**K-5 Background Knowledge**

**Course Companion**

The Course Companion is designed to allow participants to capture notes, reflections and action steps as they work through a course. Additionally, the Course Companion contains a list of all extra resources listed in the course. Each section of the Course Companion is linked to a corresponding section of the course.

**CONSIDER THIS SCENARIO**

*Mr. Solomon's 4th grade class is studying habitats. As part of the study, the class is learning about plants and animals that are native to Ohio. However, several of his students, including a group of recent immigrants from Central America, seem to have some difficulty comprehending the texts that he provides to them. Mr. Solomon knows that background knowledge is an important component of text comprehension. However, he feels stuck when he tries to think of ways to increase students' background knowledge.*

Can you relate to the above scenario? In what ways are your challenges in literacy instruction similar or different?

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**VIDEO: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE WITH NANCY HENNESSY**

Notes:

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**RESOURCES**

Read the article Building Background Knowledge from Reading Rockets. Pay special attention to the section titled "How to build background knowledge." In your Course Companion, identify one or two suggestions from the article that you can incorporate into your current practice. What steps do you need to take to make these changes successfully?

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**COURSE REFLECTION**

1. How would you describe background knowledge to a colleague? A parent? Consider a possible misconception that you could pre-correct in your description.

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1. What instructional tools or resources do you currently use for background knowledge instruction? What are some areas of need or growth?

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**RESOURCES LISTED IN THE COURSE**

Include all resources that can be linked from the course including weblinks, videos and documents.

* [Comprehension in Disguise: The Role of Knowledge in Children's Learning](http://www.onlinedigeditions.com/publication/?i=644729&article_id=3571278&view=articleBrowser) by Susan B. Neuman.
* Nancy Hennessy provides more detail on the role of background knowledge in [this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joi-5JC47Bw&list=PLnRQNvyI1h9bg5eZBsx_C_YIWwlQKhyA-&index=50) from Ohio’s Literacy Academy.
* In her article [Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years](https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/04/-american-students-reading/557915/), journalist Natalie Wexler explores the concerning trend of stagnant reading scores and what the implications for reading instruction.