



Strategies for Author's Viewpoint

to support comprehension in nonfiction

Taken from *The Reading Strategies Book* by Jennifer Serravallo

8.12 Track Down Opinion Clues in Solutions

Strategy If the text is written in a problem-solution structure, first identify the problem the author presents. Then, notice what solution the author offers. Think, "How is this solution different from other possible solutions? What does it seem the author is arguing for?"

Lesson Language In the Time for Kids article "Cleaning Up After Isaac" (2012), the author first presents the problem: Hurricane Isaac left a big mess in the gulf region and caused an estimated \$1.5 million in damages. The solutions he presents are that both presidential candidates visited the area and offered help, utility crews worked over labor day weekend to fix power lines, and work crews worked to clean up the mess and get rid of large dead rodents that washed up during the storm. He concludes the article saying that life was pretty much back to normal by September 1. If I look at the solutions presented, I might say the main idea is, "In times of trouble, others should come to offer help." Looking for the solution might help you find the author's argument, too. I think in this example the author believes that help is important in disasters like Hurricane Isaac.

Prompts

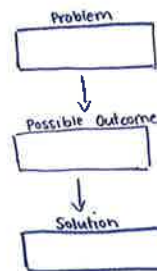
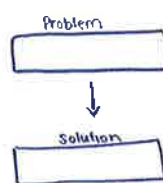
- Identify the problem.
- Where will you look to read about the solution the author proposes?
- Now that you know the solution, say what this section is mostly about.
- Think about what the author is arguing for.

PROBLEM/SOLUTION

Key words:
(signal words)

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| problem | suggests |
| dilemma | solution |
| if/then | proposes |
| so that | |
| because | |
| question/answer | |
| answer | |

graphic organizer:



Who is this for?

LEVELS

M and above

GENRE / TEXT TYPE

expository nonfiction

SKILLS

**determining
importance,
synthesizing**



Hat Tip: Inside Information: Developing Powerful Readers and Writers of Informational Text Through Project-Based Instruction (Duke 2014)

8.13 Opinion-Reasons-Evidence

Who is this for?

LEVELS

M and above

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expository nonfiction

SKILLS

determining
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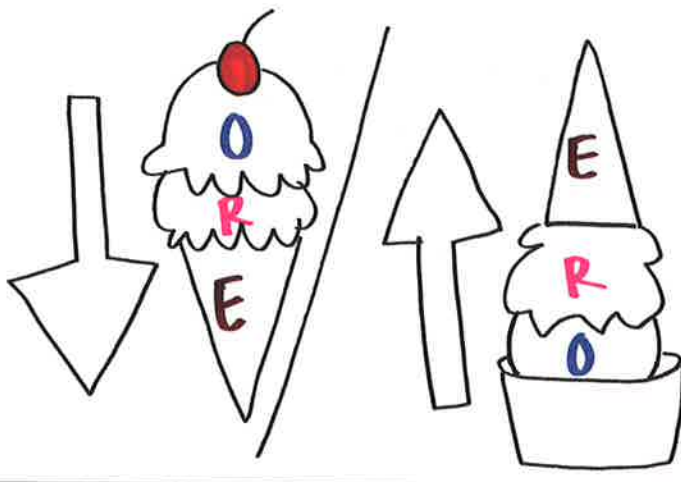
Strategy Notice how the text is organized. Think, “Does the author state an opinion then back it up, or does the author give details then conclude with an opinion?” Knowing the structure will help you find the main idea.

Lesson Language Pay attention to the three levels or layers of information that are presented. By working up from evidence to reasons to opinion, you can figure out the main idea. Or, if the opinion is clear, you can find the reasons that support the opinion, and the evidence that backs up the reasons. Depending on how the text is organized, it may make sense to build up to an idea or opinion, or to back up the opinion with the information.

Prompts

- What’s the author’s opinion?
- What reasons support the opinion?
- What evidence backs up the reasons?
- Summarize the information you learned in this section.
- Now that you know all the facts, add them up to conclude the reason.
- That opinion is backed up by the facts.

Are You Paying Attention...
To Layers of Information?



Hat Tip: *Inside Information: Developing Powerful Readers and Writers of Informational Text Through Project-Based Instruction* (Duke 2014)

8.20 Determining Author's Purpose, Point of View

Who is this for?

LEVELS

0 and above

GENRE / TEXT TYPE

nonfiction

SKILL

determining importance



Hat Tip: *Comprehension Through Conversation: The Power of Purposeful Talk in the Reading Workshop* (Nichols 2006)

Strategy Be aware of the author's reason for writing and any potential bias that comes from that. First, learn about who the author is (from an author bio included in the book). Then, consider what stake the author has in the topic based on his or her background. As you read, consider what facts are being included and what is being excluded. Consider if there are any "opinion words" being used alongside the factual information.

Lesson Language *The book Face to Face with Whales by Flip and Linda Nicklin (2008) at first glance looks to be a straightforward book about whales—there are photographs, lots of facts. But I wonder if the authors have a certain perspective on the issue that will shape the kinds of information they include? One look at their bio tells us that they live in Alaska and Hawaii, two places good for viewing whales. OK, good, that helps to make them experts on the topic. I also see they've written four other books about the subject. Again, all signs point to expert. At the end of the bio, it says, "He is active with Whale Trust, a conservation and research organization." If I thought about that, what kind of person would join the Whale Trust and what kind of slant might they have on the topic? I think someone who loves the creatures and wants to do all they can to protect them. Let's look inside to see if there are any opinion words that go along with that idea. I see on page 5: "I've been lucky to spend my life with whales" and excited on the next page: "They are better swimmers than we are" and thrilling. The author is clearly excluding any details that would make you feel terrified of these large creatures and is including details and opinion words to lead you to believe they are beautiful, fascinating creatures, a perspective that goes along with his bio!*

Prompts

- What do you know about the author?
- What does the author's background tell you about any potential bias?
- Think about the facts in the book. Why do you think the author included what he or she did?
- Do you see any opinion word?
- What's the slant?
- Which facts go with that slant?



Opinion Words to Watch Out For:

Fair/unfair

Right/wrong

Brave/coward

Deserves

Should

Cause/fault/responsible

amazing/terrifying

Ought to


Good/Bad

8.21 What's the Perspective on the Topic?

Strategy Read the title and identify the topic. Read the first and last paragraph. Think: What is the author's perspective? What is the author saying? Read the entire article (or book), collecting facts and details that connect with the main idea. Revise your main idea statement if needed.


Prompts


- What do you think the author's perspective on the topic is?
- How do you know?
- What words give you a hint about the perspective?
- Read the first paragraph.
- Think about all of the details so far.
- That's the topic, tell an idea about topic.
- I like how you revised the main idea when you jotted new information.
- Yes, that detail fits with the main idea.

 What's the Perspective?

Find Out:

1. Read the title and identify the topic 

2. Read the first and last paragraph 

3. Think, "What's the author saying?" 

4. Read, collect, connect 

Who is this for?

LEVELS

0 and above

GENRE / TEXT TYPE

nonfiction

SKILL

determining
importance