

## Contemporary Connection and Informational Text Selections

### Introduction

This guide describes the instructional activities for two program features: Contemporary Connection and Informational Text. Students read selections and apply reading skills and strategies to a variety of text forms. They also compare nonfiction selections to literature selections.

**Contemporary Connection: Exploration Past and Present**  
**Steve Squyres** from Mars Rover Mission Update BLOG 69

#### Informational Text: Real-Life Reading

How to Watch a Debate MANUAL 129  
 Help North Texas Vote PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENT 132

All the News That's Fit to Print LITERARY HISTORY 134

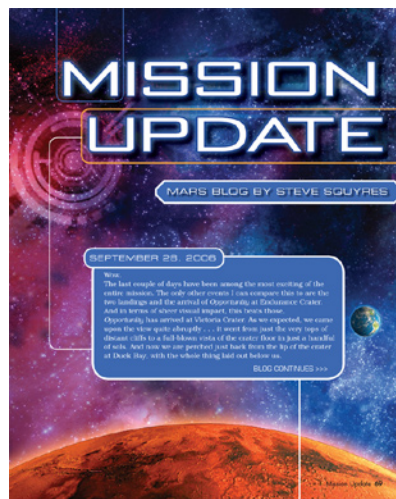
#### Informational Text: Primary Sources

**John Adams** Letter from the President's House LETTER 181  
**Abigail Adams** Letter to Her Daughter From the New White House LETTER 182  
**Benjamin Henry Latrobe** Floor Plan of the President's House DRAWING 185

### Contemporary Connection

The Contemporary Connection feature has students explore relationships between literature and contemporary culture as they read. They compare text selections and text forms, such as blogs and song lyrics. The Contemporary Connection feature appears once in every unit.

**Example 1:** Students read a blog written by Steve Squyres about the Mars Exploration Rover (MER) project. They discuss how concepts of exploration and explorers have changed since Europeans first traveled in the Americas.



**Example 2:** Students meet contemporary recording artist Natasha Bedingfield and discuss the topic of individualism. They analyze the song *Unwritten* for structure and compare the lyrics to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s prose in *Self-Reliance*.



After reading, students answer the Critical Reading questions. These questions require students to describe, analyze, interpret, and assess what they read.

**Critical Reading**

1. (a) Note the names of two Martian locations or geographical features Sqwyres mentions. (b) **Describe:** What similarities do these names have to place names on Earth? (c) **Draw Conclusions:** Why might the scientists have chosen these names for each place?
2. **Interpret:** Which details in the blog make it seem like Sqwyres is actually there on the planet instead of viewing it remotely? Explain your answer.
3. (a) **Analyze:** Which details in the text convey Sqwyres’s excitement? Explain. (b) **Interpret:** What image of science and scientists does “the blog convey”? Explain.

**Use these questions to hold a group discussion of “Mission Update”:**

4. (a) What are the risks of modern exploration—whether into space or into the deep sea? (b) Are the results worth the risks? Explain.
5. After reading this excerpt from Sqwyres’s blog, how do you think our concepts of exploration and explorers have changed since Europeans first traveled in the Americas? In what way have those concepts remained the same as they once were?

## Teaching Resources

Prepare for instruction by reading background information, teaching suggestions, and possible student responses for all lesson activities in the margins of the Teacher’s Edition.

<div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">TEACH</div> <p style="color: #c00000; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">Contemporary Connection</p> <p>“Mission Update” reproduces information first published in a blog on the Internet. Depending on access, you may wish to use a computer in the classroom to present the latest information about the Mars Exploration Rover project and to demonstrate the use of blogs.</p>	<p style="color: #c00000; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">Mission Update</p> <p>Discuss with students their knowledge of blogs. Most students may already know that blog is derived from Web log, and refers to a Web site in which entries are displayed in reverse chronological order, most recent first. Though blogs originated as online diaries or journals, they have evolved to serve many purposes: as forums for news, commentary, politics, pursuit of hobbies, and other interests, using text, images, video, and other media. Most blogs offer a home page where the blogger’s entries appear, links to other sites, an archive of past entries, and a comment section for feedback and dialogue. According to some estimates, there are more than 100 million blogs on the Internet.</p>	<div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">ASSESS</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">Answers</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (a) Sqwyres mentions Endurance Crater, Victoria Crater, Duck Bay, Cape Verde, Cabo Frio. (b) Students may note that craters, capes, and bays are also names on Earth. (c) <b>Possible response:</b> These names may have associations with places or people on Earth.</li> </ol>
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Differentiate instruction for less proficient readers, special needs students, English learners, and gifted students using the information in the Differentiated Instruction for Universal Access box in the Teacher’s Edition.

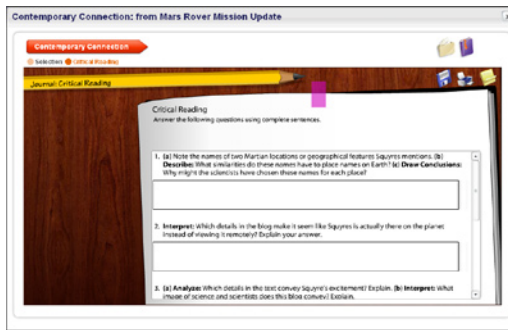
**Differentiated Instruction** for Universal Access

**Support for Less Proficient Readers**  
 Students may need help to understand some of the technical details Sqogres mentions. To clarify "superior conjunction," draw a diagram on the board showing Mars and Earth, with the much-larger Sun between them. Point out that the Sun is blocking the straight line between the two planets. Because radio signals cannot bend around the Sun, there can be no communication between Mars and Earth in this position.

**Enrichment for Gifted/Talented Students**  
 Challenge students to develop materials that will teach elementary-age pupils about the Mars rover project. They might build a life-size replica of a rover, diagram the orbits of Earth and Mars to plot the rocket journey to Mars, or create a flowchart to show the communication process between the rovers on Mars and the controllers on Earth.

**PH Lit Online**

Students can read selections on PH Lit Online. The following examples show a Contemporary Connection selection. Students complete the Critical Reading questions by typing responses into text boxes online.



**Informational Text Selections**

The Informational Text feature has students apply reading skills and strategies to nonfiction primary sources and real-world readings such as manuals, newspaper articles, and Web sites. The Informational Text feature appears twice in every unit.

Lesson activities include explicit instruction of reading strategies. For example, teach students how to analyze and evaluate information using text features such as headings or subheads, boldfaced or italicized text, numbered or bulleted lists, and photos or illustrations. These skills help students effectively read consumer documents such as manuals and public service advertisements.

**Reading Strategy**

To be effective, consumer documents must present information clearly and logically. As you read these materials, **analyze and evaluate information from their text features.** Notice how the following features draw readers' attention to key information:

- Headings and subheads that define different sections
- Boldfaced or italicized text that emphasize sections or words
- Numbered or bulleted lists that identify details or steps
- Photos or illustrations that reinforce a message

As you read these documents, use a checklist like the one shown to identify each element and analyze its purpose.

Basic Elements	Purpose	
Headlines and subheads	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Boldfaced or italicized text	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Numbered or bulleted lists	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Photos or illustrations	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

## Teaching Resources

The Accessibility at a Glance charts compare Primary Source selections on criteria such as concept level, lexile, and overall rating. This information helps the preparation of appropriate reading support for students based on text difficulty. The Reader's Notebooks provide adapted text for many selections.

Differentiated Instruction for Universal Access			
Accessibility at a Glance			
	Letter from The President's House	Letter to Her Daughter From the New White House	Floor Plan of the President's House
Context	Thoughts and feelings of the second president	Thoughts and feelings of the first lady	An architectural plan for the White House
Language/ Vocabulary	Mostly straightforward short sentences	Long sentences with embedded clauses	Annotations to a floor plan; some technical terms
Concept Level	Accessible (onset of his first stay in White House)	Accessible (description of daily events)	Accessible (labeled diagram)
Literary Merit	Primary source	Primary source	Primary source
Lexile Length	Lexile: 980L Word Count: 246 words	Lexile: 1120L Word Count: 359 words	Lexile: NP Word count: 88 words
Overall Rating	Average	Average	Average

Differentiate instruction for less proficient readers, special needs students, English learners, and gifted students using the information provided in the Differentiated Instruction for Universal Access boxes in the Teacher's Edition.

**Differentiated Instruction for Universal Access**

**Background for Less Proficient Readers**  
Neither British nor American English in the early-nineteenth century followed the rules of capitalization that we are used to. Many of the common nouns—not only the proper nouns—take capitals in this letter. (In the letter by Abigail Adams, on the next page, a twentieth-century editor eliminated what we would consider extraneous capitals.) Advise students that John Adams's style does not give them license to follow suit.

**EL Support for English Learners**  
Many languages that use an alphabet similar to that of American English have similar rules for capitalization. There are, however, differences: German capitalizes common nouns; Spanish and French do not capitalize the pronoun that corresponds to I. Remind English learners that native speakers expect them to use capitals for most proper nouns and adjectives, for I, for the first word of a sentence, for important words in titles (according to MLA style), and for some abbreviations and acronyms.

Extend instruction with vocabulary development and enrichment activities. The enrichment activities provide cross-curricular connections.

**Vocabulary Development**

**Vocabulary Knowledge Rating**  
Create a **Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart** (in *Professional Development Guidebook*, p. 33) for the vocabulary words on the student page. Give each student a copy of the chart with the words on it. Read the words aloud and have students mark their rating of each in the Before Reading column. When students have completed reading and discussing the group of

selections, have them take out their **Vocabulary Knowledge Rating** charts. Read the words aloud and have students rate their knowledge again in the After Reading column. Clarify any words that are still problematic. Then, have students complete the Vocabulary practice at the end of the selections.

**Enrichment: Investigating Science**

**Humans in Deep Space**  
The success of the Mars rover project raises an issue about the need for humans to travel in space. One problem is distance: some space voyages would last decades and human lifetimes. Another problem is neediness: the human body needs water, food, oxygen, warmth, and gravity, for starters. The "simple" solution would be to create a mini-Earth, with gravity, atmosphere, and sustainable systems for air, food, and energy—and then to propel

this object across the universe at close to the speed of light. Such a solution, of course, is more science fiction than science.  
**Activity: Research** Ask students to investigate how scientists are addressing the complications of deep-space travel for humans. Students may use the **Investigating Science** worksheet, *Professional Development Guidebook*, page 241, as they do their research. Encourage students to report their findings to the class.

Additional teaching resources for specific lesson activities are listed in the Teaching Resources boxes in the Teacher's Edition.

**Teaching Resources**

**Unit 1 Resources**  
Primary Source work sheet, p. 25  
Vocabulary Builder, p. 26

**Professional Development Guidebook**  
Enrichment, pp. 33, 228, 233, 241

**PHLIT Online!** All resources are available at [www.PHLITOnline.com](http://www.PHLITOnline.com)

## Assessment

After reading and completing the Informational Text lesson activities, students prepare for selection assessments with Test Practice. Test Practice includes standardized test questions and timed writing exercises. The Assessment Resources boxes in the Teacher's Edition list available assessments for each selection.

**Test Practice**

**Timed Writing: Responding to the Essential Question**  
What is the relationship between place and literature? [30 minutes]

**Format**  
The prompt asks you to answer questions in the form of an **essay**, a piece of writing with multiple paragraphs. Write at least two well-defined paragraphs in response to each question.

**5-Minute Planner**  
Complete these steps before you begin to write:  
1. Read the prompt carefully. Underline key words and phrases.  
2. Quickly jot down a list of responses to the first question.  
3. Decide which of the three documents seems most in line with the reasons you listed.  
4. Scan the documents for evidence that relates to the ideas in your list. **TIP** Remember that attitudes and character traits can be used as evidence.  
5. Create an outline for your essay.

**Academic Vocabulary**  
**Evidence** is information that illustrates or supports a writer's idea. When you are writing about a historical document, evidence can take the form of quotations, facts, or details that are drawn from the document.

## PH Lit Online

PH Lit Online also provides interactive lesson content for Informational Texts. The colored arrows near the top of the page direct the lesson flow for Informational Texts.

Before You Read activities include instruction about the text form.

Informational Texts: Primary Sources

Before You Read While You Read After You Read

About the Forms

**INFORMATIONAL TEXT**

**Primary Sources**

**Letter**  
Letter from the President's House

**Letter**  
Letter from the New White House

**Floor Plan**  
President's House

**About the Forms**  
Today, you might send an IM or an e-mail to a distant friend, or simply make a phone call. In the past, though, people relied on letters to keep...

While You Read activities include interactive text. Adapted text is assigned to students based on their learner settings. Students can listen to the selection in English. An audio summary of the selection is provided in English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. Students can highlight text and type notes into text boxes and journals.

Before You Read While You Read After You Read

Letter from the President's House Letter to the Delegates from the New White House White House Floor Plan Critical Reading

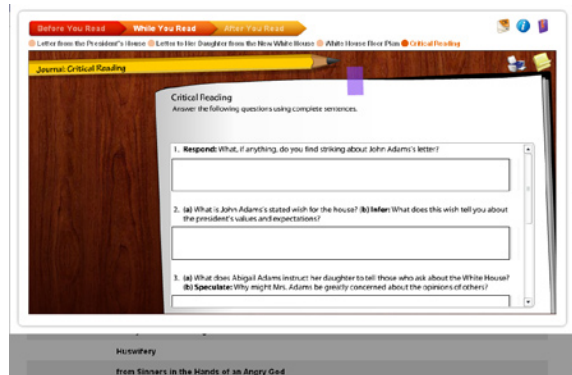
**Letter from the President's House**

President's house, Washington City, Nov. 2, 1800

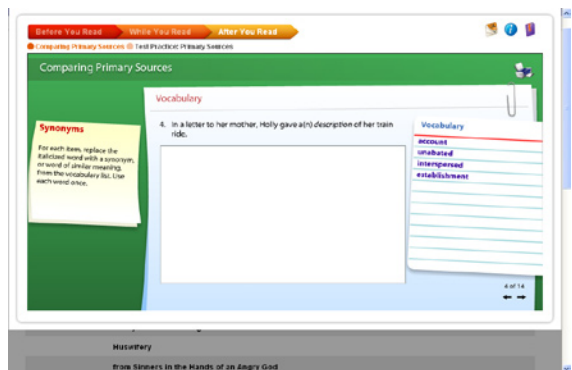
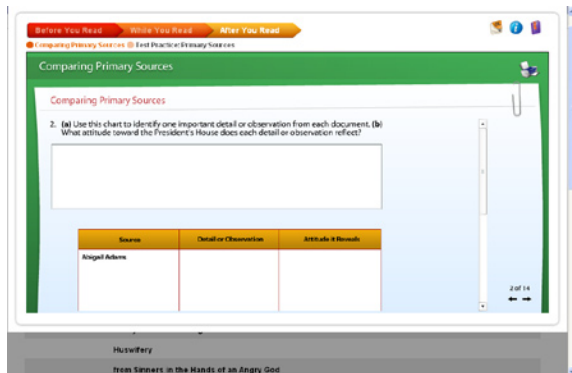
*My Dearest Friend,*  
We arrived here last night, or rather yesterday, at one o'clock and here we dined and slept. The building is in a state to be habitable, and now we wait for your Company. The Account you give of the melancholy state of our dear brother Mr. Cronch (C) and his family is really distressing and most severely affects you. I most cordially sympathize with you and them. I have seen only Mr. Marshall and Mr. Stoddard, General Wilkinson and the two Commissioners Mr. Scott and Mr. Thornton. (C) I shall say nothing of public affairs. I am very glad you consented to come on, for you would have been more anxious at Quincy (Q) than here, and I, to all my other Sokoloudes Mondaces as Horace (H) calls them (L), "bring Care" should have added a great deal on your Account. Besides it is fit and proper that you and I should retire together and not one before the other. Before I end my letter I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise Men ever rule under this roof. I shall not attempt a description of it. You will form the best Idea of it from Inspection. Mr. Broder (B) is very anxious for the arrival of the Men and Women and I am much more so for that of the Ladies. I am with invaluable Confidence and affection your  
John Adams

Huzzarey  
from Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

Students type responses into text boxes for each Critical Reading question. PH Lit Online automatically saves student work within each user account. Students can also print their work.



After You Read activities include the same questions found in the Student Edition for Comparing Primary Sources. Students type responses into text boxes online.



## Review

The Contemporary Connection feature has students explore relationships between literature and contemporary culture. The Informational Text feature has students apply reading skills and strategies to nonfiction selections. The Teacher's Edition provides background information and teaching suggestions for all lesson activities. The Teacher's Edition also provides information outlining text difficulty as well as suggestions for differentiating, enriching, and extending instruction. PH Lit Online provides lesson content in an interactive format.