

Real or Make Believe?

A Lesson in Fiction vs. Nonfiction

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LI 876

## **Overview**

This first grade lesson is designed to re-introduce students to fiction and nonfiction reading. First grade students will discuss and identify both fiction and nonfiction. All books will be related to the theme of sports all stars, in order to tie into the upcoming Scholastic Book Fair.

## **Time Frame**

Library time is only 30 minutes long, which includes time for check out. The lesson and student activity will take approximately 20-25 minutes.

Teaching fiction vs. nonfiction can easily be expanded into a number of additional lessons that will build on this introduction.

## **Content Standards**

### Reading Literature, Craft & Structure

RL.1.5 Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

### Speaking & Listening, Comprehension & Collaboration

SL.1.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

## **Information Literacy Standards (AASL Standards)**

### Standard 1, Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge

Skill 1.1.2 Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning.

Standard 2, Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge

Skill 2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real-world situations, and further investigations.

Standard 4, Pursue personal and aesthetic growth

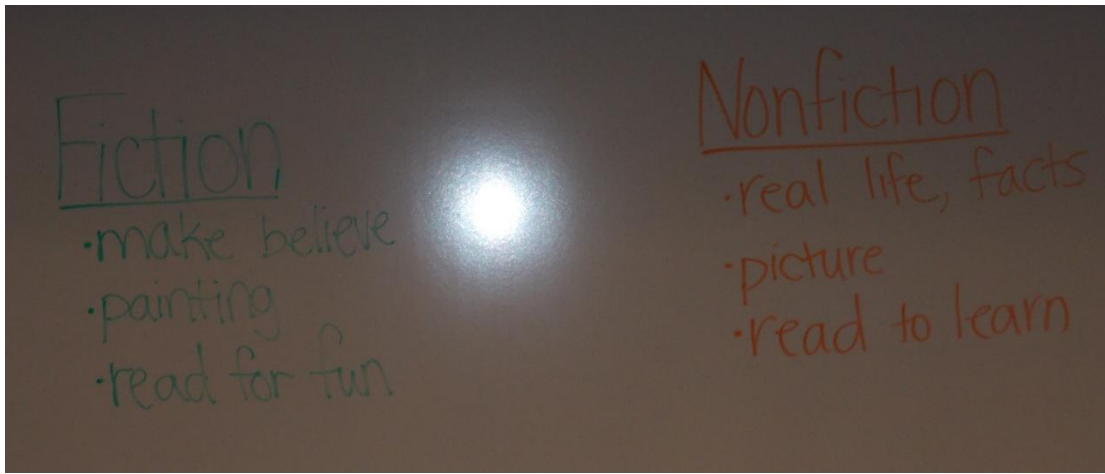
Skill 4.1.2 Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.

**Required Resources**

- Definitions of fiction and nonfiction
- White board to write notes on
- A variety of books related to the “All Star” theme, both fiction and nonfiction.

**Teaching Plan**

1. Tell students that the library has books that are both make believe and factual. These books are divided into two sections in the library – fiction and nonfiction.
2. Review with students the difference between fiction (make believe, read for fun) and nonfiction (real life, facts, read to learn). Ask students what they know about each type of writing.



<u>Fiction</u>	<u>Nonfiction</u>
make believe	real life, facts
painting	picture

read for fun

read to learn

3. Show students both fiction and nonfiction book about the same topic (baseball). Students will predict: which book is fiction (make believe) and which book is nonfiction (facts)?
4. Begin reading the fiction book, *Dino Baseball* by Lisa Wheeler. Point out the title and pictures. Discuss after reading: how did you know that this book was fiction?



5. Read a few paragraphs of the nonfiction book. Point out the photographs, facts, and numbers. Discuss what's different about this book from *Dino Baseball*.
6. Student activity: students will look at two books, one fiction and one nonfiction. I will guide them through looking at each book (label A and B with sticky notes so all students look at the same type at the same time); students will determine whether their book is fiction or nonfiction as we explore the different features of the books they have.



7. Check out time.

### **Future Lesson Possibilities**

There are a number of future lessons that could be taught after this introduction or review of fiction and nonfiction. Ideas shared with the classroom teacher include:

- Identifying fiction and nonfiction text independently.
- Reading and comprehending both fiction and nonfiction text.
- Identifying text features in nonfiction text.
- Writing both fiction and nonfiction texts.

### **Assessment Overview**

This lesson will have two pieces of assessment. The first is a checklist that will be completed by the classroom teacher as she observes the lesson and student participation. The second will be when students identify their books as either fiction or nonfiction. Correctly identifying fiction and nonfiction is a section on the checklist, simply to keep track of which students were able to identify each.

## Assessment Results

Following is a typed copy of the chart that the classroom teacher used to identify student behaviors. X= yes, - = no, X- = mostly

Student number	Participates & follows along	Listens well	Shares books & space	Answers questions	Correctly identifies fiction	Correctly identifies nonfiction
1	X	X	-	X		X
2	X	X	X	X		X
3	-	-	X	-		X
4	-	X	X	X		-
5	X	X	X	X		X
6	X	X	X	X		X
7	X	X	-	X		X
8	X	X	X	-		X
9	-	-	X	X		-
10	X	X	X	X		X
11	X	X	X	X		X
12	X	X	-	X		X
13	X	X-	X	X		X
14	X	-	X	X		X
15	X	-	X	X		X
16	absent					

All students could correctly identify fiction when we discussed it as a class.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we were unable to look at fiction individually or with a partner. Overall, students understood and identified nonfiction. The two students who were unable to identify the nonfiction text correctly were given books that included illustrations, which is discussed in the Reflection section.

### **Collaboration with Teacher**

Because of scheduling, there was little time to collaborate with the teacher. It was decided that I would take the lead on this lesson and ask the classroom teacher to provide support in the form of behavior management and with help assessing students.

### **Reflection**

I had no idea I could learn so much in such a short amount of time! I have only taught middle and high school students before, which means that I was feeling completely out of my element when it came time to teach this lesson. I felt rather unprepared to delve into things with students this young. Therefore, I talked through my entire lesson with Julie Detter, my mentor librarian, a week prior to teaching. She offered support for my overall plan and had a few suggestions for how to make the lesson more age-appropriate. It made a big difference to have someone to bounce ideas off of.

I was pleasantly surprised by how well the review went. Students seemed to really remember and understand the difference between fiction and nonfiction. My favorite answer that they gave during our discussion was that fiction is like a painting or drawing that comes from a person's imagination, and nonfiction is like a photograph that was taken of the real world. In the future, though, I will remind students that this is a comparison that is not true in every single case. Sometimes people draw or paint what they have seen in real life, or they take photographs

of scenes that are made up. This caused a bit of confusion when students were identifying nonfiction because I did have a couple of books that had illustrations instead of photographs.

My biggest mistake was the length of the lesson. I readily admit that I was a bit of an idealist in terms of what I could accomplish in only 20 minutes. There is barely time to teach either fiction or nonfiction in that amount of time, much less both! In the future, if I have similar amounts of time each week, I would break down the lesson into several – one on fiction, one on nonfiction, and another day when students identify each. This would create a 60-minute time frame instead of 20, something that is much more reasonable. Other than running out of time, I thought my lesson went pretty well. It is one that I would use again, making a few tweaks to have it fit different age and ability groups.

By spending time in this particular library, I learned quite a bit about myself. The current librarian was previously a middle school English teacher, as am I. Through my interactions with her and with the students, I have become more confident in my ability to work with elementary students. I do have more confidence in my ability to work with this age group.

One last lesson I learned is that teaching younger students is definitely different than the middle and high school groups. These elementary kids are much more restless and talkative. They all want to share every idea that pops into their mind, whether it is related to the topic or not. This will definitely take some getting used to if I end up finding an elementary library position. The experience also reinforced the importance of establishing expectations from the first day and sticking to them. I think that not knowing the students, their names, or what their experiences have been so far made it more difficult for me to manage their eagerness.

## **Conclusion**



I am grateful for the time I have been able to spend in the elementary library. While I went into this practicum believing that I was not cut out to be an elementary librarian, I now see that it is something that I am not only able to do but could actually enjoy doing, if I found the right now. There is still much for me to learn about being a librarian, and so much of it I will learn by trial and error. I am looking forward to the possibilities that are in my future.