

## Newsletter - Volume 7

How can educators help improve the reading comprehension skills of their students? Increase opportunities to gain background knowledge. How can educators help improve the writing skills of their students? Increase opportunities to gain background knowledge.

**“The bottom line is that the test-score gap is, at its heart, a knowledge gap.”**

*The Knowledge Gap*, by Nathalie Wexler (2019), p. 31

**“[T]he most important factor in determining whether readers can understand a text is how much relevant vocabulary or background knowledge they have.”**

*The Knowledge Gap*, by Nathalie Wexler (2019), p. 47

**“As important as background knowledge is to reading, it’s far more critical to writing. It may be tough to *read* about a topic you don’t know well, but it can be done. If you’re asked to write about it, you’ll struggle to produce anything coherent.”**

*The Knowledge Gap*, by Nathalie Wexler (2019), p. 222

In recognition of the scientific research and classroom experience that prove the strong link between knowledge and literacy skills, each lesson in every Novel Ideas, Inc. [Series Launchers](#) and [Reading for Success](#) novel study is carefully and strategically structured to integrate building up students’ knowledge base.

### **Vocabulary:**

Before turning to story reading, each lesson starts by pre-teaching prepared lists of vocabulary words and expressions. After practicing decoding to the mastery level, an accessible definition is provided, and then practiced, for each word and expression in the lists. After story reading, each lesson is scripted to walk students through reviewing a selection of six words or expressions and building up a Vocabulary Notebook (BLM templates provided).

Setting students up for success, this Vocabulary Notebook then becomes a tool used to study for the End of Unit Test:

- ✓ All the words included in the End of Unit Test receive this extra review and are added to the Vocabulary Notebook.
- ✓ All the definitions that students write into their Vocabulary Notebook are correct and appropriate to the usage in the story because they are taken from the glossary prepared specifically to match the novel study.
- ✓ Each entry in the Vocabulary Notebook requires a meaningful sentence showing and allowing the teacher to verify that the student understands the word or expression.

When the work of strategically selecting vocabulary words, providing appropriate and accessible definitions, and mapping out how best to teach this knowledge is carried by quality curriculum resources, teachers can focus more of their precious and limited time on delivery and interacting with their students!

### **Background expository passages:**

All Novel Ideas, Inc. novel studies also include a range of relevant knowledge-boosting background passages. Each novel study starts with an introductory lesson that includes a brief biography of the author. Throughout the novel study, background passages on topics that will help students better understand the story are provided. Students of all levels are thereby empowered to engage more meaningfully with class discussions and writing activities.

These background passages, as well as the extension and enrichment activities, also create opportunities to further develop skills in other subject areas such as math, science, history, and art.

Again, when the work of researching and preparing appropriate and accessible background passages is carried by quality curriculum resources, teachers can focus more of their precious and limited time on delivery and interacting with students!

# Summer Promotion!

**15% off the downloadable version  
of these select novel studies!**

**Henry and Mudge**

**Abby Takes a Stand**

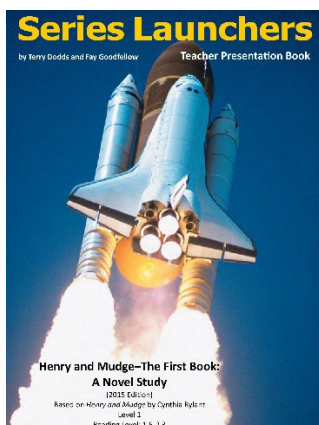
**Julian, Secret Agent**

**Bud, Not Buddy**

**Ben and Me**

**For 15% off the select novel studies, use the discount  
code at checkout: summer2024**

**Offer valid until 31 August 2024**



Series Launchers, Level 1:

## ***Henry and Mudge, The First Book***

by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Suçie Stevenson

Readability: Grade 2.3

Lexile: 460

Interest Level: Grade K-3

Common Core/State Stands Coverage: Grades 1-3

\*Fold books for all Level 1 Series Launchers (for after reading the story)

Background expository passages:

- Meet Cynthia Rylant
- Dog Care: Having a dog as a pet
- Your responsibilities as a dog owner
- Collars, tags, and microchips
- Licenses and shots
- Walking a dog
- The veterinarian
- Training
- Feeding
- Dogs and people

You can order the novel study here:

[Order Online Here](#)

[Order by Email](#)



Reading for Success:  
***Julian, Secret Agent***  
by Ann Cameron

Readability: Grade 3.1  
Lexile: 460  
Interest Level: Grade 2-5  
Common Core/State Stands Coverage: Grades 3-5

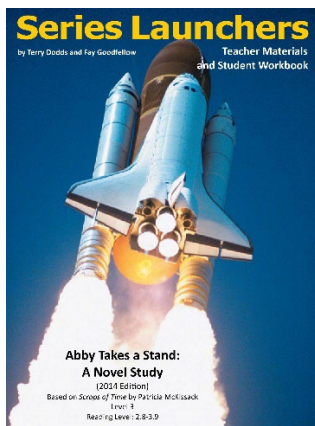
Background expository passages:

- A Brief Biography of Ann Cameron
- Law Enforcement Officers
- Detectives

You can order the novel study here:

[Order Online Here](#)

[Order by Email](#)



Series Launchers, Level 3:  
***Scraps of Time: Abby Takes a Stand***  
By Patricia C. McKissack

Readability: Grade 3.6  
Lexile: 880  
Interest Level: Grade 3-8  
Common Core/State Stands Coverage: Grades 4-6

Background expository passages:

- Meet Patricia McKissack
- About the Civil Rights Movement

You can order the novel study here:

[Order Online Here](#)

[Order by Email](#)



Reading for Success:  
***Bud, Not Buddy***  
By Christopher Paul Curtis

Readability: Grade 5.0  
Lexile: 950  
Interest Level: Grade 5-8  
Common Core/State Stands Coverage: Grades 6-8

Background expository passages:

- A Brief Biography of Christopher Paul Curtis
- The Great Depression
- Lester Joseph Gillis (alias "Baby Face Nelson")
- George Washington Carver: A Great African American
- Blind Lemon Jefferson
- All That Jazz! The Beginning of Jazz Music
- All That Jazz! Swing and the 1930s "Big Bands"
- The YMCA

You can order the novel study here:

[Order Online Here](#)

[Order by Email](#)



A Novel Study Based on  
**Ben and Me**  
By Robert Lawson  
©2024 IVEB  
Reading Level: 6.5, Interest Level: Grades 5-8

Reading for Success:

## **Ben and Me**

by Robert Lawson

Readability: Grade 6.9

Lexile: 1010

Interest Level: Grade 5-8

Common Core/State Stands Coverage: Grades 6-8

Background expository passages:

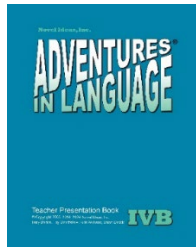
- Brief Biography of Robert Lawson
- Benjamin Franklin
- The Franklin Stove
- Poor Richard's Almanack
- Electricity
- Lightning
- Problems Between England and the Colonies
- The French Court of Versailles
- Thomas Jefferson
- The Palace of Versailles

You can order the novel study here:

[Order Online Here](#)

[Order by Email](#)

## Available Now!



New 2024 edition  
**Adventures in Language IVEB**

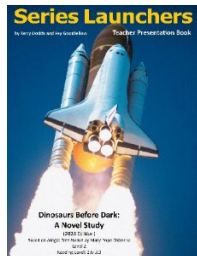


New 2024 edition  
Reading for Success,  
**Ben and Me**  
by Robert Lawson



New 2024 edition  
Series Launchers:  
**The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo**  
by Judy Blume

## Coming Soon!



Series Launchers:  
**Dinosaurs Before Dark**  
by Mary Pope Osborne



Reading for Success:  
**King of the Wind**  
by Marguerite Henry

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**Successful Teachers = Successful Students = Successful Schools**

**Celebrating School and Student Successes**

We would like to recognize school and student successes in our newsletter. Please send Terry Dodds ([terrydodds@shaw.ca](mailto:terrydodds@shaw.ca)) emails telling us about successes your school and/or students have achieved using our programs.

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Please feel free to forward this Newsletter to someone you think would find it useful.

**[Newsletter Archive](#)**

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