**STRATEGIES FOR READING NON-FICTION TEXTS**

Each of these lessons addresses at least one Literacy Standard and can be used across content areas. The lessons are designed for use with a **current event connected to the content standards.**

**1. ACTIVE READING BEHAVIORS –**

*Literacy Standard #10: Read and comprehend grade level texts independently and proficiently.*

This activity is designed to focus students and enable them to pay more attention while reading. When the reading is finished, their comments will also serve as effective small group conversation starters. This handout introduces four types of active reading comments to students, includes sample language for making a good active reading comment, and includes a rubric so that students can self-score their active reading comments.

***The key point to get across in this lesson is that readers are ALWAYS thinking while reading.*** The comment types in this lesson focus on what good readers are thinking about as they read.  Introducing and practicing these patterns of thinking will make students more efficient readers of nonfiction text.

**2. USING STATISTICS, STAR STATEMENTS, AND STORIES AS EVIDENCE**

*Literacy Standard #1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of texts.*

Another skill that students need to learn when reading nonfiction text is that authors use different kinds of evidence to both inform and persuade readers.  This handout asks readers to (1) find examples of different kinds of evidence in a current event, (2) think about the kind of evidence that seems to be the most influential and (3) think about why authors include specific pieces of evidence in a text.

***The key point to get across in this lesson is that authors of nonfiction text use several different types of evidence to make their case -- and those different types of evidence have a different impact on readers.***

Learning to first RECOGNIZE the types of evidence being used to make a case and then to determine the impact of each bit of evidence on readers will help students to think critically about the texts they read.

**3. HOW QUOTES INFLUENCE YOUR THINKING-**

*Literacy Standard #8: Distinguish among facts, opinion, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text.*

To be literate when reading non-fiction, students must learn whether an “expert” is trustworthy. This connects to the idea that interpreting texts, forming opinions, providing substantial evidence, and drawing conclusions requires the student to think critically about his sources of information. To learn this skill, students will collect all the direct quotes from a current event and evaluate the person being quoted. Students will then decide whether the information presented by the expert is reliable.

***The key point to get across in this lesson is that experts can have agendas too…and until you know more about an expert, you can’t effectively decide whether or not they are worth believing.***

**4. READING NONFICTION WITH A SKEPTICAL EYE**

*Literacy Standard #8: Distinguish among facts, opinion, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text.*

Many students believe that nonfiction reading pieces are ALWAYS true simply because nonfiction reading pieces are supposed to be full of facts.  The truth is that nonfiction reading pieces – particularly current events connected to controversial topics – can be biased because they rely on people giving their own personal opinions and/or interpretations of the same set of facts.  That means good readers are always on the lookout for potentially biased statements when they are reading nonfiction.

This handout will help students practice reading with a skeptical eye.

It asks students to identify statements in a current event that they aren't ready to automatically trust.  Then, it asks students to (1) explain why they are skeptical about those statements and (2) what they would do in order to gather more information about the statement that they are skeptical about.

***The key point to get across in this lesson is that all of the evidence in a nonfiction piece isn't automatically true -- and that good readers are always reading like critics, trying to spot evidence that may be biased***.