

# OVERVIEW of a Close Reading Lesson

Following is a general overview of the close reading lessons provided in this book. Examples of the components highlighted in **bold** reference either a specific lesson (Lesson 6: *Humpback Whales*, page 87) or the Appendix (starting on page 142).

These lessons are designed to be introductory in that they provide both the questioning and thinking necessary for close, analytical reading. The questioning is done through a teacher-facilitated whole or small group discussion during which an important central idea from the text is uncovered.

The lessons introduce critical thinking skills that are essential to close reading. The **Student Texts** (see Lesson 6: *Humpback Whales*, page 87) were chosen for their substantive content. As students gain experience with this type of lesson, they will learn to develop, ask, and answer text-dependent questions on their own. After repeated, supported practice, students will ultimately be able to transfer and apply the close reading process skills modeled in these lessons to their own independent reading of complex informational text.

The **Teacher Discussion Guides** (see Lesson 6: *Humpback Whales*, page 89) include a logical sequence of text-dependent questions that lead to predetermined central ideas. Allowing that there is usually more than one central idea in a text, the central idea for each of these lessons was chosen based on the following criteria:

- The central idea is inferential.
- The central idea is logical.
- The central idea can be adequately supported with text evidence.

To accommodate the uniqueness of individual classrooms and the students within them, the text-dependent questions provided in the Teacher Discussion Guides are scaffolded. The questions are designed to lead participants to the discovery of the purposefully chosen central idea. However, the number of questions needed to accomplish this will vary. Some teachers may use all of the questions while others may need to use only the key ones. Most will use pedagogical reasoning to adjust questioning throughout the discussion as appropriate for the level of understanding demonstrated by student response. The Teacher Discussion Guide is *not meant to be a protocol or a script*. It is meant to provide a structure that will support a vibrant, engaging discussion in your classroom.

Each lesson concludes with a **Prompt** (see Lesson 6: *Humpback Whales*, page 93) to measure both students' understanding of the text based on the discussion and their ability to demonstrate that understanding in written form. Prompts relate directly to the specified central idea and lead students to follow the logic of the discussion in their responses. **Annotated Constructed Response Exemplars** (see Lesson 6: *Humpback Whales*, page 93) are included to provide guidance for writing instruction.

The **Thought Capturer** (starting on page 150) serves as a bridge between the discussion and the written response. This organizer parallels the structure of the constructed response paragraph and can be used as a thought synthesizer as well as a prewriting tool.

**Constructed Response Instructional Rubrics** and **Response to Reading Checklists** (starting on page 152) are included to guide writing instruction and to help students with self-assessment.

The Common Core State Standards clearly charges educators with the mission of teaching students to read closely while interacting with multiple complex texts in order to prepare them to be successful in college and career pursuits. These lessons will help teachers facilitate the beginnings of this practice and move toward a comprehensive understanding of the skill of close reading.