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Ready-to-Use
Lessons
for Grades 3-5

Promote

READING

Gains

**with Differentiated
Instruction**

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Table of Contents

Foreword	ix
Preface: The Science and Art of Teaching Reading	xi
Acknowledgments	xvi
Part I: Improving Comprehension and Fluency	1
Chapter 1: Promoting and Nurturing Reading Gains	2
Chapter 2: The Differentiated Lessons: Getting Started	14
Chapter 3: Reader’s Notebooks	18
Chapter 4: Practice and Performance	29
Chapter 5: Student-Led Discussions	46
Chapter 6: Assessment-Driven Interventions	55
Part II: The Differentiated Lessons	65
Chapter 7: Using the Differentiated Lessons	66
Chapter 8: Visualizing	77
Chapter 9: Inferring	112
Chapter 10: Drawing Conclusions	161
Chapter 11: Comparing and Contrasting	205
Appendices	257
References	276
Word Ladders Answer Key	281
Index	286
Digital Resources	292

List of Lessons

Visualizing	78
Focus Lesson: The Nature of Nature	83
Grade 3	
The Blue Whale	85
Hummingbird	88
Octopus.....	91
Grade 4	
The Book or the Snake	94
The Lizard Catcher	97
A Mosquito	100
Grade 5	
Desert	103
Rain Forest	106
Winter in the Mountains	109
Inferring	114
Focus Lesson: Making the World a Better Place	120
Grade 3	
The Crow	123
There’s More to a Worm	128
The Sea Bear.....	132
Grade 4	
The Storyteller	136
The First Cave Artist.....	140
Was There a Real Alice?.....	144
Grade 5	
Climate Strike	148
How Old Do You Have to Be?	152
Who Wants to Make Life Better?	157

Drawing Conclusions	162
Focus Lesson: And What Can We Conclude?	170
Grade 3	
What the Bumblebee Doesn't Know	172
The Grass and the Butterfly	175
Don't Forget	178
Grade 4	
Down the Fence Row	182
Rolling	187
The Stream	190
Grade 5	
Tiger	194
Milkweed and Monarchs	197
Your Eyes	201
Comparing and Contrasting	206
Focus Lesson: Is That Really You?	213
Grade 3	
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter	216
More Bees, Please	220
There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs	225
Grade 4	
It All Depends on Who You Are	229
I'm Thinking about It	234
Climbing Back	238
Grade 5	
A Nation's Symbol	242
The Nature of Zoos	247
What Does an Eel Have for Breakfast?	252

Preface: The Science and Art of Teaching Reading

Over the past several years, an emphasis on reading instruction has emerged called *the Science of Reading* (SOR). The Science of Reading refers to scientific knowledge about how people learn to read and argues that reading instruction should be guided by this science. The genesis for this approach can be traced back to the National Reading Panel (2000), a group of literacy experts who were assigned the task of identifying the science-verified components of reading that are necessary for children to become proficient readers. Nearly every teacher of reading has since become familiar with those components – phonemic awareness, phonics or word decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The Science of Reading is based, to a large extent, on scientific research into the competencies that must be mastered to achieve proficiency in reading. However, like a lot of research, SOR does not provide much direction into how those competencies should be taught to students (Shanahan 2021). Very often, the implication for instruction is that the SOR competencies be taught using approaches that are direct, systematic, and, for students who are struggling, intensive. How instruction actually plays out in classrooms depends, in large part, on school districts’ background knowledge and philosophy of teaching reading as well as that of the teachers who present reading lessons to their students.

Moving Toward the Art and Science of Reading Instruction

We would take Shanahan’s argument a bit further to suggest that we also need scientifically verified approaches to instruction that are authentic, aesthetic, and that give teachers freedom to respond to each student’s unique needs by combining their creativity and educational knowledge to design such instruction. Although it may be easier to define a *science* of reading instruction than it is to define an *art* of reading instruction, there are three characteristics or principles that make reading instruction artful: authenticity, aesthetics, and creativity (Young, Paige, and Rasinski 2022).

Principle 1, Authenticity: Reading instruction should look like reading-related activities that are done in real life – outside the classroom. We want students to make the connections between what they are doing in their classroom with what they see happening beyond the classroom walls. When teachers help students understand that the goal of phonemic

awareness, phonics, and fluency practice is to read expressively with automaticity and understanding, then practicing these skills is authentic because they lead to reading well, an experience people young and old do in real life.

Principle 2, Aesthetics: By *aesthetics*, we refer to the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1978) who argued that reading should be both efferent and aesthetic. At the risk of oversimplifying, efferent reading is essentially reading to learn or to educate the mind. Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, is reading for beauty and/or to touch the heart. It seems that reading instruction in many schools has become increasingly focused on the retention of facts and information from the reading. While we acknowledge the importance of recalling facts and information from reading, we also see the need for reading to be aesthetic, touching our hearts and minds.

In this book, the poems and short texts by David L. Harrison can stir powerful feelings in the hearts of your students, raising their awareness of the wonders in the natural world and how people go about creating change in their communities. Harrison’s texts can inspire students to be more aware of the environment and develop a keen understanding of why some species have become endangered as well as why some people need food, clothing, shelter, and friendship.

Principle 3, Creativity: While the science of reading provides guidance for the overall aims and approaches to reading instruction, artfulness allows teachers the freedom to use their creativity and knowledge of students’ reading skill to deliver instruction in ways that meet the individual needs of students. Moreover, artful instruction should also allow students freedom to express themselves in creative ways.

How This Book Aligns with the Science and Art of Teaching Reading

This book features differentiated lessons that are based on original poems or short texts by David L. Harrison. These lessons integrate the science of reading by including word work that’s appropriate for students in grades 3, 4, and 5—word work that grows out of the poems and short texts. This word work offers students tools for reading with expression, fluency, and depth of comprehension. In addition, you’ll find that with artful instruction, the differentiated lessons can help students improve their comprehension using four higher-order reading strategies: *visualize*, *infer*, *draw conclusions*, and *compare/contrast*.

Word Study in the Lessons

The differentiated lessons offer students practice with word study that can boost their reading, thinking, discussing, and vocabulary. Students will use word families to develop analogous thinking, the ability to transfer word knowledge by being able to pronounce new words using known words. Additional phonics and word meaning practice occurs with the word ladders students complete in their lessons and during teacher-led focus lessons. Here’s a menu of some of the word work students complete in the context of the poems and short texts in the differentiated lessons:

- **Synonym and antonym** study is an excellent way to build students' vocabulary.
- **Multiple forms of words** enable students to understand a set of related words and how each form works.
- **Word families** offer opportunities to develop analogous thinking and improve decoding.
- **Figurative language** shows students how writers' tools such as simile and metaphor can enhance visualization and comprehension.
- **Connotations**, the associations students have with a specific word or phrase, can improve comprehension, visualization, and build their vocabulary.
- **Context clues** practice helps learners use clues in a text to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
- **Word ladders** are not only engaging and motivating but they invite students to think about phonics and the meanings of words.

If you have students who have difficulty decoding or have gaps in their knowledge of phonics, word families, and word patterns, then continue with the phonics or word study program you're presently using by setting aside time in your reading block or adjusting the lessons to gain additional time.

The Art of Comprehension in the Lessons

Even when decoding and fluency are strong, there's no guarantee that reading comprehension automatically follows (Duke, Ward, Pearson 2021). To comprehend texts, children need background knowledge, vocabulary, an understanding of text features and structures, and the ability to apply strategies such as making inferences, drawing conclusions, comparing/contrasting, and visualizing. When readers reflect upon and critically analyze the facts in a text, comprehension becomes artful, moving readers beyond recall of information to using facts and details to create new understandings, think critically, learn about the experiences of others, and consider their own roles as responsible contributors to society.

How the Lessons Are Organized

The differentiated lessons are presented in chapters 8 through 11. Each chapter features one of the following reading strategies: visualizing, inferring, drawing conclusions, and comparing and contrasting. The chapters begin with focus lessons presented by the teacher. The focus lessons are followed by the differentiated lessons.

Teacher-led Focus Lessons

There are two parts to each focus lesson. The first part asks the teacher to model artful comprehension and application of reading strategies, while the second part focuses on word work. After teachers model and think aloud, they invite students to practice using the focus lesson's short text.

Differentiated Student Lessons

After the focus lessons, students will partner with classmates for the differentiated lessons. Each lesson includes a new poem or text, and students will experience several comprehension-building strategies.

- **Students practice expressive reading** with their partners using poems and short texts.
- **Rereading** is built into the differentiated lessons, supporting and improving students' understanding, recall, and fluency with multiple readings of all or parts of a text.
- **Conversations about reading** occur when students use prompts and questions about a poem or short text.
- **Notebook writing** invites students to write to show their understanding of a reading strategy, to demonstrate their ability to think critically, and to complete the word work.

The texts in the lessons are different for readers who are below grade level, near and at grade level, and above grade level. When students can read and recall information from texts, they can improve their comprehension through discussions and critical thinking as well as successfully complete word work. Text readability, developed by using the Flesch-Kincaid readability measures, ensures that students, with support from their partners, can read and recall details in the short texts and the directions for discussion, word work, and writing in notebooks.

Formative Assessment and Intervention

Formative assessment includes observations while students work and during conferences with students, listening to partner discussions, and reading students' notebook writing. The purpose of formative assessment is to collect information that informs teachers' instructional decisions.

Intervention decisions occur after students complete a set of lessons and the teacher has gathered and reviewed information from multiple formative assessments. Chapter 6 details how to plan, schedule, and implement interventions for *all* students.

The thoughtfully developed texts and lessons provided in this book combine the science and art of reading with the goal of improving students' depth of comprehension and enlarging their reading, writing, thinking, and discussing vocabularies.

Overview of the Book

This resource is organized into two parts: Part I (chapters 1–6) provides information that supports the differentiated lessons in Part II (chapters 7–11).

Chapter 1, Promoting and Nurturing Reading Gains, introduces the structure of the differentiated lessons and explains how they align with a four-part reading framework: daily teacher read-alouds, instructional reading, writing about reading, and independent reading. This chapter also explores three types of instructional reading, the importance of volume in reading, creating culturally relevant classroom libraries, the benefits of teaching with short texts, and conferring.

Chapter 2, The Differentiated Lessons: Getting Started, presents suggestions for effectively using the lessons. You'll explore why working with one or a small group of colleagues is helpful, preplanning and then working together on lessons for the same reading strategy. In addition, you'll review how to organize students into three groups: developing readers and students who are at- and above-grade-level readers. You'll find tips for presenting teacher-led focus lessons and using formative assessments to inform instructional decisions, and suggestions for moving forward after completing the first set of differentiated lessons.

Chapter 3, Reader's Notebooks, discusses the benefits of notebooks for students' reading progress and offers suggestions for inviting students to respond to read-alouds, focus lessons, and short texts. You'll see how students' notebook writing informs your understanding of their reading growth. You'll also explore how your cold writing helps students develop their mental model of specific kinds of notebook writing.

Chapter 4, Practice and Performance, discusses routines for organizing the practice and performance of texts such as poems and reader's theater scripts. This chapter incorporates Tim Rasinski's research on practice and performance, which shows how students can improve their fluency, expressive reading, comprehension, and vocabulary. The chapter includes five poems by David L. Harrison that can be used for practice and performance in your classroom.

Chapter 5, Student-Led Discussions, provides a road map of the elements of successful student-led discussions and explains how to use the fishbowl technique to build students' mental models of these types of discussions. The chapter includes guidelines to follow when students discuss poems or short texts from the lessons in this book.

Chapter 6, Assessment-Driven Interventions, discusses the kinds of formative assessment suggested by the differentiated lessons and how to use the information gathered to organize students into three groups for additional practice and support: (1) students who require scaffolding and/or reteaching, (2) those in need of some extra practice, and (3) an enrichment group. Sample schedules for 60-minute and 90-minute daily literacy blocks demonstrate how you can work with each group within the course of a week.

Chapters 1 through 6 each end with a section called "Take Time for Reflective Conversations," which includes reflection questions you can use on your own or with your colleagues about the content in the chapter.

Chapter 7, Using the Differentiated Lessons, provides an overview of the lessons, including information about how to introduce and use the lesson components.

Chapters 8–11 present the differentiated lessons for grades 3, 4, and 5. The chapters begin with information and teaching tips about a reading strategy (visualize, infer, draw conclusions, or compare-and-contrast) and include two focus lessons presented by the teacher. The focus lessons are followed by the differentiated lessons, which invite students to analyze and think critically by interpreting what they've learned, to write about their learning in their notebooks, and to complete word work.

Comparing and Contrasting: “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs”

Directions: Read the text and complete the activities.

There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs

by David L. Harrison

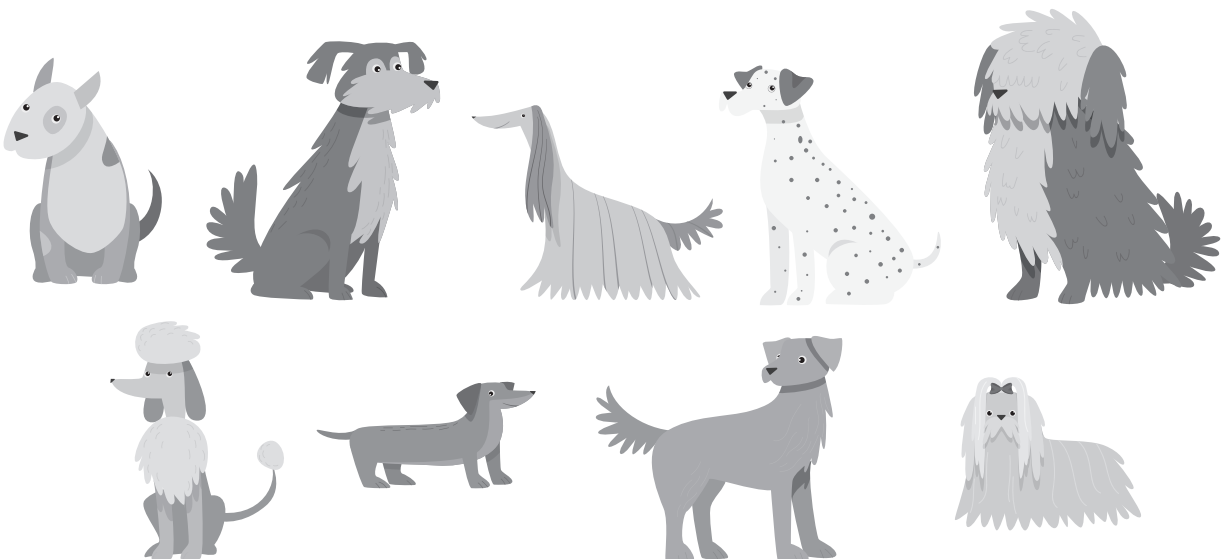
- 1 There are millions of dogs in the world—perhaps as many as nine hundred million! This is what that number looks like: 900,000,000. If you add all the people in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Brazil, and Mexico together, that’s how many nine hundred million is. There are wild dogs, lost dogs, and dogs in animal shelters, but most dogs live with people. We love our dogs, and our dogs love us.
- 2 There are over 450 dog breeds in many shapes and sizes. The smallest breed, the Chihuahua (chuh-WAA-wuh), may stand only six inches tall and weigh just three pounds. The biggest breed, the mastiff, may stand 35 inches tall and weigh 230 pounds.
- 3 Where did so many kinds of dogs come from? The first dogs branched off from an ancient kind of wolf that died long ago. It may have happened as far back as thirty-two thousand (32,000) years ago. Dogs may have already been dogs when they first met humans, or they might have become dogs later.
- 4 Some people think that somewhere a pack of wolves began to like the food scraps that human hunters threw for them to eat. As time passed, the wild beasts began to trust the hunters. They liked how warm it was around the campfires on cold nights. The hunters liked having the animals around to guard them when they slept. Maybe wolf cubs liked to have their ears scratched and their bellies rubbed and became pets.
- 5 No matter how it happened, dogs are our pets now. Some of them even work for us. People breed and train dogs to be good at doing things we need. Want a heavy sled pulled across the ice? There are strong dogs for that.

(continued)

Comparing and Contrasting: “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs” *(continued)*

Directions: Read the text and complete the activities.

- 6 When a duck hunter shoots a duck and needs to get it out of cold water, there are dogs that do that. There are fierce dogs to guard us, dogs with keen noses to track down a missing person, and bossy dogs to herd our sheep. There are dogs trained to guide us if we can't see, and dogs that know how to make us feel better when we need it.
- 7 But no matter whether a dog is six inches tall or weighs 230 pounds, it is still a dog. It will sniff other dogs' butts to say "Hi." It will use its tail to tell others that it is happy, worried, or ready to fight. It may use its voice to let us know that it is hungry or needs to go out—now! It may perk up its ears to tell us something is up or melt our hearts with its trusting eyes.
- 8 We take our dogs for walks on leashes, give them treats when they're good, and feed them from sacks or cans. They don't know it, but a long time ago, they likely came from wolves.



Thinking about “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs”

Directions: Complete these activities. For each activity, label a page in your notebook with the date, the title of the text, and which activity you are completing.

Activity 1: Comparing and Contrasting

1. Work with your partner. Take turns reading the paragraphs of “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs” out loud. Discuss why you think the author calls this piece “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs.” Find details in the text to support your thinking.
2. Reread “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs.” Discuss where dogs came from.
3. Reread the fourth paragraph. In your notebook, list what you learned about wolves.
4. Learn more about wolves using text or video resources. Write notes, and discuss what you learned with your partner.
5. Compare and contrast wolves and dogs. You can use a Venn diagram or a T-chart that you draw.
 - To use a Venn diagram: Write “wolves” above the left circle and “dogs” above the right circle. Write how wolves and dogs are alike where the circles overlap. Write ways they are different under each type of animal.
 - To use a T-chart: On the left side, write “wolves.” On the right side, write “dogs.” List the differences under each type of animal. Then write “How They’re Alike,” and list ways they are alike.
6. Review your work. Use details to draw a conclusion about wolves and dogs. Or make a prediction about both types of animals. Discuss your conclusion or prediction with your partner. Write about what you discussed in your notebook.

Activity 2: Word Work: Word Families and Using Context Clues

1. Write the term *word families*. Explain everything you know about them.
2. Create a T-chart. Choose two of these words from the text: *pets, breed, tall, take*. On the left side of the T-chart, write one of the words. On the right side, write the other word. Under each word, list words in the same word family. Share your words with your partner.
3. Reread the first paragraph of the text. Explain in your notebook how the context clues help you understand the idea of *nine hundred million*.
4. Use examples from the text to explain this sentence to your partner: “Some of them [dogs] even work for us.” Write your ideas in your notebook.

Name: _____

Date: _____

“There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs” Word Ladder

Directions: Start at the bottom. Read the clues and write the words.

10
Not easy to bend. Change two letters.

8
To cause or allow a liquid to flow from a container. Add one letter.

6
A raised area of land smaller than a mountain. Take away one letter.

4
A thick soup usually made with beans, meat, onion, tomato sauce, and spices. Replace the last letter with two letters.

2
A part of your face below your mouth. Replace the last six letters with one letter.

11
The largest breed of dog. Add two letters.

9
Not moving. Change one letter.

7
A small tablet of medicine taken in the mouth. Change one letter.

5
A feeling of being cold and shivering; the opposite of warmth. Change one letter.

3
A food that is usually thin and has been baked or fried until crisp. Change one letter.

1
The smallest breed of dog.

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

Chihuahua

1

Thinking Challenge

The word ladder starts with *Chihuahua* and ends with *mastiff*. With your partner, compare and contrast the Chihuahua and the mastiff. Show how they are alike and different. Think about how both of these dogs connect to a big idea in “There Are Dogs, and There Are Dogs.” Write your thoughts in your notebook.