

Language/English, Grades 7-9

CONTENTS

READING STRATEGIES

Engaging in Reading:

| | |
|---|----|
| Reading Between the Lines/Inference (It Says-I Say-And So) | 2 |
| Reading Between the Lines/Prediction (Probable Passage) | 8 |
| Reading Between the Lines/Visualization (The Five Guesses Game) | 14 |
| Visualizing Text (Improving Visual Memory) | 18 |
| Making Notes (Somebody Wanted But So) | 22 |
| Read Aloud | 28 |

WRITING STRATEGIES

Generating Ideas:

| | |
|--|----|
| Setting the Context (Using R.A.F.T.S.) | 32 |
|--|----|

Developing and Organizing Ideas:

| | |
|--|----|
| Supporting the Main Idea (Point, Proof, Comment) | 38 |
|--|----|

Revising and Editing:

| | |
|---|----|
| Writing with Precision (Improving Clarity) | 44 |
| Approaches to Spelling (Spelling Reminders) | 48 |

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Pair Work/Small-group Discussions:

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Mix and Mingle | 56 |
|----------------|----|

Small-group Discussions:

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Save the Last Word for Me | 60 |
| Reading Circles | 64 |

APPENDICES

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Bibliography | 71 |
|--------------|----|

Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines / Inference

Grades 7 – 9 (It Says – I Say – And So)

An inference is the ability to connect what is in the text with what is in the mind to create an educated guess. (Beers, 2003)

Making inferences from words that are read or spoken is a key comprehension skill. Students may miss vital information if they fail to make appropriate inferences.

Purpose

- Draw meaning from text – through explicit details and implicit clues.
- Connect prior knowledge and experiences to the text in order to make good guesses about what is happening, may have happened or will happen in the future.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop greater awareness that texts can be understood on more than one level.
- become capable and confident in comprehending the subtle meanings in texts.

Tips and Resources

- Select a subject-specific chunk of text e.g. a section from a textbook, a paragraph from an article, a stanza of a poem, an opening to a novel, a paragraph from an autobiography, a section of dialogue from short fiction, or an excerpt from a play.
- Encourage students to become actively involved with the text, make personal connections, and think about the meaning of the textual evidence.
- For a model, use the Student/Teacher Resource, *It Says - I Say - And So*.
- Post the Student/Teacher Resource, *It Says - I Say - And So* chart in the room.
- For struggling readers, specify how many pieces of information to list in the *It Says* column – 1, 2 or 3 items.

When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do, pp. 61-72, 165-171.

Further Support

- Use a video clip to model the strategy.
- Provide additional opportunities for students to practise making inferences with subject-specific texts in a supported situation – perhaps in a small group with the teacher acting as the facilitator.
- Pair ESL learners with a partner as they do the activities in this strategy.



Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines / Inference

Grades 7 – 9 (It Says – I Say – And So)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define inference and provide examples. (For example, the teacher says, “A man is opening an umbrella. What am I not saying?”) Using an overhead transparency of the Teacher Resource, <i>Making Inferences - Corrosion</i>, read the text <i>Corrosion</i> and think aloud through the strategy. Share the first three examples on the overhead. For “<i>It Says</i>,” underline in the text “damage caused by corrosion is expensive.” For “<i>I Say</i>” write beside the underlined text, “it is expensive because of the cost of the materials.” In the “<i>And So</i>” box, write “and so using plastic instead of metal may be less expensive.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen attentively. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute the Student Resource, <i>Miss Murdstone</i> and put the Student/Teacher Resource, <i>It Says – I Say – And So</i> on the overhead. Go over the questions on the overhead. Divide students into pairs. Read aloud the text “Miss Murdstone,” or use any other text from your subject area. Ask student pairs to underline five places in the text where they can make inferences. They may wish to use the “<i>It Says</i>” questions to find places. Invite student responses to <i>It Says</i>. Ask students to complete <i>I Say</i> questions. Invite student response to <i>I Say</i>. Ask students to complete <i>And So</i> questions. Invite student responses to <i>And So</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen attentively in assigned pairs. Complete <i>It Says</i> section. Volunteer responses. Complete <i>I Say</i> section. Volunteer responses. Complete <i>And So</i> section. Volunteer responses. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read aloud another short text. Ask students to complete Student/Teacher Resource, <i>It Says – I Say – And So</i> independently. Circulate and monitor student completion. Invite students to share their Student/Teacher Resource, <i>It Says – I Say – And So</i>. Ask students to reflect on the usefulness of the strategy in comprehending what they have read. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen attentively to read aloud. Complete Student/Teacher Resource, <i>It Says – I Say – And So</i> independently. Volunteer responses. Reflect on strategy. |

Notes



Making Inferences – Corrosion

An inference is the ability to connect what is in the text with what is in the mind to create an educated guess. (Beers, 2003)

| Text – It says | Inferences from the text – I say |
|--|---|
| <p>Have you ever wondered why <u>metal car bodies rust</u> but plastic bumpers do not? Or why bright <u>copper church domes eventually turn green</u>?</p> <p>These <u>metals change</u> because of a process called corrosion. Repairing the damage caused by corrosion is expensive.</p> | <p><i>There must be some quality of metal that makes it rust.</i></p> <p><i>I've noticed this change – assumed it was aging of the copper.</i></p> <p><i>Corrosion can't be a good change if cars rust.</i></p> |
| <p>And so...</p> | |



Student Resource

Miss Murdstone

Underline or highlight three places in the text below where you can make an inference. Refer to the question prompts for making inferences and then fill in the “I say” column. After making your inferences, write a statement about the type of person you think Miss Murdstone is in the “And so...” box.

| Text – It says | Inferences from the text – I say |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <p>It was Miss Murdstone who had arrived, and a gloomy-looking lady she was; dark, like her brother, whom she greatly resembled in face and voice; and with very heavy eyebrows, nearly meeting over her large nose, as if, being unable, because she was a woman, to wear whiskers, she had decided to grow what hair she could on her face. She brought with her two hard, inflexible black boxes, with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails. When she paid the coachman she took her money out of a hard steel purse, and she kept the purse in a very jail of a bag which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite.</p> <p>~ Charles Dickens, <i>David Copperfield</i></p> | |
| <p>And so...</p> | |



It Says – I Say – And So

An *inference* is the ability to connect what is in the text with what is in the mind to create an educated guess. (Beers, 2003)

It says...

- What words, phrases, ideas, or images stand out when I read this piece?
- What are the main ideas? Hint: Which words or ideas are repeated or emphasized in more than one sentence?

I say...

- What do I already know about this topic?
- What is my experience in a similar situation?
- What does the evidence tell me? Hint: Evidence may be in the form of examples, word pictures, or small stories (anecdotes).

And so...

- I conclude...
- I think...
- I judge...
- I predict...

Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines / Prediction

Grades 7 – 9 (Probable Passage)

An inference is the ability to connect what is in the text with what is in the mind to create an educated guess. (Beers, 2003)

Making inferences from words that are read or spoken is a key comprehension skill. Students may miss vital information if they fail to make appropriate inferences.

Purpose

- Draw meaning from text – through explicit details and implicit clues.
- Connect prior knowledge and experiences to the text in order to make good guesses about what is happening, may have happened or will happen in the future.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop greater awareness that texts can be understood on more than one level.
- become capable and confident in comprehending the subtle meanings in texts.

Tips and Resources

- Proficient readers make predictions as they encounter text, and confirm or revise these predictions as they acquire more information in their reading.
- Before reading, making predictions helps students activate their prior knowledge and do some prior thinking as a way to invest in the activity of reading.
- During reading, making predictions is useful in helping students maintain engagement by anticipating the direction of the text.
- “The predictions readers and writers make about what will happen next foster their forward momentum and become the focal point for confirming or revising meaning. Experienced readers and writers continue to ask questions and make predictions throughout the reading/writing process. (Carol Booth Olson *The Reading/Writing Connection*, p. 10.)
- Encourage students to make predictions by providing sentence starters similar to the following:
 - When I read...(the title, key word, heading, an introduction)...I predict that...
 - This...(word, description, phrase)...makes me think that...will happen.
 - Based on what I read, I think...
- During a read aloud, stop at various points in the text to ask students to make predictions based on what they have read.
- Help students understand how predictions are important to making meaning in reading by providing opportunities for them to reflect on how they confirmed or revised their predictions.
- *Probable Passage* and other pre-reading strategies can help students begin to make predictions in their reading. Teachers can adapt *Probable Passage* for any topic or issue by customizing the word categories.
- For more information, see:
 - Teacher Resource, *Tips for Using Probable Passage*.
 - Teacher Resources, *Probable Passage*.
 - Student Resource, *Probable Passage Template*.

When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do, pp. 87-94.
The Reading/Writing Connection, pp. 84-85.

Further Support

- Provide additional opportunities for students to practise making inferences in a small group with the teacher acting as a facilitator.



Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines / Prediction

Grades 7 – 9 (Probable Passage)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share a list of words associated with a situation familiar to students (e.g., school dance). • Think aloud a prediction based on the words. • Explain to students that we use prediction to understand the world around us. • Ask students in assigned pairs to brainstorm instances when they use prediction in their lives. • Invite responses. • Explain to students that proficient readers make predictions to anticipate the direction the reading might take in order to understand a text. • De-emphasize “getting predictions right”; making predictions has much more to do with being engaged in the text and less to do with making “correct” guesses. • Distribute the Student Resource, <i>Probable Passage Template</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and observe teacher modeling. • Brainstorm instances. • Volunteer responses. Responses may include predicting what a movie is about based on a movie preview, or predicting what will happen in a class based on what they see on a blackboard. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to work in assigned pairs. • Write the title of the selection on the board or overhead transparency. Ask students to write the title on the Student Resource, <i>Probable Passage Template</i>. • Explain to students how the title should begin to trigger some predictions. • Ask students to make predictions based on the title. • Invite students to share some of their predictions. • Share 8-14 pre-selected words that are significant to the text on the board or overhead transparency. Explain to students that they will use prediction by assigning these words to selected categories. • Ask students to write each word in one of the boxes (Characters, Setting, Problem, Outcomes, Unknown Words) on the <i>Probable Passage</i> by predicting which category they think it fits. The Unknown Words category is for words unfamiliar to the students. • Ask students to write a gist statement that captures the main idea of the text. • Ask students to list questions they have about the text under the heading “To discover...” • Invite students to share their pre-reading predictions and questions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the title on the Student Resource, <i>Probable Passage Template</i> sheet. • Make predictions based on the title. • Share responses. • Listen to the list of words. • Use prediction to assign each word in one of the <i>Probable Passage Template</i> categories. Write each word in one of the boxes. • Create a gist statement based on predictions. • Record questions about the text under the heading “To discover...” • Volunteer responses. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud the text. • Pause reading at various points and ask students to revisit their <i>Probable Passage Template</i>. • Summarise for students that the skill of predicting helps readers understand the world as well as a reading selection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to read aloud. • Confirm or revise predictions by revisiting <i>Probable Passage</i> and reflect on how the meaning of the text has been modified as they read. |

Notes



Tips for Using Probable Passage

Provide a list of 8 – 14 words from the selection.

Most of these words should be significant to the meaning of the selection and ones that are familiar to the student.

Provide the title of the selection.

Don't forget to ask students to begin to make predictions based on the title, and to use this information to help further their predictions as they put the words in the categories.

Categorise known words into the *Character*, *Setting*, *Problem*, and *Outcomes* boxes.

These words do not have to be selected and categorised in obvious ways. For example, the list of words may not necessarily contain names of characters or places. They may be descriptive words that might go in either category. Each word is used once.

Categorise unfamiliar words in the *Unknown Word(s)* box.

These are words with which the students are not familiar, not words for which they can't predict a category. Words students put in the *Unknown Word(s)* box provide a good diagnostic assessment of vocabulary that needs explicit teaching. You may want to select one or two words to put in the list that you know will be challenging as a way for students to attend to them prior to reading. If most of the students have put most of the words in the *Unknown Word(s)* box, it may be a cue that the selection is too difficult.

Write questions in *To discover...*

The *To Discover* questions are a good way to get students to think about the questions they have based on their predictions.

During Reading

After reading part of the selection, ask students to revisit their Probable Passage to re-categorise words and/or write new *To Discover* questions based on the new information they have gained from the reading. Also ask students to make new predictions about the rest of the selection.

After Reading

After reading the entire selection, ask students to revise their *Gist Statement* as a way to summarise the selection in one sentence.



Teacher Resource

Probable Passage

Sample Response 1: Short Story

Title of Section: *Carrying the Running-Awards* by Virginia Hamilton
(Hume, Karen et al. *Sightlines 8*. Canada: Prentice Hall Ginn, 1999)

Word List: slave catchers, emancipation, freedom, plantation, overseer, slaves, escape, man

Characters

slaves
man

Setting

plantation

Problem

slave catchers

Gist statement (I predict this is about ...)

I predict this is about how a man and several slaves working on a plantation overtake the slave catchers and escape to freedom.

Outcome(s)

freedom
escape

Unknown Word(s)

emancipation
overseer

To discover...

1. Did they use weapons to overtake the slave catchers?
2. Where did they go to find freedom?
3. What is emancipation?



Probable Passage

Sample Response 2: Short Story

Title of Section: *Borders* by Thomas King

(Saliani, Dom and Nova Morine. *Crossroads*. Toronto, Ontario: Nelson Thompson, formerly Gage Educational Publishing, 1999)

Word List: reserve, daughter, Blackfoot, mother, border, Canadian, visit, citizenship, Salt Lake City, home

Characters

daughter
mother

Setting

Salt Lake City
border
reserve

Problem

citizenship
visit
Canadian

Gist statement (I predict this is about ...)

I predict this is about a daughter who wants to leave the Blackfoot reserve; however, her mother will not allow her to cross the Canadian border to visit Salt Lake City because the daughter does not have her citizenship so she has to stay home.

Outcome(s)

home

Unknown Word(s)

Blackfoot

To discover...

1. Will the daughter ever get to leave home?
2. Where is Salt Lake City?
3. What exactly does Blackfoot mean?

Adapted from *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do*, p. 88.



Student Resource

Probable Passage Template

Title of Selection _____

Characters

Setting

Problem

Gist statement (I predict this is about...)

Outcome(s)

Unknown Word(s)

To discover...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines / Visualization

Grades 7 – 9 (The Five Guesses Game)

Unseen text is the information that resides inside the reader's head: ideas, opinions, essential background knowledge. The unseen text is unique to each reader. (Cris Tovani, 2002)

Making inferences from words that are read or spoken is a key comprehension skill. Students may miss vital information if they fail to make appropriate inferences.

Purpose

- Draw meaning from text – through explicit details and implicit clues.
- Connect prior knowledge and experiences to the text in order to make good guesses about what is happening, may have happened or will happen in the future.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop greater awareness that texts can be understood on more than one level.
- become capable and confident in comprehending the subtle meanings in texts.

Tips and Resources

- For more information on visualization see *Reading IS Seeing*, pp. 14-15; 110-114.
- Visualization is a key to reading comprehension.
- When students create mind pictures they can better understand what the writer is trying to convey.
- Show students how they can pause often to turn words into pictures.
- By turning text into mind pictures, students can more easily identify main ideas and make inferences. Learning to visualize helps students turn text into mind pictures.
- Comic books, cartoon strips, video games, and graphic novels can help students make the link to the technique of visualizing word texts.
- Prepare a set of pictures in a collage that will be used to support the strategy.
- Gather research materials relevant to the teaching of the strategy.

Further Support

- A first step in the visualization process could be to invite a healthcare professional to talk to the students about a healthy diet, or to invite a police officer to talk to the class. Students will then see the outfits worn by the professionals and the objects they use to accompany their talk.
- Whenever possible illustrate class activities with objects, pictures, or video clips.
- Use clipart, the web, and other computer programs to provide illustrations or images of words.
- For pictures of objects visit <http://www.pdictionary.com/>
- Have available in the classroom *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* which would appeal to a teenage audience from all backgrounds.



Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines / Visualization

Grades 7 – 9 (The Five Guesses Game)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the social context with an inquiry question, for example: What is healthy living? What is justice? Should scientists create human clones? • Address questions that arise from the class dialogue, for example: What are the biggest health issues facing teens? Does the justice system favour the wealthy? Would cloning improve the quality of life? • Share medical research on the connections between academic achievement and diet; or share information on Statistics Canada regarding teens and justice; or share religious and medical statistics on cloning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively. • Turn to assigned partner and offer answers to questions and create another question on the topic. • Volunteer to share responses. • Listen attentively. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show one element at a time on a pre-designed collage of, for example, different types of junk food; teens in trouble with the law; medical advances. • Do a think-aloud of the similarities and differences between each new picture and the preceding ones. • Ask what the general topic of the collage is? • Show a second pre-designed collage of, for example, individual athletes playing their sport. • Ask students for the details they see in each photo. • Ask what the topic of the collage is. • Explain that the collage has examples of competitive sports (team clothing, spotlights on the playing field). • Play the Teacher Resource, <i>The Five Guesses Game</i>, during which a list of five items, based on the pre-designed collage (for example, junk food), are revealed one at a time (gummy bears, potato chips, chocolate bars, doughnuts, nachos). Students complete the Student Resource, <i>The Five Guesses Game</i> chart. • Invite volunteers to share predictions after each word is unveiled. • Comment on varied student responses (the five items are about junk food, or the five items are about a birthday party). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively and observe closely. • Offer suggested answers to assigned partners. • Point out to partner, for example, a girl shooting a puck, a young man hitting a golf ball, a young woman smashing a tennis ball, a boy swimming. • Identify the difference between “games” and “sports”. • Fill in the Student Resource, <i>The Five Guesses Game</i>. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to define the process they have just completed. • Name the process as inferring through visualization. • Assign topics to pairs of students. • Have students create collages to illustrate the topic (use newspapers and magazines). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share definitions with assigned partners. • Create collages on assigned topics. • Share collages picture by picture with other pairs and have them play <i>The Five Guesses Game</i>. |

Notes



The Five Guesses Game

1. Choose five items that are related to a certain topic. For example, gummy bears, potato chips, chocolate bars, doughnuts, and nachos are all related to the same topic, junk food.
2. Hand each student a copy of *The Five Guesses Game chart*.
3. Reveal the first item and have students record their guess as to the topic.
4. Reveal the next item and have students record their guess as to the topic. Continue with this process until all items have been revealed and the chart has been completed.
5. Students share their prediction with assigned partners.
6. Comment on the varied student answers.



Student Resource

The Five Guesses Game

Name: _____ Date: _____

| Each revealed item: | My prediction of the topic: |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Word which confirmed my prediction: | How did the word help me confirm my guess? |
| | |

Engaging in Reading: Visualizing Text

Grades 7 – 9 (Improving Visual Memory)

I've argued that being able to create images, story worlds, and mental models while one reads is an essential element of reading comprehension, engagement, and reflection. In fact, without visualization, students cannot comprehend, and reading cannot be said to be reading. (Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, 2004)

Visualizing text is a crucial skill for students because if they can get the picture, often they've got the concept. When students don't get pictures in their heads, the teacher may need to think aloud and talk them through the ideas in the text, explaining the pictures that come to mind. Visualization can help students to focus, remember, and apply their learning in new and creative situations. It is an invaluable skill in subjects such as Math, Science and Design & Technology, where understanding spatial relationships can be a key to solving complex problems.

Purpose

- Promote comprehension of the ideas in written texts by forming pictures in the mind from the words on the page.

Payoff

Students will:

- reread and reflect on assigned readings.
- develop skills for independent reading.
- improve focus and attention to detail.

Tips and Resources

- For more information on visualization, see *Reading IS Seeing*, pp. 44-55.
- Establish a student comfort level with the use of visualization by explaining that written language began with pictographs (for example, the petroglyphs at Peterborough).
- By having students visualize objects that they retrieve from their memory, students are prepared to respond to cues in written texts.
- Emphasize that successful readers use the appearances of objects to help them form images as they read.
- Visualization skills are enhanced when students describe the relationship of one object to other objects, or to characters, or to movement.

Further Support

- Learning to visualize takes practice. Model the strategy of visualizing for your students, using a variety of texts from the subject area.
- Put students in pairs from the beginning of the strategy and allow them to work through the texts together.
- Begin with single words. Invite students to show their shoulder partner what a word looks like, for example, "As you sit at your desk, use your face and arms to show what miserable looks like; what delighted looks like."



Engaging in Reading: Visualizing Text

Grades 7 – 9 (Improving Visual Memory)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring interesting objects concealed in paper bags to class for students to handle. Divide students into pairs. Distribute one bagged object to each pair. Ask students to visualize the object based on touch, and then describe the “mental picture” of the object to a partner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide who will be partner A and who will be partner B. Without looking into the bag, by touch only, A describes the object to B. B guesses what the object is. A removes object from bag. A and B compare the description with the object. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move students from imagining recently seen objects to imagining objects housed in their memory. Ask students to visualize an object known to them, not available in the classroom, but available for later inspection. Use structure word prompts (colour, size, shape, texture) to guide students to create a detailed vision of the object. Ask students to complete Student Resource, <i>Word Prompts Chart</i>. Invite students, on a subsequent day, to share what they discovered when they compared their visual memories of the object to its reality. Read aloud imagery intense text (narrative, expository, or informational), which is familiar to students. Stop reading often and ask students to share their mental pictures with their partners. Choose and share aloud the specific words in a narrative text that help to visualize setting, characters, and situations. Choose and share aloud the specific words in an expository text which help to envision maps, models, graphs or processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine a car (a dream-catcher, a plough, a test-tube, a football). Imagine the colour, size, shape, and texture of the chosen object. Complete the Student Resource, <i>Word Prompts Chart</i>. Sketch pictures of the object or scene at home. Take picture to compare to original. Share discoveries with partners. Listen attentively and visualize the words. Share mental pictures with assigned partners. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the first few pages of a novel (or a geography, or a science textbook). Pause regularly to ask students what the words let them see. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visualize as the teacher reads. Create drawings during the pauses to have a record of visualizations in response to the drawing prompts. |

Notes



Name: _____

Date: _____

Word Prompts Chart

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Name of object: | |
| Colour of object: | |
| Size of object: | |
| Shape of object: | |
| Texture of object: | |
| Age of object: | |
| Strange (if any) aspects of object: | |
| Taste (if any) of object: | |

Engaging in Reading: Making Notes

Grades 7 – 9 (Somebody Wanted But So)

Notes help readers to monitor their understanding and help writers and speakers to organize information and clarify their thinking.

Purpose

- Provide strategies for remembering what one reads.
- Provide a tool for summarizing information and ideas, making connections, and seeing patterns and trends in course-related materials.

Payoff

Students will:

- read course-related materials, analyze content and remember important information and concepts.
- learn a strategy for studying for a test, researching, or generating content for a writing task.
- be able to identify important information and details from a text.

Tips and Resources

- For more information on note making, see *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, pp.144-149.
- Proficient readers summarise what they have read. However, students sometimes find summarising difficult because they may be overwhelmed with the information and detail and do not know where to begin. Giving students tools, such as graphic organizers, is one way to help students practise summarising their reading.
- *Somebody Wanted But So (SWBS)* is a framework which helps students create summaries for fiction and non-fiction narrative texts (i.e., biographies, personal narratives, news stories, short stories, novels). It also helps students identify main ideas and details, recognize cause and effect relationships, and make generalizations.
- *Somebody Wanted But So* represents the main components of a narrative text: *Somebody* stands for the character/historical figure; *Wanted* stands for the plot/motivation; *But* stands for the conflict/challenge; *So* stands for the outcome/resolution.
- *SWBS* can also provide a framework for understanding points of view when more than one character/historical figure is analysed.
- *SWBS* can also be used as a scaffold for written summaries.
- For a longer text, such as a novel, use several *SWBS* frameworks in sequence and link each *SWBS* by using *Then* (e.g., one per chapter).
- For more information, see:
 - Teacher Resources, *Somebody Wanted But So – Sample Responses*
 - Student /Teacher Resource, *Somebody Wanted But So – Template*

Further Support

- Provide students with Teacher Resource, *Some Tips for Making Notes*. Customize this resource to meet the needs of the student; too much material can be overwhelming.
- Build the strategy as often as possible into your classroom instruction.



Engaging in Reading: Making Notes

Grades 7 – 9 (Somebody Wanted But So)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that summarising when we read is an important skill. Using summarising what we read is similar to when we summarise events in our lives, for example, telling someone what a movie is about. • Ask students in pairs to brainstorm instances when they use summary in their everyday lives. • Invite student responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm in assigned pairs. Possible responses may include retelling an event from their lives, describing the day at school to a parent, recounting a lesson to a peer who was absent. • Volunteer responses. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin modelling the strategy by retelling a life event. • Write <i>SWBS</i> on the overhead transparency or board in a four-column chart. See Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Somebody Wanted But So – Template</i> and Teacher Resources, <i>Somebody Wanted But So – Sample Response Biography and Sample Response Fiction</i>. • Ask students to identify the <i>Somebody</i> from the event. Write down the name of the person in the first column. • Say that <i>Wanted</i> represents the plot or motivation the <i>Somebody</i> is involved in. Record student responses in the <i>Wanted</i> column. • Say that <i>But</i> represents the conflict or challenge the <i>somebody</i> faces. Record student responses in the <i>But</i> column. • Say that <i>So</i> represents the outcome or resolution. Record student responses in the <i>So</i> column. • Read aloud the summary statement that the <i>SWBS</i> framework creates. • Ask students to complete a <i>SWBS</i> for an event from their lives. • Ask students to share their <i>SWBS</i> with an assigned partner. • Invite student responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and observe teacher modelling. • Volunteer responses to teacher questions. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that <i>SWBS</i> can be used to summarise texts we read. • Read aloud a text. • Ask students to complete an <i>SWBS</i> for the text. • Monitor and provide feedback as they use the framework. • Invite student responses on completed <i>SWBS</i>. • Explain that readers keep on-going summaries as they read, but sometimes readers will be required to write a summary of what they have read. Demonstrate how <i>SWBS</i> can be used to complete a written summary. • Ask students to compare the experience of completing <i>SWBS</i> for a personal event compared to completing <i>SWBS</i> for the text. • Invite student responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to text being read. • Complete <i>SWBS</i> in assigned pairs. • Volunteer responses. • Reflect on how <i>SWBS</i> is useful for summarising narrative texts. |

Notes



***Somebody Wanted But So* – Sample Response Biography**

Students are encouraged to use *Somebody Wanted But So* (SWBS) to help summarise narrative texts. The SWBS framework can also be used to help students identify main ideas and details, recognize cause and effect relationships, make generalizations, and analyse points of view.

| Somebody | Wanted | But | So |
|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | |

Sample Response 1: Biography

| Somebody | Wanted | But | So |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Dimitri Mendeleev | to arrange the 63 known chemical elements | there was little overall understanding of how elements were related to each other | he created the periodic table based on atomic mass |



Somebody Wanted But So – Sample Response Fiction

Students are encouraged to use *Somebody Wanted But So (SWBS)* to help summarise narrative texts. The *SWBS* framework can also be used to help students identify main ideas and details, recognize cause and effect relationships, make generalizations, and analyse points of view.

| Somebody | Wanted | But | So |
|----------|--------|-----|----|
| | | | |

Sample Response 2: Fiction

| Somebody | Wanted | But | So |
|-----------------|--------------------|--|--|
| Juliet | to marry Romeo | Romeo was a Montague, an enemy to her family | she and Romeo had Friar Laurence marry them in secret, without their families' knowledge |
| Juliet's father | Juliet to be happy | he did not know she was in love with Romeo | he arranged for her to marry Paris |



Somebody Wanted But So – Template

| Somebody | Wanted | But | So |
|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | |



Some Tips for Making Notes

| Tips | Why |
|--|--|
| Write down the date of your note making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps you remember context • if you have written the notes on a loose sheet of paper, date helps you organize notes later |
| Give the notes a title, listing the text the notes are about. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps you quickly identify information you may be looking for later |
| Use paper that can be inserted later into a binder, or have a special notebook for note making, or use recipe cards. Use notepad, outlining, or annotation features of your word processing software. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you need to be able to organize your notes for easy access for use in studying, or in research reports • loose-leaf paper, a single notebook, or small cards are convenient in library research |
| Use point form, your own shorthand or symbols, and organizers such as charts, webs, arrows. Use the draw and graphic functions of your software. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • point form and shorthand are faster, easier to read later, help you summarize ideas • organizers help you see links and structures, organize your ideas |
| Use headings and subheading in the text as a guide for organizing your own notes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this part of the organization is already done for you; provides a structure |
| Don't copy text word for word. Choose only the key words, or put the sentences in your own words. If you want to use a direct quote, be sure to use quotation marks. Don't write down words that you don't know unless you intend to figure them out or look them up. Use software's copy and paste function to select key words only. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps you understand what you have read • short form is much easier for studying and reading later • helps avoid plagiarism (using someone else's writing or ideas as your own) |
| Write down any questions you have about the topic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives you ideas for further research • reminds you to ask others, clarify points • gives you practice in analyzing while reading |
| Review your notes when you are done. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that they're legible • can go back to anything you meant to look at again • helps you reflect on and remember what you've read |

Engaging in Reading: Read Aloud

Grades 7 – 9

“As middle and secondary teachers, we often forget the power of reading aloud to students.” (Beers, 2003) Reading aloud benefits all students in all grades and all disciplines. When a teacher reads aloud, the teacher engages the readers in the text as well as allowing students to hear the fluency of the language and demonstrating for students the other strategies proficient readers use to approach a variety of texts.

Purpose

- Develop an understanding of how to read a subject area text.
- Develop the proficient skills of reading through teacher read aloud.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop fluency of language by listening and following a text.
- be engaged in text through read aloud.
- understand how to read a variety of texts.
- understand how reading aloud may be used as a strategy to comprehend a text.

Tips and Resources

- For more information on Read Aloud, see *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, pp. 198-200, 215-216.
- Reading aloud provides the opportunity for students to hear the fluency of language. Reading aloud texts from a variety of genres also provides the opportunity to show the process of how to read different forms and features of text.
- Research suggests that ten to fifteen minutes of daily read aloud is beneficial to all learners, but is most beneficial to dependent readers.
- Remember that the goal of reading aloud is to allow the readers to be engaged in the text. Avoid forcing students to read aloud as a way to control behaviour (e.g., forcing a student to read aloud to keep the student on task).
- Before a read aloud, preview the text and set the context for students to activate and assess prior knowledge.
- During a read aloud, stop periodically to think aloud, visualise, make predictions, or let students respond.
- Before and during a read aloud, set the purpose for reading a selection in the preview of the text, or by periodically asking students to listen and look for key words, phrases or concepts.
- Interactive reading, choral reading and Reader's Theatre are effective ways of including students in reading texts.
- Reading aloud should not replace opportunities for independent silent reading; however, reading aloud the beginning of a selection may be an effective way to engage students in a text they will continue to read independently.
- Consult the students for reading selections that are of interest to them.
- For more information, see:
 - Teacher Resource, *Ten Tips for Reading Aloud*

Reading Reminders, pp. 8-10.

In the Middle, 2nd ed., pp. 144-145, 396-397, 424-425.

Further Support

- Use Reader's Theatre as an opportunity for students to listen to fluent reading.
- Allow struggling readers to read aloud one-on-one with the teacher or in small, guided reading groups.
- Divide a reading selection into paragraphs. Give a paragraph to each pair of students in the class. Have one member read a portion while the other listens.



Engaging in Reading: Read Aloud

Grades 7 – 9

Notes

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and preview a short text or a portion of text, e.g., poetry, chapter beginning, key passage. | |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the context and purpose for reading. Invite students to follow the text as it is read aloud. Read aloud the text. Invite students to follow the text as it is read a second time, but this time ask students to underline or highlight five words, phrases or sentences they think are significant (or five words/phrases/sentences they do not understand, or five words/phrases/sentences they liked). Read aloud the text a second time. Ask students to follow the text as it is read a third time, but this time to join the read aloud at the underlined parts of the text. Listen for the voices of students as they join in the reading. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and silently read along with the text. Underline or highlight five words, phrases or sentences as they listen and silently read along with the text. Read aloud with the teacher the parts of the text they have underlined as they listen and follow along with the text. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to identify when they heard many voices reading aloud together and when they heard few voices. Invite student responses about why these variations occurred. Ask students in assigned pairs to share why they selected the words, phrases or sentences they did. Invite responses from student pairs. Ask students in assigned pairs to speculate why so many students may have chosen in common certain parts of the text. Respond to speculations provided by students. Suggest to students that common choices may indicate main ideas in the text, interesting features in the writing, or difficult passages (that need to be addressed, possibly through think-aloud). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify when they heard more voices and when they heard fewer voices. Provide reasons for why they selected words, phrases or sentences. Responses may include: I liked how the words sounded; it was a key word or phrase; it was the most important line of the text; or it was the most confusing. Speculate why they heard more voices at certain times than others. |

Ten Tips for Reading Aloud

1. Read aloud on a regular basis. Reading aloud ten to fifteen minutes every day is beneficial for all students, especially for students who struggle with some forms of text.
2. Read aloud at least one paragraph per day from subject text, and explain how you make meaning of that paragraph.
3. Read aloud for a variety of purposes (e.g., reading texts for assignments, reading for interest, introducing types of text) in your class.
4. Preview the text. The teacher needs to be familiar with the text so as to guide the students as they read it for the first time.
5. Set the context and state the purpose for students prior to reading.
6. Read at a slower rate than speaking. Pause before and after parts you want to stress for students.
7. Provide opportunities for students to respond to the reading; for example, ask students to pick out words or phrases that they liked, lines they thought were meaningful, or sentences they thought were essential to the selection.
8. Stop at natural breaks to ask questions, think aloud, visualise, make predictions, retell, make connections and show illustrations.
9. Use read aloud to begin a text that students will continue to read independently
10. Use interactive reading, choral reading or Reader's Theatre as variations or extensions of read aloud.

Generating Ideas: Setting the Context

Grades 7 – 9 (Using R.A.F.T.S.)

Good writers anticipate the information and ideas that readers may want or need to know about the subject. Imagining and considering the possible questions that the intended audience may have about the topic help to generate content for the writing, suggest a writing form, and provide a direction for research.

Purpose

- Generate possible topics and subtopics for a writing task.
- Identify important ideas and information to include in the writing.
- Identify the audience and purpose for the writing.

Payoff

Students will:

- clarify the writing task (purpose, audience, form).
- consider the audience and the purpose for the writing.
- generate questions and use them to focus the writing.

Tips and Resources

- Review **Think/Pair/Share** strategy in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12* on pages 152, 153.
- R.A.F.T.S. (role of writer, audience, format, topic, strong verb) is a pre-writing organizer that supports students in understanding their role as a writer, the audience they will address, the varied formats for writing, and the expected content.
- **Purpose** refers to the reason for the writing and the results that writers expect from the writing. Some writing is intended to communicate information to the reader. These purposes include: *to inform, to explain, to review, to outline, and to describe*. Other purposes convince the reader of a particular viewpoint. These include: *to request, to persuade, to assess, to recommend, to propose, to forecast, and to entertain*. The purpose for the writing will affect the selection of content, language, and form.
- **Audience** refers to the intended readers of the writing. Defining the audience is important because it will affect the content (what is said), and the form and features (how it is said). The intended audience may vary in age, background knowledge, experience and interest.
- R.A.F.T.S. can also be used to support students in oral communication as they prepare for small or large group discussion.
- Teachers can guide students to develop a number of different R.A.F.T.S. based on the same text which can illustrate different viewpoints and perspectives of characters.

Cross Curricular Literacy: Strategies for Improving Secondary Students' Reading and Writing Skills, pp. 64-79.

Cross-Curricular Literacy: Strategies for Improving Middle Level Students' Reading and Writing Skills, Grades 6-8, pp. 72-91.

Info Tasks for Successful Learning, pp. 35-36, 90-91.

6+1 Traits of Writing, pp.55-58.

Further Support

- When students are working in pairs, have each partner generate questions for the other's topic.
- To generate ideas, ask questions about the topic from the point of view of the intended audience. Provide support asking rich questions.
- Review the 5W + H questions (who, what, when, where, why, how). The answer to a who question could be a name (look for a capital letter), to a what question an event, or a series of events, to a when question a date or a time, to a where question a place, a town, a city, or a country (look for capital letters), to a why question a reason, and to a how question an explanation.



Generating Ideas: Setting the Context

Grades 7 – 9 (Using R.A.F.T.S.)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display on chart paper or on overhead, one or more sample text messages. See Teacher Resource, <i>Sample Text Messages</i>. • Instruct students to work in pairs to decipher the message(s) displayed. • Invite volunteers to share the deciphered message. • Distribute the Student Resource, <i>Text Message Analysis Sheet</i>. • Using the Teacher Resource, <i>Sample Text Messages</i>, discuss the relationship among the audience, purpose and text. • Instruct students to complete the <i>Text Message Analysis</i> sheet using <i>Think/Pair/Share strategy</i>. • Invite students to share responses from completed <i>Text Message Analysis Sheet</i>. • Display on overhead the completed Student/Teacher resource, <i>R.A.F.T.S. Sample</i>. • Think-aloud as the chart is read. • Display an overhead of the blank Student Resource, <i>R.A.F.T.S. Chart</i>. • With class input, complete the <i>R.A.F.T.S. Chart</i> based on the <i>Text Message Analysis Sheet</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively to decipher the text message. • Listen to questions and ask for clarification if confused. • Formulate thoughts and ideas, writing them down as necessary to prepare for sharing with a partner. • Volunteer responses from completed <i>Text Message Analysis Sheet</i>. • Look and raise questions. Listen for areas of concern or confusion. • Volunteer to share responses to complete the chart. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide class into two groups, A and B. Within each group, students pair up. • Explain that each pair is going to write a letter requesting sponsorship for a Rollerblade-a-thon (or similar activity). Pairs in Group A will write to a peer and pairs in Group B will write to an adult. • Ask each pair to complete a blank Student Resource, <i>R.A.F.T.S. Chart</i>. • Instruct students to use their <i>R.A.F.T.S. Chart</i> as a guide to write their letter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete <i>R.A.F.T.S. Chart</i> based on the recipient of the letter. • Compose letter. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite paired partners in Group A to meet with paired partners in Group B to form a group of four. • Engage students in a whole-class discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the similarities between the two pieces of writing? - What are the differences? - What is the value of using R.A.F.T.S.? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share letters and discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did the audience influence word choice? - How did the audience influence the use of formal or informal language? - Take part in the discussion. |

Notes



Sample Text Messages

GorgES, brainy, knd, swEt, charming, witty, hilarious, frndly...
wel enuf bout ME! Hw r U?

2 4get u S hrd 2 do n 2 4get me S^ 2 u. 4gt me nt, 4gt me nvr.
4gt dis txt, bt nt D sender.

I'm nu N town, cn lve directions 2 yr house?

I'm jst chIN ot.

wd U lk 2 go h& ot @ D mal.

Answers

Gorgeous, brainy, kind, sweet, charming, witty, hilarious, friendly... well enough about me!
How are you?

To forget you is hard to do and to forget me is up to you. Forget me not, forget me never,
forget this text but not the sender.

I'm new in town; can I get directions to your house?

I'm just chilling out.

Would you like to go hang out at the mall?



Text Message Analysis Sheet

| | |
|--|--|
| Who is writing this piece of text? | |
| Who is the audience? | |
| What is the format of this text? | |
| What is the subject of this piece of writing? | |
| What is the purpose of this piece of text? | |
| In what situations would you not write in this way? | |



R.A.F.T.S. Sample

| | | Examples |
|----------|---|--|
| R | <u>Role of the Writer</u> Who are you as a writer? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• yourself• character• scientist• historian• reporter• parent |
| A | <u>Audience</u> To whom are you writing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• peer group• parent• fictional character• government• jury• teacher |
| F | Format What form will the writing take? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• letter• newspaper article• interview• e-mail• lab report• journal |
| T | Topic What is the subject or topic of the writing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• issue• personal interest or concern• question• dilemma |
| S | Strong Verb What is the purpose of the piece of writing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• requesting• persuading• comparing• entertaining• explaining• describing |



Student Resource

R.A.F.T.S. Chart

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| R _{ole} | |
| A _{udience} | |
| F _{ormat} | |
| T _{opic} | |
| S _{trong verb} | |

Developing and Organizing Ideas: Supporting the Main Idea

Grades 7 – 9 (Point, Proof, Comment)

Effective writers use different strategies to sort the ideas and information they have gathered in order to make connections, identify relationships, and determine possible directions and forms for their writing. This strategy gives students the opportunity to reorganize, regroup, sort, categorize, classify and cluster their notes.

Purpose

- Identify relationships and make connections among ideas and information.
- Select ideas and information for possible topics and subtopics.

Payoff

Students will:

- model critical and creative thinking strategies.
- learn a variety of strategies that can be used throughout the writing process.
- reread notes, gathered information and writing that are related to a specific writing task.
- organize ideas and information to focus the writing task.

Tips and Resources

- The Student/Teacher Resource, *Template: Point, Proof, Comment* can be used after students have developed and organized ideas using the Student/Teacher Resource, *Webbing Ideas and Information*. By visually organizing their information into small clusters of point, proof, and comment, students create an outline for paragraph or essay writing.
- This template can be used across the curriculum to support numerous writing forms such as the information paragraph, opinion piece, and essay.
- Confer with the students for topics that are of interest to them.

Further Support

- Cut up a completed web and have the students group the categories. Enable student success by having linked ideas in matching shapes.
- Cut a prepared topic sentence, 1 point, 1 proof, 1 comment template into strips and have the students put them into order.
- Give different paragraphs, cut into strips, to different pairs to assemble.
- Have students assemble a filled in, but cut up Teacher Resource, *Example: Point, Proof, Comment*.



Developing and Organizing Ideas: Supporting the Main Idea

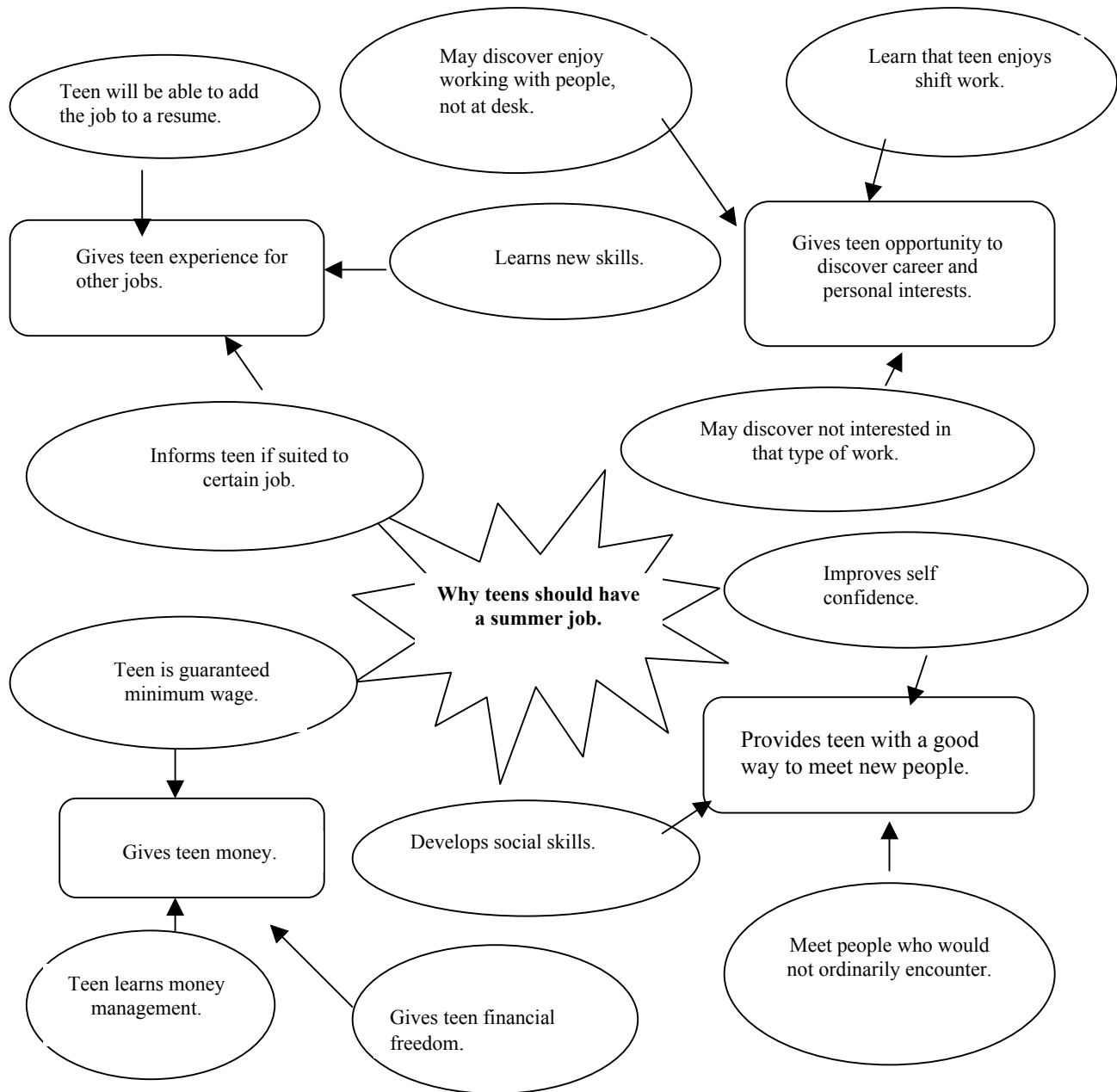
Grades 7 – 9 (Point, Proof, Comment)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model the writing process from information gathering to webbing/mapping using the Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Webbing Ideas and Information</i>. Think aloud and make connections for students as you work through the example. Use the example provided or design one that suits the curricular needs of the students. • With student input, transfer the information from <i>Webbing Ideas and Information</i> to the Student/Teacher Resource <i>Template: Point, Proof, Comment</i>. • Using an overhead, model how to establish the topic sentence, #1 point, #1 proof and #1 comment. • Use a highlighter to demonstrate visually which points have been selected from the webbing activity to transfer to the template. • Discuss how proof and comment are linked to the point. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest which information should be transferred from the web to the template. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the process of transferring points from the web to Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Template: Point, Proof, Comment</i>. • Discuss as a class how pairs/groups filled out the template. • Explain to students that this process is one way to develop a first draft. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a proof to support each point. • Decide on comment for each point and proof. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students complete another writing task following the process of starting with webbing and transferring information to Student/Teacher Resource <i>Template: Point, Proof, Comment</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the process to complete first draft. • Provide a proof to support each point. • Decide on comment for each point and proof. |

Notes



Webbing Ideas and Information



What are the big ideas?
Can you identify any patterns and trends?
How are the ideas and information connected?
What evidence or information is missing?
Is a particular viewpoint suggested?
Does the web suggest a writing outline?



Example: Point, Proof, Comment

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Topic Sentence | A summer job is definitely a good idea for a teen. |
| #1 Point | By working in the summer, a teen will have money to spend freely. |
| #1 Proof | A teen will be guaranteed minimum wage and minimum number of hours per week. |
| #1 Comment | Having her/his own money, will help a teen to be financially independent. |
| #2 Point | A summer job provides teen with experiences that s/he can use to apply for other jobs. |
| #2 Proof | A summer job will provide transferable experiences and references needed to build a resume. |
| #2 Comment | The job experience on a resume will help a teen get other jobs, and impress possible employers. |
| #3 Point | A job provides a teen with a good way to meet new people. |
| #3 Proof | With a summer job, a teen will meet a variety of different people. |
| #3 Comment | A summer job helps a teen to develop and improve social skills. |
| Closing Sentence | A summer job is a good way for teens to earn money, learn valuable life experiences, and have fun meeting new people. |



Template: Point, Proof, Comment

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Topic Sentence | |
| #1 Point | |
| #1 Proof | |
| #1 Comment | |
| #2 Point | |
| #2 Proof | |
| #2 Comment | |
| #3 Point | |
| #3 Proof | |
| #3 Comment | |
| Closing Sentence | |

Revising and Editing: Writing with Precision

Grades 7 – 9 (Improving Clarity)

Students ask other students questions and provide specific feedback about other student's writing. Students gain a sense of taking personal responsibility for their writing.

Purpose

- Discuss the ideas in a piece of writing, in order to refine and revise the ideas.

Payoff

Students will:

- engage in meaningful discussion and deepen understanding about the subject content.
- develop over time into supportive writing partners for peers.
- recognize that the writer owns the writing, but that collaboration helps other students to recognize their audience and to focus their purpose in writing.

Tips and Resources

- One of the stages of the revision process is a critical examination of the writer's diction. Concise diction benefits the writer's work by eliminating confusion and wordiness and by creating force and power.
- See the Teacher Resource, *Writing with Precision: Improving Clarity*, for suggestions to achieve precision in writing.
- This strategy is beneficial in all subject areas.
- This strategy assists students to develop powerful and effective oral communication skills. This strategy could be connected to the Student/Teacher Resource, *Effective Presentation Skills* in **Presentation Modelling** on page 196 in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12*.

Paving the Way in Reading and Writing: Strategies and Activities to Support Struggling Students in Grades 6-12, pp.185-202.

Further Support

- Provide students with examples of over-used words (then, say).
- Let pairs of students produce as many over-used words as possible.
- Use the overhead to show how the recurrent use of an over-used word can be replaced.
- Have students work in pairs highlighting every "said" in a paragraph you have written. From a box of synonyms they replace each "said" but one.
- Place the over-used words and their synonyms on the bulletin board.



Revising and Editing: Writing with Precision

Grades 7 – 9 (Improving Clarity)

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an overhead or a paper copy of a subject based writing sample that requires editing for wordiness, lack of precision, unnecessary repetition. See Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Writing with Precision: Improving Clarity</i> and Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Writing with Precision: Improving Clarity – Sample Text</i>. • Read the sample aloud, asking students to read along as they listen. • Ask students to suggest words or phrases that are unnecessary, empty or create confusion. • Model revision of the writing sample by highlighting words or phrases which are empty or create confusion. Then replace them with precise diction. See Teacher Resource, <i>Writing With Precision: Improving Clarity</i>. • In pairs, direct students to read a second sample and to highlight words or phrases that are wordy, lack precision or are repetitive. • Instruct students to replace highlighted words with precise diction. • Share students' observations with whole class. • Provide an overhead of the second subject-based sample revised with precise diction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look and listen for wordiness, lack of precision or unnecessary repetition in the writing sample. • Offer suggestions of lack of precision or unnecessary repetition. • Suggest powerful and effective diction. • Offer suggestions to improve the clarity of sample. • Suggest powerful and effective diction. • Offer suggestions to improve clarity of sample. • Suggest the purpose and effects of powerful and effective diction. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sections of the Teacher Resource, <i>Writing with Precision</i>, that are appropriate to the lesson. • Put students in conferencing groups of three or four to read each other's writing. • Ask students to read each other's writing closely for precise diction using the assigned section from the Teacher Resource, <i>Writing with Precision</i>, as a guide. • Provide approximately 20 to 30 minutes for this activity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange writing drafts with another group member. Read draft for use of precise diction and make suggestions for revision to the author. • Repeat process with another group member. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a whole class discussion about the use of precise diction. How difficult did students find it to critique diction? How useful is the process in helping to improve clarity and empower their writing? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively. • Volunteer responses. |

Notes



Writing with Precision: Improving Clarity

The list is not meant to be used during one lesson, or even during subsequent lessons, but as the occasion arises.

| Don't over use | Instead try |
|----------------|--|
| said | answered, called, cried, demanded, stated, whispered, remarked, questioned, yelled, screamed, suggested, asked, responded, replied, shouted, exclaimed |
| then | first, secondly, finally |
| big | towering, huge, large, great, gigantic, mammoth, enormous, bulky, tremendous, massive, giant, colossal, immense |
| little | teeny, diminutive, compact, microscopic, petite, wee, small, tiny, minuscule, miniature, slight, minute, dainty |
| tired | exhausted, fatigued |
| hungry | ravenous, famished, starved |
| sad | dejected, downcast, depressed, anxious, gloomy, miserable, sorrowful, unhappy, forlorn, melancholy, crestfallen, mournful, woeful |
| eat | devour, gulp, slurp, gorge |
| ran | hurried, raced, scurried, dashed, galloped, trotted, bolted, darted, sped, jogged, sprinted, rushed |
| cut | rip, tear |
| cry | weep, sniffle, moan |
| talk | chat, gossip, whisper, mumble, chatter, murmur |
| good | great, pleasant, marvellous, delightful, superior, wonderful, splendid, superb, grand, terrific, amazing |
| drink | sip, gulp, guzzle |
| friend | chum, pal, colleague, classmate, confidant |
| happy | glad, pleased, jovial, joyful, thrilled, cheerful, merry, contented, delighted, jolly, elated |
| saw | glimpsed, noticed, observed, sighted, spotted, stared at, glanced at, eyed, gazed at, spied, examined, watched |
| laughed | snickered, giggled, roared, chuckled, chortled, crowed, guffawed, cackled, howled, tittered, hee-hawed, bellowed |
| walked | staggered, travelled, trudged, strutted, marched, hiked, shuffled, sauntered, lumbered, paraded, ambled, strolled |
| like | love, admire, appreciate, fancy, adore, idolize, prefer, cherish, care for, favour, enjoy, treasure |
| nice | kind, benevolent, thoughtful, gracious, considerate, decent, congenial, agreeable, courteous, warm, cordial, humane |
| pretty | beautiful, lovely, glamorous, attractive, elegant, cute, exquisite, gorgeous, stunning, handsome, striking, fair |
| funny | farcical, jocular, amusing, humorous, witty, comical, hysterical, sidesplitting, hilarious, laughable, silly, nonsensical |
| smart | witty, bright, quick-witted, knowledgeable, intelligent, clever, ingenious, sharp, brainy, brilliant, gifted, wise |



Writing with Precision: Improving Clarity – Sample Text

Ontario is a good place to visit. It is a big province with many tourist attractions. You can see big waterfalls at Niagara Falls. Or you can walk through Toronto and look at large skyscrapers. If you like to have fun, you can take all the great rides at Canada’s Wonderland or go to a live concert at Ontario Place. Ontario even has a good Science Centre. Whatever you like to do, it’s available in Ontario!

Ontario is a terrific place to visit. It is a massive province with hundreds of tourist attractions. You can watch gigantic waterfalls at Niagara Falls. Or you can stroll through Toronto and gaze at towering large skyscrapers. If you prefer to have excitement, you can experience all the thrilling rides at Canada’s Wonderland or groove to a live concert at Ontario Place. Ontario even has a superior Science Centre. Whatever you love to do, it’s offered in Ontario!

Empty or Repetitive Word:

good
big
many
see
big
walk
look at
large
like
fun
take
great
go to
good
like

Replaced by:

terrific
massive
hundreds of
watch
gigantic
stroll
gaze at
towering
prefer
excitement
experience
thrilling
groove to
superior
love

Revising and Editing: Approaches to Spelling

Grades 7 – 9 (Spelling Reminders)

Students can build independence as writers when they develop strategies for proofreading their own work. Reading backwards one word at a time is a classic journalist's strategy for being able to see individual words and identify syntax and punctuation errors. Finally, reading from front to back slowly will help students read for meaning.

Purpose

- When writers spell words correctly, they are considerate of their readers. They provide a commonly recognized format that can be understood easily.
- Empower students with strategies for supporting their spelling in written work for any subject area.

Payoff

Students will:

- learn to look at their own writing with an objective and critical eye.
- understand some general principles of spelling words correctly.
- develop strategies for learning to spell words correctly.

Tips and Resources

- Most children begin writing with experimental phonetic spelling, making their best attempt to represent the sounds they hear with the letters and letter combinations they know. All students can become more accurate spellers when they are given support with the concepts of word meaning, word construction, and the writing process.
- Spelling is a problem-solving activity, not a test of memory. Teachers can best support students with spelling by empowering students with understanding of word construction, word meaning, and specific spelling strategies, and by giving a consistent message that spelling words correctly results in clear communication.
- An effective initial support of correct spelling is to alert students to key subject terminology, and to build a topic or unit word wall. See **Creating a Word Wall** on page 30 in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12*.
- Speech-feedback technology (Co-Writer©) can assist the exceptional student: a word-prediction program uses the first few letters a student types and the context around the letters to suggest a correctly spelt word.
- For more information on assisting students with spelling, see:
 - Teacher Resource, *Top Ten Strategies for Encouraging Correct Spelling in Your Classroom*
 - Student Resource, *Spelling Strategies Inventory*
 - Teacher/Student Resource, *Sample Roots and Prefixes for Geography, Science, and Mathematics*

Adams, Costello, and Naylor. *Reading and Writing for Success Senior*. Toronto, ON: Harcourt Canada, 2002. pp. 313-315.

Barwick, John and Jenny Barwick, *The Spelling Skills Handbook for the Word-Wise*, Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1999.

Phenix, Jo and Doreen Scott-Dunne. *Spelling Instruction that Makes Sense*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1991.

Phenix, Jo. *The Spelling Teacher's Book of Lists*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1996.

McQuirter Scott, Ruth and Sharon Siamon. *Spelling: Connecting the Pieces*. Toronto, ON: Thomson Nelson, 2004.

Further Support

- Create spelling "buddies" in the classroom, pairing more proficient spellers with spellers who need support.
- Form a core group of spelling "experts." Other students may take their written work to these experts strictly to have the spelling reviewed.
- Do word deconstruction at least once per week, using two or three subject-specific words and showing how they break down into prefixes and roots, or chunking and highlighting them to make their spelling more understandable.
- Reinforce spelling strategies such as "Look, Cover, Think, Write, Check" by referring to them and giving students opportunities to use them at least once per week.



Revising and Editing: Approaches to Spelling

Grades 7 – 9 (Spelling Reminders)

Notes

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of revising a written assignment, write the word “spelling” on the blackboard. Explain the difference between standard spelling and invented spelling and provide examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standard spelling is an agreed upon way of arranging chosen letters to represent the sounds in words, for example: school. -Invented spelling is an individual, personal way of choosing letters to represent the sounds in words, for example: skool and L8R, ICU in text messaging. Distribute the sample letter Student Resource, <i>Queen’s Bee Supply Company</i> and ask students to read it and then in pairs to highlight any areas where spelling may be a concern. Engage the whole class in discussion of what they found. Based on their responses to the letter, ask students why standard spelling is important. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring a completed first draft of a writing assignment to class. Record the definitions of standard and invented spelling. Provide additional examples of standard and invented spelling. Read the letter quietly. Work with a partner to highlight words where spelling may be a concern. Contribute examples from the letter to the class discussion. Provide observations and personal experiences on the importance of standard spelling. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that spelling is a problem-solving activity where thinking rather than memorization is important. It helps to have strategies and word knowledge to be able to spell. Distribute a portion appropriate to the needs of the students of the Student Resource, <i>Spelling Strategies Inventory</i> and ask students to complete it individually. Discuss the items in the inventory, asking for student input regarding strategies, memory cues, etc. Distribute the Student Resource, <i>Seven Spelling Rules</i> and review them with students. Ask them which rules are familiar, and which ones they use. Remind students that there are always exceptions to the rules. For example, when you add a suffix to a word the rule says change ‘y’ to ‘i’ but never write ‘ii’ (except in a word like skiing). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the <i>Spelling Strategies Inventory</i> individually and quietly with no discussion. Share personal spelling strategies and memory cues. Contribute to class discussion of the Student Resource, <i>Seven Spelling Rules</i>. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to work in pairs to read each other’s writing assignment and to highlight or underline words that don’t look right. Suggest they check the rules or share strategies for spelling. Support students with subsequent lessons around word deconstruction using Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Sample Roots and Prefixes for Geography, Science, Mathematics, and History</i> and other suggestions from Teacher Resource, <i>Top Ten Strategies for Encouraging Standard Spelling in Your Classroom</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a partner’s writing assignment and highlight words that don’t look right. Check the spelling rules to see if any of them are helpful, or share strategies for making corrections. |



Read the business letter below and highlight or underline any words that do not look right, or that you know are spelled incorrectly.

Queen's Bee Supply Company

The company that never says, "Buzz off."

433 Coneberry Drive, Hampton, Ontario B4U 2L8, (519) 321-7654

April 1, 2004

Dear Bee Freinds,

Spring is finely here and with the arrival of bee-friendly weather, we are exsited to tell you about the wide range of products available to support your hive industry. From frames to smokers and extractors, we have a complete line of equipment to assist your bee keeping hobby or bisness. Please visit our online catalogue at www.queensbee.com to review the full range of choices and prices. We axsept major credit cards and guarantee quik delivery of our products.

An additional servis we offer this year is the remanufacturing of your beeswax. We will turn it into beautiful candles, soap, or furnacher polish, and for a small processing and packaging fee, return it to you for resale at your honey stand.

Don't "bee" a stranger to us. We welcome your questions and comments any time, and we are always pleased to have your bisness.

Cordially,

Bert

Bert Bumble
The King at Queen's



Spelling Strategies Inventory

When I am writing, I recognize that standard spelling helps the reader to understand me better, so...

| | Strategy | Often | Sometimes | Rarely |
|----|---|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | I reread to check for words that don't look or sound right. | | | |
| 2 | I use the sounds of words to predict the letters I use to spell them. | | | |
| 3 | I break large words into smaller units to spell, e.g. Wed-nes-day. | | | |
| 4 | I think about the meaning of the word and associate it with other words that are similar in meaning, e.g., circle, circular, circus. | | | |
| 5 | I have memory cues for certain words to help me remember the spelling, e.g., "A friend is your friend to the end ," or Fe BR uary. | | | |
| 6 | I associate certain words by their letter pattern, e.g., eight, freight, weight. | | | |
| 7 | I check the textbook, directories, catalogues, or other resources to get correct spelling of terms and names. | | | |
| 8 | I know some spelling rules that help me spell certain words correctly. | | | |
| 9 | I use the computer spell check and dictionaries to correct errors. | | | |
| 10 | I ask the teacher, or a classroom "expert" when I have difficulty spelling a word. | | | |



Spelling Reminders

| | Rule | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Use <i>i</i> before <i>e</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ except after <i>c</i> ▪ or when a word sounds like <i>a</i> as in <i>neighbour</i> or <i>weigh</i> | belief, relieve, field, piece ceiling, deceive, receipt, caffeine reign, sleigh, vein, weight |
| 2 | <i>i</i> , <i>y</i> , and <i>e</i> soften <i>c</i> and <i>g</i> at the beginning or in the middle of words | Celsius, civilian, cylinder, exciting gender, Regina, geometric |
| 3 | When you add a suffix to a word: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ change <i>y</i> to <i>i</i> ▪ but never write <i>ii</i> | happy → happiness beauty → beautiful cry → crying EXCEPTION: ski → skiing |
| 4 | If the final <i>e</i> is not pronounced, drop it when you add a suffix that begins with a vowel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep the final <i>e</i> when you add an ending that begins with a consonant. | wave → waving admire → admiration note → noted (<i>ed</i> is the added ending here, so the <i>e</i> is dropped from “note”) EXCEPTION: canoe → canoeing awe → awesome safe → safety use → useful |
| 5 | When you add a suffix such as – <i>ed</i> or – <i>ing</i> to a word that ends in a consonant, double the consonant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ if it is a one syllable word with a short vowel sound, or ▪ if the final syllable is stressed. ▪ if the first syllable is stressed, do not double the final consonant | top → topping, hop → hopped prefer → preferred travel → traveled, focus → focused |
| 6 | To make nouns plural, you generally add – <i>s</i> or – <i>es</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a word ends in <i>y</i>, change the <i>y</i> to <i>i</i> and add <i>es</i>. ▪ If there is a vowel before the <i>y</i>, simply add <i>s</i>. ▪ If the word ends in <i>f</i> or <i>fe</i>, change, the <i>f</i> to <i>v</i> and add <i>es</i>. | school → schools, fox → foxes country → countries donkeys, attorneys calf → calves, knife → knives |
| 7 | Learn to spell irregular plural forms through experience, especially from observing them as you read. | goose → geese, mouse → mice woman → women, man → men child → children, ox → oxen |

Reference: Adams, Costello, et al. *Reading and Writing for Success Senior*, Toronto, ON: Harcourt Canada, 2001.



Top Ten Strategies for Encouraging Standard Spelling in Your Classroom

1. Preview and highlight the terminology or specialized vocabulary that is typical for your subject area using a board note.
2. Engage students in creating a topic or unit Word Wall to support understanding and correct spelling of content area words. (See *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Extending Vocabulary [Creating a Word Wall]*.)
3. Teach the meaning of common root words and prefixes in your subject area. Reinforce the occurrence of these roots and prefixes in other words as they occur in the curriculum.
4. Model your thought process for breaking words down into spell-able chunks with content vocabulary. For example, en-vi-ron-ment, es-carp-ment, chron-o-log-y.
5. Encourage the learning of new words with the “Look, Cover, Think, Write, Check” approach.
 - **Look** at the word and get a picture of it in your mind.
 - **Cover** the word so that you cannot see it.
 - **Think** about the word and how the letters look. Try to get a picture of the word in your head.
 - **Write** the word as you see it in your head.
 - **Check** your spelling by uncovering the original word and comparing it with what you have just written.
6. Where possible and appropriate, provide mnemonic cues to assist students in correct spelling of terminology. For example, in *parallel*, the middle l’s are parallel; there are three n’s in *environment*; scientists labor in their *laboratory*.
7. Provide opportunities for peer input and peer editing of writing assignments in your subject area. Students can help each other to clarify thoughts or expressions, and to identify words that may not look right.
8. Encourage students to check proper names and content terminology with the textbook or other resources to get the spelling (and capitalization) correct.
9. Consistently emphasize the importance of spelling by including it when marking the Communication or Application category of any rubric. Immediately prior to the submission of assignments, give students five to ten minutes to read over their written work and make final corrections to spelling.
10. Allow students to revisit assignments and make corrections to errors identified during the teacher marking process.



Sample Roots and Prefixes for Geography, Science, Mathematics, and History

| Subject | Prefix and Root | Meaning |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| Geography | geography | “geo” means earth – from the Greek language “graph” means writing <i>“Geography” means “writing about the earth.”</i> |
| | transportation | “trans” means across – from Latin “porto, portare” is the Latin verb meaning to carry <i>“Transportation” means to carry across.</i> |
| | hemisphere | “hemi” means half – from Latin “sphere” is a three-dimensional round or circular shape <i>“Hemisphere” means half of a round shape.</i> <i>In geographic terms, it is used to mean half the Earth, as in the northern or southern hemisphere.</i> |
| Science | biosphere | “bio” means life – from the Greek language “sphere” means half of a round shape <i>“Biosphere” means the part of planet Earth that supports life and the living organisms within it.</i> |
| | ecosystem | “eco” means house – from the Greek language “system” is an interconnected arrangement of parts – things that work together An ecosystem is an interconnected system of living things on the earth. |
| | suspension | “sus” means to support “pend” means to hang <i>A “suspension” is a mixture of a solid that hangs in a liquid.</i> |
| Mathematics | bisect | “bi” means two “sect” means cut <i>“Bisect” means to divide or cut in half.</i> |
| | geometry | “geo” means Earth “metry” comes from the Greek word metria – to measure <i>“Geometry” is the measure of the Earth.</i> |
| | quadrilateral | “quad” means four “lateral” means side <i>A “quadrilateral” is a four-sided figure.</i> |
| History | chronological | “chronos” means time “logical” means relating to the knowledge or study <i>“Chronological” means the science of estimating time and sequence.</i> |
| | archaeology | “archae” means ancient things “ology” means the study of or knowledge of <i>“Archaeology” means the study of old things.</i> |

Pair Work/Small-group Discussions

Grades 7 – 9 Mix and Mingle

In this fun and interactive strategy, students consider different pieces of connecting text to determine predictions, key ideas, and connections.

Purpose

- Gives students a chance to think about parts of a text before they actually read it.
- Allows students to make predictions and inferences.
- Provides an opportunity for students to see cause and effect relationships and to draw on their prior knowledge and experiences.
- Encourages active participation.

Payoff

Students will:

- share ideas.
- develop speaking and listening skills.
- personally connect with a selected piece of text.

Tips and Resources

- Mix and Mingle can be used as an enjoyable, interactive way to introduce a short story, novel, unit, or theme of study.
- Use Mix and Mingle as a pre-reading activity to enhance students' knowledge of a piece of text and help them become involved in determining meaning before reading.
- Mix and Mingle is a strategy that can be used in almost all subject areas for just about any topic. For example: in History, use it in a class studying the War of 1812 and have students group their cards by category (e.g., causes of the war, effects of the war, contributions of Aboriginal peoples, problems each side faced, etc.); in Science, students might group their cards according to classification (e.g., plant/animal classifications) or sequence of events (e.g., a volcanic eruption).
- To facilitate lively discussion, choose some text examples that might be interpreted in a variety of ways.
- Choose half as many words, sentences, or chunks of text as you have students, so that more than one student will have the same snippet of text.
- To help students visualize the process, use Student/Teacher Resource, *Mix and Mingle Procedure as an overhead*.
- Time the activity to keep students focused on the task.
- To encourage students to reflect on the process, use Student Resource, *Mix and Mingle Before and After Reading T-chart*.

When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do, pp. 94-101.

Further Support

- ESL and/or struggling students may benefit from pairing with a partner to Think/Pair/Share before engaging in this activity.
- To facilitate positive discussion, see Student/Teacher Resource, **Speaking Out** in Discussion Etiquette on page 179 in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12*.



Pair Work/Small-group Discussions

Grades 7 – 9 Mix and Mingle

Notes

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In advance, choose the piece of text for discussion. • Prepare index cards for each student in your class with selected words, phrases or sentences from the text. | |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give each student an index card and instruct him/her to start off by studying the card independently for clues about possible meaning. • Use Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Mix and Mingle Procedure</i> overhead to explain the Mix and Mingle process. • After 30 seconds, inform students that it is “Mix and Mingle” time. • Ask students to get up and move around the classroom from student to student. • Instruct students to share their card with as many classmates as possible, listen politely as other students read their cards, predict how these cards might be connected, and infer what the cards, collectively, might be about. • Monitor Mix and Mingle conversations to ensure that students are on-task; after about 10-12 minutes of the activity, direct students back to their seats for reflection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read words, phrases or sentences on index card independently. • Read <i>Mix and Mingle Procedure</i> Student/Teacher Resource overhead silently as the teacher reads it aloud. • When instructed, move around the classroom from student to student. • Use active listening and speaking skills to share the information on the index cards. • Participate fully in the predicting and connecting discussion. • Adhere to the time limits set by the teacher. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Student Resource, <i>Mix and Mingle, Before and After Reading T-chart</i>. • Ask students to use the before reading section of their T-chart to record their predictions about what they think the piece of text is about. • Read the selection aloud and encourage students to listen especially for “their” piece of text. • Ask students to comment on which words and phrases kept them focused on the key ideas of the text. • Let students record on the after-reading sections of their T-charts how their predictions or connections differed from the actual message of the text as a whole. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the prediction statement (<i>I think this text is about...I think this because</i>) in the before reading section of their T-chart. • Read the selection again independently and take turns sharing orally how their predictions may have differed from the actual text. • Discuss which specific words and phrases from the text enabled them to make more meaningful predictions and/or connections. • Complete the conclusion statement (<i>I know this text is about...I know this because</i>) in the after reading section of their T-chart. |



Mix and Mingle Procedure

1. **Take inventory!** What does your piece of text say?
2. **Ask questions.** What might your piece of text mean?
3. **Make connections.** When your teacher gives the “Mix and Mingle” signal, move around the classroom and share your card with other students. Your goal is to share your card with at least 8-10 classmates.
4. **Make predictions.** How might your piece of text relate to someone else’s? Does your piece of text connect to an idea already studied in class? What might **all** of the cards be about?
5. **Discuss the possibilities!** Share your predictions and connections with your classmates.
6. **Record the possibilities.** When pair/group-sharing time is over, write a brief statement to explain your predictions about the meaning of the text.



Student Resource

Mix and Mingle Before and After Reading T-chart

Record your predictions/connections about the first small piece of text you were given. After reading the text as a whole, expand on your original thoughts. How have your ideas changed?

| BEFORE | AFTER |
|---|--|
| I think this piece of text is about... | I know this piece of text is about... |
| I think this because: | I know this because: |

Small-group Discussions

Grades 7 – 9 Save the Last Word for Me

Dependent readers are often reluctant to offer their opinions because they anticipate being wrong. Save the Last Word for Me (Short, Harste, and Burke, 1996) offers even the most reluctant of speakers a forum in which their comments are heard. (Kylene Beers, 2003)

In this strategy, students individually consider the important idea(s) in a piece of text. Students then come together in small groups to share their ideas and discover common elements.

Purpose

- Gives students a chance to think about and discuss information and ideas in a text.
- Allows students to make personal connections to the information presented in a text.
- Encourages active participation by all group members.

Payoff

Students will:

- engage in meaningful discussion and deepen their understanding of the content of the text.
- share ideas.
- develop speaking and listening skills.

Tips and Resources

- This strategy can be used as an after-reading activity in all subject areas for almost any topic.
- It is a good idea to repeat this activity throughout the year. This will allow all students the opportunity to improve their active listening and positive speaking skills.
- To facilitate the process, use Student/Teacher Resource, *Save the Last Word for Me as an overhead*.

When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do, pp. 172-173.

Further Support

- Model with a talk aloud what attracts your attention in a song.
- Invite students to choose words or phrases from a song that appeals to them.
- Have students choose words, images, sounds from video clips that appeal to them.
- Some students may benefit from sharing with a partner or the teacher to articulate their ideas before moving on to share with the whole group.
- To facilitate positive discussion, see Student/Teacher Resource, *Speaking Out in Discussion Etiquette* on page 179 in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12*.



Small-group Discussions

Grades 7 – 9 Save the Last Word for Me

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with blank index cards. • Assign a reading selection. • Show Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Save the Last Word for Me!</i> on the overhead projector. • Direct students to read the selection and then choose a passage that they like (one that "speaks" to them) or one that they think is particularly important. • Instruct students to write their selected passage on one side of the index card. On the reverse side of the index card, students should explain why their selected piece of text is important or interesting to them. • Put students into small groups of 4-6 students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the selected piece of text. • Determine the passage that is most important to them and record the passage and their reasons for choosing it on their index cards. • Prepare to share and explain their selected passages with the group. • Move into small groups as directed by the teacher. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct students to select one student in each group to share their passage first. • Explain that the first student will read the selected passage (without including any explanation) and then each student, in turn, will respond to the information shared. When the discussion eventually moves back around to the student who first shared their passage, the student then flips over their index card and is able to have the last word as they explain why it was selected. The sharing process is repeated until everyone in the group has had the last word. • Monitor the activity by circulating regularly among the groups. • Comment constructively on the group process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide which group member will share first. • Use active listening skills while each group member is sharing. • Act positively and encourage other group members during the discussion. • Participate fully in the activity. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask each group to share their top three passages. • Have students discuss common passages and ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share common passages and ideas with the whole class. |

Notes



Save the Last Word for Me!

~ **Consider** the text. Does one particular sentence (or group of sentences) “speak” to you? Is there a passage that seems to be particularly interesting or important?

~ **Choose** a sentence or snippet of text that you especially like or that you think is most important.

~ **Write** your selected piece of text on one side of your index card.

~ On the reverse side of your index card, **explain** why you chose your piece of text. Give at least 3 supporting reasons for your selection.

~ **Share** your ideas by taking turns with your group as follows:

- the first student reads the selected passage **without** explaining why they chose it
- each student responds, in turn, to the information shared
- when each student has responded, the author of the card flips their card over and is able to have **the last word** as they explain their selection
- repeat the process until everyone in the group has had **the last word!**

Small-group Discussions: Reading Circles

Grades 7 - 9

Students are divided into groups of a certain size – for example, five members. Each student is assigned a specific role and responsibility to carry out during the small-group discussion.

Purpose

- Encourage active participation by all group members.
- Foster awareness of the various tasks necessary in small-group discussion.
- Make students comfortable in a variety of roles in a discussion group.

Payoff

Students will:

- have specific roles to fulfil, which clearly define their role in the small group.
- receive positive feedback that is built into the process.
- participate actively in their learning.
- all speak in small groups.

Tips and Resources

- To enable active participation, review **Discussion Etiquette** and **Speaking Out** in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12* on pages 178, 179.
- Reading Circles can be used with fiction and non-fiction text as well as with a variety of genres.
- Not all classes will need to use Reading Circles.
- It is important to familiarize students with the expectations of each role prior to students working independently. Introduce one role at a time to the entire class (e.g. Grade 9 Applied) or use *Small-group Discussions: Jigsaw* in *Think Literacy: Cross Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12, pp. 170-171*.
- A series of days may be necessary to introduce roles, depending on the class group.
- To introduce roles, use short text (picture book, article, short story) that does not pose comprehension difficulties for the students.
- Display roles on chart paper for easy reference.
- It is important to consider the composition of small groups, allowing students the opportunity to work with classmates of various abilities, interests, backgrounds, home languages, and other characteristics.
- Group size is flexible and determined by student needs.
- Once students grasp roles, the length of the text will determine the pace and the duration of the activity.
- To maintain student enthusiasm, rotate roles when using a long piece of text.
- Repeating this activity throughout the year allows students the opportunity to experience different roles, different group dynamics and the opportunity to improve skills.
- The roles are intended to scaffold students to a discussion of a text so that they will later not need the support of the roles.
- Time the exercise to keep students focused on the task.
- For role options, see Student/Teacher Resource, *Sample Reading Circle Role Cards*.
- To encourage students to reflect on their learning, use Student Resources, *3-2-1 Reflection*.
- Assign two students to a role: one struggling and one confident reader, to ensure that struggling readers can receive the necessary peer support to complete their role.

Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Press, 1994.

Further Support

- Invite a senior class who is comfortable with the format of reading circles to model the process for dependent readers.
- Although it is important to vary the composition of groups, it is also important to consider the particular needs of struggling readers.



Small-group Discussions: Reading Circles

Grades 7 - 9

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce roles through modeling, see <i>Tips and Resources</i>. • Provide multiple copies of appropriate texts. • Distribute an organizer for students to record reactions to each text. See Student Resource, <i>Response to Text Selections</i>. • Introduce each text through a brief book talk. • Create Reading Circle Groups. See <i>Tips and Resources</i>. • Assign each Reading Circle group a piece of text and each student a role. See Student/Teacher Resource, <i>Sample Reading Circle Role Cards</i>. For example: Summarizer Questioner Reflector Wordsmith Researcher Designer • Circulate to monitor understanding of roles. • Invite sample responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively to understand role expectations. • Record comments using recording sheet. See Student Resource, <i>Response to Text Selections</i>. • Understand the expectation of each of the roles. • Retell the role expectation to a partner to check understanding. • Volunteer to share retell with whole group. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for students during the reading process. • Provide support for students as they work to prepare their role. • Circulate around the room, ensuring that all groups are on task and all students are fulfilling their roles. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the assigned selection of text. • Prepare role information to the best of their ability. • Present prepared material to Reading Circle. • Act positively and encourage other group members. • Participate fully in the discussion. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to individually complete an evaluation of the Reading Circle. See Student Resource, <i>3-2-1 Reflection</i>. • Gather class and ask for volunteers to share role highlights and to discuss successes and challenges within the day's Reading Circle. • Repeat this activity with a new piece of text, allowing students to try a different role. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete <i>3-2-1 Reflection</i>. • Share role highlights and discuss successes and challenges of the day's Reading Circle. |

Notes



Response to Text Selections

| Text Title | Comment |
|------------|---------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |
| 6. | |
| 7. | |
| 8. | |
| 9. | |
| 10. | |



Student/Teacher Resource

Sample Reading Circle Role Cards

Text Title _____
 Author _____
 Pages _____

Summarizer

Create a graphic organizer based on the day's reading. Choose an organizer that is suitable to the type of text read. E.g. Plot Graph, Story/Article Pyramid, Sequence Chart, Venn Diagram.

Using the ideas on your graphic organizer, write a 5-8 sentence summary of the text.

Consider the following when summarizing:

What are the elements (setting, character, plot, conflict, climax) of the story?
 What is the main idea?
 What are the key points?
 What are the main events?

Text Title _____
 Author _____
 Pages _____

Questioner

Prepare questions to help the group discuss the day's reading. Generate questions that invite group members to share their thoughts, feelings, reactions, and concerns about the text. Use the following suggestions to support the development of a variety of questions. Give one of your own responses to each question.

Who ...? What ...? When ...? Where ...? Why...? How...? If ...?

What is the main idea of this passage?

How did you feel about the character _____? I felt ...

What predictions did you make as you read? Which predictions were confirmed?

Did anything in the text surprise you?

If you could meet the author, what would you ask her or him? I would ask...

What lesson or message is the author trying to teach you?



Sample Reading Circle Role Cards

Text Title _____
Author _____
Pages _____

Reflector

Find connections to the day's reading. This means connecting the reading to personal experiences, community happenings, news stories, media or other people and problems.

This reminds me of the time I ...because ...

This reminds me of when I read ... because ...

This reminds me of something I heard about ... because...

These connections helped me to understand the text because ...

Text Title _____
Author _____
Pages _____

Wordsmith

Choose 3-5 words from the day's reading that may be new, different, difficult, interesting or important.

Word _____

Page Number _____

I predicted that this word means...

I could use (new word) _____ instead of the
(synonym) _____

The rest of the passage helped me to figure out the meaning of the word _____
by ...



Student/Teacher Resource

Sample Reading Circle Role Cards

Text Title _____
 Author _____
 Pages _____

Researcher
 Dig up some background information on any topic related to the text. This could include the history or geography of the book's setting, information about a time period portrayed in the book or information about a specific individual. Check in the library using an internet search engine or ask your Teacher-Librarian for support. This is not a formal research report but an opportunity to share related and interesting information.

I used _____ to gather information about ...

When I looked up _____ I found ...

Text Title _____
 Author _____
 Pages _____

Designer
 Create a visual related to the day's reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow-chart or stick-figure scene.

When I read _____ I could picture ...

My image relates to the story because ...

The words that helped me to visualize this image are ...



3-2-1 Reflection Strategy

3-2-1 Reflection Strategy

List **three** interesting items that you learned from the Reading Circle.

List **two** ways in which you supported your group members.

List **one** question that you still have about the text selection.

3-2-1 Reflection Strategy

List **three** interesting items that you learned from the Reading Circle.

List **two** ways in which you supported your group members.

List **one** question that you still have about the text selection.

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