

# Teaching Nonfiction, Grades 4–12

## 1. What do you primarily teach?

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I teach all content subjects | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies/History | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts/English        | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical subjects     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts              | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not a classroom teacher.<br>I am an administrator, coach,<br>supervisor, or university professor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Resource               |   |

## 2. What grade do you primarily teach? Check all that apply.

- |                                  |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 |

## 3. How long have you taught?

- |                                      |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1–5 Years   | <input type="checkbox"/> 16–20 Years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 30 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6–10 Years  | <input type="checkbox"/> 21–25 Years |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11–15 Years | <input type="checkbox"/> 26–30 Years |   |

## 4. How many students are in your school?

- |   |                                    |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 200 | <input type="checkbox"/> 750–1000  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–2000      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 200–500        | <input type="checkbox"/> 1000–1500 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 500–750        |                                    |   |

## 5. How many students do you teach each day? (Round to the closest number.)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> About 15 students | <input type="checkbox"/> About 75 students  | <input type="checkbox"/> About 150 students     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About 30 students | <input type="checkbox"/> About 100 students | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 175 students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About 50 students | <input type="checkbox"/> About 125 students |   |

## 6. The majority of my students speak. . . .

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English as their home language | <input type="checkbox"/> English as a second language |
|---|---|

## 7. The majority of my students are. . . .

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino        | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> My school is roughly equally divided between 2 or more ethnicities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American |  |   |

If split between or among groups, list them here using the terms we used above

## 8. The majority of my students. . .

- Appear to come from homes where finances are tight.
- Appear to come from homes where financial issues do not negatively affect a student's work and concentration.
- Appear to come from homes where students have many advantages.

**9. How often do you spend time specifically teaching students TO READ your subject matter, as opposed to teaching them the content itself?**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Once every couple of weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> Several time a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not very often (once a month) | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week                | <input type="checkbox"/> Every day           |

**10. On average, about how many minutes per week do students read assigned nonfiction material during class time? This is silent reading that they do with no support of buddy reading, you reading aloud to them, or the CD playing the text they are reading.**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None          | <input type="checkbox"/> About 1 hour    | <input type="checkbox"/> About 2 hours     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About .5 hour | <input type="checkbox"/> About 1.5 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 hours |

**11. About how much at-home reading of nonfiction do you assign each week?**

- |  |                                      |                                       |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                | <input type="checkbox"/> 11–20 pages | <input type="checkbox"/> 41–60 pages  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 10 pages | <input type="checkbox"/> 21–40 pages | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 60 |

**12. What is most of the nonfiction reading your students do for your class? Choose one.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary source documents  | <input type="checkbox"/> Textbooks                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade books on a particular topic (such as <i>Earthquakes</i> by Seymour Simon or <i>We’ve Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children’s March</i> by Cynthia Levinson) | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers                  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Materials from the web      |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles from magazines     |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Workbooks and/or worksheets |

**13. I believe that I should be expected to teach students not only the content itself, but also how to read the content.**

- Yes  
 No

**14. When it comes to teaching students who struggle with reading the texts for my content, I . . .**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Know a lot about teaching reading to struggling readers. | <input type="checkbox"/> Know some things about teaching reading to struggling readers. | <input type="checkbox"/> Know little about teaching reading to struggling readers. |
|---|---|--|

**15. In choosing texts for your teaching of nonfiction, which of these is most problematic?**

- Planning instruction that accommodates diverse and unrelated interests of students.
- I have no choice. The school system specifies what is to be taught.
- Not knowing enough about the students’ reading levels.
- Finding and organizing several texts on a particular topic in order to teach students to look at multiple sources of information.
- Identifying or funding (purchasing) texts at the students’ levels.
- Finding the time to select appropriate texts.

Other (please specify)

**16. Where do you spend the majority of your instructional time when working with struggling readers? Choose up to 3.**

**“I spend my time helping struggling readers to . . .”**

- Recognize the importance of text features—bold-faced words, maps, figures, diagrams, charts, headings, etc.
- Use context clues to understand unknown vocabulary.
- Identify the main idea, details, and summarize or paraphrase what was read.
- Think about the author’s purpose, arguments, and bias.
- Make logical inferences from the text and cite evidence for interpretations and inferences they offer about the text.
- Offer questions about the author, the text, and their responses to the text.
- Simply comprehend and retain the material.

**17. The preceding question asked you to identify the area where you must spend the majority of your instructional time when working with struggling readers. Consider these same options in this question and tell us where you must spend the majority of your instructional time when working with skilled and highly skilled readers. Choose up to 3.**

**“I spend the majority of my instructional time helping skilled and highly skilled readers. . .”**

- Recognize the importance of text features—bold-faced words, maps, figures, diagrams, charts, headings, etc.
- Use context clues to understand unknown vocabulary.
- Identify the main idea, details, and summarize or paraphrase what was read.
- Think about the author’s purpose, arguments, and bias.
- Make logical inferences from the text and cite evidence for interpretations and inferences they offer about the text.
- Offer questions about the author, the text, and their responses to the text.
- Simply comprehend and retain the material.

**18. What do you perceive as your students’ biggest stumbling blocks when it comes to understanding the nonfiction you assign? Select up to 3.**

- Lack of ability to identify main idea and key details
- Lack of vocabulary needed to access the text
- Lack of knowledge about transition words and phrases (“before this,” “so as to,” “as a result”) and how they indicate text structure
- Lack of background knowledge on the topic
- Poor decoding abilities
- Lack of strategies for getting through difficult texts
- Lack of interest in, or reason for, reading about the topic

**19. How do students in your class primarily get the information about the topic you are teaching?**

- Through reading
- Through my class lectures, explanations, presentations
- Through class discussions

**20. Do you think your students, as a group, mostly like to read about your content or mostly do not like to read about your content?**

- I think most of them do not enjoy reading about the content we are studying.
- I think most of them enjoy reading about the content we are studying.
- I do not know what most of my students think about the reading they must do.

**21. Do you think readers use different strategies for reading various types of nonfiction texts? In other words, do you think we need different strategies for reading, for instance, a science text and a social studies text?**

- Yes                       No                       I'm really not sure

If you answered yes, please offer examples of strategies that you think are more appropriate for one content or another. . .

**22. If there is one work of nonfiction that you have students read every year, what is it? (This could be a magazine that you rely on; if so, please tell us its title.)**