



# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 1: **Understanding the Reader**

### **Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories**

*Background* — Students have many different, unformed and incorrect perceptions about what it means to comprehend text. Many students think that they are supposed to soak up the information they encounter in their reading. They are unaware of the conscious activity that comprehension requires. Good readers make connections between what they already know and new information. The first activity, *Think About Yourself*, requires students to identify their familiarity level with the topics they will encounter in the newspaper. The second activity, *Think About the Newspaper*, has students anticipate where they can find different kinds of information in the newspaper.

### **Before Reading: Introduce the Lesson**

- 1) Ask students to think about the expertise some of their classmates or family members have in different areas: sports, video games, rap groups, cooking, etc. Have them identify individuals they would go to if they had questions about those areas.
- 2) Have students discuss what those friends or family members have done to become knowledgeable (e.g., watch TV, look up information on the Internet, read magazines or newspapers, go to events, meet with others who have similar interests, etc.). Write their comments on the board and discuss.
- 3) Explain that their interest in and knowledge about different topics play an important part in their being able to understand what they read. The more they know about the topic, the more they will be able to understand what they read.

### **During Reading: Direct Instruction**

- 1) Hold up a newspaper and show students a news or feature story that is related to one of the areas the students discussed.

- 2) Ask students to name people who could read and understand that story easily. Guide the discussion so students identify the friends or family members they named in the introduction activity.
- 3) Ask students to explain why they think those people would have an easier time understanding the story. Guide the discussion to include knowledge of specific vocabulary words, individuals or concepts related to the topic because of the experiences these people have had.
- 4) Model how you read and understand a news story. Select a story about a topic that may be unfamiliar to students. Do a “think-aloud” to show how you make connections between your prior knowledge and experiences and the new information in the story.
- 5) Distribute the Lesson 1A activity sheet, *Think About Yourself*. Have students complete the sheet independently.
- 6) Have students share their responses. Ask a volunteer to identify one of his/her top seven areas of familiarity. Ask for a show of hands from those who identified the same area. Repeat the procedure several times.
- 7) Introduce students to the Lesson 1B activity sheet, *Think About the Newspaper*. Have them complete the sheet independently.

**After Reading: Reflect and Review**

- 1) Do a quick “hands up” survey to see how many students selected news stories for one of their topics. Repeat the survey with the other newspaper sections identified on the Lesson 1B activity sheet: editorial/opinion, lifestyle/modern living, arts/entertainment, sports, and comics/puzzles. Ask if any other sections of the newspaper besides these were selected.
- 2) Discuss with students how their knowledge of the newspaper helped them find the information they wanted. Explain that the more familiar they are with the newspaper, the more efficiently they will be able to read it.
- 3) Discuss how each person may understand the same story differently because of past knowledge and experiences with the topic. Explain that reading the newspaper is a good way to learn about many different topics.

**Performance Rubric**

<b>Expectation: The student was able to ...</b>	<b>Exceeds expectation</b>	<b>Meets expectation</b>	<b>Revisit</b>
Identify seven areas of familiarity			
Identify appropriate newspaper sections related to areas of familiarity			
Indicate knowledge of newspaper organization			

## Student Activity Sheet 1A: Think About Yourself

You will be a better reader if you can make connections between what you already know and the new information you find in newspaper stories and features.

- ☞ Who you are plays an important part in how you understand what you read. What experiences have you had? What topics and activities interest you? What topics or subjects do you know about? What new and unfamiliar areas would you like to explore?
- ☞ Look at the list of topics in the chart below. Put a check mark in the column that tells how much you know about each topic.
- ☞ Finally, circle the seven topics that you know the most about. Share with classmates how you learned about those topics.

Topic	Not very familiar	A little familiar	Very familiar
1. My community			
2. My state			
3. The country (nation)			
4. Other countries			
5. People in music, TV or movies			
6. People in sports			
7. People in politics and government			
8. Local sports teams			
9. Professional sports teams			
10. The weather			
11. Science and technology			
12. Health and fitness			
13. Getting along with others			
14. Improving my life in some way			
15. Video and computer games			
16. Television programs and movies			
17. Concerts and plays			
18. Puzzles and games			
19. Good prices on clothes, games, electronics, restaurants, etc.			
20. Careers/part-time jobs			
21. Other _____			

## Student Activity Sheet 1B: Think About the Newspaper

You will discover that the newspaper has many kinds of information in it once you know how to find what you need in its different sections.

- ☞ Look at the topics you checked on the *Think About Yourself* activity sheet. Write your top seven topics in the first column below.
- ☞ Circle the newspaper section where you think you might find information about each of your topics.

<b>Your Top Topics</b>	<b>Newspaper Section</b>			
	Where do you think you could find information about your topic in the newspaper? <i>Circle your choices. You may choose more than one section.</i>			
1.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	
2.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	
3.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	
4.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	
5.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	
6.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	
7.	News	Editorial/Opinion	Lifestyle/ Modern Living	Arts/ Entertainment
	Sports	Comics/Puzzles	Other _____	