

Grade 8 Playlist: Making Connections Within a Text

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3*:

- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

Welcome

In informational texts, authors often use comparisons, analogies, or categories to make connections between people, ideas, and events. For example, historians may explain how one historical event caused another, or scientists may describe the structure of one planet in terms of a similar planet. Effective readers identify and understand these connections to enrich their comprehension of the text.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- find connections between individuals, ideas, or events in a text.
- analyze how the connections among individuals, ideas, or events affect the overall message of the text.

Review

Key Term

- An **analogy** is a type of comparison. It identifies similarities between two things in order to explain them.

Exploring the Standard

Sometimes, writers state at the beginning of a text that they will analyze the relationship between two concepts. In most cases, however, readers must look more closely to find connections that the author makes. To find these connections, readers can use the following strategies:

1. Take notes while reading. Mark key individuals and events by underlining the text or adding sticky notes.
2. Pay attention to phrases that signal similarities and differences. These phrases include *like*, *unlike*, *similar to*, *just as*, and *in contrast to*.
3. Look at any text features the author uses to form categories. Chapter titles, subheadings, and charts can show how an author groups ideas.
4. Mark any references an author makes to unfamiliar people, places, or events. If readers are unfamiliar with a reference, they should research its significance and connection to the topic at hand.



Watch!

This video further explains various strategies readers can use to find textual connections:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9lwxsR-uBg>

Example 1

The following is an excerpt from President F. D. Roosevelt’s Second Inaugural Address from 1937. In this speech, he refers to an earlier event, the 150th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention. Roosevelt connects the purpose of that event to his goal as a president.

This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitutional Convention, which made us a nation. At that Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War; they created a strong government with powers of united action sufficient then and now to solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. A century and a half ago they established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people. Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives.

Roosevelt chose to draw this connection in order to establish his primary goal of maintaining a “strong government” that is united and efficient in solving problems for the general welfare and liberty of the American people. His goal exactly mirrors the sentiment of the American founding fathers as they formed the U.S. Constitution. This comparison was meant to invigorate and assure the American people of Roosevelt’s sense of duty and commitment when American morale was low in the aftermath of the Great Depression in the 1930s, and global tensions were high as World War II broke out overseas. In these times of struggle, Roosevelt sought to remind people of the past and present while preparing for the future. This speech most likely comforted many in the audience by reminding them of the enduring nature of the American people.

Listen and Read!

As with all great speeches, the words are more effective when they are heard aloud. Listen to President Roosevelt’s audio recording of his Second Inaugural Address while reading the full transcript, and see if his comparisons invigorate as intended:

- <http://millercenter.org/president/fdroosevelt/speeches/speech-3308>

A Closer Look: Cause and Effect

One specific method of making connections is through cause and effect. Many informational texts discuss an issue by explaining what caused the issue in the first place and by analyzing its effects on the world. For example, there are countless texts that analyze the causes and effects of global warming or of conflict and war. Mapping out causes and effects can also draw relationships between two different categorical events or concepts such as poverty and crime, education and wealth, or childhood and adult experiences. This method of making connections frequently offers different perspectives on important issues and can also act as a method of persuasion, depending on the author’s purpose for the text.



Teaching Notes: Making Connections Within a Text

The goal of RI.8.3 is for students to analyze how a text makes connections between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories). The following information contains ideas and resources that teachers can use to address this standard.

Activity

Distribute copies of an informational text on a current global issue (see below for possible sources of texts). Have students read the text and analyze it to find connections that the author draws. Remind students to use the strategies they learned about in the playlist. Then discuss the following questions: Why does the author draw these connections? How do they affect the reader's comprehension or experience?

- CNN Freedom project: <http://www.cnn.com/specials/world/freedom-project>
- U.S. Department of State official blog: <http://blogs.state.gov/>
- PBS Newshour for students: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/>

Writing Prompt

Have students research a topic or issue of their interest that has an element of cause and effect, and task them with writing an essay that explains the causes or effects of that issue on the society in which it is a problem. Ask students to use cause and effect transition words to signal the connections they make between concepts.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RI.8.3:

- **“No Place Like Home?”**: This lesson has students read an article that makes connections between endangered species in two different countries:
<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2005/05/11/no-place-like-home/>
- **Organic Gardening Research**: In this lesson plan, students complete an inquiry-based research project about organic gardening. As students research their plants, have them take notes on how the resources they read make connections between different types of plants or gardening methods.
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/grow-inquiry-based-organic-804.html?tab=3#tabs>
- **The Boswell Sisters**: In this lesson plan, students read informational texts about the Boswell Sisters of New Orleans. Have students analyze how the texts draw connections between different musicians and between historical events and changes in music.
http://www.hnoc.org/programs/documents/LessonPlan_Boswell.pdf

