

# PowerPoint Handouts

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## Making Connections



A Presentation for Teachers in  
Grades 6-12










TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Making Connections  
Grades 6-12



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Training Goals

- Clarify the difference between activating and building background knowledge.
- Understand the importance of Making Connections as a foundational strategy.
- Plan and practice an introduction lesson for Making Connections.
- Plan and practice a think-aloud lesson for teaching Making Connections.



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

What does this store sell?



(Adapted from Wilhelm, 2004)



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

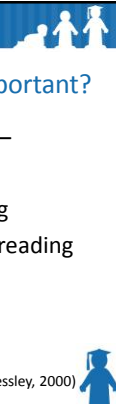
### Why is Background Knowledge Important?

“The many active processes of reading –

- prediction
- construction of images during reading
- monitoring of comprehension and rereading
- summarization
- interpretation

– depend greatly on prior knowledge.”  
(Pressley, 2000)

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE


“Our prior experience and background knowledge fuel the connections we make.

- the books we read
- the authors we choose
- the discussions we have
- our past experiences
- the newspaper
- the evening news
- the weekly magazines
- the internet
- and nightly dinner table conversations ...



all forge connections that lead to new insight. We teach kids to think about their connections and read in ways that let them discover these threads.”  
(Harvey and Goudvis, 2000)

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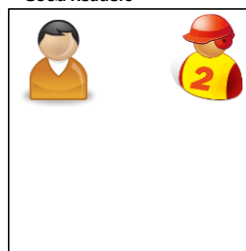
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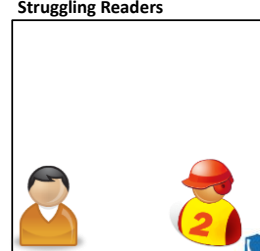
TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Knowledge of Baseball

**Good Readers**

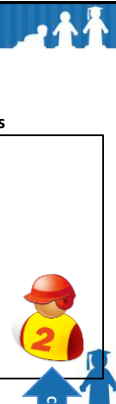


**Struggling Readers**



(Recht & Leslie, 1988)

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### All Students Have Background Knowledge

“...all students have background knowledge even though not all of them have the *academic* background knowledge necessary to do well in school. The background knowledge that is not germane to academic success may still be highly valuable in other contexts and, as such, should be honored along with the bearers of that knowledge.”

(Marzano, 2004)

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Build? Or Activate?

Building Background Knowledge	Activating Background Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students know little or nothing about a topic</li><li>• May take place 1-2 weeks before reading</li><li>• Takes 3-4 exposures, no more than 2 days apart</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students have some knowledge of a topic</li><li>• Takes place directly prior to reading</li><li>• Takes 2-10 minutes</li></ul>

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Building Background Knowledge

- When beginning a new unit or topic of study, assess what students do/do not know. (Wilhem, 2004)
- Pre-read selections to determine knowledge that is essential for understanding unit texts.
- Plan “virtual experiences” to build students’ knowledge. (Marzano, 2004)

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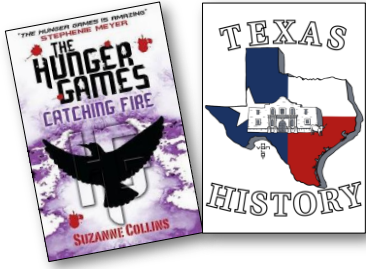
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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Building Background Knowledge



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

For new information to become part of memory students need:

- 3-4 exposures
- No more than 2 days apart

**Week prior to reading:**

**Monday:** Read aloud a short article from social studies text about Texas Annexation.


**Tuesday:** Brainstorm a chart of the problems facing the Republic of Texas .

**Wednesday:** Show a map of the three regions of the United States as it applies to sectionalism. Discuss where Texas falls?

**Friday:** Quick review of what we have learned about Texas annexation.

(Nuthall, 1999).

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Activating Background Knowledge

- Activating background knowledge should take just a few moments.
- We should activate background knowledge that is crucial to understanding the text.
- The background knowledge we activate should be linked to our purpose for reading.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Background Knowledge

What's important for teachers to keep in mind regarding background knowledge?  
How might these factors affect your teaching?  
Your students' learning?



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Why Should We Teach  
**MAKING CONNECTIONS?**



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Making Connections

“We are turning out lots of superficial readers. They look and sound competent. They read smoothly and retell what they’ve read with some detail, but they are unable to go further – to discuss why characters behave as they do, to give a concise summary, to discuss the theme or big ideas, to talk about the author’s purpose.”

(Routman, 2003)



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE


### Why Teach Making Connections?

Connections help readers:

- Relate to characters
- Visualize
- Avoid boredom
- Pay attention
- Listen to others
- Read actively
- Remember what they read
- Ask questions

(Tovani, 2000)

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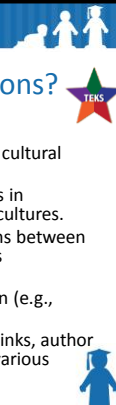
TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Why Teach Making Connections?

Students are expected to:

- 6.3(C): Compare and contrast the historical and cultural settings of two literary works.
- 6.3(B): Analyze the function of stylistic elements in traditional and classical literature from various cultures.
- 6.10(D): Synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres.
- Figure 19(C): Monitor and adjust comprehension (e.g., using background knowledge ...);
- Figure 19(F): Make connections (e.g., thematic links, author analysis) between and across multiple texts of various genres and provide textual evidence.

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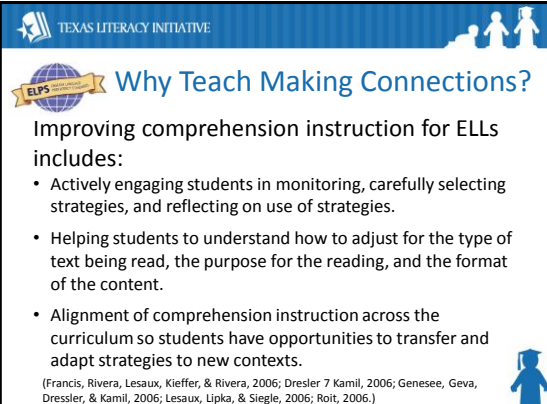
### Why Teach Making Connections?

Improving comprehension instruction for ELLs includes:

- Actively engaging students in monitoring, carefully selecting strategies, and reflecting on use of strategies.
- Helping students to understand how to adjust for the type of text being read, the purpose for the reading, and the format of the content.
- Alignment of comprehension instruction across the curriculum so students have opportunities to transfer and adapt strategies to new contexts.

(Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Dresler & Kamil, 2006; Genesee, Geva, Dresler, & Kamil, 2006; Lesaux, Lipka, & Siegle, 2006; Roit, 2006.)

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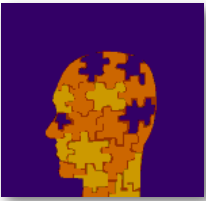
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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

## How Do You Teach MAKING CONNECTIONS?

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

## Introducing Cognitive Strategies

**Strategy Instruction**

**Direct – Explicit – Systematic**

1. Use a real-world example to create a context (teacher selects).
2. Give the strategy a name.
3. Define the strategy, how and when it is used, and how it helps with reading.
4. Give students touchstones, such as a hand gesture or icon, to help them remember the strategy.
5. Show aloud, using the strategy in a variety of contexts.
6. Engage students by providing opportunities for them to share their thinking during the reading. Practice shared application with planned discussion prompts.
7. Scaffold practice, providing opportunities for students to use the strategy while reading, with teacher support and modeling.
8. Provide accountability measures for students while using the strategy independently.

**Engaging Assessment** may include informal assessments such as peer reviews, observations of class discussion profiles, graphic, student records of thinking, goal notes, drawings, and protocols, as well as formal assessments.

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Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning	
Title of Lesson	
<b>Step 1</b> Use a real-world example to create a context.	Anchor lesson
<b>Step 2</b> Give the strategy a name.	Define the strategy and when to use it.
<b>Step 3</b> Define the strategy, how and when it is used, and how it helps with reading.	Strategy definition How it helps us comprehend
<b>Step 4</b> Give students touchstones.	Model hand gesture, explain strategy purpose, and offer to anchor lesson.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 1: Anchor Lesson

“Today, we are going to explore our background knowledge. Did you know that everyone has background knowledge? Background knowledge is another way for saying, ‘What I know.’ You have lots of background knowledge because you know a lot about many things. We get background knowledge from doing things, seeing things, going places, from reading, and talking with others.”

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### My Background Knowledge



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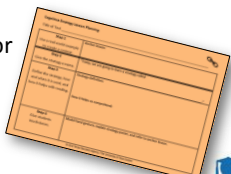
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### Step 1: Anchor Lesson

Use a real-world example to create a context.



Record what you will do for Step 1 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Teaching the Strategy (Steps 2-4)

Strategy Instruction		
Direct – Explicit – Systematic		
<b>responsibility</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use a real-world example to create a context (anchor lesson).</li> <li>2. Give the strategy a name.</li> <li>3. Define the strategy, how and when it is used, and how it helps with reading.</li> <li>4. Give students touchstones, such as a hand gesture or icon, to help them remember the strategy.</li> </ol>	<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>



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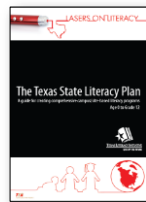
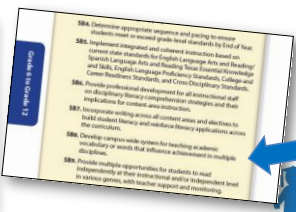
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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 2: Give the Strategy a Name

“Today we’re going to learn a strategy called Making Connections.”

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 2: Give the Strategy a Name

**“Today we’re going to learn a strategy called Making Connections.”**

Record what you will say for Step 2 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 3: Tell Why and How it is Used

**Strategy Definition:**  
**“We are going to learn how to use our background knowledge to help us understand what we are reading. When something in the text reminds us of something we know, we call that making a connection.”**

**How it helps us understand:**  
**“When we make connections while reading, it helps us understand and remember the text better.”**



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 3: Tell Why and How it is Used

Record what you will say for Step 3 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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### Step 4: Touchstones

Provide students with a hand motion that signals “Making Connections”



Display strategy poster in the classroom



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 4: Touchstones

Touchstones: Model hand gesture, explain strategy poster and refer to the anchor lesson.

“See this Making Connections strategy poster? It shows a chain link. The two links are connected. This poster helps us to remember that good readers make connections when they read. Today when I am reading, I will show you when I am making a connection to the text by crossing my fingers to make them connect. Remember, a connection is when something in the text reminds us of something in our background knowledge. For example, we all have background knowledge of cars.”



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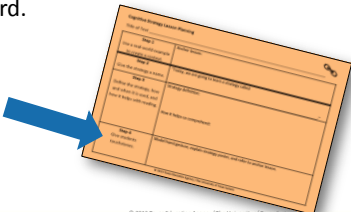
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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 4: Touchstones

Record what you will say for Step 4 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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### Practice Steps 2-4

You Do:

With a partner, practice Steps 2-4 of your Making Connections lesson.



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 5: Think Aloud (Side 2)

Step 5 is where we SHOW students how we use the strategy while reading.

We plan a comprehension purpose question (CPQ) as well as places to model thinking aloud for students.

Step 5 will differ with each lesson. We transfer the sticky notes from the planning card and place them right on the text.



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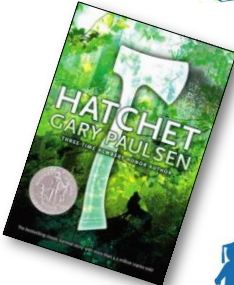
TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 5: Think Aloud

Pages 13-29

CPQ: What does Brian do to try and help the situation.

*“As we read chapter 2, I will stop and think-aloud some of the connections I make while reading.”*



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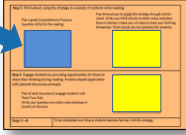
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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

## Your Turn!

1. Read pages 15-16.
2. Use the Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card to plan a CPQ for this text.



Pages 14-29  
CPQ: What does Brian do to try and help the situation.

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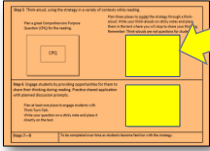


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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

## Your Turn!

3. Use the Think-Aloud sticky notes to record 2-3 places where you will stop to think-aloud making connections.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

## Step 5: Think Aloud

**EXAMPLE 4 Write and solve a linear system**


**KAYAKING** During a kayaking trip, a kayaker travels 12 miles upstream (against the current) and 12 miles downstream (with the current), as shown. The speed of the current remained constant during the trip. Find the average speed of the kayak in still water and the speed of the current.



Upstream: 3 hours  
Downstream: 2 hours

CPQ: What is the average speed of the kayak in still water and the speed of the current?

Larson, R., Boswell, L., Kanold, T. & Stiff, L. (2007).



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE



### Step 5: Think Aloud

**► Molecules**

Ionic compounds are compounds formed by combining cations and anions. The attractive electrostatic force between a cation and an anion is called an *ionic bond*.

A molecular compound is formed when a non-metal and metal combine to form a covalent bond. Covalent bonds are the type of bonds formed when two atoms *share* one or more pairs of electrons to achieve an octet of electrons. A polar covalent bond is formed when the atoms *unequally share* paired electrons.

CPQ: How are ionic bonds different from covalent bonds and polar covalent bonds?

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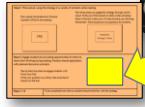

TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 6

Engage students by providing meaningful opportunities for them to share their thinking during the reading. Practice shared application with planned discussion prompts.

p. 20. "Let's think for a moment. How do you think Brian is feeling right now? Can you make a connection to how he's feeling?"

Turn and talk to your partner.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### How Can We Help Our Students Make Connections?

- Carefully preview texts and choose texts to which students can relate.
- Model authentic connections by thinking through the text yourself before reading with the students.
- Be explicit about the ways connections help you understand.
  - When modeling, use the stems, "That reminds me of ..." and "That helps me understand the text better because ..."
  - Post these stems for student reference.



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Caution

**Surface-level Connections**  
Example: "That character has the same name that I do!"

**Distracting Connections**  
Example: "That character has a dog, and I have a dog, and one time we took the dog to the lake. We went fishing at the lake. We ate the fish for dinner. I don't like fish. I like pizza."



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Caution

Weak readers often have difficulty understanding text because they make connections to background knowledge that is irrelevant to the reading task. When students are directly taught to integrate background knowledge with the text, however, they do better on comprehension measures.

(Hansen, 1981; Pressley, 2002)



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 7: Scaffolded Practice with Support

Scaffold practice, providing opportunities for students to use the strategy while reading with the teacher's support and monitoring.

*"We are going to read an article in class today. As you read, I want you to be aware of the connections you make to what we've learned so far about the Earth's core. Record your connections on sticky notes and place them on the text. When you are finished reading the article, complete the 3 column chart we use for Making Connections and be prepared to share your thinking during small group discussion."*



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 7: Scaffolded Practice with Support

**Making Connections**

Name: Emily

The Rare Rocks offer a unique glimpse of the Earth's core because...

What I read	Connections	My connection helps me understand the text because...
p. 1	Connections of continents and plates is important because it helps us understand the world.	It helps me to understand why the article states that plates of the origin of how were found in California.
p. 2	At first I thought this was just a story about science, but it was more than that.	It helps me to understand how.
p. 2	Connections of plates and how they move is important because it helps us understand the world.	It helps me to understand how plates of oceanic crust ended up in the mountains.

CPQ: What might we learn about the Earth's core from studying these rare rocks?

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 8: Accountability

Provide accountability measures for students when using the strategy independently.

**“Today when you are reading independently, I want you to be aware of the connections you’re making while reading. When you’re done reading, complete a quick-write in your Reading Reflection Journal, explaining the connections you made.”**

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Step 8: Accountability

**To Kill A Mockingbird Chapter 1**  
The story takes place during depression. Many people in my neighborhood are unemployed and facing hard times. Scout is raised by her father, in a single family home. My mother raises me alone and I understand how it feels to have a parent missing.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Other Considerations When Teaching  
**MAKING CONNECTIONS**

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE


**3 Types of Connections**

Text-to-Self 

Text-to-Text 

Text-to-World 

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

**3 Types of Connections**

Text-to-Self:  
“Connections between the text and the reader’s experiences and memories. The more experiences and memories a reader has about a topic, the easier the material is to read.”

 (Tovani, 2000)

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

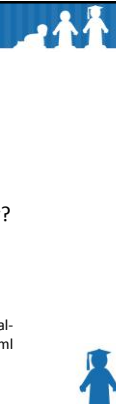
### 3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Self:

- What does this story remind you of?
- Can you relate to the characters in the story?
- Does anything in this story remind you of anything in your own life?

<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/making-connections-30659.html>

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

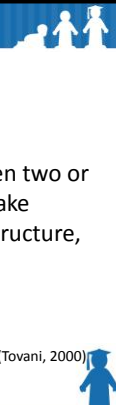
### 3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Text:

“Connections the reader makes between two or more types of texts. The reader may make connections relative to plot, content, structure, or style.”

(Tovani, 2000)

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE


### 3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Text:

- What does this remind you of in another book you have read?
- How is this text similar to other things you have read?
- How is this text different from other things you have read?

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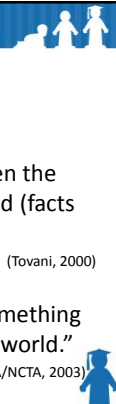
TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### 3 Types of Connections

**Text-to-World:**  
“Connections the reader makes between the text and what he knows about the world (facts and information).”  
(Tovani, 2000)

“A connection between the text and something that is occurring or has occurred in the world.”  
(IRA/NCTA, 2003)

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### 3 Types of Connections


**Text-to-World:**

- What does this remind you of in the real world?
- How are events in this text similar to things that have happened in the world?
- How are events in this text different from things that have happened in the world?



[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine\\_high\\_school/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine_high_school/index.html)

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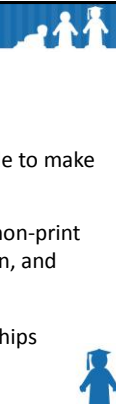
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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

### Tips (Steps 6-8)

- Introduce text-to-text and text-to-world connections when most students are able to make text-to-self connections.
- Allow students to make connections to non-print texts (i.e. movies, video games, television, and music).
- Use graphic organizers to chart relationships between texts.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

On Day

Project Read

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Venn Diagram  
Comparing and Contrasting

Martin Luther King Jr.      Malcolm X

- Encourages Black and white people to work together for racial harmony
- Equality through nonviolent methods
- Christian
- Black Americans
- Leaders
- Religious
- Two races can live apart
- Violence as a way of gaining equality
- Muslim

Different      Same      Different

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Keep In Mind ...

Making Connections is the foundation for many of the other cognitive strategies good readers use. It is important that students have a good understanding of background knowledge, and how they use their background knowledge to make connections during reading.

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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

**YOU DO:**  
Look at text that you will be using in class next week.

1. Plan a CPQ for the text that will link to the strategy of Making Connections.
2. Plan three places to model Making Text-to-Self Connections. Place sticky notes in the text right where you will stop to model the connections that you are making.



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TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

“Background knowledge is a repository of memories, experiences, and facts. When information is read in isolation and not connected to existing knowledge, it is forgotten and deemed unimportant. Calling on existing knowledge and experiences is crucial if readers are to assimilate new information.”

~Cris Tovani



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