

From Reluctant to Engaged: Open-Access Text Sets That Transform Adolescent Readers

Elfrieda H.
Hiebert
TextProject



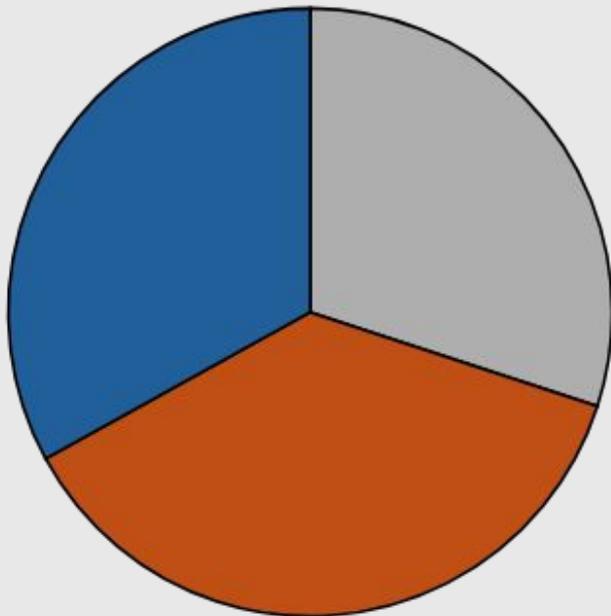


How are we interpreting “Below Basic”?



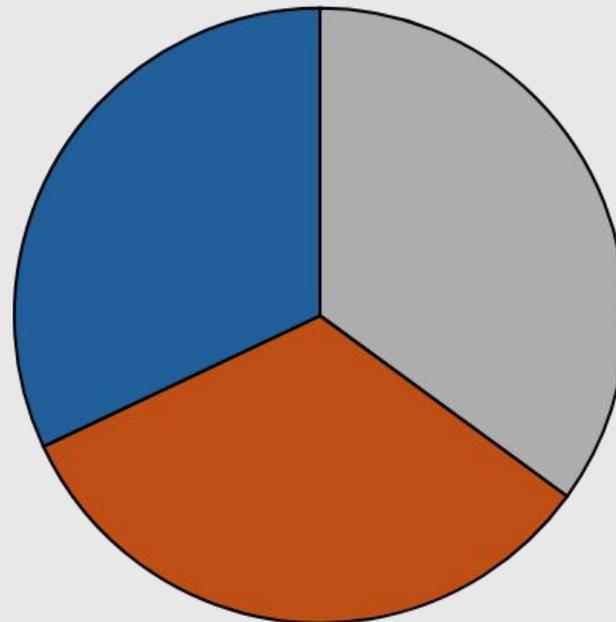
National Assessment of Educational Progress (2024)

8th Grade



□ Proficient □ Basic □ Below Basic

12th Grade



□ Proficient+ □ Basic □ Below Basic

The Surprising State of Middle School Literacy—And What School Leaders Can Do About It

Sixty-nine percent of eighth grade students are “non-proficient” readers. In this article, uncover the causes behind this adolescent literacy crisis. Discover practical literacy strategies for middle school reading improvement through evidence-based instruction and teacher training—plus, determine how to fund it.

The Shocking Statistics About Adolescent Literacy

Data from the most recent [2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#), a widely respected and comprehensive assessment of student performance in the United States, revealed that 70% of eighth grade students are “non-proficient” readers. This leaves a meager 30% of eighth grade students at or above the NAEP proficient achievement level.

Why 65 Percent of Fourth Graders Can't Really Read



KIDS LEARN TO READ THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY AT HOBART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN 1999. (DAVID BUTOW VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Emily Hanford reveals how America's educators adopted a flawed system for teaching reading to kids—and, as a result, completely failed them.

By The Free Press

02.11.23 —Education

Education

These are deep investigations—from kindergarten to college—into school choice, the misalloc

FOLLOW TOPIC 

America's Reading Crisis That No One Wants to Talk About

"There's this focus on K-3, without a lot of resources dedicated to helping the kids in secondary school who fell through the cracks."

LAUREN COFFEY JANUARY 23, 2026

US 

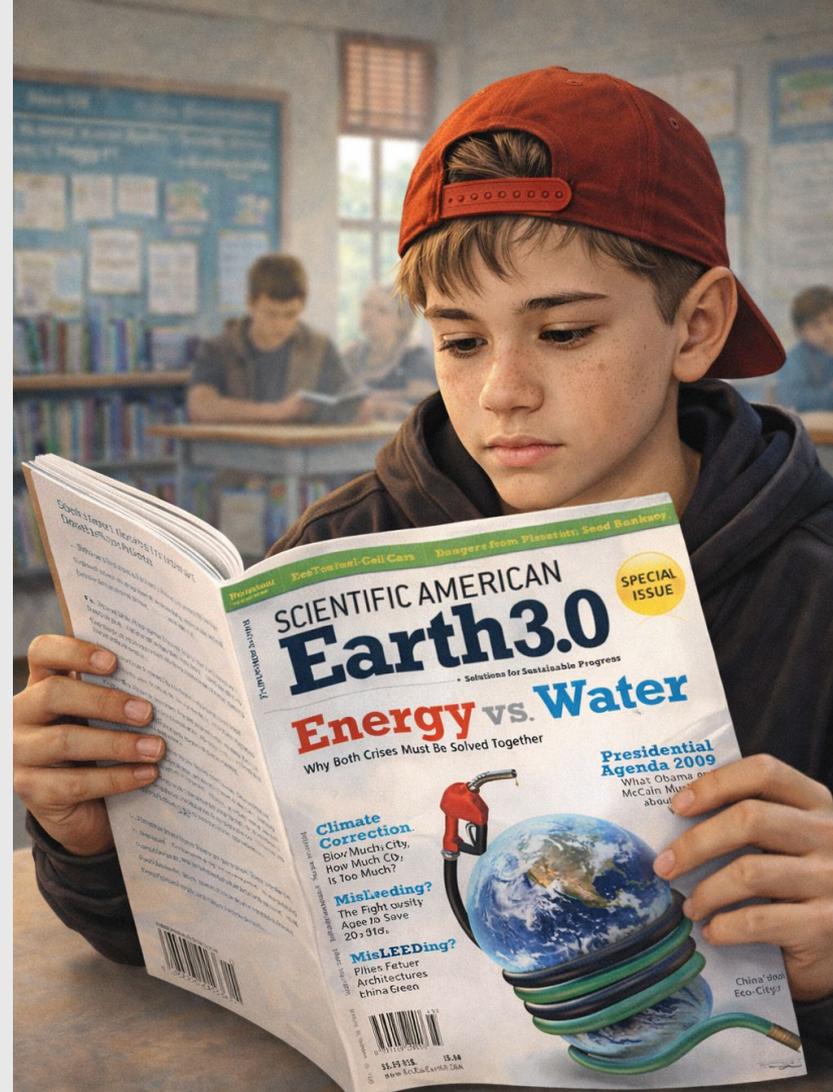
The Guardian

'These results are sobering': US high school seniors' reading and math scores plummet

Educators worry about absenteeism and smartphones as NAEP report shows scores at lowest levels in two decades

Aspirational by Design

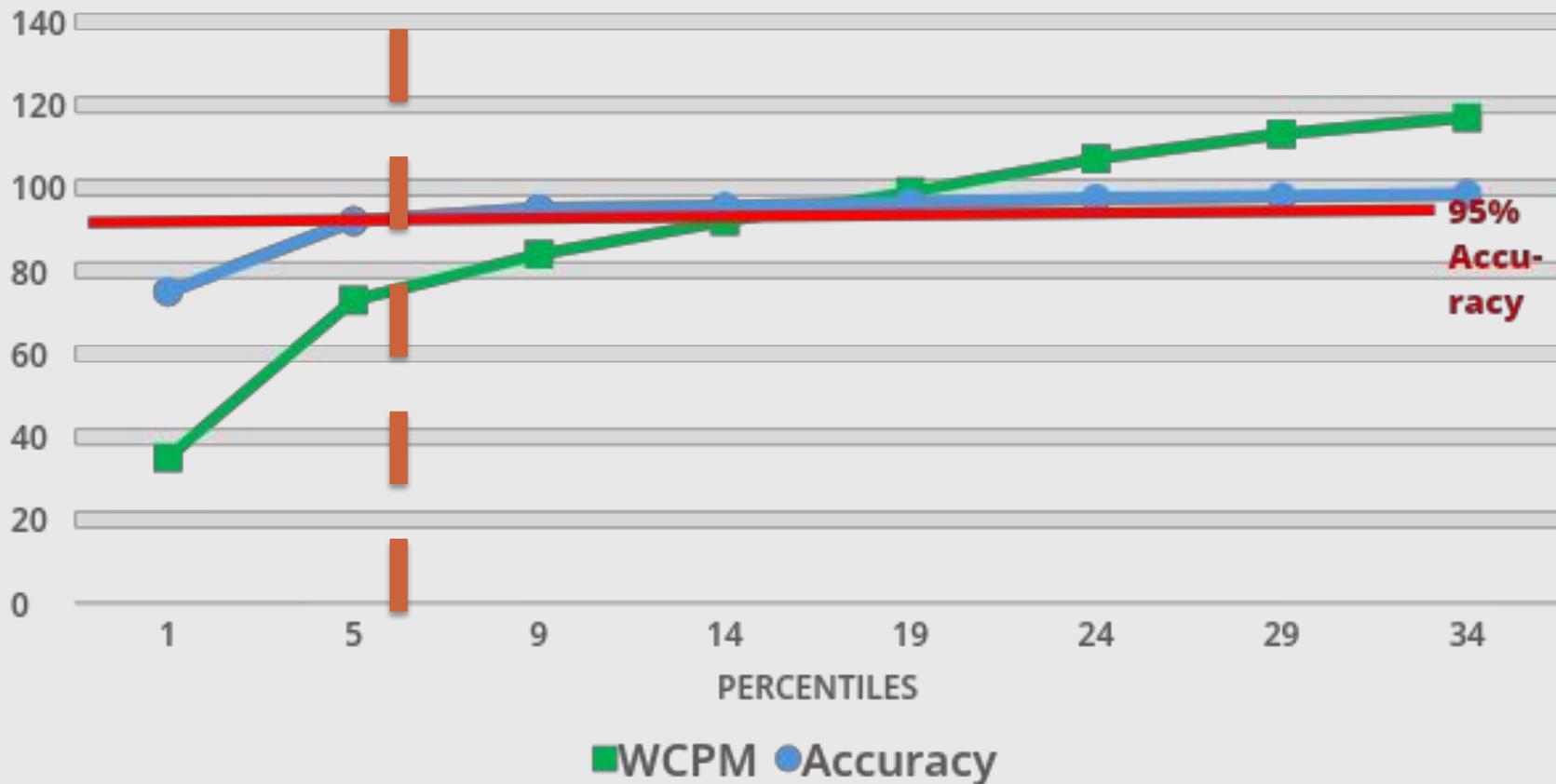
NAEP panel's mandate: to "establish a vision (in the form of guidelines and **aspirational** goals) reflecting current issues within the educational context" (Forzani et al., 2022, p. 161).



Independent Evaluations of NAEP

- "NAEP achievement-level results do not appear to be reasonable compared with other external information about students' achievement" (p. 7). (Pellegrino et al., 1999)
- National Academies of Science, Engineering, & Medicine questioned validity of achievement levels and called for evidence linking NAEP performance to real-world outcomes (Koenig & Edley, 2017)

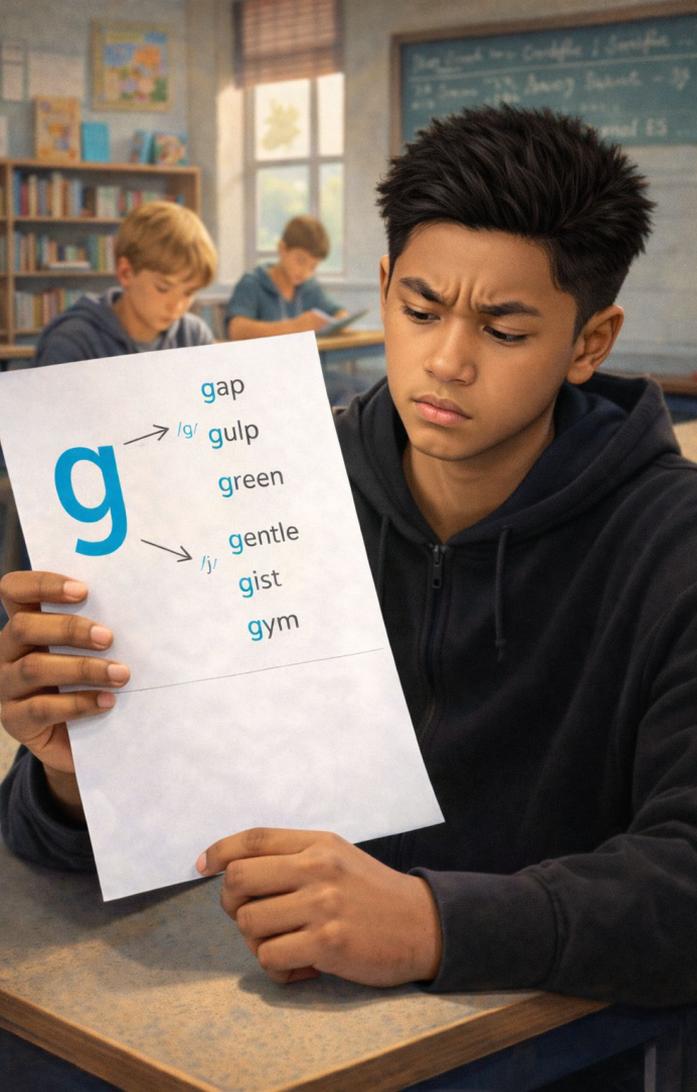
Variation Within the "Below-Basic Group"





What instruction does this interpretation produce?





- We intervene with adolescents using beginning-reading models.

OBJ

Example 1: Lesson in a Commercial “Evidence-Based ” Intervention for Grade 6 to 12 Students

hard g = /g/



game

goal

gust

grumpy

soft g = /j/



gem

huge

tragic

gymnast

got

sing

giant

glasses

grab

plunge

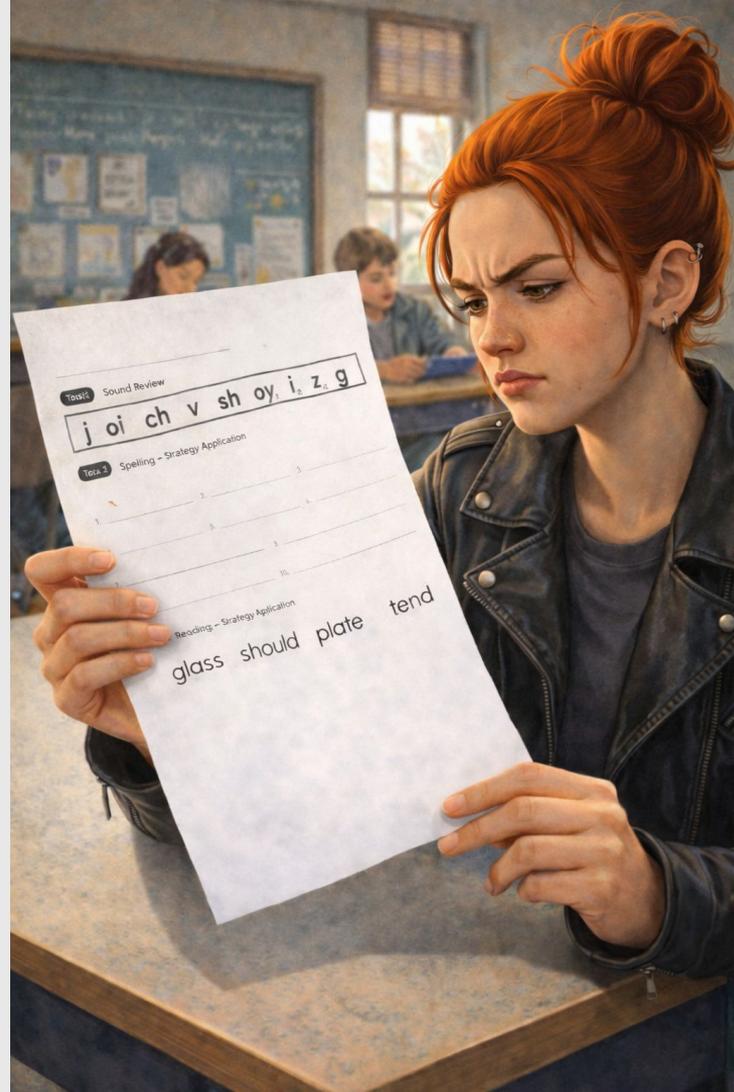


/g/ when g comes before a, o, u, or a consonant

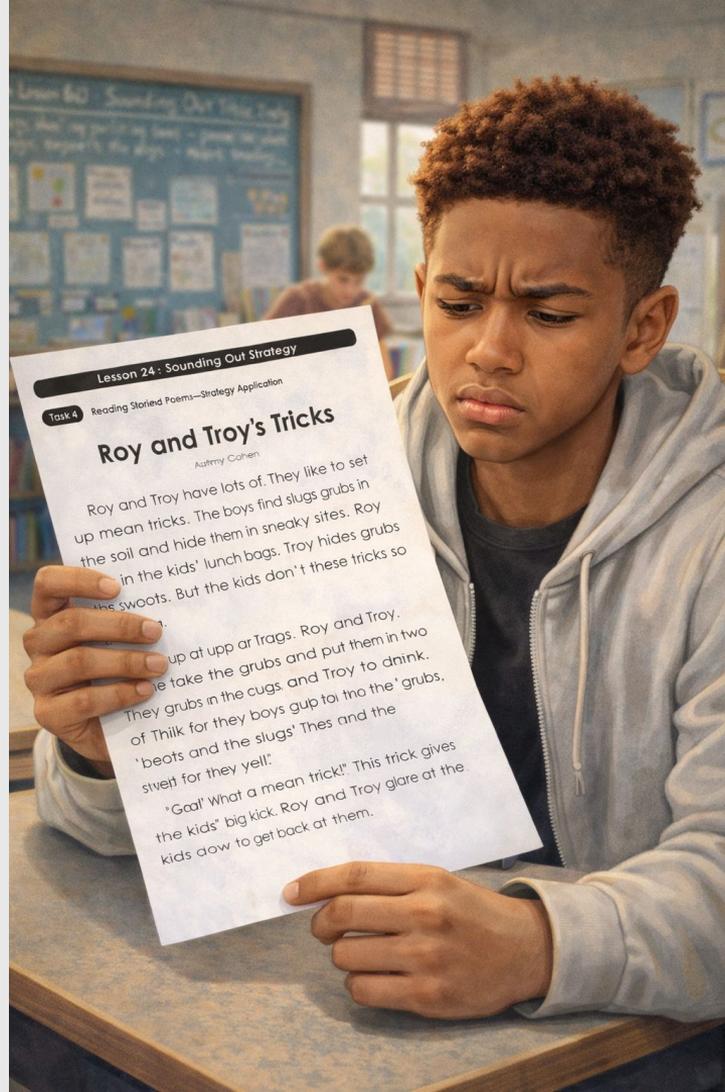


/j/ when g comes before e, i, or y

Example 2: An Adolescent Intervention from the Scientific Literature



Le coup d' éclat: A text in the 24th Lesson



- How are we interpreting “Below Basic”?
- What instruction does this interpretation produce?

Take-aways?





What alternative interpretations are supported by evidence?

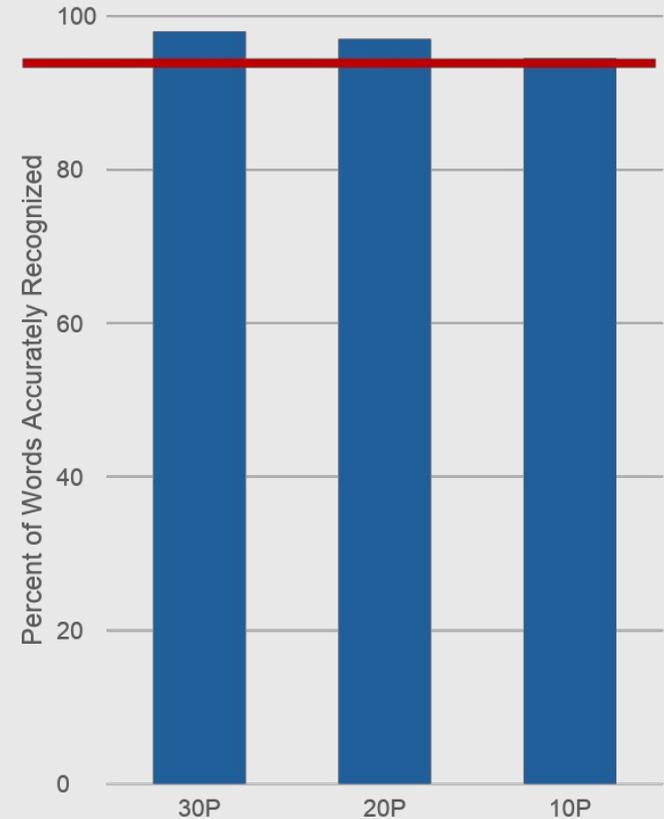


Data Source: Performances on DIBELS

Grade 8 Oral Reading Accuracy

Just a little over a century ago, the only way to enjoy music was to play it or listen to it in person. Then, with the discovery of radio waves and the invention of recording technology, people could enjoy music anytime. Today, digital recordings make enjoying music even easier and more portable than ever. However, the process of producing music has become more complex.

Prior to the sale of the first compact disc, or CD, music was sold and listened to on wax cylinders, phonographs, vinyl records, or cassette tapes. Although most of these technologies are thought to be obsolete, you can still buy music in these formats.



30th Percentile: 114 wcpm, 98% accuracy

Just a little over a century ago, the only way to enjoy music was to play it or listen to it in person. Then, with the discovery of radio waves and the invention of recording technology, people could enjoy music anytime. Today, digital recordings make enjoying music even easier and more portable than ever. However, the process of producing music has become more complex.

Prior to the sale of the first compact disc, or CD, music was sold and listened to on wax cylinders, phonographs, **vinyl** records, or cassette tapes. Although most of these technologies are thought to be **obsolete**, you can still buy music in these formats.

Prior to recording the music, musicians would thoroughly

20th Percentile: 101 wcpm; 97% accuracy

Just a little over a century ago, the only way to enjoy music was to play it or listen to it in person. Then, with the discovery of radio waves and the invention of recording technology, people could enjoy music anytime. Today, digital recordings make enjoying music even easier and more portable than ever. However, the process of producing music has become more complex.

Prior to the sale of the first compact disc, or CD, music was sold and listened to on wax **cylinders**, phonographs, **vinyl** records, or cassette tapes. Although most of these technologies are thought to be **obsolete**, you can still buy

10th Percentile: 85 wcpm, 94.5% accuracy

Just a little over a century ago, the only way to enjoy music was to play it or listen to it in person. Then, with the discovery of radio waves and the invention of recording technology, people could enjoy music anytime. Today, digital recordings make enjoying music even easier and more **portable** than ever. However, the process of producing music has become more complex.

Prior to the sale of the first compact disc, or CD, music was sold and listened to on wax **cylinders, phonographs, vinyl** records, or cassette tapes.

Known Words

Appearances per million	2 syllable	2-syllable with CVC 1 st syllable	3+ syllable (words with large morphological families)
100+	process, although		easier, producing, discovery
99 to 16	music	complex, listen	invention, enjoying, recording, technology,
15 to 1		cassette, compact	digital, phonographs

Challenging Words

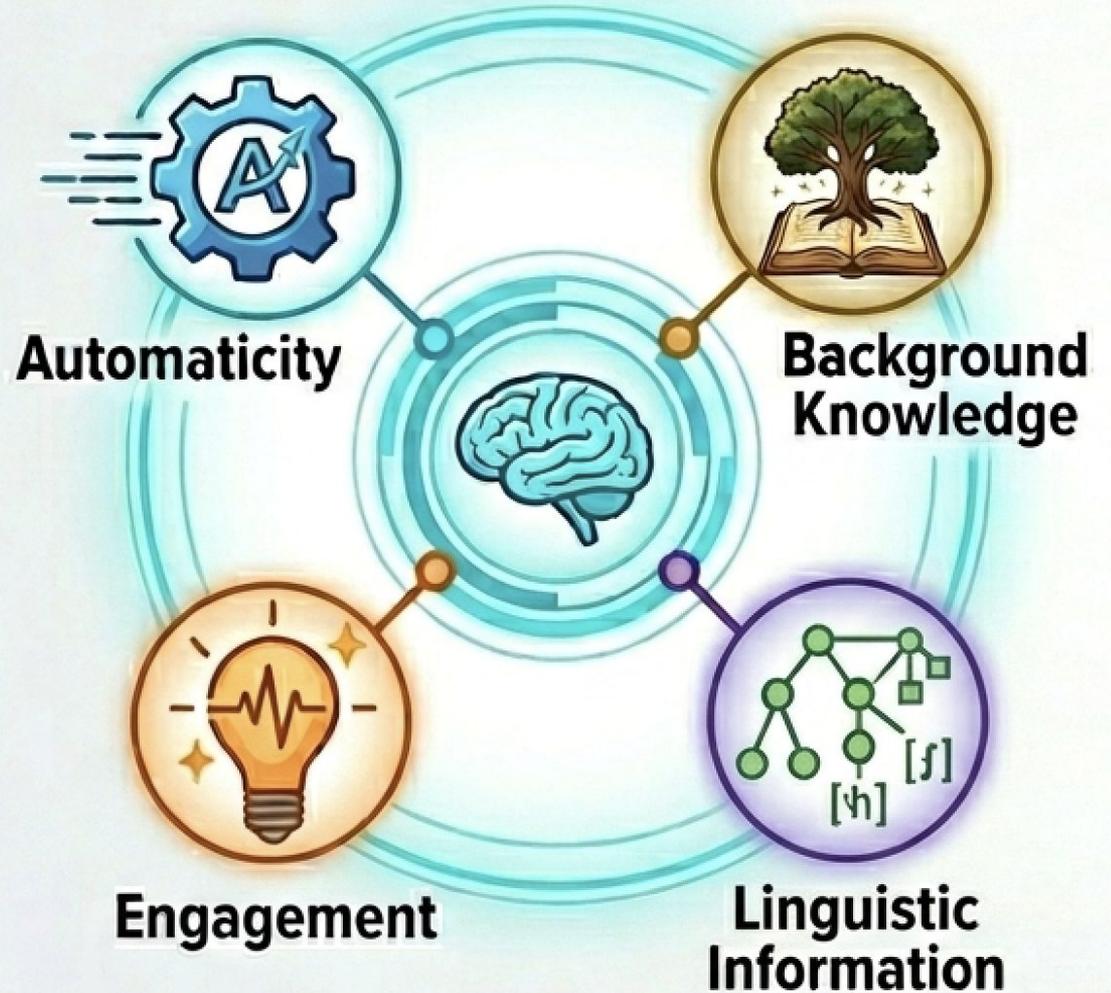
Percentile	2 syllable (variant or open 1 st syllable)	3 syllable
30 th	vinyl	obsolete
20 th	vinyl	cylinders obsolete
10 th	prior vinyl	portable cylinders obsolete



How do these alternative interpretations change what & how we teach?



Text Sets at TextProject



Open-Access Resources to Support Adolescent Readers

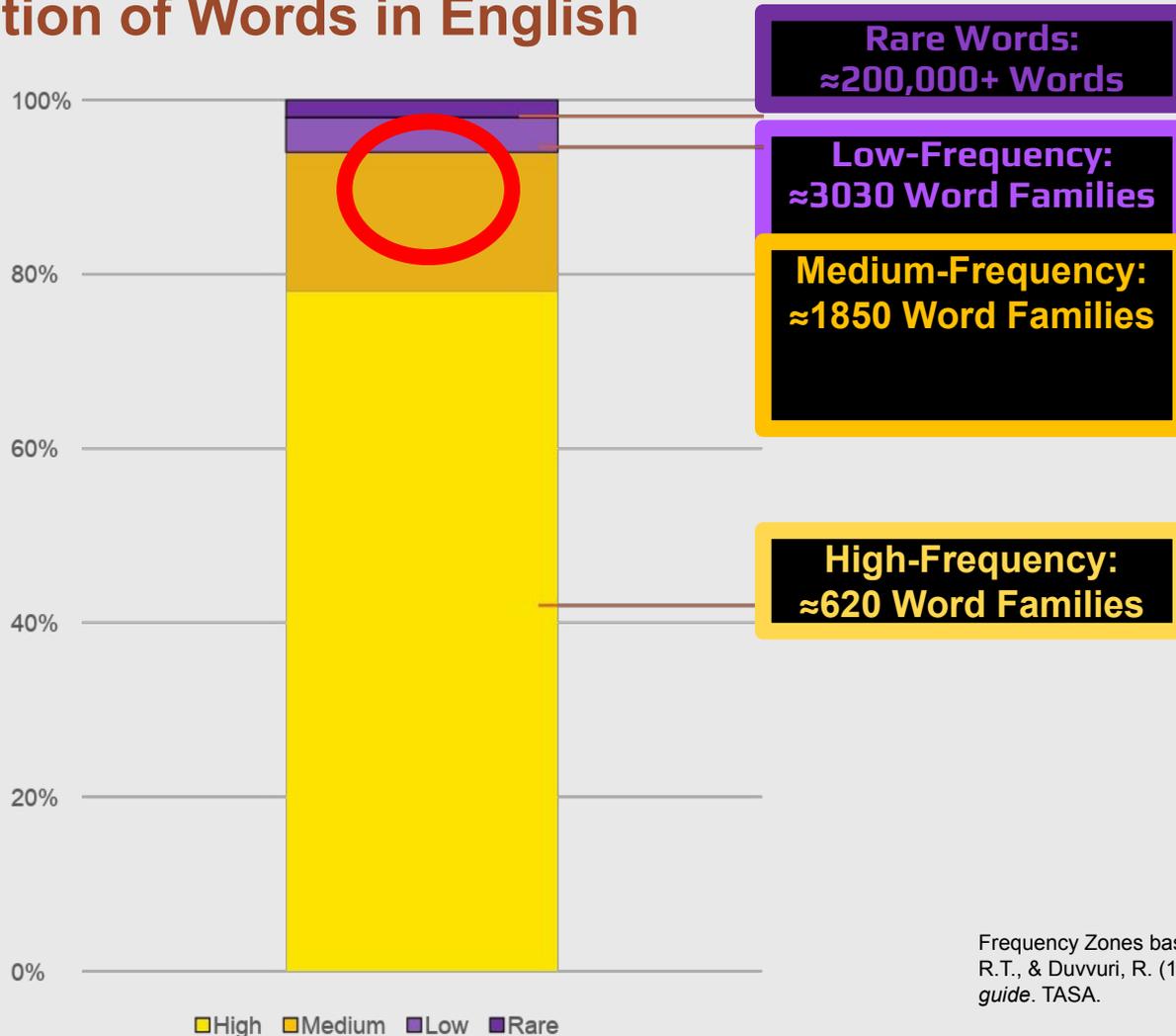


Text Sets at
TextProject



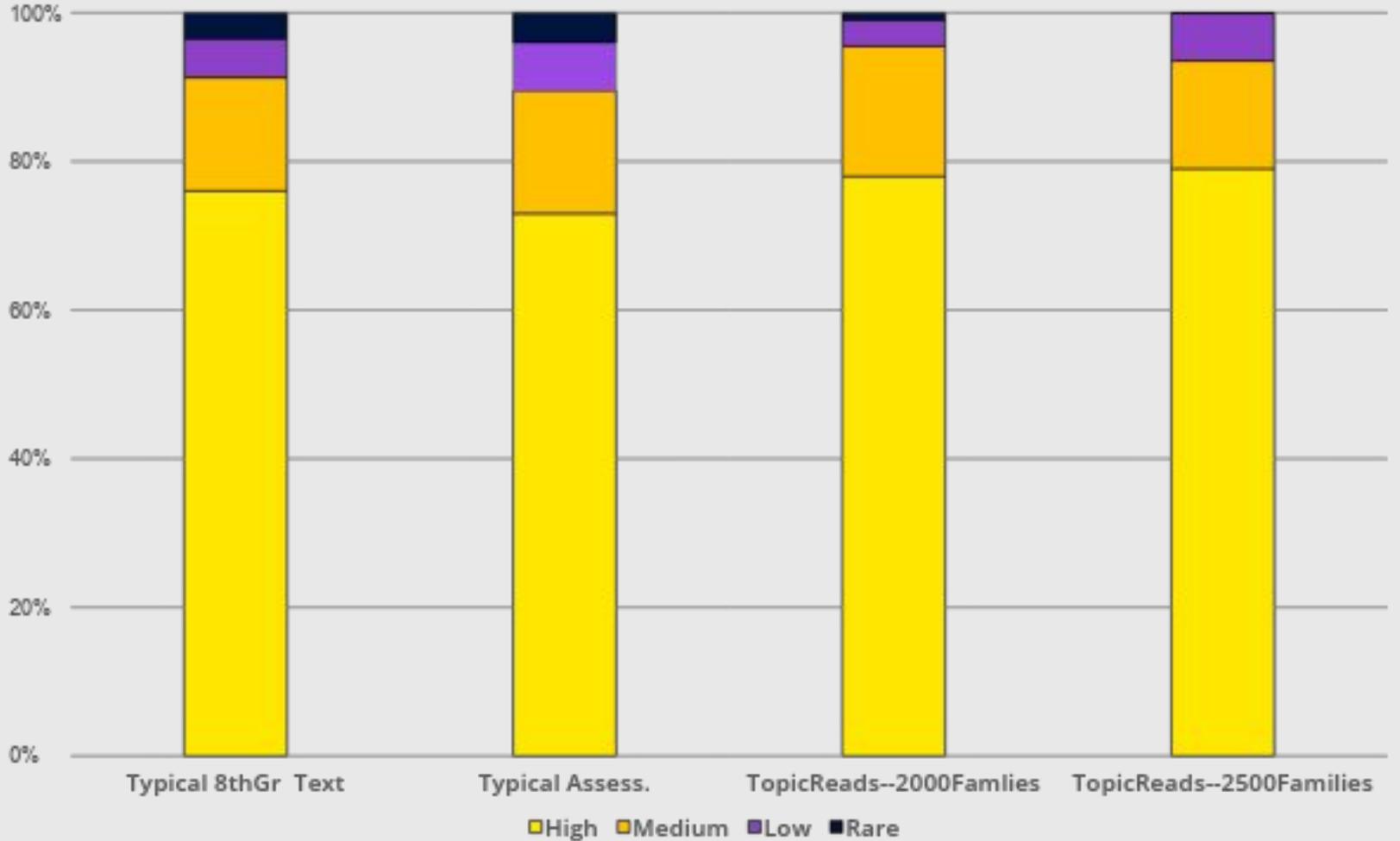
Automaticity

Distribution of Words in English

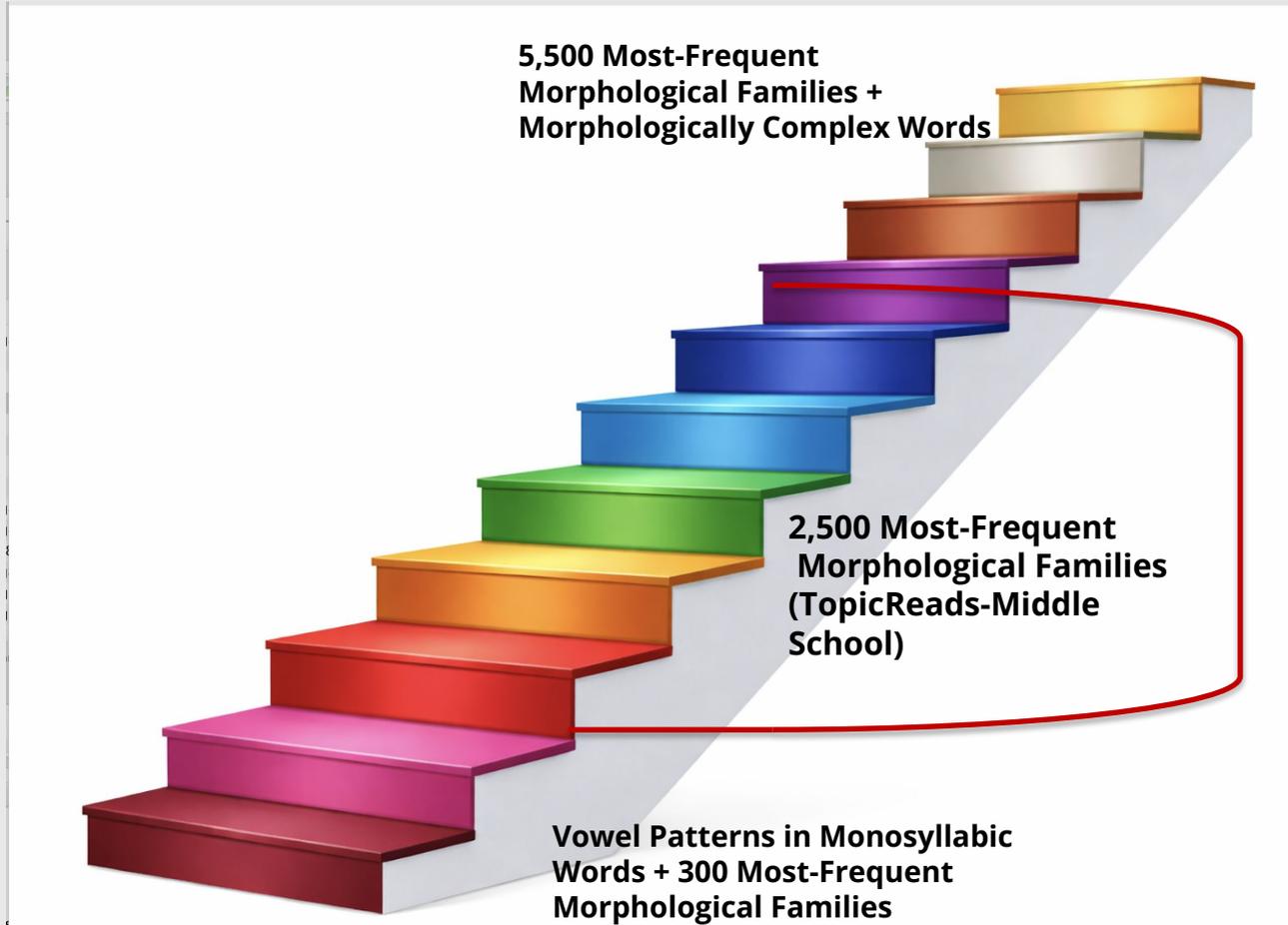


Frequency Zones based on Zeno, S.M., Ivens, S.H., Millard, R.T., & Duvvuri, R. (1995). *The educator's word frequency guide*. TASA.

Profiles of Typical Eighth-Grade Texts



Curriculum: The Staircase of Automaticity



Open-Access Instructional Intervention



Texts Aligned with Curriculum (n = 288)

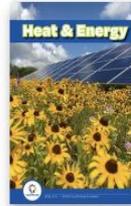


Level E

[Download all Level E TopicReads \(zip file\)](#)

Science

[Eating for Energy](#), [Earth's Moon](#), [Heat and Energy](#)



Literature and Language

[Science Fiction](#), [All About English](#), [Newspapers](#)



Social Studies

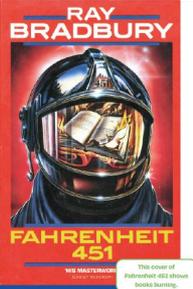
[Civil Rights Leaders](#), [Managing Money](#), [The American Civil War](#)



Arts and Culture

[Guitars](#), [People in Pictures](#), [Music in the Movies](#)





RAY BRADBURY

FAHRENHEIT 451

THE COVER OF
FAHRENHEIT 451 SHOWS
BOOKS BURNING.

© Level 6-10, Science Fiction

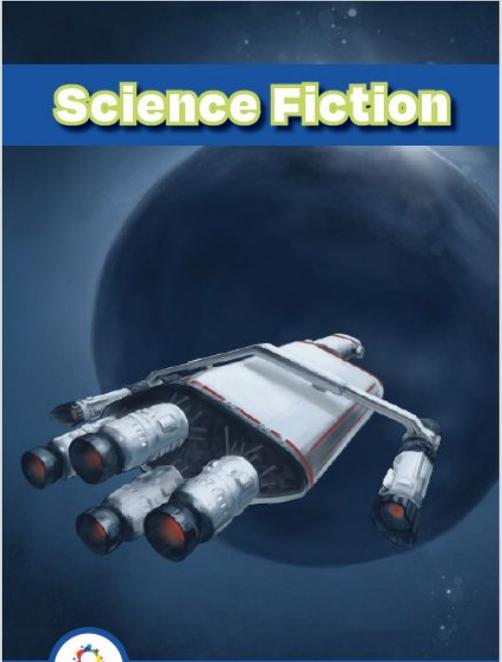
Fahrenheit 451

Fahrenheit 451 is the Bradbury's most popular science fiction book. The story takes place in a future in which books are outlawed and reading is against the law. When books are discovered, they're burned and their owners are arrested. The temperature at which books burn is 451 degrees Fahrenheit.

In this lesson, Bradbury does 'not' read from. Instead, they make their own books. Guy Montag is a firefighter who questions the purpose of his job. He notices the society read books. Working together in underground books can lead people to ask questions about things that are going on around them. The concern is whether that his government doesn't want people to think.

When Montag's wife, Mildred, discovers, she tells him to stop. However, Montag escapes and joins a group of people who are trying to save books by memorizing them. Later, they'll read their memorized books to others so that books won't be forgotten.

Key Notes:
In Fahrenheit 451, what happens to people who read?



Science Fiction

LEVEL E-10 • Written by Elfriede H. Hiebert

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Science Fiction stories sometimes include robots.



© Level 6-10, Science Fiction

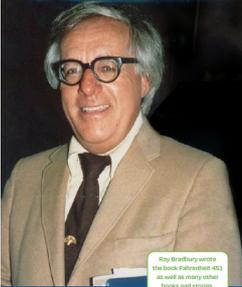
What is Science Fiction?

Imagine a man facing a pack of hungry space wolves. Then, imagine a girl shrinking to the size of a dime. Finally, imagine people who try to read books, but firefighters who burn books and then arrest them. Events like these occur in science fiction.

Science fiction stories are often strange tales that have roots in science. In the science in science fiction, that makes these stories seem like they could happen.

There are different kinds of science fiction. These stories might include high-tech like the Jetsons, or low-tech space. Alien visits might include creatures on our beautiful Earth. Sometimes, however, the aliens are humans who land on other planets. Another kind of science fiction might include predictions for our own planet, but have hidden worlds. Science fiction writers always create what exists in our world and also make us think about our own world.

Key Notes:
What are science fiction stories about?



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Censorship

One of the main ideas in Fahrenheit 451 is that people have a right to read books, even if others don't like the ideas in them. When people are not allowed to read what others have written, it is called censorship. Sometimes some of the words are changed. At other times, a whole book is banned.

At times, Fahrenheit 451 itself was censored. In 1967, the book's publisher began to receive a number of letters that said the book should be removed unless some words were changed, or edited.

In 1970, Ray Bradbury discovered that only the edited version of Fahrenheit 451 was available. He was angry that the book in which he wrote about the danger of censorship was itself being censored. Because he wanted people to read his book as he has written it, Ray Bradbury advised the publisher to sell Fahrenheit 451 only in its original, unedited version.

Key Notes:
What is censorship?



© Level 6-10, Science Fiction

Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury is one of the greatest writers of science fiction, and he has won many awards for his work. Several times he's won the Bradbury Award for his science fiction.

As a child, Bradbury was interested in magic. When he was 11 years old he saw a performance by Harry Blackstone, a famous magician. Bradbury even went up on stage to help Blackstone make a horse disappear. From that time, Bradbury loved magic.

Movies, adventure books, and comic strips also inspired Ray Bradbury. He especially liked the horror films filled with mystery and with unusual and strange creatures. His favorite adventure book place was other worlds. In the daily newspaper, he read comic strips that had ray guns and rocket ships.

Bradbury comes straight through words. His stories take readers on trips through space and time. He tells tales of strange beings and surprising events that sometimes even both scary and real.

Key Notes:
What does Ray Bradbury write about?



Pueblo Dwellings

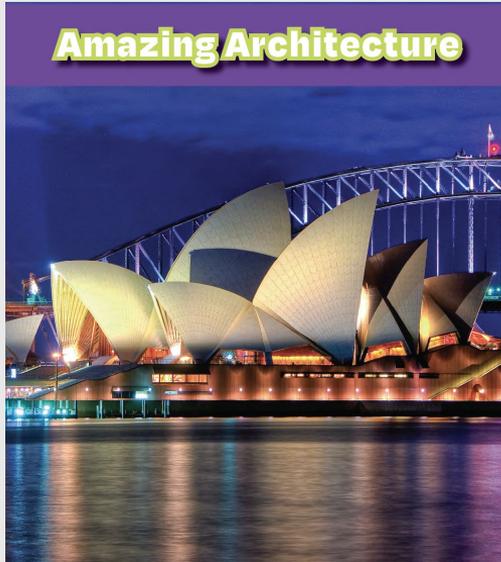
Hundreds of years ago, several groups of American Indians built a new style of architecture with buildings that were several stories high. Spanish people who came to the American Southwest the people after pueblo, a Spanish word that means "town," this word refers to both American Indians and their dwellings. The Pueblo Indians represent different American Indian groups built similar dwellings.

Pueblo dwellings had many rooms. Some were made of mud with straw and water. This mixture was often made into that were shaped like a cone. Large beams support the roof, which was made by laying smaller pieces of wood side by side on top of the covering them with dirt. The pueblo effect had many more. Pueblo Indians used ladders to reach the different levels. If you wanted people pulled the ladders up. Today, pueblos seen in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico.

Key Notes:

What kind of dwellings did Pueblo Indians build?

Ladders connected rooms in pueblos.



Amazing Architecture



Sports Stadiums

Architects also design new stadiums, or places where sports are often played. Many stadiums are either outdoor or indoor stadiums. However, in 1988, a new kind of stadium, the SoFi Stadium, opened in Los Angeles.

The SoFi Stadium is both an outdoor and an indoor stadium because it has a retractable roof. When the roof is open, it's an outdoor stadium. When the roof is closed, it's an indoor stadium. The stadium was also new in another way inside the stadium is a total of 68 teams. In 2016, the NFL chose to move the league's center.

Today, stadiums with retractable roofs are common. They can be used all year in any weather. They are used for more than one sport.

Retractable roofs for large stadiums were a challenge for architects, because retractable roofs weigh many tons and have no poles to support them. Each time architects meet such a challenge, it's a reminder of how amazing architecture can be.

Key Notes:

How are new sports stadiums different from older stadiums?



What is Architecture?

Every building was designed by someone. People who design buildings and other structures are called architects. Architects create office buildings, houses, schools, factories, hospitals, libraries, and other structures. The art and science of designing buildings is called architecture.

Architects think about building carefully before construction begins. They first see how the building will look. Appearance is important because people like to live in attractive places. Architects also think about how the building will be used. An office must be designed so that students can work comfortably. A school should be designed so that students can easily find their classrooms. In addition, architects envision how people will take care of the structure. A building should last a long time without needing expensive repairs.

In the United States, there are many kinds of architecture, from American Indian buildings that are hundreds of years old to modern houses and sports stadiums. These are just three examples of the architecture in our world.

Key Notes:

What do architects do?



Modern Homes

When architects design homes, they often consult with the people who will live in them. They consult so they know what kind of house the people want. Architects also create unusual homes that think people might like. Two of these designs, A Frames and domes, have become popular.

A-frame houses are shaped like a big A. They are usually erected in the country and are often used as vacation homes. A-frame houses are lot of trees at the bottom, which might be over the open space. The top of the house has less room because the house curves to a point.

Another unusual home design is the dome. A modern dome house is built on a circular frame divided into many small sections. The frame is covered, and the finished house looks like half of a soccer ball. Dome houses are easy to build, do not require much space, and are not expensive. They are also most commonly erected in the country.

Key Notes:

What kinds of unusual modern homes have architects designed?

TopicReads—Middle School: The Full Intervention

Assessments: Pre and Post

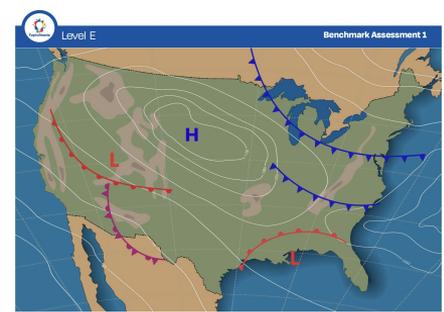


WEATHER FORECASTING

People always want to know about the weather. Forecasting, or predicting, the weather is important for people who go outside. It is also important for farmers and people who work outside. People who run airports need to know if planes can safely fly. People who run schools need to know if students can get to school.

Those who forecast the weather use a number of ways to do it. They check pictures taken by satellites above the Earth. The satellites tell about weather around the world. They check readings that tell the temperature of the air. They find out how hard the wind is blowing.

Weather forecasters put together all the information they gather. That helps them forecast what the weather will be like tomorrow or next week.



WEATHER MAPS

During a weather report, you may have seen a map of the United States with curved lines. These weather maps can help a meteorologist, or weather expert, explain the weather. The weather expert may point to the map to show what weather is coming.

The curved lines on the map show weather systems. The curve shows the direction that weather is heading. An H or L labels the curves. The H stands for a high-pressure area. It often means the weather will be calm.

An L stands for a low-pressure area. Low pressure means the weather is not settled. If a meteorologist points to an area labeled L, he or she might tell about rain, wind, or snow. Those low-pressure areas

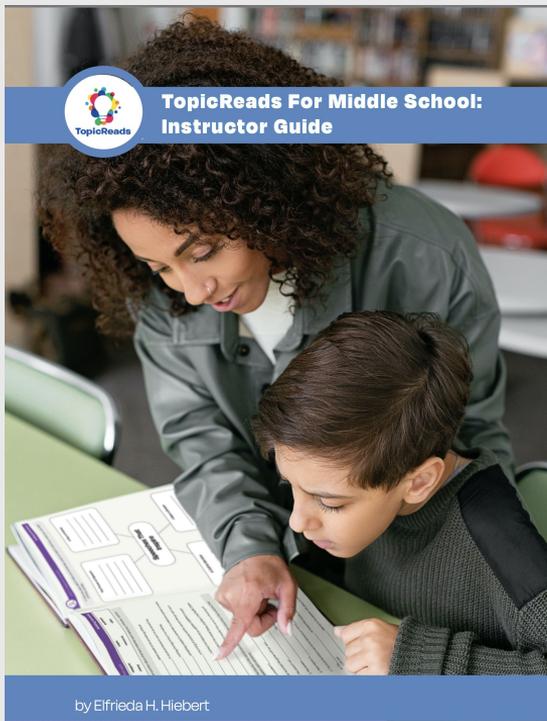
Building Comprehension

1. How do satellites help forecast the weather?
 - a. Satellites know if planes can safely fly.
 - b. Satellites put together information to forecast the weather.
 - c. Satellites let weather experts travel to take readings.
 - d. Satellites take pictures that tell about weather.
2. How do satellites help forecast the weather?

Building Comprehension

1. What do the curved lines on a weather map show?
 - a. temperature
 - b. thunderstorms
 - c. weather systems
 - d. winds
2. What does an H on a weather map mean?

Teacher's Guide



Instructional Plan

FIRST READ

1. Say to students, "Before you read, think about what you already know about the topic. Also, look for two words that might be new and challenging. Underline these words."
2. Then, ask students to read the passage silently. They may take as much time as they need.
3. After they read, tell students to write on the graphic organizer a few words or phrases that will help them remember what is important about the topic. The graphic organizer is located at the beginning of each Review section in the Student Editions.

SECOND READ

1. Say to students, "Now I'm going to read aloud as you read along silently. Follow along with me."
2. Then, read the passage aloud at the target rate of one minute.
3. Ask students, "What is one thing the author wants you to remember?"

THIRD READ

1. Say to students, "On the third read, your goal is to read as much of the passage as you can in a minute."
2. Then, tell students to read silently as you time them for one minute. Tell them to circle the last word they read when you tell them to stop.
3. Ask students to write the number of words they have read at the bottom of the page. Then, ask them to review in their mind what is important to remember from the passage.
4. Assign the comprehension questions in the Review section to check that students have understood what they have read.



fiction	inspired	memorize	edited
alien	Fahrenheit	censored	strange

1. Choose the word from the word box above that best matches each definition. Write the word on the line below.

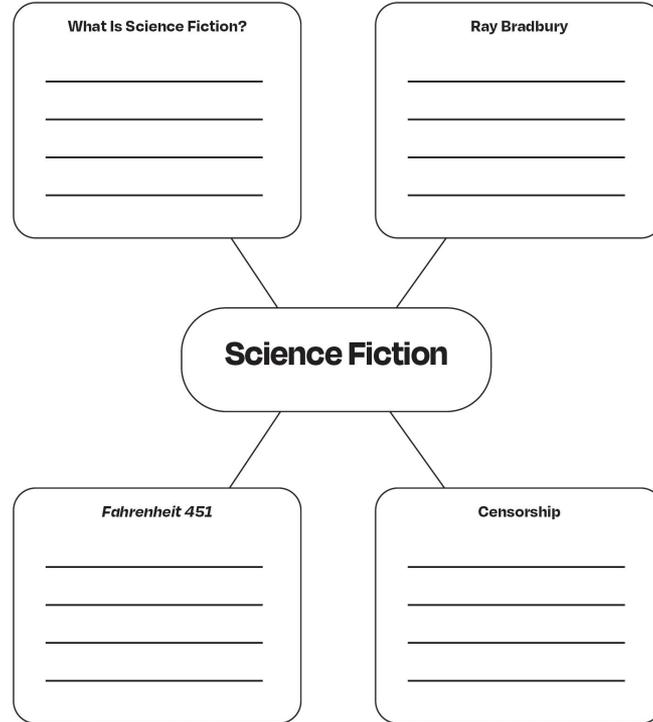
- A. _____ a scale for measuring temperature
- B. _____ readings with characters and events that were created by a writer
- C. _____ to learn something so that it can be repeated exactly
- D. _____ made someone want to do something
- E. _____ took out information so that others cannot read or see it
- F. _____ from another world
- G. _____ unusual, uncommon
- H. _____ to change words in something

2. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below. Choose the word from the word box that completes each sentence.

- A. An _____ that looked like a giant ape landed on Earth.
- B. I read a book of _____ that had characters that sounded like my friends.
- C. The official _____ the book to keep some people's names secret.
- D. Water will boil at 212 degrees _____.
- E. I need to _____ the script before the first performance of the play.
- F. I _____ my paper to add more information about the topic.
- G. Your music was so exciting it _____ me to start singing again.
- H. The science fiction novel had a _____ character in it.



1. Use the idea web to help you remember what you read. In each box, write the main idea of that reading.



Study Sheets Including a Way to Save “Knowledge”

Evidence Published in Scientific Literature

Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A. (2009). Supplemental Fluency Intervention and Determinants of Reading Outcomes. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 13(5), 383–425.

Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A. (2008a). Benefits of Repeated Reading Intervention for Low-Achieving Fourth- and Fifth-Grade Students. *Remedial and Special Education*, 29(4), 235–249.

Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A. (2008). Repeated Reading Intervention: Outcomes and Interactions with Readers' Skills and Classroom Instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(2), 272–290.

Average Effect Size:
+0.21

Outcome Measure	Statistic (reported)	Cohen's d (approx.)	Hedges'g (approx.)	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value
Reading Fluency (DIBELS ORF slope)	t(72) = 2.29	0.188	0.186	0.027	0.348	.022*
Vocabulary (IRAS slope)	t(73) = 2.20	0.085	0.084	0.009	0.160	.029*
Comprehension (Gates-MacGinitie)	F(1,1064) = 5.45	0.143	0.143	0.023	0.263	.020*

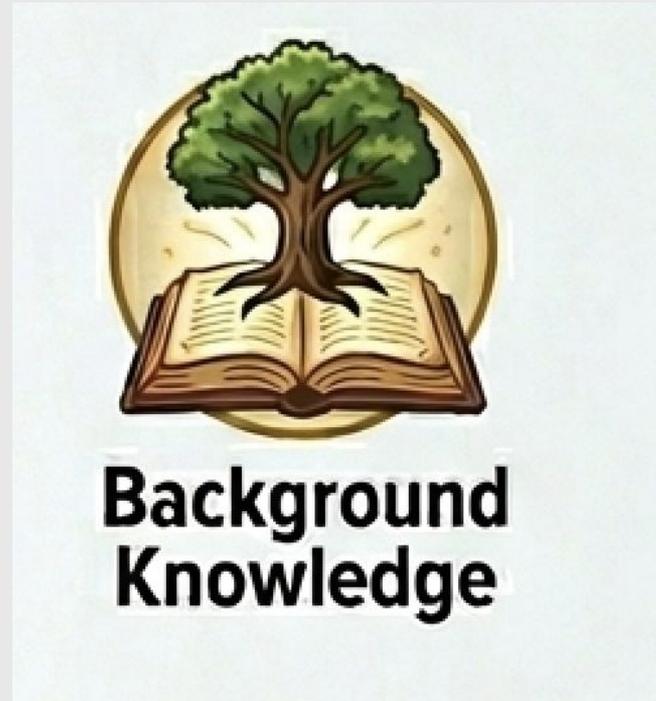
Trainin, G., Hayden, H. E., Wilson, K., & Erickson, J. (2016). Examining the impact of QuickReads' technology and print formats on fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development for elementary students. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 9(sup1), 93-116.

ANCOVA-adjusted effects (the primary results):

Measure	d	g	95% CI	Sig
GORT Accuracy	0.898	0.887	[0.354, 1.442]	p = .001
GORT Rate	0.557	0.550	[0.028, 1.086]	p = .036
GORT Comprehension	0.462	0.456	[-0.064, 0.988]	p = .080
TOWRE Sight Word	0.505	0.499	[-0.022, 1.032]	p = .180
TOWRE Decoding	0.505	0.499	[-0.022, 1.032]	p = .180
General Information	2.134	2.107	[1.483, 2.785]	p < .001

Huxley, A. B. P. (2006). *A text-based intervention of reading fluency, comprehension, and content knowledge*. University of Michigan.

The Text Sets at TextProject



Jack London The King of M



Wh
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5

Claim Jumping

Wolf Dogs: Lifeline of the Klondike

In the frozen wilderness of the Klondike, dog sleds were the best way to travel. The toughest dogs were wolf dogs—powerful, dangerous animals that were the size of a small pony. These wolf dogs weren't pets, but prospectors risked working with them because the dogs were unstoppable.

A team of six or more wolf dogs could haul a thousand pounds of supplies many miles a day across frozen rivers and mountain passes. They survived on scraps of meat and slept easily in freezing temperatures.

The person driving the sled, called a musher, had to guide these fierce animals with voice commands since there were no reins. The lead dog at the front had to know how to follow trails and respond to commands. A bad lead dog could cause the team to go off the trail and get stuck in deep snow, which meant death in the wilderness.

7

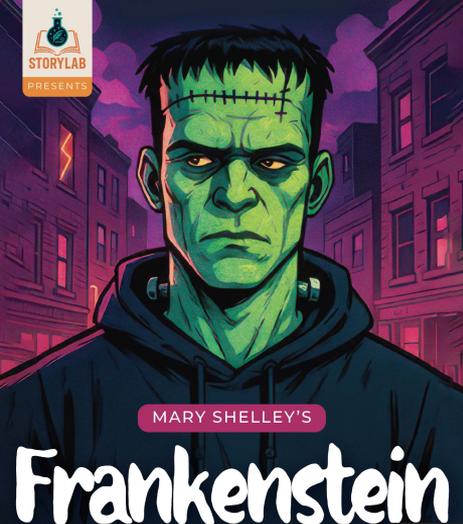


In the deadly Klondike winter, sled dogs were the difference between life and death. No GPS, no cell phones—just you and your dogs against the frozen wilderness.

Image: Sam Sherman | dreamstime.com

8

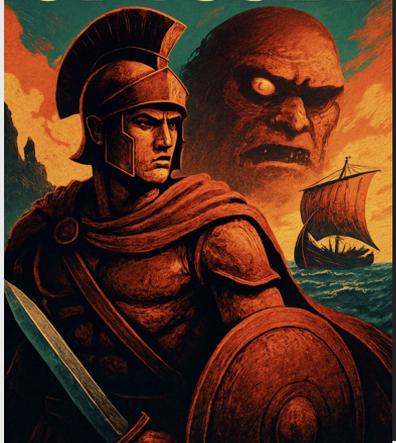




MARY SHELLEY'S

Frankenstein

THE ODYSSEY



20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S
Treasure Island
a retelling



THE OUTSIDERS

RETELLING



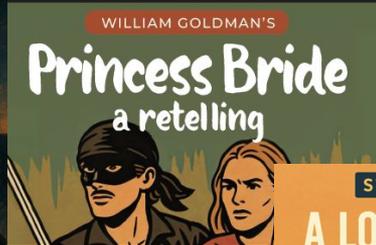
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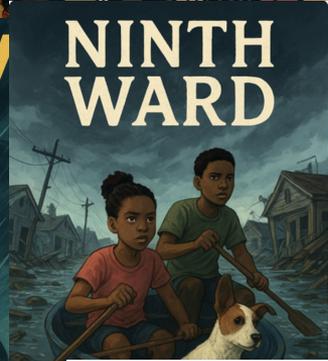
ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND



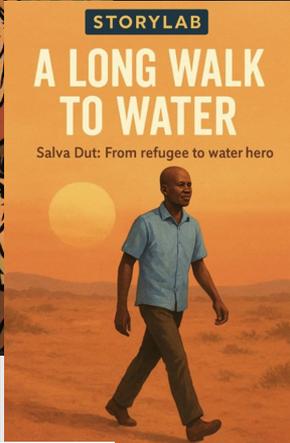
Elfrida (Freddy) N. Hebert, TextPresent



WILLIAM GOLDMAN'S
Princess Bride
a retelling



NINTH WARD



STORYLAB
A LONG WALK TO WATER
Salva Dut: From refugee to water hero



THE LIGHTNING THIEF



WALTER DEAN MYERS'S

game

a retelling



A RETELLING OF MEG MEDINA'S
YAQUI DELGADO WANTS TO KICK YOUR ASS

WHEN SCHOOL BECOMES



RICK RIORDAN'S

The Lightning Thief

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AN EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER 8:

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick Riordan

TEXT CONNECTION

TEXT REFLECTION

Percy's Most Dangerous Challenges Define Him



A fan of the movie version of *The Lightning Thief* pretends he is Percy Jackson.

Percy Jackson's quest to find Zeus's lightning bolt and save his mom is more than a road trip. It is a test of courage, loyalty, and identity. The journey is filled with impossible situations, but Percy handles each challenge and grows because of them.

From the very start of the trip, Percy must fight for his life. Percy, Grover, and Annabeth board a bus in New York.

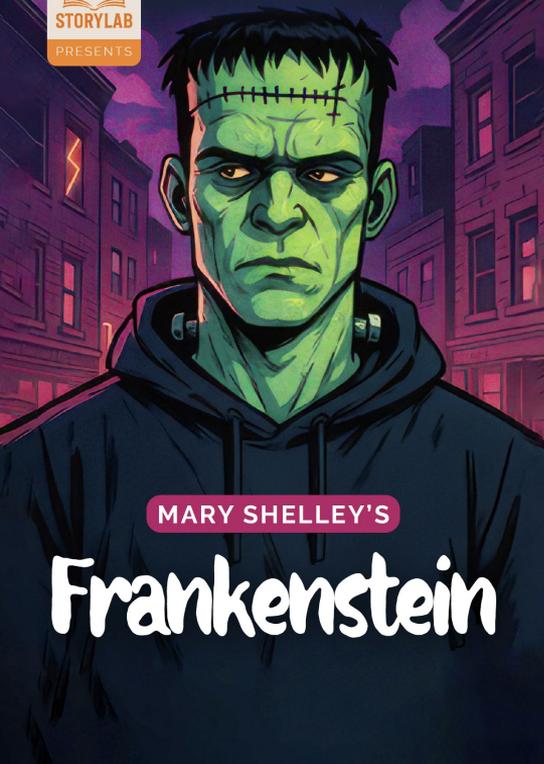
They encounter the Three Furies, winged demons. With the help of Grover's magic and Annabeth's quick thinking, Percy escapes. This moment shows that Percy isn't just running toward a goal. He must also figure out who he is under pressure.

Driving out west, Percy and his friends stop at a garden shop. Too late, they realize the shop is run by Medusa, the snake-haired monster who turns people to stone with just a look. Percy figures out how to kill Medusa. He proves to himself he can use his brain as well as his sword.

Percy and his friends get to Las Vegas and check into the Lotus Hotel and Casino. They hang out for what seems like a few hours but is really five days. They have been trapped by time-bending lotus flowers. Percy finally comes to his senses and becomes a true leader.

The final challenge comes in the Underworld. Percy faces Hades, the god of the dead. He realizes someone else put the lightning bolt in his backpack. Yet Percy is able to stay calm and prove his innocence to Hades.

By the end of the journey, Percy has faced gods, monsters, and his own doubts. Each time, he has chosen to stand up for what is right. His journey is not just about saving his mom or stopping Zeus. It is about discovering the hero he is meant to be.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

corpse. Working alone in his lab, Victor stitches together body parts from different corpses.

A RETELLING FROM *FRANKENSTEIN*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR TEXT REFLECTION

Are Modern Scientists Like Victor Frankenstein?

When people compare cloning and artificial intelligence to Victor Frankenstein's experiment, they're asking an important question. Are today's scientists making the same dangerous mistakes as Mary Shelley's fictional character?

The similarities are obvious. Victor Frankenstein created artificial life from dead tissue. Today, scientists clone animals by copying their genes. Tech companies build AI systems that can learn like humans. In both cases, humans are trying to create something that acts alive or intelligent.

But the differences are big. Frankenstein worked alone in secret, driven by his obsession. He never considered the results of his actions or what his creature might need.



Computers might be able to mimic human behavior. But they do not have feelings like Frankenstein's creation.

In contrast, modern scientists follow strict safety rules. They work in teams and publish their research. They think about the rights and wrongs of their work.

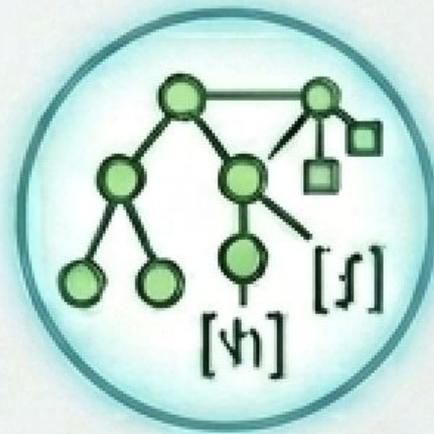
Furthermore, real cloning isn't about bringing dead things back to life. Scientists use cloning to help endangered species survive, develop medical treatments, and understand diseases. Cloned animals are born naturally and live normal lives. There's no stitching together of body parts!

Artificial intelligence is also different from Frankenstein's creation. AI systems are computer programs, not physical creatures. Frankenstein's creature experienced emotions, while today's computers only mimic human emotions.

However, the comparison isn't completely unfair. Like Victor Frankenstein, some modern scientists worry about losing control of their creations. AI researchers debate whether super-intelligent machines could become dangerous. These concerns echo Shelley's warning about the dangers of unchecked power.

The real lesson from Frankenstein is not that we should stop scientific progress. It's that we need to be responsible in how we use our power to create. Victor's biggest mistakes were in failing to consider the consequences of his creation while obsessively pursuing it and, then, abandoning what he had created. Modern scientists understand that with great power comes great responsibility. That's what separates real science from horror stories.

Text Sets at TextProject



**Linguistic
Information**

Stories of Words

Sports

1

Play Ball

You may think of baseball as a winter sport, but it's actually one of the most popular sports in the world. The game is played in over 200 countries. Like basketball, it's a game that tells players to cooperate with someone else.

2

Baseball is a popular pastime, but in fact, more people play it than any other sport. (There are over 2 billion people in the world.) Like basketball, it's a game that tells players to cooperate with someone else.



3

The game of baseball is a pastime, but in fact, more people play it than any other sport. (There are over 2 billion people in the world.) Like basketball, it's a game that tells players to cooperate with someone else.



4

Have you ever played basketball with a friend? You might thank James Naismith, a physical education teacher at a school in Massachusetts. He invented basketball in 1891. The game was created in a snowy winter when the students at the school had no place to play. Naismith invented a game that could be played indoors. He had a peach basket hung from the gymnasium rafters. The students would throw the ball into the basket. That's why it's called basketball.

At first, the game was played with a ball that was made of rags. In 1906, a ball was made of rubber. Today, even though the game is called basketball, it's not really a basketball game.

5

TENNIS

The player crouches, then throws the ball high into the air. She smashes the ball to her opponent. The crowd holds its breath. Will her opponent hit it back?



By



The Big Red Sign

Sam and Meg were on their way to school.
Sam saw the big red sign at the corner.

"STOP!" said Sam. "We need to stop here
and look both ways."

Meg stopped next to Sam. They watched
as cars stopped at the sign too.

"The cars are stopping because of the
sign," said Meg.

"Now it's safe," said Sam. "Let's go!"

Text Sets at TextProject



Engagement

Ini Archibong: Crafting the Future with Tradition and Technology

Ini Archibong is a talented designer who was born in Pasadena, California, to parents from Nigeria. His work spans various fields, including furniture design, fashion, and architecture. What sets Ini apart is his unique ability to blend traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge technology. He draws inspiration from many sources—architecture, philosophy, and even global religions—to create designs that are not only stunning but also incredibly functional.

Ini's journey began with his Nigerian roots and a shift from studying business at USC to pursuing his true passion for design at ArtCenter College of Design. There, he excelled, earning a degree in Environmental Design before heading to Europe to further his studies.

His career is marked by impressive achievements. Ini has crafted stunning furniture collections like "The Secret Garden" and has collaborated with major design companies such as Hermès and Knoll. His designs have been showcased at some of the world's most prestigious museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

But Ini's contributions go beyond creating. He also writes essays and teaches design, sharing his knowledge and passion with others. Now living in Switzerland, Ini continues to push the boundaries of art and technology, inspiring people with his innovative approach and deep respect for materials and craftsmanship.



Image source: <https://www.citizenand.com/ini-archibong/>

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Dr. Jessica Esquivel: From Sci-Fi to Scientific Innovation

Dr. Jessica Esquivel is an inspiring physicist and advocate for diversity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Growing up, Jessica faced numerous challenges, but her interest in science developed in a most unusual way: by watching science fiction movies! She cites the film *Contact*, in which Jodie Foster plays an astrophysicist, as a pivotal moment that hooked her. Here was a woman leading a scientific inquiry!



Jessica completed her undergraduate studies in her home state of Texas before pursuing a PhD in particle physics at Syracuse University in New York. She earned her PhD during a time when the number of Black and Latinx women in the field was very low. As a woman of both African and Latin American heritage, Jessica often felt isolated during her graduate studies, frequently finding herself as one of the few women and people of color in meetings. Despite these challenges, she sought support from mentors and peers and learned the value of a strong support network.

She currently works at Fermilab, a leading laboratory for particle physics research, where her research focuses on the properties of muons. Muons are elementary particles similar to electrons but with much greater mass. Understanding muons is fundamental to understanding the forces in the universe.

In addition to her scientific work, Dr. Esquivel is dedicated to making STEM fields more inclusive. She mentors students from underserved communities, helping them see that they too can succeed in science. Her efforts aim to break down barriers and open doors for future generations of scientists.

Image source: Citizens Newspaper Group, provided by Dr. Jessica Esquivel

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TeenReads

TextProject.org Volume 1, Issue 3



GET CREATIVE

Smart ways to use your phone

Cell phone poetry

Turning special moments into poems

Digital Collage

Creating a visual diary

Smart Ways to

The tech world this more than available on a Some teenagers hav cellphones. Here are and Asa, who have c

Lucas: Digital Ph

Photos of an even can capture memorie and give you a recor revisit and remembe Lucas loves taking pictures of everyday life—rocks on a beac a sunset, an unusual plant, a funny sign oi building. He plays an with different angles and filters on his phc turning ordinary thin into amazing photos Lucas especially love town. He transforms visual stories.

TeenReads™
Volume 1, Issue 3
by Wendy Svec & Elfrieda Hiebert
TextProject.org

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Ron Lach | pixels.com

Harper: Video

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Asa: Music Cre

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In conclusion, t cellphone is not ju and Asa. It is an i photography, vid interaction, these of their cellphone

Cell Phone Poetry



Freeppk.com

A note-taking app lets Tess capture moments of ideas that she can use in poems.

Tess is a poet. She is always on the hunt for sights, sounds, or smells that will stir her imagination. Today, Tess is walking in the park. She sees some children playing, and their laughter sets off a memory from her own childhood.

Tess quickly opens the note-taking app on her cell phone. She jots down her thoughts and feelings. She isn't worried about crafting a poem at this time. Right now, she wants to simply capture the feeling and idea. By capturing her thoughts instantly, Tess makes sure her ideas aren't lost.

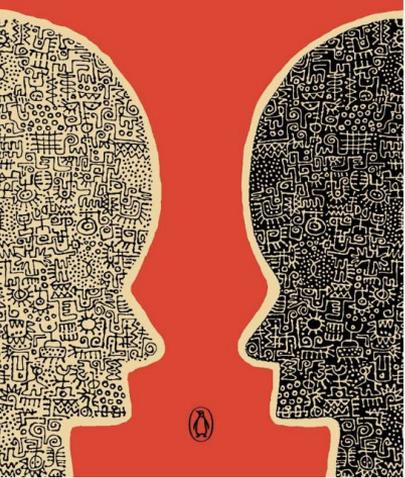
Turning Special Moments into Poems

Tess uses several steps to create and share her poems. Once she has the idea of a poem on her note taking app, she refines it. Some ideas might stay unfinished, to be returned to at some future time. Other ideas are discarded. Tess knows she can choose to revisit the unfinished or discarded pieces at some

- What alternative interpretations are supported by evidence?
- How does this evidence change what and how we teach?

Take-Aways





Building a Text Set Around a Novel—AI Assisted

Elfrieda (Freddy) H. Hiebert
TextProject

AI prompt callout.

Step 1: What Students Need to Know Before They Read: Identifying Topics

I am a high school English teacher who is teaching *Things Fall Apart*. For many of my students, the contents of this book feels very alien and faraway. What are 5 to 7 topics for short background builders that could support not only their comprehension, ease of reading (many are challenged in reading three and four-syllable words), background knowledge, but, most importantly--engagement and interest.

Step 2: Choose germane topics from options

Can you write a text set on 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. Each text should not be more than 325 words. Also don't include too many polysyllabic words (i.e., words with 3+ syllables). And can you generate a sixth text--on the Berlin conference where the European nations "divided" Africa up--and then describe how the British put together a divergent group of cultures to call it Nigeria.

Step 3: I do considerable editing of the texts

- To see results of my editing...come to CATE presentation, where you will get a paper version of the BackgroundBuilder for *Things Come Apart!*

Step 4: Identifying additional content

Can you write a piece contrasting Conrad's book with that of Achebe's

Step 5: Locating illustrations/graphics

So now I've got 7 texts in my text set. Can you suggest illustrations or historical pictures or some graphic to accompany each of the 7 texts?

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart



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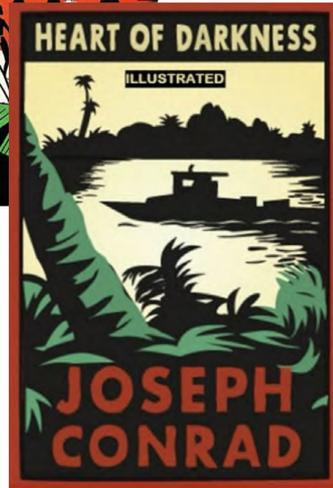
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7



How Africa Was Shown in Earlier Novels Written by Europeans

When *Things Fall Apart* was published in 1958, it was not the first novel set in Africa. For decades, European writers had written books about the continent. But almost all were told from a European point of view. The land was described in detail, but African people were rarely the main characters. They did not often speak for themselves but appeared as background figures in stories about European explorers, traders, or soldiers.

One well-known example is *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. In that novel, Africa is the setting for a journey made by a European sailor. The focus is on what happens to the Europeans, not on the inner lives of African people.

These kinds of books shaped how many readers in Europe and the North America imagined Africa. They often suggested that African societies were simple. Readers rarely saw detailed portrayals of family life, law, or religion within African communities.

In the 1950s, most African countries were still under European rule. African voices were not widely heard in world literature. Achebe wanted to change that. *Things Fall Apart* shows Igbo life as a full society, with strengths, flaws, humor, and conflict. Achebe was not just writing a story. He was entering a conversation — and reshaping it.



Adolescents are wired for growth, status, and meaning. When we lower the cognitive bar, they disengage. When we show them why the work matters—and show them that we believe they can do it—they rise. (Yeager, 2025)

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Building Better Readers

Free, evidence-based texts for supporting beginning and struggling readers.

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Sincerest thank you for
your time & commitment
to our students and their
future!

