

Title: SOAPS Reading Strategy (Firefighters)

Objectives Students will be able to identify the author’s purpose in a piece of writing.	Time frame to Complete 40 minutes
	NRS EFL 4

Stackable Certificate Documentation	Technology	Study / Life skills	EL-Civics	Career Pathways	Police	Paramedic	Fire Rescue	Medical Asst.	EKG / Cardio	Phlebotomy	Practical Nursing	Healthcare Admin	Pharmacy Tech	IMT	AMT	HVAC	Welding	Other:	
X		X		X			X												

Standard(s) Addressed in Lesson
 Read with Understanding

Benchmark(s) Addressed in Lesson
 R.4.11. Apply, monitor and adjust comprehension strategies (for example, note subtle details in texts, pose questions about text) to understand text at an inferential level.
 R.4.14. Analyze how an author uses argument and provides evidence to persuade others.
 R.4.15. Draw conclusions about text using knowledge of main idea(s) and supporting details, consistent with complexity of the text.

Materials

- SOAPS reading strategy handout
- “Where is the Focus?” Firefighter commentary (attached) available online from: <http://www.firefighterexchange.com/Structure/StructureStory2.html>

Learner Prior Knowledge
 Students should be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.

Activities

Step 1 Ask students to identify different reasons people write. Possible answers include to entertain, to inform, to persuade, to record, to communicate a message. (If students need help thinking of purposes, ask students why people write books? Letters? Speeches? Essays? Diaries? Poems?)

Step 2 Distribute the SOAPS handout and introduce the SOAPS reading strategy as a way to help students determine the purpose in a piece of writing. SOAPS can be used with any genre, but works easily with letters to the editor. S=subject (the topic of the piece of writing); O=occasion (event or incident that inspired the writing); A=audience (whom is this piece of writing for?); P=purpose (the reason for the piece of writing); S=speaker (from whose point of view is this piece of writing).

Step 3 Students read the commentary “Where is the Focus?” and identify the subject, occasion, audience, purpose, and speaker of the piece.

Step 4 Discuss with the students whether or not they agree with the opinion expressed in the article.

Assessment/Evidence

Correct identification of the subject, occasion, audience, purpose, and speaker for a piece of writing.

Adaptations for Beginning Students

For beginning students, a multiple-choice worksheet could be created to help students identify the subject, occasion, audience, purpose, and speaker.

Adaptations for Advanced Students

For more advanced students, choose longer passages or different genres of writing to test their understanding of the SOAPS strategy.

Teacher Reflection/Lesson Evaluation

This lesson was created by Middletown ABLE.

The SOAPS reading strategy is a method to help readers determine the purpose and/or bias of a piece of writing. The SOAPS strategy can be used with any type of text.

S = Subject

The first step in the SOAPS strategy is to identify the subject, or main topic.

O = Occasion

The occasion is the general time and place of a piece of writing or a specific event that caused the author to write this. Sometimes the occasion is stated (such as a Christmas letter) or a response to another piece of writing (e.g. a letter to the editor), but other times you may have to make a guess.

A = Audience

The audience is the group of people who are most likely to read and respond to this. Think about who would have access to the piece of writing, who would be most interested in it, and where the piece of writing can be found. (Is it for the general public? Is it geared toward voters? Is it for women only? Is it for workers in a specific career field?)

P = Purpose

Determine why this piece of writing was written. Is it to inform, persuade, entertain, or cause a specific action (such as to sell something or promote a cause)?

S = Speaker

The speaker is the point of view. This is often the author, but it may include more details such as a profession or role. (For example, the speaker may be a doctor providing his expert opinion on ways to minimize the risks of a disease.) In fiction or poetry, the speaker is not the author, but is the narrator or main character.

Select a short piece of writing and complete the SOAPS analysis.

Subject - _____

Occasion - _____

Audience - _____

Purpose - _____

Speaker - _____

white socks become primary issues. Shame on us! Let me let you in on a little secret. It isn't hose loads that are the primary important issue with hose. With hose, it is effective deployment and proper hose work. Proper and effective hose work is seldom accomplished anymore, and even though we have the training materials and videos available, I see little to no training done at the company level along these lines. Many firefighters no longer recognize that hose work is a two-step process: the stretching of hoselines is the first step; handling the charged hoseline is the second. No where is the ease of loading a primary and important factor here! So, I have to stop and wonder, where is the leadership and the focus?

The number of structure fires are down, yet line-of-duty injuries and fireground deaths have remained constant for the past number of years. Our fireground response and training efforts are tragically deficient across the nation. What are we doing to address these problems? These problems will not go away until we invest in our people and their training. The fire service has always been, and always will be about people. At times we lose the battle on the fireground or encounter problems which were not common to us a few short years ago, and we have the gall to point the finger of judgement at each other's strategies and tactics. So, I have to wonder, where is the focus? Could the problem be we no longer have the proper number of well trained personnel, equipment, and information about the building? It takes well trained people to reverse the encountered tragedy and problems of the emergency scene. Please don't tell me we are missing these simple points because they have become too simple.

The fire service has been conducting a twenty-year experiment which has created a fresh new image for the fire service, but at what price? Do more with less, customer service, and be all things to all people are the common mind-sets in the fire service today, but what are we doing about the problems plaguing us as emergency workers? Our company level training efforts are commendable, but at times we water them down or eliminated certain ones completely. Our programs and education efforts are much needed and testimonial efforts of everyone's part; however, we continue to expose our members to great harm if there is a serious lack of training, lack of personnel, and lack of information available to us on the fireground. We don't get fires anymore has become the common nation-wide mind-set. This has become a dangerous mind-set. So, I have to wonder, where is the focus?

Since the tragic incident in Worcester, I have seen little to nothing done to improve things for the firefighter, except talk of restrictive policies and standard operating procedures. We can start by encouraging the company officers to increase their training and building detection efforts. This includes hazard identification for the fist-due districts. There is another real tragedy that occurred in Worcester that night; it was the fire department's lack of information about the building's hazards, contents, and occupants. This lack of information, or training if you will, is what started the snowball and avalanche effect that dreadful night. That night in Worcester, more information about hazards would have made the risk verses benefit equation much clearer to firefighters and the Incident Commander. True, firefighters at the grass roots level will never question the decision to conduct building searches for human life. This is why the fire service was created and it is what it is all about. The items that need changing in our profession are not the policies and mission; the changes need to occur in our attitudes, hearts, and minds. So, six months later I have to stop and wonder; where is the focus; what have we learned, and as leaders, what are we going to do about it?

You are reader  since this story was published on 8/24/00.

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