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Introduction

If you are like most teachers, your classroom includes a wide variety of scholars: average students, English language learners, gifted students, and learning disabled students. You may be expected to get your diverse student population, including special education students and those for whom English is a second language, to master grade-level, content-area material. That's a challenging task and one that requires grade-level, content-area materials written at several levels. The *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* kit was designed with that in mind.

Each unit in the *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* kit covers a grade-level appropriate curriculum topic in science, geography, history, or language arts. One set of comprehension questions and answers is provided (in the back of the Teacher Resource Book) for each unit. This enables your students to access the text and concepts at their instructional—rather than frustration—level, while requiring them to meet objective standards, just as they must do on standardized assessments.

This kit contains 20 units, each with four sets of cards written at three different levels (240 cards), and a Teacher Resource Book which includes a Comprehension Questions page for each unit and a corresponding page with the answers. Students can fill in the answers on the unit question page or fill in the standard bubble Answer Sheet provided on page 71. A one-page Master Answer Key for all units is also provided on page 112. The kit's accompanying CD includes an Enhanced Teacher Resource eBook and the Common Core State Standards.

Prepare Your Students to Read Content-Area Text

Each day you can prepare your students to read the passages in the *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* kit by reading aloud a short nonfiction selection from another source. Reading content-area text aloud is critical to developing your students' ability to read it themselves.

Discussing content-area concepts with your class is also very important. Remember, however, that discussion can never replace reading aloud since people do not speak using the vocabulary and complex sentence structures of written language.

Readability

All of the passages in the *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* kit have a reading level that has been calculated by the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula, built into Microsoft Word®, determines a text's readability by calculating the number of words, syllables, and sentences.

Each passage is presented at three levels: easy, average, and challenging. *Easy* is below grade level; *average* is at grade level; and *challenging* is above grade level. The chart on page 10 shows you the specific reading levels of every passage.

To ensure that only you know the reading level at which each student is working, the levels are not printed on the passages. Instead, at the top of the card is a pair of books with a specific pattern that will allow you to quickly match students and passages.

Reading Level	 Easy (below grade level)	 Average (at grade level)	 Challenging (above grade level)
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Introduction (cont.)

Essential Comprehension Skills

Comprehension is the primary goal of any reading task. The *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* kit will help your students build a foundation for comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.

The passage questions and answers can be found in this Teacher Resource Book or in the Enhanced eBook. Run off copies for each student or use the E-copies on an interactive white board or computer. The questions following each passage always appear in the same order and cover six vital comprehension skills:

1. **Locating facts**—Questions based on exactly what the text states—who, what, when, where, why, and how many
2. **Understanding vocabulary in context**—Questions based on the ability to infer word meaning from the syntax and semantics of the surrounding text, as well as the ability to recognize known synonyms and antonyms for a newly encountered word
3. **Determining sequence**—Questions based on chronological order—what happened first, last, and in between
4. **Identifying conditions**—Questions that ask students to identify similarities and differences or notice cause-and-effect relationships
5. **Making inferences**—Questions that require students to evaluate, make decisions, and draw logical conclusions
6. **Analyzing and visualizing**—Questions that make students draw upon their schema and/or visualization skills to select the correct response (Visualization reinforces the important skill of picturing the text.)

How to Use the Unit Cards and the Teacher Resource Book

You can choose to do whole class, small group, or independent practice:

Whole Group—For whole-group practice, you can do the following:

1. Distribute the cards (or copies) based on students' instructional reading levels.
2. Have students read the text silently and answer the questions either on the Unit Comprehension Questions page or on the Answer Sheet on page 71.
3. Collect all of the papers and score them.
4. Return the comprehension questions pages or answer sheets to the students and discuss how they determined their answers.
5. Point out how students had to use their background knowledge to answer certain questions.

Unit 2 Reading Passage—Science

Meet Astronaut Danny Olivas

We wonder what it is like in outer space. People travel in space. We call them **astronauts**. They tell us what they find. Danny Olivas traveled in space.

Danny was born in California. He grew up in Texas. He wanted to make things. He went to college. He won awards.

Danny set goals. He worked hard. He wanted to go into space. He is an example. Anyone can go into space.

Danny worked at an air force base. He made spacesuits better. He worked on rockets. Danny made things to use in space.

Danny had a lot to learn. He trained to go into space. He read a lot. He prepared for danger in bad weather. He learned how to survive.


Astronauts practice in a machine. They pretend it is a rocket. It feels like being in space.

Danny's teacher inspired him. He asked her to come to the shuttle launch. It was a great day. His teacher, Ms. Martha Pickrell, was there.

Danny was ready. He flew on a space shuttle. He helped with the mission. He went to the Space Station. Danny walked in space.

NASA gave him a new job. Danny helped crews in orbit. They talked to the ground crew. They told NASA if something went wrong.

Danny likes to walk in space. He wants to learn more about space.



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You may distribute the passages without revealing the different levels. If you do not want your students to be aware that the passages are differentiated, organize the passages in small piles by seating arrangement. Then, when you approach a group of desks, you'll have the levels you need. An alternative is to make a pile of passages from diamonds to polka dots. Put a finger between the top two levels. Then, as you approach each student, pull the passage from the top (easy), middle (average), or bottom (challenging) layer. Do this quickly and without much hesitation.

Introduction *(cont.)*

How to Use the Unit Cards and the Teacher Resource Book *(cont.)*

You can also announce to your class that all students will read at their own instructional levels. Do not discuss the technicalities of how the reading levels were determined. Just state that every person is reading at his or her own level and then answering the same comprehension questions. If you find that a student is doing well, try giving him or her a higher-level passage the next time. If he or she displays frustration, be ready to slip the student the lower-level passage. Remember, the cards look very similar and all three have the same photographs or illustrations.

Working in Centers and Independently—If you prefer to have the students work independently or in centers, try this procedure:

1. Create a folder for each student.
2. Make photocopies of the Answer Sheet for each class member and staple it to the back of each student folder. Replace as needed.
3. Each time you want to use a passage, place a unit card for the appropriate reading level and the related Comprehension Questions page in each student's folder.
4. Have each student retrieve his or her folder, read the passage, and answer the questions on the questions page or on the Answer Sheet.
5. Go over the answers together, or check the students' folders at a convenient time.
6. You may wish to provide a laminated copy of the Master Answer Key in the center, allowing students to check their own responses.

Teaching Multiple-Choice Response

It's a good idea to practice as a class how to read a passage and respond to the comprehension questions. In this way, you can demonstrate your own thought processes by “thinking aloud” to figure out each answer. Essentially, this means that you tell your students your thoughts as they come to you.

Make copies of the practice comprehension questions on page 8 and distribute them to your class. Then, display the practice reading passage on page 7. You may wish to use the Enhanced eBook to show it to the class on an interactive board. Or, you might use a document camera or an overhead transparency to show the page. Read the passage chorally. Studies have found that students of all ages enjoy choral reading, and it is especially helpful for English language learners. Choral reading lets students practice reading fluently in a safe venue because they can read in a whisper or even drop out if they feel the need.

Remember to demonstrate how to “darken” the answer bubbles on the question page or answer sheet. It is important that students learn to clearly mark their answers.

Discuss Question 1: After you've read the passage together, ask a student to read the first question aloud. Tell the student NOT to answer the question. Instead, read all of the answer choices aloud. Emphasize that reading the choices first is always the best way to approach any multiple-choice question. Since this question is about *locating facts*, reread the first paragraph of the passage aloud as the class follows along. Have the students reread the question silently and make a selection based on the information found. Ask a student who gives the correct response (C) to explain his or her reasoning. Explain that the first question is always the easiest because the fact is stated right in the passage.

Introduction *(cont.)*

Teaching Multiple-Choice Response *(cont.)*

Discuss Question 2: The second question is about the *vocabulary word* shown in boldfaced print in the passage. Ask a student to read that question aloud. Teach your students to reread the sentence before the boldfaced vocabulary word, the sentence with the word, and the sentence after the word in the passage. This will give them a context and help them to figure out what the word means. Then, have them substitute the word choices given for the vocabulary term in the passage. For each choice, they should reread the sentence with the substituted word and ask themselves, “Does this make sense?” This will help them to identify the best choice. One by one, substitute the words into the sentence, and read the sentence aloud. It will be obvious which one makes the most sense (B).

Discuss Question 3: The third question asks about *sequence*. Ask a student to read the question aloud. Write the choices on chart paper or the board. As a class, determine their order of occurrence, and write the numbers one through four next to them. Then, reread the question and make the correct choice (A).

Discuss Question 4: The fourth question is about *cause and effect* or *similarities and differences*. Ask a student to read the question aloud. Teach your students to look for the key words in the question (*penguins, Galapagos, different*) and search for those specific words in the passage. Explain that they may need to look for synonyms for the key words. For this question, ask your students to show where they found the correct response in the passage. Have students explain in their own words how they figured out the correct answer (B). This may be time-consuming at first, but it is an excellent way to help your students learn from each other.

Discuss Question 5: The fifth question asks students to make an *inference*. Ask a student to read the question aloud. Tell your students your thoughts as they occur to you, such as: “Well, the article didn’t say that you need to have a camera, so that one’s questionable. The article did say that you should not bring animals. So I’ll get rid of that choice. You could get there by boat. But it would be a very long trip. I don’t think that’s the best choice here. Let’s look back at the passage . . . it states that all visitors must go with a guide. The word “must” means you have to have it, so I’m going to select D.”

Discuss Question 6: The sixth question calls for *analysis* or *visualization*. With such questions, some of the answers may be stated in the passage, but others may have different wording. Sometimes one or more of the answers must be visualized to ascertain the correct response.

After having a student read the question aloud, you can say, “This one is tricky. It’s asking me to choose the one that *will not* instead of the one that will. First, let’s look at all the choices. Then, we can ask ourselves which ones are not mentioned in the article.” Then, read the answer choices aloud and eliminate them one by one. Point out that the passage does not state that there are any tigers on the island, which is how you identify the correct answer (D).

Frequent Practice Is Ideal

The passages and comprehension questions in *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* are time-efficient, allowing your students to practice these skills often. The more your students practice reading and responding to content-area comprehension questions, the more confident and competent they will become. Set aside time to allow your class to do every passage. If you do so, you’ll be pleased with your students’ improved comprehension of any nonfiction text, both within your classroom and beyond its walls.



Extreme Wildlife Adventure

If you like wildlife, you will enjoy the Galapagos Islands. You can dive in the ocean or stay on land. The islands are far away from the mainland. They are 600 miles off the coast.

Volcanoes in the ocean erupted. They formed islands. Each island is a volcano. Some are still active.

The islands are slowly moving eastward. Hot rock on the ocean floor makes land move. The islands drift in the ocean.

There are large islands. Some are tiny. There are more than twenty islands total. People live on just five of the islands.

Amazing animals live there. There are penguins. No other penguins live in the tropics. There are iguanas that swim. They eat seaweed.



The animals do not fear humans. The islands have no large predators. People can walk right by the animals. Blue-footed booby birds dance by your feet. Sea lions swim near by. You can see an **albatross** fly above you. A giant tortoise might walk by.

People can go diving. A boat leaves from the main island. The trip takes fifteen hours. It goes to other islands.

There are strong ocean currents. Dive to a ledge sixty feet down. Grab onto the rock and hang on. Watch the marine life swim by.

A diver can see whale sharks. There are manta rays and dolphins. Sea turtles swim by.

People try to preserve the islands. They do not want them to change. Do not bring animals from other places. They eat the same food as native animals. It is hard for native animals to survive.

Almost all of the land area is a national park. All visitors must go with a guide. It is fun to explore and learn about the wildlife.



Extreme Wildlife Adventure

Directions: Darken the best answer choice.

1. On how many of the Galapagos Islands do people live?

- (A) 600
(B) 20
(C) 5
(D) 15

2. An **albatross** is

- (A) a boat that travels on the ocean.
(B) a large seabird with long wings.
(C) a bird that dances by your feet.
(D) a tree with coconuts.

3. When you dive in strong ocean currents, what should you do first?

- (A) Dive to a ledge.
(B) Hang onto the rock.
(C) Grab onto the rock.
(D) Watch sea animals.

4. How are penguins in the Galapagos different from other penguins?

- (A) They do not look like penguins.
(B) They do not live at the South Pole.
(C) They do not swim.
(D) They do not eat fish.

5. What do you need to have to visit the Galapagos?

- (A) a camera
(B) a boat
(C) an animal
(D) a guide

6. Picture a tour on the Galapagos Islands. What will you *not* see?

- (A) a booby bird with blue feet
(B) a sea lion
(C) a giant tortoise
(D) a tiger

Common Core State Standards Correlation

Each passage and question in *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* meets one or more of the following Common Core State Standards. © Copyright 2010 National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. All rights reserved.

Informational Text Standards	Passage Title	Pages
Key Ideas and Details		
Standard 1: RI.2.1. Ask and answer such questions as <i>who, what, where, when, why,</i> and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	A New Monkey Deserts Fight for Freedom The World of Cartoons	11–13, 72 32–35, 86 44–46, 94 59–61, 104
Standard 2: RI.2.2. Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.	Wind Power Let’s Play Dogs as Pets	17–19, 76 29–31, 84 53–55, 100
Standard 3: RI.2.3. Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.	The Biggest Waves Fight for Freedom An Apple a Day	35–37, 88 44–46, 94 47–49, 96
Craft and Structure		
Standard 4: RI.2.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 2 topic or subject area</i> .	all passages	
Standard 5: RI.2.5. Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.	The Sounds We Hear Find Your Way The Storyteller To Buy or Not to Buy	23–25, 80 26–28, 82 56–58, 102 65–67, 108
Standard 6: RI.2.6. Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.	The Shape of the Land Money The World of Cartoons	38–40, 90 41–43, 92 59–61, 104
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
Standard 7: RI.2.7. Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.	Meet Astronaut Danny Olivas The Sounds We Hear Find Your Way	14–16, 74 23–25, 80 26–28, 82
Standard 8: RI.2.8. Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.	Let’s Play Money Fight for Freedom	29–31, 84 41–43, 92 44–46, 94
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity		
Standard 10: RI.2.10. By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	all passages	