Short complex texts, with deep reading activities.
**Why Short Reads Non-Fiction?**

**TEXTS FOR CLOSE READING AND DEEP COMPREHENSION**

Close reading involves careful study of a short text passage to build a deep, critical understanding of the text. By developing children’s comprehension and higher-order thinking skills, you can help them make sense of the world.

“A significant body of research links the close reading of complex text—whether the student is a struggling reader or advanced—to significant gains in reading proficiency, and finds close reading to be a key component of college and career readiness.”

(Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2012, p. 7)¹.

**READING AND RE-READING FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES**

The texts in *Short Reads Non-fiction* are carefully selected and deliberately short. This focusses students on purposeful reading, re-reading and responding. They learn about the topic through rich vocabulary development and deep comprehension.

Students re-read and analyse the text through questioning to explore:

- text structure and features
- key ideas and details
- connections/conclusions
- predictions/inferences
- words and phrases in context

Students actively respond to the text using:

- higher-order thinking skills
- paired discussion
- written responses
Choosing a Short Text

Your students should ideally be reading texts at a level appropriate to their reading development, or have teaching support to help them access texts outside their normal reading range.

**WITHIN A STUDENT’S READING RANGE**

To determine a good fit between the student and the short text, you can use:
- subjective data including:
  - students’ prior knowledge of or interest in the topic
  - support provided during reading (e.g. the text being read aloud)

- objective assessment—Short Reads Non-fiction text was assessed in three ways:
  - colour wheel/book bands
  - reading level (as levelled by Scholastic)
  - Lexile® (as levelled by MetaMetrics®)

**BEYOND A STUDENT’S READING RANGE**

You might choose a text that is outside a student’s normal reading range, perhaps because the text fits with a classroom study topic, or because students are not from English-speaking backgrounds.

You can support students by:
- providing background information about the topic
- clarifying the vocabulary in advance
- reading the text aloud
- using ‘think aloud’ techniques to model ways to access the text
- actively engaging the students in conversations about what they’ve read

Scheduling Short Reads in the Classroom

The cards are designed as teacher-led, small group activities and should be an alternative to other group activities. Because the cards are short, your class should be able to read, re-read and discuss a card in one lesson of 20–30 minutes. Students may then complete two independent writing activities, which should each take between 10 and 20 minutes.
Using the Short Reads Lesson Notes

**Chocolate Mining**

**Focus Question:** Can people mine for things without causing major damage to the environment?

**PREPARE & READ**

- Discuss what it means to mine for something.
- Ask if the students know any objects that we dig for in the ground.
- Ask students to read the card.

**READ CLOSELY**

Illustrations and Vocabulary

Look at the tiny illustration near the heading. How does this illustration help you understand the meaning of the word mining?

Make Connections

Read the introduction under the heading and the “What do we dig for?” section. Why does the author first talk about ways we use things that grow or exist on Earth’s surface, when most of the card is about mining?

**DISCUSS**

These questions can be discussion. Ask students their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.
- What’s the problem? Between getting electricity and mining coal, and using solar panels to make energy from the sun?
- Permission to mine things from Earth usually comes from the community. It makes the government know they are concerned about mining in the local area? What’s the problem? Why was mining not environment in the past? How did mining methods change the Earth?

**WRITE**

Have students choose one of the following options for writing, or do both.
- Fold your paper in half. On one side write the heading “Reasons for Mining” and on the other side list “Problems with Mining” Facts taken from the front of the card under the appropriate heading. (Information/Explanation)
- Write a letter to your local newspaper. Explain why we should be careful when mining for things underground. Use examples from the card to support your reasoning. (Opinion)

**POSSIBLE RESPONSE**

Exemplary answers for challenging questions

**STUDENT TEXT**

Copy of both sides of the card

**RED NUMBERS ON CARD**

Cross-reference to questions in “Read Closely” section

**WRITE**

Two writing tasks using information, explanation and opinion writing skills

---

**REFERENCES:**

**SUMMARY:**

These pages describe what mining is and why we do it. Card designs are a match to the chocolate biscuit as a biscuit without damaging the biscuit.

**Thematic Focus:**

energy: environment, resources, human impact, and practices.

**Text Features:**

heading, subheadings, equipment list, photos, diagrams, illustrations, text boxes, list of rules, capital letters, rhetorical questions.

**Vocabulary:**

- buried: hidden underground
- cheaper: lower in price
- crush: to dig into the ground to collect minerals, metals, jewels etc.
- precious: valuable or costly
- mine (verb): to dig for something.
- precious: precious or costly
- mine (noun): earth's minerals or resources
- precious: precious or costly

**Themes/Ideas:**

- mining: the extraction of valuable materials from the earth's crust
- environment: the natural, living things in an area
- resources: materials found in the earth's crust
- human impact: the effects of human activity on the environment

**Procedure**

These pages describe what mining is and why we do it. Card designs are a match to the chocolate biscuit as a biscuit without damaging the biscuit.

**Sequence:**

The presentation of this procedure is different from that of other procedures. How is it different? Why did the author arrange things in this way?

**Author’s Language Choices**

Pages 1 and 2 have two quite different styles of writing. How are they different? How does the author use humour in the final comment to reinforce the main message presented in the first part of the card?

**POSSIBLE RESPONSE**

Exemplary answers for challenging questions

**DISCUSS**

These questions can be discussion. Ask students their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.
- What’s the problem? Between getting electricity and mining coal, and using solar panels to make energy from the sun?
- Permission to mine things from Earth usually comes from the community. It makes the government know they are concerned about mining in the local area? Why was mining not environment in the past? How did mining methods change the Earth?

**WRITE**

Have students choose one of the following options for writing, or do both.
- Fold your paper in half. On one side write the heading “Reasons for Mining” and on the other side list “Problems with Mining”. Facts taken from the front of the card under the appropriate heading. (Information/Explanation)
- Write a letter to your local newspaper. Explain why we should be careful when mining for things underground. Use examples from the card to support your reasoning. (Opinion)

**SUMMARY:**

What are some of the different things we dig for? What things do we make using objects from underground? What are some of the problems caused by mining?