

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, First Grade, 2014-2015
Unit Six - Reading Across Genres to Learn about a Topic: Informational Books, Stories,
Poems

Unit Six – Reading Across Genres to Learn about a Topic: Informational Books, Stories, Poems

April/May (Level 3 Reading Benchmark: H/I/J/K)

Welcome to the Unit

The Common Core State Standards spotlight the importance that students learn academic content—farms and steam engines and medieval castles and baking soda and the antennae of a cricket—by reading. We agree that this is important. The amount of information that exists in the world is growing exponentially; the amount of total knowledge developed between 1997 and 2003 is equal to the amount of knowledge developed over the entire history of the world. The amount of technological information in the world doubles every seventy-two hours. So there is no question that we need to bring up a new generation of young people, a generation whose knowledge base, like that of the world, will grow exponentially, as they take in ideas and information from everywhere, linking all that they learn with all that they already know.

First graders need not only “learn to read,” but also “read to learn.” You’ll tell them, “Readers take classes from books! They learn not just from nonfiction books but also from stories and poems, from the backs of cereal boxes, from signs, directions, Internet articles—the works.” The concept that readers learn from many sources will be especially pertinent as children tackle more complex books. In the upper grades, when they will read historical fiction texts set in different eras and places, they will need to accumulate information about the setting (time and place) while engrossed in fast-paced drama.

This unit positions readers to apply all that they have learned about reading genres across the year to learning about a topic across genres. It gives readers an early start to viewing the world—and all the many types of books—through the lens of a learner. For example, a child who has read a story about a soccer team that finally wins a game may recognize that this is a story about how working hard can pay off, but she may not realize that it also teaches about soccer as a topic; soccer players must move a ball down the field by dribbling, not throwing it, they have to work together as a team, with each person in a particular position, to make goals. There is soccer vocabulary to be learned, too: mouth guard, shin guard, goalie.

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As you think about your game plan for this unit, pay attention to your children’s interests and their curiosities; now is the time to encourage that budding gemologist, veterinarian, ballerina, or chef. Of course, you may not have enough books on especially precise interests; you may need to improvise a bit, supplying books on topics that approximate your children’s interests. The child who loves dump trucks may decide to read not only a couple of nonfiction informational list books about trucks in general, but also some fiction and poetry: Jon Scieszka’s new *Trucktown* series, Donald Crews’s book *Truck*, Mark Todd’s rhythmic poem “Monster Trucks,” or the poem “Dig Dig Digging” by Margaret Mayo. You might consider, too, the topics that recur in many of your library’s fiction books and children’s just-right books—birthdays, grandparents, new siblings, moving, and school are just a few common ones. Once you start looking, you’ll be surprised at the topics you can pull together from your fiction library.

Overview

Essential Question: How can I get interested in a topic and learn a lot about it by reading many different kinds of books—and books that are in many different genres?

- **Bend I: Making Sense of All Kinds of Texts**
When I’m ready to learn about a topic, can I find a way to learn from all kinds of texts—even stories and poems?
- **Bend II: Reading and Learning about a Topic through Language**
When there are important words and phrases in the texts that I read, how can I get better at using them as I think and talk about my topic and learning?
- **Bend III: Learning Information by Comparing and Contrasting**
When I have a pile of books and other texts that tell about a topic, can I take all I learn from one text and add it to what I learn from the next?
- **Bend IV: Thinking Critically About Books**
After I’ve read many books on a topic, how do I teach others the information I’ve learned and my opinions about it?

We suggest you make explicit the reading and writing connections between this unit and the work your children are doing in writing workshop. For example, you’ll want to convey to kids that writers make deliberate choices to instruct readers. As they read, students can be on the lookout for the bits of information that authors have woven into their books—

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both in the words and the pictures—and they can try to find the ways in which the information from the illustrations adds to the information provided by the words on the page (CCSS RI 1.6).

Students might then reread the narrative writing they have done to find parts of their stories that could teach information. A child who wrote a story about making cookies with Mom could add a tip his mom gave him to “Add flour slowly, stirring all the while,” and then explain that when you make cookies, you add just a bit of flour, then stir it in before adding more flour and stirring again. The child who wrote a story about one time she was at ballet class might reread her writing to be sure it includes words like “plié” or “first position” in order to teach a reader who has never taken a dance class some ballet vocabulary. If children illustrated their stories, they can label important details that readers might not otherwise know.

As with any reading unit, you’ll spotlight a few strategies, perhaps teaching these in isolation and then as a repertoire to draw on. Because most of your kids are becoming transitional readers (levels H, I, J, K), in addition to teaching them to word-solve and monitor for meaning on their first reads, you will also nudge them to reread to acquire more information. Rereading will play an important role in this unit, both as a support of fluency and comprehension and as a means of building knowledge of a topic.

CCSS / LS Standards Addressed in this Unit

Five major standards are addressed in this unit. During the first bend, you’ll remind your readers to ask and answer questions about key details that they may encounter throughout texts (RI 1.1), as well as about new vocabulary or phrases they will come across (RI 1.4). As your readers identify the genres of the books they are reading, they can use all they know about a genre to identify the main topic and retell key details (RI 1.2). Your students will be reading a wide variety of text structures, and consequently, will be working on connecting information and ideas across two or more texts (RI 1.9). As you conclude this unit, you’ll encourage your first-graders to share any new knowledge they have gained and also to ask questions to clear up any confusion (SL 1.1c).

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Getting Ready

- Gather books together by topic and level to match your children's interests and reading abilities (the majority of books you select will be nonfiction).
- Prepare a text set to support a class study. A text set on weather might include such titles as: *Wind and Storms* (level K) by Fred Biddulph, *Rain* (level I) by Sheryl Sloan, *That Sky, That Rain* (level J) by Carolyn Otto, *Why Do Worms Come Up When it Rains?* (level I) by Betty Erikson, and *It's Raining, It's Pouring* (level G) by Kin Eagle.
- Plan for some individual and club materials that will help students hold on to information and vocabulary. Consider adding *think-marks* (bookmarks that have spaces for students to collect vocabulary and to jot their thinking) to baggies. You can also get a supply of simple file folders to use as containers for sorting Post-its, collecting vocabulary, and comparing and contrasting books (like a Venn diagram).
- Create a vocabulary word wall by clearing space on a bulletin board or in a publically displayed pocket chart for children to write new words on index cards.
- Pull out any charts that will support this unit: genre charts that have the criteria for each genre, partnership charts, which can be revised to add new ways partners can work together, and vocabulary charts with strategies for word-solving.

Assessment

Initial Assessments

As you plan for this unit, gather information on how your students think and read texts across genres. Look back to your summative assessment from Units Three and Four and across previous units to see what your students already know. You will also conduct some sort of initial assessment to check in on any skills or standards on which you want to focus that are not addressed in the summative assessments.

Once you have selected the standards on which you want to focus, you may decide to do an initial read-aloud assessment off of two texts from different genres. To do this, select a particular part of a text to read aloud to your students, and then ask them to stop-and-jot in response to a particular prompt around a given skill or standard. For instance, you might choose to gauge your students' initial understanding of skills such as compare and contrast, main idea and key details, and monitoring. You can then collect these student responses to get a sense of how your students are progressing toward the standards you hope to

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address in the unit. Use the TCRWP's *Informational Reading Learning Progression* to begin assessing how your students are growing as readers and thinkers.

Formative Assessments

Your conference notes and any Post-it work that your students produced independently during the last unit to capture their thinking around texts will also be important initial assessments as you plan instruction.

In addition, mid-unit, during this time of year, you will be in the process of administering your benchmark assessments (running records, word tests, spelling inventories). You can use this information either as an initial or a formative assessment to monitor student progress in reading strategies, skills, and behaviors at both independent and instructional levels. These assessments will reveal how well your readers are able to demonstrate understanding of texts at these levels, and will guide you in planning the goals for the whole class, for small group work, and for one-to-one conferences throughout the unit.

You will also want to teach into the speaking and listening standards outlined in the CCSS. You can consult your notes from read-aloud and whole class conversations to determine what students know about using talk as a tool for understanding. Throughout the unit, you can monitor your students' levels of reading strategies, skills, and behaviors to track their progress and to plan for whole class instruction, small group work, and conferences.

Summative Assessment

At the end of the unit, as a summative assessment, students can share what they have learned about their topics and where they acquired this information. This allows you to check their comprehension, both at their independent and instructional levels.

Working with students below benchmark (G or Below)

If you have a group of readers at level G or below, plan to do some close-in diagnostic work. Pinpoint the exact difficulty these kids are having in texts that they read at 90–95% accuracy—whether it is with phonics, multisyllabic word solving, cross-checking, self-correcting, or fluency. Some students may not have progressed because they are struggling with literal or inferential comprehension. These are all important pieces of information to consider when planning.

Set goals with each reader and decide when you will reassess to see if a child is ready to move. Some will be able to do so with direct and specific instruction. Kids should feel the

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success of moving up levels. Those who are on the cusp of entering a new level should be in transitional book baggies that include some texts at the next level up that they can read with support. Introduce your readers to books at their instructional level in conferences, through guided reading, or through shared reading of those texts, so that they have the opportunity to practice during their independent reading time.

Bend I: Making Sense of All Kinds of Texts

Invite children into the world of learning from various texts

On the first day, you will announce that today, everyone in the class is going to “shop” for books about something that fascinates them. This might be a hobby or interest that is already a part of kids’ lives, or it could be a topic they researched during one of the nonfiction units of study or that they have studied in science or social studies. It might be a topic that a partner loves, or one that is entirely new to them.

You might issue the invitation this way: “Readers, over the next few weeks you are going to be learning a lot. Right now, think, ‘What do I want to know more about?’ Is there a hobby or an animal or something in the world that gets you thinking, ‘I wonder....,’ ‘What if...?’ ‘How big...?’ ‘What about...?’ Now is the time to get some answers! You’ll draw on all you know about reading (which is a lot, by now) to learn about topics that make you curious. This is going to be a bit like a treasure hunt. You are going to see what information you can find across lots of different kinds of books—not just informational books, but stories, poems, lists! You may be drawn to particular topics, but you can also challenge yourself to learn about things you’ve never thought to study before—like how weather can be a powerful force. It’s an exciting time. Let’s get started!”

Whether you have already organized some baskets in the library by topic or are asking your kids to search the shelves on their own, teach your children to look for books that fit together. Remind them that they can select books from any genre—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, the works! This is a great opportunity to get to know your kids, to identify “experts” in your class, and to support kids’ individual interests and identities. Who is the go-to kid for questions about dinosaurs? Who loves all things motorized and mechanical?

Now that children are shopping for mixed genres, getting ready to read will take on a new level of importance. Draw your kids close and confide, “Readers, across this year we have read many different kinds of texts. Look at all these books about weather!” Hold up the titles as you read them aloud: *Wind and Storms*, *Rain*, *That Sky*, *That Rain*, *Why Do Worms*

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Come Up When it Rains?, It's Raining, It's Pouring.” Then point out that each of these books is about the weather, but they are all different kinds (genres) of books.

Then say, “Let’s remind ourselves of the different kinds of books we’ve read, of what they look like and what parts we can expect to find in each.” Students can search their book baggies, writing folders, poetry folders, science/social studies, folders. You might bring out your writing charts with the criteria for each genre kids have written across the year. This will set them up for the different genres they may encounter as they shop for texts.

Your first teaching point might sound like this: “Today I want to teach you that the first thing readers do when they begin a new book is to look through the pages and pictures to figure out what kind of text it is. Is it a poem? Is it fiction? Is it informational? Is it a mix of more than one kind of text? They can tell that it is fiction if something happens to a bunch of characters. They can tell that it’s nonfiction if it teaches them all about a topic. They can tell it’s a poem if it is on the short side and has just a few words on a line.”

“Today I want to teach you that the first thing readers do when they begin a new book is to look through the pages and pictures to figure out what kind of text it is. Is it a poem? Is it fiction? Is it informational? Is it a mix of more than one kind of text? It’s fiction if something happens to a bunch of characters. It’s nonfiction if it teaches all about a topic. It’s a poem if it is on the short side and has just a few words on each line.”

“Let’s look at *Wind and Storms*. What are you noticing? Turn and tell your partner.” Give children a minute to do this and listen in as they talk. Then say, “Yes, there’s a table of contents, an index, headings, photographs with labels. You’re right that this is a nonfiction book. Look at that photo of the tree with lightening in the branches. It says, ‘Lightning often shoots to the ground. It can destroy a tree and sometimes even hurt people.’ Now let’s look at *That Sky, That Rain*. This is a story about a little girl living on a farm with her grandpa and her dog. When they see a thunderstorm approaching, they visit all the animals to make sure they are safe and snug. I bet we’ll learn something about thunderstorms from this book, too.”

Notice how this provides a model for children of some ways to preview a book, expecting to learn information. If you plan to involve your kids in the organization of this unit’s books into topics, you might say, “Readers, as you look through books and identify what kind of text each one is, put a Post-it on it and label it ‘fiction,’ ‘nonfiction,’ ‘poetry,’ or ‘realistic fiction.’ This will help us when we sort our books later into topics/ideas.”

Later, perhaps during a mid-workshop, you might add, “Just like you did when you read nonfiction, you can look through our books now to decide which ones will be easiest and which will be hardest. Try reading a page or two to decide. Then make a plan for your

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independent reading. For example, you might put your books in a pile with the easiest ones on top, or you might decide to start with the challenging ones, and then move to the easier ones. You will decide which plan works best for you.”

It’s important to use language that lets kids know that they’ve done this previewing work before. A reminder of strategies from previous units should be enough to get kids on the right track. Also, since you’ve been reading aloud a mix of fiction and nonfiction all year long, kids should be able to easily spot the difference. You can address any confusion regarding genre through conferring or small groups. If your readers need additional work on this, remind them of what you’ve taught about structure across the year.

Teach strategies for learning about new topics

Teach children that readers do particular work when they begin reading a book on a topic that is new to them. Specifically, they read on the lookout for new facts and information that will help them to learn about and understand the topic.

“Today I want to teach you that when readers start a new book, they think, “What do I need to do to read this book my very best? Is this a topic I already know a lot about or is this a new topic for me? If it’s new, they read on the lookout for new facts and information that will help them to learn and understand about the topic.”

Teach children, too, that readers ask themselves questions as they read to learn about a topic. They read a bit, then stop and ask, “How does this work? When does this happen? Why is it important?”

Teach children to begin to determine the central message and main topic

Once readers identify a book’s genre, they can use what they know about that genre to figure out the central message and/or main topic of the book. Across this unit, and especially during this first bend, encourage your readers to ask and answer lots of questions about the key details in the texts they read (CCSS RI 1.1).

Teach students to read their books not only to take in new information, but also to think. Teach them that readers pause while they read to ask, “What does the author want me to think or understand about the topic in this book? You may decide to read a section of *Wind and Storms*, then stop and model how you ask yourself, “What does the author want me to feel about this topic? Does he want me to care about the topic more? Does he want me to be warned or be careful? Does he want me to feel amazed or inspired?” Then ask children to discuss the possibilities, using details from the text to support their thinking. A child doing this work herself might say, “I learned that baby skunks line up behind their mother.” Then

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she might ask herself, “What does the author want me to think? Oh! Mommy skunks keep track of their babies so they don’t get hurt or lost!”

Teach children to accumulate information across pages and to predict

During this bend, readers will synthesize information as they read. This skill works the same in all kinds of texts. You might say, “As readers read one page after another, they think, ‘What am I learning on this page? How does this information go with the information on the page before it? What is this book mostly teaching me about?’ Then they use what they notice to identify the main topic of the book.”

You will also want to remind your readers to make predictions and check their thinking as a way to hold on to the important information across a text.

“Today I want to teach you that when readers read to learn about topics, they make predictions and also check these. After they read a bit, a page, a part, or a section, they stop and ask themselves, “Did my prediction match what I learned? Do I need to change my thinking or understanding to match what the book is teaching me?”

Say, “Readers, don’t forget to take book walks in order to imagine what these may be about or what they may teach. Then as you read, you check your thinking across each book. At the end of each book, you will know whether or not the prediction you made during the book walk was right. You can identify the main topic or story line and the details you actually learned from the book. Do this work in all the books you chose to read. Jot Post-its as you notice clues about the main topic or about anything you are learning. You can leave these Post-its in the book to help the next reader!”

Bend II: Reading and Learning about a Topic through Language

In Bend Two, students will choose a topic of focus, selecting from the text sets made in Bend One. They will read as they did in the first week, using what they know about a genre to make predictions and then find a book’s main topic, central idea, and key details.

You’ll also teach children how to use the special features and language of their books to improve their understanding. You might say, “Readers, when you warm up, it helps to notice the bold words, or labels and captions, and think, ‘What is in this book? What will I learn?’” If you have read several books about weather and then come across a fiction book with a picture of a storm on a farm, you can think of words you have learned about weather

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to predict what might pop up on that particular page!”

"Today I want to teach you that as readers flip through the pages of a book to get ready to read, they stop to notice words, pictures and captions that may help them understand the book. As they come across these, they think, 'What is in this book? What will I learn?'"

Spotlight the learning that can take place from fiction

Because students will have a mix of fiction and nonfiction in hand, one thing to teach them is how to find factual information in a fictional story: “Even though some of your books are fiction, there is still a lot of factual information in them to learn.” You may want to teach a few lessons that help children clarify the difference between fact and fiction and that set them up to be on the lookout for true information, even in fictional books. You could introduce this concept using a familiar read-aloud, shared reading text or even a short three-to-four-minute clip from a familiar movie. Read aloud a page or two of a book, asking children to think carefully about how to tell if something is fact or fiction. In *That Sky, That Rain*, the grandpa says to the little girl, “It’s the most commonplace kind of magic, clouds spilling down before your eyes.” Point out that this is a poetic way of telling readers that rain comes from the clouds. For a more detailed and factual explanation of the source and process of rain, students can consult informational books on the topic.

After watching a clip or reading and thinking carefully, kids might contribute to a list of how to tell whether something is fact or fiction, while you record their ideas on a chart. They might notice, for example, that the people in the video clip are real, not cartoon drawings—often photographs contain factual information. They may notice some pieces of information that are familiar from other sources. For example, animals react in different ways when they sense storms are coming. Restate children’s contributions so that they are transferable to any book, rather than recording comments on the specific text you use to demonstrate. Teach them that readers always keep an open mind— something might be true or untrue (especially in today’s age of online information, computer-generated graphics, and realistic animation). Readers can confirm or disprove using multiple sources. They can think, “If I’ve only seen this once, I should check other sources to see if it’s right.” They can hold on to a fact they learn in one book and then, as they read other books, think, “Does this book say the same thing, or does it say something different?” Once they’ve read lots of books, they decide what to think.

Spotlight the language structures of particular genres

Marie Clay says that whatever a child can utter predicts what he or she can read and write. This means that if a child can talk in a particular way, she should be able to read and write

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texts that “talk” in similar ways. Every text has a particular language structure, or way that it “talks.” You can help students understand the language of different genres by teaching them what kinds of language structures they may see in particular genres. Have them listen for key words and phrases that indicate the author is teaching the reader something, such as: “The fact is . . .,” “Lightning is caused by electricity in the sky. . . , Next the . . .,” “Temperature means . . .,” “ A . . . is like . . .” In this way, you teach students to pay attention to the language structure in order to understand what the author is trying to teach. You’ll want to do this work not only during reading workshop, but also as you model and demonstrate aloud for students during read-aloud and shared reading. Set readers up to notice and name what the author is saying or what he is trying to teach by having them turn and talk, or stop and jot Post-its in the moment. Show readers that when they can anticipate the language structure of a text, they can read it with fluency and phrasing, which also enhances comprehension.

“Today I want to teach you that readers read books in a voice that matches how the book talks. They think about how the book talks, then they make their voice match that. If it is an information book, they use a teacher’s voice; if it is a story, they use a storyteller’s voice”

Challenge children to take on the new words of their topics

As children read, they will encounter new and often unfamiliar words. According to the CCSS language standards, first graders are expected to determine and clarify the meaning of new words that they encounter in their texts, so you will want to support this across the unit. You might teach your children that as they read, one big thing readers learn is the lingo of a topic. Whether they are learning about soccer or castles, as they read texts on a topic, readers will encounter the technical vocabulary that goes with that topic. In levels H, I, and J, children will encounter many more multi-syllabic words and new vocabulary. Encourage them to tackle these words and provide strategies for them to collect and talk about these with partners and clubs.

Children might create bookmarks that list important vocabulary and place them in the book for the next person to use or even add to. Additionally, you might clear a space on one of your bulletin boards or pocket charts for children to write new vocabulary on index cards that you can then put on display for others to see. You can keep this vocabulary wall organized by topic so that the words are easy for kids to locate and use in their book talk and independent writing. Clear a space, too, for all the charts you’ll make in this unit that list the new word-solving strategies you’ll teach.

Now that children are reading harder books, the strategies they need for solving tricky words will also have shifted. Kids will certainly need to use what they know about the topic

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to help them. You could say to your readers, “Remember, your baggies are filled with books about one topic. When you get to a tricky word that isn’t a word wall word or a word you can figure out using the letter sounds, there is a good chance that word has something to do with your topic. A book that teaches about school is probably going to include words like ‘reading,’ ‘classroom,’ and ‘students.’ A book that teaches about dogs is probably going to include words like ‘snout,’ ‘canine,’ and ‘paws.’ When you talk to your partners, be sure to incorporate these words into your conversation.”

"Today I want to teach you that readers become experts by 'talking the talk' of their books. When they see special, topic-specific words in their books, they go out of their way to use those words during partnership conversations."

At the beginning of the year, the books kids were reading likely had strong picture support to help them figure out the meaning of tricky words, but now that most of your children are reading level H or higher, there is less picture support. You might, then, teach kids that when the picture doesn’t help them figure out a word, they can think about what is happening in the story or about the information they are learning in order to figure it out. You might teach a strategy that pushes kids to cross-check their guess, like, “Readers think about the topic the book is teaching to figure out what might make sense in that word’s place, and then they use the first few letters to check the guess.” Another teaching point might be, “After you’ve figured out how to say a word by decoding it, you still have to figure out what it means by thinking about what else is happening on that page.” If a child is able to decode a word, but has no idea what the word means, then he will likely continue reading without clarity. Teach readers to stop to use all the clues they can gather not only to learn how to *say* new words, but also to figure out what these *mean*.

During partner time, you could show children how to create a word bank of vocabulary for the topic basket they are in and how to use those words as they talk about what they’ve learned. Teach them that partners let each other know when a word is new to them. Show them how to explain unfamiliar words to their partner by making a picture clue to support the new word. You could also steer them to use a small Post-it to flag particularly tricky words as they read, so that their partner can help them solve these. It will be important to have a resource in the room that children can look at to remember some of the key strategies they can use to figure out tricky words. When a child asks you, “What’s this word?” you can reply by saying, “Look at our chart of strategies! Try each one. Give it your best go. Figure out something that makes sense, and move on.”

You might also teach children that after solving an unfamiliar word, readers say it out loud a few times, and they reread the sentence in which it appears a few times until they can do it smoothly. Tell children that readers know to put a new word into their memory, so the

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next time they encounter it they don't have to start all over again from scratch.

"Today I want to teach you that you can push your understanding of new words by talking to your partner about them. When you come across a new word that you think is important to your topic, you can teach it to your partner. You may even look back to the page where you found the word to help you understand and explain it."

Invite children to read with expression

Another important reason to emphasize rereading for phrasing and fluency is that when children read with expression, it is easier to comprehend what they are reading. As children move from book to book about a particular topic, encountering unfamiliar words along the way, it will be less daunting if they have a sense of how the text is supposed to sound. You could play audio clips from NPR, the National Geographic television channel, or the Discovery channel as examples of what it sounds like to read (and talk) with fluency, in an informative, authoritative teaching voice. Teach kids that it is equally important to talk with fluency as it is to read with fluency. While this may come easily to confident, talkative children, for whom words (in English) come easily, this is a common challenge for many young children—especially when they talk about informational topics. According to the Common Core, fluency begins in the younger grades; it is named in the primary section of the foundational standards.

Remember that your minilessons are not mini-assignments. Each new strategy you teach should become just one of many options. Each day, during partner time, remind children that they have choices, and suggest that they look over the growing list. During partner time, then, some children will choose to continue sketching to consolidate what they know about a topic, while other partnerships will choose to make bookmarks or word banks or to help each other with tricky words or to talk about their new ideas about a topic.

Bend III: Readers Learn Information by Comparing and Contrasting

In Bend Three, children will think across the books in their text sets. Noticing how ideas connect across a single text and across several texts supports CCSS RI 1.3, and it helps young readers synthesize all of the information they are learning about a topic. When they find connections, students will then start to see the big picture or the context in which all of the details and isolated facts fit. Teach them that if they read a nonfiction book on a particular topic first, they can then read a fiction book, thinking, "Hmm. . . what in this book connects to the informational book I just read? Do any of the facts from the information book show up here in this story?" They could even stop and jot these connections on Post-

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its. The factual information they jot will help them keep track of the new information they get from the story. Later, they can teach it to a partner, which will further solidify their new understanding.

"Today I want to teach you that when readers learn new facts about a topic from informational books, they can hold those in their minds as they read stories about the same topic. They can think, 'What in this story connects to the informational book I just read? Do any of the facts from the first book show up here?' Then they can stop and jot on Post-its the things they notice."

Students will benefit from the concrete support that comes from referencing information in a book, rather than trying to pull the information out of the story in the abstract. Once they are doing this work, you might go a step further, teaching them, "Now that you've read *several* books on a topic, you can think to yourself, "What information do I already know about this topic that might connect to this story?" When you come to a place in your story that connects or adds to information you already know, again, you can stop and jot the information on a Post-it. Later, you and your partner can teach each what you've learned from all the books you've read."

Help students to accumulate information and to talk and think in deeper ways about their topics and books

Some children may struggle to carry all they know about a topic across a book or from one book to another. Remind them that new information and concepts help them understand not just the *one* book in their hands, but *other* books, too. On any given topic, some information will come from one text and some from another—it is the reader's job to assimilate all this information.

You might begin a chart that lists prompts for partner talk specifically designed to help kids accumulate information and make connections across experiences. Some of these prompts might include "This reminds me of. . .," "From all that I've read. . .," "This goes with this because. . .," or "This fits into the big picture by. . ." You'll think of other prompts to add to the chart by listening to your children as they talk in partnerships during reading workshop and read-aloud time. You might teach kids, too, that they can lay two books on a topic side by side to discuss where the information in the pictures and text in the two books overlaps or intersects. This will support your more visual learners.

As they accumulate new information, encourage your kids to add their own thinking. Some children in your class may be "fact collecting" without talking much about their ideas. Encourage these students to pause when they encounter a bit of information they find particularly interesting, and then to jot their idea about it on Post-its. If they struggle still,

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they may benefit from using prompts such as, “This makes me think. . .,” or “The idea I'm having is. . .” They can use these same prompts when they talk with their partner (or club) to share ideas and come up with new ones.

"Today I want to remind you that always, your job as a reader is to put together everything you're learning. That might mean you take a little bit from one book, and a little bit from another, and maybe even a little bit from a third or fourth book! When readers put lots of information together, they can figure out what they themselves think about a topic!"

Throughout all of this, children should use any new vocabulary—if they aren't, coach them to do so, reminding them of ways to hold on to new words they learn while reading.

Bend IV: Readers Think Critically About the Books They Are Reading

In the final bend, you will teach students to talk back to the information they read across texts. Of course, chances are your kids are already doing this on their own. You may hear things like, “Hey, there's a turtle in my book, and it's eating pizza out of a pizza box!” or “I didn't know saucers could fly!”

Encourage children to question and fact-check possibilities from their topics

Because children will be reading from a variety of sources, it is likely that they will come across texts that may not be fact-based (e.g., a poem that has a bit of personification). They will sometimes encounter non-truths. Encourage your students to read their stories and poems with a critical eye, not just accepting all things in books as truths, but questioning things that seem funny or “not quite right.”

In *It's Raining, It's Pouring*, there's a picture of an old man sneezing and the text says, “He blew so hard that he moved the stars but of course that wasn't easy.” Kids might ask, “Is that possible? Can a sneeze move stars?!” Here, you'll have the perfect opportunity to encourage them to do a little research. “What books might you look in to find an answer?” you can say, and then gently guide them toward any books that may hold answers (of course, you may need to supplement their books with some online information). Teach children that in addition to books, they can search resources like photographs or pictures or maps. Point out that the things they've learned in nonfiction books has tended to differ from the things they've learned in poems or stories or even their own life experiences. Teach clubs to jot down any questions their books are raising for them about their topics. As students reread their books they can search these for the answers.

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Teach children to form opinions

As the bend continues, teach children to not only question a book, but to also form opinions about it. “Readers,” you’ll say, “After you read, ask yourself and decide, “What do I think about this book? Do I agree with the author? Do I have different ideas?””

"Today I want to teach you that after they're done reading a book, readers ask themselves, 'What do I think about this book? Do I agree with the author? Do I have different ideas?'"

Children can learn to support their opinions using features and information from the text, citing evidence in the details they learned or the pictures they studied. Consider this passage in *Rain*, Sheryl Sloan:

Water is warmed by the sun and blown by the wind. When this happens, tiny drops of water are lifted up into the air. The water drops come together in the air. Soon they turn into clouds.

Kids can connect this line with these words from *That Sky, That Rain*:

The most commonplace kind of magic, clouds spilling down before your eyes.

“What’s the same about these two authors’ description of rain?” you might ask. “What’s different? How do *you* think rain forms?”

Teach children to bring their thinking, on Post-its, to their clubs, prepared to talk with others, and to draw on evidence from their books or other books they’ve read on their topics to support their thinking. They can apply the same work you teach about forming opinions in response to information books to their reading of stories; they can make judgments about characters and/or events in a text.

Spotlight the work that partnerships can create

By this point in the year you will likely have a chart that lists a few carefully selected choices of work for partners to do together. Continue to add to this now. You might say, “You’ve probably noticed that the pictures and words in each book only show some of the information about the topic—they leave out a lot, don’t they? One thing you can do as partners is to create a sketch that shows what the author of a book left out and stick it right into the book, so that the next kid who reads it will see the information the author left out.” Giant-sized Post-its work well for this, but plain paper is fine, too. It’s highly likely that kids

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will talk as they draw, maybe even talk more than they draw, which is fantastic. One of the most powerful ways to learn new language and content is through talk.

You might celebrate the end of the unit by asking students to share what they have learned about their topics while discussing where and how they acquired this information. You could invite another first grade class into the room to hear presentations. It's important that your young researchers have an opportunity to share their new knowledge and ideas (CCSS SL 1.4-6).

Word Study

Most of your students are going to need continued work with vowels, and at this point they will turn from understanding the difference between long and short vowel patterns, to really digging deep with vowel teams. Vowel teams are actually easier for students to recognize in words than they are for students to apply since there are so many different ways to make the same long vowel sounds.

Typical Concepts to Address for Students Reading H/I/J/K Level Texts:

Phonics	<p><i>In spelling, your writers will practice...</i></p> <p><i>long vowel patterns CVCe</i> (e.g., /ā/ as in late, /ā/ as in tape)</p> <p><i>inflectional endings</i> (e.g., play<u>ed</u>, play<u>ing</u>, wish<u>ed</u>, wait<u>ed</u>)</p> <p><i>In reading, the H/I/J/K level texts will also require readers to have knowledge of...</i></p> <p><i>vowel teams CVVC</i> (e.g., <u>rain</u>, <u>heat</u>, <u>fruit</u>)</p> <p><i>possessives (bird's nest)</i></p> <p><i>VVC phonogram patterns</i> (e.g., keep, good)</p> <p><i>contractions (I'm, can't, we're)</i></p>
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Vocabulary	<p><i>compound words (blueberry, backpack)</i></p> <p><i>plurals (y to i, add -es - pennies)</i></p> <p><i>taking apart longer words in various ways (syllables, onset rime, etc.)</i></p> <p><i>prefixes and suffixes (redo, reread; brighter, brightest)</i></p> <p><i>homophones (bare, bear)</i></p> <p><i>comparatives (-er, -est)</i></p>
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Word Work

You'll want to continue to provide word study instruction and practice opportunities across the day through word study centers and shared reading. You may provide more support through small-group instruction during reading workshop. In each unit, we'll give an example of one of these methods for teaching particular word study features.

At this point of the year, it is likely that your students will probably continue to need practice with spelling and reading words with long vowel patterns. You probably have children who are still securing CVCe patterns in their spelling and at the same time will need to know and use more sophisticated long vowel patterns such as vowel teams ('ai,' 'ay,' 'ea.'). During word study centers you might have children studying these patterns in different ways. Research suggests that a typical child may be involved in the spelling stage of vowel work for approximately two years, so allow for plenty of review, reflection, and activities that require children to apply this work to their reading and writing. Children need to learn that vowels can make several different sounds, that a vowel sound can be affected by other vowels and certain consonants, and that one sound can be represented by various spelling patterns.

A sequence of practice activities around long vowels across a week during word study centers could be:

Session 1 - sorting words - short a, long a (a_e), long a (ai, ay)

Session 2 - word hunt for words in just-right book bags and in writing folders

Session 3 - making words with magnetic letters

Session 4 - writing silly stories using words from the sort or from the collection of words found during the word hunt

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This cycle of practice allows children to read, manipulate, and write words using the long vowel features which will support transfer to their independent reading and writing work.

Shared Reading

Readers must learn the importance of setting a purpose for their reading and understand how this affects the way they read. In this cross genre unit, you might read two or three texts in one shared reading session to demonstrate how readers read different genres for different purposes. In the appendix, there is a weekly plan that includes strategies for orchestrating sources of information, fluency and word study across genres.