

Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

Date: Thursday, March 23, 2017

Article: Misty Copeland: A ballerina for our times

Print Replica: Sunday, March 19, 2017

Section: NW Arts & Life, H1

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

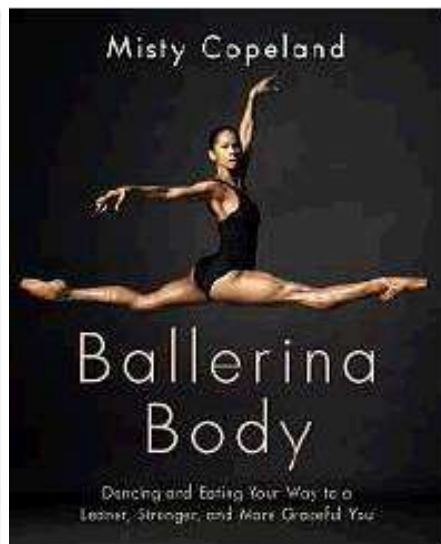
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Objective:

Students will practice their reading skills to explore how the author uses reasoning and evidence to support specific points in the text by using deeper level questions and connecting the content to their personal lives.

Pre-Reading: Get into pairs and look at these pictures together. Answer the questions below.



An ***inference***, is making a conclusion or opinion that is formed because of known facts or evidence. Examine the following pictures and make an *inference* about what the story will be about:

- What do you see?
- Who is in the pictures?
- What emotions do you see?
- What do you see that would help you with what the article will be about?
- What questions do you have about the photos?
- Does it bring up any personal memories?
- What character traits does it take to become a professional ballet dancer?

Vocabulary:

Look up the definitions for the following word. Write definitions in the space provided, using your own words. Get into pairs and take turns telling your partner the definition of these words without looking at what you wrote.

“In her book, Copeland urges readers looking for inspiration to find people they ***admire***.”

Admire:

Building Language Skills:

Visualizing text is a proven way that improves reading comprehension. Have students close their eyes and listen carefully. Have them think deeply about the words described in the statement.

The teacher will read the following sentence to the class, taken from the article.

“I was a shy girl, unsure of my own voice, but I felt I was able to communicate with the world through ballet.”

— ***Misty Copeland, “Ballerina Body”***

Have students share their thoughts. What images did they see? Do they feel connected to something special that pushes them out of your shell? What talents do you have? What inspires you?

If time permits, students can even draw what they saw in their mind.

Comprehension:

1. At the Boys & Girls Club gym one day, a teacher noticed something distinctive in the tiny, quiet 13-year-old's movements, and suggested what?
2. Fast-forward to today: Copeland, now 34, has become the first _____ principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre, one of the world's most revered classical ballet companies.
3. Though Copeland worked with writer Charisse Jones on both "Life in Motion" and "Ballerina Body," the books stemmed from what?
4. How did journal writing help Misty?
5. What did she say about the misconception of dancers having eating disorders?
6. In quiet rebuke to the idea of the ballerina as a fragile flower, Copeland filmed an ad for the athletic-wear company Under Armour in 2014. That ad gave her a platform to showcase what?
7. In addition to practical advice about food and fitness, "Ballerina Body" goes deeper, in a chapter devoted to mentoring. How is this important?
8. In a journal entry in the book, Copeland describes how, in her early years at ABT, she learned about Raven Wilkinson, who danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in the 1950s as the company's first African-American ballerina. What connection did she feel to Raven?
9. She finally got to meet Wilkinson. What was the surprise connections between them?

Post-Reading Class Discussion or Journal Writing Assignment:

In her book, Copeland urges readers looking for inspiration to find people they admire — to approach authors at book signings, for example.

"I always encourage younger dancers to surround themselves with support, to believe in themselves, to feel comfortable in their own skin and try not to get caught up in society's standards of what's acceptable, what's beautiful. That's really hard in this day and age."

- Who do you look to for inspiration?
- Who do you admire? Why?
- Who is part of your support network?
- Do you feel comfortable in your own skin?
- How do you define beauty?
- Are you caught up in society's standards? Why or why not?