

## 6-8th Grade Sample Lesson

### Listening Closely to Determine an Author's Main Idea and Supporting Evidence

#### OBJECTIVE

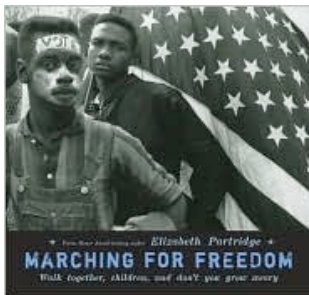
The student will listen to a nonfiction text read aloud and synthesize, as expressed orally and in writing, the ideas in the text including identifying one or more of the author's central ideas and the related supporting evidence.

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS

- *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, Theme 6: Power, Authority, & Governance*
- *Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading:*
  - Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
  - Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### MATERIALS

- copy of book ***Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary*** (Partridge, 2009),
- one copy of excerpted text (see below) to be projected for students to view (with LCD, document camera, Smart Board, or overhead projector),
- class set of excerpted text (one copy for each student)



## PROCEDURES

1. **Just prior to this lesson, read aloud the first chapter of *Marching for Freedom*** to students, “Voteless, 1963.” The purpose for listening is to begin to understand the intransigent problems African Americans and others faced in the Jim Crow South.
2. **If possible, project the photographs** from this chapter (with an LCD, document camera or on an overhead with transparencies you create for this purpose) for all students to view and engage the students in a conversation. What do they notice? What is the evidence in the photo to support what they are saying?
3. **Project the text for all students to view** and be prepared to mark (i.e., underlining, writing short notes) on the text to make transparent for students visually what you are doing to read a text closely.
4. **Define and explain close reading:** *Close reading is when a reader reads and rereads a text, carefully considering the importance of specific words, phrases and sentences in a chunk of text. The reader has a specific purpose for doing this and the purpose for this lesson is to determine the author’s central idea and how the author develops that idea over the course of a text with particular details.*
5. **Model close reading:**
  - a. Project the first “chunk” of the excerpt. Read aloud the chunk and then explain to students you are going to reread one sentence at a time to determine what the author’s central idea.
  - b. Engage in thinking aloud and marking on the text, underlining key words and phrases you consider important to remember. For example, you might underline in the text like this:

In 1963, Mrs. Boynton was joined by people from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, or “snick.” They worked to register voters in Dallas County as well as adjoining counties, but hit huge resistance. Just for talking with Mrs. Boynton or SNCC workers, people could be fired from their jobs, beaten up, or run off the land they share cropped. By late fall 1964, SNCC workers had only managed to increase the number of black voters in Dallas County from 156 to 335.

Articulate aloud to students *why* you are choosing to underline particular words or phrases. Reasons why might include that the words/phrases tell when, who, where, what, how, and why, describe problems, resolutions, and so forth.

- c. Summarize and synthesize aloud what you have just learned using the words and phrases you underlined. For example, you might say:

*If I look at the words and phrases I underlined, I'm beginning to think that the author's central idea is that there was a huge problem in Alabama regarding helping African Americans register to vote. In 1963, Mrs. Boynton and the SNCC worked together to register voters but there was a lot of resistance (by white racists, I'm thinking). African Americans faced some serious trouble if they even talked to them like getting beaten up, losing their jobs, and losing the land they share cropped. After many months, the group had only increase the number of voters registered from 156 to 335. This is not very many.*

**6. Engage in shared close reading or partner close reading:**

- a. Project the second “chunk” of the excerpt. Read aloud the chunk and then ask students to join you in rereading each sentence to determine the development of the author’s central idea. You might do this as a large group or you might ask students to work in pairs and share out.
- b. With the students, you might mark the text in the following way:

Widespread intimidation kept most blacks obeying the rules of segregation, unable to challenge unjust laws and customs. “Fear is the key to all,” said Mrs. Boynton. “Once we lose our fear, we’ll be O.K.” But how could they make a breakthrough? She strategized with the members of the Dallas County Voters League and came up with a plan. In December, Mrs. Boynton drove to Atlanta. She asked Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, or **SCLC**, for help. As a leader in the civil rights movement, Dr. King could bring three critical missing components to Selma: motivation, money, and the media.

- c. With the students, summarize and synthesize what you and the students just learned using the words and phrases they chose to underline.

7. **Engage in independent close reading.** Ask students to read the last chunk of text with a partner or independently depending on their needs. Coach individuals as needed. Consider projecting the last chunk of text after the students work independently and discussing the words and phrases they determined were important. Students might have chosen these words or phrases:

Mrs. Boynton’s timing was perfect. The Civil Rights Act, signed into law on July 2, 1964, by President Johnson, had outlawed segregation in schools, workplaces, and public areas such as restaurants and movie theaters. Now removing all barriers to the right to vote had become a top

priority for the civil rights movement and the SCLC. “If we in the South can win the right to vote,” said King, “it will give us the concrete tool with which we ourselves can correct injustice.”

Note: For English Learners, the idiom “timing was perfect” and any others may need to be explained.

8. **Debrief about content and strategic reading.** Guide the students in looking at the key words and phrases from all three paragraphs of the text and noticing the following development:
  - a. Paragraph #1: The author identifies a chronic problem and failed attempt to resolve the problem.
  - b. Paragraph #2: The author identifies how the people involved persevered, strategized and came up with a new plan.
  - c. Paragraph #3: The author describes the context for why this plan might work.

Take notes in the margins of the projected text (and advise students to do the same) regarding this development. Note: This will become a pattern of development in the rest of the book where the Civil Rights activists planned, failed, persevered and planned again given a new context. *Share with the students that by reading this excerpt closely, they can begin to understand how Civil Rights activists worked tirelessly and strategically to effect social change.*

9. **Extension:** Ask the students to write one paragraph synthesizing the ideas in the text or write a paragraph *with* the students. This is the example of the type of response you are looking for from students:

In this excerpt, Partridge captures how the civil rights activists practiced tenacity. They refused to give up the fight to register African Americans and help them vote. The author develops this idea by describing how Mrs. Boynton and the SNCC tried to register voters, but the African Americans were too fearful. Then the author describes how Mrs. Boynton and the others came up with ANOTHER plan – to get Dr. King involved because his group could bring three things Mrs. Boynton’s group needed – motivation, money, and media. ALSO, the author includes why this was a good plan. There were more and more laws protecting citizens like the Civil Rights Act. So there was a good chance this might change how African Americans were being treated in Selma.

## *Voteless, 1963*

(Excerpted from *Marching for Freedom*, Partridge, 2009, p.4)

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