

Paul Bunyan: The Invention of an American Legend
by Noah Van Sciver

FOR VISUAL READERS
TOON BOOKS®

TOON Graphics

Grades = 3-5

F&P Reading Level = T

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CCSS-aligned Guided Reading Lesson Plan

Standards indicated for grades 3-5 – (See page 10-11 for other grades.)

Overview	Readers will learn about the Paul Bunyan legend and the real story behind it.	
Subject	History	
Grade Level	3-5	
Objectives	<p>To help children learn about the tradition and origin of tall tales.</p> <p>To help children understand that the Paul Bunyan legend was the creation of a logging company—that anything they read might have an agenda behind it.</p> <p>To help children understand how logging companies acquired the lands they exploited.</p> <p>To help children understand the effects of logging on Indigenous people, their lands, and their cultures.</p> <p>To help children gain an understanding of the variety of ways text and images work together to bring out the underlying ideas driving an informational or literary narration.</p>	
VERBAL EXPRESSION		
<p>RI.3.1, RI.3.7, RI.3.10, RI.4.1, RI.4.7, RI.4.10, RI.5.1, RI.5.10, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.6, RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.5.1, RL.5.2</p>	<p>Page 4: What do you learn on this page about the man who is speaking?</p>	

RI.3.1, RI.3.4, RI.3.7, RI.3.10,
RI.4.1, RI.4.4, RI.4.7, RI.4.10,
RI.5.1, RI.5.4, RI.5.10, RL.3.1,
RL.3.4, RL.4.1, RL.4.4, RL.4.7,
RL.5.1, RL.5.4, RL.5.7

What do you think a **timber cruiser** does?
What is the man's job now? ¹



RI.3.1, RI.3.4, RI.3.7, RI.3.10,
RI.4.1, RI.4.4, RI.4.7, RI.4.10,
RI.5.1, RI.5.4, RI.5.10,
RL.3.1, RL.3.4, RL.4.1,
RL.4.4, RL.4.7, RL.5.1,
RL.5.4, RL.5.7

What do you think **old growth** is?

RI.3.1, RI.3.4, RI.3.7, RI.3.10,
RI.4.1, RI.4.4, RI.4.7, RI.4.10,
RI.5.1, RI.5.4, RI.5.10, RL.3.1,
RL.3.4, RL.4.1, RL.4.4, RL.4.7,
RL.5.1, RL.5.4, RL.5.7

Page 8: What is a **stand**?³



RI.3.1, RI.3.7, RI.3.10, RI.4.1,
RI.4.10, RI.5.1, RL.3.1,
RL.4.1, RL.5.1

What has happened to the north woods after twenty years of lumbering?⁴

RI.3.3, RI.3.7, RI.3.8, RI.4.3,
RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7, RL.5.7

Why is **MOST OF THE TREES ARE GONE!** in capital letters and boldface? Where else do you see words in all capital letters and/or boldface in the book? Why do you think those words are shown that way?⁵

RI.3.1, RI.3.7, RI.3.8, RI.4.1,
RI.4.7, RI.5.1, RI.5.3, RI.5.6,
RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.7, RL.4.1,
RL.4.7, RL.5.1, RL.5.7

Later on: How do the other passengers react to the man's stories about Paul Bunyan? How can you tell?⁶

RI.3.1, RI.3.7, RI.3.8, RI.4.1,
RI.4.7, RI.4.8, RI.5.2, RI.5.3,
RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.7, RL.4.1,
RL.4.2, RL.4.6, RL.4.7, RL.5.1,
RL.5.2, RL.5.6, RL.5.7

What would you say is the role of the man in the yellow checked shirt in this book? How about the train conductor? Explain your answer with examples from the book.⁷



RI.3.1, RI.3.6, RI.3.7, RI.4.1,
RI.4.7, RL.3.1, RL.3.6, RL.3.7,
RL.4.1, RL.4.6, RL.4.7,
RL.5.1, RL.5.6, RL.5.7

What is your favorite Paul Bunyan story that the man tells? Why?

RI.3.1, RI.3.3, RI.3.4, RI.3.7,
RI.4.1, RI.4.3, RI.4.4, RI.4.7,
RI.5.2, RI.5.3, RI.5.4, RI.5.10,
RL.3.1, RL.3.4, RL.4.1, RL.4.4,
RL.5.1, RL.5.3, RL.5.4

Page 36: What is **clear cutting**? How has it affected the lands of Indigenous peoples?



RI.3.1, RI.3.7, RI.4.1, RI.4.7,
RI.5.1, RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.7,
RL.4.1, RL.4.6, RL.4.7, RL.5.1,
RL.5.6, RL.5.7

Pages 36-37: How did the Native peoples think about trees? How do you know?

RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.3, RI.3.7,
RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.7,
RI.4.8, RI.5.1, RI.5.2, RI.5.3,
RI.5.8, RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.7,
RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.7, RL.5.1,
RL.5.2, RL.5.6

How were lumber companies able to acquire the land to cut down the trees?

RI.3.2, RI.3.6, RI.3.10, RI.4.2,
RI.4.8, RI.4.10, RI.5.2, RI.5.10,
RL.3.1, RL.3.6, RL.4.1, RL.4.2,
RL.5.1, RL.5.2

What would you say are the main ideas of this book? Why do you think so? Use evidence from the book to support your answer.

Why are trees important? Explain your answer.

Trees make oxygen. They provide food and habitats for many kinds of animals. They provide fruits and nuts. They make shade. Furniture, paper, cardboard, and many other things are made from wood from trees. Wood is used for floors and for building houses and other structures.

VISUAL EXPRESSION

RI.3.1, RI.3.7, RI.4.1, RI.4.7,
RI.5.3, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.6,
RL.3.7, RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3,
RL.4.6, RL.4.7, RL.5.1, RL.5.2,
RL.5.3, RL.5.6, RL.5.7

How is the man in the yellow shirt dressed differently from the other passengers (besides his yellow shirt)? Why do you think this is so?



Emanata

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Lines and squiggles emanating from a character to represent something about the character are called emanata. They can be used for objects, too.

What do you think the emanata in the following panels tell us?

Page 11, panel 1 (Don't forget the puff of smoke at the bottom!)

Page 12, panel 2 (lines) and panel 3 (drops of sweat)

Page 29 (smoke/steam, drops of sweat)

Page 32 (question marks)

Page 33, bottom right (three curved lines next to Paul Bunyan)

Page 34 (steam, drops of sweat)

Page 35, panel 1 (red lines, beads of perspiration)

Page 37 (beads of perspiration)

Besides the emanata, how else does the author show Joe's strength?

The sudden change of background color, the yellow patch of light, the X's in the other man's eyes, the angles of the bodies, Joe's fists.

Fill a piece of paper or two with characters with emanata of your own. See if your classmates can figure out what your emanata wish to communicate.

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Do you notice how much alike the faces of the man telling the story and of Paul Bunyan look? Why do you think this is so?

This may reinforce the relationship between the lumber companies and the creation of the Paul Bunyan legend. The two men are even standing alike on page 15, as the man tells the story.

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Notice how the author/artist uses many **insets** (small panels set into larger ones). Most have square borders (e.g., page 29), one has none (page 17), and two have a different kind of border (page 33). Do you have any thoughts why this might be so?

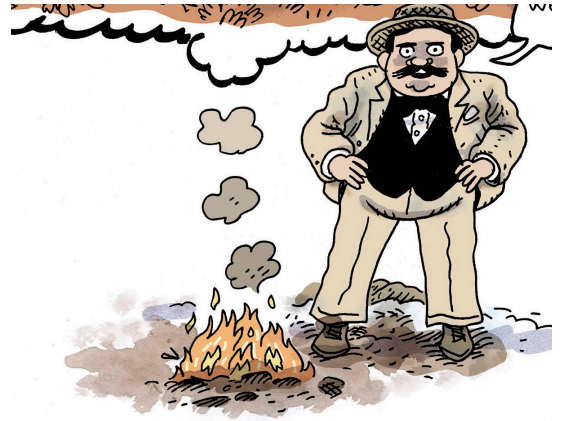


... you spent your youth in lumber camps, then
the truth.



RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

On page 15, notice how the puffs of smoke from the fire work like a thought balloon (or **internal dialogue**). It makes it look as though the fire is telling the story. You can see this again on page 23. In a sense, the fire is telling the story, because if the train hadn't broken down and people hadn't started the fire, they wouldn't be all together to hear the story. And the fire was made from pieces of wood.



RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Notice the position of the hands throughout the book. How do they help to reinforce the meaning of what the characters are saying or thinking?

Angles

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Notice on page 18 (panel 1) and page 23 how the dramatic angle upward emphasizes Paul Bunyan's height. (The small figure on the bottom left of page 24 does this, too.)



On page 28, the angle looking down on Babe emphasizes how heavy the load on Babe's back is.

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Color

How does the author use color to show that time has passed from the beginning of the book to the end?

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

Why is Babe purple on page 29?

What do the color changes in Babe show on page 34? Notice how the plain, white background makes the action and drama of the moment stand out. The plain, orange background on page 11 (panel 1) has the same effect. At what other moments is color used as an expressive element in this book, standing out from the book's overall color palette?

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

The background on page 13, the sky on pages 22-23, for example.

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7,
RL.5.7

There are very few bright colors in this book. Why might that be?



Perhaps to indicate that despite the humor, there are serious issues raised in the book.

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7, RL.5.7

Panels and Borders

How does the author/artist show us when we're in the real world and when we're in the story he's telling?

He uses curly, cloudlike borders for the story, either for a whole panel or part of it. The narration boxes in the story have wavy borders, too, whereas the one outside the story (middle panel p. 16) has mostly straight borders.

A series of small panels indicates a rapid action sequence, and a full-page panel makes us stop and reflect. Medium-sized panels focus our attention on what is happening, on what other people are doing and how they react, and on important details of setting.



RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.7, RL.4.7, RL.5.7

Look at the three panels in the middle of page 6. The three short panels emphasize the speed and action of throwing the snowball.

Now look at the full-page panel on page 8. Here the artist makes us stop and reflect on all the beautiful trees and on how dense and tall they are.



Where else do you see full-page panels in this book? What do you think the author wants us to think about?

Page 19, page 24, pages 32-33, and page 34 (the most dramatic)

RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.3, RI.3.7, RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.7, RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.6, RL.3.7, RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.7, RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.7

The last two pages of the book are one large panel called a **spread**. What can you learn from this spread? Can you find where you live?

Comparison

RI.3.7, RI.3.9, RI.4.7, RI.4.9, RI.5.2, RI.5.3, RI.5.5, RI.5.6, RL.3.7, RL.4.7, RL.4.9, RL.5.7, RL.5.9

Look at the artwork in the endpapers by Marlina Myles. How is different from that of the author, Noah Van Sciver?

It's lighter and airier, with more geometrical shapes. The natural world fills the frame, and the three figures are small. There's a different color scheme.

RI.3.7, RI.4.7, RL.3.1, RL.3.7, RL.4.7, RL.5.7

Why do you think the trees look translucent (light can pass through them)?

Perhaps to show that they're no longer there, like ghosts. The forests so important to the Indigenous people are all gone in many places, cut down by logging.

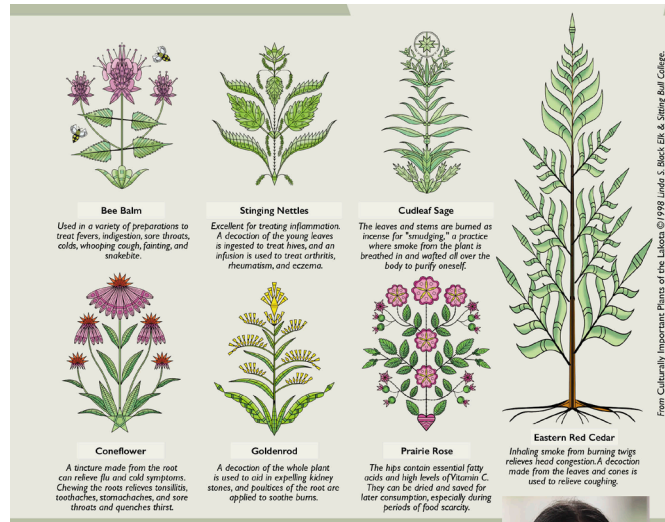
ACTIVITIES AND SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following trees native to North America appear in the book:

Aspen
Maple
Oak
Red pine
Spruce
White cedar
White pine

Other native trees are:

Basswood
Birch
Dogwood
Elm
Fir
Giant sequoia
Hackberry
Hickory
Honey locust
Magnolia
Redwood
Sweetgum
Sycamore



RI.3.4, RI.3.7, RI.4.4,
RI.4.7, RI.5.4, RI.5.7,
RI.5.9, RI.5.10, RL.3.4,
RL.3.7, RL.4.4, RL.4.7,
RL.5.4, RL.5.7, W.3.2,
W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.6,
W.3.7, W.3.8, W.4.2,
W.4.4, W.4.5, W.4.6,
W.4.7, W.4.8, W.4.9,
W.4.10, W.5.2, W.5.4,
W.5.5, W.5.6, W.5.7,
W.5.8, W.5.10

Each of these trees exists in two or more varieties (for example, Douglas fir, balsam fir). There are many trees that have been introduced to North America from other parts of the world.

Have students each do some research on one variety of native tree listed above and write a mini report telling what it looks like, where it lives, how big it grows, how long it lives, what lives in it, and how people use it. They can draw and color a picture of it. Is their tree deciduous (sheds its leaves every year) or an evergreen (stays green all year round)? Did Indigenous people have any special beliefs about it or use it somehow?

On pages 44-45 there is a list of Dakota Villages and Sacred Sites. Have the children find names of other locations in the US and Canada that bear Native names or names derived from Native words. Why are there symbols above and below the letters? Children should tell what the names mean and what language they come from. And they should try to pronounce them! Make a bulletin board display. If possible, group names from the same language together. This can also be used as an alphabetical order exercise.

Alternatively, you can assign one place name to each student. Make sure each one tells where his or her place is located and the language the name comes from.

RI.3.5, RI.3.7, RI.3.10,
RI.4.7, RI.4.9, RI.4.10,
RI.5.7, RI.5.9, RI.5.10,
W.3.8, W.4.8, W.5.8

An extensive list for the US, with associated links, can be found at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_place_names_of_Native_American_origin_in_the_United_States

For Canada:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_place_names_in_Canada_of_Indigenous_origin

Creative Writing

W.4.3, W.4.4, W.4.5, W.4.6, W.4.8,
W.4.9, W.4.10, W.5.3, W.5.4,
W.5.5, W.5.6, W.5.8, W.5.9,
W.5.10

Tell the students: Imagine that you are Paul Bunyan. Choose a period of his life and write a diary of his experiences for a week. Include illustrations.

Imagine that you are Paul Bunyan. Write a letter to a relative or friend explaining your latest experience with Babe. Be sure to include at least one illustration.

Imagine that you are Babe. Write a letter to a relative or friend explaining your latest experience with Paul Bunyan. Be sure to include at least one illustration.

RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.6, RI.4.1,
RI.4.2, RI.4.6, RI.5.1, RI.5.2,
RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.6, RL.4.1,
RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.6, RL.5.2,
RL.5.6, W.3.2, W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.5,
W.3.6, W.4.3, W.4.4, W.4.5, W.4.6,
W.4.8, W.4.9, W.4.10, W.5.3,
W.5.4, W.5.5, W.5.6, W.5.8, W.5.9,
W.5.10

Write a radio or TV interview with Paul Bunyan or Babe. You can be the interviewer. Plan your questions first! What do you think your audience would like to know?

RI.3.6, RI.4.6, RI.5.4, RL.3.4,
RL.3.6, RL.4.4, RL.4.6, RL.4.7,
RL.5.4, RL.5.6, RL.5.7, W.3.3,
W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.6, W.4.3, W.4.4,
W.4.5, W.4.6, W.4.8, W.4.9,
W.4.10, W.5.3, W.5.4, W.5.5,
W.5.6, W.5.8, W.5.9, W.5.10

A **tall tale** is a story with unbelievable events, related as if they are factual. They are a fundamental element of American and Canadian folk literature. Many, such as the legend of Paul Bunyan, include exaggeration. Discuss the nature of tall tales with your students, using examples from this book. Then have the children plan and write their own tall tales, which they can illustrate to the extent that they wish. Who will their central character be? What will his or her special abilities be? What forms will exaggeration take? This can be a multi-period writing project spread over a week or more according to time constraints.

As an art project, children could make their own Paul Bunyan and/or Babe out of papier-mâché and paint it. Display the results. Or make a carefully researched figure of a Native American. On an index card, indicate his or her nation and where he or she might live. (See next activity.)

Study some Native American design elements seen on clothing, blankets, bags, pottery, etc. Discuss their nature and have children create their own. Do they have any particular symbolism? Compare the results and display them in the hallway.

Reader's Theater

Have students read various scenes aloud in class. Pay attention to their expression. If possible, have students play multiple roles, and be sure that they adjust their performance accordingly. Ask them to try to incorporate visual information from the images into their performance. This can be done in small groups.

Or: The class could work together to make this book into a play and perform it for other classes and their parents.

Improvisation

Have students choose a scene from the book and act it out, inventing their own dialogue. Good choices would be coming out of the train and setting up the fire; acting out some of the tall tales (maybe not the one with the kick); Paul's parents bringing him up; Paul's working with Babe on various tasks; the conversation that begins in the last two panels on page 34 and continues to the end of page 37.

Below are the ELA Common Core State Standards for Reading for Information addressed in this book by grade level.

	Key Ideas and Details	Craft and Structure	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
K	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.2 With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.3 With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas or pieces of information in a text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.4 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.5 Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.6 Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.9 With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.10 Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.</p>
1	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.3 Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.4 Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words or phrases in a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.6 Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.9 Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.10 With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.</p>
2	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2 Identify the main topic of a multiparagraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.5 Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6 Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.7 Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.</p>	

<p>3</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 3 topic or subject area</i>.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.8 Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R.3.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/ social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 4 topic or subject area</i>.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.10 By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/ social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p>
<p>5</p>		<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 5 topic or subject area</i>.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).</p>	<p>By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/ social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</p>