

The Power of Text Sets

An easy, research-based, and fun way to become a stronger reader

What is a text set?

Text sets are intentionally grouped sets of texts and media resources focused on a specific topic designed to help *all* learners build background knowledge and vocabulary through a volume of reading on science, social studies, and other high-interest topics.



Why use a text set?

There are so many reasons to use a text set. Here are just a few:

- To allow **student voice and choice** for independent reading. Students can select topics that interest them, that connect to and relate to their lives, or that will give them new perspectives.
- To build knowledge about the **topic of an anchor text** (before, during, or after reading) in order to enrich that reading experience. For example, students can build their knowledge of the time period of a historical fiction text or the setting of a text that takes place in a potentially unfamiliar habitat or location.
- To support **science and social studies** content through reading. Students can learn about the world around them including social issues, current events, or the past through topically connected texts.
- To support authentic **writing and research**. Students can keep track of new knowledge and the vocabulary they are learning.

Whatever your instructional goals, consider ways for students to talk, write, and present about their cumulative knowledge. See these [“Rolling Knowledge”](#) and [“Rolling Vocabulary”](#) templates for one easy-to-implement option.

Where do I get a premade text set?

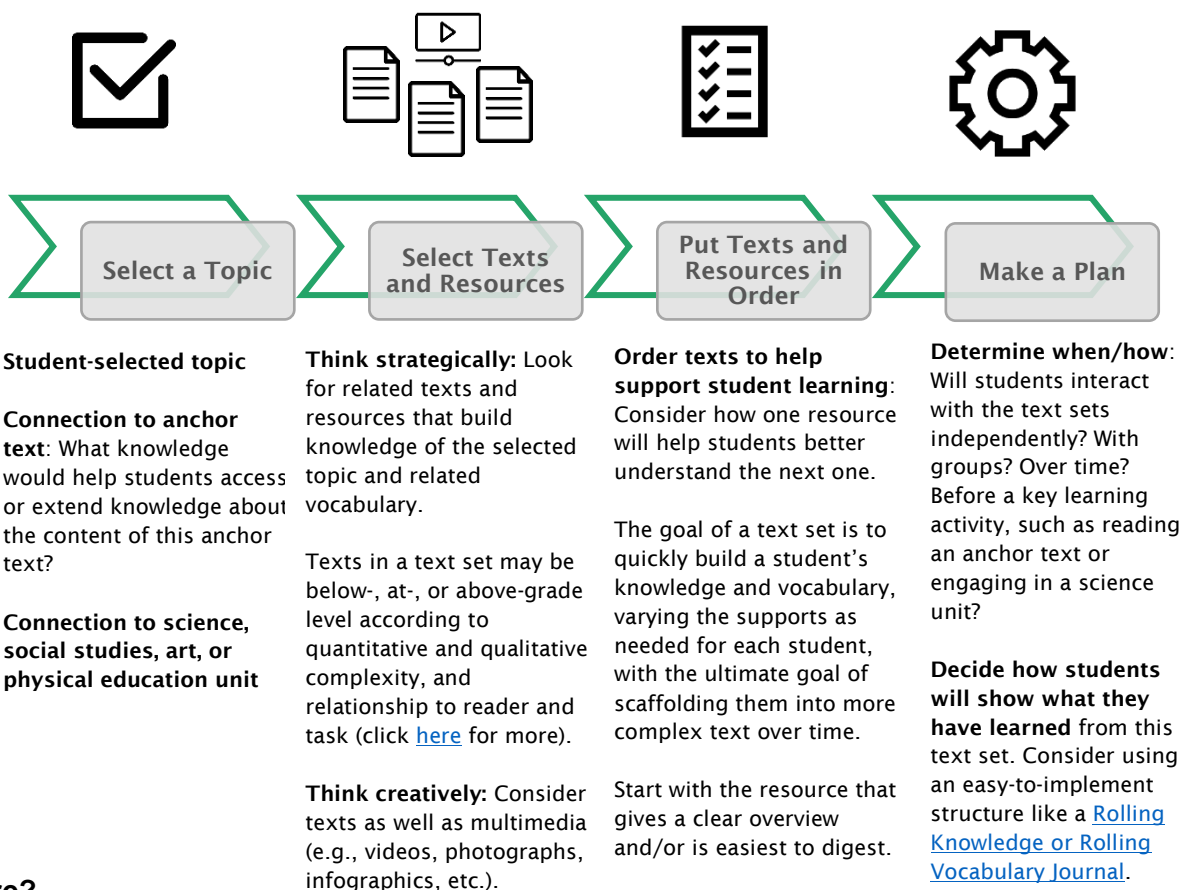
There are many places online that have premade text sets available for free. Some options are noted below. High-quality text sets focus on a tight topic (e.g., spiders, the Harlem Renaissance, the moon), *not* a broad theme (e.g., friendship, heroes, overcoming struggle). Review premade text sets to ensure they are topic-based and meet your instructional goals.

Site	Grades	Guidance
Readworks	K-12	Readworks’ “Article-A-Day” sets are available on a range of topics for all grade levels. Anyone can create a free account for access.
CommonLit	4-12	CommonLit’s text sets cover a range of subject matter including historical, cultural, and political topics. Many articles are free to access, but to download and access all features, teachers will need to create an account with a school-based address and then invite students with a code.
Newsela	2-12	NewsELA houses text sets on a wide variety of topics. Also includes resources from publications like <i>The New York Times</i> , the History Channel, <i>PBS NewsHour</i> and more. Sign up for a free educator or student account.

Facing History and Ourselves	6-12	Facing History and Ourselves provides resources that address racism, antisemitism, and prejudice at pivotal moments in history. Look for “Featured Collections” that include multiple resources on a topic. Sign up for a free account to download some content.
Teaching Tolerance Text Sets on Diversity	6-12	Teaching Tolerance includes a range of text sets as well as individual resources that could be added to text sets. To start, see these “ Text Sets on Diversity .” Create a free account to save texts for later or access the Learning Plan Builder.

How do I make my own text set?

Making your own text set is a great way to zero in on topics that are relevant to your specific students or curriculum. See additional guidance for building your own text sets [here](#).



Want more?

- [What are "text sets," and why use them in the classroom?](#) -- The Fordham Institute
- [Text Set Examples from History/Social Studies \(Grades 6-12\)](#) -- William E. Lewis, Sharon Walpole, and Michael C. McKenna
- [Which text set approach is right for you?](#) -- The *Aligned* Blog
- [Reading to Learn](#) -- The *Aligned* Blog

