Unit Six – Nonfiction Reading Clubs

February/March (Level 3 Reading Benchmark: K/L/M)

Unit Overview
When a curriculum spirals, it essentially does three things. First, it revisits old ideas or instructional content. Second, it increases the depth and level of this content. Third, in Jerome Bruner's words, it "re-construes" old content, connecting it with "other knowledge." This month, as you revisit expository nonfiction (a genre that you introduced in Unit Four), expect to do all three, in more or less chronological order. You will begin by revisiting earlier teaching, reminding children of the essential "habits of mind" that make for proficient nonfiction reading and tackling difficulty in texts. Once you have children doing this work again, you'll remind readers to continue club conversations around nonfiction texts, the way they began in December. But this time, you will teach them more complex ways of thinking collaboratively. In Part Two, you'll ask your students to grow from learning what the author is aiming to teach by developing their own ideas about the texts. The third and final part consists of comparing and contrasting information and ideas within books, across books, and across baskets, building on the work of the first two bends and this year's earlier work.

At this point in the school year, your on-grade-level readers will be reading around a Level L in nonfiction. If you have students reading below that level (I, J, K), you may want to revisit the Unit Five curriculum for some of the teaching points recommended there. For students who are above grade level (M, N, O), you may look ahead to Unit Eight to see the kind of work children at those levels can be taught to do.

This unit is strongly aligned to the Common Core State Standards because of its focus on nonfiction and speaking and listening.

Setting Up Your Library
Each club will need its own basket of just-right texts to read, study and talk about for each week you'll be in this unit. To prepare these baskets, take stock of your existing library and make plans to re-stock as needed. Like the curriculum, the contents of your class's nonfiction library, too, needs to spiral upwards! Of course you'll want to retain most books from the December nonfiction unit. Remember that your students have grown as readers so they will be reading a whole new set of books at higher levels. However, topic-baskets must also be dotted with many new nonfiction texts, preferably ones that address familiar topics and are at the higher ends of your children's current levels. Prior knowledge or topic familiarity will scaffold readers' climb to a higher leveled book. As you present these to your room, however, watch like a hawk to monitor that these are actually within your readers' range of comfort. Check that readers have access to just-right books at all times, that they aren't merely thumbing pages looking at illustrations in books that are too hard for them to understand. As the Common Core State Standards discuss, matching readers to a text at an appropriate level of complexity involves several variables such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences; this is especially true in nonfiction.
Typically, second grade classrooms will feature baskets of books on animals (wolves, spiders, snakes, and so forth), weather (tornadoes, hurricanes, twisters), planets, plants and habitats (trees, fruits, rain forests, deserts, and so forth), and dinosaurs. If your nonfiction library in December covered these topics, it makes sense to shop for new books on the same topics that are a level higher than existing volumes. However, it is important to get slightly easier books if the topic is new. While shopping for new books this month, keep in mind that a child can read a just-right book on a topic she may be familiar with—like cats. But if that child decides to read books on a topic about which she has no foreknowledge, like gemstones, it will benefit her to begin with books that are easier than her just-right reading level. As she builds up her vocabulary and background knowledge about gemstones, she'll move to reading with success books that are at her just-right level (or slightly above that level). You will want to review the books in your library, asking, "For my L/M readers, what leveled books do I have? What topics do I have? Do I know topics that might be of interest to these readers? What are some of the science and social studies themes and topics that my readers know?" These questions will help you put together topic baskets that support your second graders. Consider partnering up with a colleague in the third grade and another in first with whom you'll share your books—right now, you'll need the books, but later in the year your colleagues may need to borrow some of your easier texts to introduce their students to new content and build conceptual understanding.

While stocking your nonfiction library in preparation for this month, you will also want to look at subtopics within a larger theme. If your existing nonfiction library contains a couple of well-thumbed books on mammals (such as whales and bears), for example, you might prepare a topic basket containing new volumes on other mammals (such as apes and seals) to allow children to compare and contrast something new with what they have read previously. Similarly, if a topic basket already contains books on tornadoes and hurricanes, you might shop for additional books on tsunamis, or for books about a specific historic hurricane or tsunami. Layering various aspects and dimensions of a topic next to one other in one club basket will set children up for deeper thinking and inquiry as well as scaffold their climb into higher reading levels.

You'll also want to keep the fiction areas of your library open, and set aside some time daily for reading of just-right chapter books. Likely, your children have fallen in love with characters and series, and the reading they have done in these kinds of books goes a long way to helping them become stronger, more confident readers, and growing into increasingly more challenging texts.

As you and your students collect texts for this unit, you will want to remember that many of your students should be poised to move up text levels within this unit. This is the second unit on nonfiction reading, so they should have developed proficiency by now. Then, too, they’ll be reading a bunch of text on topics of interest. They’ll probably read the easier texts first, and those texts will provide readers with the domain specific vocabulary and the conceptual knowledge so they are poised to be able to comprehend more challenging texts. They’ll also be reading alongside other inquirers, and the conversations around shared texts provide the same sort of scaffolding provided during guided reading sessions. Then, too, you can take any text-set inquiry group and think of that group as a guided reading group, working with them to be sure they have the requisite skills to read texts of increasing difficulty.
About Reading Clubs
If you had your children in series clubs last month as the TCRWP scope and sequence suggests, and it went well, you can skip this section. If you are new to the idea of clubs, you may want to read this section to learn the nuts-and-bolts information that will help them to be a success.

Just as reading workshop always aims to do, reading clubs allow children to function like real readers do. Aren't there times in your life when you've decided to start a project of some kind, and you gather a bunch of books on the topic and read them with another person or two? Perhaps you even do this as part of your ongoing professional development at your school—you decide, for example, that your focus for the year will be on improving your reading conferences and you and your inquiry group read a bunch of books on the topic and meet monthly to talk about it. Reading clubs put the natural social aspect of reading at the forefront, and help to make our reading workshop time even more engaging and more fun.

In her book, *Reading for Real: Teaching Children to Read with Joy, Power and Intention*, Kathy Collins offers clarification around what clubs are. She explains that a reading club is "a couple of kids reading and talking about a small collection of books that go together in some way. During a cycle of reading clubs, partners choose a reading club of interest that contains books they can read, and they determine their own purposes and plans" (p. 20). She goes on to further clarify in Chapter Two that:

- A reading club is simply a basket of books that has been collected because the books relate to each other in some way
- A reading club doesn't involve a particular task, other than reading and talking about books.
- Reading clubs aren't a permanent daily structure of every reading workshop period all year, but instead are used a couple times a year for two to four weeks at a time.
- In a reading club, readers are partnered with other children who are reading at about the same reading level and has the same or similar interests.
- Partners read and talk about texts in their reading clubs, and then they ponder questions, develop ideas, develop theories, celebrate discoveries, and so on.
- The work that students do in clubs allows them to become experts on their topics, and increases their comfort and familiarity with different kinds of texts and reading strategies.
- Club and partnership work are teacher-supported as the teacher confers with individuals, partners and clubs.
- Reading clubs are in addition to a daily independent reading time, not instead of that time.

Remember that the Common Core State Standards call for collaborative conversations within student-groups where members observe certain protocols of "following agreed-upon rules of discussion" and of "building on other's talks in conversations" by "linking their comments to the remarks of others." Students are also expected to, "ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion." At the very start of the month, you'll want to review by reminding children of the rules and protocols that you expect clubs to uphold. You will want to revise your charts so as to spotlight ways of growing more content in clubs rather
than solely focusing on behaviors. Display these tips prominently in the room. For example, your chart may say:

- When a club member wants to enter the conversation, we...
- Club members listen and help to clarify what one another says...
- Club members try to help build on one another's ideas...
- When a club member cites evidence from text, we...
- Club members help one another ask and answer questions by...

Launching the Unit

In her book *Reading for Real*, Kathy Collins likens reading clubs in the primary grades to being part of a band that gets together for a jam session. In a jam session, she writes, the musicians each get together and start by sharing some of what they've been working on alone. They've come to the group with some new way the chorus could go, a new chord progression, a new thought about ending the piece. The session is one filled with energy and joy. Every member is grateful for the collaboration because without each other they may end with just a bunch of their own notes, but now they have a piece of music. Tell your students that they're going to be like musicians—doing nonfiction reading work independently and then coming together to share. Together, they'll get smarter about the topics that were interesting to all of them, and together they'll come up with new thoughts, ideas and questions.

Just like a band comes together because they have a shared musical ability and a love of the same genre of music, the readers in your class will come together not only because they read on about the same level, but because of the topics that they are curious about and authentically want to pursue. You may consider an activity in which readers circle the classroom with a clipboard and interview questions in hand, or a list of topics that will appear in the library during this unit, and then ask other students, "I'm looking for a few other kids who like wolves. Do you want to learn more about wolves?" or "Which of the following topics sounds most interesting to you: whales, plants, or simple machines?"

Once you've organized your students into groups of two, three, or four, you could have their first task as a club to begin work on a "Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction" (RAN) chart that Tony Stead mentions in his book, *Reality Checks*. You could create a big board (perhaps by using an opened legal-sized manila folder) where you head columns with: "What I think I know," "Oops!," "Yes!," "New Information," and "Wondering." The club could meet and talk about the things they think they know about the topic. This helps them to activate prior knowledge, but is different from a KWL chart where the first column is meant to contain information that the student is sure he knows. Here, the idea that they think they know it will launch club members into an exploration to confirm (yes!) revise (oops!) add to (new information) and question. This board could become a living part of the work the group does as they move Post-its from one column to another.

Remember, as always, that about one week prior to the start of the unit, you'll begin a nonfiction read aloud and perhaps also a nonfiction shared reading book, so that kids get into the mindset of the new unit. Consider that your read aloud can function like a maxi version of a club—choose a...
set of books that go together in some way and plan to read through several books on a topic. During conversations, mentor children into the kind of independent talk work you hope they do in their club. Together with their club conversations, exemplify the kind of independent thinking work you'll want them to do as they read. Choose a highly engaging topic—maybe something gross or really cool—that will have children on the edge of their seats. Your challenge will be to find books whose density of information doesn't make it too difficult for children to process and visualize as you are reading them aloud.

We Know How to Be Strong Nonfiction Readers, and Now We Can Do That with Our Club
This bend is all about reminding children that they already know a lot about how to read nonfiction and that it's time to switch from thinking about characters to reactivating that nonfiction mindset. Bring out your old nonfiction charts. Remind children of all that they know. For starts, your students know that the most essential, foundational thing they can do as nonfiction readers is to monitor for meaning and learn what the author is trying to teach. Nonfiction readers do this in a number of big ways. We think about how to read nonfiction fluently and with intonation, using our voices to convey that everything the author has to say is the most interesting thing we've ever heard. Your students know, too, that their work as nonfiction readers is to determine the main idea of a section and to think about what supporting details go with that main idea. They know to care about the specific words an author uses and to make it a habit to try to use the language that they learn in their books in their talk. During this unit, they will talk with not just their partner, but with their whole club.

In this bend, you'll do as the Common Core State Standards suggest by revisiting some of the key standards in the Informational Text document. You'll be teaching children to "know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons)," "to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently," "identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text" and "determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area."

Just as the Common Core State Standards are designed on a spiral, this bend essentially deepens the base of nonfiction strategies that you introduced previously. While reiterating December's teaching points, you can add tips that clarify and deepen the essential work you want readers to be doing. For instance, "Nonfiction readers read with explaining voices," is a teaching point you taught in December, while working on fluency and intonation. In this bend, you will re-teach it but halfway through workshop time, you may also announce, "We don't just read with explaining voices...nonfiction readers, in fact, do actually explain the text to ourselves as we go along—we pause after a few words and explain whatever we've read to ourselves, using our own words if we can. It's almost like the explaining voice in our head is a real teacher who makes sure we understand each section before moving on. Not only will this help us to understand the text better, but it will also prepare us to talk and teach our other club members about our topics." Even as you teach children to parse and use intonation as they read, you can also prompt them to monitor for meaning.
Since the texts that students are reading have gotten more complex than those they could read two months ago, you'll want to tweak some of the teaching points and add on to others to more closely match the work that's possible and helpful to do in these harder texts. When students read nonfiction earlier in the year, their books were probably about one topic for the whole book. If they were divided into subcategories of information, the subcategories were very clear. Now, students will be grappling with different types of text structures and layouts, ones that may demand that they be more flexible with the kinds of strategies they use for determining the main idea.

For example, whereas before you may have taught your students to be on the lookout for section headings to help them figure out what the pages are mostly about, here you may alert them to the fact that sometimes the section headings can be a bit clever and it'll take a careful reader to turn one into a main idea. For example, in Binns' book, *The Lincoln Memorial* (Level K), the section headings clearly identify the topic of the two-page spread: "Building the Memorial" and "Huge Statue" and "Outside the Lincoln Memorial." But in Platt's book, *Spiders' Secret* (Level M), the headings are "Hairy and Scary" and "Watch Out, Dad!" and "Super Scuba." The sections are also not on a two-page spread, which allows readers to see the heading while reading the entire section. Instead, in this particular Level M text, the section is more like a chapter which spans several pages. You may need to teach children to do more accumulating information within a section, perhaps by reading page-by-page thinking "How does this page fit with the one before it?" or "What are both of these pages talking about?" Look closely at the books that your children are reading, and decide how you'll support the same kind of skill work (figuring out main idea and supporting details) now that the text has become more challenging.

As children are doing the work of reading to understand what the author is teaching, they now have the support of their club, their "band," and can lean on one another. They can come to their club ready to teach others about what they've learned. They can talk about new learning by touching their palm and saying, "The big thing I learned in this book/section today is..." and then touch each finger saying, "For example, for example, for example..." By doing so, they are doing the work that the Common Core State Standards describes as "identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe."

When children have difficulty teaching what they read, club members can offer support. A big part of monitoring for meaning is knowing when you don't understand something and then drawing on the tools you have handy to fix this. Children can bring confusions or misunderstandings to their club and talk to the other members to clarify these. They may start by saying "In my book it says ___, but I don't really get it. Did your book talk about that?" or "I thought __, but in the book it says ___. I don't get it."

Nonfiction Clubs Don't Only Learn What the Author Says, We Have Our Own Ideas, Too

If you launched your Reading Clubs with the RAN chart mentioned in the launching section of this write-up, your children likely collected more main ideas and information, such as content-specific vocabulary words, in the last section. Now, you will want to teach your children to alter the facts they thought they knew on new sections of the chart as they confirm or revise their
knowledge. They will also come up with new thoughts, ideas, and questions as they continue to explore their topic.

You may begin this bend by saying to children, "Since the beginning of this month, each of you has showed me and one other how you're careful nonfiction readers. You've done strong nonfiction reading by thinking about main idea, reading with fluency and learning new vocabulary. You've talked with your clubs to make sure you're sure about what you're learning, and you've really talked about what the author is trying to teach you. Now, we're going to start making some of our own inferences based on the information in the books we're reading. Remember when we were studying characters last month in our series clubs? We talked about how we don't want to just retell our stories to our clubs. That's a good start to the conversation, sure, but then we need to talk about our ideas, too. We need to come with our own thinking about character traits, theories about the story, or maybe even ideas about what lessons we're learning from the book. Well, this next week or so, we're going to be doing the same thing in nonfiction. We're still going to be coming to our club with information that we've found fascinating, but now we're also going to talk about our own thinking and reactions to the information."

Over the course of this bend, you'll share about a handful of teaching points you selected to help your children do this well. You might read some nonfiction books at the levels your students are reading, and think, "What is it that I do to have my own ideas, my own thinking about these books? How do I infer when reading factual information?" One way people infer is by having reactions to the information in the books we read. Once we understand what the author is saying, we react, mulling over that new bit of information and our reaction—eventually landing on an inference. For example, imagine you read about how emperor penguin eggs will crack if they touch the ice for even a few seconds. You might think, "Wow. It's amazing that penguins know this and are so careful to keep the egg safe. It must be hard to roll the egg from the mother penguin to the father penguin, and keep it off the ground." Notice that the inference comes after the reaction. Likewise, you'll want to encourage your children to push past just "wow" and instead explain their thinking, using details from the text.

We also want to teach our students to be flexible thinkers. They enter a book confident of what they know about the book's topic. However, as they read, rather than holding firm to their preconceived beliefs, we'll encourage them to be open to learning more, and to revising their thinking if needed. In some cases, this means confirming what they knew and adding onto it with related information from the book. In other instances, it means taking what they thought they knew and explaining why they had the misconceptions they did. This can also help them to grow new ideas. During their club time, they may use sentence starters such as these to share their new understanding and ideas with their club members:

- I used to think... but now I'm thinking...
- My new thinking about.... is different because...
- I thought I knew something about....but then I read this part that says...so now I think...
- I was right about ... and I also learned...so now I think..

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As your young readers learn to ask questions of their text, you might teach them some questions that almost always lead to deeper thinking, such as: "How do...?" "Why do...?" "How come...?" "Why would...?" Pursuing a question in a single book and, especially, across several books can drive a child or club's reading. Imagine a club reading through all of their insect books looking for the answer to this question: "Do all insect legs make noise like crickets legs do?" Even if the club members don't find the answer, they can use the information they do find to state a possible answer. This will require that they're able to synthesize related information to form ideas. They might then say, "Well, since it says here....I'll bet..." This asking and answering questions is tied to the Common Core State Standard suggesting that second graders should be able to "ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text."

You might also teach readers to make their own captions, or to add onto captions that embed their thinking in the picture supports of their texts. Perhaps a reader first discovers that cats carry their babies in their mouths, moving the babies when they sense danger. Next, the child reads and studies the picture of the kitten in the cat's mouth, and may add onto the caption to include her thinking and deepen her understanding of the text. She may add, "Cats know just how to carry the baby so it isn't hurt. It doesn't hurt the kitten, the kitten isn't afraid when the mother cat does this" or, "Only mother cats carry kittens. Father cats don't do anything to help care for the kittens." This added caption work will take your children even further in their understanding and developing of new ideas.

Another strategy that is crucial as students encounter new information and concepts in nonfiction reading is visualizing. Your students can gather information by looking at the illustrations in the text, conjuring images they have seen in other books, and using their imaginations to create movies in their minds as they read. You may want to model how readers create a movie to add to their information by reading a bit of text out loud and then walking children through how you create a visual in your mind of that text. For example, if you read a page that says, “The polar bear swims up under the seal,” you can share with children that you picture a seal treading water obliviously. The waves are quiet, until suddenly, a polar bear bursts through the surface of the water, scaring away the unsuspecting seal. The goal is that children are able to envision no matter what they read. As they read about an eagle building a nest, we want them to "see" the eagle flying through the air and dipping down to collect twigs in its beak. As children read about flowers, we want them to see the flower’s roots soak up water and nutrients from the soil, and, too, the growth from seed to blossom. Partners can help each other envision parts, using gestures and facial expressions and pointing out things in pictures to each other as they read to help create a more complete visualization of what is happening in the text.

You may decide to teach your more advanced students do some inferring and connecting by expressing why what they are learning is important, and then to think about a project they might do either alone or with their club based on what they've learned and thought about. (Note that this is difficult work; not all your students will make this move at this point in the year.) For instance, a child who is learning about polar bears might decide that it is unfair that the polar bears are losing their homes since the ice caps are melting. Perhaps she'll want to make some posters at home to let others know that we can help our environment, which helps global
warming, which helps the polar bears to still have a home. A child who is learning about insects might decide that the classroom should keep a terrarium with insects. A child who is learning about flowers may decide to plant flowers at home or at school. Children’s ideas about the importance of what they are learning thus can be expressed as ethical concerns and/or as action plans.

**Nonfiction Clubs Can Compare and Contrast Information About Our Topics**

It's likely that your children have already done some comparing and contrasting in the last two bends. Perhaps, for example, two different readers shared information from two different books about snakes: "My book says..." and the other, "That's weird, because my book says..." Or perhaps they compared information within the same book: "on this page it talks about...but here, it says..." Now, in this new bend, we'll take advantage of that work plus the fact that each club has likely moved on to a second or third basket of books by now, which means that they'll be able now to compare, contrast, and synthesize information. As the Common Core State Standards outline, they'll have the opportunity to, "Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts" and "compare and contrast two texts on the same topic."

Once children are in new bins, they'll begin by comparing information, and alongside this work, they'll move on to contrast. Finally, they'll take on the sophisticated work of synthesizing. To model this, you might draw on examples from the class topic, comparing a new fact with something you already know, activating prior knowledge. Imagine your class is studying chimpanzees. You may read from a book, pause and say, "Chimpanzees use tools to get food. That is a lot like people who live in the wilderness and set traps to catch food." That is, you'll model how to compare a similarity between two species.

Then too, you could teach your children to compare ideas within texts. For instance, "Chimpanzees use tools to trap and eat ants. They also use tools to construct their nests. Chimpanzees use the *same* materials for different purposes. In one way, they use tools to gather food, in another they build their habitat." This work is so closely related to contrasting that it will often come up, as a natural counterpart, within a text. Second graders are naturals at noticing and commenting on differences.

Alternatively, you could start by reading a section of your class text together. Imagine you read a section about gibbons who use stones to crack the husks of fruit. Model your observation, "So gibbons just started using tools recently, but I just read that chimpanzees have been using them for a long time. Animals must be getting smarter the longer they are around!"

You'll teach your readers that when we notice differences it's helpful to identify them first, then to consider what makes two things different, and finally to think about what might explain the differences. For example, if the praying mantis has six thin, green, twig-like legs and the beetle has six short, black, spiky legs, then one thing we might consider is how these different shaped and colored legs are helpful to each of these two insects. We may say that the praying mantis has twig-like legs to blend into trees while the spiky-legged beetle can tightly grip or hold onto leaves. As your partnerships compare and contrast the information in their books, be sure to
support them as they incorporate more nuanced language to describe information they are comparing and contrasting. For example, your chart could look this:

- On this page…. but on this page…
- In this book… but in this book
- The difference between …. and…. is
- What’s the same about these two …. is….
- Unlike the …. in this book the …. does or doesn’t …. 
- When we were learning about...we learned...., but now that we're learning...

Teach children to look across their Post-its and ideas, either on the same page or across pages. First help kids imagine how their ideas or information fit together. Have them place their Post-its side by side. Then have them ask themselves (and their partners), "How are these the same and how are these different?"

As they come up with new ideas, you will want to teach them to read on, to see if the information fits with their new thoughts and/or ideas. The Post-its will help kids compare information across books.

As children find parts in their books that fit together, you’ll teach them how to talk about and read between the parts that are similar. Inevitably, as children find and note similarities, they’ll discover differences, too, or at least will engage in a conversation about differences. Help kids lay out their texts and Post-its side by side to easily move between the texts and pages, citing examples and thoughts. Sometimes when partners work together, they forget to go back and read from the text to give an example. Teach kids to prompt each other, saying, "Where does it say that? Is there another example? Prove it!"

Perhaps one child will note the similarity between octopuses, which hide in caves and turtles, which hide in hard shells. After which all the kids in the club can discuss the idea that some animals aim to hide and protect themselves. Kids could then open their books or find other texts that support (or refute) the idea. One child might say, “Yeah, these fish hide in the coral. They all hide in places with hard stuff.” Then another child might ask, “Is that always true?” As a group, the kids in the club could try either to prove their theory right, or try to find something that proves their theory wrong.

As students think and talk about the information they discover in their books, you might suggest that they use words like "always," "sometimes," "never," "rarely," or "all," "most," "many," and "few," to explore theories. You can also suggest that they rekindle some of the skills they use in science for observation, such as describing what something looks like in detail. Children might observe and read closely by thinking about the size, quantity, or description of what something looks like. As they look closely and name things, coach them to raise questions like, "How is that important?" or "Why is that happening?"

When reading clubs meet, you can up the ante for accountable talk by reinforcing what children already know and helping them apply it to nonfiction. Get children into the habit of thinking and talking about the answers to questions such as, “Why is it important to know about ___?” or
“What does the author mean by that?” Encourage your students to summarize their ideas by saying things like, “This teaches me…,” “I’ve learned that…,” or "I think the author wants us to know...”

As you wind down this last bend, you will want to spread the excitement that comes from preparing to share all the new learning you and your children have done during the month. Clubs that are interested in making a project out of their learning might pursue a question or two, such as, "How do different animals care for their babies?" Then they can either reread books they've already read during this unit, or read new ones (or do both) to attempt to answer their question. Clubs can mark pages that answer their question and present their findings to another club or to a class of kindergartners or fifth graders. The presentation might feature a table or a chart or a diagram. For example, the club investigating whether various animals care for their young might create a chart that features animals that don't care for their young (seahorses, turtles, spiders), and animals that do (birds, cats, alligators). This club could then extend its study by coming up with a chart of the ways animals care for their young, such as carry them, feed them, and protect them.

Some clubs may find that the differences they discover between one animal and another (or one plant and another) are more subtle. For example, one club that pursued the question, "How do animals use their tongues?" discovered that cats and giraffes both have a long, rough tongue. But cat tongues are rough so that they can clean and groom themselves, just as people groom ourselves with a hairbrush, while giraffe tongues are rough so they can eat leaves that are tough to eat. Cat tongues are long to get to hard to reach places on their bodies, while giraffe tongues are long to reach high up in the trees for the leaves.

Unit Celebration
By now, your children are filled to the brim with information, ideas, and theories. They've learned volumes about different topics that excited them from the start, and chances are, they're even more excited now. Instead of letting all of that knowledge go underground, think about ways they might spread their thrill of learning about a particular topic to other kids in the class. Think about how you might get children who shied away from certain baskets earlier in the year excited about the stuff that's in there—perhaps by having students from a club that studied that topic become the teachers.

Toward the end of the unit, children will share the expert knowledge that they grew as a club and will reflect on how and why others might need to know this information. Kids in one club could get together with kids in another club and teach each other about their topics. You might have a “museum” share where visitors come to each reading club to hear what children have learned. During these shares, the kids in each club will assume the role of teachers, teaching the information from the texts they have read.

Word Study/Phonics
According to the Common Core State Standards, you will want to make sure your students can recognize and read irregularly spelled high frequency grade-level words. You might group students according to the words they still need to know so that they can work together to tackle these. Teach students how to study these words so that they can read them with automaticity as
they are reading continuous text. A routine you might teach students is to say the word, cover it, write the word and check it.

At this point in the year, students are also coming across more multi-syllabic words in their reading. The Common Core State Standards recommend that students are able to decode two-syllable words by the end of second grade. You will want to help students use what they have learned about words and how they work to problem-solve these multi-syllabic words. At first, you will want to teach students that every syllable must have a vowel sound. You'll do this in order to help kids understand how you break up a word into syllables. You might work on this at first in an isolated, explicit way and then move on to showing students how to break up words into syllables as they are reading. Specifically, during shared reading, you might prompt students to break up unfamiliar words as they are reading. You might say, "Break the word into parts or cover the parts of the word as you move your eyes from left to right or read the word part by part."

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Additional Resources

Your children are just coming off the heels of series book clubs, which is often a favorite unit, and you will want to keep the momentum going. As you get set to launch nonfiction reading clubs, keep in mind that nonfiction may be more challenging for some of your children but remember that some children actually prefer nonfiction and find it easier to discuss.

You may want to quickly refer back to your conferring notes from Unit Four Reading the World—Reading Nonfiction to remember which of your students were particularly strong nonfiction readers and which seemed to need more support. Make a quick list of the skills and strategies you taught most in the last nonfiction unit. Chances are your students will still need support with these now that they will be reading nonfiction again, so you may decide to adapt the plans that follow to match your students’ needs. For example, if you look across your conferring notes and see that you worked with students again and again on fluent nonfiction reading, chances are your students will benefit from some reminders of those lessons. You might plan a string of two or three minilessons right at the start of the unit to remind kids of the work they did in the last unit, to get it up and running again.

We invite you to make adaptations and accommodations accordingly, using the plans that follow as a starting point. We hope that you will pull from all kinds of sources of data to make your plans—running records, observations from read aloud and shared reading, book logs, and more.

One possible sequence of teaching points:

**Bend I: We Know How to Be Strong Nonfiction Readers, and Now We Can Do That with Our Club**

- Today I want to teach you that we need to come to our clubs prepared to talk about our topics. One way we can do this is to really listen to the text. We don't just read with explaining voices... nonfiction readers, in fact, do actually explain the text to ourselves as we go along—we pause after a few words and explain whatever we've read to ourselves, using our own words if we can. It's almost like the explaining voice in our head is a real teacher who makes sure we understand each section before moving on. Then you will be ready to explain and talk in your clubs about your topic.
- Today I want to teach you that you need to come ready to your clubs to talk about the main ideas about your topic. We can figure out the main idea by noticing the “who” and the “what” of the page or part. This helps us name the subject and the action as we read. To find the main idea, we can think, "What's the relationship between the “who” and the “what?” and "How can I say this main idea as a sentence?"
- Today I want to teach you that club members don’t just ‘read’ their information to each other. They explain and discuss it. Careful nonfiction readers always try to put what we’ve read into their own words. We might read a bit, then put the text down and say, “What the author is saying is that…” Or “What this means is…” This will help you to prepare to talk in your clubs later.
Today I want to teach you that nonfiction readers have read closely to find the main ideas in the text. We read the first sentence of a paragraph and ask, “What is this saying?” Then read on, sentence by sentence, asking, “How does this fit with what’s been said so far?” to help us find the main idea. Readers take the sentences we’ve read and say what we learned in one short statement.

- Tip: Readers of nonfiction can think about the topic of the whole book, and the subtopic of the section. Then, as we read the sentences on the page, we can think "What's the part of the larger topic this section is dealing with? What does the author want me to think, know, or understand about that subtopic?"
- Mid-Workshop Interruption: Readers are on the lookout for when our book switches topics. We know that sometimes there isn't a heading that will alert us to the change, and instead we should think, "What part of the main topic is this dealing with? Is it the same or different from the last page?"
- Teaching Share: Sometimes the author is being clever with the section heading and we need to figure out what the section is really about. We can read each sentence and think, "How does this fact fit with the heading?" Then, at the end of the page or section, we can re-title that section with a heading that makes sense.

Today I want to teach you that we can come to our clubs with confusions or misunderstandings and talk to the other members of the club to clarify these. We may start by saying what we read in our book, and explaining what's confusing. Then, the other members in the club can talk back to the questioning member to explain or ask further questions to help fix up confusion.

**Bend II: Nonfiction Clubs Don't Only Learn What the Author Says, We Have Our Own Ideas, Too**

- Readers can have reactions to the information presented in our books. We can think about how we feel when we read a section or part of our book, and make a statement about what our response is. We can say, “That is really important because”, “This part makes me feel”, or “This seems really surprising because...”
- Today I want to teach you that readers can use our skills of envisioning what the author is saying to really think about the information being presented. We can read a fact on the page and look to the picture. Then, we can make the picture move like a movie by reading more facts on that same page. As we see what the author says, we can say what we think about what we see.
- To get ideas, readers don’t just let the facts fly over our heads. Today I want to teach you that we really try to understand and imagine what we’re learning. When we do this, we can think about why this information matters, and what our own thoughts about the information are.
- Today I want to teach you that readers can use sentence starters with question words to help us get ideas. We can ask a question and then push ourselves to answer it. We can use words like, “How do...?” and “Why do...?” and “How come...?”
- Today I want to teach you that readers can share our revised thinking with our clubs. We can take a fact that we have in the “I think I know” column of our RAN chart, and move
it based on what we’re now learning. This new information can help us to also have an idea.

• Today I want to teach you that readers can make our own captions, or add onto captions in the book. We can put together what the author tells us, what the picture tells us, and our own thoughts.

• Today I want to teach you that readers can make plans alone or with our clubs to take action based on the reactions or ideas in our books. We can think about how we can make a real world difference based on what we’re learning.

Bend III: Nonfiction Clubs Can Compare and Contrast Information About Our Topics

• Clubs can compare information in our nonfiction books to what we know in our own lives. We can think about what the book says, and compare it to something similar in our own lives. By comparing these two bits of information, we can come to a new conclusion about the topic we’re studying.

• Today I want to teach you that clubs can talk about differences in the information we're learning. We can think about why they are different, and then what might explain those differences. This can help us to come to new understandings about our topics.

• Clubs can use prompts to push our thinking as we compare and contrast. We can say, “On this page…but on this page…” or “In this book, but in this book”; “The difference between … and … is…”; “What’s the same about these two is…”; and “Unlike the…in this book, the… in that book does/doesn’t…”

• Today I want to you that clubs can compare and contrast two different kinds or parts of the same larger topic.
  ◦ Example: We can think about two what’s the same and what’s different about two different kinds of mammals, or fish, or plants. We can think about the parts of our topic and how parts are the same and different.
  ◦ Tip: Sometimes we find these parts and kinds within books, and sometimes we look across two or more books.

• Today I want to teach you that readers can think about how often information shows up in our books as we read across many books on one topic. We can use words like "always," "sometimes", "never," "rarely," "all," "most", "many," and "few" to talk about our ideas.