BUILD KNOWLEDGE by Promoting Volume of Reading

One of the three shifts (or advances) in the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) is “building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction,” critically important for its power to accelerate student growth.

General Tips on Finding and Selecting Additional Texts

→ Book excerpts can be superb short texts.
→ Consider materials that are available in print and digital formats.
→ Primary documents can engage your students.
→ The “text” can be more than words on a page: consider videos, graphics, charts, and photos.
→ Consider the complexity, quality, and relevance of each suggested text or resource.
→ If information from different articles overlaps, this is a plus, not a problem. What is known helps connect to what is new, and repetition is key to learning new academic vocabulary.

Research in Support of Reading Volume and Building Knowledge


Knowledge of a topic leads to dramatically improved reading comprehension.


Use high-quality informational texts.

• Staying with a topic and building expertise regarding it is a powerful way to accelerate knowledge, acquire vocabulary, and strengthen reading comprehension.

Offer additional readings on the same topic as the lesson text.

• The CCR standards emphasize reading informational texts and are explicit about the importance of students being able to glean knowledge from what they read.
• Promote this learning by selecting texts for careful study from the content areas (history, social studies, technical subjects, and science).

Promote a high volume of independent reading.

• Reading independently is the most powerful way to increase both vocabulary and reading fluency.
• Students need more practice than they get during direct instruction; students who are not yet comfortable or confident readers may need to be held accountable by instructors for engaging in independent reading.
• Support independent reading by providing recommendations related to class studies or on high-interest topics.
Find Additional Readings on a Topic ~ a few of the many free resources

Some require a free subscription.
As always, check for readability.

❖ Leveled (or sorted) Readings
  o CCSSO Text Sets [www.ccsso.org/Navigating_Text_Complexity/Showroom_Models.html]
  o LINCS Learner Center – Learn to Read [https://learner.lincs.ed.gov/resources/reading]
  o Marshall Adult Education [http://resources.marshalladulteducation.org/reading_skills_home.html]
  o NewsELA [https://newsela.com/]
  o News For You (costs $) [www.newreaderspress.com/news-for-you-online]
  o ReadWorks [www.readworks.org/]
  o ReadWriteThink [www.readwritethink.org/]
  o The Change Agent (free to state-funded programs in New England) [http://changeagent.nelrc.org/in-the-classroom/]

❖ U.S. government websites
  o Census Bureau [www.census.gov/]
  o Kids.gov [https://kids.usa.gov/]
  o NASA [www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/index.html]
  o National Park Service [www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm]

❖ Museum websites
  o American Museum of Natural History [www.amnh.org/learn-teach/educators/]
  o National Women’s History Museum [https://www.nwhm.org/]
  o The Exploratorium [www.exploratorium.edu/education/designing-teaching-learning-tools]
  o The Smithsonian [www.si.edu/Educators]
  o United States Memorial Holocaust Museum [www.ushmm.org/]

❖ Other nonprofit organizations’ websites
  o Facing History and Ourselves [https://www.facinghistory.org/]
  o Independent Television Service (ITVS) [http://itvs.org/educators/collections]
  o National Geographic Education [http://education.nationalgeographic.org/]
  o PBS Learning Media [www.pbslearningmedia.org/]
  o Primary Source [www.primarysource.org/for-teachers]
  o Teaching Tolerance [www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources]

❖ Encyclopedias and Reference Sources
  o World Book Online – Scott Fetzer [www.worldbookonline.com]
  o Encyclopedia Britannica Online [www.britannica.com]
  o Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia and Encyclopedia Americana (Scholastic Grolier Online) (costs $)
    • http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/grolier
  o Oxford Reference Online (Oxford University Press) [www.oxfordreference.com]

❖ Library Catalogs, Vetted Lists, Reviews, Bibliographic Information, and Databases
  o American Library Association [www.ala.org]
  o Library of Congress [www.loc.gov/teachers/]
  o Project Gutenberg [www.gutenberg.org]
  o Your local public library network, and research databases available through your library