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About This Book

The primary goal of any reading task is comprehension. *Document-Based Questions for Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking* uses high-interest grade-level nonfiction passages, related documents, and critical thinking assessment practice to help you develop confident readers who can demonstrate their skills on standardized tests. In addition, you will build the comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.

There are five topic areas with six or seven lessons in each. Each lesson consists of three pages: a passage, a related document, and an assessment practice page containing multiple choice, true-false-explain, and short-answer document-based questions. This gives your students practice in all of the question types used in standardized testing. The students respond to the document-based questions based on the information gleaned from the passage plus its related document. Such questions improve a student's ability to apply prior knowledge, integrate information, and transfer knowledge to a new situation.

Readability

These passages have a 6.0–6.9 reading level based on the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula, built into *Microsoft® Word™*, determines readability by calculating the number of words, syllables, and sentences. Average readability was determined for each of the five topic areas. The topics are presented in order of increasing difficulty.

The documents are not leveled. Many of them are historical pieces and therefore replicated with the exact wording. Some terminology may be challenging, but your students can handle difficult words within the context given.

Preparing Students to Read Nonfiction Text

One of the best ways to prepare students to read expository text is to read a short selection aloud to them daily. Reading expository text aloud is critical to developing your students' ability to read it themselves. Since making predictions is another way to make students tap into their prior knowledge, read the beginning of a passage, then stop, and ask them to predict what might occur next. Do this at several points throughout your reading of the text. By doing this, over time you will find that your students' ability to make accurate predictions increases.

Your questions will help students, especially struggling readers, to focus on what's important in a text. Also, remember the significance of wait time. Research has shown that the amount of time an educator waits for a student to answer after posing a question has a critical effect on learning. So after you ask a student a question, silently count to five (ten if you have a student who really struggles to put his or her thoughts into words) before giving any additional prompts or redirecting the question to another student.

Talking about nonfiction concepts is also important. Remember, however, that discussion can never replace reading aloud because people rarely speak using the vocabulary and complex sentence structures of written language.

The Man Who Slept Through His Own Presidency

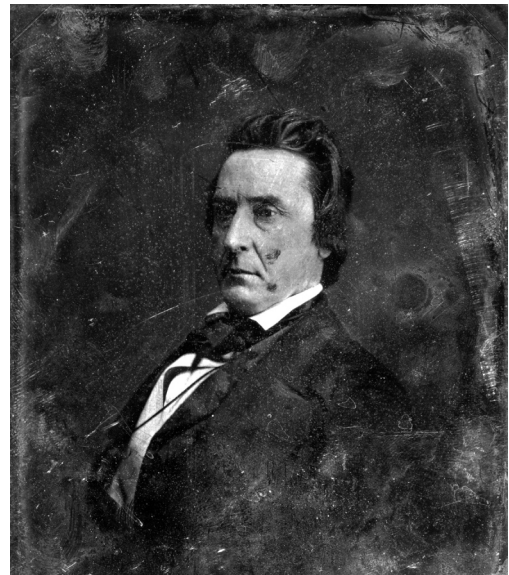
Would you believe that David Rice Atchison slept through the most important day of his life? It all happened on March 4, 1849. Government leaders were coming from all over the nation. They wanted to see Zachary Taylor sworn in as the 12th president of the United States. At that time March 4 was the inauguration date. (Today it is January 20.)

The first three days of the month had had terrible, stormy weather. The roads, unpaved at that time, were muddy. They had deep ruts. Travel was slow. Few of the people who were expected to come had actually arrived. So it was decided that Taylor's inauguration would be postponed for 24 hours. That would give people more time to reach the capital.

Yet this meant that the prior president, James Polk, was no longer president. And neither was Taylor until he was sworn into office. So who would be the U.S. president during those 24 hours? According to the U.S. Constitution, the presidency passed to Senator David Rice Atchison. He was the president pro tempore of the U.S. Senate. The president pro tempore is elected by the Senate to preside when the vice president is not there. The Senate typically chooses the majority party senator with the longest continuous service for this honor. Sometimes the president pro tempore signs official papers for the Senate. But never before had one actually served as U.S. president!

Atchison never even knew that he was the president. The Missouri senator had been working overtime for several weeks. He was totally exhausted when he came in early on the morning of March 4. He told his housekeeper that he was going to lie down. Then he slept all that day and night. He awoke on March 5. He had slept through his presidency!

Atchison served as president pro tempore of the Senate from 1846 to 1854. But never again was he or any other president pro tempore the U.S. president.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress,
"David Rice Atchison," LC-USZ62-109952

The Man Who Slept Through His Own Presidency

DICTIONARY OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Congressional Law

Power of the purse. The power of the purse refers to the Constitutional right given to Congress to raise and spend money. This includes the power to levy taxes on constituents, spend revenue on specific causes, assume debt and liability, and pay off debt and liability including interest accrued.

President pro tempore. The Constitution provides for a president pro tempore. This senator is chosen by the rest of the senators to preside over the Senate when the vice president cannot be there. In the Presidential Succession Act of 1792, the president pro tempore was next in line of succession to the presidency after the vice president.

A law completely removed the president pro tempore from the line of succession in 1886. Cabinet members were used instead. In 1947 a new law changed the order of succession to its current status. It placed the Speaker of the House in line immediately after the vice president. The president pro tempore comes after the Speaker, and then the secretary of state and other cabinet officers follow in order of their departments' creation.

The president pro tempore holds the office until the election of another president pro tempore. However, the president pro tempore may choose another senator to preside in his or her temporary absence. Usually a member of the majority party is selected.

Previous questions. A motion to end debate and force an immediate vote on a pending measure. In some legislative bodies, this is called cloture.



The Man Who Slept Through His Own Presidency

1. The president pro tempore is elected by the
 - a. U.S. president.
 - b. voters of the United States.
 - c. the U.S. vice president.
 - d. the Senate.
2. David Rice Atchison
 - a. was never the acting U.S. president.
 - b. knew that he was the acting U.S. president.
 - c. discovered that he had been the acting U.S. president after the fact.
 - d. never knew that he had been the acting U.S. president.
3. The 11th president of the United States was
 - a. Zachary Taylor.
 - b. James Polk.
 - c. David Rice Atchison.
 - d. none of the above.
4. The president pro tempore has always been in the line of U.S. presidential succession. True or False? Explain.

5. Why is it essential to have a clear line of succession for the U.S. presidency?

6. Do you think that the current line of presidential succession is better or worse than prior ones? Defend your stance.
