

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

Focuscurriculum books make 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 Focuscurriculum books to teach the 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 Focuscurriculum books. 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.

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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.

Focuscurriculum books 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.