

# Lesson Plan: Real-World Problem Detectives (Hunting for Issues in Informational Texts)

## Materials Needed

- Two to three simple, age-appropriate informational texts (non-fiction books, magazine articles, or short online articles) focusing on community, nature, or animals. *Examples: A text about recycling, a story about endangered turtles, or a book about firefighters.*
  - Whiteboard, large paper, or digital screen.
  - Markers, crayons, or pencils.
  - "Problem & Solution Detective Sheet" (a simple T-chart graphic organizer labeled 'The Real Problem' and 'The Smart Solution').
  - Optional: Pictures of real-world scenarios (e.g., a pile of trash, someone planting a tree, an animal in danger).
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## Introduction (10 Minutes)

### Hook: Real or Pretend?

**Educator Prompt:** "Today, we are going to be detectives! Our job is to find TRUE things in books and figure out how we can help fix the world. Think about this: If I tell you a story about a dragon who ate a purple sandwich, is that real or pretend? (Pretend!) If I tell you a story about how bees help grow the food we eat, is that real or pretend? (Real!)"

We use informational texts to learn TRUE things about the world.

### Learning Objectives (Tell them what you'll teach)

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between a pretend story and a true (informational) story.
2. Find a "real-world problem" described in an informational text.
3. Suggest a sensible "smart solution" for the problem you find.

### Success Criteria

You know you are successful when you can fill out your Detective Sheet with a clear Problem and a clear Solution from the text we read today.

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## Body: Content and Practice (30 Minutes)

### Step 1: I Do (Modeling the Skill)

**Content Focus:** Distinguishing informational text and identifying the problem.

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**Activity:** Educator selects the first informational text (Text 1: *Example: A short article about the amount of trash in our oceans*).

**Modeling Talk Aloud:** "I'm going to read this article. It's all true, so it's an informational text. As I read, I'm looking for something that is hurting the world or making life difficult—that's the PROBLEM. (Read the text slowly.) Ah! The text says that plastic bottles end up in the ocean and hurt the sea turtles. That's a big problem! I will write 'Too much plastic is hurting sea animals' in the 'Real Problem' box on my big chart."

**Modeling Solution Finding:** "Now I need a Smart Solution. Does the text tell me how to fix it? Yes, it says we should use reusable water bottles and recycle plastic. So, I will write 'Use reusable bottles and recycle' in the 'Smart Solution' box."

**Formative Assessment:** Quick check—"What was the problem I found? What was the solution?"

## Step 2: We Do (Guided Practice)

**Content Focus:** Identifying problems and solutions collaboratively.

**Activity:** Educator selects the second informational text (Text 2: *Example: A story about a community needing a new park or saving a local forest*).

**Guided Reading & Discussion:** Read Text 2 aloud. Pause frequently.

- **Q&A/Interactive Element:** "What is happening in this text that makes you feel worried or sad? That is probably the real-world issue." (Guide them to identify the problem, e.g., "The local forest is being cut down.")
- **Think-Pair-Share (or Think-Discuss-Write in homeschool):** "If the problem is that the forest is disappearing, what could be a solution? Does the book offer any ideas? If not, what can we, as detectives, suggest?" (Students offer ideas, e.g., planting new trees, holding a protest, writing a letter.)
- **Joint Creation:** Work together to fill out the "Problem & Solution Detective Sheet" for Text 2 on the shared board.

## Step 3: You Do (Independent Application)

**Content Focus:** Applying analysis skills independently.

**Activity:** Educator provides Text 3 (a short article or book excerpt focused on an accessible topic, e.g., *The importance of washing hands to stop germs from spreading*).

**Instructions:** "Now it's your turn to be the lead detective! Read this text. Use your own Detective Sheet to find the main real-world Problem and the Smart Solution. If the text doesn't offer a perfect solution, think of one that you could do right now!"

### Scaffolding Options (Differentiation):

- *For Struggling Learners:* Pre-highlight or underline sentences in the text that describe the problem. Provide sentence starters for the solution (e.g., "We can fix this by...").
- *For Advanced Learners:* After finding the Problem and Solution, require them to list three potential challenges that might stop people from using the solution (e.g., Challenge for recycling: "It takes too long to sort the plastic.").

## Conclusion (5 Minutes)

### Closure and Recap (Tell them what you taught)

**Review:** "Detectives, you did great work! Today, we learned that informational texts tell us true things about the world, and sometimes they tell us about problems that need fixing. Why is it important to know about real-world problems?" (Wait for answers like: So we can help, so we can make things better.)

### Summative Assessment: Gallery Walk / Share Out

Learners briefly share their completed Detective Sheet from the "You Do" activity.

- **Educator Prompt:** "Tell me the problem you found and the solution you suggested. Did you meet the success criteria?" (Check for clear problem/solution identification).
- **Learner Reflection:** Ask the student, "Which of the three problems we talked about today do you think is the easiest for a 7-year-old to help fix?"

### Extension/Next Steps

If time allows, or as homework:

- **Action Planning:** Choose one of the problems identified today (e.g., litter, lack of safety, endangered animals) and design a simple poster or short persuasive speech to teach others the solution.
- **Text Hunt:** Look through everyday materials (cereal boxes, local newsletters, signs) and try to find another real-world issue mentioned.