

Conversation Stems

General Conversation around Informational Texts

Whether reading nonfiction or fiction texts, it is equally important for students to talk about those texts with each other. Readers read differently when they are going to be in conversations later, they read holding conversations in their minds.

Stems:

- *The weird thing about this is...*
- *I wonder why...*
- *Did you notice that...*
- *The text is teaching me...*
- *The most important parts are...*
- *This reminds me of...*
- *I used to think..., but now I am realizing*
- *So, again, the idea is that...*

Pushing Deeper Thinking about Content

You will probably want to teach your students that researchers don't just take information in while reading. They also think about whatever they've read: they wonder at this, they think more deeply about that, they make connections, they ponder, they consider the implications of what they read.

Teach students that it is important to take some of what they are thinking, jot it down, and then write more deeply off of this. You'll want your students to literally "write to think" showing them that rewriting something fascinating in their own words can spur bigger ideas if they just keep their pens moving.

Stems:

- *In other words...*
- *Stated differently...*
- *This matters because...*
- *This is different than I expected because...*
- *My ideas about this are complicates. On one hand I think... But then again, I also think...*

Extending a Point in the Text

You might teach certain thought prompts: "This makes me realize...", "This is interesting because...", "This makes sense because..." or "This reminds me of..." all can be powerful ways for students to extend a point they've read about.

Stems:

- *This makes me realize...*
- *This is interesting because...*
- *This makes sense because...*
- *This reminds me of...*
- *I think the author is trying to convey...*
- *It is important to notice...*
- *To add on...*

Source: A Curricular Plan for the Reading Workshop, Grade 7 and Grade 8, 2011-2012
Unit Four Nonfiction Research Clubs: Developing Analytical Lenses for Informational Reading
Lucy Calkins and colleagues at Columbia University's Teachers College.