

Grade 7 Playlists for Reading: Informational Text Craft and Structure

This resource bundle aligns with the Craft and Structure standards of the Common Core State Standards for Grade 7 Reading: Informational Text. We have included four of our playlists—content-rich tools that use trusted textual, audio, visual, and multimedia resources to supplement high-quality instruction in specific elements of the Common Core—to guide students through each of the relevant standards for the informational text reading strands of English Language Arts.

Each playlist is designed for 30–45 minutes of instructional time and is followed by a rigorous self-check for students. Alternatively you could assign individual student playlists as homework or remedial/extension activities.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are not intended to be taught in sequential order, and neither are these playlists. Instead, you should feel free to dip in and out of these resources as your instructional needs dictate.

Standard Coverage Notes:

- Standard RI.7.4 is covered across two playlists: one focuses on connotative meanings; the other focuses on word choice.

The accompanying Student Editions include additional passages on which students can practice their reading skills, including the ability to analyze craft and structure. Stepped-out examples and hyperlinks to videos, graphic organizers, and other activities further support instruction.

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Grade 7 Playlist: Connotative Meanings

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.4*:

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Welcome

“My Aunt Petunia is an economical shopper,” says Susie. “If she finds something she likes, she patiently waits until it’s on sale before she buys it.” Meanwhile, Susie’s sister, Elsie, says, “Aunt Petunia is so stingy! She refuses to buy anything that’s not on the clearance rack!”

The words *economical* and *stingy* have essentially the same definitions in the dictionary; they are both adjectives that describe people who do not want to spend too much money for things. Yet these words have different feelings associated with them. They show that the girls have different opinions of Aunt Petunia’s hesitation to spend money. Which sister probably enjoys shopping with Aunt Petunia more?

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine connotative meanings of words and phrases as they are used in informational text.

Review

Key Terms

- **Denotation** is the literal meaning of a word, or the word’s dictionary definition.
- **Connotation** is a thought or emotion that is suggested or implied by a certain word.
- An author’s **tone** is the attitude the author assumes toward the subject or the audience. Authors use many types of tone, but they usually assume a formal or serious tone in informational texts.
- **Context** is the phrases and sentences surrounding a certain word. A word’s context often helps to show its meaning, including its connotation.

Practice!

Complete this activity to practice determining word meanings in context:

- <https://www.opened.com/assessment/determine-the-meaning-of-words-and-phrases/1073112>



Teaching Notes: Connotative Meanings

The goal of RI.7.4 is for students to be able to determine connotative meanings of words used in an informational text. The following activities and resources are designed to help students develop this skill.

Activities

1. Find an editorial from a newspaper and underline words that have strong connotative meanings. Have students look for context clues that help to show whether the words have negative or positive connotations. For example, students may look for synonyms or examples that clarify the meaning of each word. Students should also consider the author's point of view in the article.
2. Discuss with students what a *euphemism* is: the replacement of a word that is considered offensive with one that has a less offensive connotation. For example, *restroom* might be considered a euphemism for *bathroom* or *toilet*. Ask students to give other examples of euphemisms and to describe how they illustrate the power of connotative meanings.

Writing Prompts

1. Ask students to describe an issue or topic that they have very strong feelings about. Then, instruct them to write an essay about that topic. Students should use a tone that reflects their view on the subject and use connotative words accordingly.
2. Use the editorial from Activity 1 above and have students replace some of the underlined words with words that have different connotations. Have students share their revised articles. Then discuss how changing the words affect the meaning of the article. Does the author's point of view seem the same? Why not?

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RI.7.4:

Interview a Word: In this activity, students create a mock interview with a word to help illustrate its connotation. Teachers can assign each student a different word and have them present their interviews to the class.

- <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/wordshop/getting-at-connotation-by-interviewing-a-word/>

Word Connotations in Context: This resource gives ideas for teaching the relationship between tone and connotation.

- <http://www.smekenseducation.com/word-connotations-convey-tone-in-reading-and-writing.html>



Grade 7 Playlist: Determine an Author's Purpose and Point of View

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.6*:

- *Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.*

Welcome

Reading nonfiction informational texts like historical documents, speeches, or even technical instructions is a very different exercise from reading fiction. When reading an informational text, a reader identifies the purpose and point of view to understand the significance of the text. This playlist explores the skills a reader will use to discover these features, through an analysis of an excerpt of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address to the nation.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn and practice how to:

- determine an author's purpose.
- determine a point of view.
- analyze how the author differentiates his/her position from those of others.

Review

Key Terms

- An author's **purpose** is his or her reason for writing. Most writing is done with the purpose of entertaining, persuading, or informing the reader.
- The author's **point of view** is the way he or she looks at the topic. The **position** on the subject is the author's opinion or judgment of it.
 - Point of view is developed through the **narrator**, or the person speaking in a piece of writing. In nonfiction texts, the narrator is sometimes the author (first-person point of view) and other times it is an unknown voice (third-person point of view).



Background: Understanding 1933

To understand and appreciate the very first speech Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered as president, it is important to understand the serious economic trouble the United States was facing in 1933. Four years earlier, in 1929, the stock market in New York collapsed, erasing entire fortunes. This collapse brought an end to a decade of heavy investment in the stock market and risky financial behavior. It also revealed the weaknesses in the U.S. economy. Soon after the crash, the country descended into what's known as the Great Depression. People lost their homes, farms, and entire savings. Soon factories closed down and once-bustling cities ground to a slow crawl. Americans were frightened and uncertain about the future. This was the environment, one of fear and anxiety, in which Roosevelt delivered his speech.

Watch!

Watch this video to learn more about the Great Depression:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/discussing-the-great-depression/113923>

A Closer Look: Understanding Purpose

There are as many reasons for writing as there are subjects to write about. Here are four basic categories:

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| Narrative writing serves the purpose of telling a story, sometimes to inform the reader and sometimes to entertain. | Most narrative writing is fictional, but nonfiction examples include personal memoirs, biographies, and anecdotes. |
| Descriptive writing serves the purpose of reporting the features of something, like the way it looks, sounds, or feels. | Character sketches, captions for photos, and some types of advertisements are examples of descriptive writing. |
| Expository writing serves the purpose of explaining something to the reader or informing them about a subject. | Most nonfiction writing is expository, including nonfiction books and articles, encyclopedia entries, news reports, and instruction manuals. |
| Persuasive writing serves the purpose of presenting an opinion and trying to convince the reader to accept this opinion. | Newspaper editorials try to be persuasive, as do advertisements, speeches, literary essays, and critical reviews. |

Of course, it is possible for a piece of writing to fall within more than one category. A novel that tells a true story in a dramatic fashion can be considered both expository and narrative, while an advertisement that gives a description of a good or service to convince someone to buy it is both descriptive and persuasive.

