



Growing our Readers: Nonfiction Reading

Helping Your Child Learn from Informational
Texts Grades K-5 Volume XIII

Amy Wilson- Elementary School Director



Table of contents

01 Why Nonfiction Matters

02 How Kids Learn from Informational Texts

03 Practical Tips to Try at Home

04 Choosing the Right Informational Books

05 Nonfiction Book Lists by Grade Level





Why Nonfiction Matters



Informational (nonfiction) texts are everywhere — from books about animals and space to recipes, maps, labels, and even signs on your way to school. These texts help children:

- **Build vocabulary and background knowledge** about the world around them.
- **Develop critical thinking skills** as they learn to understand facts, main ideas, text features, and how information is organized.
- **Connect learning to real life**, which boosts curiosity and engagement.



Research shows that kids who practice reading informational texts become stronger readers overall because they learn strategies that help them understand *what a text is teaching* — *not just what the words say*.





How Kids Learn from Informational Texts



Understanding the Text Structure

Informational books often organize information in patterns like *cause and effect*, *compare/contrast*, or *chronological order*. Recognizing these patterns helps children follow the author's ideas more easily.



Using Text Features

Features like **headings**, **table of contents**, **glossaries**, **diagrams**, and **captions** aren't just decorations — they guide understanding. Helping children notice and use them makes reading feel more purposeful.

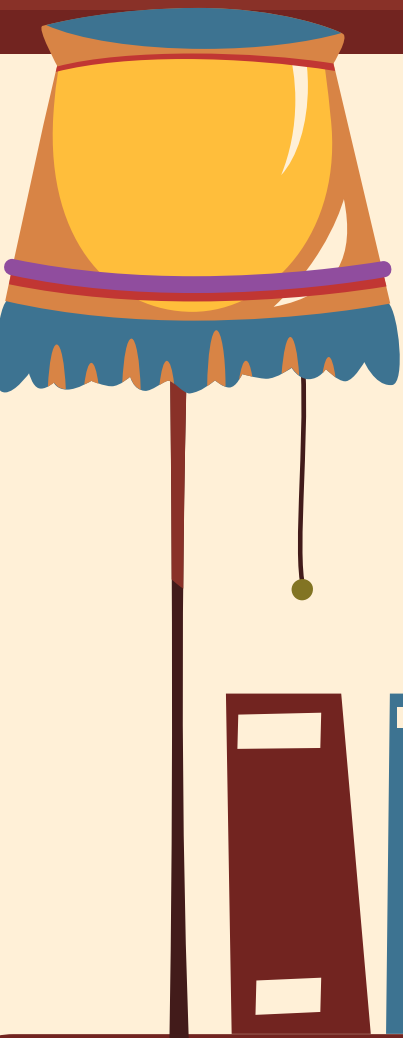


Asking Questions & Summarizing



Encourage your child to think about:

- *What did I learn?*
- *What surprised me?*
- *What questions do I still have?*
- Simple activities like the **3-2-1 strategy** (three things learned, two interesting facts, one question) can strengthen comprehension.



Practical Tips to Try at Home

Explore Text Features Together



Before reading a new book, *skim* the contents:

- Look at chapter titles
- Talk about photos and charts
- Find the glossary or index

Help your child predict what they might learn — it builds purpose!

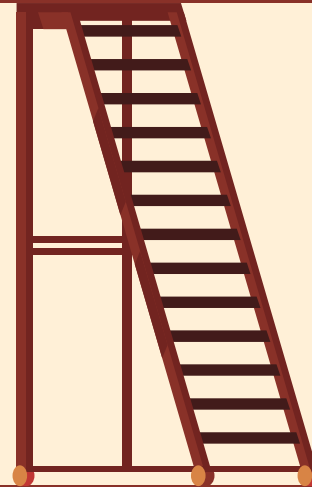


Connect Reading with Everyday Tasks



Informational texts aren't only books! Try:

- Reading directions on a recipe while cooking
- Looking at a map while planning a family trip
- Exploring an article or fact video about something your child wonders about



Ask Thoughtful Questions

Pause sometimes and ask:

- "What's the big idea here?"
- "Why do you think the author included this fact?"
- "Did you learn something new?"

These prompts support deeper thinking.





Choosing the Right Informational Books



For Younger or Beginning Readers



Look for:

- ✓ Short, simple text
- ✓ Large print and supportive pictures
- ✓ Familiar topics (animals, weather, space)



For Older or More Experienced Readers

Let your child choose topics they *care about* — interest boosts persistence and comprehension.

Also consider:

- ✓ More complex texts with captions, maps, and charts
- ✓ Books with clear text structure (compare/contrast, cause/effect)
- ✓ Subjects that build background knowledge for school projects





Great Nonfiction Book Lists





Kindergarten & Grade 1

Great for first nonfiction experiences — short text, engaging photos, and simple facts.

Recommended Books

- Fly Guy Presents series (e.g., *Sharks*, *Space*) — fun facts with kid-friendly text.
- *Tornadoes!* by Gail Gibbons — accessible science with clear diagrams.
- *National Geographic Readers: Ponies and other National Geographic Kids* level readers — nonfiction photos and facts.
- *Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney — nonfiction about geography and place.
- *The Tiny Seed & From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle — nonfiction themes in picture book form



Second & Third Grades

Readers are ready for richer facts, more text features, and greater independence.

Recommended Books

- **Animal Atlas for Kids** – visual journeys through wildlife and habitats.
- **Wild Vet Adventures: Saving Animals Around the World** – true stories about animal care and conservation.
- **The Magic School Bus** nonfiction titles — science topics presented in fun, informative ways.
- *National Geographic Kids Everything Battles* — fascinating comparisons and photos.
- **Who Would Win?** series — engaging fact “vs.” format kids love.



Fourth & Fifth Grades

Older elementary readers are ready for more complex nonfiction — deep facts, biographies, science concepts, and historical topics.

Recommended Books

- **I Am Albert Einstein** (Brad Meltzer's *Ordinary People Change the World*) — biography that inspires curiosity in science and history.
- ***Who Would Win?*** titles — still engaging for older kids who love animals and facts.
- **National Geographic Kids Almanac** — tons of facts across science, culture, and nature.
- **Biographies & History:** Look for books about real people, explorers, scientists, or events (e.g., civil rights heroes, astronauts, inventors). *Common Sense Media* lists many age-appropriate options.
- **Engineering and science topics** – books about inventions, space missions, or discoveries (e.g., *Isaac Newton* and *Physics for Kids* style titles) have great crossover between facts and real-life application.





Favorite Nonfiction & Author Series

Gail Gibbons

clear, informative
picture books on many
topics.

National Geographic Kids Series

consistently rich,
photo-driven nonfiction.



Science Comics

engaging graphic
nonfiction series
covering STEM topics.

Who Was/Is Series

biographies kids enjoy
(older grades).





Nonfiction reading is not just about *reading* — it's about *thinking, questioning, and connecting ideas*. With your support at home, your child can become a confident informational reader who enjoys discovering new things every day!



We appreciate your feedback!

Was this resource helpful?
Take a moment to answer three short questions to help guide future
Growing our Readers Newsletters.

