Sources of Informational Texts for Middle School Students

For the complete special collections with media resources, visit: http://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/grades-6-8-common-core-ela-resources/

The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts hinge on students encountering appropriately complex texts at each grade level to develop the mature language skills and the conceptual knowledge they need for success in school and life.

Characteristics of high-quality reading materials for Grades 6-8:

- compact, short, self-contained texts that students can read and re-read deliberately and slowly to probe and ponder the meanings of individual words, the order in which sentences unfold, and the development of ideas over the course of the text
- extended readings that provide opportunities for close reading, or are necessary for research or other purposes, enabling students to develop the stamina and persistence they need to read and extract knowledge and insight from larger volumes of material
- additional materials that appeal to students’ interests and provide opportunities for regular independent reading—including a wide variety of formats, such as high-quality newspaper and magazine articles as well as information-rich websites
- nonfiction written for a broad audience on a wide variety of topics, such as
science, contemporary events and ideas, nature, and the arts (and representing diverse cultures)

National Geographic's reference, news, and magazine content is a valuable source of informational text on history/social studies, science, and geography content for middle school students. Educators can find age-appropriate books, articles, encyclopedic entries, and interviews/profiles that meet the Common Core measurements of text complexity. Many of the texts also offer rich multimedia supports, such as photo galleries and rollover vocabulary definitions.

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