

It's A Fact!

Developing Non-Fiction Comprehension Skills

Grades 1-3

Written by Eleanor M. Summers
Illustrated by S&S Learning Materials

About the author:

Eleanor Summers is a retired elementary teacher who continues to be involved in various levels of education. Her goal is to write creative and practical resources for teachers to use in their literacy programs.

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Printed in Canada

Published in the United States by:
On the Mark Press
P.O. Box 433
Clayton, New York
13624
www.onthemarkpress.com

ISBN: 9781770781450 

Published in Canada by:
S&S Learning Materials
15 Dairy Avenue
Napanee, Ontario
K7R 1M4
www.sslearning.com

At Glance

Learning Expectations	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Vocabulary, Word Usage:			
• Identify word meanings	•	•	•
• Compound words, synonyms, antonyms		•	•
• Dictionary skills		•	•
• Write complete sentences	•	•	•
• Fill in cloze sentences	•	•	•
Reading Comprehension:			
• Understands words and phrases in context	•	•	•
• Identify and describe main facts	•	•	•
• Summarize main facts and supporting details	•	•	•
• Use knowledge and experience to understand what is read	•	•	•
• Identify and describe implied ideas	•	•	•
Reasoning and Critical Thinking:			
• Organize information (graphs, T-charts, lists)	•	•	•
• Compare and contrast facts	•	•	•
• Distinguish between facts and opinions	•	•	•
• Analyze importance of information	•	•	•
• Evaluate facts in text	•	•	•
• Identify and describe cause and effect	•	•	•
• Relate text to personal experiences and knowledge	•	•	•
• Extend text message to personal actions and behaviors	•	•	•
• Creative writing	•	•	•
Creativity and Design:			
• Create a visual product from facts gained from the text	•	•	•
• Use illustrations to confirm understanding of text	•	•	•
• Express own interpretation of facts in a visual form	•	•	•

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Introduction and Teacher Suggestions

The Importance of Non-fiction Reading:

Most of the reading that we do in real life is non-fiction. However, most classroom reading programs focus mainly on reading fiction materials. To help to correct this imbalance, we need to incorporate non-fiction reading and comprehension strategies into the daily reading program. The ability to read and understand non-fiction is a vital skill for young children as they progress toward inquiry skills and research.

Purposes for Reading Non-fiction Materials:

We read non-fiction materials to learn and to connect what we have learned to our own life. Some specific purposes include:

- To acquire information and to find answers to specific questions.
- To satisfy our curiosity.
- To understand new ideas and to develop a greater vocabulary.
- To have a better understanding of our world and to make real life connections.

Teacher Suggestions

This resource is organized so that passages can be made into student booklets.

The student booklet focuses on non-fiction material on a wide range of topics. Each booklet contains the following activities:

- a) **Before I read:** reasoning and critical thinking skills; vocabulary development skills to be used prior to reading the passage; relation of prior knowledge.
- b) **While I read:** comprehension, analysis and application skills, critical thinking.
- c) **After I read:** comprehension, summary, synthesis and evaluation skills, creativity and design

- Student booklets for Grade 1 may be prepared by photocopying the student pages, cutting them in half, and stapling them together to make individual booklets.
- Student booklets for Grades 2 and 3 may be prepared by photocopying the student pages and stapling them to make individual booklets. If desired, provide a generic cover for students to decorate or illustrate.
- Booklets may be stored in bins or file folders, ready for student use.

Pre-Reading Activities:

- Read aloud a piece of non-fiction to the whole class. Point out the features of non-fiction materials: it is true, it makes us curious, it tells us new facts.
- These selections may be used in conjunction with some ongoing classroom themes.
- Discuss types of “real” stories that are of interest to your class.



Trees

My name is: _____

Trees



What do you already know about trees?
What would you like to learn? Complete the chart.

Facts I already know	Facts I would like to learn



There are many kinds of trees that grow on our earth.
Some trees have leaves. Some trees have needles.

Page 3



Some trees have flowers.
Some trees grow fruit.

Page 4

10





Trees can be very tall.
Trees need sun and
water to grow.

Trees



Think about the facts in the story. Read each sentence.
Circle **Yes** or **No**.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Trees can only have leaves. | Yes | No |
| 2. Some trees grow fruit for us to eat. | Yes | No |
| 3. There are many kinds of trees. | Yes | No |
| 4. Trees can grow without sun or water. | Yes | No |
| 5. We need trees on our earth. | Yes | No |

