

Bay City Public Schools Sample Mentor Text to Teach 3-5 Informational Reading and Writing

“By using mentor texts, the reader can virtually position him or herself to sit beside the author and study how the text is constructed and how it communicates. It is a powerful teaching and learning strategy...”

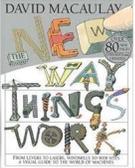
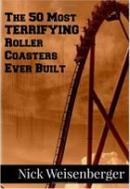
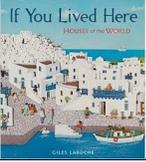
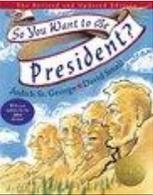
-The Writing Thief, Ruth Culhum

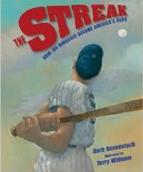
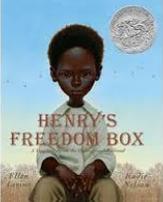
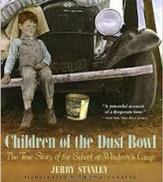
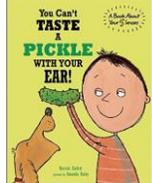
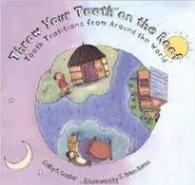


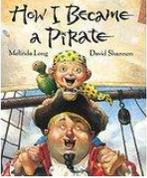
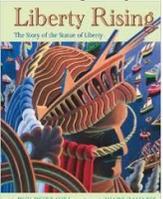
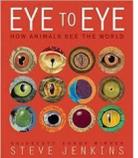
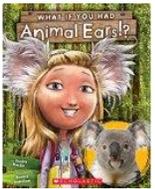
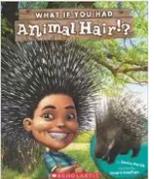
Sample 3rd-5th Grade Writing Informational Mentor Texts

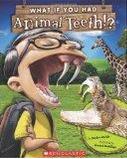
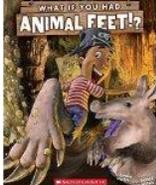
The mentor texts listed below are samples of picture books that could be used in the classroom when teaching students how to write an informative/explanatory piece.

Using a specific set of questions to analyze the craft within a mentor text can open students to new ideas to consider in their own writing. The questions/prompts listed on the following page assists students with comprehension, analyzing and evaluating informative/explanatory pieces as well as developing informative/explanatory writing skills.

| Informational Text | Additional Information |
|---|---|
| <p><i>The New Way Things Work</i> by David MacCaulay</p>  | <p>The information age is upon us, baffling us with thousands of complicated state-of-the-art technologies. To help make sense of the computer age, David Macaulay brings us <i>The New Way Things Work</i>. Each scientific principle is brilliantly explained--with the help of a charming, if rather slow-witted, woolly mammoth.</p> |
| <p><i>The 50 Most Terrifying Roller Coasters Ever Built</i> by Nick Weisenberger</p>  | <p>Mega roller coasters of today reach heights of over 400 feet and speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. Roller coasters towering taller than a certain height are terrifying for many individuals but it would be boring to simply make a list of the world's tallest coasters. As a result, most of the bone-chilling machines in this list do not use sheer height to terrify, but instead prey on our fears and emotions in other, more creative ways.</p> |
| <p><i>If You Lived Here: Houses of the World</i> by Giles Laroche</p>  | <p>Step into unique homes from around the world and discover the many fascinating ways in which people live and have lived.</p> |
| <p><i>So You Want to Be President?</i> by Judith St. George</p>  | <p>Hilariously illustrated by Small, this celebration by St. George shows us the foibles, quirks and humanity of forty-two men who have risen to one of the most powerful positions in the world.</p> |
| <p><i>The Camping Trip that Changed America</i> by Barbara Rosenstock</p>  | <p>Caldecott medalist Mordicai Gerstein captures the majestic redwoods of Yosemite in this little-known but important story from our nation's history. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt joined naturalist John Muir on a trip to Yosemite. Camping by themselves in the uncharted woods, the two men saw sights and held discussions that would ultimately lead to the establishment of our National Parks.</p> |

| Informational Text | Additional Information |
|--|--|
| <p><i>The Streak</i> by Barbara Rosenstock</p>  | <p>In the summer of 1941, Yankee center fielder Joe DiMaggio and his favorite bat, Betsy Ann, begin the longest hitting streak in baseball history. But when Betsy Ann goes missing, will DiMaggio keep hitting? Set on the brink of World War II, this is a spellbinding account of a sports story that united the country and made DiMaggio a hero, at a time when one was profoundly needed.</p> |
| <p><i>Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad</i> by Ellen Levine</p>  | <p>Henry Brown doesn't know how old he is. Nobody keeps records of slaves' birthdays. All the time he dreams about freedom, but that dream seems farther away than ever when he is torn from his family and put to work in a warehouse. Henry grows up and marries, but he is again devastated when his family is sold at the slave market. Then one day, as he lifts a crate at the warehouse, he knows exactly what he must do: He will mail himself to the North.</p> |
| <p><i>Mr. Ferris and His Wheel</i> by Kathryn Gibbs Davis</p>  | <p>Capturing an engineer's creative vision and mind for detail, this fully illustrated picture book biography sheds light on how the American inventor George Ferris defied gravity and seemingly impossible odds to invent the world's most iconic amusement park attraction, the Ferris wheel.</p> |
| <p><i>Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp</i> by Jerry Stanley</p>  | <p>This true story took place at the emergency farm-labor camp immortalized in Steinbeck's <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>. Ostracized as "dumb Okies," the children of Dust Bowl migrant laborers went without school--until Superintendent Leo Hart and 50 Okie kids built their own school in a nearby field.</p> |
| <p><i>You Can't Taste a Pickle with your Ear</i> By Harriet Ziefert</p>  | <p>In <i>You Can't Take a Pickle with Your Ear</i> kids discover how each of their five senses is hard at work all day long, providing them with information and helping them get the most out of their daily lives.</p> |
| <p><i>Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions From Around the World</i> by Selby Beeler</p>  | <p>What do you do when you lose a tooth? Do you put it under your pillow and wait for the tooth fairy? Not if you live in Botswana! In Botswana, children throw their teeth onto the roof. In Afghanistan they drop their teeth down mouse holes, and in Egypt they fling their teeth at the sun! Travel around the world and discover the surprising things children do when they lose a tooth.</p> |

| Informational Text | Additional Information |
|---|---|
| <p><i>I Feel Better With a Frog in My Throat</i> by Carlyn Beccia</p>  | <p>It wasn't too long ago that people tried all sorts of things to help sick people feel better. They tried wild things like drinking a glass full of millipedes or putting some mustard on one's head. Some of the cures worked, and some of them...well, let's just say that millipedes, living or dead, are not meant to be ingested.</p> |
| <p><i>How I Became a Pirate</i> by Melinda Long</p>  | <p><i>Pirates have green teeth—when they have any teeth at all. I know about pirates, because one day, when I was at the beach building a sand castle and minding my own business, a pirate ship sailed into view.</i></p> <p>So proclaims Jeremy Jacob, a boy who joins Captain Braid Beard and his crew in this witty look at the finer points of pirate life.</p> |
| <p><i>Liberty Rising: The Story of the Statue of Liberty</i> by Pegi Deitz Shea</p>  | <p>The Statue of Liberty stands as a powerful symbol of freedom to all. But what is her story? How did she come to be? From conception to construction, each element of the Statue of Liberty has a fascinating story of its own: a face bearing the likeness of the creator's mother; a hand and a torch traveling alone to America; seventy train cars packed with pieces.</p> |
| <p><i>Eye to Eye: How Animals See the World</i> by Steve Jenkins</p>  | <p>Steve Jenkins explains how for most animals, eyes are the most important source of information about the world in a biological sense. The simplest eyes—clusters of light sensitive cells—appeared more than one billion years ago, and provided a big survival advantage to the first creatures that had them. Since then, animals have evolved an amazing variety of eyes, along with often surprising ways to use them.</p> |
| <p><i>What if You Had Animal Ears!?</i> by Sandra Markle</p>  | <p>What if you woke up one morning and your ears weren't yours? What If You Had Animal Ears explores what would happen if you looked in the mirror and saw an animal's ears instead of your own! This book, explores incredible ears from the animal kingdom. From the elephant's tremendous ears to the jack rabbit's mood ears, discover what it would be like if you had these special ears--and find out why your ears are just the right ones for you!</p> |
| <p><i>What if You Had Animal Hair!?</i> by Sandra Markle</p>  | <p>If you had a polar bear's double coat, you would never have to wear a hat when playing in the snow. If you had reindeer hair, it could help you stay afloat in water. And if you had a porcupine's hair, no bully would ever bother you again!</p> |

| Informational Text | Additional Information |
|---|---|
| <p><i>What if You Had Animal Teeth!?</i> by Sandra Markle</p>  | <p>WHAT IF YOU HAD ANIMAL TEETH? takes children on a fun, informative, and imaginative journey as they explore what it would be like if their own front teeth were replaced by those of a different animal. This book explores how different teeth are especially adapted for an animal's survival. At the end of the book, children will discover why their own teeth are just right for them.</p> |
| <p><i>What if You Had Animal Feet!?</i> By Sandra Markle</p>  | <p>WHAT IF YOU HAD ANIMAL FEET? will teach kids about the amazing variety of feet in the animal kingdom and their specialty functions! From cheetahs' fast feet to mountain goats' nimble climbing hooves, to flies' sticky feet!</p> |

Sample 3rd-5th Informative/Explanatory Mentor Text Questions

Check grade level reading/writing standards when choosing which questions/prompts to address. Create additional prompts/questions based on the standards for your grade level.

To answer the questions or address the prompts, students should use evidence from the text to support their answers. This can be done by drawing, writing, or orally responding.

Illustrations

- Did the author include illustration with the book? Who is the illustrator?
- What kinds of illustrations were included? (diagrams, photos, maps, charts, graphs, tables)
- Did the illustrations help to understand the text better? Why or why not?
- Were labels and captions used? If so, did they help to understand the information better? Why or why not?

Text Structure

- Did you use the table of contents or the index? For what? Was the information located quickly?
- Are there headings and subheadings in this text? Did they help you “see” how information is presented?
- What is the topic of this piece/section/page? Is it easy to locate?
- Are there other ways information is presented in the book, chapter, or passage?
Examples include:
 - Information is chronologically ordered
 - Information is listed
 - Information is shown in comparison or contrasted
 - Information is written in cause and effect relationship
 - Information is narrated as a problem and solution
 - Information is presented as a main idea or topic and then has ideas with supporting details
- How does the author introduce the topic? What techniques does the author use to hook the reader?
- How does the author develop the topic? (With facts, definitions, details, questions or other information and examples?)
- How did the author close the piece, section, or book?

Content

- What does the author teach about the topic? Do we have questions?
- What topic(s) does this book or chapter describe?
- Is the information easy to understand? Why or why not?
- What facts were easiest to learn about? Why?
- What else would you like to know about this topic? How can you find it?
- Was the title misleading? Did you expect to discover information that wasn't there?
- Did the book/chapter/passage give you enough information? If not, what else do you need to know?
- What vocabulary is important within this piece? What is provided to help determine the definitions?
- What linking words are used to create clarity and flow? Are there places in which the sequence is not clear?

- Does this book provide recent information? Is there a better source of information?
- What qualifies the author to write this information? What kind of research did that author have to do to write the text?

Style

- Do you understand what the author is saying? What information is the easiest/hardest to understand? Why?
- What could the author have done to make the information easier to understand?
- Would this book or information be different if it were written 10 years ago? Why?
- By reading, did you discover anything that could help you outside of school?
- Was the information well organized? Give an example of why or why not.
- Is the information told straight to you or is it in story form?

Resource questions were adapted from:

Boyles, N. (2004). *Constructing meaning: Through kid friendly comprehension strategy instruction*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House.

Owocki, G. (2013). *The Common Core writing book, K-5: Lessons for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Text Structures Anchor Chart Example:

| Informational Text Structures | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--------|--|
| Structure | Defined | Clues | Visual | Example |
| Description | Text provides details or characteristics of something. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjectives • Characteristics • Examples • Mental Image | | Ice cream is a frozen, sugary sweet delicacy. The treat comes in flavors like vanilla. |
| Compare + Contrast | The text talks about similarities and differences between people, places, things, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same/Different • Both, neither • In contrast • On the other hand | | Although both ice cream and veggies are food, ice cream is less healthy and eaten as dessert. Veggies, however, are a side dish to a meal. |
| Order + Sequence | The text outlines chronological events or a list of steps in a procedure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of events • History • Instructions • Steps • Signal Words | | Want delicious ice cream? First, scoop it into a bowl. Then, top it with goodies like sprinkles. Finally, grab a spoon and enjoy! |
| Problem + Solution | The text gives information about a problem and explains one or more solutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem • Solution | | If your ice cream melts before you finish it, put it back into the freezer. |
| Cause + Effect | The text describes an event (cause) and the effects that follow. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause • Effect • if/then • because • as a result • due to | | If melted ice cream gets on your hand, your skin will be sticky. |