Reading Different Text Forms: Reading Informational Texts

**Before**
Before reading, help students to connect new content and ideas to their prior knowledge by encouraging them to think about what they already know about the topic or the type of reading material. For example:

- Ask students to brainstorm related ideas, concepts and vocabulary, recall previous experiences and feelings related to the subject, recall what they have learned about the topic, or list questions they might have about the topic.
- Provide students with related experiences, discussion topics, readings, or background information to increase background knowledge.
- Pose questions to students before they read, to help them determine a purpose for reading.
- Model (using a “think aloud”) how to predict the content based on the features of text, specialized vocabulary, illustrations, introductory information or personal experiences. Skim, scan and sample the text to make informed predictions.
- Identify and pre-teach unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts that appear in the text.

**During**
During reading, help students to connect the information and ideas in the text to what they already know as they monitor their understanding. (Monitoring their understanding means recognizing when confusion occurs and identifying strategies that help to regain meaning.) For example:

- Have students describe and model the different reading strategies they might use, such as predicting, questioning, activating prior knowledge, inferring, monitoring, adjusting, rereading, and decoding.
- Model (using a “think aloud”) strategies for pausing and thinking about the text. Encourage students to chunk the text, read, pause, think and ask questions or make notes about the section of text.
- Demonstrate how to use a graphic organizer to categorize and select main ideas, important details, and questions as you read. For example, comparison charts, T-charts, or Venn diagrams can help students to identify the ideas being compared and how they are similar and different.
- Invite students to visualize the concepts as they read. Have partners share and compare the visualizations.
- Provide students with focus questions, such as the following:
  - What are the main ideas?
  - How has the writer organized them?
  - How does the writer support the main ideas?
  - What is the writer’s viewpoint?
  - Is this a useful source of information?

**After**
After reading, help students to consolidate and extend their understanding of the content. For example:

- Ask partners to restate or paraphrase what they have read, and note similarities and differences in the retelling.
- Model how to summarize the reading selection (using a “think aloud”) by identifying the essence of the text, choosing the most important information, and organizing the information to convey the key ideas of the selection.
- Have students suggest possible diagrams or graphic organizers to illustrate connections among the topics, main ideas, supporting details, and prior knowledge.
- Review the process that students used for reading informational text, including strategies for before, during and after reading. See Student Resource, *Tips for Reading Informational Texts*. 

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