6th Grade Interactive Read Aloud: “Arizona Immigration Posse Now on School Patrol”

Considerations for text complexity:
• Class profile:
  o 75% of the class is reading at or above grade level
  o 20% of the class is reading slightly below grade
  o 5% of the class is reading more than two grades below grade level
  o It is October – the beginning of 6th Grade
  • Common Core “Stretch” Level band for grades 6-8: 925-1185

Article at Lexile 1150 versus 1050:

1150 presents tougher sentence syntax with less embedded definitions of sophisticated terminology related to political issues (e.g. “undocumented workers” versus at 1050 “immigrants who did not have documents to work in the U.S.”)

Both versions present some qualitative complexity: the reader has to make inferential connections between the history of the posse as an enforcer of immigration laws and the role it currently plays as a would-be protector of schools. In addition, there are opportunities for readers to make broader connections between this sheriff’s actions and the national debate on gun control – these connections require interpretive thinking and benefit from some background knowledge of the topic.

Decision:

Given that it is early in the year for this sixth grade, and that 25% of the students are not reading at grade level, it would be reasonable to select the 1050 Lexile level text: this is still within the grade band for sixth grade, and offers the chance to teach some higher-order thinking skills within nonfiction while staying within a reasonable level of difficulty for syntax and vocabulary. The interactive read aloud method of presenting the text, in addition to some pre-text introductions, will support readers who may not be able to access this text independently.

Purposes of Newsela Instructional Read Aloud

• Preview and read aloud text to provide multiple access points to a complex, worthwhile text and topic
• Demonstrate and model fluent, engaged reading of informational text
• Demonstrate and prompt for pausing and pacing of the text to monitor for comprehension and synthesize across parts
• Demonstrate and prompt for questioning the text to push for more inferential and interpretive comprehension
• Chart transferable strategies to support students’ application of the same work to future independent reading of informational texts
• Introduce a common text that can become the practice ground for future close readings and lessons

Introduction to Read Aloud: Setting the Stage for a Through-Line of Reading Work
Today, we’re going to read an article together and practice some of the important work that helps us to make sense of information that we read. When we read news articles, it’s sometimes challenging to find central ideas, because often we are presented with a lot of details up front. The details are there to help us understand the basics of the story: who is the story about, what’s happening, where is it taking place, when did it happen. Think about your experience with reading or listening to the news – think about when and how most people read or watch the news - why do news writers put all this detailed information right at the beginning of the story? Discuss this with your partner – what could be the reason?

[Listen in… Share out responses that sound like…]

This partnership was saying that when they go to read a news article or when they’re watching the news on tv, they want the most important information right away. They may not stay on that channel long, or they may flip to another page in the paper, so they want to know the main points up front.

Let’s practice reading an article together today. We’re going to stop once and a while to make sure we are collecting the details that the author shares with us and then making sense of them by pushing to think: what is a central idea that holds these details together (CCSS RI 6.1 and 6.2). By the end of the article, we can decide on what central idea or ideas go across the whole article, and what we still wonder or need to know to really understand this topic.

Chart:
Reading to make sense of informational text
Stop frequently to ask:
• What details has the author given so far?
• What idea holds these details together? In other words, what do these details make the reader think about this topic?

Before we start, let’s take a look at the title: “Arizona Immigration Posse Now on School Patrol.”

Even headlines pack a punch in news articles – trying to cram in a lot of information in a little space, in case readers are just skimming the headlines in an online format, or watching the crawl on tv. Right away we want to try to figure out what this will be about. Let’s look at the first three words and do some quick thinking: “Arizona Immigration Posse”. Hmm. So Arizona is a state – where is it? Yes, West of here. South and West. “Immigration” – what does that word mean? Tell your partner. Ok, and finally “posse.” That’s a word you may not know, or may have heard in another context. In this article, it means a group of citizens that a sheriff (or local police leader) has gathered together to help with law enforcement. These days, some people use “posse” to mean just a group of friends or followers, but here it’s really going back to an earlier meaning – a group that is put together by a sheriff, or local police leader, to help with police investigations or protecting
And in fact, in this article, we are going to learn about an Arizona sheriff who has pulled together a posse – or a group of citizens - to help him in different ways.

So we’ve learned quite a bit in a short time about this sheriff in Arizona. The author of the article wants us to understand what kind of sheriff he is before we get to the current story. The first sentence lets us know that he calls himself “the toughest sheriff in America.” It goes on to tell us ways in which he’s been “tough” – some of which seem to upset people. Let’s list these “tough” ways:

- Racial profiling of Latinos
- Investigating President Obama’s birth certificate
- Joe’s Law – “controversial” statements about Mexican-Americans

What do all of these issues have in common? Keeping in mind the title – “Arizona Immigration Posse” – what can we say about Sheriff Arpaio so far? How is he introduced? (CCSS RI 6.3) What does he seem to be “tough” about? Discuss with your partner – some terms may be unfamiliar to you, but try to think it through based on everything else you do understand.

So far it seems he wants to be “tough” on immigrants. And it seems that not everyone agrees with the ways he’s decided to be tough. Let’s keep reading to see what he’s up to now.

Ok, now we’re getting a different story. It seems that this “posse” he has put together has had many roles over the years. Let’s re-read the details about the posse and try to get a picture of what they have been doing, and what they’re doing now. With your partner, make a list of what the posse has done before and what they are doing now. [CCSS RI 6.1]

Now, what does this make us think? We can think about the sheriff – what does it say about him that these are the things he’s getting help with – or we can think about the idea of a citizen posse – what are we learning about what kinds of issues they get called to help with?
[Chart: Sheriff: example: he thinks that getting more people out policing will stop crime. OR – he sees illegal immigration as just as dangerous a crime as robbery and school shootings. Posse – they get asked to help with issues that are important to the sheriff, not necessarily what they think are important.]

[Continue in this way, stopping after each section to sum up details and prompt for idea-making. After the next couple of sections, ask students to think across sections. What is a bigger idea that they have about this sheriff, or about the issue of protecting schools, or about law enforcement? Allow partnerships to choose the topic they want to think about, then chart possible central ideas in the article.]

[At the end of the article…give all students a copy of the article. Pull them together for a whole class talk.]

Could be next day or that day if there is time: Whole class discussion: [Set up a system for whole class talk where students understand that they will run the conversation. Give an open-ended prompt, and let students call on each other to continue the conversation so that they have control of making connections to each other.]

Now that we’ve finished reading, it’s time to take stock of all the thinking we’ve done across the article. We want to push ourselves to come up with central ideas that this article teaches us, and remember the details that support those ideas. (CCSS RI 6.2) Let’s try it with several topics that the article touches. [chart possible topics for discussion – the sheriff; protecting schools from gun violence; law enforcement methods, others…]

Let’s talk about the central ideas that came up in this article, using examples from the text to back them up. (CCSS SL 6.1) When you participate in the conversation, be sure to state your idea clearly and to say what part of the article made you think that. To continue the conversation, call on someone else to keep it going. Let’s try to stay with the same idea for a while, so try saying “Another example of this is…” or “I think another part of the article that goes with that is…”]
6th Grade Minilesson Using “Arizona Immigration Posse Now on School Patrol”

Note: Students will need access to individual copies of the article, either printouts or computer access. See rationale for text complexity above for Lexile selection (this is also a whole-class instructional method.)

Teaching Point (a transferable reading strategy that students can use to apply to future reading):

Readers of informational text notice when two sides of an issue are presented. Clues like “Other people say…” or “Critics say…” help readers to be alert to another point of view. To clarify reasons or evidence on both sides of an issue, readers can set up a note-taking chart to collect support for each side.

[To teach this lesson, refer to “Who Called the Posse?” and “Critics Question the Plan” as demonstration texts. Model thinking through the pros and cons of the school protection posse by setting up a note-taking chart: “The posse is a good idea/The posse is a bad idea” and collecting evidence from the passage that supports each side.

Then give students an opportunity to practice this same strategy on the last section of the article: “Armed Guards for Every School.” Set up the chart and have students re-read for the evidence to support both sides: “Obama’s gun control plan will be effective for protecting school children/The NRA’s plan to arm guards in school will be effective for protecting school children.”

Finally, link this to independent practice. Students will use this strategy, plus the strategy that was demonstrated in the read aloud for coming up with central idea by thinking through details, as they move to read their own independent Newsela stories that they choose, at their instructional levels, as approximated by themselves and the software.
6th Grade Small Group Guided Reading Using “Arizona Immigration Posse Now on School Patrol”

Text Complexity: Use the reading level of the students to group students reading at a similar instructional level. Select the Lexile level for slightly above the students’ level, as this will be a chance to guide them into a more complex text. For example, if students are reading at a 5th grade reading level (based on multiple reading assessments – ELA score, Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment, TCRWP reading assessment, DRA, etc.), you might select the 1050 Lexile as a way to nudge them into the 6-8 grade band. However, if students are reading at a 4th grade reading level, you might select the 920 Lexile version as you do want students to be able to access most of the text themselves.

Text Introduction: Give a similar introduction as described above in the Read Aloud introduction, but in this case, preview more vocabulary. Also, start a small group discussion to introduce the concepts of immigration and school gun violence, as these are central to the article. Read the title of the article out loud and think through it with the group, in a similar fashion as described in the Read Aloud.

Students read the text: Ask the students to read the text independently. As they read, coach into their work: ask them questions to prompt for key details and central ideas. When you notice misunderstandings, model re-reading with fluency, and stopping to make sure the details make sense to you. Then prompt the student to try another section. Move from student to student so that you get to all students in the group.

Share and naming of strategies: At the end, share out central ideas and key details from the article, and name some ways that students monitored for comprehension and got back on track when they were misunderstanding a section.