

NEW FROM

Nell K. Duke



# **i**NFORMATION in *Action*

Project-based instruction  
designed to create powerful  
readers and writers of  
informational texts

GRADES  
K-5



 **SCHOLASTIC**  
open a world of possible

## About the Author



### **NELL K. DUKE, ED.D.,**

is a professor of literacy, language, and culture and a faculty affiliate in the combined program in education and psychology at the University of Michigan. Duke's award-winning research focuses on early literacy development. Her areas of expertise include development of informational reading and writing in young children, comprehension development and instruction in early schooling, and issues of equity in literacy education. Nell K. Duke is the author and co-author of numerous journal articles and book chapters as well as coeditor of the *Handbook of Effective Literacy Instruction: Research-Based Practice K—8* (Guilford), and a co-author of *Reading and Writing Genre With Purpose in K—8 Classrooms* (Heinemann). Her latest professional book is *Inside Information: Developing Powerful Readers and Writers of Informational Text Through Project-Based Instruction* (Scholastic).

# Dear Educator:

Welcome to *Information in Action*. In the pages that follow you'll take a deep dive into this unique resource. But first, a word about why I've made this work such a priority.

Children are curious, intrepid information seekers. They want to know how the people, places, and things in their world fit together and function. But beyond that, they want to know how to make things right. They often have strong ethical moorings, and work hard to resolve problems in the world.

A couple of years ago, I had an "a-ha" moment about developing a professional learning resource that honors that active, problem-solving instinct, while developing the informational reading and writing skills students need and deserve. I wanted to create a resource that propels teachers' and students' knowledge upward, and their ability to read and write well forward.

In recent years, I've been researching the design and impact of project-based instruction for developing informational reading and writing skills. So far, the results are quite promising. Students seem to develop stronger informational reading and writing skills in project-based contexts than with a traditional instruction model. On top of that, teachers are adding more rigor and excitement to their work.

*Information in Action* is built on that research. It's designed for job-embedded professional learning, so teachers can start making an impact with students right away.

*Information in Action* focuses instruction on what matters most for students: cultivating the desire to learn alongside developing essential skills. It shows you how to bring rigorous reading and writing into daily practice, while igniting a passion for learning. Read on to learn more.

I wish you every success, always.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nell K. Duke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# Get Students Reading, Writing, and Researching with Power, Purpose, and Passion!

## *Information in Action delivers:*

**1**

### **Powerful professional learning.**

Step-by-step guidance helps teachers develop expertise in project-based instruction and teaching key informational text types. Ready-to-go, interdisciplinary model units show teachers how to put research into practice.

**2**

### **Access to a variety of high-interest, authentic, informational text sets.**

At each grade level, students work with a wide range of the text types and text features they need to know to build and apply comprehension skills, gather information, and draw on strong models of writing.

**3**

### **A research-based approach to project-based instruction.**

Each unit has been field-tested in a variety of classrooms in diverse settings and incorporates the latest thinking from Nell K. Duke, one of the nation's leading literacy experts.

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*“Students seem to develop stronger informational reading and writing skills in project-based contexts than with a traditional instruction model.”*

—NELL K. DUKE

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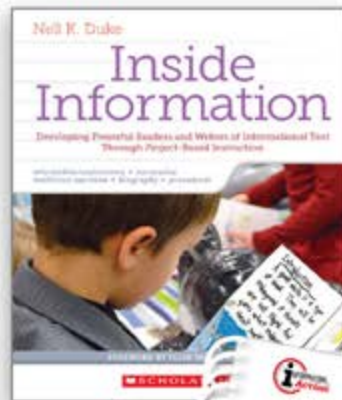
## Tools You Need to Build Essential Reading and Writing Skills!

**Information in Action** is made up of grade-specific print and digital materials for teachers and students.

### For Teachers

#### Each grade-level set includes:

- *Inside Information*, a professional book that provides teachers with a blueprint for developing their own project-based units.
- A teacher's guide containing four classroom-tested units, with step-by-step lessons. Each unit covers a different informational text type:  
**informative/explanatory,**  
**persuasive: opinion,**  
**procedural/how-to,**  
**biography, or nonfiction narrative.**
- Online professional learning resources, including a video clip suite featuring Nell K. Duke, a professional learning study guide for *Inside Information*, and more.



**Embedded  
Professional  
Learning  
at Its Best!**

**AVAILABLE AT**

[www.scholastic.com/  
InformationInAction](http://www.scholastic.com/InformationInAction)



### Additional Online Resources

#### Lesson Resources

- Ready-to-Print PDFs
- Research Notebook
- Project Planning Forms
- Peer Feedback Forms
- Teacher Feedback Forms
- Editing Checklists





## For Students



Grade 1 set shown

### LAUNCH TEXTS

High-interest 4-page read-alouds that are used at the start of each unit to build enthusiasm and knowledge about the project (**One text per unit**)

### SOURCE TEXTS

Collections of articles that help students develop important research skills and provide them with the information they need to complete their project (**Set of 30 texts per unit**)\*

### MENTOR TEXTS

Full-length informational books that match the text types in which students are writing for the units—and contain text features that students are expected to include in their projects (**Set of six texts per unit**)

### RESEARCH NOTEBOOK

Contains lesson-specific graphic organizers, data-gathering charts, drafting sheets, and other tools to help students prepare for and create their projects. (**Set of 30 notebooks**)



### STURDY STORAGE CONTAINERS

One for Launch and Mentor Texts, and one for multipacks of Source Texts.\*



### DIGITAL FORMATS

Student materials are provided in print and screen-ready digital formats at

[www.scholastic.com/InformationInAction](http://www.scholastic.com/InformationInAction)

\*The kindergarten Source Texts are enlarged to share on an easel with the class. (one text per unit, storage box not included)

## Meet Instructional Goals With Rigorous, Engaging Projects

*“There is unprecedented competition for students’ attention from multimedia entertainment.*

*We simply have to make teaching and learning more interesting for students than we have in the past.”*

—NELL K. DUKE

| Grade | Unit | Project   |
|-------|------|---|
| K     | 1    | Why We Write Posters  |
|       | 2    | Our Classroom Jobs Manual   |
|       | 3    | “Kids Saving the Rainforest” Picture Book (Author Study: J. Winter) |
|       | 4    | Let’s Reduce and Reuse Messages                                     |
| 1     | 1    | Who’s Who in Our School Posters                                     |
|       | 2    | Fitness Forever Pamphlets   |
|       | 3    | Delicious Drink Recipes Booklet                                     |
|       | 4    | Animals in the Wild Magazine (Author Study: S. Goudarzi)            |
| 2     | 1    | Inventors Up Close Books  |
|       | 2    | “Dear News Readers...” Letters                                      |
|       | 3    | Marine Animals at Risk Booklets (Author Study: J. Arnosky)          |
|       | 4    | Super Cool Science Show and Handouts                                |
| 3     | 1    | Protect Our “Pests” Posters and Leaflets                            |
|       | 2    | Notable Native Americans Books                                      |
|       | 3    | “Put Your Household Products to the Test” Flyers                    |
|       | 4    | Bio Blog Posts (Author Study: A. E. Johnson)                        |
| 4     | 1    | Crafty Newspaper Creations Booklet                                  |
|       | 2    | Champions of Change Books (Author Study: K. Krull)                  |
|       | 3    | “What’s Great About Our State” Pamphlets                            |
|       | 4    | Riveting Stories, Real Events Book Reviews                          |
| 5     | 1    | Survive-That-Environment Travel Cards                               |
|       | 2    | How to Make Money Book  |
|       | 3    | Save a Local Ecosystem Proposal                                     |
|       | 4    | “One Small Step...” Books (Author Study: P. Muñoz Ryan)             |



| Text Type of Project    | Audience  |
|-------------------------|---|
| informative/explanatory | prekindergartners and other kindergartners                  |
| procedural/how-to       | classmates new to a job/the school                          |
| nonfiction narrative    | children's organization members                             |
| persuasive: opinion     | restaurant/grocery store customers                          |
| biography               | visitors to the school                                      |
| persuasive: opinion     | local senior citizens                                       |
| procedural/how-to       | families  |
| informative/explanatory | patients of local doctor/dentists' offices                  |
| biography               | customers of a store at which inventors' creations are sold |
| persuasive: opinion     | readers of a local online/print newspaper                   |
| informative/explanatory | preservation foundation contributors                        |
| procedural/how-to       | younger schoolmates   |
| persuasive: opinion     | schoolmates   |
| biography               | local post office customers                                 |
| procedural/how-to       | families/grocery store customers                            |
| informative/explanatory | community members   |
| procedural/how-to       | hardware and home-improvement store customers               |
| biography               | service organization volunteers                             |
| informative/explanatory | kids new to the state                                       |
| persuasive: opinion     | school library goers  |
| informative/explanatory | travelers to natural environments                           |
| procedural/how-to       | local youth group members                                   |
| persuasive: opinion     | community members   |
| nonfiction narrative    | public library patrons                                      |

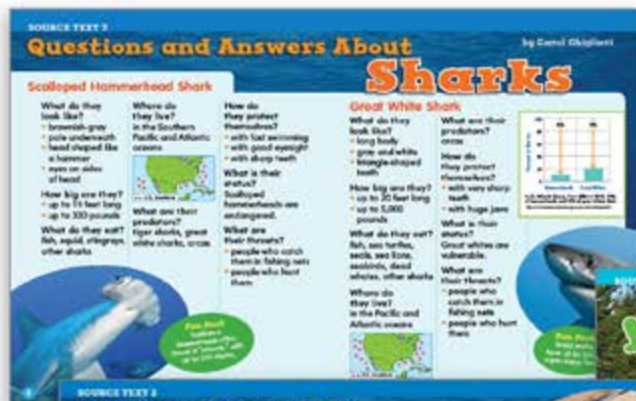




## A Close-Up of the Information-Rich Texts

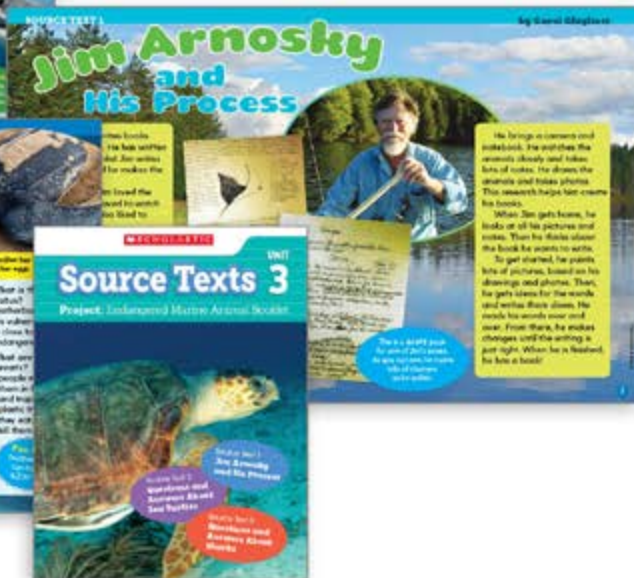
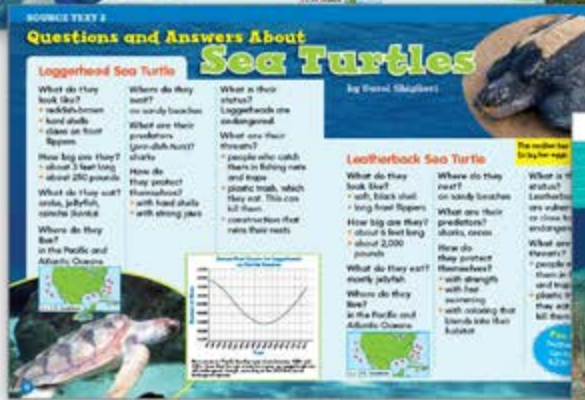
**Information in Action** projects are supported by a set of texts—the Launch Text, the Source Texts, and the Mentor Text—that each serve a distinct purpose.

**LAUNCH TEXTS** These 4-page read-alouds spark student interest and help kick off each unit.



### SOURCE TEXTS

Students read and learn from three articles for each unit, written and designed to maximize students' exposure to key vocabulary, concepts, and text structures and features.





**MENTOR TEXTS** Each Mentor Text is a model of the text type in which students are expected to write.

**TARGETS KEY INFORMATIONAL TEXT TYPES:**

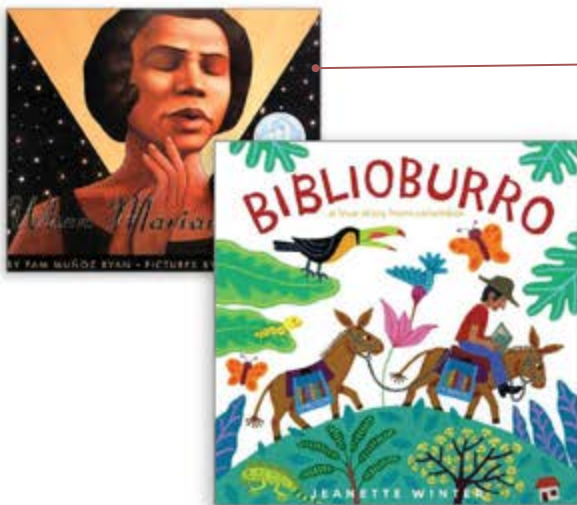
Community Workers  
Biography

Amazing Animals  
Informative/Explanatory

"If You Want My Opinion..."  
Persuasive: Opinion

Gross Science!  
Procedural/How-to

- Informative/Explanatory
- Persuasive: Opinion
- Procedural/How-to
- Biography or Nonfiction Narrative



Each grade-level kit includes an author study featuring the work of acclaimed writers of informational text, including Jim Arnosky, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Jeanette Winter, and others.



Students learn to read information delivered in graphic formats.



# The Instructional Framework of the Units and Lessons

## Inside a Unit

Following a progression of five phases, each unit fully immerses students in learning to read and write informational texts.



### PHASE 1: PROJECT LAUNCH



Students begin by listening to a read-aloud that inspires them to engage with the project or project topic.



### PHASE 2: READING AND RESEARCH

They research the topic and gather information, using high-interest texts.



### PHASE 3: WRITING AND RESEARCH

Students draft the project, continuing to gather information as necessary.



### PHASE 4: REVISION AND EDITING

Students revise and edit the project, based on feedback from their teacher and peers.



### PHASE 5: PRESENTATION AND CELEBRATION

Finally, students deliver the finished product to the audience for a response—and celebrate!



Detail of a first grader's Fitness Forever pamphlet project, written to persuade local senior citizens about the benefits of exercise.



# Inside a Lesson

The 15 lessons in each unit all follow a three-part sequence that allows for explicit instruction, guided practice, and reflection. Suggestions for providing extra support or extra challenge for students who need it are also included.

2 UNIT 2 Persuasive: Opinion

## LESSON 2: Learning From Graphs


### Reading information from graphs.

**Students Will**

- Learn the purpose of graphs.
- Practice reading information from graphs with your help.
- Write their interpretations of graphs in the Research Notebooks.

**Materials**

- Source Text 1, "Fitness Facts"
- Reading Graphs (Research Notebook, pages 14 and 15)



Source Text 1

**Standards Link**

**RI.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

**RI.1.5** Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key information in a text.

**With the Whole Class**

- Explain that a graph is a type of picture that shows information about something. Authors often use graphs to show how pieces of information on a single topic compare to one another. Tell students that today they will study information represented in graphs in Source Text 1, "Fitness Facts."
- Read Source Text 1, pausing at each graph to discuss it. Be sure to read the title of each graph, the information it contains, and its source. Ask questions such as, "What information do we learn from this graph?" "What pieces of information does this graph compare?" "Why would an author include this graph in his or her text?" Keep focused on helping kids interpret/read so they can write about the graphs.
- Model-write your interpretation of the graph titled, "How Americans spend their free time each day." For example, you might write, "Americans spend 165 minutes, or almost three hours, watching TV a day. But they spend only about 18 minutes exercising."

**Individually or in Small Groups**

- Have students look at the Reading Graphs page in the Research Notebook. Then ask them to write their own interpretations of the graphs in the spaces provided.
- As you circulate, look for students who are drawing information from the graphs and not simply writing the titles. Work with individuals or call together a group of students who need additional support.

**For Additional Support:** Assist students by co-writing an interpretation of the first graph, "Kids favorite sport to play." Ask students, "Which sport is the most popular?" "Which is the least?" "Which sports did about 200 kids report as their favorite?" Then have each student write an interpretation of the second graph on his or her own.

**For Additional Challenge:** Encourage students to expand their interpretations, using words and phrases such as greatest, least, and most common.

**Whole-Class Wrap-Up**

When students are finished, ask them to turn to a partner and share one of their graph interpretations. Tell students to be on the lookout for more graphs throughout this unit. As an extension, you may do an activity such as graphing heart rates sitting still, after one minute of marching in place, and after one minute of doing jumping jacks. This graph would likely show that heart rate increases with exercise.

**Reaching Dual Language Learners**

Select specific elements of a graph to study one at a time, such as the title, the topic of the horizontal axis, and the topic of the vertical axis. Then assist students with their interpretations. On chart paper, write key words from students' responses to use in the Reading Graphs page.

Lessons offer ways to differentiate instruction and strategies for reaching dual language learners.

**EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION**  
(10–15 minutes)

**Whole-Class Lesson:** Teachers provide instruction about one or more teaching points aligned with the standards and related to the unit project, often reading aloud to build background knowledge or provide a model.

**GUIDED PRACTICE**  
(25–30 minutes)

**Small-Group, Partner, and/or Individual Work:** Students apply to their project what was taught in the whole-class lesson. The teacher provides support to needs-based groups and/or circulates among students.

**REFLECTION**  
(about 5 minutes)

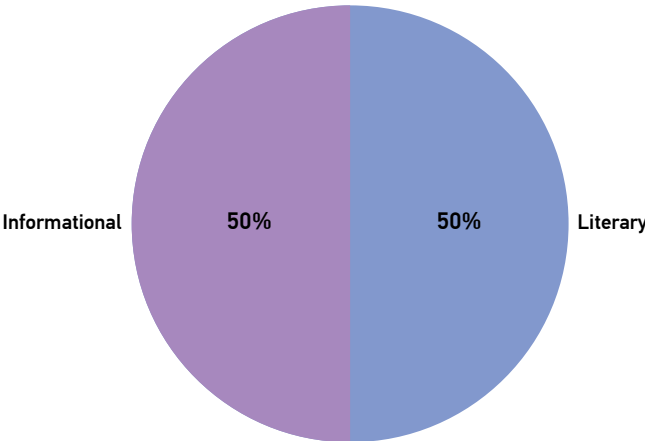
**Whole-Class Wrap-Up:** The teacher gathers the students back together, reviews key instructional points from the whole class lesson, and leads a share of student work that captures those points.



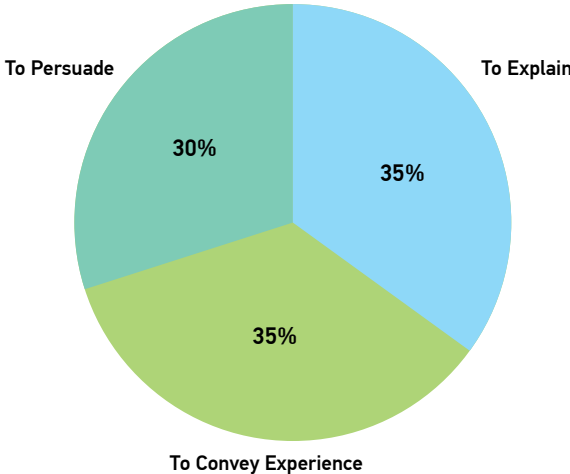
# Informational Text and Project-Based Instruction—a Great Match

Today’s higher standards have specific benchmarks for reading and writing informational text beginning at kindergarten. The standards expect a large proportion of elementary-school students’ reading and writing to be of informational text.

Recommended distribution of literary and informational passages in grade 4, 2009 NAEP reading framework



Recommended distribution of communicative purposes in grade 4, 2011 NAEP writing framework



Project-based instruction is particularly well suited to helping students meet rigorous standards because it:

- ✓ can include extensive reading and writing of content-rich informational text
- ✓ offers opportunities for teaching important reading and writing skills
- ✓ provides a compelling purpose and audience for reading, writing, and revising

**Information in Action** is designed to put teachers on the road to high-quality implementation of project-based instruction with informational text.

Research is increasingly showing the benefits of project-based instruction for students.<sup>1</sup> For example:

## ACADEMIC SUCCESS

When students read and write for purposes beyond satisfying a school requirement, and for audiences beyond their classroom teacher, their reading and writing skills are stronger.

## ATTITUDES

Many studies have compared students' attitudes about learning before and after project-based units, finding that those attitudes improved.

## MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Project-based approaches are more motivating and engaging than traditional methods of instruction. Research shows that motivation and engagement are essential to students' academic success.

**Information in Action** has been field-tested in a variety of classrooms in diverse settings to ensure that the topics, projects, lessons, student materials, and informational texts are highly engaging, developmentally appropriate, and most of all, effective.



Download the full research paper at [scholastic.com/InformationInAction](http://scholastic.com/InformationInAction)

*“Nell Duke ignites within teachers and students a passion for authentic project-based instruction. This resource enables you to begin your journey with confidence and it gives you fresh, classroom-tested ideas to support your work.”*

—**LYNN BIGELMAN**, Principal,  
Grayson Elementary School,  
Waterford, Michigan

1. Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010; Hertzog, 2007; Kaldi, Filippatou, & Govaris, 2011; Okolo & Ferretti, 1996; Rivet & Krajcik, 2004

# Expert Consultants

Each unit has been reviewed by expert consultants to ensure the material contains appropriate content and practices in social studies and science instruction, as well as meets the needs of dual language learners and students in urban schools.



Urban Schools and  
Dual Language  
Learners

**ESTANISLADO S. BARRERA, IV**, is an assistant professor of literacy studies at Louisiana State University. Barrera’s work focuses on the role of reading, writing, and discourse in comprehension; the needs of English Language Learners; and the development of pre-service teachers’ expertise through service learning field experiences. Prior to accepting the position at LSU, he was a third grade teacher and Title-1 Instructional Advisor in South Texas public schools.



Social Studies

**ANNE-LISE HALVORSEN** is an assistant professor of teacher education, specializing in social studies education, at Michigan State University. Halvorsen’s work focuses on elementary social studies education, the history of education, the integration of social studies and literacy, and teacher preparation in the social studies. She is a former kindergarten teacher and curriculum writer for the state of Michigan.



Science

**VANESSA WESTBROOK**, a professional educator for more than 30 years, has served in areas that focus on elementary science education, informal science education, teacher certification in science, and increasing minority representation in science careers and teaching. Recently, she served on the writing team for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and National Chair of the National Science Teacher Association Conference.





## Good Buzz for Information in Action

“Nell Duke made a significant contribution to the field with her seminal research on the shortage of informational text in the early grades. Her work has influenced one of the largest shifts in classroom practice. I’m convinced her recent focus on **project-based instruction will change the way teachers teach and children learn.**”

—KRISTIN DE VIVO, Executive Director,  
The George Lucas Educational Foundation

“What I see in Nell Duke’s new program is a gold mine for teachers! **Students will overflow with curiosity as they explore a variety of projects and audiences**—and, in the process, become powerhouse readers and writers of informational text.”

—TINA CANTU YBARRA, Elementary Curriculum Director,  
Gregory-Portland Independent School District, Texas

“Nell Duke, a true researcher/practitioner, recognizes the need to enhance literacy instruction in elementary schools. To make that happen, **teachers must have an effective approach and framework. Information In Action provides them with that**”

—ANDY BRYAN, Superintendent,  
Lee County Schools, North Carolina

“It’s smart, it’s flexible, and it’s organized so clearly you’ll be able to start tomorrow. **Evidence of Nell’s wise and thoughtful approach to informational reading and writing can be found in every lesson, in every video, and in every one of the many accompanying texts for children.** This much-wanted and -needed new resource is sure to inspire teachers and students alike as they explore its riches.”

—RUTH CULHAM, author of



**BEST VALUE!**

Support ongoing, job-embedded professional learning with this cost-effective resource designed by Nell K. Duke, one of the nation's leading literacy experts.

|           |                                    |            |
|-----------|------------------------------------|------------|
| WMS583931 | Information in Action • Grades K-5 | \$3,499.00 |
| WMS583929 | Information in Action • Grades K-2 | \$1,799.00 |
| WMS583930 | Information in Action • Grades 3-5 | \$1,899.00 |
| WMS555650 | Information in Action • Grade K    | \$599.00   |
| WMS555645 | Information in Action • Grade 1    | \$699.00   |
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| WMS555648 | Information in Action • Grade 4    | \$699.00   |
| WMS555649 | Information in Action • Grade 5    | \$699.00   |
| WMS566768 | Inside Information                 | \$26.99    |

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