

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 11

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 11:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a nonfiction selection,
- practice test-taking strategies, and
- identify main idea.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lesson 11 – 1 and 11 – 2
- Pencils

LESSON 11: Reading and Responding

Following your introductory remarks to students, say:

In today’s lesson, the focus will be on two areas: reading and responding.

First, let’s talk about the reading. There are several tricks or techniques to use when you have a passage to read. We will try using a variety of techniques today in order to help you become a more successful reader.

For starters, look at the passage you are about to read. Ask yourself some simple questions. What kind of writing is it? Fiction, nonfiction, poetry? Then, once you have answered that question, you can move on to the next step. Let’s begin.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 11 – 1.

Say:

What kind of writing is this selection? Pause. (Response: nonfiction)

**How do you know it is nonfiction? (Response: It is about a real person.)
Yes, nonfiction is based mainly on facts. It is about real people, real places, and real events.**

How do you know this selection isn’t a poem? Pause.
(Possible responses: It is written in sentences; it is written in paragraphs; it isn’t written in stanzas; it doesn’t rhyme.)

Now I know I am reading a nonfiction selection. Just taking a couple of minutes to look at the piece can be beneficial. This article is about whom?

(Response: Maya Angelou)

I need to get my brain in gear! When I actually begin reading the selection, I must give it my complete and full attention.

Now say:

You follow along while I read the selection aloud.

Read the selection. Students should follow along on their copies. It is important for them to read along with you, not just to look at you and listen.

Let's pick out some key facts about Maya Angelou's life. Tell me something from the passage that you think is important. Pause. Listen carefully so you don't repeat a fact.

Ask for volunteers or call on a student.

(Possible responses: She lives in New York City; she worked with Dr. King, Jr.; she wrote *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; she's been a singer, actress, teacher, producer, director, and magazine editor.)

Have students *tell* a fact, not just read it from the selection.

We focused first on the reading part. We used two techniques: look at the passage and read it carefully.

Be sure you have your mind focused on the reading! Sometimes focusing on the reading is hard to do cause our brains want to think about a lot of different things that don't have anything to do with the assigned reading.

Then say:

The next part of the lesson focuses on the responding part. The responding part is how your teacher assesses what you know and are able to do.

You may be asked to respond in a variety of ways. Sometimes you have multiple-choice questions and other times you have what are called short-answer questions. There are some special techniques for answering each kind of question.

When you are working with multiple-choice questions, there is a technique called process of elimination. You use the process of elimination to get rid of incorrect answers. First be sure to read the question carefully. Then read all four answer choices. Now put an X or draw a line through those responses that you know are not correct. Even when you know that you know an answer, you still need to go through and read all four responses.

Sometimes after you have eliminated a couple of answers, you still aren't sure of the correct answer. Go ahead and guess. Don't leave the answer space blank! If you leave it blank, it is sure to be wrong.

Say:

On the short-answer questions you will usually write a short answer! Seriously, your response needs to be a very clear, concise, complete answer. It is a good idea to write in complete sentences. That way you are sure that whoever reads your paper will understand what you were trying to say. If you write in fragments, you run the risk of being misunderstood.

Another thing to remember about these short-answer questions is to use your best handwriting. If you know that others have trouble reading your handwriting, make a special effort to write legibly. Again, you don't want to risk losing points because your handwriting is too difficult to read.

Just as on the multiple-choice questions, read the question carefully. Be sure you understand the question. To understand fully may mean reading it more than once.

For goodness sakes, don't leave the answer space blank. Answer the question as well as you can! If you leave the answer space blank, you know the answer will be wrong.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 11 – 2.
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Say:

Here are the questions that accompany the Maya Angelou selection. Read each question carefully. If necessary, circle the key word in the question.

Then answer the questions. Go back and reread parts of the article to find the answer. After you have finished working, sit quietly until we are ready to go over the answers.

Allow time for students to complete the worksheet.

Then say:

As we go over these questions, I will want to hear your explanations for why you selected an answer. I may even ask you why you did not select a particular response.

Number one. “Where did Maya Angelou spend most of her childhood?” What is the correct response?

(Response: Stamps, Arkansas)

Yes, Choice C: Stamps, Arkansas. What word in the question helped you to know the answer was Stamps, Arkansas? Pause.

(Response: childhood)

Now, tell me why *childhood* was so important in that question? Pause.

(Response: She’s lived in all four places, but her childhood was spent in Stamps.)

Good work. What about number two? “Which of the following statements is *not* a fact from the article?” That question really makes you think, doesn’t it?

Now think about it...if it is not a fact, what is it? Pause.

(Response: an opinion)

See, you really have to read those questions carefully! You can’t quit concentrating even for a moment or you might mess up.

What is the answer to number two?

(Response: Choice D: Maya Angelou is one of the most talented women in the world.)

That's it. That statement is *not* a fact. Choices A, B, and C are all facts. They can be proven or checked.

Let me tell you a little secret about Fact and Opinion questions. When you are reading the answer choices, it is a good idea to put an "F" in front of those statements that are facts and an "O" in front of those statement that are opinions. That strategy/trick will keep you from getting confused.

You are doing really well on these! Let's do the last multiple-choice question. "What is the main idea of this article?" Which answer did you choose?

(Response: Choice A: She is a talented performer and writer.)

Good. Why didn't you choose Choices B, C, or D? Those statements are all in the article? Pause.

(Response: Yes, they are all in the article, but that's not what the question asked; the question asked for the main idea and none of those statements is the main idea.)

Say:

Now you switched to the short-answer questions. I hope you remembered to write in complete sentences!

Number four. "List two influences that shaped Maya Angelou's life."

Let's think about that question a minute before we share answers. What do you think is the key word or phrase in this question?

(Response: two; influences; some students might say list.)

Okay. So let's have a volunteer read his or her response.

(Responses: moving to Stamps, Arkansas; Mrs. Bertha Flowers; writing *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.)

Say:

“Why do you think Maya Angelou worked in so many different jobs?” Let’s hear some of your responses.

(Responses: She is talented; she wants to experience a lot of different things.)

Encourage students to write in complete sentences. As you observe their handwriting, remind them to write legibly.

Now say:

Reading and responding take some effort and energy on your part. Be sure to read the passage carefully. Be sure to read the questions carefully.

So often, students get in a hurry and don’t give their full attention to the task of reading. Don’t you be guilty of being impatient! Keep yourself focused on the task of reading and then on responding to the questions.

MAYA ANGELOU

When she was three years old, Maya Angelou took a long train ride with her four-year-old brother Bailey. They left Long Beach, California, to live with their grandmother, who ran a general store in Stamps, Arkansas. Angelou later told the story of her childhood in a work called *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In this selection, she describes African-American life with witty, intelligent language. She credits Mrs. Bertha Flowers with giving her a love of language that has lasted a lifetime. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was made into a screenplay that aired as a television special.

Maya Angelou is one of the most talented women of our time. She studied dance in San Francisco. Later she toured Europe and Africa as a cast member in the musical *Porgy and Bess*. She has also worked as a singer, actress, journalist, teacher, producer, director, and magazine editor. Angelou was not satisfied with working only in the arts, however. She also became involved in the civil rights movement and worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She has traveled all over the world promoting the causes of peace and human rights.

Ms. Angelou presently lives in New York City, where she remains active in dance and theater. She gives marvelous, one-woman shows in which she sings, reads her poetry, and tells stories of her fascinating life. She continues to work on later volumes of her autobiography. In 1992, Angelou was invited by Bill Clinton to write a poem for his inauguration. In January, 1993, “On the Pulse of the Morning” was read by Maya Angelou for the President and the nation.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 11 – 2

NAME _____

1. Where did Maya Angelou spend most of her childhood?
 - A. Long Beach, California
 - B. San Francisco, California
 - C. Stamps, Arkansas
 - D. New York, New York

2. Which of the following statements is **not** a fact from the article?
 - A. Maya Angelou rode the train from California to Arkansas.
 - B. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is the story of her childhood.
 - C. Maya Angelou's grandmother ran a general store in Stamps, Arkansas.
 - D. Maya Angelou is one of the most talented women in the world.

3. What is the main idea of this article?
 - A. Maya Angelou is a talented performer and writer who works for civil rights.
 - B. When she was three years old, Maya Angelou took a long train ride.
 - C. She read a poem she wrote for Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993.
 - D. Maya Angelou wrote a book and worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

4. List two influences that shaped Maya Angelou's life.

5. Why do you think Maya Angelou worked in so many different jobs?
