

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 1

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\Rightarrow) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 1:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- study the directions for the reading part of the test,
- develop techniques or strategies for the reading part of the test,
- use the process of elimination on multiple-choice questions, and
- practice giving support on short-answer questions.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lesson 1 – 1 and 1 – 2
- Pencils

Preparations before beginning Lesson 1:

There is a passage “The Dance” to read aloud.
It is found on page 11.

LESSON 1: Reading and Responding

After your introductory remarks to students, say:

Today we will practice some techniques or tricks to help you be successful with a reading assignment. As we are working today, think about how you can use these techniques, or strategies. Some techniques may seem very obvious to you, while other techniques will be brand new. Find something that works for you and use it.

Have you ever had this experience? On the day of a test, the teacher distributes the test materials, reads the directions aloud, and then says the words, “You may now begin.” Suddenly, you feel as if you had forgotten every thing you ever knew. Your hands get sweaty. Your stomach knots up. Don’t worry. There are some things you can do to settle yourself down and to get your brain back on task.

Say:

For starters, take your paper and look at the title and any illustrations, graphs, or charts that might be included. Look over the selection you are to read. You are just looking, not reading yet. Do you see any words in boldface type? Any words in italics? Little things like that can help you be a successful reader! You are still looking.

The few minutes you spend looking at the passage can help you in many ways. Just by skimming or looking at it quickly, you can get an idea of what the selection is about. Your teacher may call that strategy predicting. You are almost ready to begin reading.

Take a deep breath and relax. As you begin reading, concentrate! Don’t let your eyes wander off the page. Don’t let your mind wander onto other topics. Stay focused.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 1 – 1.

This lesson is a walk and talk lesson. We will walk through the lesson step by step. I will guide you as we talk about *how* to find an answer. This technique will give you a better understanding of what to do on the test.

Look at the passage.

Is this a poem? Pause.

(Response: no.)

You are right. This piece of writing is not a poem. Actually, it's called prose. *Prose* is another name for ordinary, regular writing.

This piece of writing is a story. As you skim it, notice the quotation marks. Quotation marks indicate that there is dialogue or conversation in this selection. When you read the dialogue, pay close attention to what the speaker says and also the *way* he or she says it.

You follow along as I read aloud.

Students follow along as you read the selection. Begin by reading the title.

Then read the selection.

Here are some things to do *after* you have read the selection, but *before* you answer the questions. Take some time to think about the story.

First, where is the setting, or where does this story take place? Pause.

(Responses may include school, school gym, social studies class.)

Identify the characters in this story. Pause.

(Response: Mr. Wheelless and Ms. Anderson are the teachers. Linda and Ricky are students.)

What was the main idea of this story? Pause.

(Response: teachers teaching a folk dance; students who didn't like folk dancing)

Sometimes, just thinking about the story can help you. We are not talking about a great deal of time here: just a couple of minutes to visualize or make a picture in your head of this scene.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 1 – 2.
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Say:

Number one is a multiple-choice question. Read those multiple-choice questions carefully. You don't want to mess up because you read the question inaccurately or incompletely or because you misunderstood the question. So, take your time.

You follow along while I read the question.

1. The story says, "Ms. Anderson and I will *model* the moves and give you the instructions." The word *model* means

- A. to display clothing to its advantage.**
- B. to demonstrate correct moves.**
- C. to evaluate each group's attempts.**
- D. to explain folk dancing in South America.**

What do you notice about the word *model* in this question? Pause.
(Response: It is in italics.)

Yes, the word *model* is in italics. The italics signal the need to pay attention to the italicized word! The italics is one of those clues that you should be looking for on the test.

What does the word *model* mean in this sentence? Pause.
(Response: B: to demonstrate correct moves)

Be sure that you read all the possible answers. I hope you didn't quit reading when you got to Letter B. Don't be fooled into picking the first answer that looks or sounds right. Check out all four possible answers before you mark your choice.

Then say:

Let's go to the next question.

2. Linda could not keep her mind on the folk dancing instructions Mr. Wheelless was giving the class. This sentence suggests that Linda is

- A. lazy.**
- B. angry.**
- C. self-conscious.**
- D. hungry.**

When you see a multiple-choice question on the test, what are some tricks or techniques you should use? Pause.

(Possible responses: read the question carefully; read all the answer choices; look for bold face type or italics.)

Another technique you can use is the process of elimination. *Process of elimination* means to eliminate or get rid of the answers you know are not right. Let's use this technique on question two.

Linda could not keep her mind on the folk dancing instructions Mr. Wheelless was giving the class. The story suggests that Linda is

- A. lazy.**
- B. angry.**
- C. self-conscious.**
- D. hungry.**

Start with Choice A. Is Linda lazy? Pause.

Is there anything in the story that suggests Linda is lazy?

(Response: no)

I agree. There's nothing in the story that makes me think she is lazy; therefore, I am going to eliminate that choice. Put a dot by the word *lazy* to show that it is not the answer.

Choice B, angry. Is there anything in the story to show that Linda is angry? Pause.

Is Linda angry?

(Response: no)

So, we have eliminated angry. Put a dot by the word *angry*, since angry is not the answer.

Let me give you a word of advice here. Don't make your dot too big or too heavy. You do not want to get any stray marks in the bubble by the correct answer. Be careful with your marks.

Let's continue. Choice C is self-conscious. Is Linda self-conscious?

Pause.

What does self-conscious mean? Pause.

(Response: ill at ease; uncomfortable)

If necessary, tell students the answer.

Is there anything in the story that shows she is self-conscious or ill at ease? Pause.

(Responses might include Linda gasped; her palms grew sweaty; she didn't want her friends watching her; dancing was embarrassing; she'd rather have a test.)

It sounds as if you have found the answer! Just to be on the safe side, look at Choice D.

Say:

Choice D, hungry. Is there anything in the selection that suggests Linda was hungry? (Response: no)

You are correct. There is nothing in the story about being hungry, so put a dot by the word *hungry*.

You considered all four possibilities and then eliminated the wrong answers. The process of elimination is a technique you should use when you see a multiple-choice question.

Sometimes you can eliminate only two wrong answers. Then work with the two that are left. Go back and reread the story quickly. Use these techniques to your advantage!

Then say:

On a reading test, you also have short-answer questions. These questions ask you to write a short answer! Usually you have two or three lines on which to write your response. While your answer may be short, it needs to show a clear and complete understanding of the question.

One thing you need to do is write legibly: write so somebody else can read it. You may print or use cursive.

It is also a good idea to write in complete sentences. You want to be sure that the reader understands what you are saying.

Question number three is a short-answer question. Let's walk and talk through this one together so that you can develop some techniques or tricks for answering this type question.

The story says Mr. Wheelless walked toward Linda's group. What do you predict will happen next? Support your answer with a detail from the story.

Let's start with the question. This question has more than one task for you to perform. What's the first thing the question wants you to do? Pause.

(Response: predict what will happen next)

Circle the word *predict*. Pause. What is the next task or the next thing you are to do? Pause.

(Response: support your answer with a detail from the story)

Circle the word *support* and the word *detail*.

Identifying key words helps you write a complete response to the question. Be sure you answer *all* parts of the question! Some students might miss this question because they only predict what might happen and they forget to support their prediction with evidence or details from the story. We circled those key words so that we can answer the question completely.

Before you write your response, let's talk about it. What do you think might happen next? "Mr. Wheelless walked toward Linda's group." Pause. Let's hear some predictions. Remember you have to support your prediction.

Ask for a volunteer or call on a student.

Allow students to predict what might happen. They must give a detail from the story to support their answer.

(Possible responses: Mr. Wheelless shows Linda how to do the dance.
Mr. Wheelless switches places with Ricky and dances with Linda to help her.
Mr. Wheelless might ask why they aren't dancing.)
Students may think of other possibilities.

Incorrect responses would be the following:

Linda is in trouble and gets a referral.

Mr. Wheelless is angry and sends Linda to the office.

There is no support for either of these answers. Notice in the story that Mr. Wheelless *walked* toward Linda's group. The focus for this question is on the word *walked*, which does not indicate anger.

If no one responds, ask, "Is Mr. Wheelless angry? Do you think Linda is going to get in trouble?" If a student answers *yes*, ask him or her to give you a detail or support from the story that shows Mr. Wheelless is angry. There is no support or detail to show he is angry.

Now guide the students to a correct answer by asking:

"Do you think Mr. Wheelless is going to help Linda?" or "Do you think Mr. Wheelless might switch places with Ricky and be Linda's partner for a while?" Then focus on the word *walked*. The word *walked* does not suggest he is angry. There is another clue earlier in the passage when it says he answered students' questions and demonstrated the steps several times for those who were confused.

Say:

Don't skip giving support to your answer! In fact, you probably will have to go back and reread some of the story.

Now, write an answer to this question. Begin by telling what you think might happen next. On your worksheet, write your prediction.

Pause to allow students time to write.

If a student is struggling, say, "What do you think will happen next?" Listen to the response and then help the student compose a complete sentence.

Everyone should now have a prediction written on paper. The next step is to support that prediction with a detail from the story. You are going to write a sentence that supports or explains why you made that prediction.

Pause to allow students time to write.

If a student is struggling, suggest that he or she begin the sentence with “In the story, Linda was simply standing while the rest of the class was moving.”

Let’s do number four now. “How do you know Linda felt uneasy?” You shouldn’t have any trouble answering this question. Use details from the story to show that Linda felt uneasy. Write your answer in complete sentences. Use your best handwriting.

Pause to allow time for students to answer the question.

(Possible responses: Linda’s hands were sweaty. She gasped. She could not keep her mind on the instructions. She would rather have a test than dance.)

Ask for a volunteer to share his or her response. Be sure the student reads from the paper rather than tells you an answer.

Then say:

Number five. “His eyes were glued to Mr. Wheelless and Ms. Anderson.” Explain what that sentence means.

What does that sentence mean? Write your response on your paper.

Pause to allow time for students to write.

Ask for a volunteer or call on a student.

(Possible responses: It means that he was really watching the teachers. It means Ricky is paying very close attention to what Mr. Wheelless and Ms. Anderson were doing.)

Then say:

Today's lesson was a good practice for answering multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions.

On the multiple-choice questions, what technique or trick can you use to find the right answer?

(Response: process of elimination)

Yes, the process of elimination. Be sure to read all the choices carefully and then eliminate or get rid of those wrong answers.

On the short-answer questions, what techniques or tricks can you use?

(Possible response: read carefully; circle the key word or key words; answer the whole question)

THE DANCE

On Friday afternoon, Mr. Wheelless escorted the whole social studies class to the gymnasium, where the other eighth-grade class was already waiting. Then Mr. Wheelless announced, “Today we’re going to learn a traditional South American folk dance. Ms. Anderson and I will model the moves and give you the instructions.”

Linda gasped. She felt her palms growing sweaty. If there was one thing she did not like to do, it was dance. She especially did not like folk dancing with all her friends watching. Dancing was the most embarrassing thing in the world. Linda could not think of a worse way to spend last period. She would almost rather have a test than dance.

After the two teachers got everyone paired up and organized into groups of eight, Mr. Wheelless began explaining the instructions. Then he and Ms. Anderson demonstrated the complicated moves. Mr. Wheelless patiently answered students’ questions about the dance steps. He and Ms. Anderson repeated their demonstration. The other students seemed to be paying attention, but Linda could not keep her mind on the instructions.

“Okay, listen up,” said Mr. Wheelless, “I’m going to put in the CD and we’re going to try it. Get ready. Here goes!”

Linda glanced at her partner Ricky, but he wasn’t paying any attention to her. His eyes were glued to Mr. Wheelless and Ms. Anderson. Suddenly, music filled the gymnasium and the couples began moving to the right. Linda just stood there with no idea of what to do. Just as suddenly as it had started, the music stopped. Mr. Wheelless walked toward Linda’s group.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 1 – 2

1. The story says, “Ms. Anderson and I will *model* the moves and give you the instructions.” The word *model* means
 - A. to display clothing to its advantage.
 - B. to demonstrate correct moves.
 - C. to evaluate each group’s attempts.
 - D. to explain folk dancing in South America.

2. Linda could not keep her mind on the folk dancing instructions Mr. Wheelless was giving the class. This story suggests that Linda is
 - A. lazy.
 - B. angry.
 - C. self-conscious.
 - D. hungry.

3. The story says, “Mr. Wheelless walked toward Linda’s group.” What do you predict will happen next? Support your answer with a detail from the story.

4. How do you know Linda felt uneasy?

5. “His eyes were glued to Mr. Wheelless and Ms. Anderson.” Explain what that sentence means.
