

Informational Text

Informational text provides information, persuades, or explains, and is based in truth. Examples include textbooks, newspaper articles, some magazines, and encyclopedias.

Factoids

- Nonfiction is the most widely read genre. However, classroom reading programs place most focus on fiction (Harvey, 1998).
- In a study of 20 first grade classrooms, the researcher discovered that there were few informational texts in classroom libraries, little informational text displayed on classroom walls, and a mean of only **3.6 minutes per day** spent with informational text. For children in low SES school districts the time spent on informational text dropped to **1.9 minutes per day** (Duke, 2000).
- Researchers found that **only 14 percent** of the material read to primary students by their teacher was informational text (Yopp and Yopp, 2000).
- Standardized tests are now comprised of **50 to 85 percent** informational text (Hoyt, 2002).
- In a recent international assessment, students from the United States placed **fourth on reading stories and thirteen on reading informational text** (Pikulski, 2004).

What can Teachers Do?

It is clear, that we must place more focus on teaching students how to read informational text. Teachers can promote and encourage their students to read informational material in a variety of ways.

- During **read aloud** time spend more time on informational text. Read from newspapers, magazines, and books pointing out the special features of informational text.
- Build your **classroom library** to include a wide range of text material including magazines, newspapers, and informational text.
- Conduct **author studies** or **highlight authors** of informational text authors, such as Jean Fritz or Seymour Simon. Your public and/or school librarian will be able to give you additional names.
- In place of literature circles introduce **informational book discussions groups** to your class.
- **Explicitly teach** your students how to use the text structure and features of informational text for studying.

References

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