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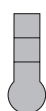
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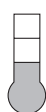


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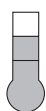
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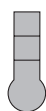
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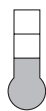


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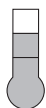
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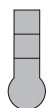
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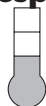


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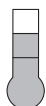
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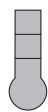
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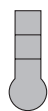
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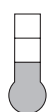


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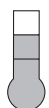
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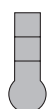
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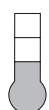


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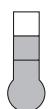
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SECTION I

Getting It Right from the Start

Every truth has four corners. As a teacher, I give you one corner; it is for you as the learner to find the other three.

—Confucius

The ability to comprehend and respond to written material plays an increasingly important role in students' success as they progress through primary school. As early as grade three or four, students must move from reading stories almost exclusively to dealing with the challenges of reading expository, or nonfictional, text with little or no formal training on how to adapt to the different format. One method teachers can use to ease the transition from narration to exposition is to use pre-reading activities with both types of text.

Pre-reading activities stimulate student interest and improve reading comprehension. In the primary pre-reading technique, previewing, students examine the 'extratextual' aspects of written material, such as chapter titles and illustrations, before they begin reading for clues to the content of the text. When they preview fictional texts regularly, students can easily expand the previewing techniques to encompass the elements of nonfiction such as headings, topic sentences, sidebars, charts, graphs, review questions, and highlighted vocabulary words.

In addition to previewing, other pre-reading activities such as teacher-created 'pre-tests' at the onset of a unit of study expose a picture of student prior knowledge of a particular topic. This picture is vital as reading comprehension depends on a meaningful interaction between the author's message and the reader's prior knowledge of the topic and of language in general. Through oral or

written feedback, teachers learn students' interest in and previous experience with new concepts and can plan the depth and direction that instruction must take to meet student needs most effectively.

On a less formal scale, class discussion before students read a work of either fiction or nonfiction also helps teachers determine student level of understanding of concepts that will appear in the text for that unit. Class discussion also stimulates interest in the subject and gives teachers planning group activities an idea of how to group students based on their prior knowledge.

The primary focus of this section is to provide pre-reading activities that get students thinking before actual reading takes place. When preparing pre-reading activities, keep the following guidelines in mind.



Guidelines for Developing Pre-reading Activities

- Ask the students questions before they begin reading that help them focus on what they will read. See activities 2, 3, 7, 14, and 20 for sample pre-reading questions.
- Point out headings, illustrations, sidebars, and other features outside of the text that give clues to content and can enhance students' understanding of the text.
- Determine students' prior knowledge of a subject through class discussion or individual, written responses to a pre-test before they begin reading. See activities 15, 16, 17, 21, and 22.