

7 Actions Teachers Can Take to Increase Students' Capacity with Complex Text

Elfrieda H. Hiebert
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1. Knowledge
2. Connections
3. Passion
4. Vocabulary
5. Volume
6. Stamina
7. Keeping the Goal in Sight

1. Knowledge

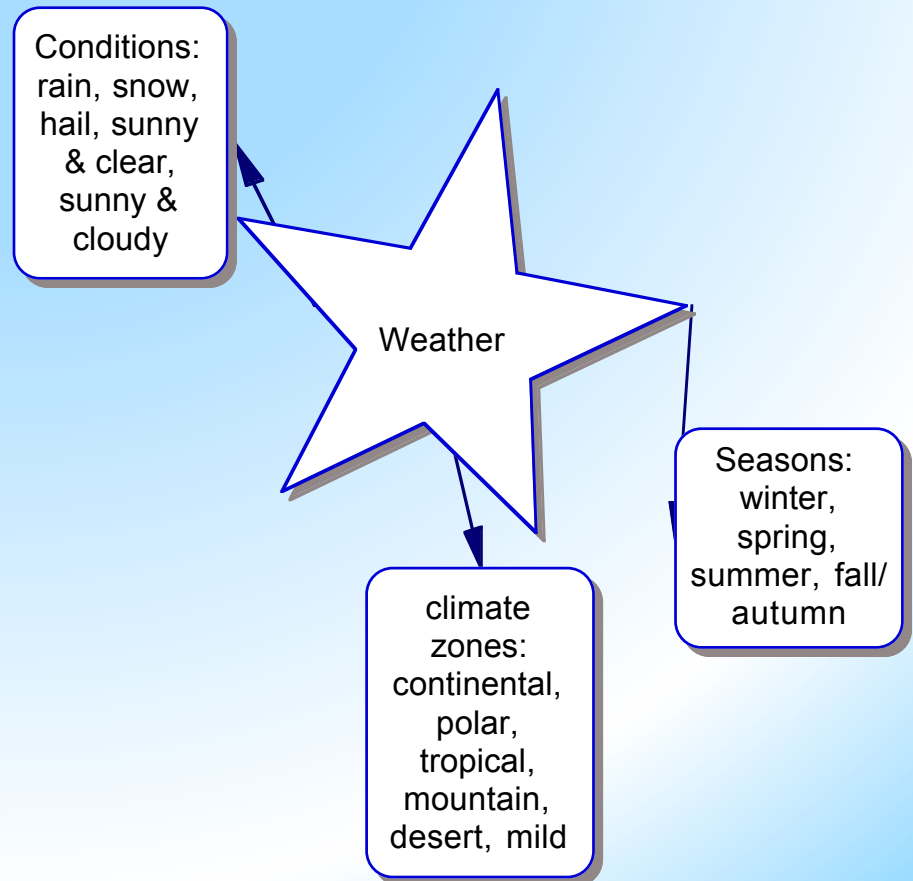
Reading is where vocabularies and
concepts are extended & developed.

Comparison of Spoken & Written Language
(from Hayes & Ahrens, 1988)

<u><i>Printed Text</i></u> Popular Magazines Children's Books	<i>Rare Words per 1,000</i> 65.7 30.9
<u><i>Television Texts</i></u> Popular adult shows	22.7
<u><i>Adult Speech</i></u> College graduates to friends	17.3

Particular funds of knowledge are acquired solely through academic presentations (texts, lessons, selected media)

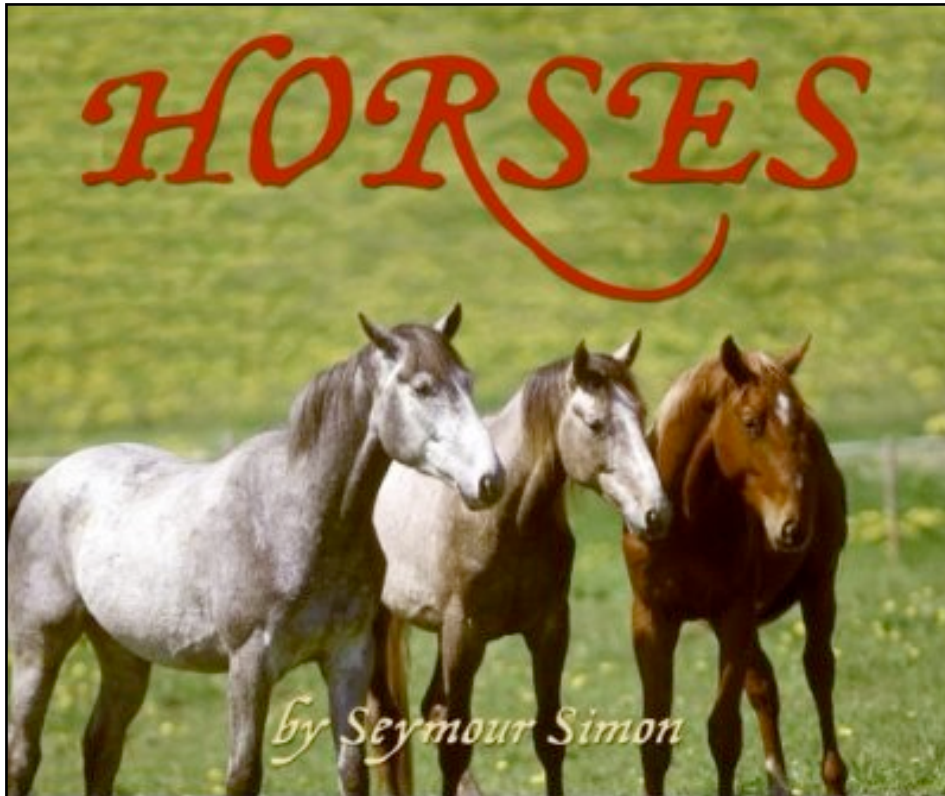
- * Representational forms of government
- * Photosynthesis
- * Atom-splitting



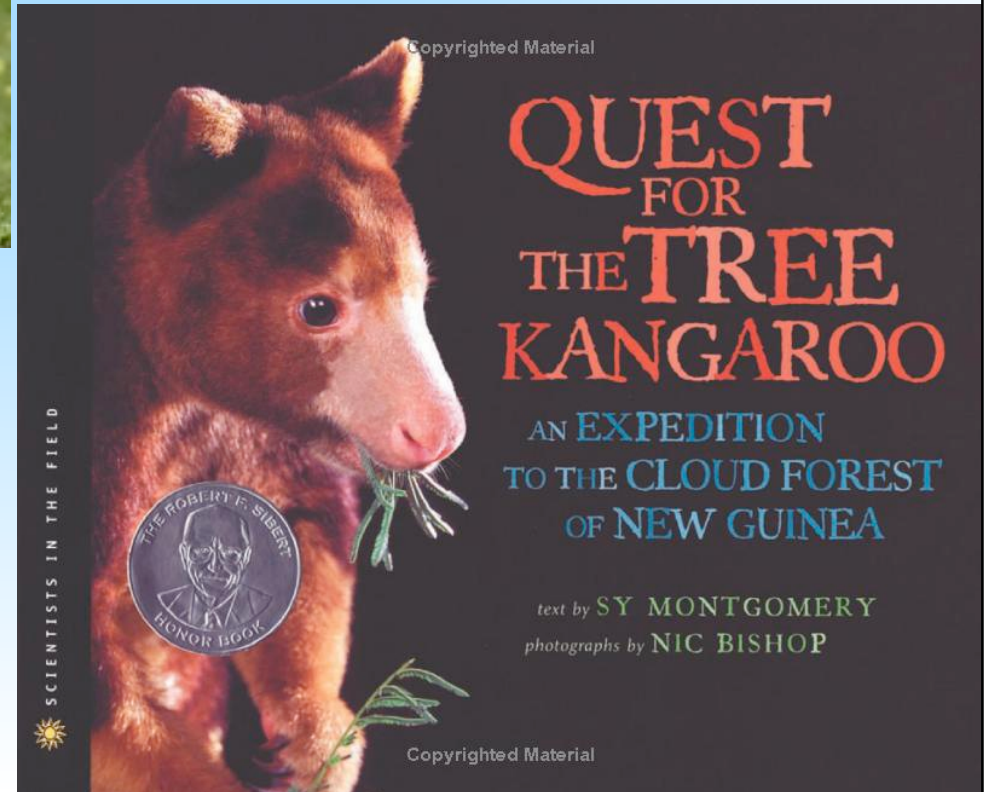
2. Connections

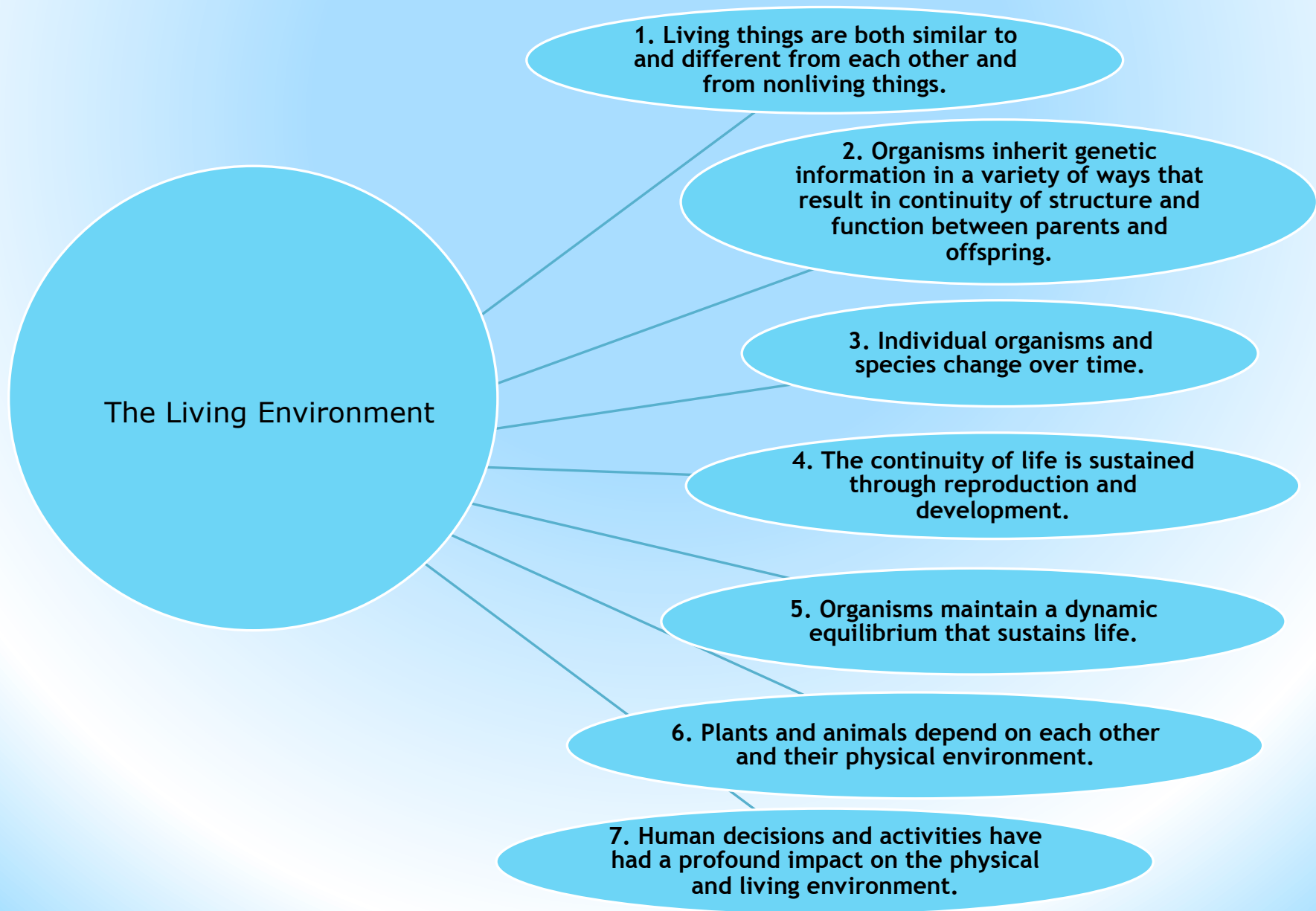
Connections

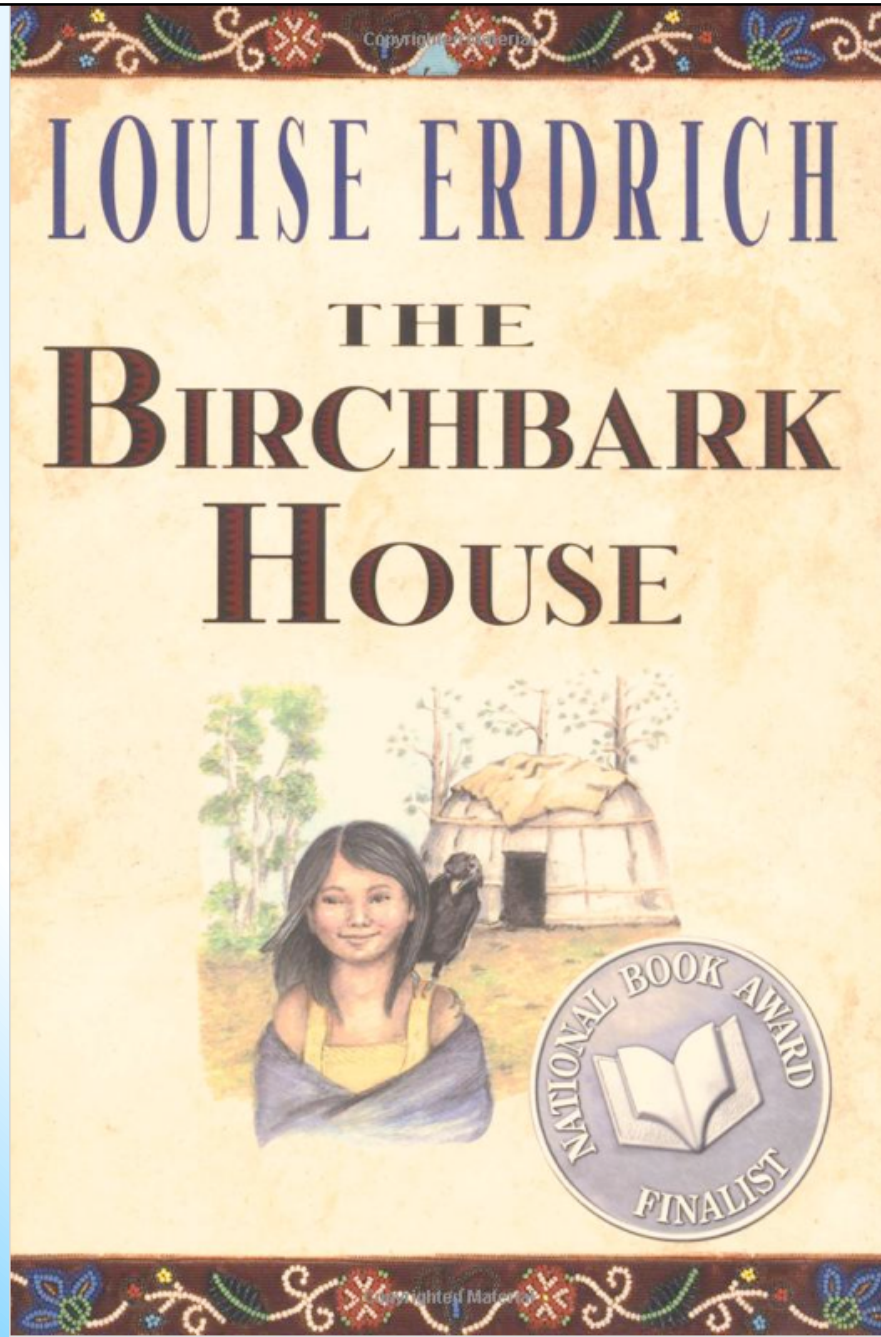
1. To students' existing knowledge
2. To overall purposes
3. Across texts and experiences



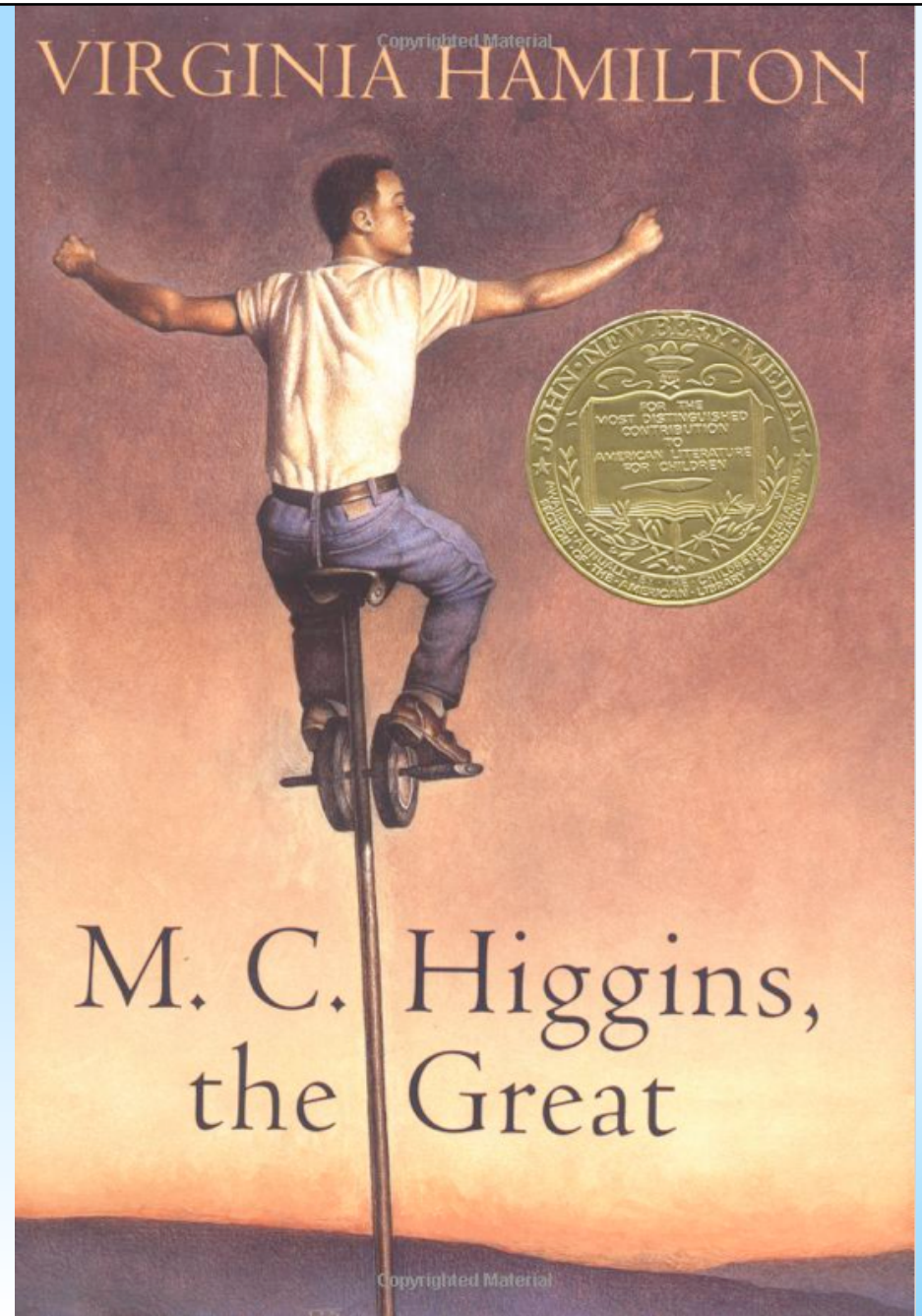
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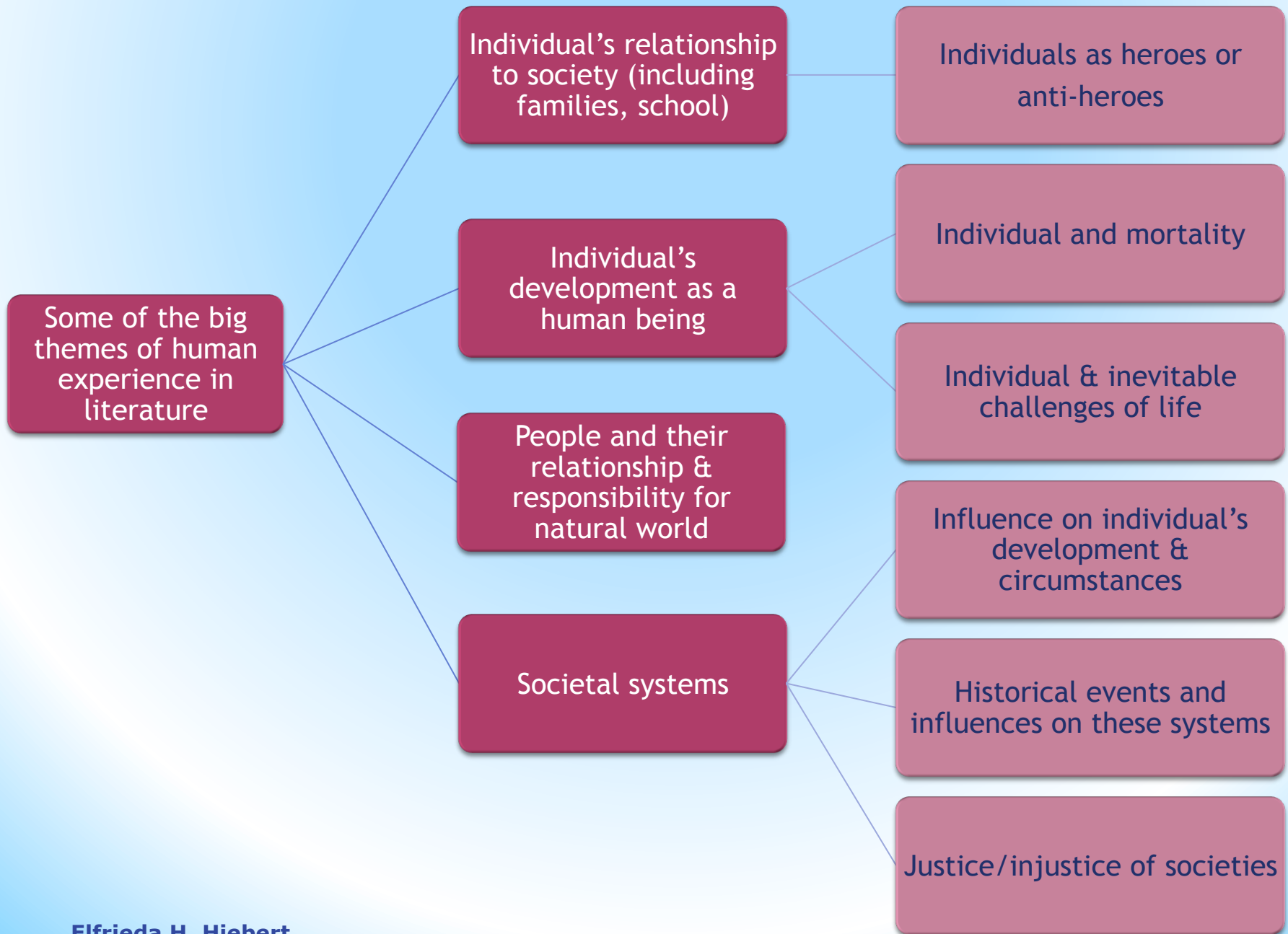






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And...

**Blood, Toil, Sweat, and Tears
—yes but with:**

Examples of Speeches

JK Rowlings, Harvard Commencement, 2008: The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination

You might never fail on the scale I did, but some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all - in which case, you fail by default.



Cesar Chavez's speech to the Commonwealth Club

<http://esl-bits.net/listening/Media/CesarChavez/default.html>



Twenty-one years ago last September, on a lonely stretch of railroad track paralleling U.S. Highway 101 near Salinas, 32 Bracero farm workers lost their lives in a tragic accident.

The Braceros had been imported from Mexico to work on California farms. They died when their bus, which was converted from a flatbed truck, drove in front of a freight train.

Conversion of the bus had not been approved by any government agency. The driver had "tunnel" vision.

Most of the bodies lay unidentified for days. No one, including the grower who employed the workers, even knew their names.

Steve Jobs

Commencement address
to Stanford class of 2005:

[http://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=D1R-jKKp3NA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1R-jKKp3NA)

"Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you."



3. Passion



Stories about heroes		• <i>Joan of Arc</i> (Diane Stanley) • <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i> (Rosemary L. Bray) • <i>Seven Brave Women</i> (Betsy Hearne) • <i>She's wearing a dead bird on her head!</i> (Kathryn Lasky)
Music		• <i>I like music</i> (Leah Komaiko) • <i>The Philharmonic gets dressed</i> (Karla Kuskin) • <i>Moses goes to a concert</i> (Isaac Millman)
Tales: New & Old		• <i>The Huckabuck Family & and how they raised popcorn in Nebraska and quit and came back</i> (Carl Sandburg) • <i>The people could fly: American black folktales</i> (Virginia Hamilton) • <i>Rapunzel</i> (Paul O. Zelinsky)
Math		• <i>Math Curse</i> (Jon Scieszka) • <i>The Adventures of Penrose the Mathematical Cat</i> (Theoni Pappas) • <i>The Joy of Mathematics: Discovering Mathematics All Around You</i> (Theoni Pappas)
Animals in the Wild		• <i>Starlight Animal Rescue: Wild Cat</i> (Dandi Daley Mackall) • <i>Animals and the Seasons</i> (Susanne Riha) • <i>Amazing X-Rays: Wild Animals</i> (Jacquelin A. Ball)
History & Geography		• <i>Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes</i> (Eleanor Coerr) • <i>The Scrambled States of America</i> (Laurie Keller) • <i>Shaka: King of the Zulus</i> (Diane Stanley)
How People Live	Fashion	• <i>I want to be a fashion designer</i> (Stephan Maze) • <i>My wonderful world of Fashion: A book for drawing, creating, and dreaming</i> (Nina Chakarabarti) • <i>Frankly, Frannie: Fashion Frenzy</i> (AJ Stine)
	Sports	• <i>The World's greatest soccer players</i> (Matt Doeden) • <i>The Wild Soccer Bunch: Kevin the Star Striker</i> (Joachim Masannek) • <i>A Beautiful Game: The World's Greatest Players and How Soccer Changed Their Lives</i> (Tom Watt)

The Funds of Knowledge Initiative

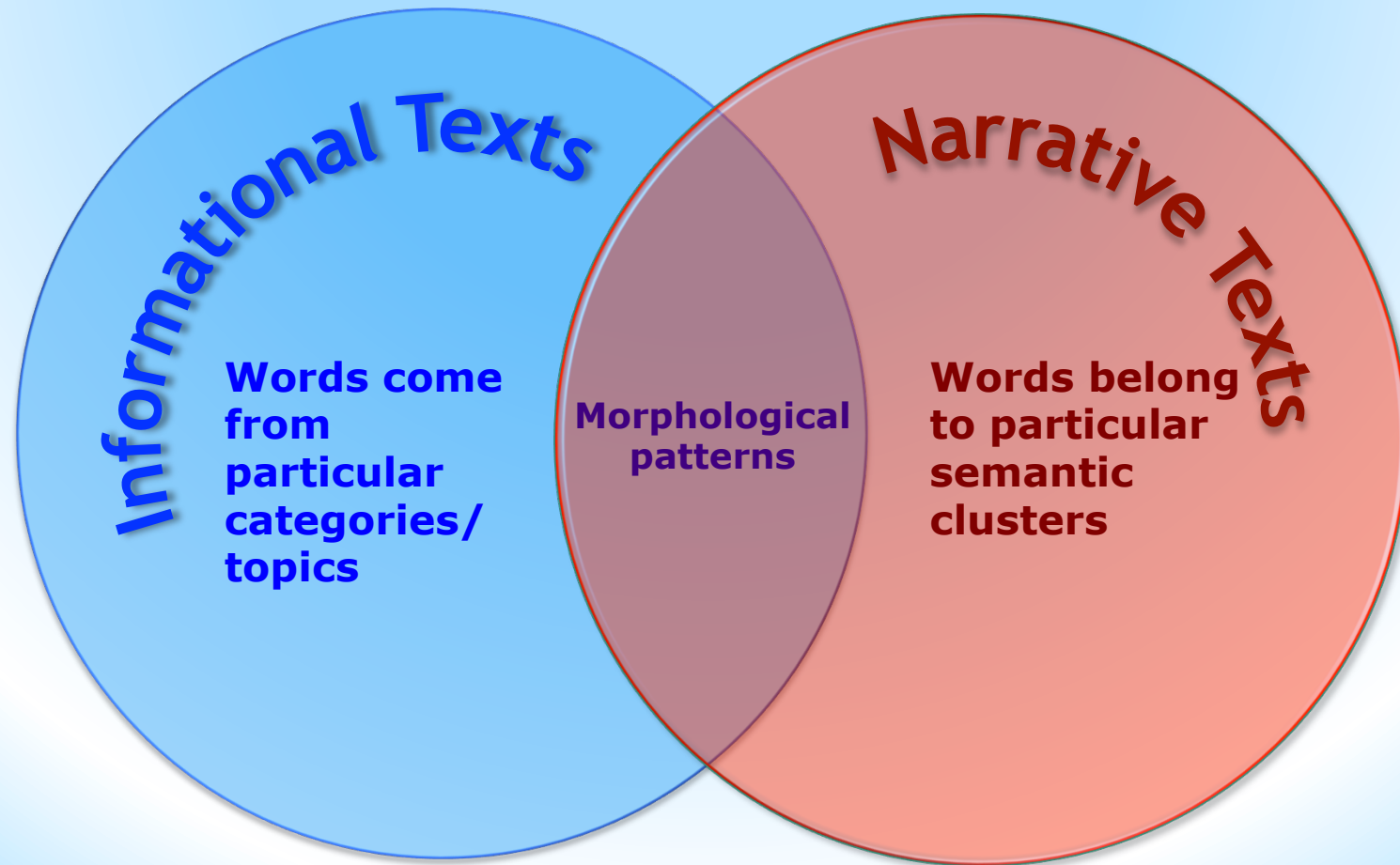
Stories about Heroes	Music	Tales: New & Old	Math
Animals in the Wild	History & Geography	How People Live	Your Choice!

The Funds of Knowledge Initiative

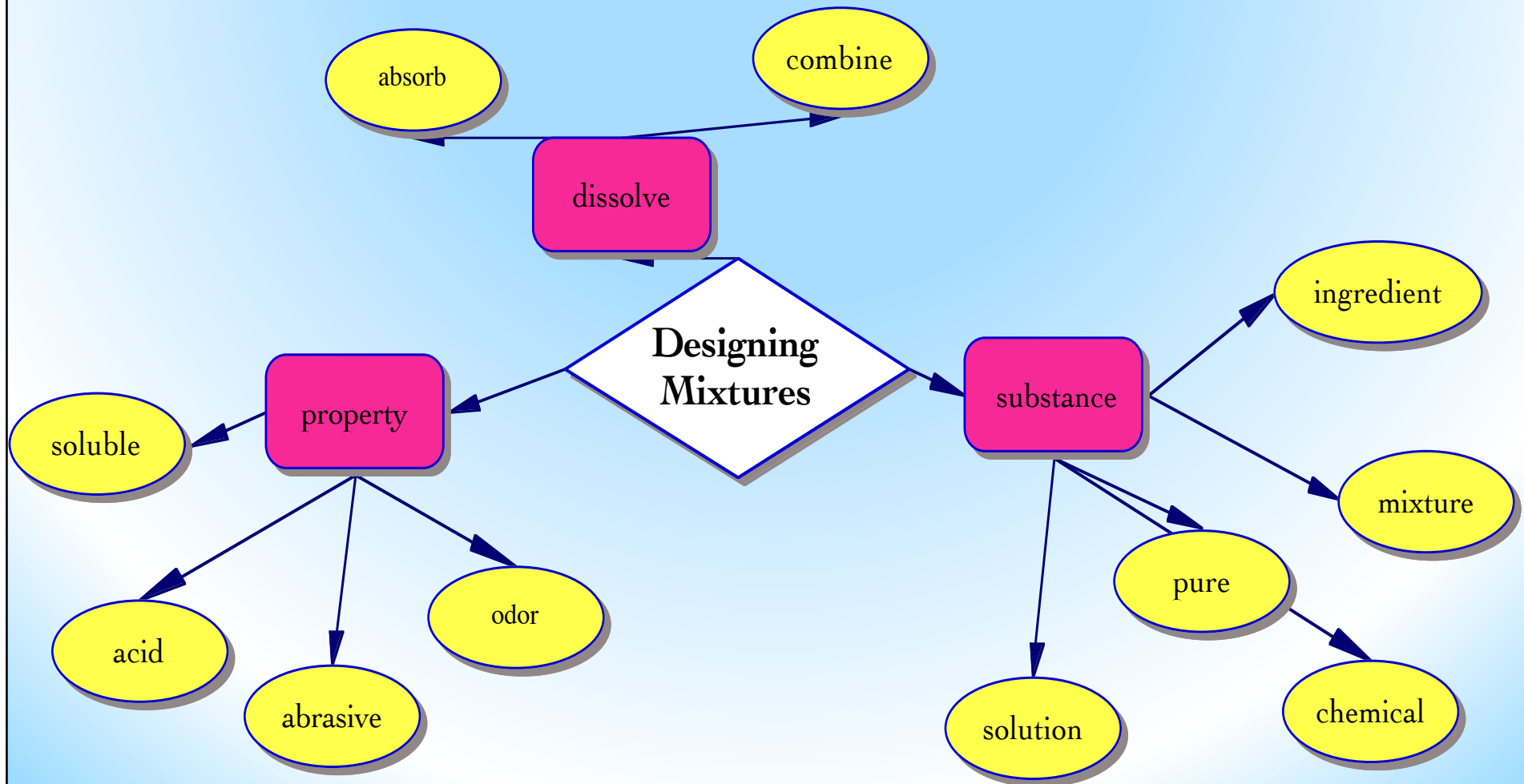
 Stories	 Science	Tales: New & Old	Math
Animals in the Wild	History & Geography	How People Live	You & Me! 

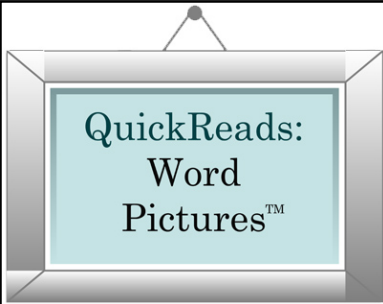
4. Vocabulary

The vocabularies of informational & narrative texts



Vocabulary of Informational Text





Natural Resources & the Economy



Left Photo: [Elfrieda H. Hiebert](#)
Typical rocky shores. September, 2009. ©2009 by Petritap in en:wikimedia. Some rights reserved CC-BY-SA-3.0 ([https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en](#)).

Middle: Refilling a 18L water jug. Released into public domain by Myke2020 in en:wikimedia.

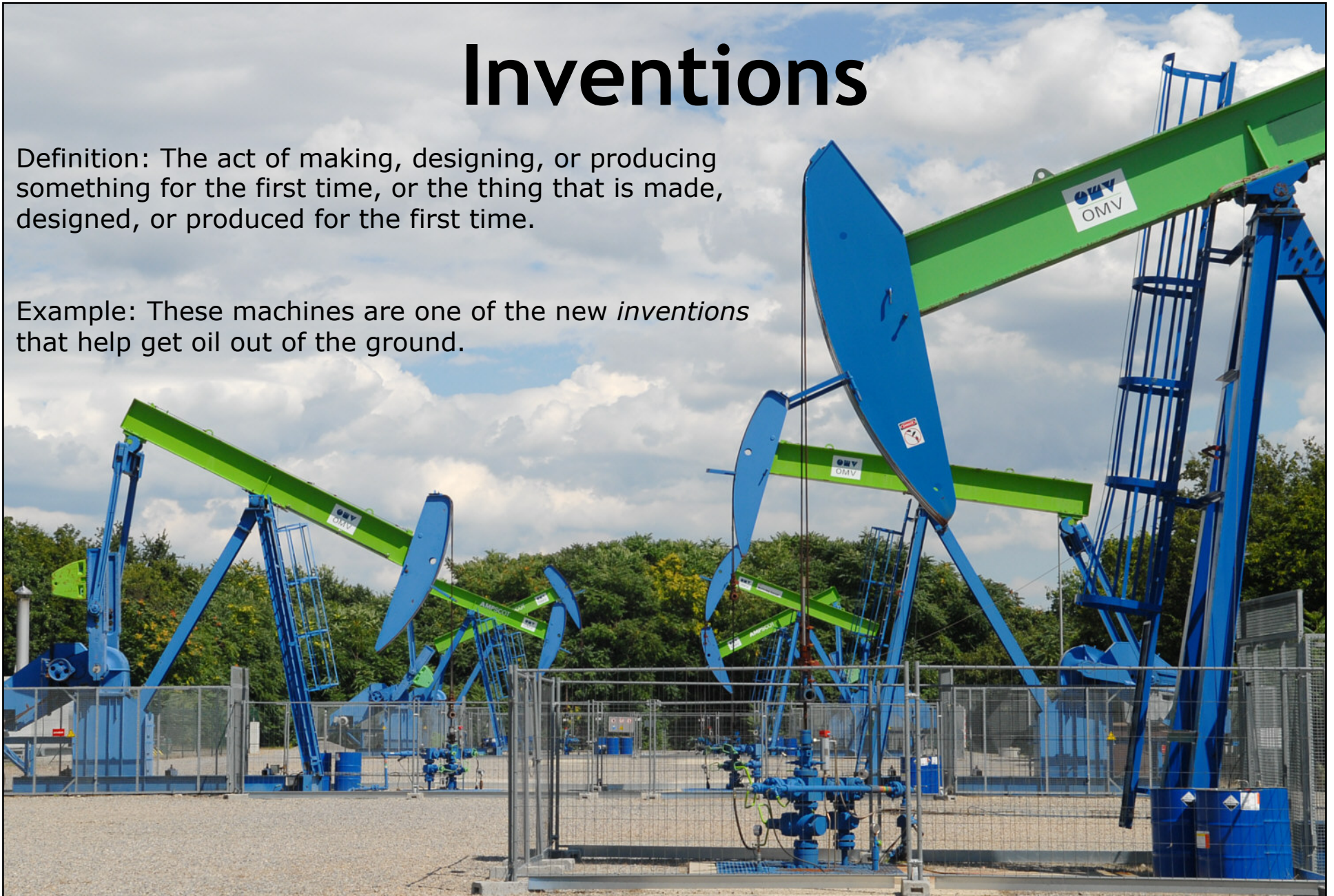
Right: A child drinks water from a well built by Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 in Shant Abak.

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Corresponds to QuickReads Level D, book 2, Geography and Economics, *Natural Resources & the Economy*

Inventions

Definition: The act of making, designing, or producing something for the first time, or the thing that is made, designed, or produced for the first time.

Example: These machines are one of the new *inventions* that help get oil out of the ground.



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Resources



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Definition: Something such as land, mineral, or natural energy that exists in a country and can be used in order to increase its wealth

Example: Trees are a natural *resource* that humans use to make paper.



The Vocabularies of Narrative Texts

Story Word	Cluster	Examples of Words in Cluster (Beyond Story)
amazed	Emotions/Feelings/Happy Excitement	surprised jubilant ecstatic dumbfounded
fascinated		
marveled		
baffled	Communication/Mental Actions/Confused	confused bewildered mystified perplexed confounded
bewildered		
stumped		
humble	Traits/Shyness/Meek	reluctant retiring self-effacing
timid		

Talk



Talk as in a conversation (noun)

- conversation
- chat
- discussion
- slang
- dialogue
- chatter
- lecture
- address
- speech
- meeting
- conference
- summit
- utterance
- gossip
- comment
- debate

Talk as in to speak casually (verb)

- chat/chatter
- scuttlebutt
- gossip
- comment
- smooze
- mention
- say
- utter
- remark

Talk as in to speak (verb)

- speak
- verbalize
- converse
- vocalize
- articulate
- communicate
- confer
- dialogue

Talk as in to speak in a specific way (verb)

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| • whisper | • slur |
| • flirt | • bay |
| • snap | • jabber |
| • shout | • chant |
| • yell | • preach |
| • orate | • boast |
| • lecture | • debate |
| • pontificate | • enunciate |
| • address | • pronounce |
| • drone | • question |
| • stammer | • ask |
| • bark | • declare |



Talk

COMMON PHRASES

- Talk to me
- Talk back
- Talk over
- We need to talk

IDIOMS

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Talk a mile a minute | • Small talk |
| • Spit it out | • Speak of the devil |
| • Talk big | • Sweet talk |
| • Talk sense | • Talk your ear off |
| • Dance around the topic | • Talk in circles/riddles |
| • Speak up | • Talk shop |
| • Talk it up | • Walk the talk |
| • Talk down | • Talk your way out of a paper bag |
| • Talk is cheap | • Talk until your blue in the face |
| • Talk it over | • You're a fine one to talk |
| • Talking to a brick wall | • Shooting the breeze |
| • Talk of the town | |

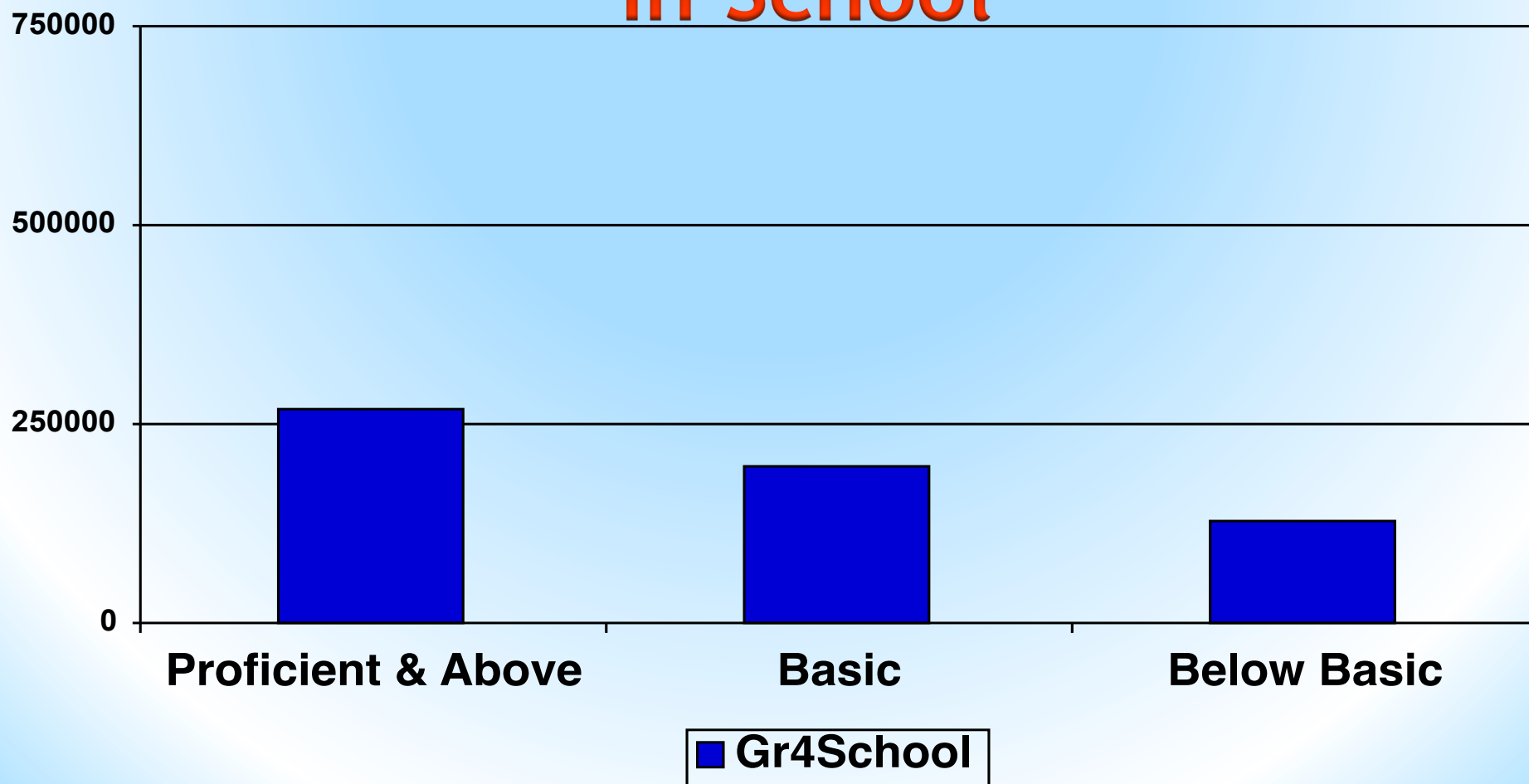
THE SPANISH CONNECTION

- conversation / conversación
- discussion / discusión
- to discuss / discutir
- dialogue / diálogo
- to have a dialogue / dialogar
- comment / comentario
- to comment / comentar
- to mention / mencionar
- to verbalize / verbalizar
- to converse / conversar
- to communicate / comunicar
- communication / comunicación
- pronounce / pronunciar
- to debate / debatir
- debate / debate
- enunciate / enunciar
- pronounce / pronunciar
- declare / declarar



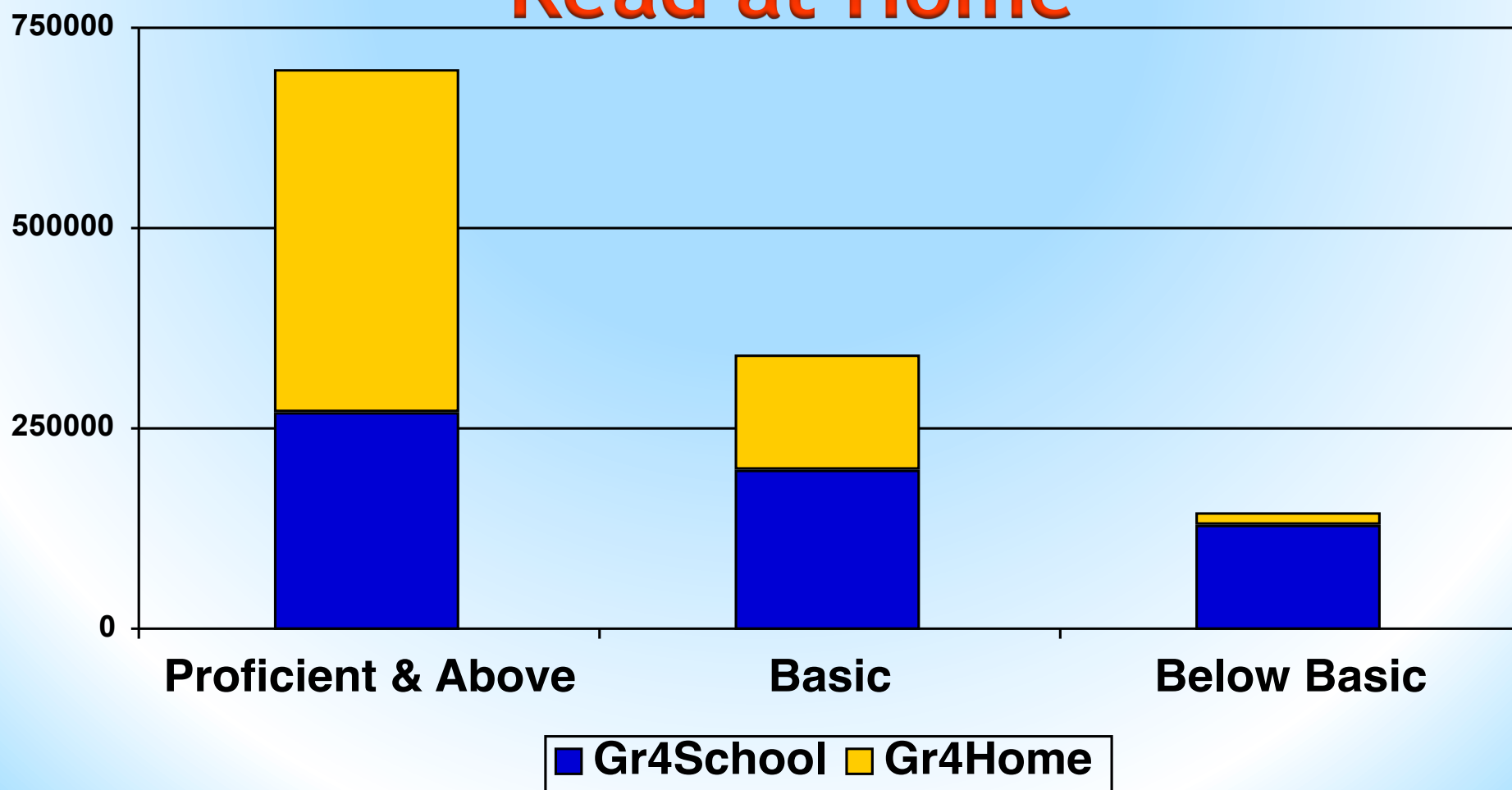
5. Volume

Typical Number of Words Read in School



Guthrie, J.T., Schafer, W.D., Huang, C.W. (2001), Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. *Journal of Educational Research*, 84, 145-162.

Plus the Typical Amount of Text Read at Home



Anderson, R.C., P.T. Wilson, and L.G. Fielding. 1988. Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly* 23(3):285-303.

Recent evidence from Reading First Classrooms

Length of Instructional Blocks	Time with eyes on text
90-minute	17.57
100-minute	16.25
120-minute	19.25
Overall	18.33

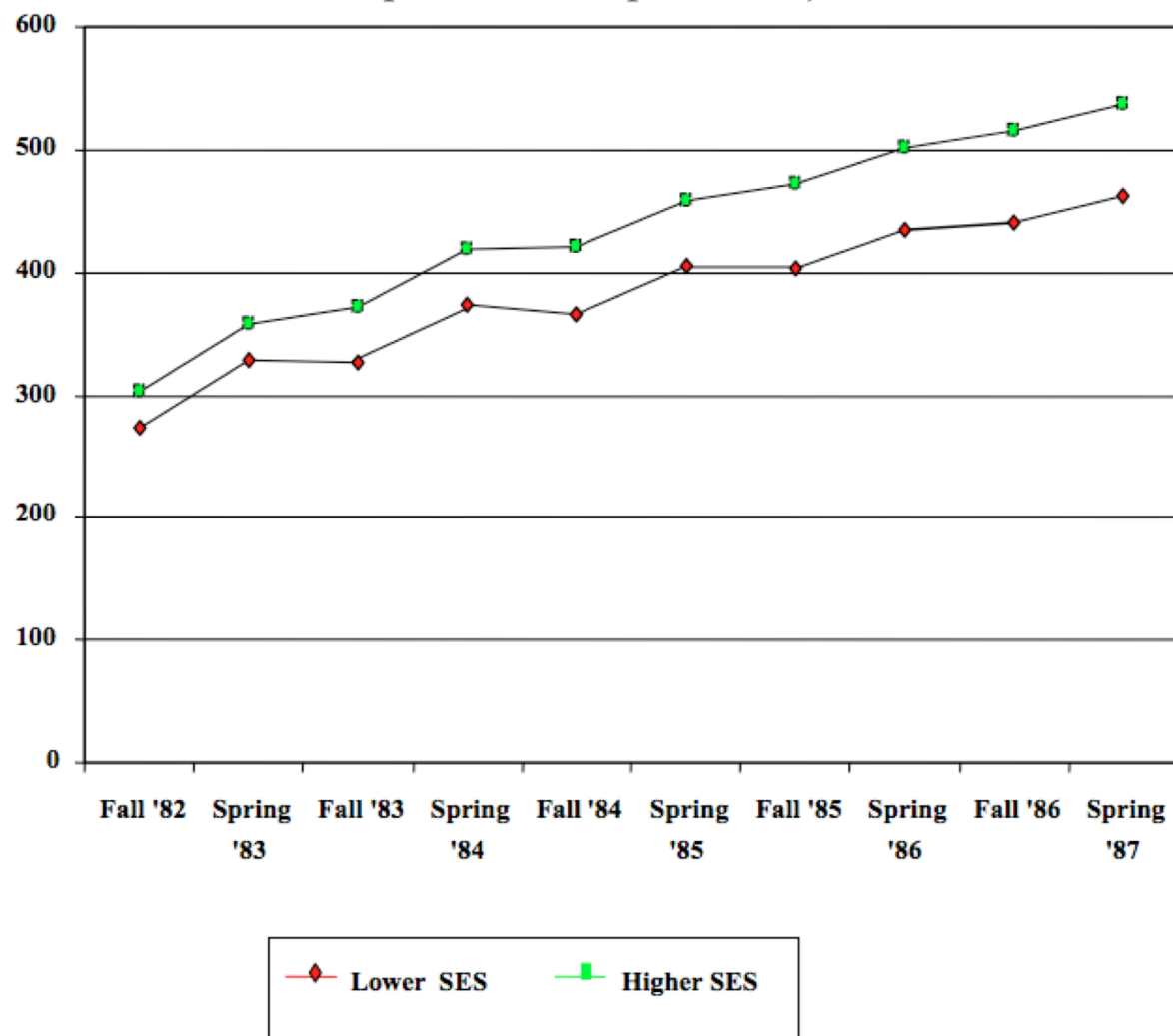
(Brenner & Hiebert, 2009)

What 7 Minutes of Extra Reading Mean

- Kuhn & Schwanenflugel (2009): Data from the seven classes most successful in increasing reading rate were compared to 7 least successful classes: students in former read 7 minutes more daily than students in latter.
- Average 3rd grader:
 - 127 words per minute x 7 minutes x 180 school days: **160,020 additional words**
 - Using Hayes & Ahren's (1988) data (31 rare/new words per 1,000): **5,000 additional words**

Figure 1: The Trajectory of CAT-V Reading Comprehension Gains for Lower- and Higher-SES Children

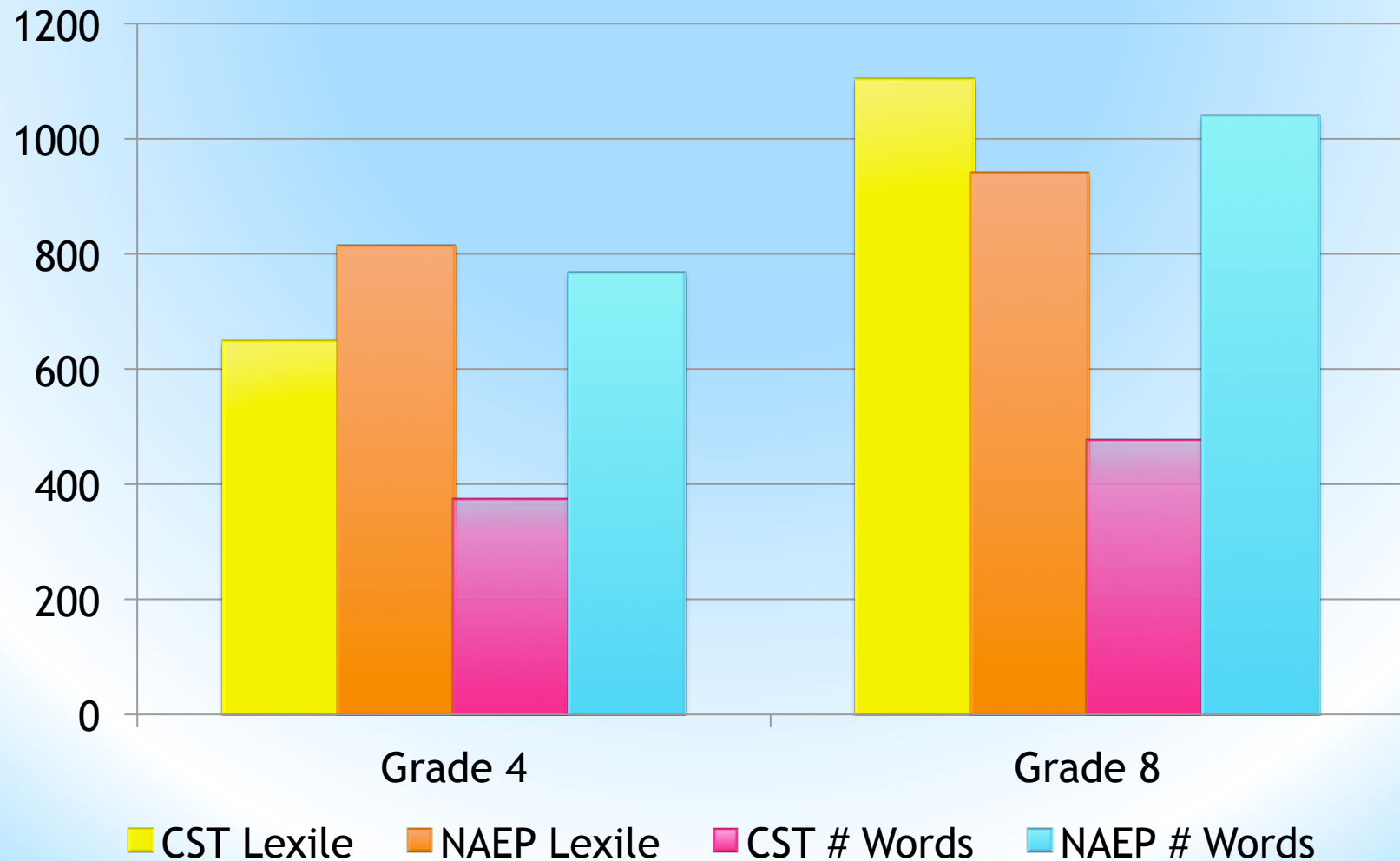
(from Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2004,
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The Funds of Knowledge Initiative is Especially Critical for Summer Reading

6. Stamina

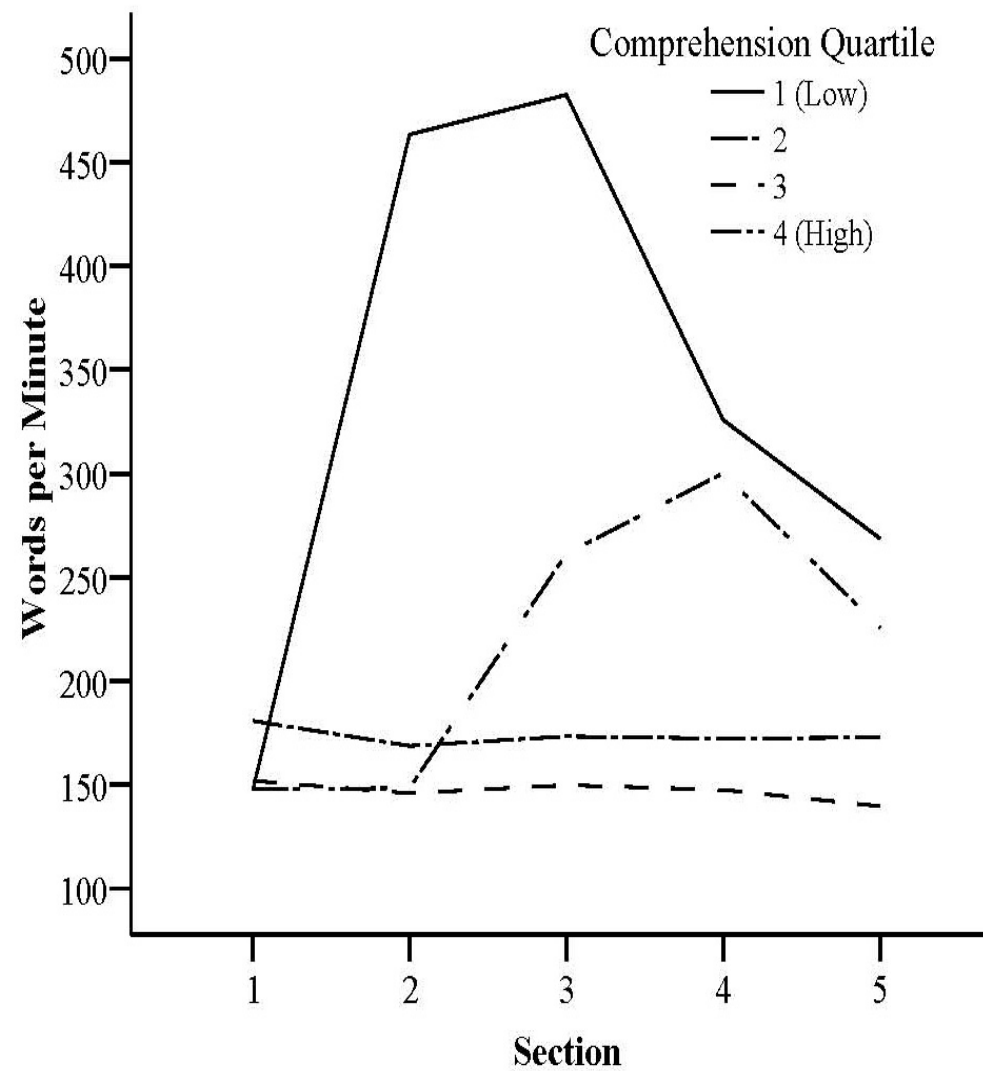
Comparison of CST & NAEP



Studies on Comprehension-Based Silent Reading Rate

Task	Results
Consecutive presentation of 4 short passages followed by questions (4 th graders) (Hiebert, Wilson, & Trainin, 2010)	While students in two lower quartiles started out at a reasonable rate, their rates changed dramatically over assessment (but not with increases in comprehension). Students in top two quartiles had both stable rates and comprehension across sections of the text.
Consecutive presentation of 4 short passages followed by questions (2 nd & 4 th graders) (Hiebert, Trainin, & Wilson, 2011)	30% of second graders and 21% of fourth graders failed to attain comprehension level of 70%. Among comprehenders: students had consistent rates and comprehension across segments 1 and 3 but rates increased and comprehension decreased for segment 4.

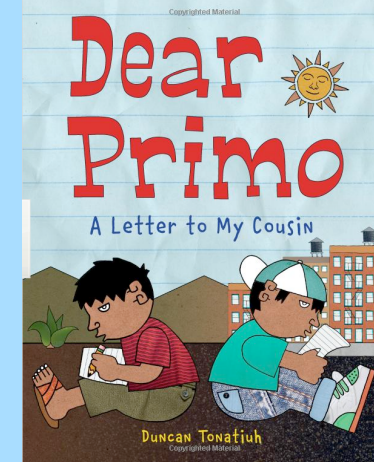
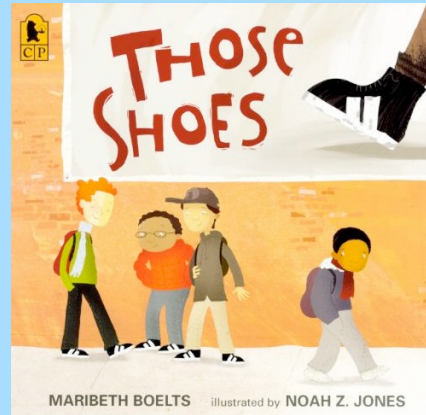
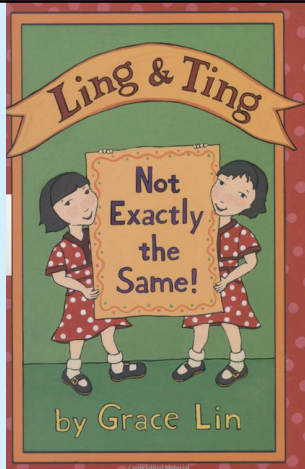
Stamina



7. Keeping the Goal in Sight

Level	Source	Title	Curriculum	
			Word Recognition	Comprehension Strategies
2.1	CCSS	• <i>The Fire Cat</i> (Averill, 1960)	600 most-frequent (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1-3 letters	Follow story structure with a dilemma that is fairly common (e.g., a mischievous cat, twins who are different)
	High recognition	• <i>Frog and Toad Are Friends</i> (Lobel, 1970)		
	Contemporary	• <i>Ling and Ting</i> (Lin, 2010) • <i>Fly High, Fly Guy</i> (Arnold, 2008)		
2.2	CCSS	• <i>The Treasure</i> (Shulevitz, 1978)	1,000 most-frequent (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1- 4 letters	Follow story structure where characters need to make choices (e.g., giving away shoes)
	High recognition	• <i>Henry & Mudge</i> (Rylant, 1987)		
	Contemporary	• <i>Those Shoes</i> (Boelts, 2007) • <i>Grandfather Counts</i> (Cheng, 2003)		
2.3	CCSS	<i>Tops & Bottoms</i> (Stevens, 1995)	1,000 most frequent words (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1-5 letters	Understand that characters may be “playing” tricks (as in a fable); compare/contrast contexts
	High recognition	<i>Good Luck, Ronald Morgan</i> (Giff, 1999)		
	Contemporary	• <i>Dear Primo</i> (Tonatiuh, 2010) • <i>Amazing Grace</i> (Hoffman, 1991)		
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Grade 2.1

“Tell me a story,” Ling says.
 “Okay,” Ting says. Once upon a time there were twin girls. They were named Ling and Ting. People saw them and said, you two are exactly the same.
 “Oh good” Ling says. “I know this story.”

Grade 2.2

I have dream about those shoes. Black high tops. Two white stripes. “Grandma, I want them.”
 “There's no room for want around here, just need,” Grandma says.
 “And what you need are new boots for winter.”

Grade 2.3

Dear primo Carlitos, I live in a city. From my window I can see a bridge and cars zooming by. I can see skyscrapers, too. Skyscrapers are buildings so tall they tickle the clouds. At night all the lights from the city look like the stars from the sky.



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Go

TextProject aims to bring beginning and struggling readers to high levels of literacy through a variety of strategies and tools, particularly the texts used for reading instruction.

TextProject Topics

- Common Core State Standards
- Beginning Reading
- Morphological Awareness
- Content & Story Words
- Silent Reading & Reading Stamina
- Reading Automaticity & Fluency

Upcoming Events

Jan 21, 2012 in CSU, East Bay
Alameda County Office of
Education: English Learner
Conference 2011

Reading Today The Common Core's Staircase of Text Complexity: Getting the Size of the First Step Right

TextProject president and CEO Elfrieda (Freddy) Hiebert explains why the assertion in the Common Core State Standards that K-3 reading texts have been dumbed down along with those for higher grades is contradicted by research, that too much text complexity in lower grades is an obstacle to beginning reading proficiency, and that there is no evidence that the recommended increase in complexity for third-grade texts will improve reading proficiency at higher grades. The article appears in the December 2011/January 2012 issue of IRA's *Reading Today* (digital magazine version available online to IRA members only) but is  [reprinted here](#) from *Reading Today* with the permission of the International Reading Association.

TEtT Products

TextProject creates reading programs based on our **TEtT** model of text complexity.



Among the leading classroom reading

programs based on TEtT are [QuickReads](#) and [ZipZoom](#).



SummerReads is TextProject's free summer reading program, based on the TEtT model, that helps at-risk readers avoid the summer slump.



For Fall 2011, TextProject launches our new **BeginningReads** program to support bringing children into reading by connecting their oral language knowledge

Teacher Support

TextProject helps teachers who want to improve their students' reading achievement.



Reading activities promote fluency and vocabulary, including

E4: Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events (still free but newly revised, updated and polished) and [QuickReads Word Pictures](#).

Professional development, including a series of upcoming [webinars](#), provides teachers background on the elements of reading success.

Benchmark Texts: Stepping Up Complexity is a set of contemporary benchmark

Research

TextProject's new Reading Research Report series documents innovations in reading education.



The latest report looks at the

measurement of text complexity under the guidelines of the CCSS.

The **TextProject Library** contains a decade's worth of research articles, presentation slides and more from founder Elfrieda H. Hiebert and her colleagues.

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