

Dignity in Differentiation: The 10-Minute Reading Routine

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The Multi-Level Classroom Challenge

THE ACADEMIC GAP: One classroom, vastly different reading levels

THE CONTENT GAP: Lower-level reading materials are designed for children, not adults

THE DIGNITY GAP: Adult learners may feel discouraged or disrespected by child-oriented content

Our Path Forward

The Goal: Ensure equal access to age-appropriate rigorous content

The Impact: Greater confidence, persistence, and classroom equity

The Tool: ReadWorks StepReads to support learners at every reading level

The Tools: ReadWorks & StepReads

What is ReadWorks?

A **free, nonprofit online library** of high-quality nonfiction and fiction passages



What are StepReads?

A built-in feature that provides alternative, **human-written versions** of the exact same article at lower reading levels



Why it Fits Adult Ed:

- **Age-Appropriate Content:** Topics in history, science, and literature that align with HiSET skills and concepts
- **Protects Dignity:** Adult learners use materials designed for adults, not children
- **Builds Foundational Skills:** Strengthens vocabulary and background knowledge needed for HiSET success
- **Flexible to Use:** Works digitally, offline, or with printed material

The Story Behind the Routine

40 Years Ago: Hand-built reading folders to protect student dignity

The Breakthrough: ReadWorks automated what I had created by hand for decades

The Advocacy: Helped bring Adult Education voices to ReadWorks

Why I Share This: No financial ties—just a free resource that works for adult learners

"Worldwide Loss of Bees A Growing Concern"

The Big Question:

How can the disappearance of one insect trigger a chain reaction that impacts the entire ecosystem?

HiSET Vocabulary:

- biodiversity
- ecosystem
- pollinate



Original Passage: high school level, complex sentence structures, vocabulary

"This particular study highlights the importance of bees to the continuation of, not just our food supply, but also all **biodiversity**, as the effects of this study do not end with the larkspur plant alone, but point to a much larger issue." (1340L)

StepRead 1 Modified sentence lengths, maintains core vocabulary

"The study points to a much larger issue, beyond the harmful effects bumblebee loss has on the flowers. This study shows how important bees are to keeping the variety of plant and animal life, or **biodiversity**, in our **ecosystems**. The purple wildflower is just one example of how bee loss decreases **biodiversity**." (1060L)

StepRead 2 More accessible pacing and structure, target foundational readers

"This experiment shows that the loss of bees is a huge problem. Bees are very important to all **biodiversity**. **Biodiversity** is the variety of plants and animals on Earth. The problem the larkspurs had is just one example of how the loss of bees hurts **biodiversity**." (810L)

Day One: Preview & Locate

Teacher Actions

- Introduce vocabulary by breaking words into meaningful parts (prefixes/suffixes)
- Ask: *"Does anyone know what the prefix **bio-** means? Think of biology or biography."* (Life)
- Discuss the vocabulary definitions
- Post the Big Question

Student Tasks

- **Document:** Write down the vocabulary words
- **Scan:** Locate and circle the target vocabulary words in the text
- **Predict:** Write a one-sentence prediction about how the loss of bees impacts an ecosystem

Day Two: Read, Vocabulary, Questions

Teacher Actions

- Review vocabulary
- Revisit the Big Question to establish the purpose for reading
- Prompt students: As you read, look for evidence that shows how losing bees affects the ecosystem.

Student Tasks

- **Interact:** Complete the ReadWorks vocabulary activity.
- **Engage:** Read or listen to the passage.
- **Track:** Annotate or underline details that directly address the Big Question.
- **Respond:** Begin answering the comprehension questions (or complete them at home)

Day Three: Finish and Discuss

Teacher Actions

- **Facilitate:** Reread the Big Question aloud to begin the discussion.
- **Listen for Language:** Encourage students to use the week's target vocabulary in their responses

Student Tasks

- **Collaborate:** Discuss answers to the Big Question using notes and evidence. Challenge yourself to use at least one target vocabulary word.
- **Demonstrate:** Complete the ReadWorks comprehension questions.
- **Submit:** Write a short answer to the Big Question on a Post-it note, using at least one vocabulary word, and turn it in as an exit ticket

Dignity in Differentiation: the Path Forward

Core Takeaways (Why Do This?)

- Build vocabulary and background knowledge
- Prioritize routine over perfection
- Protect student dignity with age-appropriate, visually identical materials

Your Next 3 Steps

- **Sign Up:** Create your free ReadWorks account.
- **Explore:** Choose one high-interest StepReads article.
- **Start Small:** Try one day of the 10-minute routine

Thank you!

Keep Exploring

Scan the QR code to watch my ReadWorks
webinar:

*"Using ReadWorks with High School and Adult
Learners"*

Stay Connected

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Writing Prompts

Uses Hiset thinking words such as *predict, compare, evaluate, infer*

Scanning the text for exact words and/or evidence

How does the worldwide loss of bee populations threaten both agriculture and the balance of our global ecosystem

StepRead1:

What major impact does the disappearing bee population have on the environment?

Sentence Stems:

In paragraph 3, it says that disappearing bees have a negative **impact** on the planet because _____.

Bees are an essential part of the **ecosystem** because they help _____.

How does the worldwide loss of bee populations threaten both agriculture and the balance of our global ecosystem?

StepRead 2:

Why are scientists worried that over 1 million bee colonies disappear every year?

Sentence Stems:

Scientists worry about a lost **colony** because bees are needed to _____

When bees **pollinate** crops, they help our food supply by _____.

How does the worldwide loss of bee populations threaten both agriculture and the balance of our global ecosystem?

Passage: *Based on the 2013 National Academy of Sciences study about the larkspur wildflower, analyze how the reduction of specific bee species threatens regional biodiversity.*

The researchers' findings about the larkspur imply that protecting **biodiversity** requires more than just high numbers of any insect; it specifically demands _____.

The study shows that losing specific types of bees hurts **biodiversity** because the remaining bees _____.