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Introduction

If you are like most teachers, your classroom includes a wide variety of students: average students, English language learners, gifted students and learning disabled students. You may be expected to get your diverse student population, including special education students and those for whom English is a second language, to master year-level, content-area material. That's a challenging task and one that requires year-level, content-area materials written at several levels. *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* was written specifically to help you respond to the demands of your local standards while meeting the needs of your students.

Purpose of This Book

Each passage in *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* covers a year-level appropriate curriculum topic in science, geography, history or English. The Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) standard and benchmark related to each passage is listed on pages 10–13.

Each content-area passage is written at three different levels: easy (below year level), average (at year level) and challenging (above year level). After each passage is a set of comprehension questions that all of your students will answer. This enables your students to access the text and concepts at their instructional—rather than frustration—level, while requiring them to meet objective standards, just as they must do on standardised assessments.

Prepare Your Students to Read Content-Area Text

You can prepare your students to read the passages in *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* by daily reading aloud a short nonfiction selection from another source. Reading content-area text aloud is critical to developing your students' ability to read it themselves.




Discussing content-area concepts with your class is also very important. Remember, however, that discussion can never replace reading aloud since people do not speak using the vocabulary and complex sentence structures of written language.

Readability

All of the passages in *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* have a reading level that has been calculated by the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula determines a text's readability by calculating the number of words, syllables and sentences.

Each passage is presented at three levels: easy, average and challenging. *Easy* is below year level; *average* is at year level; and *challenging* is above year level.

To ensure that only you know the reading level at which each student is working, the levels are not printed on the passages. Instead, at the top of the page is a set of books with a specific pattern that will allow you to quickly match students and passages.

Pattern			
Reading Level	easy (below year level)	average (at year level)	challenging (above year level)

Introduction *(cont.)*

Essential Comprehension Skills

Comprehension is the primary goal of any reading task. Students who comprehend expository text not only do better on tests, but they also have more opportunities in life. *Differentiated Nonfiction Reading* will help you to promote the foundation of comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning. The questions following each passage always appear in the same order and cover six vital comprehension skills:

1. **Locating facts**—Questions based on exactly what the text states—*who, what, when, where, why and how many*
2. **Understanding vocabulary in context**—Questions based on the ability to infer word meaning from the syntax and semantics of the surrounding text, as well as the ability to recognise known synonyms and antonyms for a newly encountered word
3. **Determining sequence**—Questions based on chronological order—what happened *first, last* and *in between*
4. **Identifying conditions**—Questions that ask students to identify similarities and differences or notice cause-and-effect relationships
5. **Making inferences**—Questions that require students to evaluate, to make decisions and to draw logical conclusions
6. **Analysing and visualising**—Questions that make students draw upon their schema and/or visualisation skills to select the correct response (Visualisation reinforces the important skill of picturing the text.)

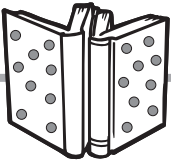
How to Use This Book

You can choose to do whole-class or independent practice. For whole-group practice, you can:

1. Distribute the passages based on students' instructional reading levels.
2. Have students read the text silently and answer the questions either on the comprehension questions page or on one of the Answer Sheets.
3. Collect all of the work and score it.
4. Return the comprehension questions pages or Answer Sheets to the students, and discuss how they determined their answers.
5. Point out how students had to use their background knowledge to answer certain questions.

You may distribute the passages without **revealing the different levels**. There are several ways to approach this. If you do not want your students to be aware that the passages are differentiated, organise the passages in small piles **by arrangement**. Then, when you approach a group of desks, you have just the levels you need. An alternative is to make a pile of passages from diamonds to polka dots. Put a finger between the top two levels. Then, as you approach each student, pull the passage from the top (easy), middle (average) or bottom (challenging) layer. You will need to do this quickly and without much hesitation.

You can also announce to your class that all students will read at their own instructional levels. Do not discuss the technicalities of how the reading levels were determined. Just state that every person is reading at their own level and then answering the same questions. By making this statement, you can make distributing the three different levels a straightforward process.



Julia Gillard, 27th Prime Minister of Australia



Julia Gillard was born in 1961. She lived in Barry, a small town in Wales. Julia was a sick child. Doctors told her parents to take her somewhere warmer. The Gillard family **immigrated** to Australia in 1966. They lived in Adelaide.

Julia was smart. She did well at school. She was a school prefect, or leader. She was very good at debating. Her first job was peeling vegetables and serving meals. It was at the aged-care home where her mother worked.

Julia went to university in Adelaide, where she studied law. But she cut short her study to move to Melbourne. She wanted to work with the Australian Union of Students. This was a group that helped students put their views across. It was Julia's first taste of politics.

She finished her study. Julia became a lawyer. At the same time she joined the Labor party. She tried to get fair treatment for workers. She worked for this as a lawyer and as a Labor member.

In 1998 Julia won the seat of Lalor at the election. Julia was talented. Labor were not in power. But Julia became the Shadow Minister for many important jobs. A Shadow Minister is a politician with special responsibility for one area. They are matched to a Minister in government. This means they debate issues with the government as an expert. This is important in our democracy. It means ideas are challenged by people who know about them.

In 2006 Julia became the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party. The leader was Kevin Rudd. Labor had been out of power for more than ten years. But under Rudd and Gillard they were doing very well. In 2007 Australia elected a new government. Kevin Rudd was now the Prime Minister of Australia. And Julia Gillard was Australia's first female Deputy Prime Minister!

Julia did good work in the Rudd government and was liked by her colleagues, or other members of the party. In 2010 something happened that had never happened before in Australian politics. Just months before an election the Labor Party decided to get rid of Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister. This had never happened to a Prime Minister during his first term before. Kevin had been very popular. Now he was losing support. A strong challenger decided to stand up and put themselves forward as a choice for Prime Minister. It was Julia Gillard.

Julia Gillard became Prime Minister of Australia on 23 June 2010. She was the country's first female Prime Minister. She was also the first Prime Minister not to be married. One of the first things she did was to call an election. She wanted the Australian people to decide whether she should be Prime Minister or not.

The 2010 election was very close. It took weeks to find out who the next government would be. People held their breaths. No party had enough seats to win by themselves. But, in the end, Julia Gillard was still Prime Minister after it.



Julia Gillard, 27th Prime Minister of Australia

Directions: Darken the best answer choice.

1. In her role as Shadow Minister, Julia Gillard
 - (A) took on a Government Minister in their area.
 - (B) created new international laws.
 - (C) took over as leader from Kevin Rudd.
 - (D) was the first woman to ever be a Shadow Minister.

2. The word **immigrated** means
 - (A) stayed home.
 - (B) got healthier.
 - (C) moved to a new country.
 - (D) broke up.

3. What happened first?
 - (A) Kevin Rudd stopped being Prime Minister.
 - (B) Julia Gillard won the seat of Lalor.
 - (C) Julia Gillard became the first woman to be Prime Minister.
 - (D) Julia Gillard worked in an aged-care home.

4. Julia Gillard was the first woman to
 - (A) be Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister.
 - (B) win a seat at an election.
 - (C) decide to join the Labor party.
 - (D) choose not to get married.

5. Think about Gillard becoming prime minister. You can tell that she
 - (A) would have supported Kevin Rudd.
 - (B) was more popular in her party than Kevin Rudd.
 - (C) was not liked by anyone.
 - (D) stood out because of her red hair.

6. When Julia Gillard was growing up, she
 - (A) came to Australia from Wales.
 - (B) wanted to be Prime Minister.
 - (C) became a lawyer.
 - (D) was the first female member of her family.