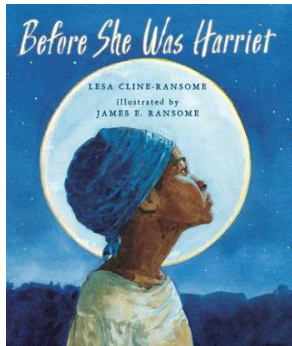


## Rich Language in Nonfiction: An Activity

The best way for students to get a feel for the flow of rich, engaging language is to analyze finely-crafted nonfiction books. Invite students to choose one of the eight titles below and type or write out a few pages by hand, so the text looks similar to the drafts they write, and they can evaluate it in the same way that they analyze their own writing.



*Before She Was Harriet: The Story of Harriet Tubman* by Lesa Cline-Ransome

*Frog Song* by Brenda Z. Guiberson

*Giant Squid* by Candace Fleming

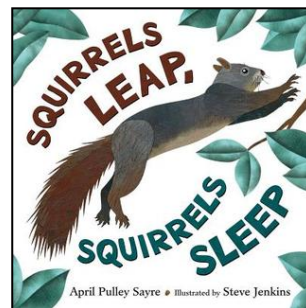
*If You Find a Rock* by Peggy Christian

*If You Hopped Like a Frog* by David M. Schwartz

*Planting the Wild Garden* by Kathryn O. Galbraith

*Squirrels Leap, Squirrels Sleep* by April Pulley Sayre

*We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* by Traci Sorell



After organizing the class into small groups based on the books they selected, encourage the teams to identify key language features and highlight them with different colors. Students who typed the text can use colored text in the computer file, and students who wrote the text by hand can use colored pencils or highlighting markers. The following color code works well for the titles listed above:

red = vivid verbs

blue = similes, metaphors, and other comparisons

green = alliteration

purple = repetition

orange = onomatopoeia

After students complete this task, invite them to highlight these same language features in one of their rough drafts. Can they find spots where replacing a verb or adding a comparison or language device could strengthen their writing? As students complete this task, encourage them to share their changes with a classmate.