

# ELAR for Texas Students

## Aligned to TEKS

### Why Now?

With the recent updates to the STAAR assessment, students will need to do the following to perform well on the ELAR assessment:

- Define vocabulary words in context
- Go back to the text for evidence
- Explain figurative language
- Find the main idea
- Identify text structure
- Identify author's purpose
- Compare selections from different genres

### Why Newsela?

We pair authentic, engaging, TEKS-aligned content with instructional supports and activities that help students build foundational literacy skills in cross-curricular instruction. Curations and instructional resources for teachers help them find the materials they need to cover specific literacy skills, as well as create individualized learning plans to support accelerated instruction requirements in Texas.



#### TEXAS LESSON EXAMPLE

Canine empathy is strong when humans are hurt, study says



### HIGHLIGHTS:

#### Reading comprehension quizzes for every text

Teachers across subjects can check for understanding by having students complete standards-based reading comprehension quizzes that are side-by-side with the text.

#### Instructional supports and scaffolds for differentiation

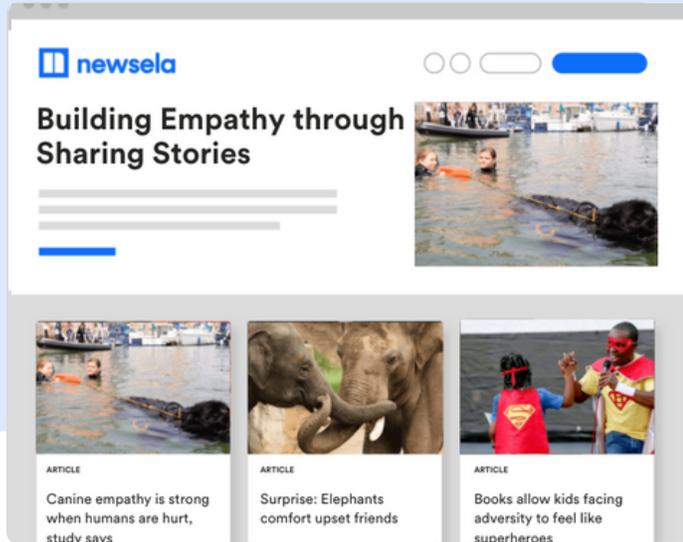
Every text is published in five different reading levels - with many texts in English and Spanish - with customizable scaffolds at each level, so every learner can build literacy skills while accessing grade-level concepts.

#### Curated collections for targeted skills practice

Newsela ELA includes collections like Review: Standards and Skills, which help teachers lead targeted skills practice on authentic content that is engaging to students.

# Instructional supports for each article

Help teachers expand students' learning experience and engagement

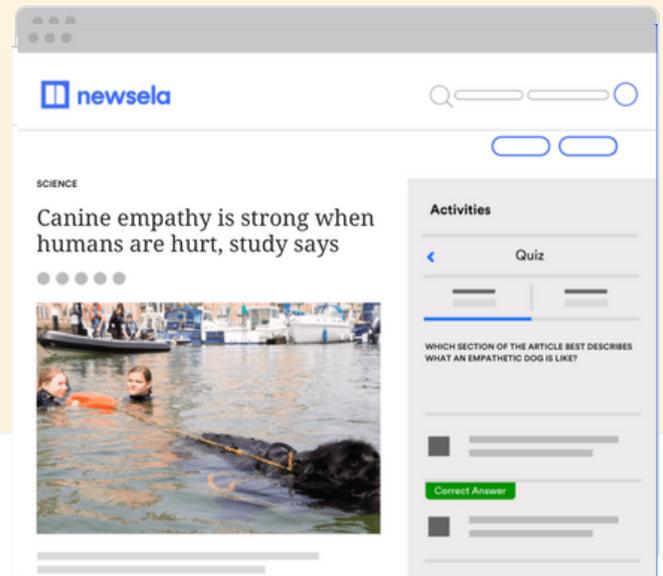


## Curations, Lessons, and Customizations

Teachers can use Newsela to teach to the standards and priorities of their school and district. Create custom activities, search for content by standard, curate Text Sets, and control the reading levels students see.

## Quizzes, Writing Prompts, and Assignments

Teachers can create and share customizable assignments and give students access to reading comprehension quizzes, customizable writing prompts, and annotations.



# Example Lesson Spark for ELAR

## Building Empathy Through Sharing Stories

**Time to Complete:** 60 minutes

### Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about how people can build empathy for others by sharing stories and experiences.

Students will begin by discussing the definition of "empathy," specifically comparing it to "kindness" and "sympathy." Students will then read an article of their choice and jigsaw what they learn with a group. Teachers should repeat this process twice, so all students read two articles and develop an understanding of 8 stories. Students will then complete a short response prompt. Students can complete a creative writing assignment as an extension.

### Activities

#### Before Reading

**Definition Discussion:** Ask students to discuss what the word "empathy" means. As the discussion progresses, ask students to differentiate between "empathy" and "kindness," as well as "empathy" and "sympathy."

**Jigsaw:** Provide students with the jigsaw printable and put students into groups. These groups will be the "home groups" of the jigsaw. Assign each student in the group a different article or articles to read. Tell students that they are going to be responsible for teaching their article or articles to the group they are sitting with now.

#### Assignment Reading Instructions

As you read, highlight in GREEN details that show a person sharing their story. Highlight in YELLOW others' reactions to this story.

### After Reading

**1. Jigsaw:** After they have read, students will leave their "home group" to sit with a group of students who read the same article or their "expert group." Have them take notes on what they learned in their article. After they have taken notes, have them return to their home groups to explain what they've learned and fill in the rest of the Jigsaw printable.

**2. Custom Write Prompt:** After students have finished, have them respond to the following prompt:

- Why is empathy important and/or beneficial? Include at least 2-3 specific details from the text to support your response.

After students have had time to respond to the prompt, have students share what they wrote with a partner, or select a few students to share their ideas with the class.

### Extension

**Creative Writing Prompt:** Have students write a short narrative about one of the following topics, using sensory details:

- A favorite gift
- A time I was bullied
- A time I failed and learned
- A favorite memory with a loved one

**Advisory Circle:** Allow students to share their stories and experiences. Use this as an opportunity to build community by encouraging students to express empathy and build off of each other's experiences. Ask students how they can create a more empathetic culture in their classrooms or schools.

**Pairs with Lesson Spark: Identifying Key Ideas From Evidence.**

ARTICLE  
Science

# Canine empathy is strong when humans are hurt, study says

By Baltimore Sun, adapted by Newsela staff. Published: 08/21/2018. Word Count: 858

Recommended for: Upper Elementary School - Middle School. Text Level: 7



Caption

*A Newfoundland dog pulls along people in the water on May 30, 2016 in Portishead, England. Photo: Andy Casey / Barcroft Images / Barcroft Media via Getty Images*

Viewers of the long-running TV show "Lassie" know that the collie would do anything for her human. It turns out there is some truth behind the story.

That is the conclusion of a recently published study about dogs and empathy. It was co-authored by a woman who is now a Johns Hopkins University graduate student.

The result would be no surprise to many dog owners. There are millions of stories online about dogs helping or comforting humans.

### Canine Empathy

A new study, however, takes what is known about the empathy of dogs another step,

suggesting that dogs will overcome obstacles to aid their humans. Not only does the study shed more light on the relationships between dogs and humans, but it also could lead to better animal models for research into human disorders.

"There was a gap to be filled," said Emily Sanford, a Hopkins graduate student in psychological and brain sciences. She did the research as an undergraduate at Macalester College in Minnesota. "Dogs will help. But would dogs be motivated to help someone who needed help if there was a barrier? Other studies had a hard time finding evidence, but maybe the tasks were too difficult." of living things. They have DNA, which contains the instructions for how each part of a creature

The theory was tested by Sanford and Julia Meyers-Manor, a former professor at Macalester who is now an assistant professor of psychology at Ripon College in Wisconsin. The pair wanted to come up with an obstacle that would be a challenge but was not too confusing or hard to overcome.

They placed dogs on one side of a see-through door from their owners and had the owners alternately cry or hum "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." The dogs could see and hear them. About half the dogs came through the door, but they came four times faster when their owner cried. The study included many breeds and found no differences between the different types of dogs.

### **Doggy Stress Tests**

The researchers also measured the stress level of the dogs using heart rate and other behavioral signs described by the owners.

Those who were less stressed were able to bust through the door and "rescue" their owners. Those who were more stressed could not manage to do much about the problem, even if they appeared as though they wanted to.

That, Sanford said, is also an issue with humans facing extremely distressing situations.

The pair got the idea for the study when Meyers-Manor was playing with her children several years ago. The kids buried her under pillows, and when she called for help her husband did not come — but her collie rushed in and tried to uncover her. She wanted to test whether this was a general dog reaction.

"I've always been interested in the human-animal bond; how do we have this unique relationship with dogs?" she said.

The information can be useful to understand the role of empathy in motivating the animals, she said. It also could help in developing more useful animal models to study human disorders such as autism, which can be characterized by a lack of empathy, Meyers-Manor said.

Next, she plans to test whether dogs would respond so quickly, and overcome obstacles to aid strangers or other dogs.

The research builds on many other studies of empathetic dogs. There is even research showing that dogs are responsive to strangers crying.

### **Therapy Dogs Provide Comfort**

Hoot the 3-year-old goldendoodle is an example of such a dog. He is a therapy dog for Fidos for Freedom, a nonprofit that supplies hearing dogs, service dogs and therapy dogs in the Baltimore-Washington area.

Initially a pet, Hoot lives with Gayle Bragg, a substitute teacher in Columbia, who put him to work when she discovered how he was tuned into others' feelings and needs. She said he knows when she has been sitting at the computer too long and comes over to nudge her up. He would, no doubt, go through a door to get to her if she were in distress, she said.

Bragg has participated in studies with Hoot. She said there is much to be gained from dogs for their owners' benefit and the well-being of strangers. Hoot does not just understand Bragg and her level of comfort, she said. He was also connected to children in reading programs, older people in senior living facilities and those with emotional and physical disorders, including veterans.

He dials up or down his energy and enthusiasm for helping, depending on the person and the situation, Bragg said. Sometimes he will put his head in a lap and other times he will play or even let a child tug on his ears or lie on his belly.

"It's hard to put into words; they just sense," Bragg said. "Hoot worries if I sneeze. Fortunately, I don't have allergies. He comes right in and put his face in my face to see if I'm OK. Dogs and their people have this nonverbal bond and end up reading each other's signals. Hoot is very generous, but dogs, they are just naturally empathetic."

Such dog behavior comes as little surprise to researcher Meyers-Manor.

"For sure, they are your best friend," she said.



**Newsela's content is published daily from trusted and vetted sources at 5 different reading levels. Teachers can find a wide range of ELAR and cross-curricular resources to support instruction aligned to TEKS.**



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