

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 2

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 2:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a selection of nonfiction,
- develop techniques or strategies for the reading nonfiction,
- review the author's purpose, and
- practice using context clues.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

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

LESSON 2: Reading and Responding

After your introductory remarks to students, say:

Successful readers have a series of strategies or tricks they use when reading and responding to questions. Today we will explore some of those tricks that will help you be a more successful reader.

The reading you do may fall into one of these three categories: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. After you have read a passage, you may be asked to answer multiple-choice questions and short answer questions. Sometimes you may have to answer an essay question about the reading selections. We will practice using a variety of techniques and strategies so that you can find something that works well for you. Practice here with me; but also use these tricks in your mathematics, science, and social studies reading.

First, let's talk about the different kinds of reading you do: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

What does it mean when your teacher says, “This piece of writing is fiction”? What is fiction? Pause to allow students time to answer.

(Response: *fiction* is literature whose characters and situations are made-up or invented by the writer; writing that tells about imaginary characters and events.)

When you read fiction, think about the characters. Use the clues the author gives you and imagine how a character looks and dresses. Listen to what the character says and try to imagine what that character is doing. Sometimes an author gives us lots of details and describes a place. Don't skip over that part!

Now, here's the trick. Try to imagine what the place looks like, what the characters look like, how they sound, what they are doing, and why they are doing it – it is sort of like seeing a movie in your head. That advice may sound silly to you, but it will help you to understand the passage.

Then say:

Sometimes you have to read nonfiction. *Nonfiction* is writing based mainly on fact, not on imagination. It tells about real people, real places, and real events. Your mathematics textbook is nonfiction. Your Louisiana history book is nonfiction. Your science textbook is nonfiction. Nonfiction presents information and explains ideas. Since there is so much information given in nonfictional writing, you may need to slow down and read some parts more than once.

A biography or an autobiography is another example of nonfiction. What is a biography? Pause.

(Response: A writer tells the life story of someone else.)

What is an autobiography? Pause.

(Response: A person tells or writes his or her own life story.)

Now, if you are reading biography or autobiography, you will find characters and setting and details. You will get a story about somebody's life, family, and problems and successes. You can probably do the M&M thing again – “movie in your mind.” Just as with the fiction, try to get a picture in your head. This mental picture/image will make it easier for you to understand what you are reading.

Who remembers the third kind of reading you will do on this part of the test? (Pause.)

(Response: poetry)

Some people hear “poetry” and think “asparagus, brussel sprouts, and cauliflower.” Actually, poetry is not *that* bad! It just takes some practice to be able to read poetry and to understand it.

Poetry doesn't look like the fictional and non-fictional pieces. Poetry uses words, language, and punctuation marks in different or unusual ways. Poetry sometimes rhymes. Poetry has rhythm. Sometimes it is serious and other times it is outrageously silly.

Say:

Just knowing what you are reading – fiction, nonfiction, or poetry – is important. You see, we use different skills, different strategies or techniques for each kind of reading.

Today, we are going to practice reading a nonfictional selection. We will read and talk about a variety of techniques to use on this selection.

One strategy that will help you when reading nonfiction is to preview. Previewing is fairly easy to do! Just take a minute to look over the selection and to get a general idea about the subject matter. Sometimes the passage will be about something you are interested in and know about. Other times, the passage may include a lot of new information.

Previewing gives your brain an opportunity to get ready to receive information. It gets you prepared to read!

Say:

Another technique involves purpose. Think about the purpose of the passage. Ask yourself, “What is the purpose for reading this piece?” Now, I know some of you are thinking that the purpose is to be able to answer the questions and get finished!

However, it is a little more than answering test questions. Authors write for lots of different purposes. Sometimes they write to give you information, or to entertain you, or to describe something, or to convince you about something. It really helps if you try to think about what the author wants you to learn.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 1.
Each student will need a pencil.

Say:

This selection is a piece of nonfiction.

Remember to begin by previewing the selection. *Previewing the selection* means just look at it.

Look at the title. What is the title? Pause.

(Response: “Zydeco Comes to Louisiana”)

Just from the title, I am guessing that the author is going to give me some history about zydeco.

Some students may not know the word *zydeco*. Suggest that they look for hints, words, or information in the article that will define zydeco.

Continue previewing the selection...I am guessing that there are a lot of facts in this selection. We will need to concentrate on what we are reading.

I will read the selection aloud today. You follow along on your copy. Then we will answer several questions about this passage.

Because this lesson teaches several techniques and strategies for reading and responding to questions, please read “Zydeco Comes to Louisiana” to the students. They should follow along on their copies, not just sit and listen to you.

Now say:

Before we start working on the questions, let’s review a few things from the passage. What was the author’s purpose? Pause.

(Possible responses: to tell about the king of zydeco; to tell about zydeco music)

Did the author include a lot of details in this passage? Pause.

(Response: yes)

Yes, he did give us lots of details about the king of zydeco and about zydeco music. Do you have to remember all those details when you start answering the questions? Pause.

(Response: no)

No, you don’t have to remember the details. Good readers go back to the selection and find the details they need to answer the questions!

Say:

Let me show you a neat little trick that helps when you are reading nonfiction. Start at the first paragraph. What's the main idea of that paragraph? Just a key word or two. Pause.

(Response: the accordion)

Circle *accordion*. Pause.

Look for the main idea in paragraph two. It is in the form of a sentence. Pause. (Response: What is zydeco?)

Circle that little sentence. Pause.

Go on to paragraph three. What is the main idea in that paragraph? About whom is that paragraph? Pause. (Response: Clifton Chenier)

Circle *Clifton Chenier*. Pause.

Continue in paragraph four, looking for a key word or phrase that will help you focus on the main idea. Pause. What do you think is the main idea of paragraph four?

(Response: turning point; some students might circle 1954.)

Circle *turning point*. Pause.

What's that next paragraph about? Pause. (Response: the sixties)

Yes, the sixties. Circle the *sixties*. Pause.

It doesn't really take long to go through and focus on each paragraph and find the main idea. You will find this technique very useful when you start answering the questions.

Go to the next paragraph. What do you think – is this paragraph about music critics or the zydeco spirit? Pause.

(Response: zydeco spirit) **Circle *zydeco spirit*.**

What about the seventh paragraph? What's the main idea in that one? Pause. (Response: the eighties)

Circle the *eighties*. Pause.

And, the last paragraph? What's the main idea? Pause.

(Response: health; some students may say death.)

Circle your response. Pause.

Say:

Now you are set to answer the questions.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 2.

**Look at number one. We are going to do just number one now.
“What is the author’s purpose in writing this article?”
You have four answer choices. Begin with answer Choice A and
read each one carefully to yourself. Then mark your answer.
Look up at me when you have finished number one.
Allow time for students to do number one.**

What answer choice did you make for number one?
(Response: Choice D, to tell about the King of Zydeco.)
Good!

**Let’s work through number two together. The information in this
article might be valuable to someone who**
Choice A: is taking a foreign language.
Choice B: is interested in becoming a king.
Choice C: is preparing a social studies project.
Choice D: is planning to buy a musical instrument.

What do you think the answer is?
(Response: Choice C, is preparing a social studies project.)

Why did you select Choice C?
Students may have difficulty explaining why they chose C. It is
probably easier to tell why they didn’t choose A, B, or D.

Say:

Look at question three. “How can you tell this selection is nonfiction and not an article of fiction?” Read the answer choices and mark your answer sheet. Look up at me when you are finished with number three.

Allow time for students to complete the task.

How do you know this selection is nonfiction?

(Response: Choice A: it is based on fact, not on imagination.)

Why didn’t you choose Answer B? Pause.

(Response: The number of paragraphs doesn’t determine whether a piece is fiction or nonfiction.)

Let’s do the last one. This is a vocabulary question. “The article says, ‘Hard times forced him to *abate* his band.’ What does *abate* mean?”

Look at your answer choices. Is it Choice A: increase or enlarge the band? Choice B: decrease or lessen the band? Choice C: increase the practice time? Choice D: improve the quality of their recordings.

(Response: Choice B: decrease or lessen the band.)

How did you know it wasn’t choice A?

(Response: You don’t increase something in hard times.)

What’s wrong with C and D?

(Response: There’s no clue to indicate *abate* has anything to do with their music or their recordings.)

Then say:

You have done a great job of preparing to read and answer questions on nonfiction selections.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 1

ZYDECO COMES TO LOUISIANA

The accordion was invented in Germany in 1822. In the 1830s, musicians in France and Italy made some changes in the instrument. German settlers later brought the accordion to Louisiana. Naturally, Louisiana musicians found ways to play the accordion better than anyone played it in Europe.

Perhaps the best-known accordion players today are members of zydeco bands. But, what is zydeco? Think of a Cajun band with a fiddle, accordion, guitar, and triangle. Change the fiddle to a rubboard, add a drum set, and maybe a tenor sax. That's zydeco. This lively form of music features the melody played by the accordion with the other instruments providing a two-step or waltz rhythm. The word *zydeco* comes from *haricots*, the French word for "beans." This music is most popular along the Gulf Coast, but it is now heard all across the United States.

The spread of zydeco can be traced to a farmer's son from Opelousas, Clifton Chenier. Clifton grew up hearing his father play the accordion and then mastered the instrument himself. After World War II, Clifton and his brother, Cleveland worked in Lake Charles in the oil business. In their spare time, the brothers played in towns from Lake Charles to Beaumont; but Clifton also listened to stars like Fats Domino and Ray Charles, both of whom influenced his musical style.

A turning point in Clifton's career came in 1954 because a talent scout stopped outside Lafayette when he saw a crowd gathered by the roadside. What he heard that day was the music of the Chenier Brothers. Using a Lake Charles radio station for a recording studio, the Cheniers recorded a single entitled "Clifton's Blues." The record sold well in the area, and eventually Clifton traveled to California to record for the Specialty label.

The sixties were not good to zydeco and Chenier. Hard times forced him to abate his band and he moved to Houston. He played in small clubs and bistros. Chenier was introduced to a record producer who set up studio time that resulted in a single that sold well in Houston. The success of this venture was a turning point in Chenier's career.

Music critics agree that records did not capture the zydeco spirit. It was the experience of the live show. Chenier's shows were sometimes four-hour marathons covering the history of music from country blues to zydeco.

By the eighties his audience had grown beyond Southwest Louisiana. Following an appearance at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, he was invited to perform in Switzerland. While on a trip to Europe, he participated in a contest featuring 500 accordion players. After winning the contest, he began to call himself King of Zydeco and was known to wear a crown during performances.

His health began to fail by the mid-eighties as a result of diabetes, yet he continued to make great music. In 1984, Clifton Chenier won a Grammy for the best ethnic recording. His health deteriorated quickly and in his later performances he had to play sitting down. Chenier played right up to the day of his death in 1987.

"Zydeco Comes to Louisiana" by Grace Lichtenstein, from Musical Gumbo: the Music of New Orleans, copyright © 1993 by W.W. Norton, New York, New York. Used by permission.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 2

NAME _____

1. What is the author’s purpose in writing this article?
 - A. to describe the music he likes to listen to
 - B. to sell accordions to people who live in Louisiana
 - C. to explain the origins of zydeco music
 - D. to tell about the king of zydeco

2. The information in this article might be valuable to someone who
 - A. is taking a foreign language.
 - B. is interested in becoming a king.
 - C. is preparing a social studies project.
 - D. is planning to buy a musical instrument.

3. How can you tell this is nonfiction and not an article of fiction?
 - A. It is based on fact, not on imagination.
 - B. It has eight paragraphs.
 - C. It gives the definition for the French word *haricots*.
 - D. It tells where the accordion was invented.

4. The article says, “Hard times forced him to *abate* his band and he moved to Houston.” What does *abate* mean?
 - A. increase or enlarge the band
 - B. decrease or lessen the band
 - C. increase the practice time
 - D. improve the quality of their recordings.