

Reading Nonfiction

Stances and Signposts

Stances

1. What surprised you?

- New information: "I didn't know that!"
- Suspicious information: "Really? Is that true?"
- Clarifying information: "Oh! Now I get it!"
- A different perspective: "I hadn't thought of it that way," or "How could anyone think that way?" or "This surprises me. Is there another way to see this?"



2. What did the author think I already knew?

- Vocabulary: "The author thought I'd know what this word means."
- Visualizing: "The author thought I could picture this."
- Prior Knowledge: "The author thought I'd know something about this."
- Sequencing or Causal Relationships: "The author thought I'd get how this happens."



3. What challenged, changed, or confirmed what I already knew?

- At first I thought...but...
- I had to rethink...
- My understanding changed when...
- I was right/wrong about...



Signposts

Contrasts and Contradictions

A sharp contrast between what we would expect and what we observe happening.

A difference between two or more elements in the text.

Anchor Question Progression

MIDDLE: What is the contrast or contradiction and why does it matter?

HISTORY: Why did the author point out this contrast/contradiction? Does this reveal a bias or new knowledge?

SCIENCE: How does this differ from previously held beliefs or understandings?

MATH: Under what conditions is this true?

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Extreme or Absolute Language

Language that leaves no doubt about a situation or an event, allows no compromise, or seems to exaggerate or overstate a case.

Anchor Question Progression

MIDDLE: Why did the author use this language?

HISTORY: What does this reveal about the author's biases or purpose?

SCIENCE: Is this science or pseudoscience? Why would the author use this language?

MATH: Is this language appropriate at all?

Numbers and Stats

Specific quantities or comparisons to depict the amount, size, or scale. Or, the writer is vague and imprecise about numbers when we would expect more precision.

Anchor Question Progression

MIDDLE: Why did the author use these numbers or amounts?

HISTORY: How do these numbers help me see patterns occurring across time, regions, and cultures? What do these numbers help me see?

SCIENCE: What purpose do these numbers serve in this context? Do these numbers help prove a point?

MATH: In a word problem, what question is the author asking me and how do those numbers help?

Quoted Words

Opinions or conclusions of someone who is an expert on the subject, or someone who might be a participant in or a witness to an event. Other times the author might simply cite others to provide support for a point.

Anchor Question Progression

MIDDLE: Why was this person quoted or cited and what did this add?

HISTORY: What is this person's perspective?

SCIENCE: What are the qualifications of this person?

MATH: Why was a quote needed? What does it add to the thinking?

Word Gaps

Vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the reader. This might be because it is a word with multiple meanings, a rare or technical word, a discipline-specific word, or one with a far-removed antecedent.

Anchor Question Progression

ALL

GRADES: Do I know this word from someplace else?
Does it seem like technical talk for this topic?
Can I find clues in the sentence to help me understand the word?

HISTORY: Is this term describing a period? What does the term imply?

SCIENCE: Is this a word describing a concept?
What do I know about the concept?

MATH: Is it a word important in solving the problem?

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Strategies

Fix-Up Strategies

Possible Sentences

- Before reading, choose 8-14 words (or phrases) from the text.
- Students then write 5 “possible sentences” that might appear in the text, using three to five of the given words in each sentence.



Variations

MATH: Give kids examples of problems and let them write the “possible rules” that guide solutions.

KWL 2.0

- **K:** What they **KNOW**?
- **W:** What they **WANT** to know about _____?
- **L:** What answers did I **LEARN**?
What did I **LEARN** that’s new?



Variations

MATH: Use with word problems and change to KWRA

- What do I **KNOW**?
- What do I **WANT** to know?
- What are the **RULES** that matter?
- What is my **ANSWER**?

SCIENCE: Use with lab experiments and change to KWEL

- What do I **KNOW**?
- What do I **WANT** to know?
- What’s my **EVIDENCE**?
- What did I **LEARN**?

Somebody Wanted But So

- Offers a structure to help write a one-sentence summary of a text.
- Who is the Somebody of the text?
- What did that Somebody want?
- But what happened?
- So what was the outcome?



Variations

SCIENCE: Try using SHBT (Something Happened But Then)

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Syntax Surgery

- During reading, this helps to clarify confusions that might occur.
- Looking for how one part of a text (word, phrase, sentence, or figure) connects with another part and then drawing lines and arrows to connect those parts.



Variations

MATH: Syntax of math is less about connecting pronouns to nouns and more about understanding how math symbols connect words to operations. Be sure students know how to read the special symbols of math.

Sketch to Stretch

- Helps to visualize what the author is saying.
- Underline the specific parts of the text causing the confusion.
- Reread those parts and, while rereading, try to draw in the margin what the author was describing.
- Label their drawing with terms the author used in the text.



Genre Reformulation

- After reading strategy that helps students solidify content.
- Patterns may include: The if/then structure, repetitive book structure, the ABC structure, or the cumulative tale structure.



Variations

SOCIAL STUDIES: Much of social studies is about noticing the causal connections. Reformulating with the text *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* in mind is helpful.

MATH: This is most helpful in math as a review and students should use the ABC text structure for reformulation.

“Reading is important because if you can read, you can learn anything about everything and everything about anything.”

~ Tomie dePaola

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