

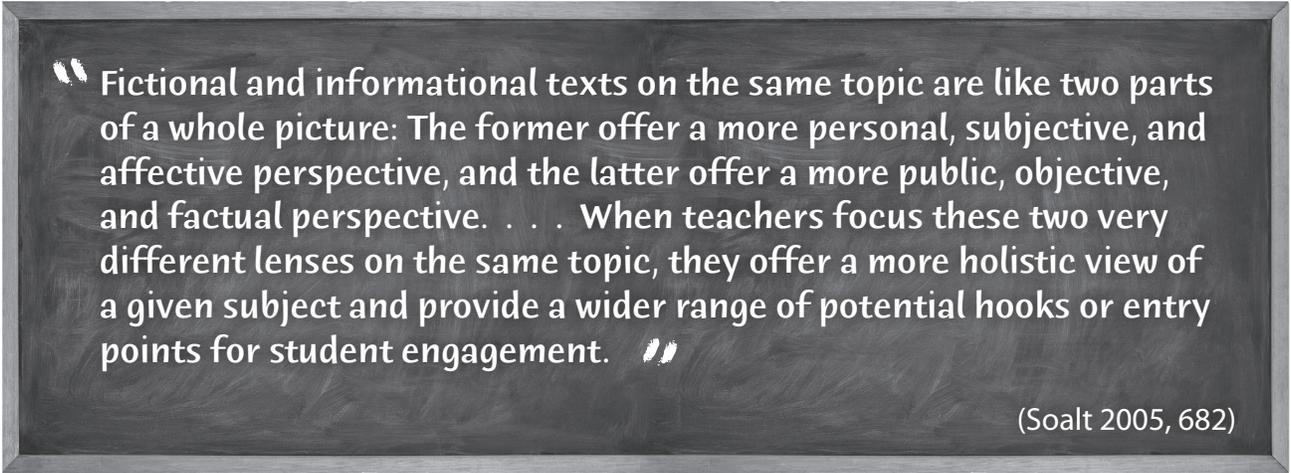
Research-Based Curriculum

Purposeful Pairs

Connecting Fiction and Nonfiction

**Complete Supplemental Program
Based on Respected Research**

Introduction



“Fictional and informational texts on the same topic are like two parts of a whole picture: The former offer a more personal, subjective, and affective perspective, and the latter offer a more public, objective, and factual perspective. . . . When teachers focus these two very different lenses on the same topic, they offer a more holistic view of a given subject and provide a wider range of potential hooks or entry points for student engagement.”

(Soalt 2005, 682)

Educators today have the exciting task of navigating a new realm of language-arts instruction. The Common Core and other state standards have brought into focus the importance of preparing students for college and career by expanding critical-thinking and analytical skills. It is no longer enough to read and comprehend a single text on a topic; rather the integration of ideas across texts is so crucial that it is included in the “backbone” of the English language arts standards, Anchor Standard for Reading 9: “Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take” (CCSS 2010).

Not only is intertextuality essential for meeting state standards but it is also a cornerstone of inquiry-based learning. *Purposeful Pairs: Connecting Fiction and Nonfiction* brings informational texts and literature together in the exploration of essential questions. Teachers are able to motivate students to build literacy while exploring each theme through high-interest, appropriately leveled fiction and nonfiction content.

In considering the role of texts in the new education landscape, iNK Think Tank founder and nonfiction author Vicki Cobb asserts that “the standards are not in the books but in the way the books are used” (2013, last paragraph). *Purposeful Pairs* provides the means to effectively and seamlessly integrate texts with rigorous lessons that not only meet literacy standards but also work to engage, inspire, and challenge students.

Research

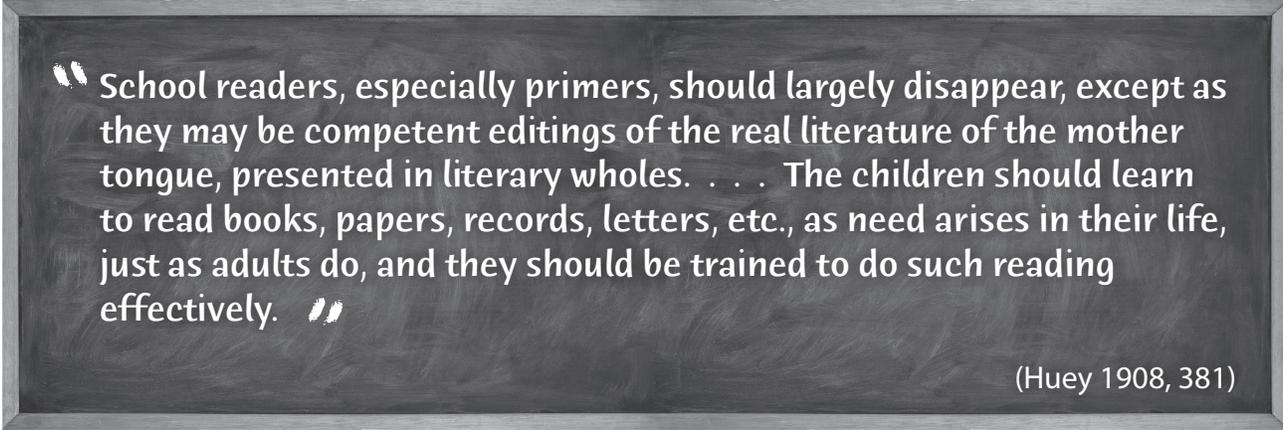
The Importance of Reading Nonfiction

In our increasingly global and information-rich society, students need to be eager to learn, seek answers, and have the necessary skills to navigate the various informational texts they will come across in school, the workplace, and everyday life. According to Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis in their book *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* (2000), "Interesting, authentic nonfiction fuels kids' curiosity, enticing them to read more, dig deeper, and search for answers to compelling questions."

However, additional research shows that very little time is spent in the classroom learning to navigate nonfiction text. In the article "3.6 Minutes per Day: The Scarcity of Informational Texts in First Grade" (2000), Nell Duke cites research that suggests giving students more experience with informational texts in the early years will lead to less difficulty with nonfiction texts as students move through the grades. Aside from the long-term goal of developing skilled readers, nonfiction text also has a role in standardized testing. Because students are most often tested on their ability to comprehend nonfiction text, it is important to provide readers with explicit instruction on the ways in which nonfiction text is organized along with specific skills and strategies for comprehending nonfiction text. In their article featured in *The Reading Teacher* (2000), Broaddus and Ivey suggest that familiarity with nonfiction text will add to students' depth of content-area knowledge and understanding and might increase standardized test scores. Nonfiction reading also has a prominent role in the Common Core and other state standards for language arts. Some key points include the following:

- an interdisciplinary approach to literacy
- a wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality informational text
- a progression in text complexity
- a focus on building rich content knowledge

The Importance of Reading Fiction



“School readers, especially primers, should largely disappear, except as they may be competent editings of the real literature of the mother tongue, presented in literary wholes. . . . The children should learn to read books, papers, records, letters, etc., as need arises in their life, just as adults do, and they should be trained to do such reading effectively.”

(Huey 1908, 381)

Recommending children read “literary wholes” may seem like a contemporary criticism of basal programs, but this quote is taken from a 1908 work on the teaching of reading in the United States, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* by Edmund Burke Huey. Huey’s observations highlight what every parent and teacher of young children knows: Children love a good story. And the discussion that contextualizes and extends the story is just as important.

Oral discourse consists of “extended oral productions, whether monologic or multiparty, centered around a topic, activity or goal” (Lawrence and Snow 2011, 323). Oral discourse development involves the acquisition of the skills required for participation in oral discourse. Speaking and listening strategies—such as those identified in the Common Core State Standards (asking and responding to questions, using grade-level-appropriate vocabulary, and so forth)—are critical during preschool and primary grades, during which time oral discourse provides the primary context for learning. Numerous correlational studies indicate that frequent high-quality reading experiences benefit preschoolers in vocabulary acquisition (Lawrence and Snow 2011, 324). Further, primary students who are learning decoding skills benefit from discussions that set a purpose for reading, activate prior knowledge, ask and answer thoughtful questions, and encourage peer interaction (Lawrence and Snow 2011, 324). Reading fiction provides rich opportunities for oral discourse development. Fiction also has a prominent role in the CCSS.



Research to Practice

Purposeful Pairs is a supplemental reading program that exposes readers to both informational and literary texts. The program helps students develop literacy skills through the use of texts that appeal to their interests and instruction that guides them through close reading and in making intertextual connections.

The Importance of Intertextuality

Using paired fiction and nonfiction texts (widely known as “twin texts”) is a natural way to explore themes and integrate instruction across the content areas. In an article in *The Reading Teacher*, Deanne Camp poses this question: “Given children’s natural tendencies to ask questions about the world around them, why not focus on both fact and fiction to answer those questions?” (2000, 400).

Paired texts are “uniquely suited to scaffolding and extending students’ comprehension” (Soalt 2005, 680). Soalt identifies three ways in which paired fiction and informational texts are particularly effective in increasing comprehension: through the building of background knowledge, the development of vocabulary, and the increase in student motivation (2005). In an action-research project that used twin texts and graphic organizers to teach summarization skills to Grade 1 students, Furtado and Johnson found a significant increase in students’ ability to accurately summarize both genres (2010).

Fictional books can be an engaging way to introduce a topic to students; however, instruction with twin texts does not necessarily need to begin with the work of fiction. Reading a nonfiction text before a fictional text on the same topic can build or strengthen background knowledge that may be required to successfully comprehend the fictional piece (Baer 2012; Soalt 2005). Additionally, students who prefer nonfiction texts will be more motivated to read a related fictional text when the informational piece is presented first (Soalt 2005). According to research cited by Sylvia Read, “interacting with nonnarrative texts may be the best path to overall literacy” (2005, 36).



Research to Practice

In light of the research cited above, *Purposeful Pairs: Connecting Fiction and Nonfiction* presents informational texts before literature and brings the two genres together with high-interest books and lessons that enable students to delve into comparisons of texts while exploring engaging topics.

Best Practices

Developing Key Reading Skills

Word Recognition

Word recognition is one essential component in cultivating proficient readers. As students are introduced to and manipulate sounds and words, they gain confidence and mastery with language. Within word recognition, there are subsections of skills: automaticity with reading high-frequency words, explicit teaching of language conventions and patterns, and vocabulary development. “Rich instruction in word recognition provide[s] an opportunity to teach children that there are systematic relationships between letters and sounds, that written words are composed of letter patterns that represent the sounds of spoken words, and that recognizing words quickly and accurately is a way of obtaining meaning from what is read” (Linan-Thompson and Vaughn 2007, 34).



Research to Practice

The *Purposeful Pairs* lessons support word recognition by focusing on a **language standard** in each unit that addresses conventions of standard English, knowledge of language, or vocabulary acquisition and use. The lessons also highlight **high-frequency words** that are used in each text.

Academic Vocabulary

Research conducted over the past decades has consistently found a deep connection between vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and academic success (Baumann, Kame'enui, and Ash 2003). Kamil and Hiebert describe vocabulary as a bridge between the “word-level processes of phonics and the cognitive processes of comprehension” (2005, 4). This is a useful way to visualize the importance of vocabulary for young or struggling readers. But meaning does not automatically follow successful decoding. If a word is not in a student’s oral vocabulary, the student cannot apply word-recognition strategies effectively, and reading comprehension is hindered (National Reading Panel 2000).

Vocabulary instruction is at the very core of learning because students cannot learn from words that they do not understand. All students need explicit introduction of vocabulary words before reading a text in order to better understand the text. The task is even more complicated for English language learners and struggling readers. “Developing readers cannot be expected to simply ‘pick up’ substantial vocabulary knowledge exclusively through reading exposure without guidance. Specifically, teachers must design tasks that will increase the effectiveness of vocabulary learning through reading practice” (Feldman and Kinsella 2005). It is not enough to give students a list of words and have them look up the definitions in dictionaries or glossaries. Students who are struggling with learning a language are not going to find the process easier by simply being given more words to sort through (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short 2004). Struggling readers and English language learners need context-embedded activities that acquaint them with the necessary and most central words for comprehension of the content. “Direct instruction helps students learn difficult words, such as words that represent complex concepts that are not part of the students’ everyday experiences. Direct instruction of vocabulary relevant to a given text leads to better reading comprehension” (Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn 2001).

Students with broad vocabularies find it easier to comprehend more of what they read than do students with limited vocabularies. The type of reading students encounter in school can be highly specialized, and the words they need to learn can be challenging. This type of academic vocabulary is often not encountered in everyday life or in everyday reading. Therefore, all students need an explicit introduction to and explanation of these vocabulary words.



Research to Practice

Purposeful Pairs incorporates rigorous academic vocabulary into the lessons and activities presented to students. Important terms for each unit are identified in the **Introduce Vocabulary** section. Additionally, the following academic vocabulary is used frequently throughout the program:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> analyze | <input type="radio"/> explain | <input type="radio"/> relate |
| <input type="radio"/> compare | <input type="radio"/> inferences | <input type="radio"/> similarities and differences |
| <input type="radio"/> determine | <input type="radio"/> information/informational | <input type="radio"/> support |
| <input type="radio"/> essential | <input type="radio"/> justify | <input type="radio"/> task |
| <input type="radio"/> examine | <input type="radio"/> literature | <input type="radio"/> text |

Close Reading

According to Catherine Snow and Catherine O'Connor, close reading is “an approach to teaching comprehension that insists students extract meaning from text by examining carefully how language is used in the passage itself” (2013, 2). The goal is to produce proficient readers who can extract meaning from complex, college-level and career-relevant texts, independently. What is unique about close reading is that it focuses exclusively on the text at hand and eliminates the background knowledge, which many say will level the academic playing field and close the achievement gap between various learning and language/literacy groups (Snow and O'Connor 2013). This is not to say that close reading should replace other comprehension and reading approaches. Ideally, close reading will be one avenue to purposefully engage students in reading complex texts.

In elementary classrooms, short, complex passages should be used for close readings that are guided by the teacher. The lessons should be designed with a different purpose for each rereading. Students need to learn to question, mark words and passages of note, and take notes while performing these close readings (Fisher and Frey 2012b). They should engage in rich discussions with the teacher and their classmates around the content of the text. This helps students learn and practice speaking, listening, and language skills that show that they truly understand a text (Fisher n.d.). And finally, students should be engaged in projects that require them to use writing in some form to communicate their learning.

Text-Dependent Questions

Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (2012b, 3) suggest that there are at least six categories of question types that can help students “move from explicit to implicit meaning and from sentence level to whole text and across multiple texts”:

- general understanding
- key details
- vocabulary and text structure
- author’s purpose
- inferences
- opinions, arguments, and intertextual connections



Research to Practice

Each *Purposeful Pairs* unit presents multiple opportunities for close reading. Look for the **close reading icon** to see where this strategy is used throughout the program.



Examples of Text-Dependent Questions

General Understanding

- What is the main idea of this text?

Key Details

- What happened after _____?

Opinions, Arguments, and Intertextual Connections

- What evidence from the text supports your opinion?

Author's Purpose

- Why did the author use the word _____ instead of _____?

Inferences

- What can we infer about _____ given that _____?

Vocabulary and Text Structure

- What word means the same thing as _____?



Research to Practice

Students ask and answer **text-dependent questions** throughout the *Purposeful Pairs* program. Look for text-dependent questions in the lesson plans and activity sheets. These questions access varying levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge.

Annotation

Annotation, the practice of taking notes during reading, is an important component of close reading. While this skill has been traditionally taught and implemented at the high school and college levels, it can be introduced and practiced in the early elementary grades. Fisher and Frey (2012a) suggest using highlighter tape or WikkiStix® to identify key ideas in texts in kindergarten and first grade, and then transition to the use of writing instruments for interactive notes in second grade. By third grade, students can use sticky notes to mark key ideas and circle words and phrases that are confusing. As they progress through the elementary grades, students can expand the complexity of their annotations to show connections, examples, and questions (Fisher and Frey 2012a).



Research to Practice

The lessons in *Purposeful Pairs* offer tips on modeling and encouraging the **annotation** of the texts.

Comprehension Strategies for Informational Texts and Literature

These effective research-based strategies serve as a resource for strengthening student comprehension of informational text and literature. Teachers may use these strategies before, during, and/or after reading.

Using Text Features

In addition to reading the main body of a text, good readers use headings, captions, diagrams, and other text features to fully comprehend and navigate the text. Referencing these features throughout the reading process helps students make inferences, understand, remember, and comprehend the content.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students use the table of contents, chapters, glossary, index, titles, headings, labels, captions, photographs, sketches, diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, tables, figures, time lines, cross sections, insets, sidebars, bold words, and graphic organizers to increase comprehension of nonfiction texts.	Students reference the title, cover illustration, back-cover text summarizing the book, table of contents, chapter titles, illustrations, and captions to understand a novel, a poem, or a drama.

Understanding Text Structure

Students need to be aware of the way text structure influences meaning and how authors use the structure of a text to evoke a desired effect in the reader. Students should understand how ideas in a text relate to one another and how information is organized. Readers who understand the structure of a text can use this knowledge to make inferences and understand the author's purpose more easily.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students recognize a variety of nonfiction text types such as instructional, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution. Students understand how each part of a text contributes to the whole.	Students identify the genre and structure of a literary text, noting whether a piece is a mystery, a poem, a drama, etc. Students analyze how components of a text such as paragraphs, chapters, scenes, and stanzas relate to one another.

Using Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers provide students with concrete ways to visualize information found in a text. Organizers come in a wide variety of formats. They can, for example, help students capture the sequence of events, compare and contrast, summarize, make connections, and identify areas of confusion.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students use graphic organizers to analyze arguments, summarize data, and show the relationship among key details in the text.	Students use graphic organizers to summarize character traits, review plot points, and analyze themes and other literary elements.

Asking Questions

Students who ask questions throughout the reading process are engaged and actively reading. Allowing students to form their own questions provides an authentic purpose for reading. Model how to ask inferential questions, and let students practice forming their own *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* questions. Encourage students to use evidence in the text to answer their questions.

Informational Texts	Literature
<p>Students use text features such as headings, captions, graphs, and visuals to inspire questions about the main ideas of a text. Questions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ "What information is explained in the text?"○ "What is the author saying about the main subject?"○ "What evidence does the author present to persuade the reader?"○ "Am I convinced by the author's argument?"	<p>Students ask questions regarding characters, plot, text structures, symbols, metaphors, and word choice. Questions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ "Who is telling the story?"○ "Who is the main character, and what is he or she like?"○ "What is the author's central message?"○ "How does the author use elements of fiction to express his or her message?"

Paraphrasing and Summarizing

When students know how to paraphrase and summarize, their overall comprehension improves. Paraphrasing involves reading the material and creating a shorter version of the text in one's own words. Summarizing requires distilling the main ideas and important details from the overall text and then putting them in a logical order. Encourage readers to summarize both during and after reading.

Informational Texts	Literature
<p>Students use text features such as titles, chapter titles, bold words, captions, and diagrams to identify the main ideas and key details of a text. Summaries should reflect the structure of the text. For example, if the text is a compare/contrast text, then the summary should follow the same format but be condensed.</p>	<p>Students review the title; chapter titles; illustrations; main events in the beginning, middle, and end; central characters; key details; tone; and the structure of the text to summarize the main idea and key details.</p>

Connecting Prior Knowledge

Good readers use their prior knowledge and experiences to help them understand new information they encounter during reading. They think about their own experiences (comparing text to self), other texts they have read (comparing text to text), or the world around them (making text to world connections). Teachers can encourage this practice through discussions, bringing in realia, paging through the text to look for connections, or by providing a hands-on experience.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students reference prior experiences and information from other texts to understand new concepts, relate to distant time periods, and access technical information.	Students draw on prior knowledge to understand new characters, foreign settings, or unfamiliar words.

Monitoring Comprehension

To avoid gaps in comprehension, good readers monitor their progress during the reading process. Encourage students to ask themselves, "What words or ideas are difficult to understand?" and revisit those concepts. Strategies such as word-level decoding; looking at the root word, nearby words or context clues; rereading; reading on; asking a friend; or looking up a word or concept in a dictionary or encyclopedia can also clarify meaning.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students pause to reflect upon and clarify how key concepts relate to one another, rereading or reviewing when needed.	Students pause to reflect upon and clarify key plot points, actions taken by characters, dialogue, and themes.

Using Mental Images

Making mental images, or a "mind movie," during reading enhances the reading experience. Mental "images" include visuals as well as sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings. Encourage students to make reading a complete sensory experience. Discuss sensory clues provided explicitly in a text as well as the details that can be inferred based on setting, characters, and context clues.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students use maps, photographs, and diagrams to clarify or confirm geographical relationships, procedures, and other data explained in the text.	Students use sensory clues provided explicitly in a text as well as the sensory details that can be inferred based on setting, characters, and context clues.

Establishing a Purpose

Determining an authentic purpose for reading increases student engagement and comprehension. Before students read, encourage them to think about their reasons for reading each text. What do they want to know? What are the main ideas they want to understand?

Informational Texts	Literature
Students set a purpose for reading, such as learning more about a particular topic, acquiring information that can be presented to others, or answering questions the reader has about the text.	Students set a purpose for reading, such as learning more about a topic, understanding an author's point of view, or using one's imagination to escape into a great book.

Previewing Text

Previewing the text is often referred to as a "text walk." Before reading, the reader may go through the text to glance at the text features, understand the text structure or genre, and gather some information about the big ideas in the text. This is the reader's chance to browse through the book.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students page through to preview the diagrams, headings, bold words, topic sentences, main ideas, and organization of a text.	Students skim the cover, illustrations, and chapter headings and select sentences within the text of a book.

Making Inferences

Good readers make inferences while reading. Students use clues in images and written text to determine implied meanings and draw conclusions. Students should be able to identify evidence from texts that helps them make inferences.

Informational Texts	Literature
Students make inferences from the information they learn in the text and cite evidence to support their conclusions.	Students make inferences about plot, characters, and themes based on images and key details in the text.

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