

TIME
FOR KIDS

Level
3

Prepare for

NCEOG

Using

**Exploring
Nonfiction**

Teacher's Guide

TCM8373

Teacher Created Materials
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Introduction to

Prepare for NCEOG Using Exploring Nonfiction

The cards in *Exploring Nonfiction: Reading in the Content Areas* provide opportunities for students to interact with authentic, culturally diverse written text. However, exposure to authentic text alone may not be sufficient to prepare students for high-stakes tests. Students need many opportunities in the classroom to encounter the types of questions for which they will be held accountable on the state tests.

To meet this need, NCEOG-style questions for each *Exploring Nonfiction* card were developed by North Carolina teachers. Each card has four questions, in most cases one from each of the four NCEOG categories (described in the next section). However, because of the expository nature of the text, there are instances where literary elements are not present. In those instances, a question from another objective is substituted.

These practice questions were patterned after the questions found in the Reading Comprehension Sample Selections and Items Test Information Document published by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

These questions will give students the opportunity to practice showing their comprehension of text in the NCEOG test format. These NCEOG specific questions will allow teachers a “dip stick” to be used with each card to continually monitor a students’ comprehension. In essence, each card carries with it a “mini-NCEOG.” Continuous practice and progress monitoring will aid both students and teachers as they prepare to meet the challenge of a rigorous assessment.

About the North Carolina EOG Assessments

The NCEOG student expectations in Reading for grades 3-5 are grouped under four categories. These are identified in Reading Comprehension Sample Selections and Items Test Information Document as follows:

Category 1: Cognition

Refers to the initial strategies a reader uses to understand the selection

Examines the purpose and organization of the selection

Considers the text as a whole or in a broad perspective

Includes strategies such as using context clues to determine meaning or summarizing to include main points

Includes literal understanding of text

Category 2: Interpretation

Requires a student to develop a more complete understanding

Asks students to clarify, to explain the significance of, to extend, and/or to adapt ideas/concepts

Introduction to

Prepare for NCEOG Using Exploring Nonfiction (cont.)

Category 3: Critical Stance

Asks the student to stand apart from the selection and consider it objectively

Involves processes such as comparing/contrasting and understand the impact of literary elements

Category 4: Connections

Refers to connecting knowledge from the selection with other information and experiences

Requires the student to relate the selection to events beyond/outside the selection

Requires the student to make associations outside the selection and between selections

How to Use the NCEOG Practice Pages

Reproduce the NCEOG practice page for use after each card has been taught. Sometimes have students complete the page on their own for use as a comprehension assessment. At other times, complete the page together modeling and discussing the test-taking strategies that might be used to answer the questions. With on-going, consistent practice students will become comfortable with the format and will perform successfully when they take the NCEOG.

Authors:

This introduction was written by Debbie Pittman and May Tilghman, authors of the test items in the student book.

Why Supplement a Core Reading Program with Nonfiction Materials?

Schools have been given a challenge: Leave No Child Behind. Under the Reading First legislation, part of the No Child Left Behind Act, a core program must address five components of reading. These are Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension. To make sure that all children succeed and that all five reading components are thoroughly covered, supplemental/intervention materials may be used. Furthermore, good reading programs should include expository text, multicultural text, and high interest text. Often core reading programs fail to meet these criteria completely, so supplemental materials will help guarantee that all children are exposed to a wide variety of reading materials that will help them grow in all five areas of reading.

Core reading programs usually do a fine job of covering the first two elements of reading—phonemic awareness and phonics. Children learn to sound out words well. The bigger challenge to instruction, especially as students move up the grades and encounter tests that measure their progress, are the other three elements—vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Vocabulary

Developing readers have difficulty reading words that are not in their oral vocabularies. The discrepancy between the average vocabulary of low SES children (3000 words at age 6) and high SES students (20,000 words at the same age) is staggering. And the discrepancy grows because good readers add vocabulary faster than poor readers. If we are truly to “leave no child behind,” we must do something to improve vocabulary instruction.

Strategies for teaching vocabulary include direct, explicit instruction of individual words. This strategy is especially helpful for **pre-teaching the specific vocabulary** that will be encountered in upcoming reading assignments. It also works for lists of important words that students should know. Students should be taught how to **use context clues** to decipher meaning as they encounter unfamiliar words, and they should learn how to use reference materials such as dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses. Additionally, students should learn to **recognize and use word parts** to help derive meaning. These parts include prefixes, suffixes, and base or root words. Teachers should provide **word-rich environments** with word walls and brainstorming sessions that focus on expanding students’ vocabularies.

Specific vocabulary activities for determining word meaning in context can be found in the next section of this Teacher’s Guide beginning on page 20.

Why Supplement a Core Reading Program with Nonfiction Materials? *(cont.)*

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly while gaining meaning. Fluent readers recognize words automatically as they read; they group words quickly to gain meaning; they read aloud effortlessly and with expression, an indication that they understand what they are reading. Fluency is important because it provides the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. It allows readers to focus on meaning, not decoding. Fluent readers are free to make connections between the text and their backgrounds.

Research has consistently shown that students with poor comprehension score lower on fluency measures. Fluency can be developed, however, with consistent practice over a considerable time. Practice should be done on texts at the student's independent reading level, that is, the material a student can read with 95% accuracy. Passages for fluency practice should be 50-200 words in length. Reading and rereading the same passage until fluency is reached improves fluency even on unpracticed materials, according to research studies.

Comprehension

Reading is only reading when it is understood. Students need to be moved beyond simple word recognition to full comprehension. This can be accomplished with a combination of instructional strategies and activities. The procedure for introducing and learning each strategy is the same:

- First, there must be **explicit, direct instruction** where teachers explain the strategy and discuss why it helps and when to apply it.
- Then, teachers should **model** how to apply the strategy (thinking aloud during reading).
- Students should then be engaged in **guided practice** where teachers guide and assist as students learn and apply the strategy.
- Finally, teachers monitor students until **application** of the strategy is done independently.

There are at least four effective strategies that students should learn to apply concurrently when reading any text. They are:

- **Asking questions** about the text
- **Summarizing parts** of the text
- **Clarifying words** in the text that are not understood
- **Predicting** what might occur next

Other strategies that are useful for particular texts include: activating the use of **prior knowledge**, using **mental imagery**, and attending to the **graphics** associated with a text.

Note: Details about how to teach these strategies can be found in the section of this Teacher's Guide beginning on page 10.

Why Supplement a Core Reading Program with Nonfiction Materials? *(cont.)*

Comprehension *(cont.)*

Students should also be taught to **use graphic and semantic organizers** as tools to aid comprehension. These tools will help students understand concepts and see the interrelationships among concepts. These devices include diagrams, maps, webs, graphs, charts, and clusters. How do these help students? They help them focus on text structure as they read, they provide students with tools to be used to examine relationships, and they help students write well-organized summaries.

The technique of **asking and answering questions**, either teacher- or student-generated, is essential to good comprehension. Asking and answering questions helps in the following ways:

- Gives a purpose for reading
- Focuses attention on what is to be learned
- Helps active thinking as reading occurs
- Encourages self monitoring
- Reviews content and relates it to what the reader knows

The use of expository text to practice these comprehension techniques is highly motivating for students. They love the real-life stories and actual photographs. This type of text also connects very well to content area topics. In addition, state reading tests contain a high percentage of nonfiction text. If students are to do well, they need repeated exposure to this type of text and to the skills needed to comprehend it. Furthermore, most of the reading adults do in their daily lives is nonfiction, so learning to understand it is an essential life skill.

Sources for Authentic Nonfiction Text

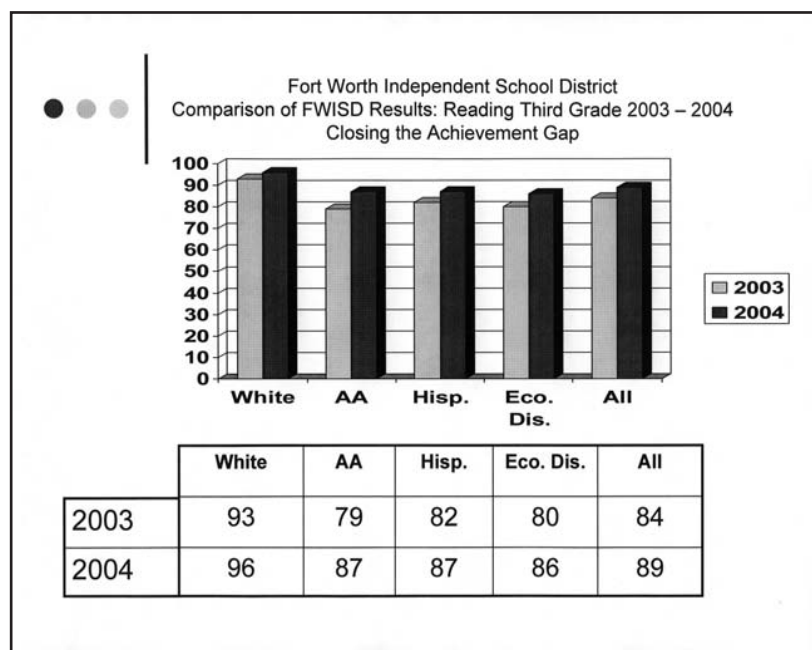
- *Exploring Nonfiction* from Teacher Created Materials
- *Reading in the Content Areas: Exploring Nonfiction Supplement* from Teacher Created Materials
- *Exploring Writing* from Teacher Created Materials
- *Reading and Writing Nonfiction* from Teacher Created Materials
- *Nonfiction Readers* from Teacher Created Materials
- *TIME For Kids* magazine from Time, Inc.

Most of the materials listed above are available in both English and Spanish and at all grade levels from K-Secondary.

Why Supplement a Core Reading Program with Nonfiction Materials? *(cont.)*

Practice Gets Results

Practice must be emphasized! Daily practice reading nonfiction text is necessary to improve vocabulary, fluency rate, and comprehension skills. When nonfiction comprehension strategies are applied to motivating nonfiction materials daily in the classroom, the results are measurable. The graph below shows the results in one school district after a concerted effort to implement the direct, explicit teaching and monitoring of vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills and strategies.



Remember

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are **RELENTLESS**.

As children become more accurate and independent readers, teachers must **encourage, cajole, lead, beg, support, demand, and reward** them for reading as broadly and as deeply as possible.

To “leave no child behind” in reading is the most difficult educational challenge any of us have ever faced. It will require relentless pursuit of the goal of teaching all children what they need to know to be good readers.

About the Author of This Section

Marsha Sonnenberg’s most recent position is Executive Administrator, Reading for the Fort Worth Independent School District in Texas. She has served in many roles during her career as an educator, including reading director, assistant superintendent, teacher, consultant, and presenter. Marsha has a passion for making sure that all children learn to read.

Using the Resources Available from *Exploring Nonfiction*

The *Exploring Nonfiction* kit offers teachers text cards and curriculum support to help students meet the NCEOG reading comprehension expectations. While the kits are not intended specifically as test preparation materials, they are designed to support instruction in many of the essential knowledge and skills tested by the NCEOG. These skills were chosen because they provide a level of support necessary for success in reading. With a particular focus on twelve comprehension strategies—main idea and supporting details, summarizing and paraphrasing, developing vocabulary, prior knowledge and making connections, author’s point of view, structural patterns, using text organizers, using parts of the book, making inferences, setting the purpose, questioning, and visualizing—the *Exploring Nonfiction* kit will provide students with powerful experiences in reading nonfiction with the depth of comprehension required for success on the NCEOG in reading.

The intent of this section of the manual is not to define for teachers all the various ways that their grade level standards can be addressed, but rather to give teachers concrete strategies for using the text cards to prepare students for the independent reading skills and comprehension that each must use during the NCEOG. These ideas are not explicitly for use on the test, but instead reflect good reading strategies for a lifetime of reading, especially using nonfiction sources.

Kit Components

- The *Activity Cards* in the kit contain the nonfiction content for test practice. Note the sections provided on the back of each card. See the accompanying CD for reproducible pages and cards. Use the transparency of each card for whole-group instruction.
- The lessons for each card will provide specific instructional procedures on the named objectives, but each card can be used to address *multiple* comprehension strategies. Use the lessons in the *Lesson Plan Notebook* for instruction, but keep in mind the particular focus/strategy that a particular group of readers needs based on informal daily observation/assessment and test results. For example, all of the cards can be used for finding proof to answer literal or inferential questions and all of the cards can be used for main idea (paragraph/several related paragraphs or whole passage), summary of a nonfiction text, and word meaning.
- The *Teacher Resource Notebook* contains a “Nonfiction Skills and Strategies” section that provides a multitude of assessment and/or instructional ideas for all twelve of the identified comprehension strategies. The activities found in this resource also supports students’ development of the reading comprehension required for success on the NCEOG.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance

Previewing Text to Determine Importance

Many students seem to consistently pick up a nonfiction text and start reading it without doing anything to set up meaning before they read. Hand students a card from the kit and ask them to get ready to read. Observe what the students do. Some students will read the title. Some may even look at the picture(s). Most students will either look around at what the other students are doing in response to the request, or they will simply start reading the body of the text. Without instruction, students simply may not know how to survey the text to set up meaning before they read. When students are asked to read independently or read in a testing situation without teacher support or a text introduction, this strategy of using text organizers becomes critical for maximizing meaning before reading.

Authors use text organizers to draw readers into the nonfiction text, point out important information, and even highlight the main idea(s). These visual clues set students up for determining importance, locating information, establishing author's purpose, and even developing tentative main ideas about the text. Authors use these text organizers to literally say to readers, "Look at this. This is important information. Why do you think I put this here? How does this help you make sense of the text before and as you read?"

One of the features of nonfiction text is that it is dense text; that is, it is full of facts and details and important information. Students often become bogged down in all that information and have difficulty determining what is most important. They often tend to see all the details as equal and can not find the big ideas or significant points. This inability to determine importance goes on to impact such comprehension strategies as articulating a main idea, summarizing a text, finding proof to respond to inferential questions, drawing conclusions, and determining word meaning from context. A significant action that students can take to begin to help them determine important ideas in a nonfiction text is to survey that text from "top/down" before they read.

Before modeling this strategy for students, decide on a consistent language for describing the strategy of previewing text and always call the strategy by that name. Suggestions include "previewing the text," "surveying the text," "taking a text walk," or, as one teacher calls it, "taking the Grand Tour." Whatever it is called, the strategy represents looking at all the text structures provided by the author in order to set up meaning before reading.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Previewing the Text to Determine Importance *(cont.)*

Teach students to go from the top of the text down to the bottom so they will not miss any feature of text that might inform the reader. Have students circle each feature of the text that they survey on a card from the kit. Students will need to recognize every text organizer that signifies meaning in previewing text. These include titles; breaks in text such as headings, subheadings, and insets; graphic features including pictures and captions, sketches, diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, tables, time lines, and cross sections; and print features like varied font, bold print, colored print, italics, and bullets. While this list of text features is not comprehensive, it does help teachers become aware of many of the text organizers students must learn to use when they read.

By surveying the text organizers, students can develop a sense of context for their reading as well as begin to determine importance in the text. However, this preview of text can quickly become a mechanical task that students perform before reading if they only note or circle all the text features. After examining each text organizer, students must ask, “Now what do we know about the text/topic?” With each additional preview of a new text structure, the students add information to their ideas about the text. This survey of text is not a predicting activity, but gets readers to note what the author has provided to indicate what is important in the text even before the reader begins to read the text body.

After surveying the entire card and its text organizers, the students form a tentative main idea (hypothesis) considering whether the text is going to be about a “who” or a “what” and then determining what important information about that “who” or “what” has been revealed in the text survey. Write the students’ tentative main idea on a chart and have them identify what information they still don’t know about that main idea or topic. This kind of text survey gives students a purpose for reading—to find out answers to questions they have generated and to be able to revise their tentative main idea with more specific important information from the actual text. (See *Example One*, page 12. Text structures are pointed out and call-outs provide examples of teacher “think aloud” for each text structure going “top down.” At the bottom is a tentative main idea statement as well as questions generated to set a purpose for reading.)

Students must be provided many opportunities to survey text in a guided context with a teacher before they will automatically utilize the strategy and use it independently in a testing situation. Students who preview a text selection on the NCEOG test before reading it, using whatever information the author provides—even though sometimes the only organizer may be a title—will have a better understanding of the length, organization, and context of the reading. Students who understand that previewing the text includes asking why the author included each text structure will be set up for determining some of the important ideas before they even begin to read.

Example One

Previewing Text to Determine Importance

Who: Kids
 What: Saving the planet
 How: We don't know yet.

Must be a chapter from a book/textbook telling ways that kids work to save the planet

Title of chapter—
 Who helps out?
 (probably the kids)
 What are they helping? (the trout)
 What are trout?
 (students may not know)

Picture/caption shows that trout are fish that live in this stream. Students feed them. Maybe that is how they help out trout.


Whose dream? If dream is students helping out trout, what might they do to the stream?

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Kids Saving the Planet

Chapter Two

HELPING OUT THE TROUT



The trout have made a home in the stream. Students love to feed them.

Compared to lots of other animals, they're not too cute. In fact, they can be kind of ugly. But trout are probably the most important type of animal living around Lake Isabella, California. That's where many people depend on trout fishing for income, food, and sport.

At Woodrow Wallace Elementary School, students in Martine Metzenheim's 4th-grade class complete a whole science unit all about trout. They also take a field trip to the local Kern River and splash around among the fish.

The class studies the needs of trout, including the need for clean water. But not everyone who comes to Lake Isabella understands the importance of keeping the Kern River clean. Sometimes, campers throw trash into the river. Some even go to the bathroom in the river! Polluting the river is a serious threat to trout and their babies, called fry.

A Stream Dream

Metzenheim's class wanted to protect their favorite fish. They decided the best way to do that was to teach people about trout. The class also wanted to show how to care for the rivers where trout live.

The Kernville Hatchery is a local fish farm where trout are raised for sale. Metzenheim's students were invited to build a miniature trout stream at the hatchery.

What a great idea! The class decided to start the project right away. They set up a three-month work schedule beginning in November.

Planning, Digging, and Planting


First the students had to measure, map, and design the pond. Next came the digging. "Moving rocks and plants out of the way was really hard," recalls Matthew Abbott, 10. Fortunately, the students borrowed a giant digging machine to speed up the process.

A Trout Triumph


At last, the stream was filled with water! Today, it serves as a perfect trout habitat. The students made signs to line a walkway along the stream. The signs explain how people can help preserve the river. One sign really sums up the class's message: "Clean Rivers Make Healthy Fish."

Next, students built a hill alongside the stream. Now they will watch for signs of the hill wearing away, called erosion. Erosion is dangerous to fish because the loose dirt that washes into the river can choke the trout fry.

One way to avoid erosion is to plant grasses and shrubs. They hold the soil together. Allie Jones, 9, and her mom helped with that task. Says Allie: "It was fun because we were helping the fish."



Students used rocks to strengthen the stream's banks.



Much of the digging was done by hand.

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Trout triumph or win in some way, kids have success in helping out trout with stream (students may not know meaning of triumph)

Pictures/captions confirm students are building a stream (note multiple meaning of banks)

Who: students
 Doing what: planning, digging, planting stream

Tentative Main Idea After Previewing the Text: Students help out the trout by building a stream.

Read to find out:
 Why did the trout need help?
 How did the students go about building a stream?

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

“Read a Little; Think a Little”—Processing Text by Chunks

Another powerful reading strategy that benefits students in developing and sustaining meaning across a nonfiction text is to divide the text into small chunks, and “read a little; think a little” about each chunk of text before proceeding on with the reading. Natural text breaks, such as paragraphs or groups of related paragraphs under a subheading, provide students with markers to process that text in small, meaningful chunks.

After students read a small chunk of text, they stop and paraphrase what they just read, focusing on what was important in that chunk (determining importance). They ask themselves, “What was the big idea here? What important information did the author just give me? What information was interesting but not necessarily the most important?” If students are unable to retell/paraphrase the chunk of text or determine what was important, they should reread the chunk to gain more information. Students may also think about concepts or vocabulary that seem unfamiliar or confusing and search for context clues or text organizers that can help them discern meaning. Students may use the comprehension strategy of visualization to picture in their minds what the author is trying to convey with words.

Finally, students may ask a question of themselves or the author and continue reading to find out more information. The students may even make a reasonable prediction as to what might happen next in the text based on what they have already read. After students have read and processed the entire text, they return to the tentative main idea that they generated after their text preview and revise that main idea based on any new information they gained from the actual text reading.

The strategy of “read a little; think a little” needs to be modeled by the teacher many times in a small group setting before students may show evidence of “owning” this strategy as they read. Teachers must “think aloud” after they read a chunk of text—paraphrasing, questioning themselves on what was important, clarifying concepts or word meaning and rereading if necessary, asking questions about the text, making predictions when applicable about what might happen next, and using the author’s words to visualize what the author is saying or explaining.

By engaging students in a short, clarifying discussion of each chunk of text before continuing reading, students learn to process meaning as they go along, rather than only thinking about a text when the reading is completed. Using this strategy supports students in being “risk takers” in their reading as they monitor their own meaning throughout the text reading, asking a question when something does not make sense.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

“Read a Little; Think a Little”—Processing Text by Chunks *(cont.)*

As teachers employ the “read a little; think a little” strategy in their instruction, they will need to scaffold more responsibility to the students for having a conversation about the meaning of the text chunk. Eventually, this “conversation” will happen in the students’ heads as they read, and they will incorporate the strategy as one of their good reading “tools” during independent reading or in a test situation.

Along with the “read a little; think a little” strategy, teachers can show students how powerful annotating the small chunks of text with their thoughts can be. It will be so much easier when they return to the text to determine the main ideas, find proof for questions in an efficient manner without having to search the entire text, and locate important details to build a summary of the text.

With the cards from the kit, students can make their annotations (notes) directly on a teacher-made paper copy of the text card from the CD. Students can also place a small sticky note directly on the card to record their thinking about each chunk of text. Students’ notes should be brief and focus on the big idea of the chunk—just a word or short phrase to help students recall the main idea/concept of that chunk. Students can then be shown how to use their notes/annotations to help them scan the text for information or details without having to reread the entire text each time. Annotating text, while processing that text chunk for meaning using the “read a little; think a little” strategy, helps students quickly locate the specific portion of the text to scan for textual proof for a response to a question by using their notes as a guide.

Once again, learning to annotate text effectively and to use that annotation to support comprehension must be modeled many times by the teacher in a small group setting. Students who have trouble determining importance in a chunk of text will also have difficulty writing notes about that chunk of text that effectively capture the big/main idea. However, the more experience students have with “read a little; think a little” conversations about the text, the better they will become at discovering what is important in that text chunk. Both the “read a little; think a little” strategy and the ability to use text annotation effectively can be used in a testing context by students to help them monitor their meaning throughout reading of the text selections and then to utilize that thinking in responding to the accompanying assessment questions. (See *Example Two*, page 15. Main ideas or annotations are beside each chunk of text as an example of the “read a little; think a little” strategy.)

Example Two


“Read a Little; Think a Little”

14 Science

Kids Saving the Planet

Chapter Two

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Next, students built a hill alongside the stream. Now they will watch for signs of the hill wearing away, called erosion. Erosion is dangerous to fish because the loose dirt that washes into the river can choke the trout fry.

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Chunk 1
Trout important (three reasons given)

Chunk 2
Students learn about trout

Chunk 3
Pollution hurts trout. (Main idea is pollution is threat to trout, interesting details given, but they are not big ideas.)

Chunk 4
Subtitle—This chunk must be about the students’ dream of helping the trout’s stream.

Teach about trout care

Chunk 5
Decide to build stream (Main idea is what project is, interesting how long it will take)

Chunk 6
Subtitle—This chunk must be about how the students went about building the stream.

Getting Started (Main idea is how it got started, interesting about digging machine)

Chunk 7
Erosion hurts fish

Chunk 8
Perfect habitat (Author signals importance with words “sums up”—“clean rivers make healthy fish”)

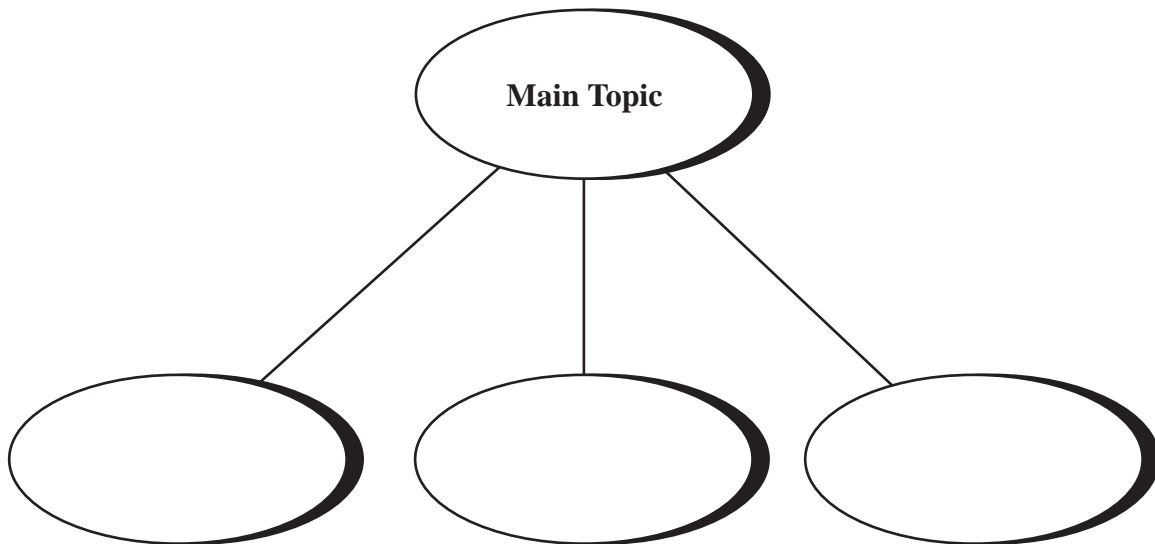
Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Putting it All Together—Summarizing a Nonfiction Text

When students become proficient at previewing nonfiction text to determine importance, processing that text by “reading a little; thinking a little” to understand the main ideas and significant details of each chunk of text, and revising their tentative main idea after reading, students will be set up to develop a summary of a text. A summary consists of a short paragraph about the whole text that includes the main idea of that text and the most important details.

Students who have previewed text and “read a little; thought a little” will have the information that they need to develop a summary or select a strong summary from several choices. Students learn to put the main idea of the selection into one sentence and then add the important details that answer questions such as who, what, where, why, and how in order to build an effective summary of a nonfiction text.

A graphic organizer that lends itself to helping students see how a nonfiction summary is developed is the part-to-whole graphic organizer. The top part of the organizer below is the main idea of the whole text, and the lower parts will contain the most significant supporting details in the text.



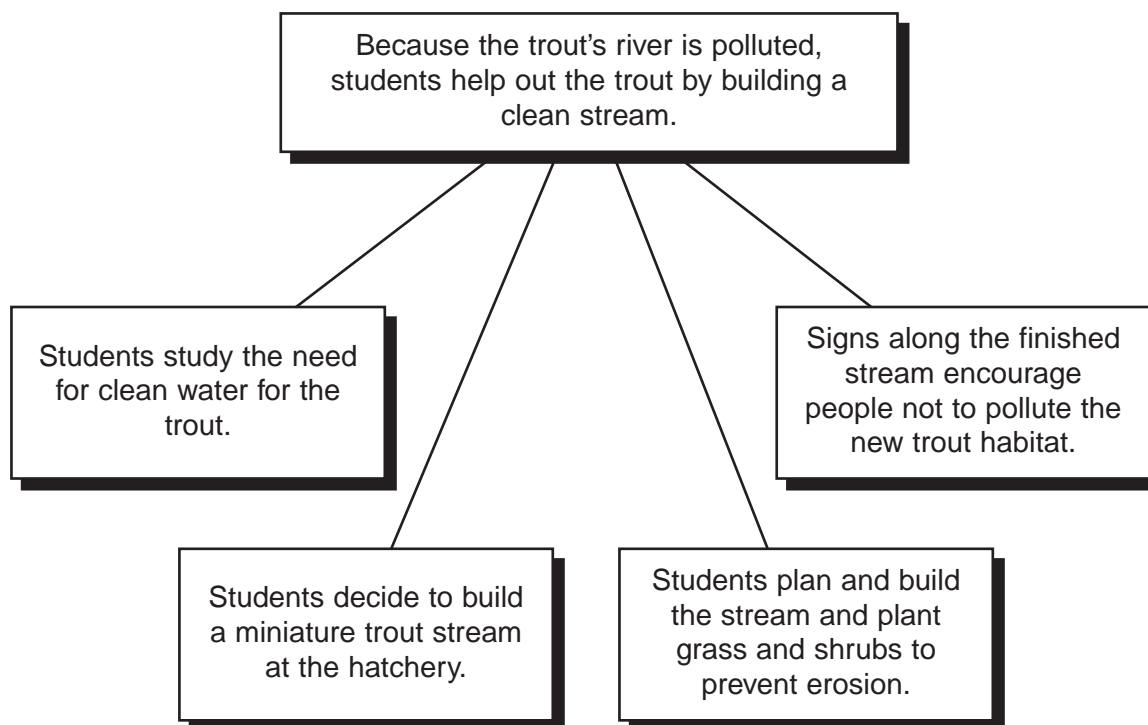
This graphic organizer could also be represented by a web with the main idea in the center and the supporting details around the center of the web. In either case, after the graphic organizer is completed, the students can combine the information into a paragraph, creating a summary of the text.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Putting it All Together—Summarizing a Nonfiction Text *(cont.)*

For many students, the main idea of the graphic organizer is more difficult to determine than the supporting details. Combining the use of this graphic organizer with developing a summary of a nonfiction text gives students experience in representing text information in different ways.

Here is an example of a possible part-to-whole graphic organizer for the sample card, *Helping Out the Trout*, on page 12:



Here's a possible summary for "Helping Out the Trout" developed from the above part-to-whole graphic organizer.

Because the trout's river is polluted, students help out the trout by building a clean stream. After students study the need for clean water for trout, they decide to build a miniature trout stream at the hatchery. The students build the stream, protecting it from erosion. They place signs along the new stream to encourage people not to pollute the trout's new habitat.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Putting it All Together—Summarizing a Nonfiction Text *(cont.)*

Teachers should prepare NCEOG-like questions as practice for students. A teacher-written, NCEOG-like summary question on *Helping Out the Trout* for students to answer and prove might look like the example below.

The best summary of this passage is—

- A. After seeing the pollution in the Kern River, the students decide to help out the trout by building a new clean stream. The students study the needs of the trout and design a plan for the stream. The students dig the stream and protect it from erosion. The finished stream has signs to tell people how to protect the river and the fish.
- B. The students measure, map, and design a stream at the fish hatchery. They plant grasses and shrubs to protect the stream from erosion. Then they fill the stream with water and line a walkway with signs.
- C. Trout are important animals in Lake Isabella since many people need them for food, sport, and income. The trout in the Kern River are threatened by the pollution in that river caused by campers throwing trash and going to the bathroom in the river. Many people do not understand the importance of keeping the Kern River clean.
- D. Fourth-grade students at Woodrow Wallace Elementary School take a field trip to the Kern River to do a science unit all about trout. They want to protect the trout from pollution and show people how to care for the river where the trout swim. The students go to the Kernville Hatchery where trout are raised to get a great idea on how to help the trout.

Students must not only be able to explain why the first response in the above example is correct, but also be able to “disprove” the other three responses since those answer choices do not meet the definition of a summary—the main idea and the most significant supporting details.

Questions such as these can be prepared for any nonfiction text. For the cards in this kit, sample practice questions have already been prepared in the accompanying student workbook.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Text Detectives: Returning to the Text for Proof to Support Responses to Questions

The more familiar students are with the concepts and vocabulary of a nonfiction text, the better able they are to make connections with the content and add new information about the topic to their personal store of knowledge. Nonfiction texts can be challenging for students who have little prior knowledge or experience with its concepts and vocabulary. Teachers must often provide these students with a foundation, such as a supportive introduction, a concrete experience with the text topic, artifacts that represent the concepts, related read-aloud texts that build schema, visualization strategies, sketching and labeling the ideas and vocabulary of concepts presented, or rich conversations about the text. A preview of text organization and structures can also set the students up for gleaning more meaning from the text.

However, in a testing situation such as the NCEOG, students are on their own to access meaning in the text. Although they may not be familiar with the concepts or vocabulary of a particular text selection, readers must use what they know about reading and comprehension to derive the maximum meaning possible. Because the NCEOG is a text-dependent assessment, every question asked will be based on that particular text and not depend on students' background experience or prior knowledge. Every correct response to a test item, whether it requires literal or inferential thinking, is based on proof from that text. In fact, a "distracter," or incorrect response, can often be a plausible choice based on a student's background experience or prior knowledge but not supported by the text. Many students mark this incorrect response because it sounds reasonable, not because those students have found proof in the text to support that response.

Use questions or open-ended stems to assess students' comprehension as they read and have students continually refer to the text to support their responses. Students can locate and underline their proof on the text card, thereby lessening the chance that they will select the plausible, yet unsupported, response to an NCEOG question. Look for specificity of proof as students find details to justify their thinking. Many students will tend to underline everything in a paragraph rather than the exact information they need. Sometimes the support for an answer may be found in more than one location in the text.

When students are provided with practice in responding to NCEOG-like questions (such as those found in the *Prepare for NCEOG Using Exploring Nonfiction* student booklets), it is important that students not only "prove" their response by returning to the text for support, but also that they are able to explain why the other choices are incorrect or unsupported. In "disproving" incorrect choices, students begin to see why plausible responses may sound right but are not correct. They also begin to understand how incorrect responses can "trick" them if they are not careful thinkers who use text support.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Using Word Meaning Strategies

Because of the importance of students effectively using context clues in determining word meaning, teachers must always carefully select vocabulary words that are contextually supported on an *Exploring Nonfiction* card. Using contextual proof for determining word meaning may be called “looking around the word.”

In addition to context, students must learn to “look in the word” to find parts such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words for additional clues to support word meaning. Although younger students do not have as much experience with “looking in” words for known affixes or root words, they need to learn as many of these meaningful word parts as possible to support their understanding of vocabulary.

The key for student success on word-meaning questions on the NCEOG is having many opportunities to practice with “looking in” words for parts/chunks for which they know the meanings and “looking around” words for contextual proof of the words’ meanings.

Students who are learning to use contextual clues to help them determine word meaning often struggle with specificity of proof. Told to find and underline their proof, these students may read or underline everything in a paragraph as proof rather than locating the exact words or phrases that pinpoint the word’s meaning. Since context is often broader than just the sentence the word is in, students must be taught to peruse the surrounding text as well.

Before teaching a lesson with a card from the kit, consider the suggested vocabulary words provided in the *Teacher’s Manual* as well as the experiences of the group of readers. Ask:

- Which vocabulary words represent concepts that these readers will need to understand in order to successfully read this text with meaning?
- Which vocabulary words can be “planted” in the text introduction so the readers can hear the words in context but do not necessarily need the words to be explicitly taught?
- Which vocabulary words can be left for the students to solve the words’ meaning during the text reading by using affixes/root words—“looking in” the words—and/or context—“looking around” the words?

On the cards, many of the vocabulary words are content specific. These may need to be addressed before the reading to set students up for reading success (see the previous section, *Text Detectives*). The teacher carefully selects one to three words that could be used to practice word meaning strategies, keeping in mind that those words for practice must be contextually supported.

When choosing the words, look for context clues in the text that will provide possible synonyms or antonyms for the selected vocabulary word. Sometimes the author will provide descriptions or explanations of the word in the text or even give examples that support word meaning.

Reading Strategies for Successful NCEOG Performance *(cont.)*

Using Word Meaning Strategies *(cont.)*

As the students encounter one of the words the teacher has selected for word meaning practice, have them apply the two strategies of “looking in” the word and “looking around” the word to come up with a meaning for that word. After students look for possible known chunks such as prefixes, suffixes, or root words that support meaning, they may discover that they have a good idea of the word’s meaning, or they may also decide that they have gathered no information that will help them. In either case, the students continue with the strategy of “looking around” to confirm any ideas about the word’s meaning from their “looking in” exploration and to gather context clues to help them figure out what the word means. Students should underline proof in the text that supports the word’s meaning and be able to justify their thinking to the teacher/group.

Use a “think aloud” strategy to model for students how to use word parts, select specific words or phrases that support word meaning, and look beyond just the word’s sentence to find proof. (See *Example Three*, page 22, where “think aloud” or “looking in” the word and possible “looking around” proof is underlined.)

A powerful extension that can be used after students have read a card and worked within a small group to determine and explain the meaning of a word from that text is to have students respond to a NCEOG-like question for that word. If a word-meaning question for that text card is not provided in *Prepare for NCEOG Using Exploring Nonfiction* student booklet, the teacher could write a NCEOG-like word meaning question for the students to answer. Consider all of the ways that word meaning has been assessed on the NCEOG, and provide students with the experience of seeing and responding to each type of question. Have students “think aloud” about each possible response, either justifying why the response is correct based on their proof or why the response is incorrect.

Resources

Harvey, Stephanie and Anne Goudivis. *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*. Stenhouse Publishers, 2000.

Hoyt, Linda. *Make It Real: Strategies for Success with Informational Texts*. Heinemann, 2002.

Successful Strategies for Reading in the Content Areas, Teacher Created Materials Publishing.

Zimmermann, Susan and Chryse Hutchins. *7 Keys to Comprehension: How to Help Your Kids Read It and Get It!* Three Rivers Press, 2003.

About the Author of This Section

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Example Three


Word Meaning

14 Science

Kids Saving the Planet

Chapter Two

HELPING OUT THE TROUT



The trout have made a home in the stream. Students love to feed them.

Compared to lots of other animals, they're not too cute. In fact, they can be kind of slimy. But trout are probably the most important type of animal living around Lake Isabella, California. That's where many people depend on trout fishing for income, food, and sport.

At Woodrow Wallace Elementary School, students in Martine Metzenheim's 4th-grade class complete a whole science unit all about trout. They also take a field trip to the local Kern River and splash around among the fish.

The class studies the needs of trout, including the need for clean water. But not everyone who comes to Lake Isabella understands the importance of keeping the Kern River clean. Sometimes, campers throw trash into the river. Some even go to the bathroom in the river! Polluting the river is a serious threat to trout and their babies, called fry.

A Stream Dream

Metzenheim's class wanted to protect their favorite fish. They decided the best way to do that was to teach people about trout. The class also wanted to show how to care for the rivers where trout live.

The Kernville Hatchery is a local fish farm where trout are raised for sale. Metzenheim's students were invited to build a miniature trout stream at the hatchery.

What a great idea! The class decided to start the project right away. They set up a three-month work schedule beginning in November.

Planning, Digging, and Planting


First the students had to measure, map, and design the pond. Next came the digging. "Moving rocks and plants out of the way was really hard," recalls Matthew Abbott, 10. Fortunately, the students borrowed a giant digging machine to speed up the process.

Next, students built a hill alongside the stream. Now they will watch for signs of the hill wearing away, called erosion. Erosion is dangerous to fish because the loose dirt that washes into the river can choke the trout fry.


One way to avoid erosion is to plant grasses and shrubs. They hold the soil together. Allie Jones, 9, and her mom helped with that task. Says Allie: "It was fun because we were helping the fish."

A Trout Triumph

At last, the stream was filled with water! Today, it serves as a perfect trout habitat. The students made signs to line a walkway along the stream. The signs explain how people can help preserve the river. One sign really sums up the class's message: "Clean Rivers Make Healthy Fish."



Students used rocks to strengthen the stream's banks.



Much of the digging was done by hand.

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"Looking in"—comes from *erode*, students may have prior knowledge of *erosion*

"Looking around"—see proof

"Looking in"—*pollute*, helps students if they know the meaning

"Looking around"—see proof, note implication of "opposite" of *polluting* in paragraph (*clean*)

"Looking in"—*hatch*, helps students if they know the meaning but is a multiple meaning root word

"Looking around"—see proof

Answer Key

Science

Page	Card #	Answers			
1	1	1. D	2. C	3. B	4. B
2	2	1. D	2. B	3. C	4. C
3	3	1. A	2. A	3. C	4. A
4	4	1. B	2. C	3. D	4. D
5	5	1. C	2. B	3. A	4. C
6	6	1. B	2. C	3. D	4. B
7	7	1. A	2. B	3. C	4. B
8	8	1. A	2. B	3. D	4. C
9	9	1. C	2. B	3. A	4. A
10	10	1. B	2. C	3. B	4. B
11	11	1. C	2. C	3. C	4. C
12	12	1. B	2. A	3. B	4. C
13	13	1. C	2. A	3. C	4. B
14	14	1. A	2. D	3. B	4. A
15	15	1. C	2. C	3. C	4. D

Social Studies

Page	Card #	Answers			
16	1	1. A	2. C	3. B	4. D
17	2	1. B	2. C	3. C	4. B
18	3	1. B	2. B	3. D	4. A
19	4	1. B	2. D	3. A	4. B
20	5	1. C	2. B	3. B	4. B
21	6	1. A	2. D	3. A	4. C
22	7	1. B	2. B	3. A	4. B
23	8	1. B	2. D	3. B	4. A
24	9	1. B	2. D	3. B	4. B
25	10	1. B	2. B	3. A	4. A
26	11	1. A	2. B	3. A	4. B
27	12	1. B	2. B	3. C	4. C
28	13	1. B	2. B	3. C	4. B
29	14	1. A	2. B	3. D	4. B
30	15	1. B	2. A	3. C	4. B

Answer Key *(cont.)*

Language Arts

Page	Card #	Answers			
31	1	1. D	2. B	3. D	4. B
32	2	1. D	2. B	3. A	4. C
33	3	1. A	2. B	3. A	4. A
34	4	1. B	2. A	3. B	4. B
35	5	1. C	2. B	3. B	4. B
36	6	1. B	2. B	3. A	4. D
37	7	1. C	2. A	3. B	4. B
38	8	1. D	2. B	3. C	4. B
39	9	1. A	2. B	3. B	4. C
40	10	1. A	2. C	3. B	4. B
41	11	1. C	2. B	3. D	4. D
42	12	1. B	2. A	3. C	4. B
43	13	1. B	2. B	3. B	4. C
44	14	1. C	2. C	3. D	4. C
45	15	1. C	2. C	3. A	4. B

Math

Page	Card #	Answers			
46	1	1. A	2. B	3. A	4. B
47	2	1. D	2. D	3. A	4. B
48	3	1. A	2. B	3. C	4. A
49	4	1. C	2. A	3. C	4. C
50	5	1. B	2. C	3. C	4. C
51	6	1. B	2. A	3. B	4. B
52	7	1. A	2. A	3. B	4. B
53	8	1. B	2. B	3. C	4. C
54	9	1. B	2. A	3. A	4. C
55	10	1. B	2. B	3. B	4. B
56	11	1. B	2. B	3. A	4. B
57	12	1. B	2. A	3. A	4. B
58	13	1. B	2. A	3. A	4. A
59	14	1. B	2. B	3. B	4. B
60	15	1. A	2. A	3. B	4. B