

Language Arts Quickie Lessons

Rubric Rating

Skill: Student organizes information effectively and clearly.

Have each student select an interesting story from the newspaper and rate the article using a rubric. A rubric (ROO-brick) is a scale created to judge something using different categories. A rubric for a newspaper article could include the following categories: Is the article organized? Is it fair? Does it have supporting details? A satisfactory closing paragraph? Have each student rate the story in each category (you can add categories) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. Then they can write a reason for their ratings. Have them compare stories and ratings.

Something Good and New

Skill: Student writes concise summary.

The news is often about the troubles in the world. Is there any good news as well? Encourage students to find a story of good news. What makes the news good? Does the story have any impact on their lives? Have them write a brief summary of the good news and share it with your class.

Comic Players

Skill: Student speaks with understanding and for various audiences or purposes including informal presentations.

The comic strips are really like little plays. Students can practice reading aloud with expression by reading the dialogue in the comics. Assign parts and have the strips read aloud in your classroom. Have fun and encourage students to really ham it up!

Comics and You

Skill: Students identifies details and uses information to construct meaning and make inferences.

Have students look through the comic strips in today's newspaper for a character that is most like them. They can make a list of the things they have in common as well as the differences.

Fun with Nouns

Skill: Students correctly identify parts of speech – nouns.

Review the definition of a noun with your class. Then have them select a story from the front page of today's paper and find the nouns. They can underline the people in red, the places in blue and the things in green. Then make a list of nouns you can find looking around the classroom.

“Jazz Up” and “Pair Up” the Headlines

Skill: Review antonyms, synonyms and homonyms

Have students define antonyms, synonyms and homonyms and then give a few examples. Students select five headlines that could use some “jazzing up” and then rewrite them using synonyms for nouns or verbs. Then “pair up” headlines into sets of antonyms, synonyms and homonyms.

Listen Up

Skill: Develop listening and reading comprehension skills

Read an interesting story from the newspaper and ask students (individually or in teams) to answer questions based on the 5W's and H (who, what, when, where, why and how) of the story. Stress attention to detail, as well as the gist of the story. Who recalls the most?

Headline Meaning

Skill: Predict, confirm and understand the meaning of words.

Have students study and then circle the headlines that have more than one meaning and identify the possible other meaning. (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Context Clues**Skill: Use context and/or dictionary to determine meanings of vocabulary in content areas and literature.**

Have students choose three news or feature stories of interest from the newspaper. Using a black marker or pen have them mark out five words in each story (have them make a list of the words on a separate sheet, no proper nouns). Exchange articles between students and have them replace the words with ones that make sense. Then compare with the original words. (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Reference Resources**Skill: Select and use appropriate resources for a given task.**

After students have selected a news story, display ad, an editorial and a sports story have them list the facts from each and then identify which reference source (Encyclopedia, Telephone Directory, Atlas, Dictionary, Newspaper or other source) could be used to verify each fact. (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Court Opinion**Skill: Draw conclusions and make generalizations supported by facts.**

Have students carefully read a story about a court case and then list all the major facts and references to points of law. Then they describe the court decision in one or two sentences, give their opinions of the case and whether they agree or disagree. If the case is not yet decided, how would they rule? (Copyright, CJHatcher & Associates, Inc.)

Think Positive**Skill: Student understands that word choice, figurative language or sentence structure may determine mood or meaning of text.**

Challenge students to make a list of people in today's newspaper that they believe are positive thinkers. Then they can make a list of negative thinkers. Have them compare the people on both lists. Who is more successful, happy, productive and satisfied? They can write their conclusions.

Sportsmanship**Skill: Student forms his/her own ideas about what has happened in a text and uses specific information from the text to support these ideas.**

All athletes are encouraged to be good sports and to play fair. Have students make a list of characteristics that a good sport should have. They can use today's newspaper to find an example of an athlete demonstrating good sportsmanship and explain why they think so. What athletes are not good sports? Why do you think so?

Sentence Quickie Skill: Sentence structure

Have students find examples of declarative, exclamatory and interrogative sentences in the paper.

Reading Quickie Skill: Reading for enjoyment

Give students time to read each day for no other reason than enjoyment.