

**Mississippi Valley State University  
Teacher Work Sample  
Teaching Process One  
Contextual Factors**

**TWS Standard**

*The teacher uses information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment.*

**Task**

Discuss relevant factors and how they may affect the teaching-learning process. Include any supports and challenges that affect instruction and student learning.

**Directions**

In your discussion, include:

- **Community, district and school factors.**

Greenwood, MS is located in the Mississippi Delta Region. Many people are familiar with Greenwood because it was the center of the cotton industry in Mississippi years ago. The city is located east of west of Grenada, MS, and northwest of Jackson, MS. The Greenwood-Leflore Consolidated School District serves both the Greenwood city students as well as the Leflore county students. The population within the city of Greenwood as of 2019 was approximately 16, 152. The racial demographics within the city are 26.6% white, 71.4% black, and a mixture of other racial backgrounds make up the remaining 2%. The school district includes 4,716 as of October 2019. The community worked collaboratively to make students' graduation in May 2020 a success. With input from students, parents, school and community leaders, everyone came

together to ensure the students were recognized in lieu of a traditional graduation ceremony. The atmosphere within the district is family oriented, so everyone is familiar with the students and their families within the community. There are various businesses, which stimulate the city's economy such as the Greenwood-Leflore Hospital, shopping centers, factories, and the school districts. Because of the revenue generated from these businesses, the community is able to support the school district and become heavily involved.

- **Classroom factors.**

The buildings within my district could use some cosmetic work; however, there are some buildings in better condition than others because they were built more recently, such as Greenwood Middle School. Despite the cosmetic issues with some of the schools around the district, the goal for the district to have 20/20 vision, so that all students can obtain proficiency in all subject areas. This means that our efforts are focused on improving students' literacy and numeracy skills. The buildings are being renovated in increments, so the learning environment does not become uncomfortable for students. There is technology available in each classroom. Every teacher has a smart board, and there are laptops available for students to utilize throughout the school day. The district is working to ensure that there is a 1:1 ratio for students and computers. Parental involvement for academics could use some improvement; however, there is much more parental engagement with the 43 extracurricular activities. The students are given the classroom rules and student handbooks on the first day of classes. They are given an opportunity to develop classroom expectations they have for the teachers and their peers,

and the teacher states his or her expectations of the students, as well. Each day the students enter the classroom they are expected to begin their assigned bell work task. Students will also transition classes at the right side of the hall. Each of these routines are implemented with fidelity throughout the year. Each of these procedures are important when planning for student success because there needs to be a positive learning environment where students feel supported, accepted, and loved.

- **Student characteristics.**

When designing a lesson, the students must always be in mind. Because many classrooms include students of varying performance levels, it is essential for teachers to tailor their lessons to meet the individual needs of students. This can be accomplished by differentiating instruction, building students' ability to self-monitor, and providing remediation and enrichment opportunities for students throughout each lesson. Some students have learning disabilities, so there should be a list of accommodations from the students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to ensure they are receiving equitable instruction. Other students may not have a learning disability, but they are not a fast learner. Therefore, teachers must remember to scaffold the instructional information. This is extremely important following the dismissal of school amidst the current pandemic. Teachers must remember that all students were unable to adequately complete the previous school year, so there will be a learning gap that must be addressed through scaffolding and review at the start of each lesson. In addition, some students learn information through a variety of modalities: kinesthetic (moving), tactile (touching), auditory (listening), and visual (seeing). By keeping this in mind, teachers could

implement activities throughout each lesson to meet these individual learner's needs, and the assessments could be given in various modalities, also. Assessments should be developed first based on the specific learning objectives for each lesson. This means the teacher must begin with the end in mind, and they should be able to assess students based on what information they should have obtained throughout each lesson, and the teacher can address information they may have prior to teaching, so he or she can effectively pace their lesson for the day.

Another aspect teachers must think about when designing a lesson is to be culturally responsive. This means the teachers must choose passages in English/Language Arts that are diverse and address each background represented within the school district. Furthermore, students who are still classified as English Language Learners (ELL) should be afforded an opportunity to read passages that translate into their native language. While it is beneficial to build the students' ability to utilize English language skills, it is still important to be culturally sensitive to the child as he or she transitions, and it will produce more accurate results of the child's capabilities. Teachers should also meet the needs of students by sparking their interest levels based on gender. Many times boys enjoy reading books about sports, outdoors, cars, or gaming, while girls typically love drama, mysteries, beauty, and fashion. Although these are generalizations made for each gender, some categories are applicable to both genders based on personal interest.

- **Instructional implications.**

Since there are 37.7% of the students just within the city who are impoverished, it is important for teachers to understand the importance of remediation, support, and relationship building. Many students from families who are in poverty do not receive assistance with homework, lack nutrition, and they sometimes fall behind academically as a result. These factors are important indicators for teachers to address from day one, so they can attempt to close the learning gaps that may exist within the school. Additionally, students who are consistently disruptive throughout the instructional time can negatively impact themselves and their peers. This distracts those who are listening to the teacher and engaging in discussions, and in many cases it negatively impacts students' grades. This can be problematic when it is time to give an assessment because students were not adequately prepared to test. These things must be considered when planning a lesson to prevent students from being disruptive. When teachers integrate fun and engaging activities within their lessons, they are less likely to deal with disruptive students. Furthermore, they would be addressing the various learning styles, which could positively impact students' assessment scores.

**Mississippi Valley State University  
Teacher Work Sample  
Teaching Process Two  
Learning Goals**

**TWS Standard**

*The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied and appropriate learning goals.*

**Task**

Select Learning Goals/Objectives.

Provide and justify the learning goals/objectives for the unit.

**Directions**

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- **List the learning goals**

RI 5.2a Determine **two or more main ideas** of a text and explain how they are **supported by key details**;

There are three specific learning goals for students throughout this particular unit.

1. The students will be able to determine two or more main ideas in an informational text in order to comprehend key ideas and details within informational texts.

2. The students will be able to explain how key details support important ideas in informational texts.
3. The students will be able to determine which key details support which main ideas in informational texts.

- **Show how the goals are aligned with local, state, or national standards**

The learning goals were chosen from the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for English/Language Arts. This particular skill is vital for students to comprehend informational texts in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

- **Describe the types and levels of your learning goals.**

Each learning goal requires students to read complex reading passages, and they must analyze them each time they read it. The first learning goal would be in the evaluate category for Bloom's Taxonomy. This category is where students are able to determine which ideas are most important based on the author's presentation of ideas. The second learning goal would be under the understand category, and this is where students simply identify which details provide support for the main ideas in a passage. Lastly, the third learning goal is in the evaluate category because it requires students to determine which details support which particular ideas within a text. Each learning goal is required for a 5<sup>th</sup> grader to master by the end of the school year; however, there may be students who

require scaffolding along the way. There may also be students who master the skill sooner than anticipated, so they would receive enrichment with the same skills, but at the next grade level.

- **Discuss why your learning goals/objectives are appropriate in terms of development; prerequisite knowledge, skills; and other student needs.**

These learning goals are appropriate for all students despite their performance level. Students who are not reading on grade level can build their comprehension by identifying key ideas within a text. Furthermore, it would help develop their ability to analyze passages quickly. When students can identify the most important concepts in writing, they have a greater chance of mastering other reading skills. Students only need to have prior knowledge of ways to identify a main idea in a passage such as reading the title, looking at the first and last paragraphs in a passage, and identifying repeated words and phrases. They will need to have phonemic awareness as well as phonological awareness in order to read grade level complex texts. If they do not have these skills, reading fluency and other academic interventions would commence.

**Mississippi Valley State University  
Teacher Work Sample  
Teaching Process Three  
Assessment Plan**

**TWS Standard.**

*The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction.*

**Task**

Provide two examples of instructional decision-making based on students' learning or responses.

**Provide an overview of the assessment plan.**

Students will be given a pre-assessment prior to instruction that will assess their ability to master the learning objectives for the week's lesson. . Throughout each daily lesson there should be an assessment before, during, and after the instruction takes place. The pre-assessment (before) will be a reading passage with 5 questions that address the three learning goals for the week. There will be formative assessments (during) given throughout the unit, but they will not be graded assignments. They will simply be observations, and they will be rated based on an observation checklist. This allows students to receive quick feedback to address their misconceptions. The post-assessment (after) will mirror the same format as the pre-assessment. The pre-assessment and post assessment are both going to have an informational reading passage and 5 questions. Since this is a standards based assessment, the learning goals all depict whether a student has mastered one grade level standard. The questions are worth 20 points each. Since there are three learning goals within one standard, the students will be measured based on their

ability to score at least 60% or greater on a grade-level standard. Mastery at the beginning of the year is at 60%.

**Assessment Plan Table: Fifth Grade English/Language Arts**

<b>Learning Goals</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Format of Assessment</b>	<b>Adaptations</b>
<p><b>Learning Goal 1</b>  <i>The students will be able to determine two or more main ideas in an informational text in order to comprehend key ideas and details within informational texts.</i></p> <p><b>Learning Goal 2</b>  <i>The students will be able to explain how key details support important ideas in informational texts.</i></p> <p><b>Learning Goal 3</b>  <i>The students will be able to determine which key details support which main ideas in informational texts.</i></p>	<p>Pre-Assessment</p> <p>Formative Assessment</p> <p>Post-Assessment</p>	<p><i>Online Form: Multiple Choice Questions and reading passage</i></p> <p><i>Observation (checklist included)</i></p> <p><i>Online Form: Multiple Choice Questions and reading passage</i></p>	<p>*Repeat and modify instructions, as needed. Demonstrate and assist with close reading an informational text. Provide another model of the desired task by using a think aloud. Keep all activities high-interest and brief.</p> <p>*Provide routine talk examples and writing samples, as needed. Provide multiple explanations and model performances. Provide verbal cues and plenty of wait time for Q &amp; A.</p> <p>(This is done for struggling readers and students with disabilities.)</p>

**Observation Checklist for Small Groups**

Student Names:

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Use the following checklist to assess the students' understanding of today's lesson and learning goals. Circle **YES** if the student is on target with each indicator. If not, circle **NO**.

1. Do the students use the Talk Routine information from page A52-53?      YES    NO
2. Do the students provide explanations of their answers?                      YES    NO
3. Do the students use accountable talk throughout discussions?              YES    NO
4. Are the students using the academic vocabulary in the learning goals?      YES    NO
5. Are the students referring back to the standard for justifications?            YES    NO

# RI 5.2 Pre-Assessment "When Stars Explode"

Read the following scientific text by Ken Roswell, PhD. Answer the questions that follow.

\* Required

## "When Stars Explode"

[1] All your friends warned you to stay away from Antares — a big red star in the constellation Scorpius. Someday, they said, Antares would explode.

[2] But you didn't listen. You wanted to visit this supergiant star. Antares is so big that if it were at the center of our solar system, it would swallow Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars.

[3] Now, as your spaceship comes within a few trillion miles of Antares, your neutrino detector sounds an alarm. A big burst of neutrinos is passing through your ship. Neutrinos are tiny particles of matter — they don't hurt you, because they pass harmlessly through everything in their path — but you know what they mean: Antares is about to explode! Quickly you fire your rockets and escape, just as Antares outshines every other star in the galaxy.

## When a Star Dies

[4] The explosion is a supernova, the spectacular death of a star. The last time people saw a supernova in our galaxy was 1604. That was before astronomers were using telescopes. However, every year astronomers see supernovae exploding in other galaxies. Astronomers can often observe such supernovae for months before they fade from view.

[5] Most supernovae — that's the plural of supernova and pronounced SOO-per-NOH-vee — come from massive stars. Antares is a massive star. Such a star is born with more than eight times the mass of the Sun.

[6] When a massive star is young, it is hot, bright, and blue. Its center makes energy the same way the Sun does: by

changing hydrogen, the lightest element, into helium, the second-lightest element. This nuclear reaction creates energy that heats the star and makes it shine.

[7] The outflow of huge amounts of energy — much of it light — pushes outward from the star's center. This is good, because the force of gravity pulls inward and tries to make the star collapse. But as long as the star can make energy, it can fight the force of gravity and survive.

[8] However, a massive star must make lots of energy to fight the gravity of its own mass. So the star shines very brightly. As a result, we can easily see the star across hundreds of light-years of space. This is a huge distance, because one light-year is the distance that light speeds through in a year: nearly 6 trillion (6,000,000,000,000) miles.

[9] But because the star shines so brightly, it uses up its hydrogen fuel within millions of years — much less time than the billions of years the Sun will take to use up its fuel. Soon the star's center runs out of hydrogen. Then the star expands and cools, turning into a big red star like Antares. Astronomers call such a star a red supergiant.

[10] The red supergiant makes energy by changing helium and other elements into still heavier elements. But these nuclear reactions do not make as much energy as hydrogen did. Within a few million years, the star has no fuel left.

[11] Now the star is in big trouble. The star can't make energy to hold itself up, and gravity is still trying to pull the star inward. So the star's center collapses, scrunching itself into a small, dense object.

Meanwhile, the star's outer layers shoot into space at millions of miles per hour. The star has exploded!

### Our Sun Won't Blow Up

[12] Supernovae are violent, but we do not have to worry. The Sun will never explode. If a supernova occurred within a few dozen light-years of Earth, we would be in trouble. But the nearest star that will explode is more than a hundred light-years away.

[13] Believe it or not, supernovae help life. In fact, without them, the Earth would not exist. Neither would we.

[14] In the year 1054, people saw a star explode in the constellation Taurus. Much later, astronomers used telescopes to discover this expanding cloud of debris. It is called the Crab Nebula. It is a supernova remnant — the remains of an exploded star.

[15] Here's why. When the universe began, it had only the three lightest elements: hydrogen, helium, and a little lithium. But life needs heavier elements, such as oxygen, which we breathe, and iron, which is in our blood. And the Earth is made mostly of oxygen, silicon, and iron.

[16] Almost all oxygen came from massive stars, like Antares. During their lives, massive stars cause helium nuclei to join together to make oxygen. Then, when the stars explode, they cast this oxygen into space. And the explosions themselves make iron. In fact, scientists think supernova explosions made most of the iron in the universe.

[17] How did these vital elements get from the supernovae to our planet — and even into our bodies? Billions of years ago, before the Earth was born, supernovae cast oxygen and iron into space. These elements drifted through the galaxy. They became part of a cloud of gas and dust that contained other elements. This cloud gave birth to the Sun and the Earth. You are made of those atoms now.

[18] So even though a supernova means a star has died, it also marks the birth of elements that support life.

The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which two main ideas are expressed in the text? \*

20 points

- A. When stars explode, they produce different elements.
- B. People watch stars explode, so they can study them.
- C. Star explosions can support life because of vital elements.
- D. When stars explode, people should hide in a safe place.
- E. Star explosions can be seen through telescopes only.

Part B: Which details from the text accurately support each main idea in part A? \*

20 points

- A. "Astronomers can often observe such supernovae for months before they fade from view."  
(Paragraph 4), "Believe it or not, supernovae help life. In fact, without them, the Earth would not exist. Neither would we." (Paragraph 13)
- B. "Its center makes energy the same way the Sun does: by changing hydrogen, the lightest element, into helium, the second-lightest element." (Paragraph 6), "And the Earth is made mostly of oxygen, silicon, and iron." (Paragraph 15)
- C. "As a result, we can easily see the star across hundreds of light-years of space." (Paragraph 8), "But as long as the star can make energy, it can fight the force of gravity and survive."  
(Paragraph 7)
- D. "The red supergiant makes energy by changing helium and other elements into still heavier elements." (Paragraph 10), "" (Paragraph 9)

How does paragraph 13 support the main idea that exploding stars are helpful? \*

20 points

- A. by revealing the requirements for life on Earth
- B. by explaining the connections between elements and life
- C. by discussing facts about how Earth is composed of various elements
- D. by highlighting Earth as the most important planet in the solar system

How does paragraph 17 support the idea that exploding stars are not dangerous? \*

20 points

- A. by illustrating the scientific makeup of exploding stars
- B. by listing the process in which the stars explode in the universe
- C. by describing how Earth received its elements from the stars in space
- D. by elaborating on the characteristics of stars before and after they explode

Which detail supports the main idea that exploding stars are not dangerous? \*

20 points

- A. " If a supernova occurred within a few dozen light-years of Earth, we would be in trouble."  
(Paragraph 12)

- B. "In the year 1054, people saw a star explode in the constellation Taurus." (Paragraph 14)
- C. "Then, when the stars explode, they cast this oxygen into space." (Paragraph 16)
- D. " So even though a supernova means a star has died, it also marks the birth of elements that support life." (Paragraph 18)

## RI 5.2 POST-ASSESSMENT "THE CENTER OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM"

Read the following scientific text by Jessica McBirney. Answer the questions that follow.

\* Required

### "THE CENTER OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM"

[1] Have you ever been outside on a hot summer day and wished the sun was just a little cooler or just a little farther away? Like it or not, the sun is vital to our existence here on Earth. The sun's energy keeps our planet at just the right temperature to support life and allow us to grow food. It even keeps the earth spinning year after year. For all that the sun does for us, maybe it's worth learning a little bit more about it.

It's NOT All About Earth

[2] For a long time, people believed the earth stood at the center of the universe and everything, including the sun, revolved around it. This belief is called geocentrism. Geocentrism was an accepted truth until the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus came along. In 1543, Copernicus proved through his observations and mathematical calculations that the earth actually revolved around the sun. This view is called heliocentrism. Copernicus was not the first scientist to discover heliocentrism, but his book *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* provided more detailed support behind the theory.

[3] Other scientists built on his work. In 1609, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei built the most powerful telescope of

his time and used it to confirm heliocentrism. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church, which was a major power in Europe, supported the more commonly-held theory of geocentrism. The Roman Inquisition questioned Galileo and accused him of heresy. In 1633, they sentenced him to life under house arrest. But Galileo continued to write. His work was so influential that he is often called the “father of modern physics.”

[4] Heliocentrism became widely accepted over the next century, and eventually the Church stopped resisting. Scientists could freely study the skies and our star, the sun.

### One of Many Stars

[5] The sun is a star, just like the other millions of stars you see when you look at the night sky. In fact, the sun is a relatively normal star. Like all stars, it is a large ball of gas that produces huge amounts of energy. Stars form when particles floating in space are drawn closer together by gravity, until the cloud of space dust is round and dense. Inside that dense center, hydrogen atoms are under so much pressure that they fuse together into helium atoms. This process is called nuclear fusion, and it releases a lot of extra energy in the forms of heat and light. Nuclear fusion is what keeps stars burning.

### A Whole New World

[6] 4.5 billion years ago, when the sun formed, it was not the only clump of gas and dust swirling around space. As the sun's particles pulled together, other particles and clouds farther away began circling around it, too. Those clouds started condensing into planets. The process was dramatic. Clumps of space dust slammed into each other, breaking apart and reforming, over millions of years. Finally, they solidified into the eight planets we know today. Without the sun and its powerful gravity, the earth may not be here!

### The Sun: The Center of Attention

[7] The sun sits at the center of our solar system. The solar system includes the sun and everything that circles around it: the eight planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune), their moons, and asteroids. The sun is so huge that it accounts for over 98% of all of the mass in the solar system; the pull of its gravity is incredibly strong. All of the planets are stuck circling in this gravitational field, orbiting the sun. Imagine tying a

weight to one end of a string, then holding the other end of the string in your hand and spinning the weight around. The weight is orbiting your hand. The sun holds the whole solar system together in a similar way.

[8] The one big difference between the weight on your string and the planets is that each planet's orbit is actually an oval, or an ellipse, not a circle. This theory was popularized in the early 1600s by Johannes Kepler, a German mathematician and astronomer. Kepler's laws of planetary motion, as well as Isaac Newton's law of gravity, supported Copernicus' theory that the sun was the center of the solar system because it explained how the sun held other planets in orbit.

### Putting It in Perspective

[9] Even though it acts just like any other star, the sun is extremely important to us here on Earth. Here are some more things to know about our sun:

1. It is actually pretty big. Scientists estimate that, by mass, it is in the top 10% of all stars.
2. It is about 4.5 billion years old. Think about this: humans have been around for about 200,000 years, so humans have existed for only 0.00004 percent of the sun's life.
3. Sun is about halfway through its supply of hydrogen. This means that in another 4.5 billion years, it will run out of hydrogen and swell into a different kind of star that cannot sustain life on Earth.
4. The sun's core is about 27 million degrees Fahrenheit. Compare that to Earth's core at about 11,000 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. The volume of the sun is about 1,409,272,569,059,860,000 km. That means 1.3 million Earths could fit inside it.

[10] The sun helps us in more ways than we can count. Its gravitational pull helped form the earth and keeps our planet spinning. Its nuclear fusion keeps us warm and gives us light to grow our food. It holds our solar system together! No wonder so many scientists have dedicated their lives to figuring out how it works.

"The Center of Our Solar System" by Jessica McBirney. Copyright © 2018 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

**WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA FOUND IN THE SECTION "A WHOLE NEW WORLD"? \***

20 points

- A. A group of clouds formed to fill the galaxy.
- B. The sun is the most powerful star in space.
- C. The planets aligned in the galaxy many years ago
- D. A group of particles led to the formation of the universe.

**WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE SECTION "PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE"? \***

20 points

- A. There are other suns located in space.
- B. Earth depends on the sun for survival.
- C. The sun is the most important star in the galaxy.
- D. All the planets in the solar system require sunlight.

**WHICH DETAIL FROM PARAGRAPH 9 SUPPORTS THE MAIN IDEA OF "PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE"? \***

20 points

- A. "It is actually pretty big. Scientists estimate that, by mass, it is in the top 10% of all stars."
- B. "It is about 4.5 billion years old. Think about this: humans have been around for about 200,000 years, so humans have existed for only 0.00004 percent of the sun's life."

- C. "Sun is about halfway through its supply of hydrogen. This means that in another 4.5 billion years, it will run out of hydrogen and swell into a different kind of star that cannot sustain life on Earth."
- D. "The sun's core is about 27 million degrees Fahrenheit. Compare that to Earth's core at about 11,000 degrees Fahrenheit."

**HOW DOES THE AUTHOR SUPPORT THE MAIN IDEA THAT THE SUN CANNOT BE IGNORED? \***

20 points

- A. by providing facts about the sun's size, function, and power
- B. by telling how long ago the sun appeared in the solar system
- C. by listing the details that compare the sun to other stars in space
- D. by explaining how the sun was formed and how it affects the solar system

**WHICH DETAIL FROM PARAGRAPH 7 SUPPORTS THE MAIN IDEA THAT THE SUN CANNOT BE IGNORED? \***

20 points

- A. "The solar system includes the sun and everything that circles around it: the eight planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune), their moons, and asteroids."
- B. "The sun is so huge that it accounts for over 98% of all of the mass in the solar system; the pull of its gravity is incredibly strong."
- C. "All of the planets are stuck circling in this gravitational field, orbiting the sun. "
- D. "Imagine tying a weight to one end of a string, then holding the other end of the string in your hand and spinning the weight around."