

Activity: Connection Stems

Purpose: To encourage reflection during reading; to provide a structure to make connections while reading.

1. After reading a text aloud, show students a sentence stem and think aloud about the process you use for completing the sentence stem. Use the text and personal experiences to explain your thinking.
2. As you read aloud, encourage the students to use the sentence stems to participate in the discussion.
3. Give students a complete set of connection stems. Have students read another short text with a partner and use the connection stems to facilitate their discussion.

That reminds me of...

I remember when...

I have a connection...

An experience I have had like that...

I felt like that character when...

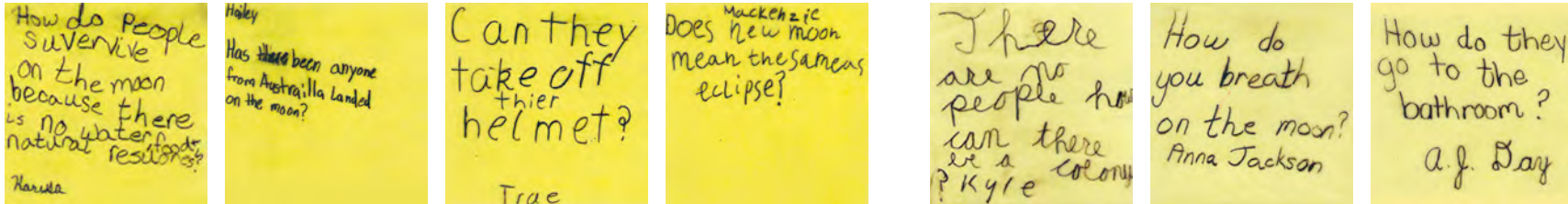
If I were that character, I would...

*Source: McLaughlin, M. & Allen, M.B. (2000). *Guided Comprehension: a teaching model for grades 3-8*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

? Questioning

Activity: Questioning the Text

Purpose: To teach students how to question the text to bring meaning to the text.

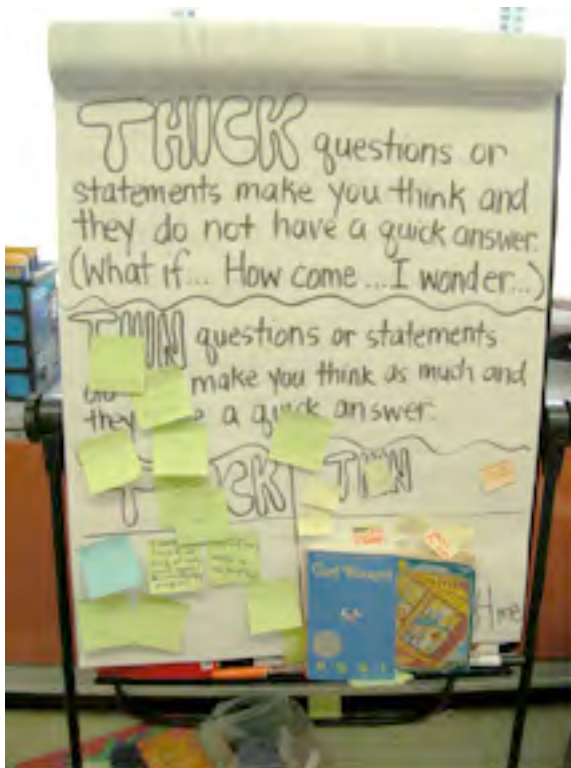


1. Begin by selecting a text that will encourage lots of questions. *Weekly Reader* is a great choice!
2. Gather students in front of you and explain how careful readers ask questions when they read because it helps them understand what they're reading. Explain that when readers ask questions, it keeps them thinking about the ideas presented in the book.
3. Begin to read part of the selected text aloud. Think aloud about the questions that you are wondering. Then write the questions on a sticky note and place it in the text.
4. Continue to read on and record questions on sticky notes. Encourage the students to raise their hands when they think of question. Record their questions on sticky notes, too. When one of your questions is answered, mark the sticky note with an 'A' for 'Answered' and move the sticky note to the place where the answer is found. Describe how the process of questioning helps support your understanding of the text.
5. It is also important to explain that some answers will not be found and that you will have to continue with your inquiries.
6. Allow time for guided practice. Students work with partners reading and noting questions on sticky notes. At this time, the teacher walks around the classroom and confers with the students about their questions and how the questions improve their understanding.

Questioning

Activity: Thick and Thin Questions

Purpose: To teach students how to create questions pertaining to a text and to help students recognize the depth of the questions they ask and are asked.
To use questions to facilitate understanding of a text



1. Teach the students the difference between thick and thin questions. Thick questions deal with the big picture and large concepts. Answers to thick questions are involved, complex and open ended. Thin questions deal with specific content or words. Answers to thin questions are short and close ended.
2. Guide students to create Thick and Thin Questions. Read a portion of text and prompt students with stems, such as "Why..." or "What if..." for thick questions and "How far..." and "When..." for thin questions.
3. Have students create Thick and Thin Questions for the texts that are reading. They can write their questions on large sticky notes for thick questions and small sticky notes for thin questions.
4. Share questions and answers in large or small group discussions.

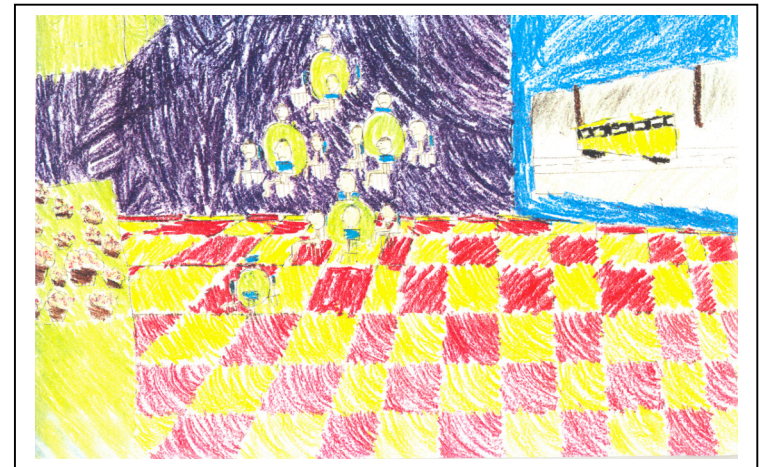
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Visualizing

Activity: Artistic Response - Visual Art

Purpose: To create artistic representations based on a text.

1. Tell students that they are going to be artists in reading class! Artists are responsible for creating an artistic representation of a text.
2. Divide students into small groups that will read a shared text.
3. Students read the text and individually create an artistic representation of the text. Encourage students to use artwork in any medium (drawing, cutting, sculpting, and painting), music, drama (one-act play, puppets) or dance.
4. Students share their artistic representations with the members of their group. Invite the group to connect the artistic representation to their own ideas about the reading. Then the artist can share what his representation means, where it came from, or what it represents to him.
5. Complete this activity several times throughout the year and encourage students to try a variety of approaches to create their artistic response!



This is a great cross-curricular activity. Plan with your art teacher, music teacher, drama teacher, dance / movement teacher, etc.



Visualizing

Activity: Guided Imagery

Purpose: To create mental images; to provide time to discuss visualizations.



1. Teacher reads a descriptive passage to students pausing occasionally to share what he sees in his mind and the emotions he is feeling. Point out to students the rich text that helped create the images and emotions. (Be sure to include text that stimulates all 5 senses).
2. Teacher asks students to close their eyes, breathe deeply and relax as he reads a descriptive passage.
3. Throughout the passage, pause to ask students what they see, hear, taste, smell and feel. Ask the students what words helped them create the mental image and emotions.

*Source: McLaughlin, M. & Allen, M.B. (2000). Guided Comprehension: a teaching model for grades 3-8. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.