

Comprehension Across Genres (Figure 19 Application)

	Establish Purposes	Ask questions	Monitor and adjust comprehension	Make inferences	Summarize or retell	Make connections
Traditional Literature (theme & genre)	<p>The purpose of traditional literature is to pass down elements of culture through stories that teach lessons or have a message about life. The purpose for reading is to find out what message the story is passing on.</p> <p>Students have to be expecting a lesson.</p>	<p>Students have to constantly be asking “what is the story trying to teach me about this culture or life in general?”</p>	<p>Students must monitor themselves on two levels as they read traditional literature...the literal and figurative level. What is happening? What does that signify?</p> <p>Certain elements of traditional literature provide scaffolds for understanding in that certain types of texts follow or contain predictable patterns and elements. (Once upon a time..., hero quest, magic)</p>	<p>Students must be able to take the fictional actions of characters and interpret the message about life that the story is trying to convey.</p>	<p>The message of traditional literature stories is generally discernable from the skeleton of the story. (i.e.: Princess meets a frog. She doesn’t like him, but after a while they become friends. Eventually she falls in love with the frog, and discovers he was a prince that had been put under a spell. Message: True love is deeper than looks)</p>	<p>Traditional literature is intended to personally connect with the readers or listeners. The very nature of the genre requires connection.</p> <p>Because the purpose of traditional literature is to teach a lesson and because every culture has some form of traditional literature, connections across texts regarding themes is one way students learn about other cultures.</p>
Poetry	<p>The purpose of poetry is to express a feeling or evoke a response from the reader.</p>	<p>Students should be asking “What does the author want me to feel? How does he want me to respond?” The way the poem is written gives the reader clues about this.</p>	<p>Students have to understand sensory language and that poetry is a form of writing that is not usually straight forward. The poet uses words to show...not tell. As they read, they must constantly be aware of how the author is using words. Monitoring fluency is an important aspect of poetry since the rhythm of the poem can affect the meaning.</p>	<p>With poetry, students have to make a lot of inferences. They have to be able to visualize or “sense” what the author is saying. They must be able to use evidence from the text to create images. Text evidence is not always just the words in the text. Sometimes, like in the case of poetry, it can be how the words are written on the page or the rhythmic pattern of the text. With poetry, students use the sensory language and forms to create those images.</p>	<p>Because of the variety of lengths and forms of poetry, summarizing is basically knowing what the poem is about and what the author wanted us to know about it.</p>	<p>Poetry is all about connecting to emotions through rhythms, sensory language, and form. What makes poetry (in a song or other forms) important to a person is whether or not it “speaks” to him on a personal level. It has to “connect” with him in some way.</p>

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Drama	The purpose of drama is to tell a story or give information through a display of interactions among characters. The primary tool that is employed to accomplish this purpose is dialogue.	The primary questions that readers of or audiences of drama ask are... “Who will the characters be?” “Which characters are significant?” “What significant events happen?”	To monitor themselves, audiences of drama have to remember and understand the significant characters as well as be able to follow the plot of the story by watching characters interact. For some students, this can be difficult because it requires inferencing...see next box. In addition, students must monitor the punctuation and descriptions of how characters say things when reading a script.	Drama requires a lot of inferences about human or character interaction. When a character says something, the audience has to interpret the meaning behind the dialogue...just as we do in real life. When reading a script, a reader has to infer how a character might say the dialogue based on the situation that the character is involved.	The reader/audience has to be able to watch/read a lot of character interaction and think to themselves “So, basically what just happened was....” At the end, the ability to summarize throughout helps them see the “big picture”.	Like poetry, drama is intended to connect. Interaction is innate to humans, so watching/reading interactions is relatively easy for us to relate. Students also must be able to see that the presentation of a story can affect our understanding or personal connection to it. (For example, I was more affected by the movie of the The Notebook than the book whereas with other stories it is the opposite for me.)
Fiction (narrative texts other than traditional lit, poetry, and drama)	The purpose of fictional narrative texts is to tell a story. It might be purely for enjoyment or to evoke a response or action from the reader.	The reader of a fictional narrative text is always asking “What will this story be about?” “What is the author trying to tell me a story about?” “How is the story being told?” “How does he want me to respond?”	When reading fictional narrative, the reader has to be aware of HOW the story is being told. The way the story is told can greatly affect understanding by providing expectations for the reader. (i.e.: drama will contain dialogue). Students can monitor understanding based on whether or not they can picture what is happening in the story.	The reader must be able to visualize events, settings, and characters based on the author’s descriptions and dialogue between characters. Readers must also be able to derive themes and lessons as with traditional literature.	The reader must be able to condense character actions and dialogue into “highlight reels” in order to see the big picture .	The point of view from which the story is written has a big impact on the type of connection we make with the text and the way the author wants us to connect with or respond to the text.

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Literary Nonfiction	<p>In literary nonfiction, an author uses literary devices and language to tell about or address a real/true subject matter. Depending on the type of text, the purpose may be to tell about a person’s life or a significant event. (ex: Gettysburg address)</p> <p>The reader’s purpose is to determine why those people or events are significant and what literary devices the author uses to tell about or address the subject matter.</p>	<p>One of the most important questions that readers of literary nonfiction must ask is “Who wrote this text?” Who wrote it gives the reader some insight into the author’s purpose.</p> <p>The reader must also ask themselves “why is this person or event significant?” “Who is it significant to?”</p>	<p>Readers must stay alert to the reality of what they are reading. Sometimes we understand and react to something in a completely different way when we realize that it is/was real. (Example: reading a fictional account of the Holocaust allows us to keep a bit of distance from the horror, whereas reading an autobiographical account is much more disturbing sometimes.)</p>	<p>To make inferences, readers must be able to draw conclusions about the significance of people or events based on the way in which the author presents the facts. We draw conclusions about the type of person the subject was or how they influenced events, etc.</p>	<p>After reading literary nonfiction, readers should be able to explain who or what was discussed and the importance of it, at least from the author’s view.</p>	<p>The literary devices an author uses are what make us connect to the people or events in literary nonfiction. The event or person becomes significant to us if the author grabs our interest, tugs at our heart, or makes us angry. It is through literary form and devices that he may do this.</p>
Expository	<p>The purpose of expository texts is to give information about a subject.</p>	<p>The main questions that a reader of expository text should ask are: “What is the text about?” “What will I learn about the subject?” “How is the text organized?”</p> <p>Organization of text is extremely important to expository text and provides clues for the reader as to what type of information will be given about the subject. This can prepare the reader for understanding.</p>	<p>To monitor understanding of expository text, readers must constantly be aware of what they are learning.</p> <p>Expository text is unique in that it has special features that provide scaffolds for monitoring and adjusting such as headings, indexes, glossaries, etc. It also usually contains graphics that can aid the understanding of sometimes complex texts.</p>	<p>Because expository text contains factual information, readers must be able to interpret facts into images. They also must be able to draw conclusions based on facts. (Ex. There is a spider that can grow as big as 10-12 inches. Conclusions: That is about as big as a dinner plate. (visual inference) That is very big for a spider. It probably eats more than other spiders.)</p>	<p>When reading expository text, readers must be able to categorize and group important information in order to understand what the author is trying to tell about the subject matter.</p>	<p>Connections allow us to understand expository text by relating new learning to something we already know (whether in a book, on a TV show, or personal experience)</p> <p>Making connections across expository texts is how doctors and scientists do their work. We must relate information across texts to get the full picture and have better understanding.</p>

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Procedural	The purpose of procedural text is to explain how to do something.	The primary question that the reader should be asking with procedural text is: “What am I being told to do?” “How do I do it?”	Readers monitor their comprehension of procedural text by being aware of whether or not they are able to complete the procedure. This is perhaps the best type of text to teach this skill of monitoring and adjusting because the process is actually physical instead of purely mental. Evidence of understanding can be seen by “doing” each step.	With procedural text, inferences are made generally when directions are not specific. They can be described as assumptions more than inferences. (Yes, the directions may not say to put the knife in the jar, but you can infer that when you read, “spread the peanut butter on the bread”)	Procedural texts are meant to be specific, but the components of procedural texts are generally grouped and categorized. (Number of players, directions, ingredients, etc.) Readers must also be able to summarize how they did something in order to do it again. The summarizing of the steps helps us to remember it. We know how to play a game again because are able to remember the key objectives. From there, we recall details.	Readers make connections across procedural text to help them understand. Most procedural texts are organized in a similar fashion with common elements depending on the type: (game boards =number of players, directions, objective, etc.) For example, we can understand how to play new games because we have some background knowledge about what to expect when reading the directions for how to play a game.
Persuasive	The purpose of persuasive text is to get the readers to think or feel in a certain way or call them to action.	When reading persuasive text, readers should ask: “What does the author want me to think, feel, or do?” “How is he trying to get me to do this?”	The techniques an author uses influence the way we respond to the text. If he is wise, he will use techniques which will influence us in the way that the author intends. As a reader, we must be aware of how the author is using words and language to persuade us. We can monitor our understanding by monitoring our response.	As readers, we must infer what the author’s intent is in some cases. While some persuasive texts have a stated claim, the strategies that the author uses is intended to “lead us to believe” a certain thing. As readers, we have to read the intended message. (Ex. One day sale! Inference-I better hurry or the deal will be gone.)	The reader has to be able to sift through the persuasive language of the text to understand the primary subject matter in order to make a judgment.	Our background knowledge determines how the techniques of the author affect us as readers. A persuasive author chooses his techniques based on the audience that he is trying to persuade.