Why Use This Book?

Greetings, colleagues.

Welcome, teachers of science, social studies, language arts, math, art, world languages, business, technology, shop, music, PE, and every other subject we teach in middle and high school.

These days, we are all expected to be "teachers of reading," no matter what our subject field, our college major, or our level of training in reading, right? There's pressure on us from our departments and principals, from our school districts, from the state and national standards, and especially from all those high-stakes tests. Everyone wants us "content-area" teachers to make sure that kids can read, understand, remember, and apply the subject matter in all of our disciplines.

And where is all that disciplinary knowledge stored? In *nonfiction texts*: reference books, textbooks, primary sources, charts, web pages, images, formulas, transcripts, and many other types of documents and data. So we are expected to give our kids tools for comprehending the whole range of informational, persuasive, procedural, and narrative documents that make up our disciplines. It's like we're supposed to issue every kid an "All-Access Pass" to the Body of Knowledge.

But our plates are already full. We have tons of content to teach if kids are going to pass those tests. We're already using every minute we have, every day. And weren't our students supposed learn how to read in elementary school anyway? You can't expect us to digress from our curricular duties to teach reading comprehension now. Can you?

But wait. This task doesn't have to be as hard or as time-consuming as it sounds. In this book, we'll show how to make your kids into much better readers in your subject field, using quick and engaging activities that add to, rather than steal from, subject-matter learning. We'll give you all the tools you need to work this magic: great short articles; explicit, step-by-step lessons; and real-life examples of kids and teachers at work. And in a minute, we'll show why we teachers also benefit big-time when we make this effort.

First, though, let's jump into some classrooms and see what these lessons look like with kids.

From Harvey (AKA "Smokey"), at Salazar School, Santa Fe, New Mexico

It's a crisp January day in New Mexico, and I am happily teaching sixth grade in Joyce Sanchez's classroom. Joyce's kids are a typical assortment of middle school readers—many are recent immigrants from Mexico, a smaller number are *Hispanos* (whose families came from Spain generations ago), and there's a sprinkling of Anglo kids. Some students are powerful readers, with homes full of books and relatives who love to read. Others struggle with text, or haven't spent much time in print-rich environments. Others are just learning English. The school, on the south side of town, is 100 percent free and reduced lunch.

Today, the kids and I are reading, writing, and talking about manure.

What?

The middle school curriculum in New Mexico calls for kids to learn about nutrition, digestion, and food production and distribution. Now, a traditional way to launch this unit might be for the teacher to give a lecture about the food chain, or have kids read the appropriate textbook chapter. But I'm worried that those approaches won't hook the kids—won't get them engaged and eager to delve into the science, economics, and sociology of food production. In fact, good-hearted as they generally are, I can easily envision many kids "checking out" for this unit—faces down on their desks, hoods pulled over their heads, surreptitiously using their banned cell phones to text friends across town.

Nope, to have any hope of the kids investing fully in this subject matter, I have to first evoke their curiosity, activate their prior knowledge (including their misconceptions), and get them interested in the topic. Engaging the kids can't wait. By the time we move into the "meat" of the unit, students need to be pursuing their own inquiry questions. Not the kind that you answer at the end of the chapter, but the questions that skillful readers have in their heads *while they are reading*: "What's going on here? Does this make sense? What are the key points? Where's the evidence? Why does this matter? Who is this author, anyway? How does this all fit together? What does this mean to me?"

To get to that instructionally propitious place, I'm going to pander a little bit this morning. As Ivey and Broaddus showed in their 2007 study, the best way to get middle-level kids (especially ELLs) engaged in a subject is to reach into the required content, pull out whatever is most fascinating, puzzling, or provocative to students, and begin with that. Forget about the regular sequence; if we wait for the fun stuff that might pop up later, the kids will already have jumped ship. So instead, we begin with a stunning fact, a mystery, or some healthy disequilibrium.

Today, I toss the kids a question: "Does anybody know what a CAFO is?" I project the acronym on the screen. Kids gaze at each other and then back at me with looks that say, "Huh?"

"CAFOs are where a lot of our food comes from," I add, but puzzlement still prevails. Now I project and read aloud this definition, while also showing a picture of some milking cows in a feed lot.

> **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations** (CAFOs) are agricultural operations where animals are kept and raised in confined situations. CAFOs congregate animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area. Feed is brought to the animals rather than the animals grazing or otherwise seeking feed in pastures, fields, or on rangeland.
>
> —U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2010

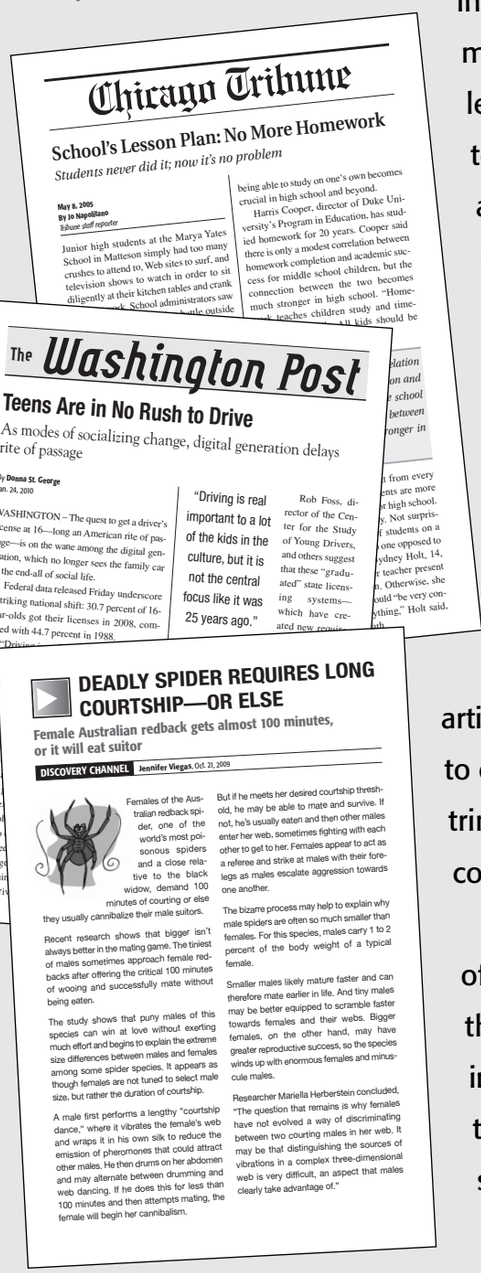
We spend a few minutes clarifying the definition. The kids are shocked by the fact that dead animals can be part of a CAFO setting, not to mention the excretory by-products. Jose says his family keeps chickens at home, and we discuss whether this constitutes a CAFO. Since the hens peck freely around the yard, we decide not. Sky wonders aloud, "How many stomachs do cows really have?" so I google it on the spot. The answer is one stomach with four sections; then we talk about regurgitation for a few minutes. Now I have the kids' full, slightly perplexed attention. "Today," I declare, "we're going to learn about one way that our food is produced in America—in CAFOs, places that most of us have never even heard about."

To start the kids reading about this topic, I've brought along some "one-page wonders"—short, quirky nonfiction articles that engage kids while providing a platform for practice in reading and collaboration. Specifically, I'll offer a five-part article from *Rolling Stone* magazine about the dangerous and nonfragrant outcomes of large-scale pork production (see "Boss Hog" on pages 186–190). What I am going to do today is invest one class period in getting kids so fascinated with meat production that they'll be eager to learn more as the whole unit unfolds.

To structure kids' reading, writing, talking, and thinking, I will draw on some key comprehension and discussion strategies that Joyce taught earlier in the year. These students already know how to leave "tracks of their thinking" in an article, using *text annotation* (see page 41). They've also learned how to have four-member *jigsawed discussions* in which they discuss different articles about the same topic (see page 137). I've edited today's choices so there are both harder and easier selections; I want to make sure that every kid can find an article he or she *can* read and *wants to* read.

Now each student chooses one article and begins to read and annotate, while I circulate and observe. Most kids read silently. At one table, four kids take turns softly reading aloud to each other, one paragraph at a time, stopping to annotate in between. A pair—one English language learner and a bilingual classmate—have sat down together so the new arrival can hear the article read aloud and translated. Kids configure themselves to read however works best for them.

What is a one-page wonder?



Chicago Tribune

School's Lesson Plan: No More Homework

Students never did it; now it's no problem

May 8, 2005
By Jo Napolitano
Tribune staff reporter

Junior high students at the Marya Yates School in Matteson simply had too many crushes to attend to, Web sites to surf, and television shows to watch in order to sit diligently at their kitchen tables and cram

being able to study on one's own becomes crucial in high school and beyond.

Harris Cooper, director of Duke University's Program in Education, has studied homework for 20 years. Cooper said there is only a modest correlation between homework completion and academic success for middle school children, but the connection between the two becomes much stronger in high school. "Homework teaches children study and time-

The Washington Post

Teens Are in No Rush to Drive

As modes of socializing change, digital generation delays rite of passage

By Donna St. George
Jan. 24, 2010

WASHINGTON – The quest to get a driver's license at 16—long an American rite of passage—is on the wane among the digital generation, which no longer sees the family car as the end-all of social life.

Federal data released Friday underscore a striking national shift: 30.7 percent of 16-year-olds got their licenses in 2008, compared with 44.7 percent in 1988.

"Driving is real important to a lot of the kids in the culture, but it is not the central focus like it was 25 years ago."

Rob Foss, director of the Center for the Study of Young Drivers, and others suggest that these "graduated" state licensing systems—which have cre-

DEADLY SPIDER REQUIRES LONG COURTSHIP—OR ELSE

Female Australian redback gets almost 100 minutes, or it will eat suitor

DISCOVERY CHANNEL Jennifer Viegas, Oct. 21, 2009

Females of the Australian redback spider, one of the world's most poisonous spiders and a close relative to the black widow, demand 100 minutes of courting or else they usually cannibalize their male suitors.

Recent research shows that bigger isn't always better in the mating game. The tiniest of males sometimes approach female redbacks after offering the critical 100 minutes of wooing and successfully mate without being eaten.

The study shows that puny males of this species can win at love without exerting much effort and begins to explain the extreme size differences between males and females among some spider species. It appears as though females are not tuned to select male size, but rather the duration of courtship.

A male first performs a lengthy "courtship dance," where it vibrates the female's web and wraps it in his own silk to reduce the emission of pheromones that could attract other males. He then drums on her abdomen and may alternate between drumming and web dancing. If he does this for less than 100 minutes and then attempts mating, the female will begin her cannibalism.

But if he meets her desired courtship threshold, he may be able to mate and survive. If not, he's usually eaten and then other males enter her web, sometimes fighting with each other to get to her. Females appear to act as a referee and strike at males with their forelegs as males escalate aggression towards one another.

The bizarre process may help to explain why male spiders are often so much smaller than females. For this species, males carry 1 to 2 percent of the body weight of a typical female.

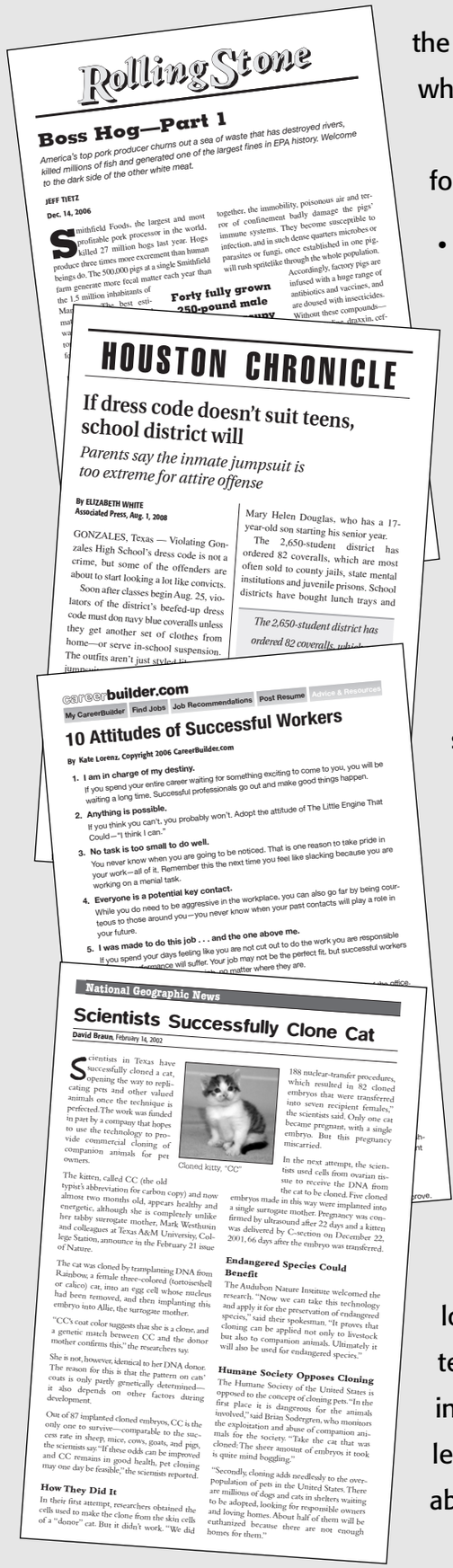
Smaller males likely mature faster and can therefore mate earlier in life. And tiny males may be better equipped to scramble faster towards females and their webs. Bigger females, on the other hand, may have greater reproductive success, so the species winds up with enormous females and minuscule males.

Researcher Mariella Herberstein concluded, "The question that remains is why females have not evolved a way of discriminating between two courting males in her web. It may be that distinguishing the sources of vibrations in a complex three-dimensional web is very difficult, an aspect that males clearly take advantage of."

Both of us are inveterate and passionate collectors of short nonfiction, in both its digital and tree-based forms, the more random the better. Nancy seems to have a direct feed into her brain from the nation's major newspapers, and among many other distinctions, has amassed the world's greatest collection of creepy animal stories. Smokey, who has subscribed to *Rolling Stone* since 1973, specializes in pop culture, politics, and stupid human behavior, a widely available genre of text. If you looked at our voluminous e-mail correspondence, you'd mainly see us trading short, current articles with subject lines like, "You're not gonna believe this one!"

We are also inveterate and passionate teachers of reading comprehension, thinking, and discussion strategies. This means we need a constant supply of text to use in short, lively, in-class lessons. So it's only natural that when we introduce our students to almost any strategy or topic, we bring out short nonfiction pieces from our collections—articles, essays, cartoons, charts, graphs, and images. We've come to call these texts "one-page wonders," because we hunt for (or trim down) kid-friendly reading selections that can be photocopied on a single page.

Now, when we do workshops around the country, teachers often come up to us all excited after the session. We expect them to compliment us on our stellar speaking skills, but instead they always ask the same question: "Where can I get those great articles?" Well, here they are, right in this book, seventy-five of our favorites, just for you. We secured permission from each publisher, so it is perfectly OK to slap these on



Rolling Stone

Boss Hog—Part 1

America's top pork producer churns out a sea of waste that has destroyed rivers, killed millions of fish and generated one of the largest fines in EPA history. Welcome to the dark side of the other white meat.

JEFF TIETZ

Dec. 14, 2006

Smithfield Foods, the largest and most profitable pork processor in the world, killed 27 million hogs last year. Hogs produce three times more excrement than human beings do. The 500,000 pigs at a single Smithfield farm generate more fecal matter each year than the 1.5 million inhabitants of

Forty fully grown 250-pound male

together, the immobility, poisonous air and terror of confinement badly damage the pigs' immune systems. They become susceptible to infection, and in such dense quarters microbes or parasites or fungi, once established in one pig, will rush spitelike through the whole population. Accordingly, factory pigs are infused with a huge range of antibiotics and vaccines, and are doused with insecticides. Without these compounds—

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

If dress code doesn't suit teens, school district will

Parents say the inmate jumpsuit is too extreme for attire offense

By ELIZABETH WHITE
Associated Press, Aug. 1, 2008

GONZALES, Texas — Violating Gonzales High School's dress code is not a crime, but some of the offenders are about to start looking a lot like convicts.

Soon after classes begin Aug. 25, violators of the district's beefed-up dress code must don navy blue coveralls unless they get another set of clothes from home—or serve in-school suspension. The outfits aren't just styled

Mary Helen Douglas, who has a 17-year-old son starting his senior year.

The 2,650-student district has ordered 82 coveralls, which are most often sold to county jails, state mental institutions and juvenile prisons. School districts have bought lunch trays and

The 2,650-student district has ordered 82 coveralls, which

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10 Attitudes of Successful Workers

By Kate Lorenz. Copyright 2006 CareerBuilder.com

1. **I am in charge of my destiny.**
   If you spend your entire career waiting for something exciting to come to you, you will be waiting a long time. Successful professionals go out and make good things happen.
2. **Anything is possible.**
   If you think you can't, you probably won't. Adopt the attitude of The Little Engine That Could—"I think I can."
3. **No task is too small to do well.**
   You never know when you are going to be noticed. That is one reason to take pride in your work—all of it. Remember this the next time you feel like slacking because you are working on a menial task.
4. **Everyone is a potential key contact.**
   While you do need to be aggressive in the workplace, you can also go far by being courteous to those around you—you never know when your past contacts will play a role in your future.
5. **I was made to do this job . . . and the one above me.**
   If you spend your days feeling like you are not cut out to do the work you are responsible

National Geographic News

Scientists Successfully Clone Cat

David Braun, February 14, 2002

Scientists in Texas have successfully cloned a cat, opening the way to replicating pets and other valued animals once the technique is perfected. The work was funded in part by a company that hopes to use the technology to provide commercial cloning of companion animals for pet owners.

Cloned kitty, "CC"

The kitten, called CC (the old typist's abbreviation for carbon copy) and now almost two months old, appears healthy and energetic, although she is completely unlike her tabby surrogate mother, Mark Westhusin and colleagues at Texas A&M University, College Station, announce in the February 21 issue of Nature.

The cat was cloned by transplanting DNA from Rainbow, a female three-colored (tortoiseshell or calico) cat, into an egg cell whose nucleus had been removed, and then implanting this embryo into Allie, the surrogate mother.

"CC's coat color suggests that she is a clone, and a genetic match between CC and the donor mother confirms this," the researchers say.

She is not, however, identical to her DNA donor. The reason for this is that the pattern on cats' coats is only partly genetically determined—it also depends on other factors during development.

One of 87 implanted cloned embryos, CC is the only one to survive—comparable to the success rate in sheep, mice, cows, goats, and pigs, the scientists say. "If these odds can be improved and CC remains in good health, pet cloning may one day be feasible," the scientists reported.

How They Did It

In their first attempt, researchers obtained the cells used to make the clone from the skin cells of a "donor" cat. But it didn't work. "We did 188 nuclear-transfer procedures, which resulted in 82 cloned embryos that were transferred into seven recipient females," the scientists said. Only one cat became pregnant, with a single embryo. But this pregnancy miscarried.

In the next attempt, the scientists used cells from ovarian tissue to receive the DNA from the cat to be cloned. Five cloned embryos made in this way were implanted into a single surrogate mother. Pregnancy was confirmed by ultrasound after 22 days and a kitten was delivered by C-section on December 22, 2001, 66 days after the embryo was transferred.

Endangered Species Could Benefit

The Audubon Nature Institute welcomed the research. "Now we can take this technology and apply it for the preservation of endangered species," said their spokesman. "It proves that cloning can be applied not only to livestock but also to companion animals. Ultimately it will also be used for endangered species."

Humane Society Opposes Cloning

The Humane Society of the United States is opposed to the concept of cloning pets. "In the first place it is dangerous for the animals involved," said Brian Sodergren, who monitors the exploitation and abuse of companion animals for the society. "Take the cat that was cloned: The sheer amount of embryos it took is quite mind boggling."

"Secondly, cloning adds needlessly to the overpopulation of pets in the United States. There are millions of dogs and cats in shelters waiting to be adopted, looking for responsible owners and loving homes. About half of them will be euthanized because there are not enough homes for them."

the photocopier and run them off for your kids. In fact, that's the whole idea.

One-page wonders (OPW) allow us to do some good things for kids:

- Provide text that's packed with really interesting stuff
  - Keep in-class reading time short, allowing all readers to keep up
  - Allow for the efficient practice of comprehension and discussion strategies
  - Minimize photocopying hassles at the school office

Now, these won't be our favorite seventy-five articles forever; we're always finding and adding new ones to the repertoire—and you should, too. As you work with these pieces, you'll start to internalize what makes a Wonder, and start collecting your own. As you search for more OPWs, keep an eye out for pieces that

- are interesting and relevant to kids
- are surprising, puzzling, funny, quirky, or weird
- invite the reader to visualize places, faces, and events
- feature people you can get interested in
- are complex enough to justify time and thought
- offer background knowledge in your content area
- contain open-ended or debatable issues that invite lively discussion

And when you are building bigger, multiarticle text sets, look for pieces that link directly to curricular units you need to teach. The goal is to create "launching lessons" that get kids interested in an upcoming topic. When you make those text collections, also be sure they are leveled: include selections at, above, and below grade level.

Looking over students' shoulders, I see lots of codes and comments going down in the margins:

! Disgusting

★ Wow! Surprised!

!★ OMG the manure lagoons are PINK

? What does this [turbulence] mean?

? This stuff has so much bacteria why would you jump in?

!★ Two guys drowned in that lagoon.

★ I didn't know lagoons had volatile gasses

★ These could be a contributor to global warming

★ Mmmm, not so good

? Don't these companies have a heart?

★!? It sounds like this company wants to pollute the planet because they don't really care.

★ They should clean up the lagoons so they are not so hazordes.

If some kids finish reading and annotating before others, they know to keep working silently, rereading their chosen article or starting on one of the other pieces in the set.

Now I form kids into discussion groups of five where each person has a different part of the article. They have five minutes to jigsaw. The kids begin by providing quick highlights from their chosen article, using their marginal notes and codes to remind themselves what's important to share. Then they shift into open-ended conversation for about three more minutes. I sit in and listen to the group meeting in the computer nook.

GREG: My article said this lagoon was as big as four Yankee Stadiums full of manure.

MARIA: And those guys drowned in there.

GREG: In my family, we would have saved them.

JOSE: Wouldn't it be horrible to live there, near one of these things?

MATT: I think I'd be really depressed. I think the smell would make me tense.

MARIA: I just feel sad for the animals. What about them? Ick! What a way to live.

GREG: I'd be angry. These companies just don't care about people.

Soon, we gather back together as a whole class. As I find so often with young people, the conversation quickly turns to questions of action: *what can we do about this*?

ADAN: The pollution stinks, but we can't just stop eating.

(pause)

NADIA: Well, you could switch from meat to vegetables.

ADAN: But I like meat! A lot. *(laughter)*

JUAN: Animals want to be hunted anyway.

NADIA: What? They want us to eat them?

JUAN: I mean they're made for us to eat. That's what they're for.

SKY: What can we do about all this pollution, though?

DEVIN: Just stop eating pork. Like bacon, ham sandwiches, and stuff . . .

NADIA: You can buy organic food instead.

DEVIN: Organic food is really expensive.

JUAN: Meat is cheap. You can get a hamburger for a buck at Mickey D's.

ILSE: That's not pork!

JUAN: Whatever.

SERENA: My mom always says steak is too expensive.

SKY: There's organic meat, you know, it's raised in a better way. Like Kobe beef. Without all the pollution and chemicals.

SERENA: But what if stores lie to you? Like maybe that meat is just the same, even though they say it isn't?

Our whole-class conversation goes on to touch on a dozen topics: pollution in the nearby Rio Grande River, climate change, animal cruelty, mad cow disease, the use of hormones and antibiotics in animal feed, the young adult book *Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food* by Eric Schlosser, recent developments in the creation of artificial, "in-vitro meat," the wisdom of humans domesticating animals in the first place, and other engaging subjects. By the time the hour has passed, most of these sixth graders are actively thinking, wondering, debating, and posing questions about food production in the United States. Nobody is asleep, nobody is secretly texting in their pocket—and we are all late for gym.

From Nancy, at Victor Andrew High School, Tinley Park, Illinois

Last spring, the latest edition of the High School Survey of Student Engagement was released. Its most incendiary findings were shouted all over the media: "Kids spend seven hours a day on screen time, more than a full school day!" They might just as well have run headlines saying, "Eek! The Sky Is Falling!"

As I reviewed the report online, I knew that my juniors would be fascinated by this topic and ready to debate parts of it. I copied short key sections and brought them in. The survey focused on three dimensions of student engagement in school:

Cognitive/intellectual/academic

Social/behavioral/participatory

Emotional

It turns out that quite a few high school kids (66 percent to be exact) say they're bored at school almost every single day. As one respondent put it, "When I am not engaged, it is because the work is not intellectually engaging." Give that kid an A!

Later the report analyzes various instructional strategies as they enhance or detract from student engagement. Anyone want to take a guess at what the most boring strategy is according to students? Teacher lecture. On the other hand, a majority of students cited "discussion and debate" as the most engaging. Hey, isn't *that* good news, especially since *those* strategies are exactly what this book is about?

Moreover, those kinds of high-level discussions are just what the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) call for in their Speaking and Listening sections. The language varies slightly from grade level to grade level, but here's what the CCSS say all kids should be able to do (2010):

Comprehension and Collaboration

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on [grade-level appropriate] topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Of course, the trick is to teach kids *how* to read deeply and then have those intellectually engaging discussions. It all starts with a combination of interesting text, instruction in smart-reader strategies, and an explicit understanding of what skills are needed for a good discussion. But boy, once those key ingredients are in place, watch out.

Here's part of what one group of my kids had to say after reading "Watch Your Driving, Kids—The Parents Are Watching" (see page 103), an article about installing cameras that monitor teen drivers and then send video snippets back to their insurance-paying parents.

> BRENDA: If my parents decided to install this in my car, I'd be highly upset. It's bad enough they can check my grades and my cell phone minutes online whenever they want. My privacy would be invaded because my parents could watch my every move.
>
> RANDI: I agree. Plus, it's creepy that an unknown person is watching you before your parents even do. I wonder what the company considers embarrassing footage. Like what do people do in their cars while driving?
>
> BRAD: What happens to the embarrassing footage that doesn't go to your parents? Do they delete it or toss it into a file somewhere? The fact that someone gets paid to sit at a computer and watch videos of some teenager in a car all day is kind of weird.
>
> BRENDA: A *lot* of things happen in a car, maybe not bad but just private. I hope my parents never put a camera in my car. I would feel like I was being watched 24/7 and that would probably make my driving even worse!
>
> BRAD: Having a camera in your car is *supposed* to make you paranoid; it's supposed to make you think more about your driving. I don't think it would make you drive any worse than you already do.

What do you notice about this discussion? First, it is pretty egocentric, focusing on one thing: how would this affect *me*? But hey, all humans, not just adolescents, are egocentric. Think about a revision of the teacher work rules at your school or a change in your contract. Sometime much later you may think about how this change will affect the bottom line of your district's budget, or how it will affect the long-term good of education in America—but I guarantee that your *first* thought will be: how does this affect me?

And, as you reread this conversation excerpt, notice that the kids are really thinking about the information in the article and responding thoughtfully to one another. As for me, it wasn't until I heard the kids' discussion that I started thinking about the "leftovers" angle myself. What *does* the company

do with all that video? Do they save it for later sale to *The National Enquirer* once someone becomes a movie star—or a serial killer? What is the privacy language in the fine print of the contract—if there even is a contract?

Notice that the kids are engaged in conversation and staying focused on a discussion thread. They're asking questions, taking turns, responding respectfully, and talking about the article versus the latest video game. What just happened? Everyone read, everyone had interesting thoughts to share, and no one complained about having to read the article or participate in a discussion. The reason? Interesting text, an appreciation of various viewpoints, and an explicit understanding of good discussion skills.

Now, this sounds like a nice little activity, reading and reacting to an article about the surveillance of teen drivers. Maybe a bit of comprehension and collaboration practice, nothing wrong with that. But listen: at my school these kids are also studying the United States Constitution, and one of the biggest topics in that unit is the "right to privacy." This has been a highly controversial issue for generations: though privacy is not specifically guaranteed in our Constitution, many scholars and justices have argued that it is an implicit right, covered by the Second Amendment and the protections against unreasonable searches and seizures. There are also countless court cases and Supreme Court decisions that bear on (and often limit) the privacy rights of children, minors, and students in school. Our text set lesson on privacy (pages 226–233) covers exactly these issues.

So this engaging short surveillance article could be the bait that lures kids into a deeper study of American government, politics, and citizenship. That's one way we use our carefully selected "one-page wonders" and the lessons that go with them—not just to get kids hooked on topics, but also to get them *thinking and building knowledge through discussion and debate.*

OK. We just gave you two glimpses of what it might look like to teach "comprehension and collaboration" when you are mainly a teacher of science, French, social studies, economics, American government, math, or any other subject. Does this teaching look more fun and doable than when it was a mandate handed down? We hope so. Not only is such reading and discussion valuable for kids; it can really improve our teaching, enhance the staying power of our content, and even ramp up the enjoyment level of our work every day.

Why and How We Teach Reading

When many of us began working in the classroom, the job was to teach our subject matter, largely by assigning books that kids were supposed to be able to read on their own. Today, that's not working. (Did it ever?)

The distribution of students has changed, and their needs as readers seem far more complex. We see more kids with identified learning issues, more kids who are just acquiring English, kids who lack the background knowledge we took for granted back in the day, and still more kids who just seem to fight off reading with all their might. In any given class that walks

though our door, the range of reading skills seems wider than ever. Fewer and fewer kids come to us ready to dig in and read our content on their own.

We also know that we are now competing for students' attention. Most of today's kids, even our academic stars, seek hours of screen time during their nonschool hours, where *they* are choosing the activities, running the mouse or joystick, being both in control and entertained. Maybe today's teenagers really are getting a little harder to reach, more alienated from the printed word.

If the kids in our classes can't read this year's material, we can't just blame the teachers in the grades below us. Reading is not a unitary skill that, once learned in elementary school, allows kids to understand any passage they encounter for the rest of their lives. Texts get harder, more specialized, more technical, more different from field to field as young people move up through the grades. So we accept that, whatever we teach, it really is part of our job to help kids crack open, connect to, and make sense of the tough texts in our field.

But we still wonder: Exactly, specifically, *how are we supposed to do this?* Show us the lessons, the materials. Oh, yeah, and while we're at it, all these new standards want us to make content literacy "interactive and collaborative"? With all the kids talking and working in groups? I mean, have you seen my sixth-period class? How can we train our students to read, work, talk, and think productively together?

Some Deeper Background: How Proficient Readers Think

Over the next few pages, we will dig deeper into the issues of teaching comprehension and collaboration as a content-area specialist. But you can bail out anytime and start trying the lessons. Then, you may want to come back here and read more about the issues and opportunities we face as we take up this role.

Still hanging in? Great.

Here's a question: how do skillful readers *think* when they are reading subject-matter text? If there are some effective patterns and strategies, we need to know what they are, so we can teach them to our students. Like today. But here's the weird thing: even though we adult teachers do have such strategies in our own brains, we might not even know what they are, since they probably were never explicitly taught to us. Instead, during our mostly fortunate lives as children, students, and teachers-to-be, we gradually cobbled together this repertoire of cognitive "moves" through our reading, storytelling, family literacy, school, and books, and then more books and more school. We may not be able to name our own strategies, but we do use them every time we read, and they work just fine. So well, in fact, that we might even deny their existence, scoffing: "Strategies, schmategies, I just read."

But the news is, we are not normal—we are teachers! And most of our students (rich or poor) are *not* growing up to be teachers, do not all come from fortunate and literate backgrounds, and will never cobble together a solid set of

reading strategies—unless we name them, demonstrate them, and explicitly teach them. To do this, we need to become more aware of what's happening in our own minds so effortlessly that we don't even notice it.

Some reliable and well-replicated research done over the past few decades (Pearson and Gallagher 1983; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, and Duffy 1992; Pearson 2009) gave us a pretty clear picture of the cognitive strategies smart readers use. But we're not going to list them yet. Instead, we think you can discover them right in your own brain. Read the following passage and try to notice what's happening in your mind as you go. Do this with a colleague, spouse, or friend if one is handy. Really think about your thinking here.

// Recommendation Engine //

Ask an Algorithm

Which TV for Me?

I want that Panasonic 103-inch TV. My wife says that's too big. Is she right? Optimal viewing distance at 1080p = diagonal screen size ÷ 0.84, maximum OVD for 103-inch screen = 122.619 inches. **Recommendation:** If seat to screen distance >122.619 inches: Purchase TV; if <122.619 inches: Construct home theater space of necessary size; purchase TV.

OK, now we're going to guess what was just happening in your mind (except for you math teachers—this was too easy for you). From the start, you were **monitoring your comprehension** at an unconscious, unaware level. But soon, you ran into trouble. The meaning you were making didn't feel solid, and so you stopped and reread parts of the passage. Maybe you slowed down your reading rate. At this point, your thinking became more conscious and intentional. A lot of **questions** were popping into your head, like "what the heck is OVD?" or "what kind of publication did this come from?" You were trying to **make connections** to your background knowledge, perhaps about TVs you have known, certain mathematical operations, or classic spousal debates. You probably were **visualizing**, trying to make a mental image of the living room with that huge TV in it. "How big would a 103-inch TV actually be?" We'll bet you were doing a lot of **inferring**, putting together clues in the text with your own background knowledge in order to gain understanding. Along the way, you were constantly trying to **determine importance**, to figure out what were the most crucial facts and what were insignificant details. Does it really matter if the TV is a Panasonic or a Sony? And for sure, you were always trying to **synthesize**, to pull together all the information into one comprehensible summary, to get the gist of the piece.

As you worked, you may even have picked up a pencil or calculator to test out your thinking. Accessing any tool to make meaning—good for you! And, oh yeah, you showed stamina and persistence. If you were a student and this text were assigned for homework, you might very well have taken one look and tossed it aside, thinking, "This is too hard, I'm outta here."

Only when you synthesized all this thinking did you really "get it," and truly comprehend the passage. You realized that this "advice column" from *Wired* magazine (August 2010, p. 86) is completely tongue-in-cheek: the husband gets the giant TV either way. The guidance comes from "An Algorithm," a robotic voice answering questions with faux-scientific wisdom. Maybe not a gut-busting guffaw, but at least a chuckle. If you were superstrategic, you might have skipped right to the end, seen the joke, understood the genre that was being mimicked, and never even bothered to read the rest. Or if you were reading like one of your students, you might have just taken a gander at all that math in the middle and given up entirely.

Even after that experiment, you might still doubt the existence of your own internal cognitive repertoire. We surely don't notice ourselves using it very often. That's because when we adults are reading everyday text—from the newspaper to memos from the principal—we "just understand." The text clicks along, we get the meaning, no problem. As seasoned reading "pros," we have long since internalized that array of thinking patterns and we mostly use them unconsciously and automatically. But when the text is a little tougher (as this article was for us, and as our textbooks can be for kids), we can suddenly notice ourselves shifting to more conscious mental strategies.

So how did we do reading your mind? If we had any success, it is only because we expected you to make the same mental moves that any veteran reader would in this situation. Skilled readers:

Monitor their comprehension

Visualize and make sensory images

Connect to their background knowledge

Ask questions of the text

Draw inferences

Determine what's important

Synthesize and summarize

These seven core reading strategies are embedded in this book's thirty-three lessons, and kids will practice each one repeatedly as you lead them through the articles and activities. For the latest word on comprehension strategies research and practice, see *Comprehension Going Forward* (Daniels 2011).

How Skillful Collaborators Act

The new Common Core State Standards push pretty hard for us to get students working in groups a good part of the day. Among other things, the standards say that students should "assist in the formation and productive functioning of both formal and informal self-directed work groups" (2010). This embrace of student–student collaboration is also mandated by many individual state documents and by major subject-matter organizations.

How Proficient Collaborators Think and Act	
Strategy	**Examples/Actions**
1. Be responsible to the group	• Come prepared: work completed, materials and notes in hand • Bring along interesting questions/ideas/artifacts • Take initiative, help people get organized • Live by the group's calendar, work plan, and ground rules • Settle problems within the group • Fess up if unprepared and take on some other work
2. Listen actively	• Make eye contact • Nod, confirm, look interested • Lean in, sit close together • Summarize or paraphrase • Use names • Take notes when helpful
3. Speak up	• Join in, speak often, be active • Connect your ideas with what others have said • Ask lead and follow-up questions • Use appropriate tone and voice level • Draw upon the notes, materials, or drawings you've brought • Overcome your shyness
4. Share the air and encourage others	• Show friendliness and support • Take turns • Be aware of who's contributing; work to balance the airtime • Monitor yourself for dominating or shirking • Invite others to participate • Build upon and learn from others' ideas
5. Support your views and findings	• Explain and give examples • Refer to specific passages, evidence, or artifacts • Connect or contrast your ideas to others' • Dig deeper into the text or topic; revisit important ideas
6. Show tolerance and respect	• Receive others' ideas respectfully; no put-downs allowed • Try to restate opposing views • Use neutral language in disagreeing • Offer your different viewpoint; don't be steamrolled • Welcome and seek insight in divergent viewpoints
7. Reflect and correct	• Do frequent reflections or "think-backs" on group processes • Identify specific behaviors that helped or hurt the discussion • Talk openly about problems • Make plans to try out new strategies and review their effectiveness • Keep written record of group processing

From Stephanie Harvey and Harvey Daniels, *Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action* (2009).

What Social Strategy Use Looks and Sounds Like		
Strategy	**Looks/Sounds Like**	**Doesn't Look/Sound Like**
1. Be responsible to the group	"Does everyone have their articles? Good, let's get going." "Let me show you this great website I found…" "I'm sorry, guys, I didn't get the reading done." "OK, then today I'll take notes on the meeting."	"What? There's a meeting today?" "I left my stuff at home." "Teacher, Bobby keeps messing around." Arriving late, unprepared, without materials
2. Listen actively	"Joe, pull your chair up closer." "I think I heard you say…" "So you think…" Asking follow-up questions	Not looking at others "Huh? I wasn't listening." Playing with pencils, shuffling materials
3. Speak up	"What you said just reminded me of…" "Can I piggyback on this?" "What made you feel that way?" "Let me show you my drawing."	Silence Whispering or shouting Not using/looking at notes Hiding from participation
4. Share the air and encourage others	"Can you say more about that, Chris?" "We haven't heard from you in a while, Joyce." "I better finish my point and let someone else talk." "That's a cool idea, Tom."	"Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah…" "I pass." "You guys are so boring." Declining to join in when invited
5. Support your views and findings	"I think Jim treats Huck as a son because…" "Right here on page 15, it says that…" "The person I interviewed said…" "My thinking was a lot like Jennifer's…"	"This book is dumb." "Well, that's my opinion anyway." "No, I didn't consider any other interpretations."
6. Show tolerance and respect	"Wow, I thought of something totally different." "I can see your point, but what about…" "I'm glad you brought that up; I never would have seen it that way."	"You are so wrong!" "What book are you reading?" "Where did you get that idea?" Rolling eyes, disconfirming body language
7. Reflect and correct	"What went well today and where did we run into problems?" "We are not sharing the talk time evenly." "OK, so what will we do differently during our next meeting?"	"We rocked." "We sucked." "It was OK." "Who cares?"

OK, so we need to get our students working together in groups. We want every single student to be willing—even eager—to work with any other classmate, at any time. We want to trust kids to stay on task when we put them in small groups. We do not want to hear chitchat about skateboards, video games, or the big dance when we stop by to listen in. We want peer collaboration, focused on the curriculum, right now, no grumbling, no hesitation, no arguments.

But, once again—have you seen my sixth-period class? Do you sometimes find yourself thinking: "Maybe *next year* I'll get some kids who can collaborate"? If so, stay tuned. Actually, collaborative, interdependent, high-morale groups are mostly made, not born. You don't have to wait for a just-right mix of kids to come along and be the exception to the rule. Every class—yes, of teenagers—can collaborate all year long *if we teach them how.* Kids are not born knowing how to work effectively in small groups; we have to show them explicitly. But that's exactly what the lessons in this book do.

So what are the component skills that good group workers have? Let's do a little thought experiment. You've been in a million small groups in your life, right? Just think for a minute—or chat with a colleague if one is handy—about some specific things that a group member can do that make the work speedier, more effective, efficient, or fun. Go ahead and jot down a couple of things. Now, ponder the reverse. What are some things that group members can do to obstruct, undermine, slow down group work—or make it less enjoyable?

Now take a look at the chart on pages 14–15, which is adapted from Smokey's book with Stephanie Harvey, *Comprehension and Collaboration* (2009). See if your own experiences aren't represented there, in the two right-hand columns. Of course, there are many ways to categorize the skills of effective collaborators. The field of study called *group dynamics* illuminates these skills in detail; we have never understood why this isn't part of our teacher training. Anyhow, this particular chart just shows how we label and group the collaboration strategies for our work with kids in school.

Here's the takeaway: just as with the comprehension strategies, we veteran collaborators have acquired a repertoire of social strategies that we draw upon, mostly unconsciously, to guide our participation in small-group work. And when the group work gets derailed, we can feel ourselves consciously deploying "fix-up" strategies to put things right ("Maybe we should get back to work now . . . ").

These seven strategies are embedded over and over again in his book's lessons. As you teach them, your kids will get plenty of practice and become better partners and group members.

How to Use This Book

This book offers thirty-three lessons: the first half of the book includes twenty-three strategy lessons, and the second half contains ten text set lessons. Every lesson focuses closely on at least one key comprehension strategy or collaboration skill that proficient learners use. You'll find that most of these lessons actually incorporate *several* such skills.

About the Reading and Thinking Strategy Lessons

Each strategy lesson is accompanied by a "one-page wonder," a real-world article, text, or image that engages students in thinking and discussion. We selected and edited these pieces with engagement foremost in our minds; they cover a variety of current events topics, with a distinctly teenage spin. The lessons accompanying them are written as generally as possible, so you can use (and reuse) the steps and language with any compatible text you choose. The strategy lessons are quick: they are designed to be completed within ten to forty minutes.

The strategy lessons appear in what we'd call a "mild sequential order." You can't argue both sides unless you first know how to turn and talk with a classmate. As you can see from the table of contents, we present the strategies in families, beginning with the simplest and most basic ones, and moving toward more complex and challenging structures. But, that being said, use them however you like; no injuries are likely to result. You can also mix and match—any lesson with any article, ours or yours. But do read the articles first. There are a few spots where you need a fairly close genre fit, not just any random article. For example, in Lesson 23, you need two articles that use roughly the same internal structure.

Every lesson in the book has several sections or features. The following preview shows a typical strategy lesson. (When you get to the text set lessons, you'll find even more elements to get you organized: texts in order of use, lists of curriculum connections, and strategies used.)

Time: Tells the expected length of the lesson. Most strategy lessons range from ten to thirty minutes, averaging twenty. A handful run up to forty minutes. This estimate does not include extensions that may be offered in the Tips and Variations section, below.
For the text sets: Each lesson fills at least one fifty-minute class period—and we may give you steps and language to dig deeper over several additional periods.

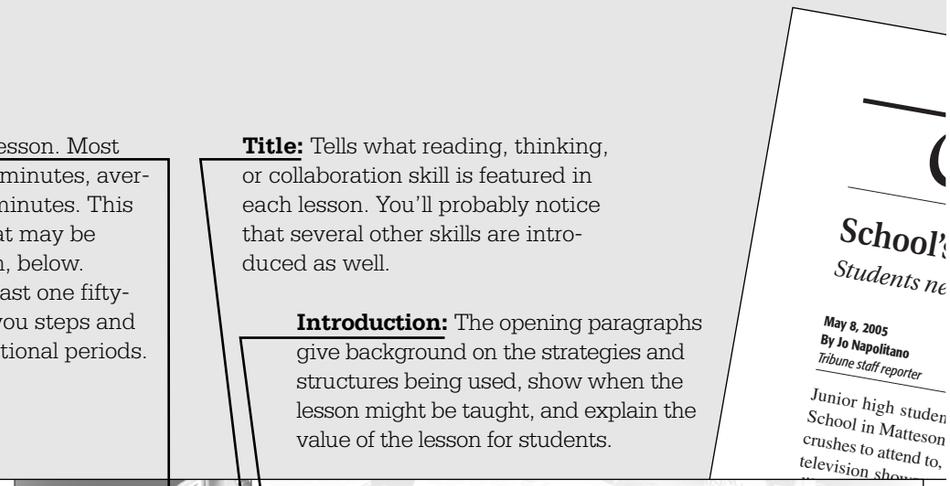
Groupings: Tells what classroom configurations are used in this lesson, in the order they are used. You'll find that students are regularly shifting from working alone, to partners, to small groups, to the whole class. This sociability works toward student engagement, learning by doing, taking responsibility, and letting school be fun.

Materials Needed: We explain up front what article copies, projectable images, or other materials should be assembled in advance.

Steps and Teaching Language: This is the core of the lesson, where all the activities and teacher instructions are spelled out in sequence and in detail. Text that appears in regular type indicates our suggestions for the teacher. Text in italic is actual teaching language that you can try on and use. If you substitute your own article, check to see where the language might need to be adapted.

Title: Tells what reading, thinking, or collaboration skill is featured in each lesson. You'll probably notice that several other skills are introduced as well.

Introduction: The opening paragraphs give background on the strategies and structures being used, show when the lesson might be taught, and explain the value of the lesson for students.



Strategy 1

Turn and Talk

- Time: 10 minutes
- Grouping Sequence: Pairs, whole class

Here is the most basic collaborative learning strategy in the world: *turn and talk with somebody for a minute or two.*

Obviously, this is something that people in all walks of life do every day. We turn and talk to one another to connect, clarify, share, think things through, learn, and make decisions. If we want kids in our classrooms to shift from passive listening to actively engaging with the curriculum, this is a critical first step toward active thinking and energetic participation.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Copy of article for each student. If using an image instead of an article, have a projectable version ready.

Steps and Teaching Language

STEP 1 **Students read and talk** Have kids silently read the *Chicago Tribune* article "No More Homework" (or another engaging text of your choice). With this subject matter, students should have plenty of connections, reactions, and questions. Then just say:

Now turn and talk in pairs for two minutes. What are your reactions, feelings, or questions about this story?

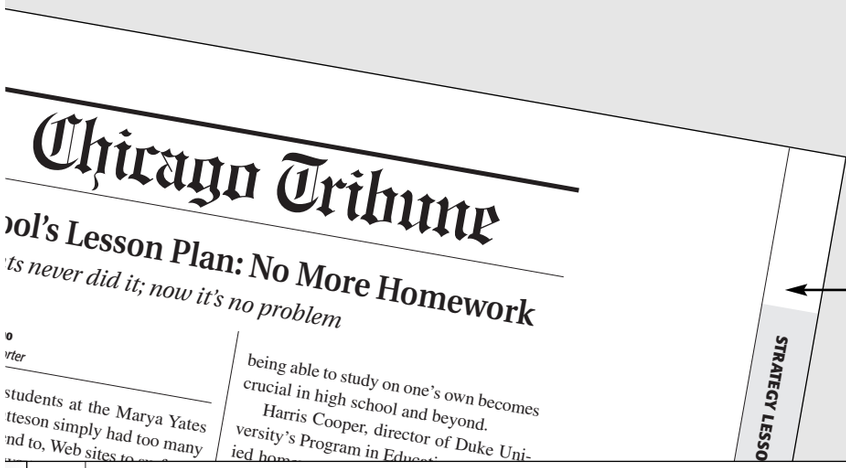
STEP 2 **Share with the whole class** After kids have talked for two minutes, reconvene the whole class and invite pairs to share their thinking. Encourage kids to build on the ideas of other pairs. If you like, make a list of key phrases from the conversation as it unfolds.

TURN AND TALK
is used in all the text sets.

STEP 3 **That's it** Your kids just turned and talked.

Tips and Variations

- **PAIRS PREPARATION** Kids must know who their turn-and-talk partner is *before* you send them to chat. They should be sitting close to each other, so all they have to do when you call a meeting is put their heads together. Pairs are best; if numbers are uneven, it's OK to have one group of three, but airtime will be less per person in a larger group. Instead, you can partner with the leftover kid yourself—then everyone is in pairs.



Chicago Tribune

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being able to study on one's own becomes crucial in high school and beyond.

Harris Cooper, director of Duke University's Program in Educati
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STRATEGY LESSO

Article: Each lesson is accompanied by a "one-page wonder"—a short nonfiction piece of proven interest to students. The whole idea of this book is that you can copy and distribute the articles we have provided. Kids must be able to write and mark directly on the page, so make copies for everyone (unless directed otherwise)—not just a class set that gets passed from one class to the next. Also keep in mind that you can substitute your own article and adapt our language to teach—or revisit—these skills.

- **TOPICS** What do pairs talk about? Factual recall questions ("When was Gregor Mendel born?") give kids nothing to discuss. Instead, choose topics with a range of possible responses, interpretations, or points of view. You may use highly focused prompts ("To what extent do you think that deism affected our Constitution?") or more open ones ("What did you think about the story?"). Both can work well depending on the material.

- **STAYING FOCUSED** How do you ensure kids stay on topic? Circulate and listen while they meet. Sit briefly with a few pairs and note their interactions. Back in the whole group, call on pairs to share their thinking. Require a short written outcome as well as an out-loud report. But you don't have to *grade* students' conversations to make them seem worthwhile; instead, listen to and use their ideas in class, honoring their thinking.

- **DOUBLING PAIRS** Obviously, as kids get more adept at turning and talking in pairs, and if it adds value to do so, they can turn and talk in threes or fours. Often, we will have pairs discuss an initial point, and then have them quickly join up with another pair to make a group of four that can continue the conversation with a second prompt or question. Or kids can sit in a group of four, alternating between their "shoulder partners" (sitting beside them) and "face partners" (sitting across from them). See Strategy 17 on page 104 for an example of this variation, which also appears in several later text set lessons.

- **TRY WRITTEN TURN-AND-TALKS** Instead of talking out loud, have pairs simultaneously write quick comments on index cards, exchange them at the teacher's signal, read the cards, and respond to them in writing. After a few swaps, have kids switch to talking. There are two complete lessons on such "write-arounds": Written Discussion on page 83 and Text-on-Text on page 89.

- **READ AN IMAGE RATHER THAN TEXT** To be sure that talk-worthy information is available to everyone, teach Turn and Talk with a great projected photograph or painting instead of printed text.

- **DO THIS A LOT** In active learning classrooms, we often see turn and talk happening three, five, or ten times during a class period—along with other collaborative, small-group activities. With practice and reflection, kids get steadily better at these one-to-one conversations. A bonus: as you rotate students through different partners (daily early in the year, weekly later), they get to know many other class members, building a basis for more complex collaborative activities later on.

Web Support: Anything you need to project or download as part of a lesson is ready for use on our website, www.heinemann.com/textsandlessons.

Tips and Variations: In this section you'll find two extra kinds of support: first, we offer advice on troubleshooting, solving predictable problems that may arise, and fine-tuning the lesson. Then, where appropriate, we offer ways you can vary, modify, or extend the lesson. Some of these variations extend the lesson into the following class period.

About the Text Set Lessons

The text set lessons are very similar in format and structure. The difference is that kids now choose from among multiple leveled texts on aspects of the same topic. (In each text set, we identify the easier choices. Also, be sure to read "What Makes Reading Easier," coming right up.) The text set lessons offer a deeper, longer engagement in the subjects and strategies being studied.

Unlike the opening strategy lessons, the text set lessons are directly aligned to commonly taught curricular topics (the U.S. Constitution, viruses and bacteria, the Civil War, force and motion, production and distribution, ecosystems, human geography, etc.) and so they require more classroom time for their exploration. Each text set lesson initially takes one fifty-minute class period to complete. Then, some have extensions—additional teaching ideas that can expand the lesson from one to three additional classes. We have arranged the text set lessons in a rough order of complexity; the first few are simple and straightforward, while the later ones add challenge and offer multiple extensions. As far as content is concerned, there is no teaching order to the ten lessons (as far as we can discern). Your own curriculum is probably the best source for timing clues.

About Text Difficulty

If you have already flipped through this book, you may have heard yourself thinking, "Whoa, some of these articles look way too hard for my kids." And you might be talking about your sixth graders, or your seniors! There is such a wide range of apparent reading levels in our classes these days that we have left-behind readers everywhere. We never see a class without a cohort of strivers, no matter what level we teach. And sometimes they're not even striving.

First, let us assure you that in the second section of the book—the text sets—we've provided a range of reading levels within each assortment. But what about the opening section—those twenty-three lessons where we use a single whole-class article? Normally, whenever we choose a whole-class text, something aimed for "the middle," it turns out to be too hard for some, not challenging enough for others, and "boring" to the rest.

Yes, we are saying that *your kids can read these articles,* from the sixth-grade strugglers to the English language learning seniors—but under the right circumstances, which you help to create. Aspects of the text itself are important, but we teachers choose to make any reading selection a lot easier—or a lot harder. So how did we identify and/or edit nonfiction pieces that *all* kids could find a way into?

As we were preparing this book, we looked for previously published, really easy nonfiction text—like fourth-grade level. But everything already in print that was aimed at below-level readers had the same chirpy, telegraphic, and patronizing voice: it was baby text, and our kids wouldn't go near it. Then we hired a professional writer to create new articles that would have the same

What Makes Reading Easier?

- ☑ **THE TEXT** is shorter rather than longer.
- ☑ **THE READER** has chosen the text, versus it being assigned.
- ☑ **THE READER** has relevant background knowledge.
- ☑ **THE TOPIC** has personal interest or importance.
- ☑ **THE TEXT** embodies familiar settings and cultural values.
- ☑ **THE TEXT** evokes curiosity, surprise, or puzzlement.
- ☑ **THE TEXT** has high coherence, meaning that it explains itself (e.g., "the plesiosaur, a Mesozoic period dinosaur . . . ").
- ☑ **THE TEXT** makes ample use of pictures, charts, and other visual and text features that support and add meaning.
- ☑ **THE TEACHER** evokes and builds the reader's background knowledge.
- ☑ **THE TEACHER** teaches specific strategies for visualizing, inferring, questioning, rereading, and other techniques.
- ☑ **READERS CAN** mark, write, or draw on text as they read.
- ☑ **READERS CAN** talk about the text during and after reading.
- ☑ **READERS CAN** hear text read aloud by the teacher, by a classmate, or in a small group.

zest and interest as the "one-page wonders" we collected from adult sources, but still we got short, choppy sentences, an artificially controlled vocabulary, and the same chirpiness.

Meanwhile, we started trying out our own favorite "grown-up" articles with kids in Chicago and New Mexico, and, defying their grade levels, kids were reading them with delight. While doing this, we were reminded: not all reading tasks are alike. For any given kid, the exact same text can be easier or harder, depending on a lot of factors. In different situations, the very same marks on a page can either slam the door on most readers, or invite everyone in for a nice reading party. The list under "What Makes Reading Easier" summarizes the variable conditions we kept noticing.

Now let's use this list to think about how kids usually grapple with a traditional textbook assignment, like "Read Chapter 8 for Friday." They sit alone, overwhelmed by the length and text density, with little background knowledge available or activated, with no fellow reader to talk to, prohibited from marking on the pages, and probably with no interest in the topic.

Hmmm, maybe "text difficulty" is not so fixed after all. Indeed, we'd argue that the presence or absence of any of these conditions can determine how "hard" a given chunk of reading is, to any given student.

We've all had students who looked like they couldn't read a lick until they showed up with their biker, skater, gamer, music, gossip, or fashion magazines—or buried their face in a website covering similar topics. Just switching a few factors here—adding choice, interest, or background knowledge—can make a world of difference to what a student "can read." It almost makes us wonder, are some "struggling readers" struggling not so much from their own deficits, but from what schools fail to provide them?

That was a long answer to the original question: "Are these articles too hard for my kids?" We think not; we hope not. We have tried them with many students and they work—because so many of the factors that "make reading easier" are present in these pieces, and because the steps and teaching language support them.

All this being said, and having patted ourselves on the back for creating these accessible one-page wonders, if some pieces are too hard for your kids, don't use them! Substitute, grab another, use a picture with a caption, edit down to a single paragraph with a big font so everyone is reading "one whole article." It's gotta work for everybody. As Richard Allington (2000) keeps telling us: kids have to read text they can read. You cannot begin to become an Olympic pole vaulter by setting the bar at world record height. And you cannot get better as a reader by reading text you cannot read.

How We Edited the Articles

Many of the articles in the book are unedited, printed in their original form. Sometimes, if a tough word here or there impeded meaning, we swapped it out for an everyday synonym. Others began as two-, three- or even ten-page

pieces, from which we extracted the most important, interesting, and kid-friendly elements, staying faithful to the thrust of the original piece. We got permission from all the copyright holders to edit this way; if they wouldn't allow such edits, we looked elsewhere.

About the Text Sets

In the second section of the book are ten more extensive lessons that use three to seven different texts on the same subject. For example, in the lesson on invasive species, kids choose among explanatory pieces about five different critters: Asian carp, Burmese pythons, killer bees, fire ants, and zebra mussels. Other text sets cover many forms of text, including six different maps of the same country and six images of children in forced labor as well as much more informational, persuasive, and even literary writings. Each of the text sets connects to one or more commonly taught school subjects, which we point out directly in the lesson.

Using these multiarticle sets allows us to differentiate for our young readers. Now, instead of using a whole-class text, kids get to choose an article they *can read* and *want to read*. The pieces are real-world, relevant, and current. Every set offers not just a range of topics, but also a range of reading levels.

Of course, not every article will be fascinating to every teenager. But there's a greater probability of grabbing kids with five options instead of one. In our selections, we've stressed the use of accessible, "hospitable" text wherever possible—and even incorporated nonprint choices in several sets. All these ingredients can, in effect, bring down the reading level, making one or more articles accessible to every student. And finally, when the teacher leads kids through the interactive and interesting steps of the lesson itself, students are even better supported to read, think, and build content knowledge.

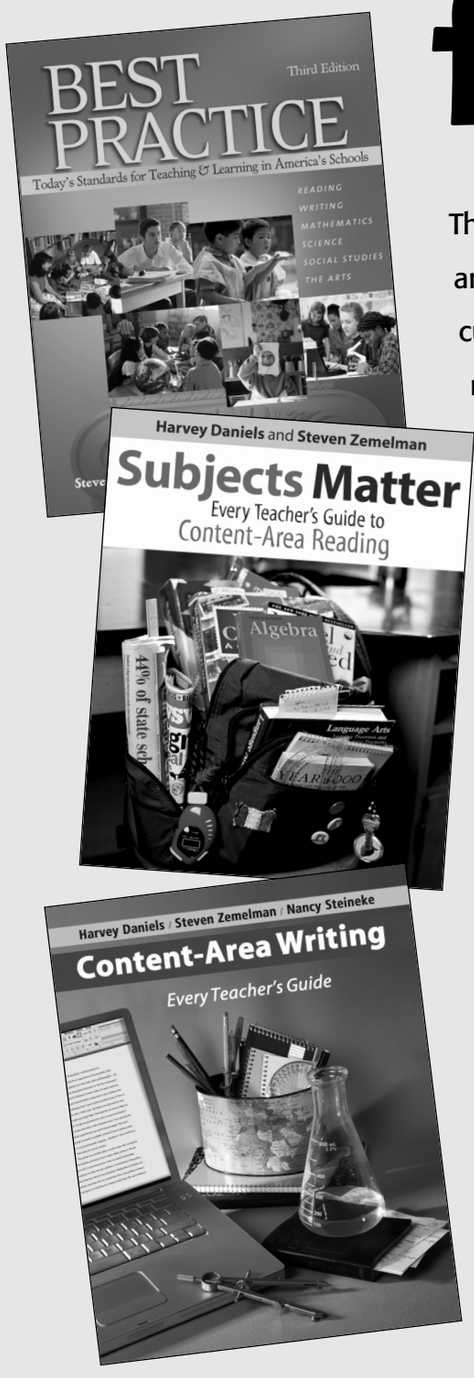
Not all of these articles immediately look like "core material," do they? They don't necessarily cover the same topics as the textbook, or always focus on highly tested curriculum points. That's because these text sets are designed as "launching lessons," experiences that engage, puzzle, and involve kids at the start of a unit—much like the factory farming set we've already discussed.

For another example, consider American slavery and the Civil War. This material is routinely taught several times as kids move through the grades. Though we adults may find this period of history endlessly fascinating, the kids just find it endless. It's old, it's over, and that slavery stuff is so uncomfortable. So, to connect and engage students at the start of the unit, instead of beginning with, say, the triangular trade route, we plunge them into an inquiry about child slavery *today* (see pages 195–202).

How hard are textbooks?

While we were preparing this book, we dumped some five-hundred-word chunks of current middle school science and social studies textbooks into two different "lexile" scoring programs. Guess what? (And you *can* guess, because you know this in your DNA.) Every textbook sample scored two years above the grade level it is labeled for. Yeah, two years. No wonder so many middle and high school kids tell us their textbooks are "boring," which might just be teenspeak for "too damn hard." If you take this understanding back to the "What Makes Reading Easier" list (page 21), you can think further about how to better support students when using textbooks—and understand why it is so important to supplement these sometimes forbidding volumes with real-world text. We even advocate that you occasionally copy one really important page out of your textbook, so students can experience reading and marking it, just like a one-page wonder.

All in the family



This book stands on its own, offering immediately usable text and language for collaborative lessons in thinking across the curriculum. But it was also created to be used with several recent books by our "family" of coauthors. Over the past ten years, our own collaborative group has created a library of books focused on building students' content-area knowledge through the direct teaching of learning strategies in the context of challenging inquiry units, extensive peer collaboration, and practical, formative assessments.

Among these books are:

- *Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools* (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde 2003; 4th edition in press)
- *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading* (Daniels and Zemelman 2004)
- *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide* (Daniels, Zemelman, and Steineke 2005)

- *Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action* (Harvey and Daniels 2009)
- *Assessment Live! 10 Real-Time Ways for Kids to Show What They Know*—and *Meet the Standards* (Steineke 2009)
- *Mini-lessons for Literature Circles* (Daniels and Steineke 2006)
- *Reading and Writing Together: Collaborative Literacy in Action* (Steineke 2003)

Many of our readers have asked us to create a "practice book" to accompany these other titles. Though we are not in love with that term, we can see the need. If you are working with one of our other books, on your own or in a teacher study group, you can use the materials here to try out some of the ideas there. Indeed, these lessons are another way to provide your kids with lots and lots of *practice*.

Each of these books offers principles for teaching in different content areas—from the K–12 curriculum in *Comprehension and Collaboration* and *Best Practice*, to the secondary discipline areas in *Subjects Matter* and *Content-Area Writing*, to the book club strategies in *Mini-lessons* (though this is actually also a book about any kind of small-group work). Using the articles and lessons provided in this book, you can help kids practice and implement the ideas from any of these seven other titles.

Jigsawing Content

Who says that every student in America must learn the same things in the same order and at the same depth as every other kid? Why does everyone study every Civil War battle? Fort Sumter, Gettysburg, Antietam, Shiloh, Bull Run, Appomattox, oy! No wonder social studies teachers rarely finish the textbook—and the U.S. history course never gets past World War I! (OK, we have both taught American history and we never finished either.)

The important thing is not for students to know every detail of every battle, but to understand Civil War battles generally: What strategies were typically used, what weaponry, what injuries resulted? Who were the flesh-and-blood people who fought? The most important thing for kids to take away from the study of the American Civil War is not General McClellan's specific battle plans, but how the sudden advent of newly destructive weapons, just before the era of antibiotics and better battlefield medicine, yielded a catastrophic new level of casualties, dwarfing previous wars. (Our text set lesson on PTSD begins with a powerful Civil War battle scene on page 162.)

When we jigsaw curriculum, we have students pick one subtopic, aspect, or element (like one Civil War battle) to specialize in, working with a small group of kids who have chosen the same specialty. Using some class and homework time, each group is responsible for investigating its topic and then finding a powerful way to teach it to others. When these new "experts" share their learning, the audience—the rest of the students—is required to participate actively and keep notes, so that they will retain the highlights and synthesis provided. And the teacher is monitoring to be sure that the big, overarching ideas come across to everyone. We so often hear ourselves asking our jigsaw groups: "What do these things have in common? What are the overlapping features? What's different? How can you tell?"

When teachers hear about jigsawing, visions of the Big State Test sometimes loom in their heads, featuring material that all their students did *not* study in detail because they jigsawed that topic instead of lecturing. The six student "experts" knock it out of the park; the other twenty-four flunk. Those teachers are summarily fired, homeless the next day, and quickly forgotten.

Two quick answers to this fear: First, we have worked all around the country, and without exception, in schools where inquiry-based learning, along with curriculum jigsawing, is used, kids do just fine on state tests. That's because they have learned *how to think* (like a scientist, like a mathematician, etc.) and not just to memorize. Second, when kids become experts in one topic, that experience is, by definition, deep and valuable for them. It may even get them interested in a field of study. But we have to be equally sure that when these "expert" kids turn to teach others, their information has real staying power for the rest of the group. So we structure not just presenter, but also *audience responsibilities* into the DNA of our lessons.

Keep track of how we structure this as you work through the text sets. You'll see many different ways that we make sure kids benefit academically from jigsawing, learning even more from each other than from traditional lectures and textbook reading.

Assessment

So, you are using these lessons and articles to help kids learn and practice skills in comprehension, collaboration, and thinking. And you are also probably using the text sets to launch bigger units in your subject field. That means you're using maybe twenty minutes of class time for the solo strategy lessons and one or more class periods for the text sets. The question naturally arises: how do I grade these activities? After all, in today's schools, it seems like we have to assess, or at least assign a grade to, any activity kids spend time on.

Use Binary Grading

If you start *qualitatively* grading every piece of kids' work on activities like these, trying to defend the difference between a 78 and a 23, you're going to give up huge chunks of your own time marking, scoring, and justifying. Maybe this is some of our old Chicago "tough love" creeping in, but for smaller everyday assignments, we use binary grading: yes/no, on/off, all/nothing. We give 10 points for full participation and 0 points for less than full participation. No 3s, no 7.5s. Ten or 0, that's it.

Our colleague Jim Vopat has brought some poetry to this kind of grading in his book *Writing Circles* (2009). Jim calls this "good faith effort"—GFE. If a student shows up prepared to work, having all the necessary materials (reading done, notes ready), joins in the work with energy, and carries a fair share of the work—that's a good faith effort and that's 10 points. From a practical point of view, this means you only have to keep track of the few kids who don't put forth that GFE, and remember to enter that zero in your gradebook, even as you award everyone else their 10s.

The idea of good faith effort ties directly into sociability in the classroom. What kids might refuse to do individually, they are surprisingly willing to do when they can mix it up with others. Nancy adds a story: Just today I had a student who hates *everything,* like "Mikey" from the old cereal commercial. If he works alone, he does nothing. So today he comes in late. I've already given away his partner but I saved a seat so that he could join his old partner and a new person to form a trio. He sits right down, has them explain what they're working on, and in no time he's giving ideas and they're all working away making a poster about friendliness and support in the classroom.

Kids won't do much for just the teacher, but they'll do a heck of a lot when the task involves working with each other. So take note, resistant readers aren't so resistant when they start to enjoy working together. The likelihood of good faith effort rises exponentially.

Still, let's be honest. Giving points is not assessment, it's just grading. When we want to get serious and really monitor kids' thinking in these activities, we have to take further steps.

Collect and Save Student Work

As kids do the activities in these thirty-three lessons, they naturally create and leave behind artifacts, evidence, and tracks of their thinking: annotated articles, drawings, maps, diagrams, lists, notes, reports, and even podcasts or video clips. Who needs a quiz? As kids carry on with the work, you can collect, study, and save the naturally occurring by-products of their learning. This authentic residue of thinking is far more meaningful than a disembodied C+ in your gradebook. The kids' own creations are far more relevant in a parent conference or a principal evaluation than a string of recorded point totals. Instead, we maintain a firsthand record of a student's thinking all the way through a unit, quarter, or semester.

Observe Kids at Work

The form on page 29 is a tool we use when sitting with a group of kids, watching them work on a lesson together. As you can see, this form incorporates the good faith idea but goes much further. As we listen in on kids, we jot down one memorable quote from each student and reflect on what kind of thinking this comment or question represents; then we also jot notes about any conspicuous use (or neglect) of the collaboration skills called for in the lesson.

Orchestrate Authentic Teaching and Sharing Opportunities

When the time comes to assign grades for kids' work over long stretches of time and big chunks of content, we traditionally make up a big test and add that score to the points kids have earned along the way. Even as we do this, we quietly recognize that this assessment system invites cramming, superficiality, and the wholesale forgetting of content.

Instead, we like to devise authentic events at which kids share or perform their learning for an engaged audience—and then we use a rubric that carefully defines a successful performance to derive each kid's grade. Nancy has recently published a whole book with ideas on this kind of sociable, practical structure called *Assessment Live! 10 Real-Time Ways for Kids to Show What They Know*—and *Meet the Standards* (Heinemann 2009).

The Mechanics of Grouping

Every lesson in this book has kids working with other kids. That means there's always the question: how do you quickly and efficiently arrange students into partners or groups of various sizes? Some teachers are able to accomplish this "on the fly," without losing a moment of time or momentum for the lesson.

Observation Chart

Student Name	"Good Faith"	Quote	Thinking	Social Skills
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Amazing. For the rest of us mortals, though, some advance planning is definitely required.

In the forthcoming lessons, we always tell you how groups should be formed right at the beginning, so you can get kids in the proper configuration. But it works even better if students have an ongoing understanding of how they can group and regroup during lessons. Before any class activity or reading, students should already be able to immediately identify their single turn-and-talk partner and know what larger group (usually four) they might join. We start with this at the very beginning of the year, so that within a week kids know what to do when we say "turn and talk" or "get in your groups."

While we highly value kids working with a variety of classmates over the year, we also prize regularity. Translation: kids keep the same partner and small group for several weeks before swapping around. There are some lively exceptions to this rule, spontaneous grouping activities like Where Do You Stand? or Jigsaw (you'll hear more about these shortly).

Finally, here's some more Chicago-bred tough love. Especially early in the year, we avoid allowing students to choose their own partners. Kids will inevitably choose their friends, which may increase off-task behavior and decrease divergent thinking. Self-choice can undermine our goal of keeping groups socially heterogeneous, as well as obstruct our attempts to differentiate instruction. And of course, there is always at least one "odd man out" circumstance, and we want to spare students from that painful moment. Nancy still remembers being picked second to last for PE teams (second to last because she was unskilled but had good hygiene—the last kid picked was the one who ate her boogers).

Materials and Equipment

These lessons are generally pretty low-tech. Mostly, you just photocopy the articles and help kids have meaningful, live conversations. But there are a few supplies we like to have around, especially for the text set lessons:

- Post-it notes of various sizes
- Index cards, 3x5-inch and 4x6-inch varieties
- Large chart paper or newsprint
- Markers, tape, scissors, glue sticks
- Clipboards: When kids are working with one-page articles, they may be moving around the room, sitting on the floor, meeting in various groups. They'll need to bring a hard writing surface; a textbook works, but clipboards were made to be portable desks.
- Projection tools: When we started teaching, there was one tool for showing documents to students: an overhead projector. Today we have a million ways of displaying material: document cameras, smart boards, whiteboards, you name it. Many of our lessons have either images or

short chunks of text, which, though they are included in the book, work much better if projected for the class. So we have parked these on our website (www.heinemann.com/textsandlessons) or provided links that were active at the time of publication. Whenever projection would enhance a lesson, we'll remind you with this icon in the margin.

Have Fun

We're serious about putting this "F-word" back into school. In the education business these days, things too often seem monotonous and a little grim. The atmosphere feels increasingly mechanical and bureaucratic. We live under an onslaught of mandates, orders, directions, rulings, and marching orders; most come from afar and few have any immediate appeal. At the lowest moments, school feels more like a forced march than an adventure.

And now they want us to read real-world nonfiction with kids? And get them working together like human beings? Thinking, arguing, debating, interacting, actually doing stuff? Are you kidding? We'll take *that* job any time. Let us at 'em!

All the best,

Smokey and Nancy