

Informational Texts and Where to Find Them:

Online Resources for Nonfiction and the Common Core State Standards

A Professional Development Workshop presented by Deborah B. Ford, Director of Library Outreach @ Junior Library Guild

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With the implementation of the CCSS, educators will be faced with an increasing need for nonfiction and other informational texts. By grade 4, 50% of what students read should be informational. By grade 8, the rate goes up to 55%. At grade 12, the rate is 70%. These standards are not just for English Language Arts classrooms, so what's an educator to do? Where can you find the informational texts that are being required with increased rigor?"

CCSS Anchor Standard 10

"Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently." (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a, p. 10)

Appendix B (text exemplars) is a sample, not a shopping list.

What is informational text?

Informational text is a type of nonfiction. Its purpose is to convey information and may be in many different formats. It can include:

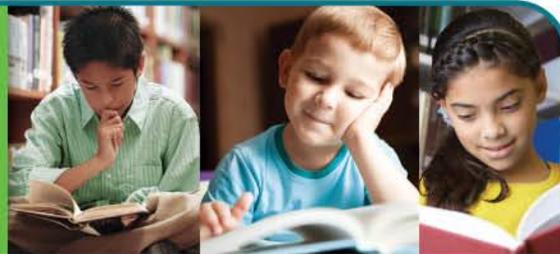
- Encyclopedias
- Other reference materials
- Periodicals
- Websites
- Newspapers
- Other primary documents
- Textbooks

Resources

- School library
- Classroom collection
- Public/state library
- Online resources

Online resources

<http://bit.ly/webresourcesforteachers>



Best of the Best: Top 100 Web Resources for Educators An Internet Hotlist on Teacher Websites

created by [Deborah B. Ford](#)

[Introduction](#) | [Content Resources](#) | [Collaboration](#) | [Global Education](#) | [Time and Money Savers](#) | [Digital Resources](#) | [Not So Free](#)

Introduction

Especially for teachers and librarians, award winning author, librarian, teacher and speaker, Deborah B. Ford has gathered these 100+ (mostly free) web resources to help you make the most of your time, money, while keeping your sanity.

The Internet Resources

Content Resources

- [A+ Click](#) - Students grades K-12 can take online math practice tests at this site.
- [ALA Youth Media Awards](#) - Want to know more about the best books of the year? Check out these annual awards given to best children's books and media.
- [Annenberg Media Lerner](#) - Videos, interactives, workshops, and distance learning are all available on this site.
- [Book Adventure](#) - Free reading motivational program for kids K-8. Over 7,000 recommended titles, take multiple choice tests and win points.
- [Children's Writing and Publishing](#) - Professor Kay Vandergrift lists websites and descriptions of websites that allow students to post their work online.
- [Curriki](#) - Curriki's mission is to provide free, high-quality curricula and education resources to teachers, students and parents around the world.
- [Discovery Education](#) - Discovery Education has so much to offer teachers: lesson plans, videos, puzzlemakers, science fair ideas, contests, grants, science help and more.
- [Free Reading.net](#) - Open source provider of many kinds of free reading resource materials for preK-Grade 6.
- [Great Websites for Kids](#) - Sponsored by ALA, this site suggests websites on authors, booklists and activities for kids and those who work with them.
- [Library of Congress](#) - The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. It is also the largest library in the world, with millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts in its collections.
- [NASA](#) - Enhance the study of science and technology by employing the diverse resources available from NASA. These include video e-Clips, podcasts, NASA television, live space station video, and blogs.
- [National Council for the Social Studies](#) - From online resources to lesson plans, the NCSS website provides all teachers will material to support the social studies curriculum.

Key Free Digital Resources

Content

[DeweyBrowse.org](#) - Need some informational text and have a nonfiction book? Websites are assigned a Dewey number as if they were a library material. Simply match your book to the website.

[Free Reading.net](#) - Open source provider of many kinds of free reading resource materials for PreK-Grade 6. Search Decodable Passages or Find Literacy Activities.

[Great Websites for Kids](#) - Sponsored by ALA, this site suggests websites on authors, booklists and activities on a variety of topics for kids and those who work with them.

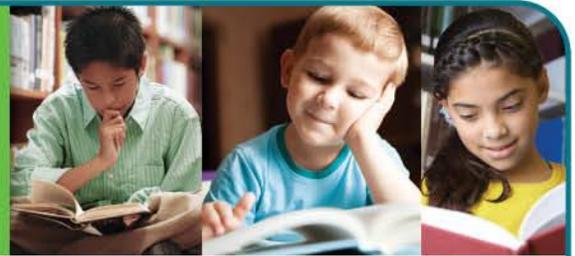
[Library of Congress](#) - The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. Search Teachers and choose common core for primary source material.

[NASA](#) - Enhance the study of science and technology by employing the diverse resources available from NASA Education. These include informational text, video e-Clips, podcasts, NASA television, live space station video, and blogs.

[National Geographic Kids' Creature Feature](#) - Free informational text for emergent readers about animals kids love.

[Newsla](#) - Free nonfiction texts that are lexiled and can be adjusted to three levels of difficulty within the article. Anchor standards and quizzes support the piece.

[On Common Core](#) - A series of webinars on Common Core sponsored by SLJ.



[Read Write Think](#) - Search for lesson ideas, web materials, student activities, and accompanying language arts standards. Choose your lesson and then you can see CCSS.

[Reading Rockets](#) - Sponsored by the PBS television show, this website offers free video of favorite children's authors, articles about reading and booklists by theme. Choose Reading Topics/Common Core for resources, including parental support. (Some resources in Spanish.)

[Readworks.org](#) - Lesson plans, activities sheet- everything you need to teach LA standards, including leveled passages with question sets.

[Smithsonian Education](#) - The section for Educators includes a lesson plan area (searchable by CCSS, subject, keyword or grade level) and IdeaLabs, student interactive tutorials that enhance the use of the site.

[Starfall](#) - Starfall is a free website to motivate children to read with phonics. Perfect for young readers, special education or ELL. Practice reading stories and watch videos. Includes CCSS math and reading for first grade.

[Time for Kids](#) - Get the latest online news- kids' style. Great source of informational text. Lots of photos and videos as well.

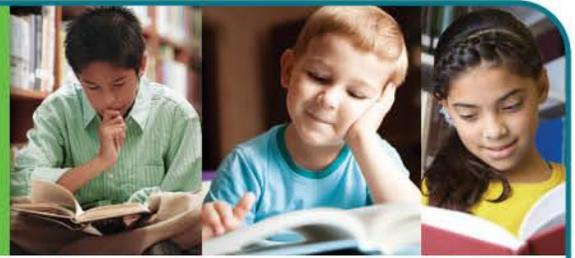
[Wonderopolis.org](#) - Wonderopolis®, CCSS correlated lesson plans that encourage students to think and research.

Time and Money Savers

[Kathy Schrock's Guide to Everything](#) - Kathy Schrock's home base for all things technology. Not to be missed. (See Assessment and Rubrics for CCSS)

Informational Text Features

- Print features: Guide readers through organization
 - Table of contents
 - Index
 - Glossary
 - Preface
 - Pronunciation guide
 - Appendix
- Illustrations: Expand meaning
 - Photos
 - Drawings
 - Magnifications



- Organizational aids: Locate info quickly
 - Bold print
 - Colored print
 - Bullets
 - Captions
 - Sidebars
 - Headings
- Graphic aids: Represent info visually
 - Diagrams
 - Graphs
 - Figures
 - Maps
 - Charts/tables
 - Time-lines

Nonfiction/Informational Text Goal

- Offer accurate, timely nonfiction
- Good text features
- Keep school and classroom libraries current

Content

[ALA Youth Media Awards](#) - Want to know more about the best books of the year? Check out these annual awards given to best children's books and media.

[National Council for the Social Studies](#) - From online resources to lesson plans, the NCSS website provides all teachers will material to support the social studies curriculum. Annual best books lists, K-12.

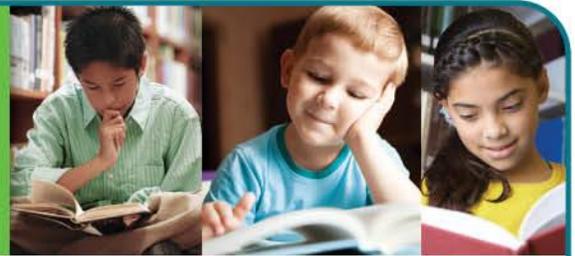
[National Council of Teachers of English Orbis Pictus Award](#) - NCTE annually selects and awards the best in nonfiction for children.

[National Science Teachers Association](#) - From outstanding trade books to grants, NSTA provides resources to support the science curriculum. Annual best books list, K-12.

[The Uncommon Corps](#) - Champions of nonfiction blog about how to use nonfiction in teaching the common core. Included are reviews of new nonfiction.

Worth the Money

[Junior Library Guild](#) - The collection development and book review service relied upon by thousands of schools and public libraries for 85 years. Offers 16 levels of nonfiction, K-12, in addition to excellent fiction levels, now selling ebooks.



- Professional development
- JLG's Booktalks to Go in School Library Journal's Extra Helping Newsletter
- JLG's award-winning LiveBinder JLG's BTG
- JLG @ Pinterest

Using What You Have: Databases

Worth the Money

[Capstone Digital](#) - Subscription digital products include PebbleGo, MyOn Reader and Capstone Interactive Library.

[Destiny @ SDUSD](#) - Teachers, parents and students can search the library's online catalog for library materials, websites and database resources- all in One Search!

[Grolier Online](#) - Now owned by Scholastic, Grolier Online Encyclopedia is another paid subscription site that provides up to date information about many topics.

[TeachingBooks.net](#) - A digital portal to thousands of multimedia resources that can enhance and enliven the reading experiences. A subscription service, some parts, like author pronunciation, are free.

[World Book Online](#) - From WB Kids to WB Discover, this daily maintained paid subscription site provides up to date information about a wealth of topics.

Check your:

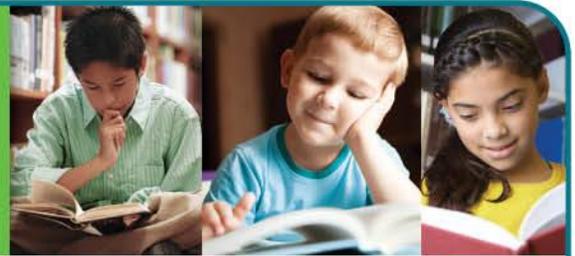
- Public libraries
- School libraries
- County/district/board office website
- State/Province department website

Get the Most out of Your School/Public Library Online Catalog

- Find out your login.
- Make bookmarkers with sites and passwords for your students.
- Can you make a wish list?
- Can you make resource lists?
- Can you search by standard?
- Can you make your resource lists public?
- Can you request items to be pulled/checked out for you?
- Does your catalog search for websites? What grade levels?
- Does your catalog search for databases? Which ones?



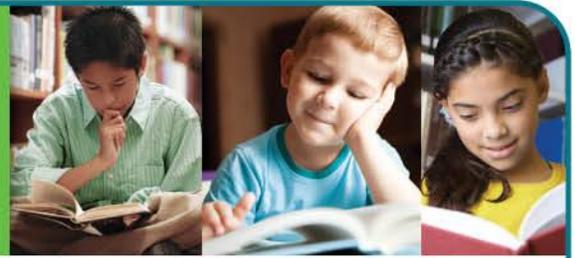
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



- Do you have an aggregated database search tool?
- Can your catalog be translated into other languages?
- Get the offsite passwords for databases if needed.
- Teach your students to go here first.

Get the Most out of Your Databases

- Find out your login.
- Find out your students' logins.
- Make bookmarkers with sites and passwords for your students.
- Use QR codes to lead them to the site.
- Use QR codes near the print materials to guide them to the online materials.
- Can you make shopping carts or lists for your students?
- Is there a sales rep or a library staff person who can teach you and your class the bells and whistles of the product?
- Are there lesson plans available?
- Does your database offer support for struggling students: audio, video, definitions, etc.?
- Collaborate with your public library. In hard times, split the cost of the resources. Teach your students to use the public library.



Informational Texts and Where to Find Them to Do List

1. Name two resources you want to investigate.
2. How can you get the word out to your students, teachers, or colleagues?
3. How can you make better use of county, state, or national resources?



About the presenter:

Deborah B. Ford is the Director of Library Outreach for Junior Library Guild. She is an award-winning teacher librarian and international speaker with almost thirty years of experience as a classroom teacher and librarian in K-12 schools. Deborah is the author of *Scary, Gross and Enlightening: Books for Boys*, published by Linworth, 2009. She is the creator of JLG's Booktalks To Go award-winning LiveBinder 2014. Serving over 180 schools, she is the former District Resource Librarian for San Diego Unified School District.

Traveling across North America, she also does seminars for the Bureau of Education, including "Using Technology in Your School Library Program. Bring Deborah to your school or library! Contact her at dford@juniorlibraryguild.com. For more information about Junior Library Guild, contact sales@juniorlibraryguild.com.