



Teacher's Guide

FOCUScurriculum

Curriculum materials for your content standards

Published by FOCUScurriculum
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Hudson, OH 44236
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www.focuscurriculum.com

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Order Number: CATG

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Designed by Signature Design Group, Inc.

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Teacher's Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Overview	4
Nonfiction Text Features	
Science	6
Correlation to California Content Standards	
Science	8
English Language Arts Activities	12
Accommodating Students' Needs	
Differentiated and Value-Added Instruction	14
Response to Intervention (RTI)	15
ELL Students	15
Home Connection	15
Tips for Building Your Nonfiction Library	16
Nonfiction Reading Strategies	
Whole Group Instruction	18
Small Group Instruction	18
Build a Knowledge Base	19
Knee-to-Knee	19
Reciprocal Teaching	20
Vocabulary Wall	21
Hide and Speak	21
Personal Reaction	21
Quiz Maker	21
Significant Points	22
Key Words	22
Highlighter Tape	22
Sticky-Note Coding	23



At Last—
the Books You
Need to Meet
California's Content
Standards . . .

At Three Different
Reading Levels!

Focus on California Standards provides you with a new, simplified, and effective choice for teaching science. Your students will no longer spend time deciphering text that has little, if any direct link to California's Science Standards. They will explore in depth, the concepts that are relevant and required of California learners at a pace and level that meets their individual needs.

Your Lesson Plans Will Match California's Science Standards

- Guessing and searching for relevant text, hoping that it covers a standard, is a time consuming process that can now be eliminated.
- Every title of *Focus on California Standards* is clearly linked to California's Science Standards.
- That means your lesson plans directly reflect the content standards your students are required to learn.

Three Reading Levels for Each Title Provides Differentiated and Value-Added Instruction

- Many science texts are often difficult for students to read. Thus they retain very little because the text is above their reading level. In contrast, some learners are not challenged by the material and become disconnected from what they read. *Focus on California Standards* provides an opportunity for all levels of learners to be engaged in nonfiction text.

When Instruction Is Focused, Assessment Is Also Focused

- When you teach with *Focus on California Standards*, you will know exactly which Content Standards have been mastered and which need further instruction. Three forms of assessment are provided to assist you.
- **Check Understanding** assessments evaluate your students' comprehension of each *Focus on California Standards* book. You will find multiple choice and short-answer questions that assess literal and interpretive comprehension of each book's content. They are designed to be used after completing each book.
- **Extended Response** assessments evaluate your students' ability to synthesize and apply the content and concepts identified in the California Standards. Extended Response assessments are designed to be used after a major unit of study, or as an end-of-year assessment.
- **A Half-length Practice Test** at each grade level, designed to mirror the California Standards Test, assesses key grade-level standards. This test can be used as a pre-test at the beginning of the year or as a post-test to evaluate mastery.

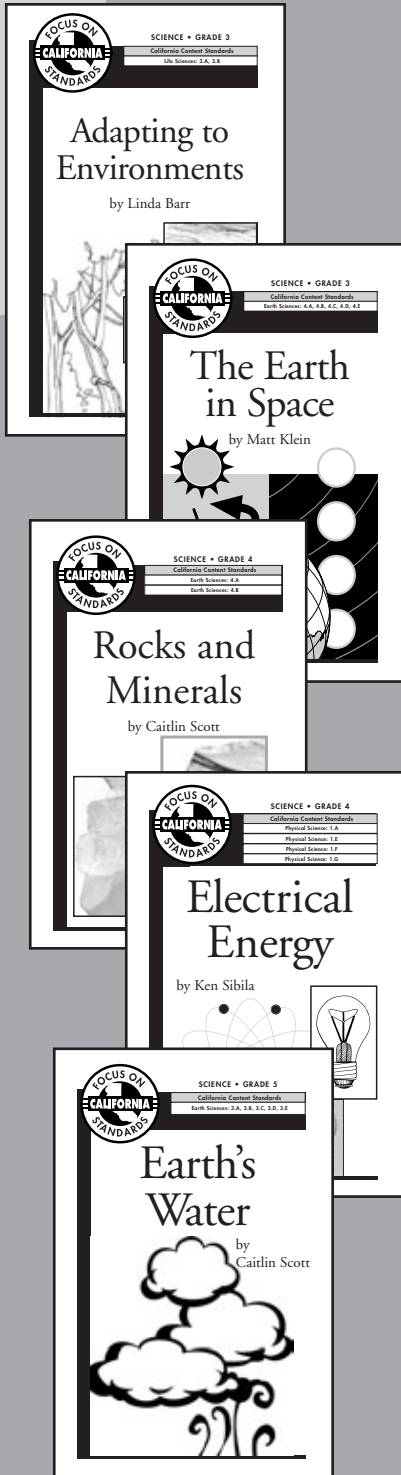
Covers California's English Language Arts Content Standards as Well

- *Focus on California Standards* covers important nonfiction reading skills and strategies required by California's English Language Arts Content Standards.
- Each title includes four reproducible activities that introduce and reinforce nonfiction reading skills and strategies.

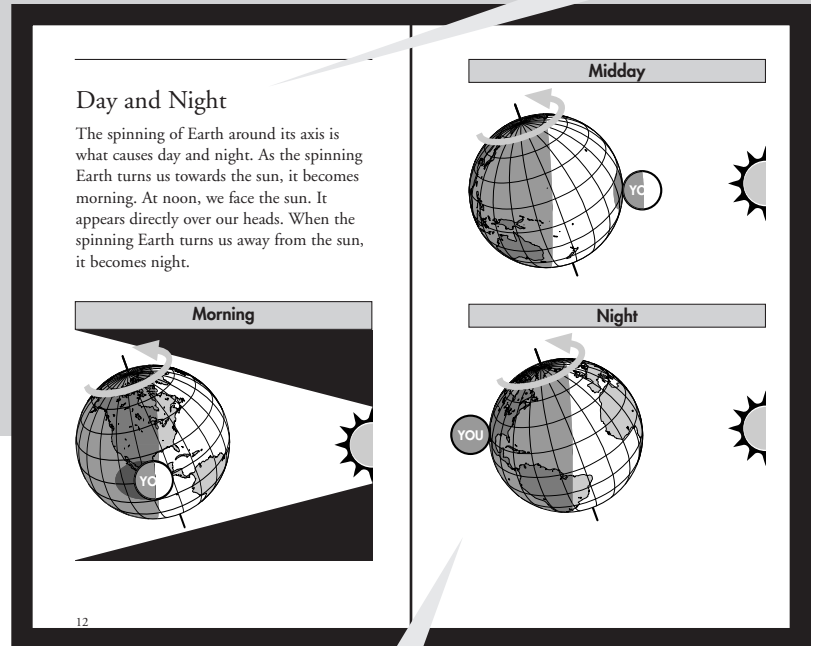
Nonfiction Text Features

SCIENCE

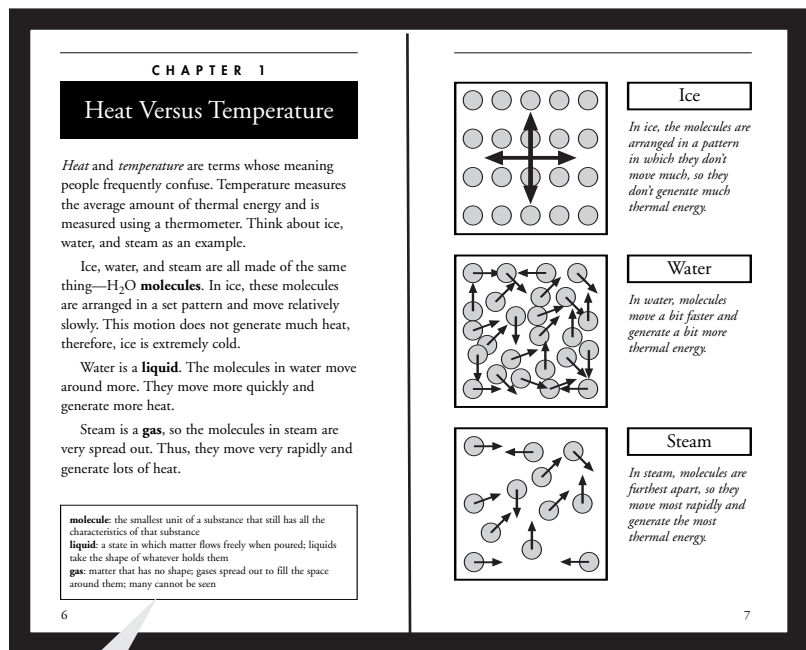
Heads and subheads guide students in predicting and organizing the text.



Shown here are just a few of the 19 science titles. Go to www.focuscurriculum.com to see all the titles.



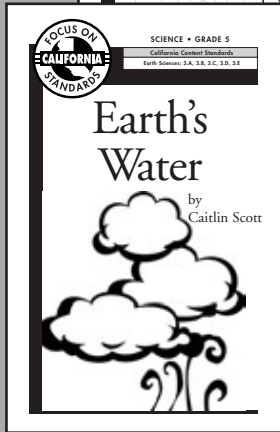
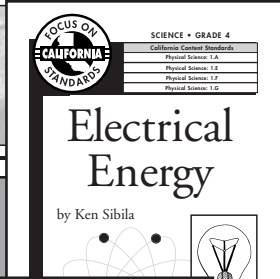
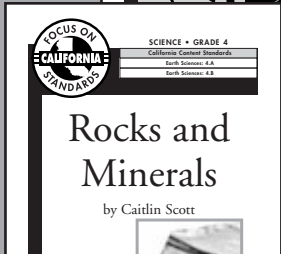
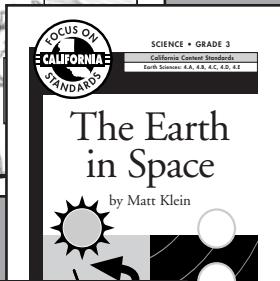
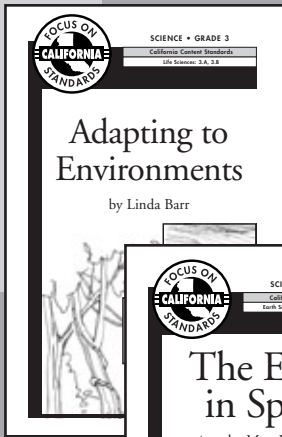
Students are encouraged to interpret graphic information to build critical thinking skills.



Key vocabulary is highlighted and defined on the page.

Nonfiction Text Features

SCIENCE



CHAPTER 1

The Water Cycle

The water cycle has four parts, each of which is essential to life on Earth.

Evaporation—The sun warms water on the surface of the Earth. Gradually, the water changes to a gas and rises.

Condensation—When the warm gas rises and moves over land, the air cools and the gas begins to change back to a **liquid**. Tiny water droplets form clouds.

Precipitation—More and more water collects in the cloud. Eventually, when there is enough water, it falls back to Earth's surface.

Runoff and Absorption—The water that falls from the cloud collects on Earth in lakes, rivers, oceans, and some is absorbed into the ground.

Can you guess what happens next? Evaporation. The cycle repeats itself endlessly.

liquid: a state in which matter flows freely when poured; liquids take the shape of whatever holds them

Water Cycle

Describe how water exists in the air in different forms.

Active reading prompts reinforce key concepts from California's Standards.

Plants That Grow from Spores

Have you ever seen a fern? Ferns have long, delicate leaves and reproduce without growing flowers or seeds.

If you turn over a fern leaf, you will probably see rows of spore clusters on the bottom of it. When these clusters break open, the spores that fall on moist soil grow into tiny, heart-shaped plants, less than 1/2 inch wide. These small plants are part of the fern's life cycle. They produce the fern's male and female sex cells and allow them to join so tiny ferns can begin to grow. When they are mature, they will produce more clusters of spores. The diagram on page 13 helps explain this process.

Mosses and other plants also reproduce using spores.

What is the difference between reproducing with seeds and with spores?

Life Cycle of a Spore

Illustrations and diagrams aid students' comprehension and build visual literacy skills.

CALIFORNIA'S SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS MET

Grade 3 Physical Science	
Book Title	Science Content Standard
What Is Energy?	3PS1.A Students know energy comes from the Sun to Earth in the form of light.
	3PS1.B Students know sources of stored energy take many forms, such as food, fuel, and batteries.
	3PS1.C Students know machines and living things convert stored energy to motion and heat.
	3PS1.D Students know energy can be carried from one place to another by waves, such as water waves and sound waves, by electric current, and by moving objects.
What Is Matter?	3PS1.E Students know matter has three forms: solid, liquid, and gas.
	3PS1.F Students know evaporation and melting are changes that occur when the objects are heated.
	3PS1.G Students know that when two or more substances are combined, a new substance may be formed with properties that are different from those of the original materials.
	3PS1.H Students know all matter is made of small particles called atoms, too small to see with the naked eye.
	3PS1.I Students know people once thought that earth, wind, fire, and water were the basic elements that made up all matter. Science experiments show that there are more than 100 different types of atoms, which are presented on the periodic table of the elements.
What Is Light?	3PS2.A Students know sunlight can be blocked to create shadows.
	3PS2.B Students know light is reflected from mirrors and other surfaces.
	3PS2.C Students know the color of light striking an object affects the way the object is seen.
	3PS2.D Students know an object is seen when light traveling from the object enters the eye.
Grade 3 Life Sciences	
Book Title	Science Content Standard
Adapting to Environments	3LS3.A Students know plants and animals have structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction.
	3LS3.B Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands, and wetlands.
What Happens When Ecosystems Change?	3LS3.C Students know living things cause changes in the environment in which they live: some of these changes are detrimental to the organism or other organisms, and some are beneficial.
	3LS3.D Students know when the environment changes, some plants and animals survive and reproduce; others die or move to new locations.
	3LS3.E Students know that some kinds of organisms that once lived on Earth have completely disappeared and that some of those resembled others that are alive today.
Grade 3 Earth Sciences	
Book Title	Science Content Standard
The Earth in Space	3ES4.A Students know the patterns of stars stay the same, although they appear to move across the sky nightly, and different stars can be seen in different seasons.
	3ES4.B Students know the way in which the Moon's appearance changes during the four-week lunar cycle.
	3ES4.C Students know telescopes magnify the appearance of some distant objects in the sky, including the Moon and the planets. The number of stars that can be seen through telescopes is dramatically greater than the number that can be seen by the unaided eye.
	3ES4.D Students know that Earth is one of several planets that orbit the Sun and that the Moon orbits Earth.
	3ES4.E Students know the position of the Sun in the sky changes during the course of the day and from season to season.

CALIFORNIA'S SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS MET

Grade 4 Physical Science

Book Title	Science Content Standard
Electrical Energy	4PS1.A Students know how to design and build simple series and parallel circuits by using components such as wires, batteries, and bulbs.
	4PS1.E Students know electrically charged objects attract or repel each other.
	4PS1.F Students know that magnets have two poles (north and south) and that like poles repel each other while unlike poles attract each other.
	4PS1.G Students know electrical energy can be converted to heat, light, and motion.
Electromagnetic Energy	4PS1.B Students know how to build a simple compass and use it to detect magnetic effects, including Earth's magnetic field.
	4PS1.C Students know electric currents produce magnetic fields and know how to build a simple electromagnet.
	4PS1.D Students know the role of electromagnets in the construction of electric motors, electric generators, and simple devices, such as doorbells and earphones.
	4PS1.E Students know electrically charged objects attract or repel each other.
	4PS1.F Students know that magnets have two poles (north and south) and that like poles repel each other while unlike poles attract each other.

Grade 4 Life Sciences

Book Title	Science Content Standard
Energy in Ecosystems	4LS2.A Students know plants are the primary source of matter and energy entering most food chains.
	4LS2.B Students know producers and consumers (herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, and decomposers) are related in food chains and food webs and may compete with each other for resources in an ecosystem.
	4LS2.C Students know decomposers, including many fungi, insects, and microorganisms, recycle matter from dead plants and animals.
Interdependence in Ecosystems	4LS3.A Students know ecosystems can be characterized by their living and nonliving components.
	4LS3.B Students know that in any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.
	4LS3.C Students know many plants depend on animals for pollination and seed dispersal, and animals depend on plants for food and shelter.
	4LS3.D Students know that most microorganisms do not cause disease and that many are beneficial.

Grade 4 Earth Sciences

Book Title	Science Content Standard
Rocks and Minerals	4ES4.A Students know how to differentiate among igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks by referring to their properties and methods of formation (the rock cycle).
	4ES4.B Students know how to identify common rock-forming minerals (including quartz, calcite, feldspar, mica, and hornblende) and ore minerals by using a table of diagnostic properties.
Our Changing Earth	4ES5.A Students know some changes in the earth are due to slow processes, such as erosion, and some changes are due to rapid processes, such as landslides, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes.
	4ES5.B Students know natural processes, including freezing and thawing and the growth of roots, cause rocks to break down into smaller pieces.
	4ES5.C Students know moving water erodes landforms, reshaping the land by taking it away from some places and depositing it as pebbles, sand, silt, and mud in other places (weathering, transport, and deposition).

CALIFORNIA'S SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS MET

Grade 5 Physical Science	
Book Title	Science Content Standard
Chemical Reactions in Matter	5PS1.A Students know that during chemical reactions the atoms in the reactants rearrange to form products with different properties.
	5PS1.B Students know all matter is made of atoms, which may combine to form molecules.
	5PS1.C Students know metals have properties in common, such as high electrical and thermal conductivity. Some metals, such as aluminum (Al), iron (Fe), nickel (Ni), copper (Cu), silver (Ag), and gold (Au), are pure elements; others, such as steel and brass, are composed of a combination of elemental metals.
	5PS1.D Students know that each element is made of one kind of atom and that the elements are organized in the periodic table by their chemical properties.
	5PS1.E Students know scientists have developed instruments that can create discrete images of atoms and molecules that show that the atoms and molecules often occur in well-ordered arrays.
	5PS1.F Students know differences in chemical and physical properties of substances are used to separate mixtures and identify compounds.
	5PS1.G Students know properties of solid, liquid, and gaseous substances, such as sugar (C ₆ H ₁₂ O ₆), water (H ₂ O), helium (He), oxygen (O ₂), nitrogen (N ₂), and carbon dioxide (CO ₂).
	5PS1.H Students know living organisms and most materials are composed of just a few elements.
	5PS1.I Students know the common properties of salts, such as sodium chloride (NaCl).
Grade 5 Life Sciences	
Book Title	Science Content Standard
Internal Structures of Animals	5LS2.A Students know many multicellular organisms have specialized structures to support the transport of materials.
	5LS2.B Students know how blood circulates through the heart chambers, lungs, and body and how carbon dioxide (CO ₂) and oxygen (O ₂) are exchanged in the lungs and tissues.
	5LS2.C Students know the sequential steps of digestion and the roles of teeth and the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and colon in the function of the digestive system.
	5LS2.D Students know the role of the kidney in removing cellular waste from blood and converting it into urine, which is stored in the bladder.
Internal Structures of Plants	5LS2.E Students know how sugar, water, and minerals are transported in a vascular plant.
	5LS2.F Students know plants use carbon dioxide (CO ₂) and energy from sunlight to build molecules of sugar and release oxygen.
	5LS2.G Students know plant and animal cells break down sugar to obtain energy, a process resulting in carbon dioxide (CO ₂) and water (respiration).

CALIFORNIA'S SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS MET

Grade 5 Earth Sciences

Book Title	Science Content Standard
Earth's Water	5ES3.A Students know most of Earth's water is present as salt water in the oceans, which cover most of Earth's surface.
	5ES3.B Students know when liquid water evaporates, it turns into water vapor in the air and can reappear as a liquid when cooled or as a solid if cooled below the freezing point of water.
	5ES3.C Students know water vapor in the air moves from one place to another and can form fog or clouds, which are tiny droplets of water or ice, and can fall to Earth as rain, hail, sleet, or snow.
	5ES3.D Students know that the amount of fresh water located in rivers, lakes, under-ground sources, and glaciers is limited and that its availability can be extended by recycling and decreasing the use of water.
	5ES3.E Students know the origin of the water used by their local communities.
The Air Around Us	5ES4.A Students know uneven heating of Earth causes air movements (convection currents).
	5ES4.B Students know the influence that the ocean has on the weather and the role that the water cycle plays in weather patterns.
	5ES4.E Students know that the Earth's atmosphere exerts a pressure that decreases with the distance above Earth's surface and that at any point it exerts this pressure equally in all directions
	5ES4.A Students know uneven heating of Earth causes air movements (convection currents).
Tracking Weather Patterns	5ES4.B Students know the influence that the ocean has on the weather and the role that the water cycle plays in weather patterns.
	5ES4.C Students know the causes and effects of different types of severe weather.
	5ES4.D Students know how to use weather maps and data to predict local weather and know that weather forecasts depend on many variables.
	5ES4.E Students know that the Earth's atmosphere exerts a pressure that decreases with distance above Earth's surface and that at any point it exerts this pressure equally in all directions.
Our Solar System	5ES5.A Students know the Sun, an average star, is the central and largest body in the solar system and is composed primarily of hydrogen and helium.
	5ES5.B Students know the solar system includes the planet Earth, the Moon, the Sun, eight other planets and their satellites, and smaller objects, such as asteroids and comets.
	5ES5.C Students know the path of a planet around the Sun is due to the gravitational attraction between the Sun and the planet.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES

Focus on
California Standards
Also Integrates
California's English-
language Arts
Standards

Focus on California Standards provides practice in important nonfiction reading skills and strategies required by California's English Language Arts Content Standards. Each title is accompanied by four reproducible activities that teach and apply comprehension and vocabulary skills and strategies. You will cover science content AND teach nonfiction reading skills at the same time. Here are just some of the skill activities you'll find:

Prefixes

TRY THE SKILL

Prefixes are groups of letters that are added to the beginning of a base word. They change the meaning of the word. Here are three common prefixes that you must know.

un- meaning "not": unsure, unhappy, uncover
re- meaning "again": replace, reproduce, return
pre- meaning "before": prefix, prepare, prevent

Understanding these prefixes can help you figure out the meanings of new words. To practice, read each definition. Then shade the circle next to the word that matches it. Pay attention to the prefixes.

1. To make up your mind before you have all the information you need

- Ⓐ prejudice
- Ⓑ retrieve
- Ⓒ unnecessary
- Ⓓ regret

2. Remembering something that happened in the past and feeling sad about it

- Ⓐ retrieve
- Ⓑ prejudice
- Ⓒ undecided
- Ⓓ regret

3. Something that is extra and not required

- Ⓐ regret
- Ⓑ undecided
- Ⓒ unnecessary
- Ⓓ retrieve

Think of more words that use the prefixes *un-*, *re-*, and *pre-*. Write them on the lines. Use a dictionary for help.

Vocabulary and Concept Development, 1.8

Four different English-language arts activities accompany each book.

- Identify Main Ideas and Supporting Details
- Identify Cause and Effect
- Make Inferences from Relevant Information
- Draw Conclusions
- Compare and Contrast
- Classify and Categorize
- Summarize
- Distinguish Fact from Opinion
- Use Context Clues
- Prefixes, Suffixes, and Roots
- Synonyms and Antonyms
- Interpret Graphic Information
- Locate Information Using Table of Contents, Index, and Glossary

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES

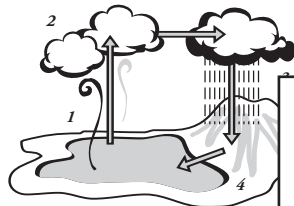
Skills and strategies are explained and modeled for students.

Then students apply the skills and strategies using information from the book.

Interpret Graphic Information

TRY THE SKILL

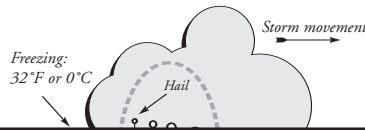
Graphic information can help you understand a process. The following illustration shows the water cycle. The steps in the process are numbered.



The picture can remind you of the steps in the cycle. For example, you might look at this diagram and then write the following:

Water evaporates and rises into the air. Next, water condenses. Then, water falls as precipitation. Finally, the water cycle repeats itself.

Look at the diagram and write about how hail forms.



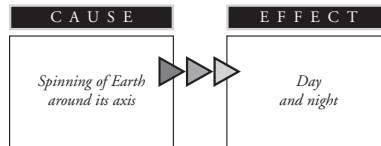
Cause and Effect

TRY THE SKILL

To find out an effect, you ask, "What happened?"
To find out a cause, you ask, "Why did that happen?"
Read this passage from the book.

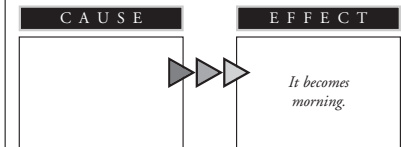
The spinning of Earth around its axis is what causes day and night. As the spinning Earth turns us towards the sun, it becomes morning. At noon, we face the sun. It appears directly over our heads. When the spinning Earth turns us away from the sun, it becomes night.

This graphic explains one cause-and-effect relationship in this passage.

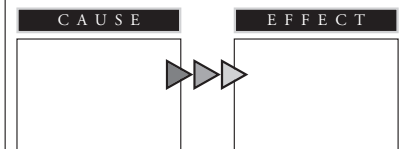


Read the passage again. Then complete each graphic.

1. Why is it morning?



2. Why is it night?



Compare and Contrast

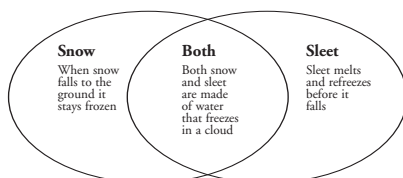
Comparing and contrasting can help you understand what you read.

- Comparing tells how things are alike.
- Contrasting tells how things are different.

Read these paragraphs from *Water Is in the Air*. Then, read the Venn diagram that compares and contrasts.

Snow is water that freezes in a cloud. As it falls to the ground, it stays frozen. Because snow freezes in a cloud and stays frozen, each flake has beautiful patterns.

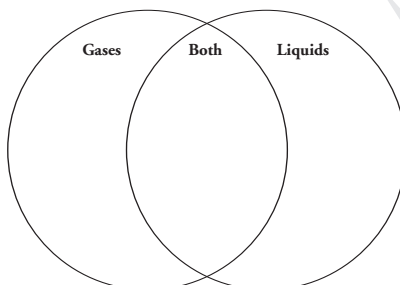
Sleet is also water that freezes in a cloud. But, sleet doesn't stay frozen. It passes through warmer air and melts. Then, it goes through colder air again. It refreezes just before it hits the ground.



Read

A gas is a state of matter. Most gases have no shape. They spread out to fill the space around them. Most cannot be seen.

Liquids are also a state of matter. Liquids flow freely when you pour them. They take the space of whatever holds them.



Graphic organizers are used to help students organize and synthesize information.

Students are provided many opportunities to reread the text for a variety of purposes.

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS' NEEDS

Differentiated and Value-Added Instruction

The aim of differentiated and value-added instruction is to maximize each student's growth by meeting each student where he or she is and helping the student to progress. In practice, differentiation involves offering several different learning experiences in response to each student's varied needs. Using *Focus on California Standards*, classroom teachers are able to differentiate with leveled text experiences. The text is differentiated by reading ability; therefore, students are engaged with text at their individual reading level. By offering three levels of text for every title, *Focus on California Standards* provides students with the ability to easily move up or down a level based on current mastery.

Below Level

Below level titles are written approximately one reading level below the intended grade level. The books cover the main ideas and important details suggested by California's Content Standards. Sentences are shorter and easier to read. The concept load is lighter, yet important content vocabulary is taught. A great start for struggling readers as well as ESL and special needs students.

On Level

These versions are written at grade level. The books cover the important content standards and provide more details and information related to the main ideas. Sentences are more complex and vocabulary is appropriate to the grade level.

Above Level

Above level books are written approximately one reading level above the intended grade level. The books delve deeper into the content expanding on the main ideas and supporting details. There is more text on each page with richer vocabulary for value-added instruction to help your highest achievers show growth.

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS' NEEDS

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention aims to prevent unnecessary assignment to special education. With RTI, low-performing children are offered individualized academic intervention. The classroom teacher must provide tier one interventions that are integrally connected to the core programs of the regular classroom.

Focus on California Standards provide core content material that can be used as part of the Response to Intervention Model. The content standards are isolated and clearly labeled for each title. When students need more than the traditional text, *Focus on California Standards* books serve as a means of intervention by providing direct reinforcement of specific California standards.

ELL Instruction

The *Focus on California Standards* books address the needs of English language learners by providing differentiated reading levels. In addition, students are able to write translations and additional definitions in their personal text. When the research-based strategies are used, language learning is strengthened as they gain background knowledge in science and social studies. The content embedded instruction provides opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, use gestures, read facial expressions, hear changes in intonation, and make references to the text while working with classmates.

Home Connection

Focus on California Standards provides an invaluable library for classrooms—and also for homes. A *Focus on California Standards* home library is an inexpensive way to involve parents with the content required of California students. It is easy to partner with parents to help their children increase their content area knowledge.

Each title of *Focus on California Standards* also includes a list of Web sites correlated to the content. These Web sites are great for student stations or independent work in the classroom. They are also a beneficial way to provide a link between school and home. By sending home the list of sites to explore, families can discover and learn together.

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR NONFICTION LIBRARY

Consider the Following Suggestions Prior to Making the Books

While it does take some time to create the library, it is well worth the effort. Your instruction will be focused on California's Content Standards—and you will save a considerable amount of money. Even with the cost of paper, ink, and aide time to compile, the books are less expensive than any other available option.

- Prepare in advance for the process of assembling the books.
- Decide how many books of each title will be needed.
- Decide how many of each level will be needed.
- Determine if the titles will be stored in a central library in the school, or if each teacher will want her or his own classroom set.
- Determine if each student will keep each book to create a home library.
- Decide if you want to create the library at one time, or over the course of the year.
- If you wish to create the books at one time:
 - * teams of teachers can be assigned titles so that they can mass produce books to share with colleagues.
 - * parents or aides can be easily trained on the assembly process and can make the books for the classrooms.
 - * utilize high school honor students needing community project hours to create the books.
- Before printing, be sure your printer functions are set correctly including printing in landscape (horizontal) format.
- An extended length stapler is required to bind the books together.
- To make the cover more durable and color coded, by subject or grade level, you may want to use heavier paper. (Do not color code by reading level. It is beneficial to have all levels the same color to protect the self-esteem and comfort of all students.)

HOW TO MAKE A STUDENT'S BOOK

- To make one student book, or a two-sided master copy that can be photocopied, you will print on both sides of seven sheets of 8.5"x 11" paper.
- Do a test printout of one book first to familiarize yourself with the procedure.
- Follow these instructions carefully.

First Since you will be printing on both sides of the sheets of paper, select a good quality white paper. We recommend using at least a 22lb sheet.

Second Be sure you have the correct page setup settings for your computer and printer. You will print these pages in landscape format.

Third Open the PDF of the book you want to print. Select print from your file menu. In your printer's dialogue box enter pages 5–18 to print. Then select EVEN pages only. It is important to print only the EVEN pages first. Click "Print" to print the even pages. (**Important note:** The first page that prints will be blank. DO NOT discard this page. It will be needed to print the cover in the next step.)

Forth When the even pages have printed, flip the stack of pages over to print the odd pages. Place the stack back in your printer. Select print from the file menu again. In your printer's dialogue box, select ODD pages. Click "Print" to print the odd the pages.

Fifth You now have a complete book. Check to be sure the pages are in the correct order with the book's cover as the top page. Then fold the stack of paper in half.

Sixth Use an extended-length stapler to staple the pages together. Place the cover facing up and staple three staples in the spine of the book.

Please note that printers vary in how they output pages. Do a test printing with one book and adjust the procedure as necessary.

If you want to make a one-sided master copy, print ALL pages 5–18 at once. Then select "one-sided to two-sided" on the copy machine.

NONFICTION READING STRATEGIES

Use These Research-Based Strategies to Ensure Success

Whole Group Instruction

Distribute the books according to your students' reading abilities. If you are not sure of the reading level, it is best to start with the lower level book. Children do not need to know who has Below Level, On Level, or Above Level books. Note that there is a small circle on the back cover with a BL, OL, or AL to indicate reading level.

For large group instruction the text in each book will not be read aloud unless the students are paired with a partner reading the same text. Allow for independent silent reading opportunities. Sharing is encouraged following the assigned section or chapter. The major content will be the same in each book, regardless of the level of the book.

Small Group Instruction

Focus on California Standards makes small group instruction practical and uncomplicated. The leveled text is very helpful. Content teachers can pull small groups of learners together to reinforce content standards. Language arts teachers can use *Focus on California Standards* to teach California's English Language Arts Standard with text that is relevant to the content standards.

Some struggling readers may still experience difficulty with the Below Level texts, especially because important content vocabulary has not been omitted. Do not be discouraged. Even with initial struggles, at-risk readers benefit from *Focus on California Standards*. The books are designed to be visually simple and appealing and are not filled with unnecessary text. By using the vocabulary and nonfiction reading strategies that follow in this Teachers Guide, all readers can successfully comprehend the content.

NONFICTION READING STRATEGIES

Build a Knowledge Base

The information and instruction given to students before they read is known as *front loading*. What you do before and during reading can matter more than what you do after reading.

Focus on California Standards provides you with many key vocabulary terms students will encounter. Print the words on index cards prior to the reading assignment to “front load” the vocabulary. Use the words in real-world sentences and questions. Then have students explain what the words mean.

Next, look at the table of contents, headings, and subheadings and discuss what might occur in the text students are about to read. Use graphic organizers such as KWL charts to tap prior knowledge. Talk about what they know, what they want to know, and then follow up with what they have learned.

Knee-to-Knee Sharing

Knee-to-Knee Sharing is an effective strategy to implement with large groups or small groups. Children retain content when they are given the opportunity to talk about what they have read. By practicing communicating with a partner while facing each other sitting knee-to-knee, the sharing is brief but powerful.

Take a minute from reading to break and share what has been learned. Ask pairs of students to take turns for a 30 second sharing of one of the following:

- Share one fact that they learned.
- Share one interesting word.
- Share a vocabulary word.
- Summarize the page, or short chapter.

Model the appropriate way to share, with proper eye contact and the knee-to-knee position. Remind students that their sharing must be original. They cannot share the same fact. If their partner used the fact or word that they were planning to share, allow them to look back at text to find an original piece of information to share. Have students take turns sharing first. Use a clock and insist that the sharing remain brief. Some students like to have a sticky-note, a sheet of paper, slate board, or dry-erase board to make notes as they read to help with this activity.

NONFICTION READING STRATEGIES

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional activity that takes place as dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: predicting, summarizing, questioning, and clarifying. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading this dialogue. The *Focus on California Standards* books are a perfect length to use with reciprocal strategies. All four comprehension strategies should be modeled and used with the *Focus on California Standards* books at each reading.

Predicting

- Prior to reading the text, encourage students to skim through the books looking at graphics, headings, and boldfaced vocabulary in order to discuss what the text is likely to be about. Guide incorrect predictions back to the graphics, headings, or vocabulary words. It is essential to get a knowledge base correlated to upcoming content.

Summarizing

- Summarizing text helps students learn to pull the main ideas from the paragraphs or chapters. Sometimes more than one page must be covered in the Below Level books to form a complete idea. Strategies such as “Key Words,” “Significant Point,” and “Hide and Speak” (explained in the next few pages) all help to practice summarizing.

Questioning

- After reading a book, students practice generating questions. Questions can be based on personal inquiry, something they are curious about, or based on general knowledge recall. The activity Quiz Maker, is an easy activity that promotes questioning. Students who can construct questions are able to deconstruct questions on standardized tests. It is important for you to model questioning by thinking aloud. Instruct children to use sticky-notes in the margins and note questions as they read.

Clarifying

- Making sense of a difficult word or passage is known as *clarifying*. Rereading, reading on, and using inferential clues all help students clarify information. To help students who are reluctant to share a personal need to clarify, it helps to ask them to clarify for a younger friend. “If a second grader read this page of the book, what might they need help in understanding?” This allows children to openly discuss, risk-free, the areas that may be misunderstood.

NONFICTION READING STRATEGIES

Vocabulary Wall

Use the words found in the *Focus on California Standards* books as word wall words. Keep them posted as the students work through the books. In addition to the words found in vocabulary boxes at the bottom of each page and in the glossary in each book, note key words for which students needed clarification as they read to add to the word wall.

Hide and Speak

Using the *Focus on California Standards* books and index cards, have students read a section that is approximately the size of the index card. Cover the text with the index card and then share what that text was about without looking back at the text. This activity works best with partners matched to the same reading level. The index cards also serve as a slide for lower level or distractible readers. If index cards are not available, students can cover the text with their hand.

Personal Reaction

Ask students to decide on a stopping point as they read a *Focus on California Standards* books. Instruct students to read silently to their stopping point and share a personal reaction to the text. There is no incorrect response. This is a self-to-text sharing. A personal connection to the nonfiction text increases content retention and understanding.

Quiz Maker

This activity can be directed to the class as a whole with independent writing or partner writing. Using the *Focus on California Standards* books, have students read a passage or read to a decided stopping point. After reading the selected text, instruct students to work alone or with a partner to create two questions about the topic. This activity can be geared towards “stumping the teacher.” The questions can also be used for group games such as Jeopardy® or team tally games. The questions can be saved as test review, or you can select ten of the questions and generate a quiz that has been created by the students. All submitted questions must include an answer and a page number indicating where the answer can be found.

NONFICTION READING STRATEGIES

Significant Points

Using the *Focus on California Standards* books, have students independently read and mark pages or paragraphs that they feel have made a strong point. Use strips of sticky-notes to mark significant points or to extend from the paper's edge to mark significant points in each chapter. These can be points of main events, interest, or confusion. Share all significant points before moving on to the next reading assignment.

Key Words

Have students read a short chunk of text and stop. They then select one word (or two words) that they feel is the most important on that page. Have students jot the word(s) down on a sticky-note. At the end of the chapter, have each student compile the sticky-notes to create a summary based on the key words.

Highlighter Tape

Highlighter tape can be used to highlight significant points or key words. Highlighter tape dispenses like any transparent tape and comes in a variety of colors. It can be peeled off and reused. Students like the tape because it adds a splash of color to their text. Instructions for gentle hands will help ensure that the tape strips may be reused for multiple lessons.

NONFICTION READING STRATEGIES

Sticky-Note Coding

Have each student use sticky-notes which have been cut into strips. Instruct students to stop reading after each paragraph and indicate their personal reaction and level of understanding on a sticky-note. Have students use the following codes:

- √ "I already knew this."
- * "New information."
- ! "Wow—interesting!"
- ? "I don't understand."

As the students code their own individual understanding, circulate around the room and make notes for grouping and lesson planning using student coding as comprehension data. You may also give time at the end of each section for all question mark sections to be discussed.

Chart paper can be posted with the codes: √, *, !, or ? at the top of four separate sheets. All four codes could be available on large charts at the end of the lesson for students to contribute their findings, or just one or two code charts can be generated at one time. If you are asking for question mark selections to be shared, the poster with ? "I don't understand." should be up front in the classroom.

Invite students to write any words that were unclear. If another student had that same area marked, keep a tally beside each recorded selection. You will know immediately if you have to reteach a lesson or provide direct instruction based on the number of students represented on the chart. Providing immediate clarity and allowing group sharing and discussions will strengthen the lesson content.

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