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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 example 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.

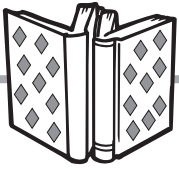
Readability

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)



The Curse of the Socceroos

Do you know what a curse is? The Socceroos do. If you believe some people, the Australian national soccer team was under a curse for nearly thirty-five years. The players and coaches felt unlucky. They couldn't seem to have any success, no matter how hard they tried.

It all started in 1969. The Australian team was trying to qualify for the 1970 Soccer World Cup. The team had just lost a match. Now they had to face Rhodesia (called Zimbabwe today) in Mozambique. If they didn't win this match the Australians would be out of the competition. The stakes were high and some of the players resorted to desperate measures.

A few of the players had heard about a **witchdoctor** in Mozambique. They believed he could help them by putting a curse on the Rhodesian team. The Australians were desperate enough to try anything. They got the witchdoctor to place the curse. This was a complicated ceremony. At the end of it he buried some animal bones at one of the goalposts on the ground where the two teams would play.

Did the curse work? Most people would say that curses don't work. All the Australians could go by were the results. In their game against Mozambique they won 3-1. The team were ecstatic. The witchdoctor asked the team for \$1000 for his services.

This is when things hit a snag. The team didn't have \$1000. They couldn't pay the witchdoctor. He was furious. He warned that unless they came up with the money, he'd reverse the curse and put it on Australian soccer. The team left the country without paying him. And the witchdoctor went ahead and did just that.

The national team qualified for the 1974 World Cup. But they didn't manage to score a single goal in any of the three matches they played. The team didn't qualify for a World Cup competition again for thirty years.

In 2004, an Australian comedian named John Safran travelled to Mozambique. He had the curse lifted. The original witchdoctor had died. But he got another witchdoctor to try and talk to his spirit. They paid the debt the team owed. The witchdoctor sacrificed a chicken. He put the blood on Safran while they sat in the middle of the soccer pitch the two teams played on. When he returned to Australia Safran had to do a smaller ritual. He did this at Telstra Stadium in Sydney. Safran had to wash himself with some clay given to him by the witchdoctor.

Did lifting the curse work? Are curses real? Was the whole thing a superstition used to explain why the Socceroos were playing badly and suffering bad luck? We can't be sure. What we can be sure of is that one year after Safran worked to have the curse lifted, Australia qualified for the 2006 World Cup.





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A few of the players had heard about a **witchdoctor** in Mozambique who they believed could help them by putting a curse on the Rhodesian team. The Australians were desperate enough to try anything, so they got the witchdoctor to place the curse. This was a complicated ceremony, at the end of which he buried some animal bones at one of the goalposts on the ground where the two teams would play.

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This is when things hit a snag. The team didn't have \$1000 and couldn't pay the witchdoctor. He was furious, and warned that unless they came up with the money he'd reverse the curse and put it on Australian soccer. The team left the country without paying him, and so the outraged witchdoctor went ahead and did just that.

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The Curse of the Socceroos

Directions: Darken the best answer choice.

1. The Australian team's relationship with "curses" started
 - (A) in the 1974 World Cup.
 - (B) when John Safran became involved.
 - (C) in 1969, when they were trying to qualify for the 1970 World Cup.
 - (D) when they were beaten by Rhodesia.

2. The word **witchdoctor** means
 - (A) a doctor for witches.
 - (B) a bad doctor.
 - (C) a soccer expert.
 - (D) an African medicine man dealing with magic and the supernatural.

3. Which event happened second?
 - (A) Australia beat Rhodesia 3-1.
 - (B) The Australian team got a witchdoctor to put a curse on the Rhodesian team.
 - (C) The Australian team left Mozambique without paying the witchdoctor.
 - (D) The team didn't score a single goal in three matches.

4. What happened after the Australian team beat Rhodesia?
 - (A) The Rhodesian team put a curse on the Australians.
 - (B) The Australian team started losing every match they played.
 - (C) The Australian team continued to do well at World Cups.
 - (D) The Australians didn't pay the witchdoctor the money he wanted for placing the curse.

5. Apart from it being funny, why did the comedian John Safran attempt to break the curse?
 - (A) He was excited at getting to go to Telstra Stadium.
 - (B) He wanted the Australian team to play in a World Cup again.
 - (C) He was tired of the Australian team's successes.
 - (D) He felt the team really shouldn't have tried to curse Rhodesia.

6. Which statement is more likely?
 - (A) The Australian team qualified for the 2006 World Cup because they were a good team.
 - (B) The Australian team qualified for the 2006 World Cup because the curse was lifted.
 - (C) The Australian team qualified for the 2006 World Cup by cursing all the other teams.
 - (D) The Australian team will never win a World Cup until they start placing new curses.