in the story | | | |
| Discuss his/her level of engagement with the story | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 4: **Inquire and Investigate**

Good readers ask themselves questions about what they are reading so they can better understand the text.

- ✎ Work with a partner or a small group and pick a news story to read. Together, identify the newspaper "Five Ws and the H": *who, what, where, when, why* and *how*.
- ✎ Write five more questions about the story. Avoid questions that can be answered in one word or phrase. Write questions that will make a reader think about the story.

Headline _____

Your questions:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Write three questions that were *not* answered in the story. Where do you think you could find the answers?

1.

2.

3.

Lesson 5: Creating a Visual Image

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background – Students are better able to comprehend what they read when they remain engaged with the text. One strategy many good readers use is to create mental pictures of the text while they are reading. The ability to create visual images acts as both a mark of comprehension and a tool for remembering what is read. In this activity, students will actively and intentionally create mental pictures to express their understanding of a news or feature story. With practice, they can develop this strategy until it becomes automatic.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to think about a book they have read that was also made into a movie, such as the “Harry Potter” series. With a show of hands, determine which students read the books first and which saw the movies first.
- 2) Have students discuss their experiences. How many were disappointed in the movies because they had visualized characters and events differently when they read the books? How many liked seeing the movies first because they helped them understand the stories better?
- 3) Discuss with students how the ability to create mental pictures of what they read can help them understand and remember the text.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to a news or feature story you have chosen in advance. Explain that you are going to model a visualization strategy for them.
- 2) Model the visualization strategy. Read the headline and describe the pictures the headline conjures up in your mind. Do a quick sketch on the board.
- 3) Read the story aloud. Talk about the pictures you see in your mind and do a quick sketch at a point where you have sufficient information to do so.
- 4) Explain that this is not a measure of your artistic ability – stick figures and cartoon drawings are fine. This is not art; it is comprehending what you read.
- 5) After you have finished reading the story and creating your sketches, have students retell the story from your sketches. Explain that their ability to remember and retell the story from the sketches shows how useful it is to create mental pictures while they read.
- 6) Distribute the Lesson 5 activity sheet, *Make a Mental Picture*. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students discuss their experiences. Was it easy or difficult to create the pictures? How did they decide which images to create? Could they retell the story from their pictures?
- 2) Explain that in this activity, they drew pictures on paper. However, when they read on their own, they should practice creating pictures in their imagination.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Draw a picture that reflected key elements of the story | | | |
| Compare different sketches | | | |
| Evaluate the level of completeness in his/her own drawing | | | |

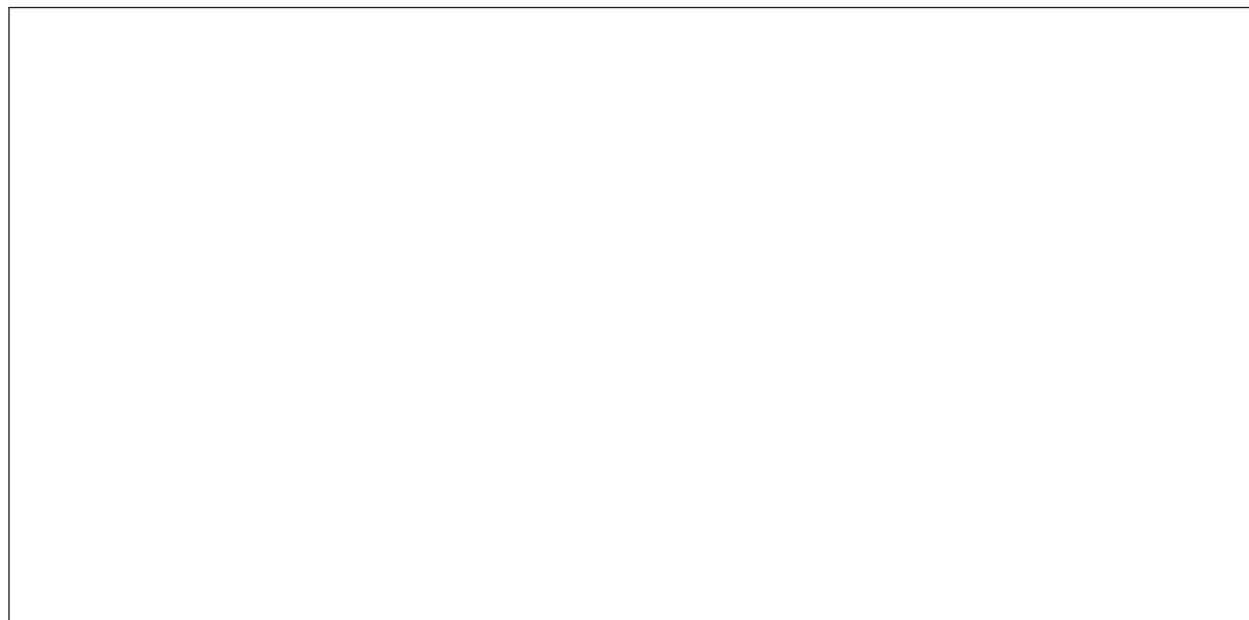
Student Activity Sheet 5: **Make a Mental Picture**

You can improve how well you understand what you read by creating pictures in your imagination that represent what you are reading.

- ✎ Work with one or two other classmates on this activity. Together, pick a news or feature story from the newspaper, or use a story that your teacher has chosen.
- ✎ Read the story silently and try to picture in your mind what's happening. Then draw a picture about the story in the space below.
- ✎ After you have finished your picture, share it with your classmates. Use the questions below to help you compare your pictures.

Headline _____

Draw your picture here.



Compare your picture with the pictures of your classmates.

| Newspaper "Five Ws and the H" | Were your pictures the same or different? | Why do you think you drew different pictures? |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Who | | |
| What | | |
| Where | | |
| When | | |
| Why | | |
| How | | |
| Other details | | |

Lesson 6: Making Connections

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories, Editorials and Opinion Columns

Background – Readers who comprehend well make connections between the text they read and their prior knowledge and experiences. Students who struggle with comprehension often approach reading passively; they do not actively engage with the text and make the connections between what they already know and new information. In this activity, students are directed to make connections between themselves and the text. With practice, they can learn to make these connections automatically.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to think about something they did with their families or friends recently – went to the movies, ate at a restaurant, visited relatives, etc. Have a student talk about the experience.
- 2) Ask students if they could understand what the first student was talking about. When students respond positively, ask them to explain why they understood what was happening. Generally, it will be because it is something they have also experienced and know about.
- 3) Explain that they are making connections between their prior knowledge and experiences, and the story told by their classmate. Tell students that making connections is an important tool in helping them comprehend what they read.
- 4) Encourage students to use their connecting ability to comprehend what they read.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Explain that they are going to look at the different kinds of connections they can make between what they already know and the information they read in the newspaper.
- 2) Model the lesson with the students. Direct them to a news story about a topic that will be very familiar to them – a community event, a sports story about a school team, etc. Have a student read the headline aloud. Ask the class to react to the headline: What do they already know about the topic? How do they know?
- 3) Read the first paragraph aloud. Again, ask students to discuss what is happening in the story. Then ask them how they already know about the topic. Guide the discussion toward students' experiences, personal acquaintance with someone in the story, or something they have heard from another person. Explain how what they already know has helped them understand what they are reading about now.
- 4) Distribute the Lesson 6 activity sheet, *Make Connections*. Have them complete the activity independently.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students discuss their experiences. What kinds of connections did they make? Were more connections from personal experiences, or from prior reading and learning?
- 2) Guide students' discussion toward their content-related classes. Help them identify the connections between the newspaper stories and what they have learned in other classes, such as social studies, science or health. Remind students that everything they learn and experience can help them comprehend what they read.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify appropriate connections | | | |
| Identify the type of connections | | | |
| Identify appropriate newspaper content-area connections | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 6: **Make Connections**

You will become better at understanding what you read when you are able to make connections between what you already know and the new information you find in your reading.

- ✎ Pick one news story, feature story, editorial or opinion column from the newspaper. Number the paragraphs.
- ✎ In the second column, write about something in the paragraph that reminds you of something you already know. It might be something you have read, something you have learned in school, or something you have experienced.
- ✎ In the third column, check the type of connection you made with the information.

Headline _____

| Paragraph number | Your connection | Type of connection |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |
| 2 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |
| 3 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |
| 4 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |
| 5 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |
| 6 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |
| 7 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Read <input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Personal experience |

Lesson 7: Monitoring Comprehension

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background – Good readers check their comprehension as they read. When they encounter text that confuses them, they select from a variety of helpful strategies. They may go back and read part of the text again because they missed or misunderstood previous information. They may have to look up an unfamiliar word. They may have to read more about the topic in another text. They also may discuss the topic with someone who is more familiar with the subject. Many students, on the other hand, do not use “fix-up” strategies when they become confused. In this activity, students are required to think about what they can do when they realize they do not understand what they are reading. With practice, students can learn to take more control of their own comprehension.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to think about a time when another person was trying to teach them how to do something: play a video game, cook a particular dish, or download a file to a personal electronic device. Have them think about what they said or did when they did not understand something the other person was saying. Did they ask the person to repeat an instruction? Did they ask the person to explain what a word meant? Did they ask the person to demonstrate how to do it?
- 2) Have several students share personal stories. Explain that they were using their own “fix-up” strategies. They found ways to get the information they needed to understand the task at hand. Explain that they can also use “fix-up” strategies when they read.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to a news story you have chosen in advance. Explain that good readers have “fix-up” strategies to use when they don’t understand what they read.
- 2) Model the strategy using a “think-aloud.” Read the headline of the story. Discuss your predictions. Then read the first paragraph. The first or lead paragraph of a news story usually consists of one sentence, which answers most of the newspaper Ws: *who*, *what*, *where* and *when*. The *why* and *how* often appear later in the story, or must be inferred. As a result, the lead paragraph may be long and may require two readings.
- 3) Model fix-up strategies as you continue through the story. Show what you would do if you came across a word you didn’t understand, or a concept or reference that was unfamiliar.
- 4) Distribute the Lesson 7 activity sheet, *Analyze Your Thinking*. Instruct students to complete the activity independently. Have dictionaries available so that they can look up unfamiliar words.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students discuss their experiences. Encourage them to give examples of the strategies they used, or could use.
- 2) Discuss options students can use to find additional information, such as the Internet or other reference resources. Have them identify individuals they could ask about specific topics. Provide students with personal examples of when you used a dictionary, almanac, atlas, another person or the Internet to find information to help you understand what you had read.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify areas of misunderstanding | | | |
| Determine appropriate strategies to clarify areas of confusion | | | |
| Demonstrate awareness of his/her personal needs to use comprehension strategies | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 7: Analyze Your Thinking

You will not always find everything easy to read. However, you can develop a set of skills to help you understand text that is hard to understand.

- 📖 Select a news or feature story from the newspaper. Write the headline on the line provided.
- 📖 Number each of the paragraphs.
- 📖 Analyze how well you understand each paragraph. If you understand the paragraph, check the "I get it" column.
- 📖 If there is something in the paragraph that isn't completely clear, check the "I need more information" column.
- 📖 Try to identify the word or idea that is confusing and write it in the third column.
- 📖 In the last column, check the strategy you could use to help you understand the paragraph.

Headline of your story _____

| Paragraph number | I get it! | I need more information | I'm not clear about this | Here's a strategy I might use: |
|------------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Reread the paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Look up the definition of a word <input type="checkbox"/> Look up information in another resource <input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone |
| 2 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Reread the paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Look up the definition of a word <input type="checkbox"/> Look up information in another resource <input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone |
| 3 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Reread the paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Look up the definition of a word <input type="checkbox"/> Look up information in another resource <input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone |
| 4 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Reread the paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Look up the definition of a word <input type="checkbox"/> Look up information in another resource <input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone |
| 5 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Reread the paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> Look up the definition of a word <input type="checkbox"/> Look up information in another resource <input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone |

Lesson 8: Summarizing Information

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background – Summarizing is one of the most difficult comprehension skills for students to develop. Student summaries are either too vague or a collection of many poorly organized details. The newspaper provides many excellent examples of summaries because news stories often are written in an “inverted pyramid” format. The headline provides the main idea and the lead paragraph answers most of the Five Ws: *who*, *what*, *where* and *when*; the *why* and/or *how* often appear further down in the story or must be inferred. Therefore, it is not appropriate to have students summarize news stories – the reporter has already done it in the lead. However, feature stories do not follow the inverted pyramid format and can be used to develop summaries.

Feature stories are stories about timely topics, but they are not necessarily late-breaking or hard news. The language of feature stories is less formal than that of news stories; it is more conversational. While feature stories contain the newspaper Five Ws, they often focus on one of the Ws. You will find feature stories about remarkable people (*who*); unusual collections, hobbies or special events (*what*); or fascinating places to visit (*where*).

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to tell you about a recent activity in which they have participated (playing a video game, going to a fast-food restaurant, working on a project in art class, etc.) in as much detail as possible. Ask for a volunteer. Explain that s/he must take two minutes to tell about his/her experience. Have another student time the telling of the story.
- 2) Ask a third student to summarize what the volunteer described in no more than three sentences and include the most important information about what was said. Have the first volunteer decide whether all relevant information was included in the summary.
- 3) Explain to students that learning to summarize what they read is as important as summarizing information that is spoken.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct their attention to two or three news stories chosen in advance that use the inverted pyramid format and include the newspaper Ws in the first paragraph. Draw an inverted pyramid on the board and explain its format.
- 2) Model how the inverted pyramid is a useful summarizing format by reading one of the stories to the class. Read the headline and explain how it provides the main idea of the story. Then read the lead paragraph and explain how it provides the essential information of the story.
- 3) Explain that news stories are designed and written so people can read them quickly. If readers want to know the key information about an event, they can read the lead paragraph. If readers want to know more, they can read the rest of the story.
- 4) Have students read a second pre-selected story independently. Ask them to highlight or underline the newspaper Ws that they find in the lead paragraph.
- 5) Explain to students that it would be hard for them to summarize a news story because the reporter has already summarized it in the lead paragraph. Instead, they are going to practice summarizing feature stories.
- 6) Direct students' attention to a feature story you have chosen in advance. Read the story aloud to the class. Ask students to discuss the differences they see between the feature story and the news story. Direct the discussion to include these characteristics of feature stories:
 - Feature stories are about timely topics, such as seasonal events or interviews with performers who are appearing in a new movie or television program.

- Feature stories do not follow the inverted pyramid format. They may begin with a quote, an unusual fact or a description of the individual or place featured in the story.
 - All of the important information is not at the top of the story. The newspaper Five Ws and the H may be found throughout the story. The story may have an unusual ending or closing comment.
 - The language of the feature story is more conversational in tone.
 - Feature stories may focus on one of the newspaper Five Ws and the H: *who, what, where, when, why, how*.
- 7) Lead students through the process they will follow on the activity sheet. Help students identify the Five Ws and the H in the feature story you have selected. Have students identify three more facts in the story. Ask students to suggest a “first line” for a summary about the story.
 - 8) Distribute the Lesson 8 activity sheet, *Make It Brief*. Have students complete the activity independently.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students exchange and read each other’s summaries. Have students check whether the writer included the Five Ws and the H.
- 2) Ask students to discuss how beginning with the Five Ws and the H helped them to write their summaries.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify the story’s Five Ws and the H | | | |
| Identify appropriate relevant facts from the story | | | |
| Summarize information in a well-written paragraph | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 8: **Make It Brief**

You can learn how to write good summaries by including the Five Ws and the H from the newspaper story.

- ✎ Pick a feature story from the newspaper. Write the Five Ws and the H in the first column of the chart below as you find them in the story.
- ✎ Next, list three important facts from the story in the second column.
- ✎ Use the Five Ws and the H and the other facts you found to write a paragraph summary of the story.

| Five Ws and the H | Other important facts |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Who _____ | 1. _____ _____ |
| What _____ | 2. _____ _____ |
| When _____ | 3. _____ _____ |
| Where _____ | 4. _____ _____ |
| Why/How _____ | 5. _____ _____ |

Write your paragraph summary below.

Lesson 9: Using Language Effectively

Newspaper Focus: News Stories, Feature Stories, Display Ads

Background – The newspaper is an excellent resource for language study, whether you use news and feature stories, editorials and opinion pieces, arts reviews, sports stories, display ads or even the comics. Reporters and editors are careful and precise with their language. Advertisers invest much time and money to find the most effective language to describe their products. In this activity, students will explore the way in which careful word choices can increase or decrease the effectiveness of a message or text.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to suggest words that describe the way they feel when they get a good grade on a test or do well in an activity that they enjoy. Write their responses on the board.
- 2) Have students look at the list and identify the word(s) they think evoke the strongest emotional response. Ask them to offer words that would reduce an emotional response to the text. Have them think of words that are even more descriptive or powerful than those on the board.
- 3) Discuss how word usage can have an impact on the message being presented. Understanding vocabulary is an important part of comprehending what is read.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Have them open their newspapers to a large display ad you have chosen in advance.
- 2) Remind students that adjectives are words that describe people, places and things. Have students circle the adjectives used to describe the product. Write the words on the board.
- 3) Model for students how changing a word can change the impact of the message in the ad. Rewrite part of the ad, substituting less compelling word(s). Discuss how the appeal of the ad has changed.
- 4) Direct students to another large display ad. Have one group of students replace the adjectives in the ad with words that would make the product less appealing. Have a second group of students replace the adjectives with words that would make the product more appealing. Have students share their responses.
- 5) Discuss how words that may have similar meanings can convey and evoke different degrees of intensity.
- 6) Explain to students that they are going to look at the vocabulary of news headlines. This time they will focus on the verbs, or action words, used in headlines.
- 7) Model the process in the activity sheet with students. Select a headline and write it on the board. Ask students to identify the verb, or action word. Underline the word, then ask several students to suggest synonyms for the verb. Discuss how each synonym changes the headline in some way.
- 8) Distribute the Lesson 9 activity sheet, *Make the Best Choice*. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity. Explain that they will be looking at verbs in newspaper headlines.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students share their responses. Guide the discussion to help students recognize the changes in meaning that occur when they use different vocabulary words or synonyms.
- 2) Ask students to identify the headline they liked most. Have them discuss how the verbs used in the headline attracted and appealed to them.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify verbs in headlines (see query above) | | | |
| Generate a variety of appropriate synonyms | | | |
| Compare and contrast the differences in meaning between various synonyms | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 9: Make the Best Choice

You can learn about the power of how words are used by studying the choices made in newspaper headlines.

- ✎ Words are called “synonyms” when they mean about the same thing. But synonyms never mean *exactly* the same thing. There is always a slight difference in meaning. For example, the verbs “rushed” and “hurried” both mean that someone or something was moving fast. The word “rushed,” however, suggests a faster speed than “hurried.”
- ✎ Pick five headlines from anywhere in your newspaper. Write each headline in the chart below. Underline the verb, or action word, in the headline.
- ✎ Write the definition of the verb in the second column.
- ✎ Think of three words that could be used as synonyms for the verb from the headline and write them in the third column.

| Headline | Definition of verb (action word) | Synonyms for the verb |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

Rewrite one of the headlines and replace the verb with one of the synonyms you wrote in the third column.

Describe how the synonym changes the impact of or response to the headline.

Discuss why you chose a particular synonym. Describe how you think the headline is different because of the change you made.

Lesson 10: Studying Content-Specific Language

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background – Every subject or topic has some vocabulary that is used primarily with it. For example, an *infield fly* is specific to baseball and *adagio* is specific to music. Students who have limited prior knowledge and experiences have difficulty with the vocabulary used in reading about topics that are unfamiliar to them. A student who has never attended, participated in or watched a baseball game has no experience with the jargon of that sport. The newspaper provides opportunities for students to experience a wide range of vocabulary because it contains stories and sections about many different subjects and topics.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to name any hobbies or special interests they may have. Ask volunteers to provide some vocabulary words that are used in their special interest or hobby. List the words on the board. Repeat this process several times.
- 2) Ask the class to indicate whether they are familiar with each word by a show of hands. Explain how interests and experiences can affect and help develop vocabulary.
- 3) Discuss how limited knowledge of a subject and the vocabulary associated with it can cause some difficulty in reading comprehension. In those cases, students may have to look up a word in the dictionary.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to a story chosen in advance.
- 2) Read the story aloud to the class. Stress, with vocal inflection, any specialized or technical vocabulary in the selection.
- 3) Ask students to identify any specialized vocabulary in the story. Write their responses on the board.
- 4) Show students how they can expand vocabulary by learning the definition of a word and then thinking of different forms of that word. For example, a story about adult *literacy* provides an opportunity for students to generate words related to literacy: *literature*, *literate*, *illiterate* and *literary*.
- 5) Have students find a preselected story or stories in the newspaper.
- 6) Distribute the Lesson 10 activity sheet, *Go for the Specials*. Have them work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students report on their activities to the class. Have each group write a list of the topical or technical words that were used in their stories and the words they generated from those base words on the board.
- 2) Encourage students to generate other words to add to each group's list.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify appropriate vocabulary | | | |
| Generate new words from a base word found in the newspaper story | | | |
| Generate appropriate sentences using new words | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 10: Go for the Specials

Your vocabulary can expand when you notice and consider the specialized words about a subject or topic as you read the newspaper or other texts.

- 🔍 Find and read the story that you have been assigned. Write the headline on the line provided.
- 🔍 As a group, identify at least five specialized vocabulary words found in that story. For example, you would probably find the word "gene" only in a science-related story.
- 🔍 Then see how many new words your group can think of using the selected word(s) as the base. The word "gene," for example, is the base for "genetic" and "geneticist."

Headline _____

| Specialized vocabulary word from story | Meaning of the word (from the story or from a reference source) | Words that are related to the base word |
|--|---|---|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

Write sentences using some of your new words.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Lesson 11: Comprehending the Classified Ads

Newspaper Focus: Classified Ads

Background – The classified ad section of the newspaper provides students with an excellent opportunity to apply their research skills in a practical situation. Students may not realize that the classified ads have an index to direct readers to specific sections. Many times, each section has another sub-index at the top of the category. There is usually a rationale for how the information is organized in each section. For example, cars might be listed alphabetically and newest to oldest. Pets may be listed alphabetically within specific categories. In this activity, students will see the value of understanding and using organizational and reference skills.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

- 1) Ask students how they find a book on a certain topic when they go to the school or local library. Then ask them to describe how information is organized in libraries.
- 2) Discuss why the library has a specific and predictable method of organization – to help people find information quickly. Explain that the newspaper organizes everything too, even the classified section.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

- 1) Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to the index, generally located on page one or two. Have them find the entry for the classified section. Discuss how the index saves readers time by helping them locate information quickly.
- 2) Before students turn to the classified section, have them identify the kinds of information they would expect to find there. Write their suggestions on the board.
- 3) Ask students how they would organize the information that is listed on the board.
- 4) Distribute the Lesson 11 activity sheet, *Locate and Learn*. Have them complete the activity in pairs or small groups.

After Reading: Reflect and Review

- 1) Have students share their responses – especially what surprised them. Discuss whether their predictions about the organization of the classified ads were accurate.
- 2) Have students identify people they know who could find something they want in the classified section.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify classified index and categories | | | |
| Locate specific information in the classified section | | | |
| Describe the unique organization and design of the classified section | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 11: Locate and Learn

You can increase and improve your research and study skills by understanding how the classified section of the newspaper is organized and how that helps you find the information you need.

-  Find the classified section of your newspaper. Skim the entire section.
-  Now analyze how the section is organized and write your answers in the chart below.

| Exploration | What you found |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Where is the classified section of your newspaper? Is it a separate section or part of another section in the newspaper? | |
| 2. How many pages are in the classified section? Find the index of the classified section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How many categories are there? b. How are the categories identified (words, icons, illustrations)? | |
| 3. Look at each of the categories. Are there separate indexes or subcategories listed at the top of each category? Give an example. | |
| 4. Look at one ad in each category section of the classified ads. How is the information within each category organized? | |
| 5. How are the automobile ads similar to and different from the other ads in this section? | |
| 6. After you have analyzed how the classified section is organized, see how quickly you can find each of these items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a large female dog b. a house with a yard c. a job that requires no experience d. a used truck | |
| 7. What is one thing that surprised you about the classified section? | |

Lesson 12: Comprehending the Comics

Newspaper Focus: Comics Pages

Background – The comics section of the newspaper can be used to help students develop critical thinking skills. Comics are motivational because although they appear to be created for entertainment, comic strips today address many personal, interpersonal and social issues. In this activity, students will evaluate the character and behaviors of comic strip characters and compare them to their own behaviors.

Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson

1. Ask students to discuss the television programs or movies they like to watch, especially ones that make them laugh. Also encourage them to talk about any books or magazines they read for amusement.
2. Have students discuss why those programs, movies or books make them laugh. Guide the discussion toward the concept that they can see themselves or their experiences reflected in the situations that are portrayed.

During Reading: Direct Instruction

1. Distribute newspapers to students. Direct them to the comic pages. Allow several minutes for students to read the comic strips.
2. Now ask students to identify the comic strips they like. Have them explain why. Encourage students to compare comic strips to people they know or situations they may have faced.
3. Distribute the Lesson 12 activity sheet, *Laugh and Learn*. Have students complete the activity independently.

After Reading: Reflect and Review



1. Have students share their responses to their analysis of the comic pages. Encourage them to compare and contrast themselves with the characters in the strips they examined.
2. Have students discuss the comic strip characters who remind them of friends or family members. Discuss how comic strips help them understand why people may behave as they do.

Performance Rubric

| Expectation: The student was able to ... | Exceeds expectations | Meets expectations | Revisit |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Identify appropriate comic strips | | | |
| Explain relationships between himself/herself and comic characters | | | |
| Analyze relationships between the behavior of real people as reflected in selected comic strips | | | |

Student Activity Sheet 12: **Laugh and Learn**

You can understand people and relationships better when you analyze newspaper comic strips and their characters.

-  Select a comic strip from your newspaper. Describe the character and the situation in the column labeled *In the text*.
-  Then discuss the comic strip with a partner and complete the column labeled *Beyond the text* with your own ideas and experiences.

| | In the text | | Beyond the text |
|---|-------------|--|-----------------|
| Who is the main character in the comic strip? | | Who is someone you know who reminds you of the character? Why does that person seem like the character in some way? | |
| What is the character like? How would you describe the character's attitudes and/or behavior? | | How are your attitudes and behaviors like those of the character? How are you different from the character? | |
| What do you like or dislike about the character? | | Why do you think you react to the character in this way? Do you know someone with the same qualities you admire in the character? | |
| What situation is shown in the comic strip? | | Is this situation familiar to you? How is it familiar? How is it different from your experiences? How would you react in the same situation? What other choices could the character make in the situation? | |

Additional Comprehension Activities

These additional activities can be used to help students develop their comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Knowledge Rating Scale: How Well Do You Know These Words?

A knowledge rating scale can be used to determine your students' familiarity with the language and concepts they must know *before* a unit or individual lesson is taught. You can also use a knowledge rating scale to measure students' growth *after* the unit or lesson. See the activity sheet *How Well Do You Know These Words?* on page 48. Use the knowledge rating scale form on that page, or create your own.

- 1) Select 10 words related to the unit/lesson. Have students complete the activity sheet by putting a check in the appropriate column: *I know it well*; *I have heard of it*; *I don't know it*. If you choose to create your own activity sheet, you may want to use more informal headings, such as: *know it*, *heard of it* and *no clue*.
- 2) Do an informal "hands-up" survey of your students. Using the words you selected, have students raise their hands to indicate a response for each column. You may ask different students to explain or define terms they indicate they know well.
- 3) You may want to select key words from the *Newspaper Glossary* on page 65 to use in a knowledge rating scale at the beginning of this unit.

List-Group-Label Activity: Putting Words in Categories

This activity requires students to identify related words and group them into appropriate categories. See the activity sheet *Putting Words into Categories* on page 49.

- 1) Assign students to small groups and have them read a particular newspaper section, such as national news, business, entertainment or sports.

- 2) Have each group select 10 to 20 words that are related from stories, columns or ads in the section. Have students write their words in the spaces provided at the top of the activity sheet.
- 3) Have students identify three or four categories for the words they have selected. Have them write the categories in the spaces provided at the bottom of the activity sheet, then organize their words accordingly.
- 4) Have students share their words with the class and explain why they created each category.

Semantic Feature Analysis Chart: Making Comparisons

Semantic feature analysis enables students to develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary and concepts. Using a semantic analysis chart will allow students to compare related words across a series of criteria in a matrix format. See the activity sheet *Making Comparisons* on page 50.

- 1) Select words from related stories in a section of the newspaper or on a specific topic. For example, if students are reading stories about other countries and international relations, they need to understand the different forms of government in each country: *representative democracy, monarchy, dictatorship, etc.*
- 2) List the words in the first column of the semantic feature analysis chart. Have students suggest the features or criteria for comparison to write across the top of the chart.
- 3) Assign students to small groups to complete the matrix. Have them put a plus sign (+) if the feature applies to the word, a minus sign (-) if the feature does not apply, and a question mark (?) if they are not sure.
- 4) Have students share their responses with the class. Use the matrix to encourage students to generate statements for comparing and contrasting words on the list.

| | The president is elected as an individual. | The prime minister takes office when his/her party has a majority. | Leadership is established through blood lines. | Leadership is taken or held by force. |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Representative democracy | + | + | - | - |
| Monarchy | - | - | + | - |
| Dictatorship | - | - | - | + |

Text Dialogue Form: What Do You Think?

This activity encourages students to analyze a newspaper story or column in depth. See the activity sheet *What Do You Think?* on page 51.

- 1) Select a story or an opinion column for students to read, or have them choose one for themselves.
- 2) Explain that this activity will help them deepen their understanding of what they read.
- 3) Model the activities with a story you have chosen in advance using the activity sheet *What Do You Think?* on page 51.
- 4) Have students complete the form independently. Have them share their responses with the class.

Concept-Relationship Chart: What Is It All About?

This activity can help students develop summarizing skills. They will identify key elements in a news or feature story and use those elements to generate an introductory main idea sentence. They then will write additional sentences to support the main idea. See the activity sheet *What Is It All About?* on page 52.

- 1) Show students the four elements on the activity sheet. Model the concept-relationship chart with a news story you have chosen in advance.
- 2) Have students suggest an introductory sentence using the elements on the chart. Then have them identify information in the story that will support the introductory sentence.
- 3) Have students complete the chart in small groups and then share their charts and summaries with the class.

How Well Do You Know These Words?

Directions: Put a check mark in the column that shows how well you know each word.

| | I know it well. | I have heard of it. | I don't know it. |
|-----|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |
| 7. | | | |
| 8. | | | |
| 9. | | | |
| 10. | | | |

Putting Words into Categories

Directions: Find 10 to 20 words that are related to the topics in the newspaper pages you have been assigned. Then organize the words into four categories.

1) List your words here.

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

2) Organize the words into four categories. Name your categories and write your words under each category.

| Category 1 | Category 2 | Category 3 | Category 4 |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Making Comparisons

Directions: List the words you will be comparing in the first column. Then write the features or characteristics you will use to compare the words on the diagonal lines across the top of the chart. If the characteristic fits the word, put a plus sign (+) on the chart. If the characteristic does not fit, put a minus sign (-) on the chart. If you aren't sure that the characteristic fits, put a question mark (?) on the chart.

| 1. | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2. | | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | | |
| 5. | | | | | | |
| 6. | | | | | | |
| 7. | | | | | | |

What Do You Think?

Directions: Select a news story, feature story, editorial or opinion column to read. After you read your selection, write your thoughts about it by answering the following questions.

Headline _____

1) What are the most important ideas from your selection?

2) What does the selection mean to you? What are your thoughts and feelings about it?

3) Why is this selection important to you? Why is it not important to you? How helpful or useful is the information in the selection? Please explain.

What Is It All About?

Directions: Select a news or feature story. After you read the story, fill in the chart below with the appropriate information from the story.

- ✎ Write a sentence from the words on your chart. This will be the first sentence of a summary of the story.
- ✎ List information from the story that supports your sentence.
- ✎ Put all of the information together in a paragraph that summarizes the story.

1) Complete this chart:

| Somebody | Wanted | But | So |
|----------|--------|-----|----|
| | | | |

2) Write a sentence using information from your chart.

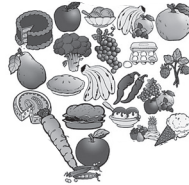
3) List the information that supports your sentence.

4) Combine the sentence with your supporting information to write a summary of the story.

Elementary Student Pages

Lesson 1: **What About You?**

- 1) It is easier to read stories about things you already know about or like.
- 2) Circle the pictures that show things you like.



- 3) Draw a picture of your favorite thing.

Lesson 2: What Is in the Newspaper?

- 1) What can you find in the newspaper? Draw a line from the newspaper word to the part of the newspaper it names.



Name of the newspaper

Headline

Story

News photo

News column

- 2) Look at a real newspaper page. Find these things on it. Draw a circle (○) around each one.
- Name of the newspaper
 - Headline
 - Photo
 - Newspaper page number
 - Newspaper ad

Lesson 3: What Do You Think Will Happen?

- 1) Listen to your teacher read each headline of two different news stories.
- 2) Write a sentence telling what you think will happen in each story.

Story 1

Story 2

- 3) Listen to your teacher read each story. Put a check mark (✓) by your sentence if you were right.

Lesson 4: **What Do You Want to Know?**

1) Listen to your teacher read the headline of a news story.

2) Write three questions you have about the story.

Your questions:

1. _____

2. _____

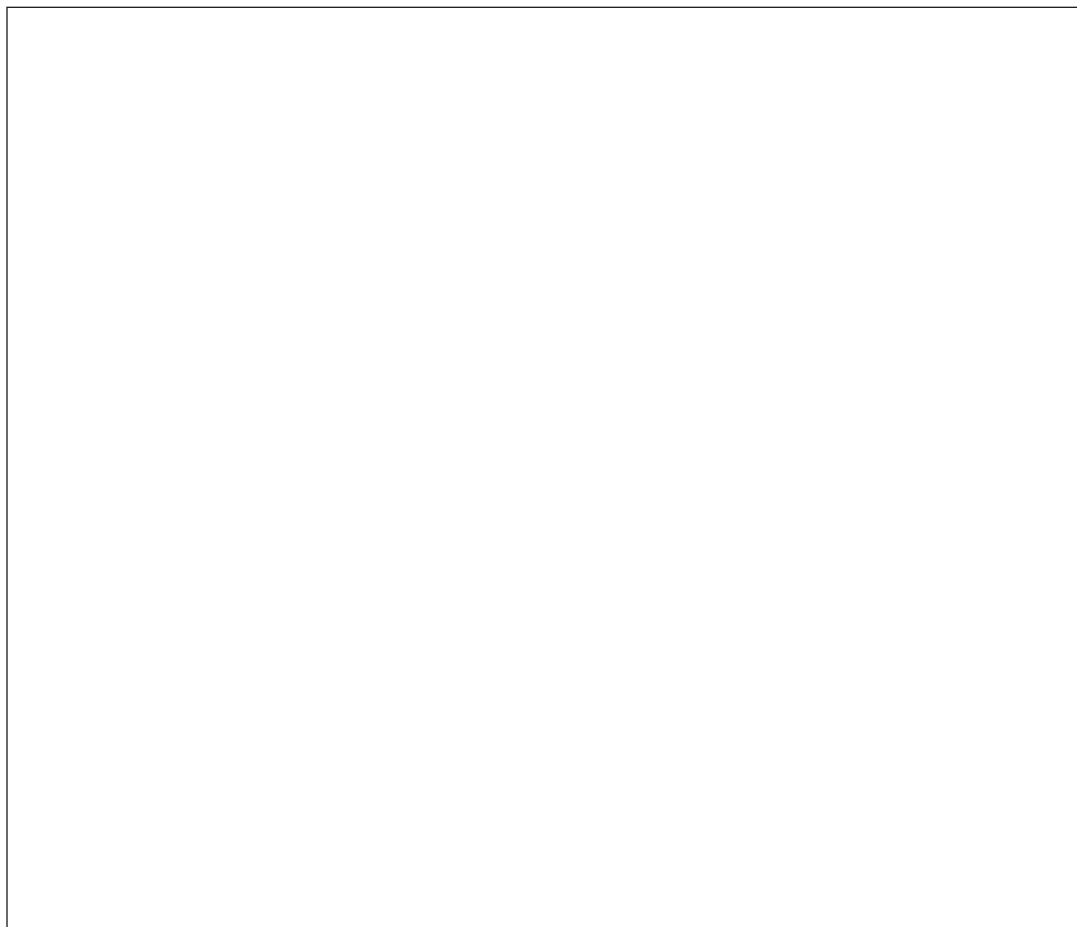
3. _____

3) Listen to your teacher read the story.

4) Put a check mark (✓) by each question if it was answered in the story.

Lesson 5: What Does It Look Like?

- 1) Listen to your teacher read a story from the newspaper.
- 2) Draw a picture to go with the story.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture related to a story.

- 3) Talk about your picture with a classmate.

Lesson 6: What Do You Know?

- 1) Listen to your teacher read a newspaper story.
- 2) Your teacher will read one sentence at a time.
- 3) As your teacher reads each sentence, put a check mark (✓) if you know something about what is in the sentence. Put a circle (○) if the information is new.

Sentence 1 _____

Sentence 2 _____

Sentence 3 _____

Sentence 4 _____

Sentence 5 _____

Sentence 6 _____

- 4) Talk about the story with a classmate. See how much each of you can remember about it.

Lesson 7: What More Do You Want to Know?

- 1) Listen to your teacher read a newspaper story.
- 2) Your teacher will read one sentence at a time.
- 3) Put a check mark (✓) if you understand the sentence. Put a question mark (?) if you need more information about what the sentence means.

Sentence 1 _____

Sentence 2 _____

Sentence 3 _____

Sentence 4 _____

Sentence 5 _____

Sentence 6 _____

- 4) What person could you ask to help you understand the story better?

Lesson 8: What Is It All About?

- 1) Listen to your teacher read a newspaper story.
- 2) Your teacher will read one sentence at a time.
- 3) Write the answer to these questions as your teacher reads the story:

A) Who is the story about?

B) Where does the story take place?

C) What happens in the story?

D) Write a sentence that includes the answers to your questions.

- 4) Put a check mark (✓) if you understand the sentence. Put a question mark (?) if you need more information. _____

Lesson 9: **What Word Would You Like?**

- 1) Find a headline in your newspaper.
- 2) Write the headline here.

- 3) Change the action word in the headline to make it a different headline.

Write your new headline here.

- 4) Talk to a classmate about your headline. Tell why you picked the new action word.

Lesson 10: **What Sports Words Can You Find?**

- 1) Look at the sports pages in the newspaper.
- 2) Circle five words that are about sports.
- 3) Write your sports words here.

- 4) Share your words with a classmate. Did you pick any of the same words?

Lesson 11: What's in the Classified Section?

The classified ads in the newspaper help people find things they need, like a place to live, a car, a job and even pets!

- 1) With your teacher's help, find the classified section of the newspaper.
- 2) Let your teacher help you find the "pets" section.
- 3) Find three different ads for pets. Circle each ad.
- 4) Write the names of the pets you found.

- 5) Share your answers with a classmate. Were any of the ads you picked the same?

Lesson 12: Which Comic Strip Character Is Like You?

- 1) Look at the comics pages in the newspaper.
- 2) Find a character who is like you in some way.

What comic strip character did you pick? _____

- 3) Write a sentence telling why that character is like you.

- 4) Share your answers with a classmate. Did you pick the same comic strip character or a different one?

Newspaper Glossary

Advertising – the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business; i.e., paid announcements in print publications and on the Internet, television and radio.

Beat writer – a reporter who covers a “beat,” or specific topic, place or team.

Budget meeting – a daily meeting during which the editorial staff talks about the lineup and placement of stories for the next day.

Byline – the writer’s name; it usually appears at the beginning of the article.

Circulation – the total number of people who subscribe to the newspaper or buy it at a newsstand.

Classified ad (or “want ad”) – people-to-people advertisements for items that individuals or businesses are looking for or want to buy or sell; i.e., a job, car or house. Called “classified” because ads are classified by category.

Columnist – a writer of a column that appears regularly in the newspaper. Columnists frequently offer their opinions on current events.

Cutline – the text accompanying a photo; also called caption.

Dateline – the line at the beginning of a news story that gives the date and place of the story’s origin.

Display ad – a larger ad that often includes photography or art as well as text. Display ads can run anywhere in the newspaper.

Edit – to revise, proofread, write a headline, check for errors or approve a story for publication.

Edition – one of a number of versions of a newspaper issued in one day.

Editorial – an article located on the editorial pages of a newspaper, stating the opinion of the newspaper, its management, its readers or other people.

Feature story – a story in which the basic purpose is something other than news.

Firsthand information – details gathered about an event through direct experience.

Five Ws and the H – the questions answered in a newspaper story: *who, what, where, when, why* and *how*.

Flag (or banner) – the name of the newspaper on the front page, set in a particular style of type so it is easily recognized.

Foreign correspondent – a journalist who gathers news outside the United States.

Index – a listing, usually on the first or second page of a newspaper, that refers readers to stories and sections throughout the paper.

Internet edition – stories, photographs and other materials selected by editors from the day's newspaper to appear on a newspaper's Web site; these materials also can be created especially for the Web site.

Journalist – a reporter who gathers information and writes articles.

Kill – to remove a story or ad from the newspaper.

Layout – a plan or sketch of each page of the newspaper indicating where photos, articles, ads and headlines will be placed.

Lead – the first paragraph of a story, designed to give readers the most important information and "lead" them to continue reading.

Masthead – a box of information, usually found on the editorial page, containing the name of the newspaper, its ownership and management.

News story – an article that includes the important details about a newsworthy event.

Newsworthy – events and information that readers want and need to know immediately; information that might have an impact on people's lives.

Obituary – a published notice of a death, sometimes with a brief biography of the deceased.

Pagination – the process of producing a full page of the newspaper on a computer.

Photo credit – a byline for the photographer, crediting him or her for the photo that appears in the newspaper.

Publisher – the person responsible for the total operation of the newspaper.

Refer [pronounced "reefer"] – lines of type and sometimes art that direct readers to stories inside the newspaper.

Review – a critical report of a new book, movie, show, performance or restaurant.

Scoop – an exclusive story.

Staff writer – a writer employed by the newspaper.

Syndicate – a news service that sells columns, comics and specialty features to newspapers.

Tip – information from a source outside the newspaper leading to an interesting story.

Wire service – a company or cooperative that sells stories and photos and sends them via satellite or computer to member newspapers.

Improving Comprehension With Newspapers

2007 NIE Week Teacher's Guide:
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