

Module: Reading

Lesson Title: Determining Meaning and Making Inferences through Text Connections

Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Analyze a primary source to determine meaning
- Make connections within the text
- Make logical inferences based on evidence from the text
- Gain basic understanding of life in the United States in the 1930s
- See connections between what happened in the 1930s and current problems of today

Florida Adult Basic Education Reading Standards	Level Expectation
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text (Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.) (CCR.RE.ABE.1)	NRS Level 4 - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Materials

- Handout A: Making Text Connections
- Handout B: Excerpt from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address
- Handout C: Making Logical Inferences
- Video clip of FDR Inaugural Address – a seven-minute clip from the address is available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm3Bntsp2ck>
- Contemporary videos of inaugural addresses
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zncqb-n3zMo> (President Barack Obama – 2013)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXzgMdj5urs> (President George Bush – 2001)

Instructional Plan

Overview

Many students have difficulty extracting meaning from text, even when that meaning is explicitly stated. The issue becomes more challenging when students must make logical inferences based on what they have read. One of the major causes of this problem is the inability of students to understand the importance of and the ability to make connections within the text that they read. The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with a strategy for making connections in the text that they read and using those connections to make logical inferences.

Process

Prior to the lesson, you may wish to download the video clip of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. While the quality of the video and audio is far less than that found in current videos, this will give students a feel for the time in which the speech was given.

Begin the lesson by writing the phrase **logical inference** on the board. Have students brainstorm what a logical inference is. Next, ask students to discuss a time when they have made a logical inference in real life. A common example might be that they heard a loud noise and the sound of glass shattering in the kitchen and just knew that someone had dropped a plate or glass. Discuss how the student did not have to see the event take place but rather inferred based on his/her own background knowledge what had occurred. Explain that when reading, an author may not always explicitly state a fact but rather expects that the reader will be able to infer that fact based on the text provided.

Provide students with a copy of **Handout A: Making Connections with Text**. Explain that one way to better understand and to make logical inferences about a text is to first make some connections with that text. Use the handout to explain the three ways that they can connect to texts that they read.

- Text-to-Self
- Text-to-Text
- Text-to-World

Discuss each connection using the following information.

Text-to-Self	Text-to-Text	Text-to-World
These occur when we make connections between personal experiences and the text.	These occur when we make connections between other texts in relation to the text we are reading.	These occur when we relate the text with what we already know about the world.
Questions I might ask... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this remind me of in my life? • What is this similar to in my life? • How is this different from my life? • Has something like this ever happened to me? • How does this relate to my life? 	Questions I might ask... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this remind me of in another book I’ve read? • How is this text similar to something I have read in a book, newspaper, magazine, or on the Internet? • How is this different from something I have read in a book, newspaper, magazine, or on the Internet? • Have I read something like this before? 	Questions I might ask... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this remind me of in the real world? • How is this text similar to things that happen in the real world? • How is this different from things that happen in the real world? • How does this relate to the world around me? • Has something like this happened in the world recently?

To set the stage for this part of the lesson, ask students if they have ever heard an inaugural address. If students have not heard an inaugural address, you may wish to view portions of the contemporary addresses

provided by President Barak Obama (2013) and/or President George Bush (2001). The purpose of this is to help students understand:

- what an inaugural address is,
- its significance in laying out a path for the upcoming years of that President's administration, and to
- enhance understanding of the Executive Branch of the federal government.

Provide students with a copy of **Handout B: Excerpt from Franklin D. Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address (1933)**. Make sure that they have a clean copy of Handout A as well so they can work through the text connection process using the graphic organizer.

Model the strategy by using the following step-by-step process:

- Have students read the text. At this level, you should have students' independently read the address. You may wish to follow the initial reading by having students listen to the address while following along with the text.
- As a group, discuss the first paragraph of the excerpt. Ask students to identify a quote or portion of the text to which they can make a personal connection (text-to-self). If students seem unsure, use the following quote to initiate discussion.

"...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..."

- As a group, discuss the quote and have students think of a time when they were afraid of something, but should not have been so scared or worried. List the students' responses on the board. Explain that what they just did was make a text-to-self connection. Have students find another area in the first paragraph and repeat the process to make a text-to-self connection.
- Continue working as a group with the same quote. Ask students if they can make a text-to-text connection. Ask if they have ever read anything similar. An example might be any text they may have read after the attacks on 9/11/2001. There were many examples of how the U.S. would not be afraid of terrorists, but would fight to prevent another attack. List students' responses on the board.
- Using the same quote, ask students if they can make a text-to-world connection. An example might be the recent concerns regarding the spread of Ebola in the United States. Have students provide other examples and list those on the board.
- Next, ask students if they can make any logical inferences about the condition of the United States based on the quote about fear. Write the students responses on the board. Examples may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - People throughout the country were afraid because things had been really bad.
 - People had been through a really rough time and were afraid that nothing would ever get better.
 - Roosevelt was trying to calm people down and assure them that things would be better.
 - While things had been bad during the years preceding his election, he was going to help the country work its way back to a strong position.
 - Roosevelt was telling Americans that they could not let fear get in the way of working toward better days.
- Explain that through the process of making text connections, they learned more about the passage that they read and that from this knowledge, they were able to make inferences about what was happening in the United States at the time of Roosevelt's inauguration, more than 80 years ago.

Provide guided practice by having students work in small groups of 3-4 students using the next two paragraphs of the excerpt. Circulate throughout the room as students are working to assist if any group is having difficulty. Have students share their text connections with the rest of the class. Discuss their results in making text connections. Discuss any difficulties they had in making the text connections.

Have students work independently to read and make text connections with the last paragraph of the passage. Have students share their results with the class.

As a final activity, provide students with **Handout C: Making Logical Inferences**. Have students use what they have learned from reading the passage to infer information based on the quote provided in the graphic organizer. Discuss the results with the class.

Debrief by discussing the similarities and differences between the text connections that were made as well as the logical inferences. Ask students to share which of the three types of text connections was the easiest to make and which was the most difficult and why. Have students discuss how close reading and making text connections can help them make logical inferences.

Sample Debriefing Questions

- How did making text connections help you to understand the excerpt?
- Which of the three types of text connections was the most challenging for you? Why?
- How did close reading of the text help you make logical inferences about what the author (President Roosevelt) was trying to tell you?
- How did you like working in groups as a way to build your text connection skills? Was it helpful or not? Why?

Modifications for Different Levels

For students who are at a lower reading level, have them listen to the video clip of the inaugural address while following along with the text. Make the video available to students so they can listen to it again if needed. Since this is a primary source, the text can't be altered for reading level. The idea here is to help students master the strategy even though the text may be at a higher complexity level than is normal. Remember, they are also gaining conceptual knowledge within the area of social studies.

Focus on one type of text connection at a time. You may need to repeat this activity over multiple sessions to enable students to learn how to do this independently. Have students focus first on text-to-self connections. Provide them with specific quotes or portions of the text with which to make the connection. Identify areas with which connections are more obvious. The following are a few examples of quotes and text-to-self connections.

- "This great Nation will endure as it has endured." Ask students if there has ever been a time when they encountered a serious issue and just thought they would never get through that time in their lives. Discuss how the same was true during Roosevelt's time.
- "We face our common difficulties." Ask students if they personally have had a problem to solve and whether or not other people have those same problems. An example might be in finding childcare or transportation to class – problems that are "common" and every day occurrences.
- "A host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence and an equally great number toil with little return." Ask students if they know of someone who lost a job and had to struggle to find a new one, or if they know someone who works multiple low-wage jobs just to get by.

The key is to help students see how text can be related to their own lives. From there, you may wish to go to text-to-world connections as students may be able to make connections based on something they have seen on television or the Internet. The last connection should be text-to-text at which time, you may wish to have students read or listen to two different texts on the same topic and make connections between them. At this level, verbally ask students questions and have them answer orally rather than in writing. Model for students how to use the graphic organizer.

At a higher reading level, provide more complex nonfiction text where the text connections maybe more challenging to find. One example is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter from the Birmingham Jail.

Assessments/Extensions

As an extension of this lesson, have students independently complete the **Making Text Connections** graphic organizer when reading other science or social studies text. Use this activity as a basis for students to summarize the text that they have read and include what a reader may be able to infer from that text.

Handout A: Making Text Connections

<p>Text-to-Self connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this text remind you of? • Does anything in the text remind you of anything in your own life? 	<p>Text-to-Text connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this remind you of in another text you read? • How is this text similar or different from other things you have read? 	<p>Text-to-World connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this remind you of in the real world? • How are things in this text similar or different from things that happen in the real world?
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Passage or Quote from Text	Explain the connection you made to yourself, another text, or the real world.	What kind of connection did you make?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World

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Handout B: Franklin D. Roosevelt: First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933.

The following excerpt is available in an online collection of public government works through the American Presidency Project. Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14473>



President Roosevelt delivers his first inaugural address on March 4, 1933.

I am certain that my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency, I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our Nation impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive, and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values

have shrunk to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone.

More important, a host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence and an equally great number toil with little return. Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment.

Yet our distress comes from no failure of substance. We are stricken by no plague of locusts. Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for. Nature still offers her bounty and human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply. Primarily this is because rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and have abdicated. Practices of unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men.

Handout C: Making Logical Inferences

Quote	Text Connection	Inference
<p>In every dark hour of our national life ...</p>	<p>Make a text-to-world connection</p>	<p>What can you infer from the phrase “dark hour”?</p>
<p>Values have shrunken to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen...</p>	<p>Make a text-to-self connection</p>	<p>What can you infer from the quote regarding the state of the economy in 1933?</p>
<p>...an equally great number toil with little return.</p>	<p>Make a text-to-text connection</p>	<p>Based on the quote, what can you infer about the wages people were making in 1933?</p>
<p>Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have much to be thankful for.</p>	<p>Make a text-to-world connection.</p>	<p>What is the author talking about when he says “perils of our forefathers”?</p>