

# Teaching reading and viewing

Comprehension strategies and activities for Years 1–9

September 2010





# 1 Be a strategic reader ...

The seven activities that make up this strategy have been adapted from the work of Scott G Paris. These activities are sequential, with each activity building on knowledge and understanding developed in the preceding activities.

Each activity has a poster for classroom use. Some also have ready-to-use activity sheets.

- 1.1 Turn on the meaning: Recognising three kinds of meaning
- 1.2 Find the hidden meaning: Understanding ambiguity and inference
- 1.3 Be a reading detective: Evaluating the reading task
- 1.4 Track down the main idea: Using clues to find the main idea
- 1.5 Build bridges to meaning: Using context and prior knowledge
- 1.6 Weave ideas while reading: Elaborating on text information
- 1.7 Round up your ideas: Summarising main points

## Acknowledgment

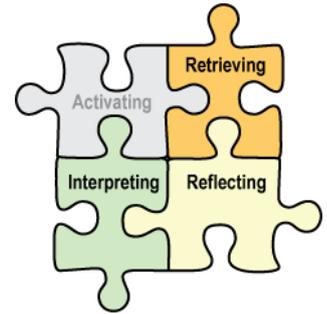
This strategy is based on ideas from: Paris, Scott G 1987, *Reading and Thinking Strategies*, DC Heath, Lexington MA.

# 1.1 Turn on the meaning

Years 1–9

## Recognising three kinds of meaning

Using a light-bulb metaphor, students learn about the mental processes involved in activating ideas and making connections between known and new ideas.



## Learning focus

The strategy makes students aware that three different kinds of meaning can be constructed during reading — literal, inferential and personal.

They develop understanding that a reader's prior knowledge plays a significant role in constructing meaning and that multiple meanings exist around a text.

## Suggested implementation

1. Introduce the metaphor of turning on a light in a person's mind when they have a 'bright idea'. Ask the question, 'How is getting an idea like turning on a light bulb in your mind?'
2. Explain that as they read, students can 'turn on' the meaning by using questions as 'switches' to help them understand the writer's ideas.
3. Ask students if there is only one meaning in a text. Discuss how there can be more than one interpretation, more than one kind of meaning.
4. Introduce the poster for this activity. Explain that there are three different kinds of light bulbs on the poster and that we are going to learn how to turn on the meaning for each one of them.
5. Draw students' attention to the first light bulb and explain that readers sometimes don't understand what they are reading because they don't understand the words. Explain that what the words say is one kind of meaning, and it is called the literal meaning.
6. Draw students' attention to the second light bulb and explain that sometimes sentences mean more than just what the words say. As readers construct meaning they make inferences — these are ideas suggested by the words. When readers link these inferences to other things they know, or other parts of the text, they are constructing inferential meaning.
7. Talk about the third light bulb. Explain that an idea in a text can have special significance for some people because it connects to something personal to them; it might remind them of what happened to them or how they felt in the past. People can make personal meaning when they read any text. Information in texts can mean different things to different people.
8. Ask students to read 'Blinky Bill' on the activity sheet. Work through the guided reading questions and discuss the different levels of comprehension involved in answering the questions.

As you work through the inferential questions, show students that the story did not say these things exactly. Talk about how readers build ideas from what the words say and what they already know.

Through answering the personal meaning questions, develop students' understanding that a reader's prior knowledge plays a significant role in constructing meaning and that multiple meanings exist around a text.

9. To practise and consolidate, ask students to silently read 'Furry fights' on the activity sheet, and then write a question (literal, inferential, personal) under each of the light bulbs (use the attached poster). Students can then exchange questions with a partner, answer the questions, and discuss whether the questions really were literal, inferential or personal as categorised.

## Variations

This strategy may also be used to consolidate learning in the KLAs. As students work together in pairs to construct questions, they are further processing ideas and concepts retrieved from the text. As pairs exchange questions, discuss and justify responses to the questions, the ideas and concepts are reprocessed and further connections are built between new and familiar ideas.

# Activity sheet 1.1 Turn on the meaning

## Blinky Bill

Told & illustrated by Dorothy Wall.

The bush was alive with excitement. Mrs Koala had a brand new baby, and the news spread like wildfire. The kookaburras in the highest gum-trees heard of it, and laughed and chuckled at the idea. In and out of their burrows the rabbits came scuttling, their big brown eyes opening wide with wonder as they heard the news.



Over the grass the message went where Mrs Kangaroo was quietly hopping towards her home. She fairly leapt in the air with joy. 'I must tell Mr Kangaroo!' she cried and bounded away in great hops and leaps. Even Mrs Snake, who was having a nap, awoke, gave a wriggle, and blinked her wicked little eyes.

The whole bushland was twittering with the news, for a baby bear was a great event. Mrs Koala had a baby every two years, and as Mrs Rabbit had very, very many during that time, you can just imagine how surprised everyone was.

In the fork of a gum-tree, far above the ground, Mrs Koala nursed her baby, peeping every now and then at the tiny creature in her pouch. This little baby was the funniest wee creature. He was only about an inch long and covered with soft baby fur, had two big ears, compared to the size of the rest of him, a tiny black nose, and two beady eyes. His mother and father always had a surprised look on their faces, but they looked more surprised than ever now as they gazed at their baby.

He peeped at them and blinked, as much as to say, 'Aren't you glad I'm here?'

Mr Koala puffed out his cheeks with pride, and his wife hugged her baby tighter than ever.

## Literal meaning

Turn on the literal meaning light bulb.

- Which animals heard the news about the baby koala?
- What did Mrs Kangaroo do?
- Where was the baby koala?

## Inferential meaning

Turn on the inferential meaning light bulb.

- What does 'The bush was alive with excitement.' mean?
- Why do you think the baby was called Blinky Bill?
- Why was having a new baby koala in the bush exciting?

## Personal meaning

Turn on the personal meaning light bulb.

- Do you think Mrs Koala will look after her baby? Why?
- What do mother animals do to look after their babies?
- What name would you give to a baby koala? Why?

## Furry fights

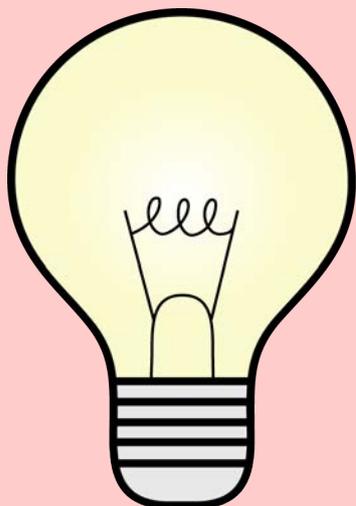
Matt and Brian were good friends, but sometimes they argued. Matt liked soccer. Brian liked rugby. Matt liked to roller skate but Brian didn't. They also liked different pets.

One day Brian shouted over the fence, 'Cats just sleep all day. They aren't much fun. Dogs chase sticks and balls.'

Matt and Brian did not agree. Matt said, 'Cats are prettier and cleaner than dogs. They are soft and cuddly'.

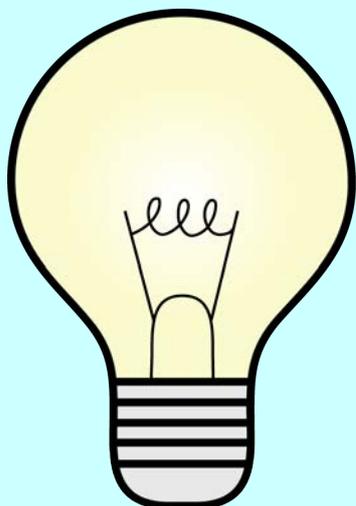
Just then the boys heard loud barking. They saw Blackie chase Muffy up a tree. Their pets were fighting too.

## Poster 1.1 Turn on the meaning



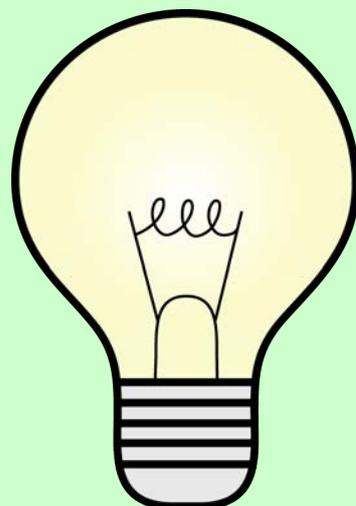
### **Literal**

What do the words say?



### **Inferential**

What does the message mean?



### **Personal**

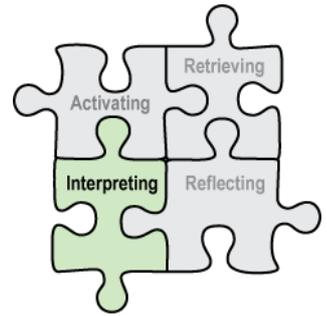
What do I think about it?

# 1.2 Find the hidden meaning

Years 4–9

## Understanding ambiguity and inference

Using ambiguous sentences, jokes and figurative language, students are explicitly taught how to read 'between the lines'. They learn the difference between explicit and implicit meaning in text: that inferences are the ideas that result from thinking about texts, and that inferences add new information that is not actually stated.



## Learning focus

Readers need to make inferences spontaneously and independently as they read. This activity helps students identify and create examples of ambiguous and figurative language that have hidden meaning. It makes inferential meaning concrete for students so that they can search for hidden meanings as they read.

## Suggested implementation

1. Draw students' attention to the poster for this activity.
2. Explain that it shows a child thinking about the double meaning of a statement. Read the words in each speech bubble. Ask 'What is funny about the child's reply?' Explain that readers expect that the word 'checked' refers to an examination by an optometrist. When they realise that the question can also refer to a checkerboard pattern on the eyes, they are amused. This incongruity or unexpected twist is what makes the double meaning of jokes funny.

Draw attention to the difference between literal and inferential meaning so that students realise that language can have double meanings. Explain that readers search the sentence for hidden meanings. Emphasise that understanding only the literal meaning does not allow us to appreciate the joke.

3. Provide examples of figurative language, such as the proverb 'The early bird gets the worm'. Ask students to explain the literal and inferential meanings.

Then ask 'Which is the more important meaning: birds get up early to eat? Or: starting the job on time makes it easier to do?' Point out that the inferential meaning is hidden but it is the important message.

Discuss other examples of figurative language such as 'Don't cry over spilt milk'. Use the following questions to generate discussion:

- How did you know the inferential meaning?
- Is it easy to find the hidden meaning?

Emphasise that to find the meaning, readers must make the effort of constructing the meaning from the sentence.

4. Use examples of puns or riddles to show ambiguity in language, for example:
  - Q: How do you make antifreeze?
  - A: Take away her electric blanket.

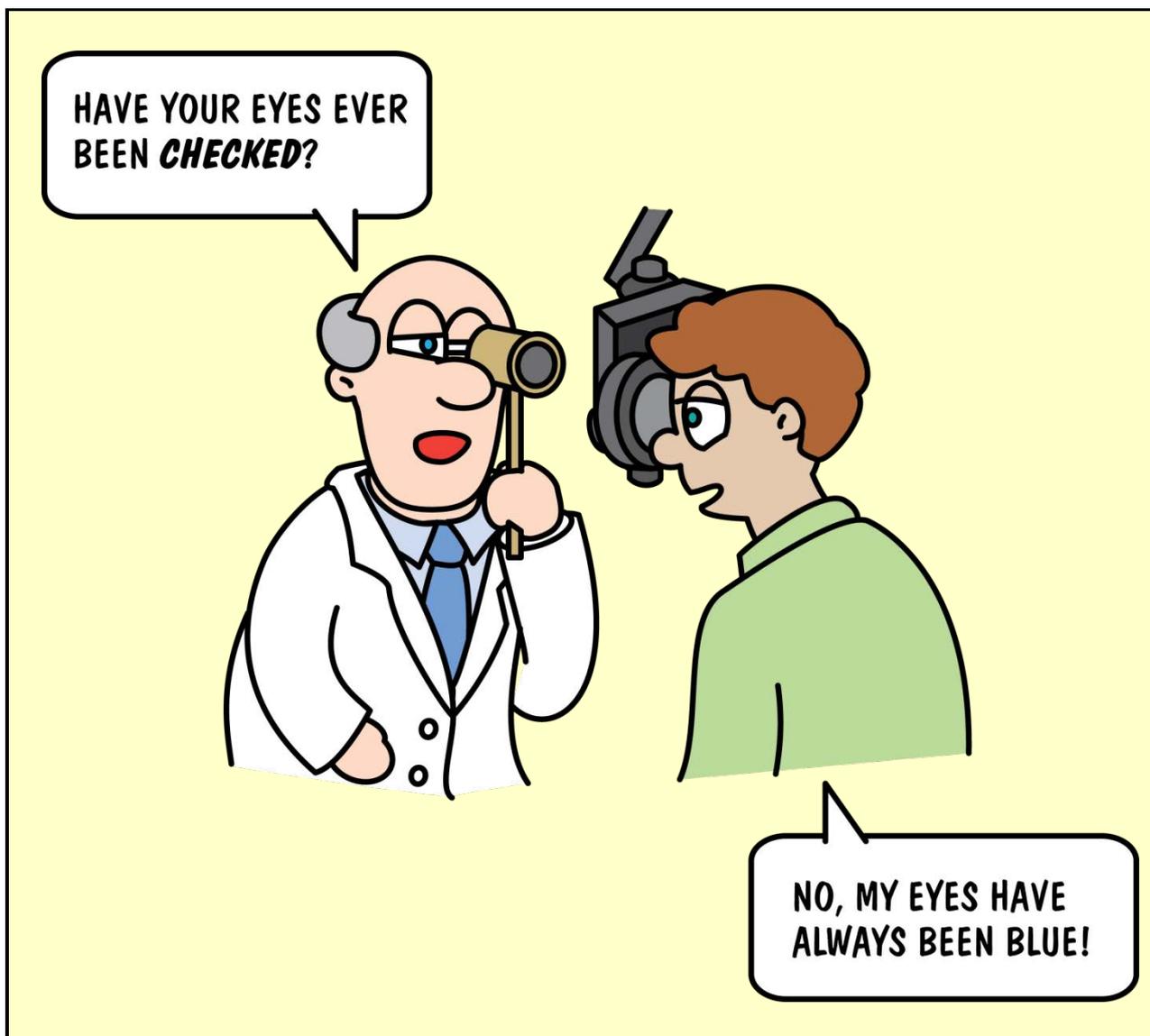
5. Use examples of similes and metaphors to show the difference between literal and inferential meaning. Ask students to describe the literal and inferential meaning for each of the sentences listed below:
  - She was as white as a ghost.
  - The sky is a grey blanket.
  - He ate like a bird.
6. Have students practise identifying the ambiguities and writing or drawing the hidden meanings in the sentences from the following activity sheet.

# Activity sheet 1.2 Find the hidden meaning

Identify the ambiguity. Write or draw the hidden meaning.

Sentences	Hidden meanings
<p>Fred: My horse is very artistic. Sue: How do you know? Fred: Because he can draw a wagon all by himself.</p>	<p>'Draw' refers to pulling a wagon or creating a picture.</p>
<p>Every cloud has a silver lining.</p>	
<p>Save your money for a rainy day.</p>	
<p>Jeff: I see green and yellow spots in my eyes. Julie: Did you see a doctor? Jeff: No, just green and yellow spots.</p>	
<p>She's like a square peg in a round hole.</p>	
<p>The rain came down in buckets.</p>	
<p>Customer: Can I put this wallpaper on myself? Salesperson: Sure, but it'd look better on the wall.</p>	
<p>'I work as a baker', said Dusty Joe, 'because I knead the dough.'</p>	

## Poster 1.2 Find the hidden meaning

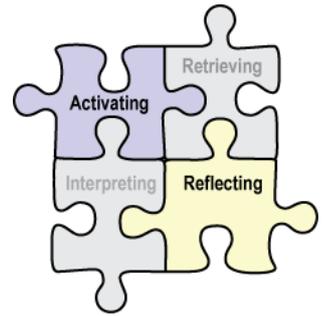


# 1.3 Be a reading detective

Years 1–7

## Evaluating the reading task

Students learn to evaluate reading tasks before they begin to read. This helps them get ready to read deliberately and logically (strategically).



## Learning focus

A lack of foresight about the reading task can create difficulties for students – they may not consider why they are reading the text, they may not allow sufficient time for reading, or they may choose material that is too difficult. These difficulties can reduce their motivation and make them less likely to engage productively with the text. During this activity, students analyse the task and themselves as readers to understand:

- why they are reading
- how difficult the material is
- how long it will take them to read it
- what kind of information is presented
- what they should know when they finish reading.

## Suggested implementation

1. Discuss the poster for this activity. Ask: ‘What do detectives do?’ Add students’ ideas to the list.
2. Invite a student to elaborate on a specific example to show how a detective analyses the type of case and clues to figure out what is going on. Encourage discussion about students’ own reading and viewing of detective stories.
3. Ask: ‘How can you be like a detective when you read?’ Place a tick next to the relevant ideas in the list of ideas about what do detectives do. Explain that this kind of inspection and analysis can occur before, during and after reading.
4. Invite students to become reading detectives. Explain that each reading task will become ‘the case’ to be solved. Explain that students who are reading detectives must develop the habit of finding all the clues in order to become successful readers. Like real detectives, they have to work hard to find all the clues.
5. Use the activity sheet for guided reading and discussion about reading tasks. Write the three guide questions on the board:
  - What is it about?
  - What kind of reading is it?
  - Why am I reading this?
6. Model the process of finding key words (the clues) that describe the purpose, text type and/or topic of the activity sheet.
7. Point out that:
  - Knowing the purpose for reading is important because it tells the reader how much attention is required and how to tell whether they were successful.

- Identifying the text structure helps the reader understand how information is organised and what kind of meaning to search for (literal, inferential, personal).
- Knowing the topic before reading helps the reader think about similar information that may aid comprehension.

8. Ask students to look at the text briefly and search for clues. Ask the questions:

- What is it about? (volcanoes)
- What kind of reading is it? (explanation)
- Why am I reading this? (to find out how volcanoes are formed)

As they answer, ask students to explain the clues they used (draw on textual features).

9. Ask students to read the text silently and complete the activity sheet.

10. Develop metacognitive awareness by asking the following questions:

- What does a reading detective do? (Encourage responses that focus on searching for clues and evaluating evidence about text meaning.)
- When does a detective look for clues? (Encourage responses that describe inspection before, during and after reading.)
- Why is it important to be a detective while reading? (Because you might miss clues or not solve the case if you just read the words for literal meaning.)

## Poster 1.3 Be a reading detective



# Activity sheet 1.3 Be a reading detective

## How volcanoes are formed

Volcanoes are formed where there is a crack or opening in the Earth's crust. A tube-like passage connects a chamber of magma (molten rock) at the centre of the Earth to the Earth's crust.

When pressure builds up in the chamber, the magma, gases and ash are pushed through the top of the tube on the earth's surface (called a vent).

The red hot magma that escapes to flow over the Earth's surface is called lava, which when cooled forms hard rocks. The layers of ash and rocks form the sloping sides (the cone) of the volcano.

While some volcanoes remain as cracks or holes in the Earth's surface, many others throw out enough lava and ash over time so that mountains are formed. The volcano then erupts through the crater (wide rimmed opening) at the top.



**What is it about?**



**What kind of reading is this?**



**Why am I reading this?**

# 1.4 Track down the main idea

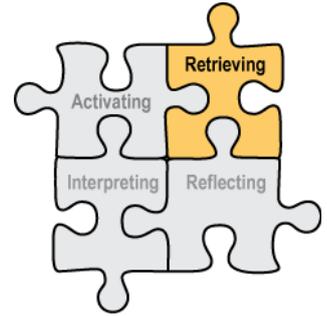
Years 4–9

## Using clues to find the main idea

Students learn to use the clues within a text to find the main idea.

## Learning focus

To understand the main idea, readers need to generate and test hypotheses about the topic as they are reading, sift through information and condense the message. This strategy helps students understand and identify main ideas by recognising content clues and teaching them to use the text organisation of a narrative as an aid to comprehension.



## Suggested implementation

1. Introduce the poster for this activity.
2. Explain that in the text, information about things that happen — Who, What, Where, When, Why and How — are important clues to the main ideas.

Explain that these are like the footprints left by an unknown person. The detective in the poster is searching for clues to identify this person and find out what has happened. Detectives use concrete evidence to solve problems. Finding the main idea is also a problem-solving activity in which the reader actively seeks the clues in the text to find the main idea.

3. Ask students to define 'main idea'. Encourage discussion about the many aspects of a main idea and the difficulties encountered in determining the main idea. Explain that the main idea tells what the whole text is about: it connects the little ideas into a summary. A main idea captures the theme or the most important information in a text.
  - a. Ask students, 'Why is it important to find the main idea/s?' (Answers should include: understand the writer's message; understand a story; tell someone about a story without having to tell them everything; concentrate on important parts; write a summary; remember information.)
  - b. Emphasise that being able to identify the main idea is a good check on one's own comprehension, a good way to study and remember information, and an excellent way to summarise information quickly.
  - c. Ask students, 'Is it easy to find the main idea when you read?' Encourage students to share the confusion and difficulty they sometimes experience in finding the main idea. Tell them it is not always easy to find the main idea; it requires thinking about the text.

# Poster: 1.4 Track down the main idea

**1. Look at:**

**Title**

**Topic**

**Pictures**

**2. Read the text ...**

**How?**

**Who?**

**What?**

**3. Ask yourself:**

**Why?**

**Where?**

**When?**

4. Before reading the story 'Albert's last bite' on activity sheet 1.4a, ask students to look for clues about the story; then ask the following questions:
  - Does the picture tell you about who Albert might be?
  - Does the picture give you a clue to what happens?
  - Is this story fact or fiction?
  - Is it easy or hard reading?
5. Highlight the fact that students knew a lot of information about the story before they even read it. Have them read the story silently or aloud to gather more evidence about the main idea.
6. After reading refer to the poster, and use the words to guide your questioning.
  - Where does the story take place?
  - Who is the main character?
  - What happened?
  - What is the outcome?
  - How did Albert feel?
7. Ask students to summarise the main idea. Explain to them that the summary captures the main idea and includes information about the setting, characters, actions and outcomes. (Example: 'Albert lived in an icy pond until he bit into a fisherman's worm and was caught'.)
8. Have students read the story on activity sheet 1.4b, *Dot and the Kangaroo*, silently. Work through the guided reading questions encouraging students to find words in the text that justify their answers. Then ask students to generate a succinct main idea (setting-character-problem-outcome).

## Activity sheet: 1.4a Track down the main idea

# Albert's Last Bite



Once there was a big fish named Albert. He lived in an icy pond near the edge of a forest. One day, he was swimming around the pond when he spotted a juicy worm. Albert knew it was a delicious worm but he had just eaten his dinner. He swam very close to the worm and bit into it anyway. Suddenly, Albert was pulled through the water and into a boat. He was very sad and wished he had been more careful.

# Activity sheet: 1.4b Track down the main idea

## Dot and the Kangaroo

*Text by Ethel C Pedley, 1899, with original illustrations by Frank Mahony.*

Dot did not know how long she was sobbing in loneliness and fear, with her head on her knees, and with her little hands covering her eyes so as not to see the cruel wild bush in which she was lost. It seemed a long time before she summoned up courage to uncover her weeping eyes, and look once more at the bare, dry earth, and the wilderness of scrub and trees that seemed to close her in as if she were in a prison. When she did look up, she was surprised to see that she was no longer alone. She forgot all her trouble and fear in her astonishment at seeing a big grey Kangaroo squatting quite close to her, in front of her.

What was most surprising was the fact that the Kangaroo evidently understood that Dot was in trouble, and was sorry for her; for down the animal's nice soft grey muzzle two tiny little tears were slowly trickling. When Dot looked up at it with wonder in her round blue eyes, the Kangaroo did not jump away, but remained gazing sympathetically at Dot with a slightly puzzled air. Suddenly the big animal seemed to have an idea, and it lightly hopped off into the scrub, where Dot could just see it bobbing up and down as if it were hunting for something. Presently back came the strange Kangaroo with a spray of berries in her funny black hands. They were pretty berries. Some were green, some were red, some blue, and others white. Dot was quite glad to take them when the Kangaroo offered them to her; and as this friendly animal seemed to wish her to eat them, she did so gladly, because she was beginning to feel hungry.



### Literal

- What is this story about?
- Why was Dot crying?
- Who found her?
- What did the kangaroo give Dot?

### Inferential

- Why did Dot feel that she was in a prison?
- How did she feel about the bush?
- What words tell us that the Kangaroo felt sorry for Dot?
- Why do you think the Kangaroo was puzzled?
- Was the Kangaroo male or female?

### Critical /creative questions

- Do you think this story could be real? Why?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What might Dot's mother and father be doing?

# 1.5 Build bridges to meaning

Years 1–7

## Using context and prior knowledge

The concept of a bridge is used to illustrate connections between background knowledge and new ideas.

## Learning focus

Readers' prior knowledge significantly influences comprehension. If readers are familiar with a topic, they spontaneously relate information in the text to personal experiences and relate new information to familiar ideas. By sharing and organising prior knowledge about a relevant topic before reading, teachers build a shared context for reading the new text; activate relevant prior knowledge to improve readers' ability to predict, sample, and confirm/reject; and teach the use of contextual clues to identify unknown words.



## Suggested implementation

1. Discuss the poster for this activity. Use the metaphor of 'bridges to islands' to brainstorm related ideas such as 'connecting isolated places', 'getting from place to place faster', 'charting new territory'. Ask 'How can reading be like building bridges?'
2. Read the title of the new text to be read. Ask a student to read the first question on the poster: 'What do I know about this topic?' Ask students to explain why it is important to think about what they know before they start to read (e.g. helps them to predict, and to think about related ideas). Then ask another student to read the second question: 'Did I connect new and old ideas?' Highlight the importance of trying to build bridges between ideas as they read.
3. Provide worksheets to the students (see the example below). Read the title of the text and ask, 'What do you already know about this topic?' Ask students to think for a moment and then, without discussion, fill in the first box with some ideas they have about the topic. Discuss responses. Point out that there are different hypotheses that readers can make about the topic and that students will have to read the text to find out which ideas are correct.
4. Read the first paragraph and ask, 'Now what do you think this text is about?' Ask them to think first and then write their answers in the second box. Discuss responses.
5. Read the second paragraph. Ask, 'Did you connect new and old ideas?' Then ask them to write what this text is about.
6. Share responses and discuss why the topic was confusing. Ask whether it would be easier to understand if the order of the paragraphs were rearranged (e.g. if the second paragraph came first).
7. Point out that clues to the topic may be in the title, in prior knowledge and in the sentences they read. Students need to think about what they are reading and build bridges both from what they know to new ideas in the text and from one new idea in the text to another.
8. Discuss the thinking that happens as we read, e.g. confirming/rejecting, predicting, sampling.

## Build bridges to meaning — worksheet

**Topic:**

**After reading the title: What are my ideas about the topic?**

**After reading the first paragraph: What is the text about?**

**After reading the second paragraph: What is the text about?**

## More information

This activity can be consolidated by cloze activities that delete sentences, clauses or words. Students then generate missing information by connecting what they already know with the missing bits of information in the text (see Strategy #11, Oral cloze, page 42).

# Poster: 1.5 Build bridges to meaning

**Text is a bridge connecting the ideas of the reader and the writer.**



**What do I know about this topic?  
Did I connect new and old ideas?**

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**Understanding new concepts  
Learning new things  
Identifying unknown words**

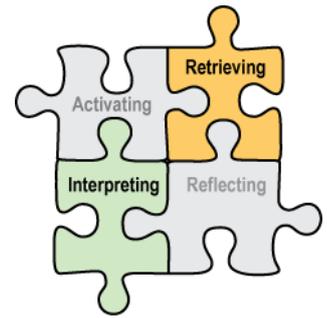
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# 1.6 Weave ideas while reading

Years 1–7

## Elaborating on text information

Students learn the importance of weaving ideas and how to do it. They learn that meaning is constructed and interwoven in readers' minds as new ideas are formed, and that sentences often provide information that leads to particular inferences.



## Learning focus

Sometimes students spend so much effort decoding and remembering sentences that they have little energy left to integrate them. It is important for students to understand that sentences and ideas work together in helping readers draw conclusions, make inferences or find main ideas. This strategy shows students how to make hypotheses about relationships among sentences, and how to weave ideas together to draw appropriate conclusions.

## Suggested implementation

1. Introduce and discuss the poster for this activity.
2. Ask 'How is reading like weaving ideas together?' Explain that there are many ideas in a text, and many ideas in the minds of people reading that text. Explain that to understand what is read, readers must connect the ideas that are read with the ideas in their minds.
3. Read the first two sentences on the poster:

It was Monday morning.  
John decided to ride to school.

4. Ask, 'How do you think John got to school?' List all ideas generated on a chart, both conventional and less conventional (e.g. car and bus, but also balloon or skateboard).
5. Ask, 'Can you tell from the story which of these ideas is more likely than others?' Students should point out that it doesn't say in what way John rode to school (bike? bus?). Encourage students to read on and weave the remaining sentences into ideas.
6. Read the next sentence.

He put his books in the basket.

7. Ask, 'Does that give you a clue?' Point out that some hypotheses are still possible but others may not be. Ask students to name hypotheses that are still possible and give reasons to support their views.
8. Read the next sentence.

His feet went round and round.

9. Ask, 'Do we have another idea we can weave? Now how do you think John got to school?'
10. Read the last sentence. Ask, 'Does the story ever say how John rode to school?'

'What is the most likely way that he rode to school?'

Point out that two sentences (He put his books in the basket. His feet went round and round.) provide good clues about how John got to school.

Explain that when readers weave their ideas about how John could have ridden to school with the ideas in the sentences, they are nearly positive that John rode his bicycle to school.

11. Show how different ideas lead the reader to make different inferences. Ask students to read the first two sentences again and then say the following two sentences.

He waited at the corner. He gave his money to the driver.

12. Then read the last sentence of the story and ask 'Now how do you think that John rode to school?' Help students reach the conclusion that John probably rode to school in a bus, tram or taxi. Point out that different inferences follow from different clues woven into the story even when other parts are not changed.
13. Ask, 'What does this story show?' Encourage responses that illustrate the following points:
  - Not everything is explicitly stated.
  - Sometimes you have to guess what happens.
  - Combining ideas from different sentences helps you make inferences.
  - Thinking about what might happen and then reading to see if you are right is a helpful strategy.
  - Even if the story doesn't say exactly, if you weave ideas, you can guess what probably happened.
14. Ask 'How can we weave ideas while reading?' Foster an understanding that pausing, paraphrasing, predicting and elaborating on the text all help to weave ideas.
15. Encourage students to talk about their thinking (raising metacognitive awareness) by asking 'Why is it important to weave ideas?' Remind students that the ideas are not always stated in sentences and that readers have to weave the ideas together with what they know (their prior knowledge) in order to understand the story or information text.

## Poster: 1.6 Weave ideas while reading

### Weaving ideas while reading



It was Monday morning.

John decided to ride to school.

He put his books in the basket.

His feet went round and round.

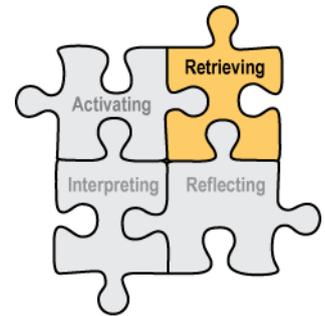
The school bell rang just as he arrived.

# 1.7 Round up your ideas

Years 1–9

## Summarising main points

Students learn how to identify information about Who, What, When, Where, and Why in stories and to write a summary. Students learn to ask themselves: ‘What are the main points?’ and ‘Can I summarise them in my own words?’



## Learning focus

Strategic readers search for many ideas as they read. Some ideas are explicit, others are implicit; some ideas are in single sentences and others are connected among a number of sentences; other ideas are drawn from knowledge about whole texts.

A good way to tie these ideas together is to teach students to summarise. Summaries include information about the five ‘W’ questions: Who, What, Why, When and Where. These bits of information include inferences and personal interpretations as well as literal information from the text. Summaries record a students’ comprehension, and allow them to check understanding and recall of the information. Condensing and rehearsing the important ideas aids memory by paraphrasing and personalising the ideas.

## Suggested implementation

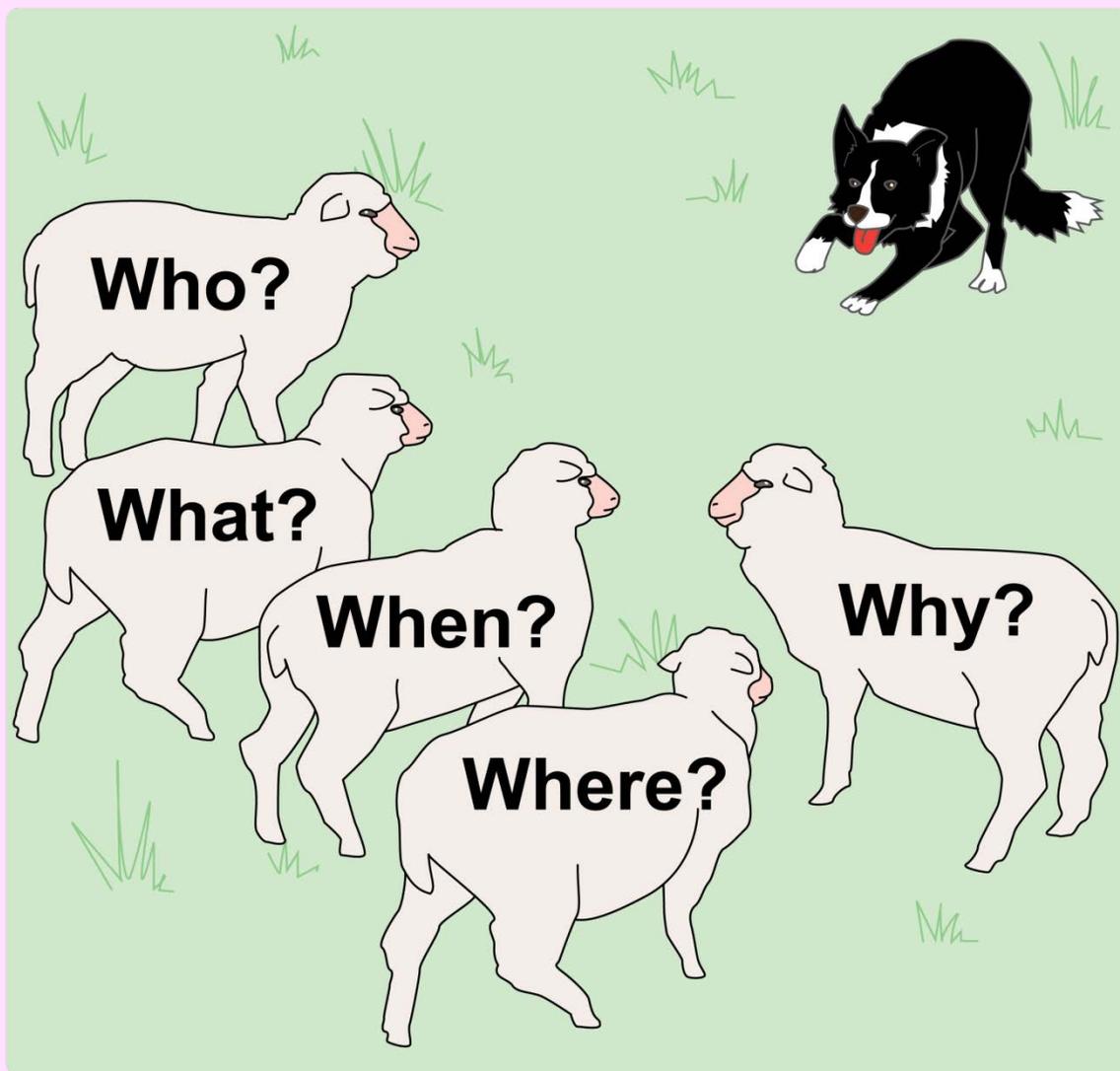
1. Explain to the students that this lesson is about making a summary. A summary is a brief retelling of what they read. It doesn’t include all the information, just the important parts.
2. Introduce and discuss the poster. Ask: ‘How is making a summary like rounding up your ideas?’ Guide students in making the analogy between rounding-up sheep and rounding-up ideas. Ask: ‘What kind of ideas do you round up?’ Read the ‘5 W’ questions in the picture on the poster. Tell students that a good summary includes information about each of these questions.
3. Ask: ‘How do you know what the important information is in a text?’ Explain that important points are not always clear. They need to ask themselves questions about the five Ws, such as:

Narrative text	Information text
Who are the main characters? Where does the story take place? What are the sequences of actions? When did things happen? Why did things turn out the way they did?	What is the main idea? What are the major supporting details? What are the minor supporting details? (Who/what, when, where, why questions help find main ideas and details)

4. Explain that readers need to ask themselves these questions in order to identify the important points of information. Tell the students that a good time to ask themselves these questions is after they have read a story or information text to make sure they have understood the key points. Explain that, if they don’t know the answers to some of these questions they need to reread parts of the text. Once they know the answers to these questions, they can summarise the story in their own words. Remind students that they don’t have to tell everything that happened, just the key points.
5. Explicitly teach students to use the ‘5 W’ questions during shared reading lessons. Once students are familiar with the strategy, introduce the ‘5 Ws’ into guided reading lessons.

## Poster: 1.7 Round up your ideas

# ROUND UP YOUR IDEAS with the five W questions



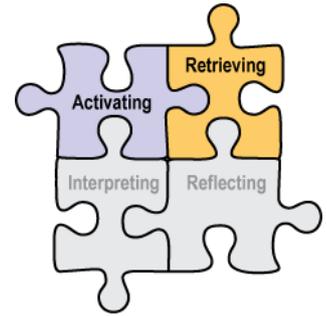
## 2 Categorising and reviewing

Students brainstorm ideas about a topic, categorise the ideas into key concepts. They review and revise their ideas after reading the text.

### Learning focus

This strategy helps students identify, and later check, expectations of what they might read in the text. It helps them collect a variety of information, and provides a framework for processing this information. It provides a focus while reading the text, and encourages participation and sharing of ideas and information, as well as independent action and self-monitoring.

Years 1–9



### Suggested implementation

1. Explain to students that they will be reading a text about the topic later.
2. Brainstorm to generate and record as many ideas about the topic as possible. Write the ideas on a chart (see also variations, below).
3. Ask students to sort the ideas into categories and label these (the labels must come from the students rather than from you). The categories that emerge will usually be key concepts about the topic. If they are not, draw out the key concepts.
4. Ask students to read the text.
5. Ask students to revise their ideas based on their reading. Discuss the appropriateness of their initial ideas as well as any adjustments they have made.

### Variations

- A. Collect ideas using a 'hot potato' activity. Use big sheets of paper, each with a different open-ended question written at the top. Pass these from group to group after a set time (e.g. two minutes).
- B. Have students work in small groups to categorise the vocabulary; groups can then share and justify their category choices with the whole class. In this way, students see that the same information can be organised in different ways.
- C. In writing activities, use the strategy to make notes before writing a first draft of a non-fiction text.

### 3 Contextual definition

Students use context, as well as other clues, to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. They make informed guesses and monitor the appropriateness of their predictions as they read.

#### Learning focus

The strategy shows students that context provides valuable information about new words, allows informed predictions, and is a more successful and satisfying strategy than guessing the meaning of a word in isolation. Students become actively involved in the discovery of new word meanings and learn useful reading behaviours from one another.

#### Teacher preparation

1. In a text from the current unit, select unfamiliar words.
2. Write at least a one-sentence context around each word to give clues to its meaning. Use the text's context, if suitable (see examples, opposite). Include a variety of clues (e.g. synonyms, comparison/contrast, definition) to show the range of devices used by authors.

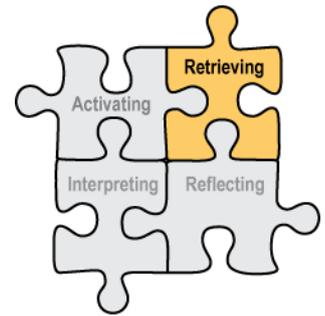
#### Suggested implementation

1. Present the words in isolation, one at a time. Read out the word so that students know how it sounds. Ask students to suggest a definition and to justify their guesses. Try to get group agreement on the word's meaning.
2. Present each word in its context. As before, ask students to suggest and justify meanings, and try to get group agreement on the best meaning.
3. Ask students to use a dictionary to verify their predictions.
4. As a group, discuss the quality of predictions given for the words in isolation versus those in context. Discuss the differences in strategies for predicting words in isolation and words in context.

#### Acknowledgment

This strategy draws on ideas from: Readence JE, Bean TW & Baldwin, RS 2000, 'Content area literacy: An integrated approach' in Robert J Tierney & John E Readence (eds) *Reading Strategies and Practices — A Compendium*, 5th edn, Allen & Bacon, MA, USA.

Years 1–9



#### Making informed guesses from context

1. The drought had been so long and severe that the cattle had died. Only the horses had survived. The people were so hungry that they had to resort to hippophagy to avoid starvation.
2. Without its carapace, a turtle is subject to certain death from its enemies or the elements.

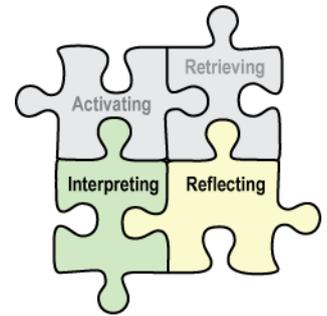
# 4 Dialogical thinking while reading

Years 5–9

Through discussion and collaboration, students learn to reflect and think critically about a central story issue.

## Learning focus

Students learn how to return to the text to verify or clarify information, identify reasons to support interpretations and evaluate the acceptability and relevance of competing or alternative interpretations. Teachers can judge how willing students are to change their positions based on new or inconsistent evidence, thus gaining important insights into their critical thinking dispositions.



## Teacher preparation

Select a narrative text that can be approached from more than one point of view.

## Suggested implementation

### Read the story

1. Have students read the entire story independently, or use guided reading for less able students.
2. As a whole class, reconstruct the storyline using a plot profile or a story ladder. Ensure that all students understand the story well enough to take part in the discussion phase.

### Consider the central question

3. On a chart, write the central question, and two possible conclusions that will be the focus for discussion.

Central question:

Support	Truth / Relevance	Conclusion A	Conclusion B	Truth / Relevance	Support

4. Ask students if, based on their understanding of the story, they have a preference for either conclusion. To do this, students must activate their prior knowledge, since they must consider whether they really do have a position on the issue. (This also allows you to assess the initial positions of students for comparison with later positions informed by the reading.)

## Identify reasons

5. Ask students to identify the reasons for supporting each conclusion. You may help by questioning and/or rephrasing. Accept all reasons at this time. List them on the chart.

## Evaluate reasons

6. As a class, evaluate the truth and relevance of each reason. For truth, use a code such as true (T), false (F), depends (D), and for relevance a (Y) or (N). Only verifiable information (within the text information, prior knowledge or logic) should be used as the basis for a decision. Students should return to the text to verify or clarify information.
7. After reasons have been verified, ask students to consider how strong the support is for each conclusion. Students must think critically about what is important and relevant in making informed decisions about what they believe.

## Draw conclusions

8. At the end of the lesson, students can talk or write, in small groups or individually, about beliefs surrounding the central question, given the preceding thinking and discussion. Students who still have not made up their minds should explain their reasons.

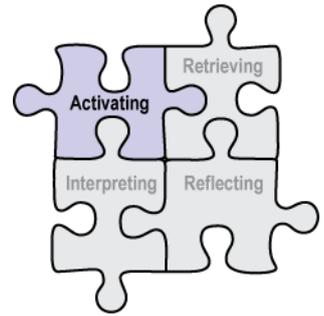
## Acknowledgment

This strategy draws on ideas from: Commeyras, M 1993, 'Promoting critical thinking through dialogical-thinking reading lessons', *The Reading Teacher*, vol. 46, no. 6, pp.486–494.

# 5 Expert panel

Years 1–9

Groups of students read a text and become ‘experts’ in the topic of the text. They form an expert panel and answer questions from other members of the class.



## Learning focus

This question-and-response strategy helps activate, expand and refine prior knowledge.

## Teacher preparation

Select a text to read on a topic within the current unit of work. The strategy is most often used with informational texts, but could be applied to any type of text.

## Suggested implementation

1. Decide who will be the experts. Ask them to read the text and become experts on the topic.
2. Ask the other students to read the same text and compose questions to ask the experts.
3. When students have finished reading, form the expert panel.
4. Students ask their questions; the experts must respond and justify their answers from within the text.

## Variations

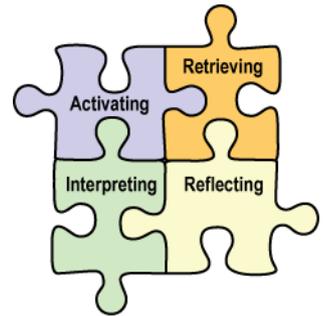
- A. Allocate points for correct answers.
- B. Have students work in pairs. Ask students to write statements about the text, either facts or opinions. Set a reasonable time limit to complete the task. Have partners exchange their work and categorise the statements as fact or opinion.

Statement	Fact	Opinion

# 6 Inking your thinking

Years 4–9

Students learn a comprehensive set of strategies for recording thoughts at each phase of the reading process.



## Learning focus

This strategy explicitly teaches strategies for all phases of the reading process. It helps develop decoding skills, vocabulary, world knowledge and active comprehension skills such as predicting, analysing stories, asking questions, constructing images, summarising and self-monitoring.

## Suggested implementation

These strategies can be applied to print, visual and other texts. The following table outlines the components used during each phase of reading.

Phase of reading	Strategy	Reader's role			
		Code breaker	Meaning maker	Text user	Text analyst
Before reading	Concept mapping		✓		
	Question generation		✓		✓
During reading	Vocabulary	✓	✓		
	Summary		✓	✓	
	Visualisation		✓	✓	
	Question and do (Q & Do)		✓		✓
After reading	Reading response	✓	✓		✓

### Before reading

- Before reading, students view a relevant visual text, such as a diagram, associated with the text they will be reading (The text for reading should be either a more complex visual text or a written text.) Students use the visual text:
  - to acquire background knowledge and vocabulary
  - as a note-making framework
  - to make summaries of the text
  - to visualise and help memorise information.

Concept mapping (webbing, semantic mapping) is an effective visual strategy for identifying relevant key concepts, arranging and rearranging those concepts within a space, and linking concepts in best-fit manner (e.g. sequentially, hierarchically, cause-and-effect flowcharts, comparison/contrast tables, Venn diagrams).

The best concept maps remain open-ended so that students can map new concepts into their existing frameworks.

- Question-generating sessions are also effective before reading, as students are encouraged to use higher-order deductive reasoning involving prediction.

## During reading

The during-reading phase is at the heart of the strategy, and includes four sub-phases. Ideas can be recorded on a simple worksheet (see following).

3. Vocabulary. Students record words, with an accompanying definition, that they predict will be in the text, as well as long or interesting words they have found while scanning the text.
4. Summary. An effective method at this stage is for students to list (a) main verbs in a paragraph or section and (b) the noun groups associated with these verbs. They can then play with combinations using conjunctions such as 'when', 'while', 'after', 'because', 'however', to capture complex temporal, spatial and logical relationships and discuss the changes in meaning. See also Strategy #24, Top-level structuring, page 67.
5. Visualisation. Students construct visual representations of their complete understanding — the gist, or main idea in a text. Visualisations may include symbols, split screens or other multimedia devices. Visualisation allows students to demonstrate their complete understanding of any text without the restrictions demanded by written responses. Visualisations help teachers gain insight into students' comprehension of an author's message.
6. Q and Do (question and action). In this phase, show students how to question the text and to position themselves to accept, challenge or reject all or part of the text. In so doing, new texts are created that both contextualise and demonstrate their new understandings. The following questions and actions are guides to get students started.

### Q — questions

- Questions that make the author's purpose explicit:
  - What was that all about?
  - Why did the author compose that text?
- Verb-based questions — 'does...', 's...', 'will...', 'has...', 'who did...', 'what did...'
- Adverb-based questions — 'when', 'where', 'why', 'how'
- Questions with 'three-level' guides — statements that students evaluate in terms of whether the author said it, meant it or would agree with it.

### Do — actions

- If so ... so what?
- How should I respond?
- How could I use this text in my own work?

## After reading

1. Reading response. Ask students to compose their own text based on the studied text. These reading responses may take three forms:
  - *Translations* replicate the subject matter and genre of the original text.
  - *Innovations* replicate the genre but change the subject matter.
  - *Transformations* maintain the subject matter but change the genre.

Reading responses do not have to be exhaustive pieces and may be multimodal. Reading responses are a representation of each student's creativity as well as a demonstration of the student's depth of understanding.

## Acknowledgment

This strategy is based on ideas from: Donnelly, P 2007, 'Inking your thinking', *Literacy Learning: The middle years*, vol 15, no 1, 2007. Australian Literacy Educators Association

## Inking your thinking — worksheet

Vocabulary	Summary
Visualisation	Q and Do

## Inking your thinking — example

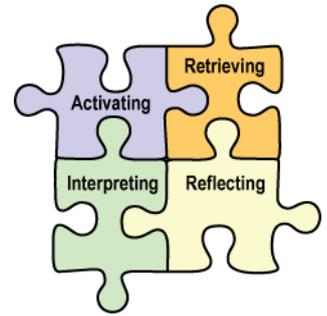
### Sport thirst takes its toll on teeth

<p><i>Courier Mail</i> 01.02.05 Tess Livingston</p> <p>Children were damaging their teeth with a combination of sports, dehydration in Queensland's hot climate and the sugary soft and sports drinks they gulp down afterwards, a University of Queensland oral health expert warned yesterday.</p> <p>Associate Professor William Young said drinking plenty of plain water before and after the games was the best way to avoid the problem, which was common among children he had seen with dental erosion.</p> <p>'Dehydration causes the body to conserve water and saliva flow is shut off for about two hours,' he said.</p> <p>'When saliva flows slowly, it lacks bicarbonate, the main buffer that neutralises acids on teeth. When the child is dehydrated, and saliva protection is lost, acids can corrode the calcium hydroxylapatite – the mineral that gives the teeth their unique hardness.'</p> <p>Dr Young and his team have examined more than 200 children with excessive tooth wear...</p> <p>© Courier Mail 2005</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>Damaging (hurting) Dehydration (dried out) Sugary (sweet) Afterwards (later) Associate Professor (Dental expert) Erosion (destruction) Conserve (protect)</p>	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Processes</i></td> <td><i>Participants</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Damaging</td> <td>Queensland children</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dehydrating</td> <td>Sports Drinks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gulping</td> <td>Associate Professor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warning</td> <td>William Young</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saying</td> <td>Dental Erosion</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Avoiding</td> <td>Qld's hot climate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eroding</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Cause and effect</i></p> <p>When dehydrated children drink sports drinks the result is increased tooth decay.</p>	<i>Processes</i>	<i>Participants</i>	Damaging	Queensland children	Dehydrating	Sports Drinks	Gulping	Associate Professor	Warning	William Young	Saying	Dental Erosion	Avoiding	Qld's hot climate	Eroding	
	<i>Processes</i>	<i>Participants</i>																
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<p><b>Visualisation</b></p> 	<p><b>Q&amp;Do</b></p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <p>Who is William Young? Would Coca-Cola agree with him? Could you avoid decay but still drink the sports drink?</p> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <p>Write a slogan to promote the consumption of water. Research the Coca-cola and Pepsi web pages. Design an experiment to demonstrate the way teeth are weakened.</p>																	

# 7 Inquiry chart (I-Chart)

Years 6–9

Using a chart with guiding questions, students gather information about a topic from multiple text sources, then organise, summarise, compare and evaluate that information.



## Learning focus

This strategy nurtures critical literacy skills, encouraging students to examine information sources for inconsistencies. It provides students with the opportunity to study a topic in depth and from different points of view.

## Teacher preparation

1. Select a topic for study or negotiate the topic with students.
2. Develop several significant questions to focus the inquiry process.
3. Construct the I-Chart, writing the guiding questions in the top row. The chart should be large enough for the whole class to see.
4. Collect a variety of materials (e.g. textbooks, CD-ROMs, posters, reference books) dealing with the topic. Record information about the sources on the I-Chart.

### I-Chart

Topic: Mammals	What defines a mammal as distinct from other animals?	In what ways are mammals alike?	In what ways are mammals different from other animals?	How are mammals grouped?	Interesting facts	New questions
What we think we know	<i>Have hair Can't fly</i>	<i>Have skeletons</i>	<i>Only humans have hands and legs</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>People and kangaroos are both animals</i>	<i>Can mammals be marsupials?</i>
<b>Source 1</b> <i>Title, author, date and publisher details</i>						
<b>Source 2</b>						
<b>Source 3</b>						
<b>Summary</b>						

# Suggested implementation

## Interacting phase

1. Discuss with students what they know about the topic questions. Record shared information in the 'What we think we know' row, regardless of its accuracy.
2. In guided reading lessons, model appropriate active reading comprehension strategies. Show how to make notes and to record information accurately on the I-Chart. Model how to generate new questions. Students can then practise during collaborative and independent reading. This phase may last from days to weeks, depending on the number of sources.
3. When students are familiar with the process, allow them to work in pairs or individually to complete the I-Chart using different texts.

## Integrating and evaluating phase

4. Summarising — during modelled writing lessons, use the 'think-aloud' strategy to demonstrate how to synthesise the recorded information into one cohesive answer for each question. Model the process of moving beyond the stated facts and refining the language to account for converging as well as conflicting information. Record the summaries on the I-Chart.
5. Comparing — once the I-Chart is complete, model the process of comparing information gathered from individual sources with summarised prior knowledge and beliefs. Lead discussions to help students refine, evaluate or correct concepts or facts using new information in the chart. In writing lessons, explicitly model strategies and skills for integrating and evaluating information. Provide repeated opportunities to practise in small groups before allowing students to undertake these tasks independently.
6. Researching and reporting — in collaborative groups, students continue researching the new questions that have accumulated on the I-Chart. Teachers work with groups who have specific needs to consolidate developing skills. Students report back to the whole class about findings concerning the new questions generated and recorded on the I-Chart.

## Reflecting and reporting individual learning

7. Lead discussions to raise students' awareness of active reading and writing strategies explored during the I-Chart activity. Encourage students to talk about topics such as the range of active reading comprehension strategies, what was easy or difficult, what worked or didn't work, and applications to other aspects of their work.

## More information

- Teachers should take a lead role when introducing the I-Chart strategy. Once students are familiar with the process, students can gradually take responsibility by selecting topics, generating questions, identifying sources and deciding what to record on the I-Chart.
- Synthesising and summarising are complex processes in which main ideas must be separated from supporting details. Some students will find this difficult, and may need a series of prompts to help them.
- The I-Chart is also useful for exploring social issues characterised by stereotyping, such as multicultural issues, gender roles, or views of particular social groups.

## Acknowledgment

This strategy, itself an adaptation of the *KWL strategy* (#8, next page), draws on ideas from: Hoffman, J V 1992, 'Critical reading/thinking across the curriculum: Using I-charts to support learning', *Language Arts*, vol. 69 pp.121–27.

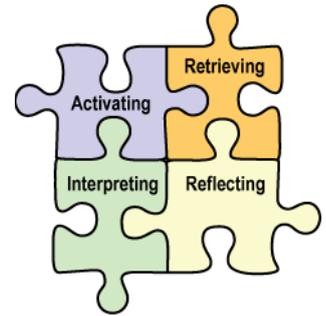
# 8 KWL

Through a three-phase strategy ('Know', 'Want to know' 'Learnt'), students develop independent skills in comprehending, composing and learning.

## Learning focus

KWL helps students engage with texts in deliberate and purposeful (strategic) ways. In the first phase (K) students activate prior knowledge. Then they predict what additional information they are likely to need (W), and develop a plan to gather that information. In the final phase (L), students reflect on the new knowledge generated or retrieved as the plan is implemented.

Years 1–9



## Teacher preparation

This strategy is best used after teachers have modelled 'think-aloud' and questioning practices that have then been rehearsed by students.

## Suggested implementation

1. Make a KWL chart and present the chosen text (see example below).
2. Ask students to examine the title of the text and list what is known about the topic. Write these in the 'K' column. Discuss and build the list as a group.
3. Now, ask students to list what they want or need to know about the topic in the 'W' column.
4. Read the chosen text to the students, or have students read it themselves.
5. Ask students what knowledge they have gained from the text and list this in the 'L' column.

K — What do I know?	W — What do I want to know?	L — What have I learnt?

## Variations

- A. Ask students to work individually to record their own KWL ideas in a table. Ask them to swap their recording sheets with another student and discuss differences. List suggestions for further research as:

What I need to know	Where to look for information	What I learnt

- B. Record the source of predictions and teach students how to draw effective inferences, using variations such as TWL or TWR.

### TWL

T — What do I think?	W — Why do I think that?	L — What did I learn about what I inferred?

### TWR

T — What do I think?	W — What triggered that idea?	R — Was I right?

- C. Use KWL journals during silent independent reading. Ask students to share and compare their entries in literature circles (groups of students reading the same book at the same time). These journals provide a wealth of information about students' language knowledge, active reading strategies and 'self' as a reader.
- D. Teach students to use the KWL strategy to keep a record of predictions and confirmations. This sample entry is based on the novel *Why the Whales Came* by M Morpurgo, first published 1985, William Heinemann.

K — What do I know?	W — What do I want to know?	L — What have I learnt?
The birdman is a character in the novel. He seems mysterious and I don't know if he is dangerous or not.	I want to know: what the mystery is if the Birdman is dangerous why he is alone what role this character has in the story.	The Birdman is a hermit because he has been cast out by other people who think he is scary because he's deformed. He is not mysterious; just not like every one else. Although humans have been cruel to him, he is protected by birds and animals.

- E. Use KWL as a comprehension assessment tool. This sample entry is based on the novel *Space Demons* by G Rubinstein, 1985, Scholastic press, Australia.

K — What do I know?	W — What do I want to know?	L — What have I learnt?
Novels are story narratives. They have four stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• orientation</li> <li>• complication</li> <li>• climax</li> <li>• resolution</li> </ul> The orientation tells what problems need solving in the main characters' lives.	I want to know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who the main characters are</li> <li>• what the problems are going to be</li> <li>• how they will solve their problems.</li> </ul>	It is a story about kids in Grade 7, two boys, Andrew and Ben, playing computer games. Andrew is spoilt and gets a new game called Space Demons. Ben and Andrew are having a bit of friendship trouble. A new girl, Elaine, has just started at the school.

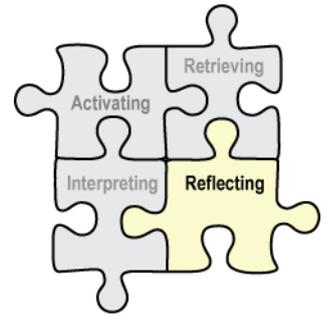
# 9 Learning logs

Teachers guide young learners in reflection, and encourage them to record their personal thoughts through visual or written language (using spelling approximations).

## Learning focus

Practice in guided reflection is essential for students to develop, consolidate and refine active reading and writing strategies as they learn about themselves as readers and writers.

Years 1–3



## Teacher preparation

1. Prepare a class learning log, using sheets of butchers paper or A3 paper to make a 'big book'.
2. Prepare small books of blank paper (stapled or concertina-shaped). For Year 3 students, consider preparing *individual* learning logs to reflect on the week's work (see next page).

## Suggested implementation

1. Model the production of a learning log as part of, for example, the morning talk time or class meeting time.
2. Invite children to share:
  - their thoughts about the topic to be discussed
  - their thoughts before the discussion
  - their thoughts after discussions
  - their opinion about something
  - what they observed on the way to school
  - what was different in the classroom today
  - what they hope to do at school today
  - how they feel
  - ideas for writing during the language block.
3. Negotiate an entry for the class learning log.
4. Ask students to make an entry in their personal learning log.
5. Ask students to share entries with the whole class or in pairs.

# MY LEARNING LOG

Name: .....

**Some things I have learnt this week are:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Page 1

**My favourite activity this week was:**

.....  
.....  
**I liked it because** .....

Page 2

**When I listened to the music I felt:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Page 3

**I think my best writing this week was:**

.....  
.....  
**because** .....

Page 4

**I think my best reading was because:**

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Page 5

**I think my best art was:**

.....  
.....  
**because** .....

Page 6

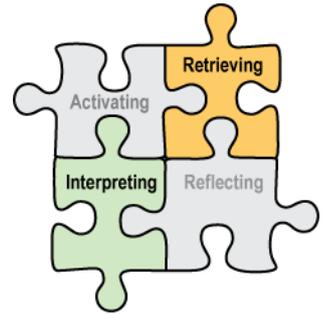
# 10 Mental imagery

Years 1–9

Students learn to create pictures in their minds to help comprehension and recall.

## Learning focus

Mental imagery helps develop active reading comprehension. It stimulates active involvement with the text; aids memory/recall; encourages thinking processes such as elaboration and inferring; and increases readers' control over their own strategic behaviour.



## Teacher preparation

When planning the activity, consider moving from visualising concrete subjects to more abstract situations.

## Suggested implementation

1. Read aloud to the students. Stop several times and ask them to imagine something just mentioned in the text, for example, a car, cup or person.
2. Ask different students to describe the thing being discussed in the text and to say why, based on the clues provided in the text, they thought it would look, smell or seem that way. For example, what clues in the text tell us that the mug was pink and had a face on it? You can help students reformulate images by rereading a section of text.
3. Discuss (compare and contrast) the differences in shared descriptions and ask students to justify their opinions by pointing to evidence in the text, or using prior knowledge and experience. This phase is most important as this allows students with limited visualisation to see ways of adding more detail. Use open-ended questions when asking for details (e.g. 'Tell me about ...').

## Variations

- A. In pairs, one student describes an object, person or place from a familiar story while the other student draws a picture that attempts to represent what is described.
- B. Play music and ask students to create representations of their mental images.

# 11 Oral cloze

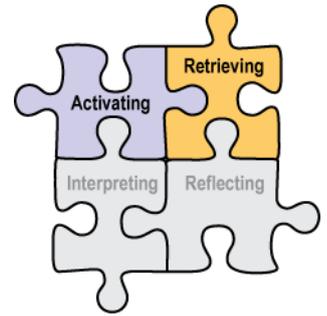
Years 1–9

## Also known as zip cloze

During shared reading, students predict missing words in a pre-prepared text and confirm their predictions using all available clues.

## Learning focus

This activity focuses students' attention on language features that carry different aspects of the meaning in a text. Teachers show students how to use contextual clues, as well as semantic, syntactic and graphophonic clues, by modelling the predicting, sampling and confirming process.



## Teacher preparation

1. Select an appropriate text. Ensure the specific textual features you wish to highlight are easily identified (see examples, opposite).
2. Familiar texts or texts that have been constructed collaboratively after a shared experience are particularly useful because the subject matter is understood. This frees working memory to focus on the language features. Unfamiliar texts may be used to present more challenging tasks and to assess students' developing reading skills.
3. Select a section of text and write it on a chart or in a big book. Cover ('mask') selected words (e.g. with tape or sticky notes).

## Suggested implementation

1. Show students the text and ask them to suggest words that make sense in the gap. Make a list of these on the chart or the side of the big-book easel.
2. Discuss how using different words from the list would change the meaning of the text.
3. Choose the most appropriate word from the list and compare it with the author's choice. Peel back the sticky note or tape to reveal the author's word one letter at a time. As you do this, compare with the list and eliminate words that don't fit the letter pattern of the author's word.
4. Discuss how the words chosen to complete the blanks change meaning significantly or slightly. For example, in the sentences below, for older children, the highlighted words are all grammatically correct and make sense, but they alter the meaning significantly and show the author's viewpoint.

After the invasion, the people were **encouraged / required / coerced** to cooperate with the military authorities.

### Using oral cloze to highlight...

#### A sequence of events

Today we went on a print walk. First we saw the sign on the toilets. It was on the wall. Next we found the adventure playground sign. It was on the gate. Mary found it first. Then we went up the path and saw the tuckshop sign. Print walks are fun!

#### Past tense

Today we went on a print walk. First we saw the sign on the toilets. It was on the wall. Next we found the adventure playground sign. It was on the gate. Mary found it first. Then we went up the path and saw the tuckshop sign. Print walks are fun!

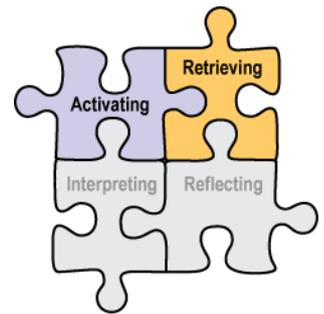
#### Words that tell where

Today we went on a print walk. First we saw the sign on the toilets. It was on the wall. Next we found the adventure playground sign. It was on the gate. Mary found it first. Then we went up the path and saw the tuckshop sign. Print walks are fun!

# 12 Possible sentences

Years 4–9

Students determine the meaning of unfamiliar words by pairing them with known words to make sentences that could ‘possibly’ be found in a text. They predict relationships between the unknown and the known words, read the text to verify the accuracy of the predicted relationships, and use the text to evaluate and refine their predictions.



## Learning focus

This strategy uses prediction to create interest and to focus students’ attention on new information. Students are actively involved in listening, speaking, reading and writing activities that develop, consolidate and refine new vocabulary knowledge.

## Teacher preparation

Identify and list key vocabulary from the new text on a chart (see example). Use only words that can be adequately defined by their context. Include familiar words so that students can use their prior knowledge to make connections between what they know and the unfamiliar words.

## Suggested implementation

1. Read the list of key vocabulary to the students.
2. Ask students to make sentences that they think might be in the text, by using at least two words from the list. Elicit as many sentences as possible and record each one as it is given, underlining the words from the list. Words may be used in different combinations. All words in the list must be used at least once.
3. Ask students to read the text carefully to verify the accuracy of the sentences.
4. As a group, evaluate each recorded sentence by using the text to verify accuracy. Remove or refine sentences that are inaccurate.
5. After the original sentences have been evaluated, ask students to write additional sentences. This step extends students’ understanding of the meaning and relationships of the new vocabulary. Check new sentences against the text for accuracy.
6. Students record all accurate sentences in their notebooks.

### Skin disorders

#### Key vocabulary

moles	athlete’s foot
acne	fungus
warts	freckles
boils	virus
congenital	infection
freckles	

#### Students’ possible sentences

Warts are caused by an infection.

Moles can be a congenital infection.

You shouldn’t squeeze boils or acne.

Moles and freckles are harmless.

Either fungus or a virus causes athlete’s foot.

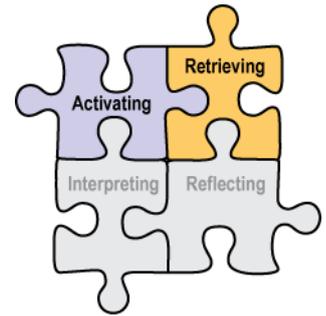
## Acknowledgment

This strategy, also called *Making sentences*, draws on ideas from: Moore, DW & Moore, SA 1981, quoted in EK Dishner & TW Bean, JE Readence (eds) *Reading in the content areas: improving classroom instruction*, Kendall/Hunt, Toronto.

# 13 Producing shared texts

Years 1–3

Teachers and students produce records of shared experiences which then become texts for teaching reading. Students contribute ideas and information. Teachers demonstrate how writers select and relate ideas within and across sentences to communicate with an audience.



## Learning focus

Through joint construction, students learn to think and read like writers. They participate in selecting and organising ideas and making appropriate language choices. They learn new vocabulary (sight words and topic words) in meaningful contexts.

## Teacher preparation

Plan a shared experience, for example a 'print walk' around the school, noting all the labels and signs.

## Suggested implementation

1. As a group, review the shared experience and select ideas for inclusion in the writing. Write these on a chart (see opposite). The learning focus is on talking about experiences (retelling) and new vocabulary.
2. Guide planning. You could ask, for example:
  - How shall we start our writing to help people predict what it is going to be about?
  - Why will we write about that part at the beginning of our text?
  - What will we write about next? Why?
  - What part will come next? Why?

The focus is on spoken to written language, new vocabulary and selecting and sequencing ideas.

3. Work with the students to produce a text that is 'owned' by the group.

Scaffold the negotiation and recording of ideas so that students play an active role in the text production.

In the early stages, you can ask questions about purpose, audience, vocabulary and sentences, then model the answers by thinking aloud.

### Selecting ideas to include

Library  
Tuckshop  
Year 1B  
Junior toilets  
Adventure playground  
Happy Mountain State School

### Planning the text

1. Print walk
2. Junior toilets
3. Adventure playground
4. Tuckshop

You might ask, for example:

- Why are we writing this text?
  - Who is going to read it?
  - What words could we use to start the writing?
  - How can we join on the part about, say, the adventure playground?
  - Is the word for ‘tuckshop’ on the chart?
  - How do you know that is the word ‘tuckshop’?
4. Have the students read the text several times. Follow this by sentence and word study activities based on words and sentence patterns in the text.

On each subsequent reading, focus on different textual features (e.g. words that show sequence, location, time. See Strategy #11, Oral cloze, page 42, for examples)

### **Share text**

#### **Our print walk**

Today we went on a print walk.

First we saw the sign on the toilets. It was on the wall.

Next we found the adventure playground sign. It was on the gate. Mary found it first.

Then we went up the path and saw the tuckshop sign.

Print walks are fun!

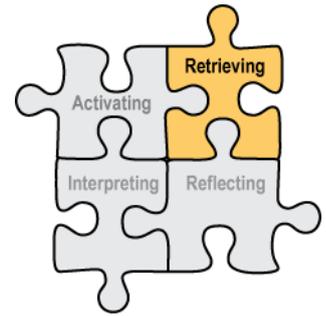
# 14 Reading aloud

Years 1–9

Teachers model fluent and accurate reading. Students experience the rhythm and flow of the language, and the language patterns, structures and vocabulary of various text types.

## Learning focus

Reading to students helps build prior knowledge of the concepts, words and language patterns of the text type they will be reading. It also provides opportunities to teach comprehension skills while students are mastering code-breaking skills.



## Teacher preparation

Choose texts from various genres. Students need to hear both literary texts, such as stories, rhymes and poems, and factual genres read aloud. Reading factual texts aloud enables students to experience language structures used in communicating information, explaining things, giving directions and negotiating.

## Suggested implementation

1. Read the chosen text. Stop the reading at key points and pose questions. Ask students, for example, to:
  - make predictions about what will happen next
  - consider how the characters might be feeling
  - identify the problems in stories, and new information in factual texts.
2. Model thinking about texts, such as:
  - summarising events so far
  - linking actions to characters' thoughts, personalities traits and actions
  - recalling other texts about the same subject matter
  - connecting to life experiences
  - confirming predictions.

## More information

- Use this in conjunction with Strategy #15, Say something, next page.

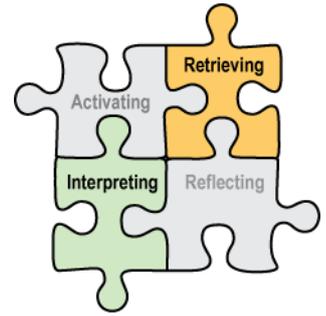
# 15 Reciprocal teaching

Years 2–9

Teacher and students exchange views about certain segments of text. Teacher and students take turns in the role of teacher in leading this dialogue.

## Learning focus

This strategy helps students construct meaning from text and monitor their understanding. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: **summarising** provides the opportunity to identify and integrate the most important information in the text; **question generating** reinforces the summarising strategy; **clarifying** helps teach students about the reasons why a text may be difficult to read, and to take the necessary measures to restore meaning (e.g. reread, ask for help); **predicting** activates students' background knowledge about the topic and gives a purpose to reading — to prove or disprove their hypotheses.



## Suggested implementation

1. Introduce the whole class to each of the skills in the process. This can take a couple of lessons to do well.
2. Work with one small group at a time, so you can model the process. Provide the group with:
  - the set of cards shown below
  - multiple copies of an information text
  - three different dictionaries
  - three atlases
  - paper for note taking.

Students could also use a computer to access websites such as [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com) and [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org).

3. Work through the instructions on the cards in sequence.

For the first few sessions the teacher is the initial leader, but the aim is for the group to function independently.

## Reciprocal teaching prompt cards

### The cards

See next page.

1. **Predicting:** The leader asks the students to read the topic sentence or subheading and then predict what the rest of the paragraph will be about.  
  
Since the topic sentence tells what will follow, you can teach the students how to skim read at this point.
2. **Reading:** This card invites the students to read up to a certain point. They can read silently, to the group, to a partner or in unison, to add variety.

3. **Clarifying:** This card gives the readers the opportunity to have any unfamiliar words, locations or pronunciations 'made clear'.

At first the students may not volunteer that they don't know something. So you might pick out a word or a place and ask the group to clarify it. If all members don't offer to answer the question, then talk about how the purpose of reading is to gain meaning and if we are not gaining meaning, then we are simply 'barking at the print'.

4. **Questioning:** Ask the students to generate the questions at this point. The questions can be answered orally or, depending on your purpose, you might like the group to record some of their questions and answers.
5. **Summarising:** This is the perfect moment to teach key points, note-taking and to some extent paraphrasing.
6. **Swap leaders:** Passes leadership to another student.

## Acknowledgment

This strategy is based on ideas from: Palincsar, AS & Browne, AL 1984, 'Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension monitoring activities', *Cognition and Instruction*, vol. 2, pp.117–175. For further information, see [www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com).

# 1. Predicting

I think ...



**Leader:** Read the next topic sentence or sub-heading and, based on that, predict what you think the next paragraph will be about.

**Group:** “My prediction is that the rest of the paragraph will be about ...”

“Based on the topic sentence, I think the paragraph will be about ...”

Adapted from Adrian Bruce <[www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com)>

# 2. Reading

Wow!  
Interesting!



**Leader:** “Can you read the next paragraph for us please [name]?”  
or “[Name] please read up to ...”

With each new leader the group alternate between reading:

- silently
- to a partner
- to the group
- in unison

Adapted from Adrian Bruce <[www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com)>

## 3. Clarifying

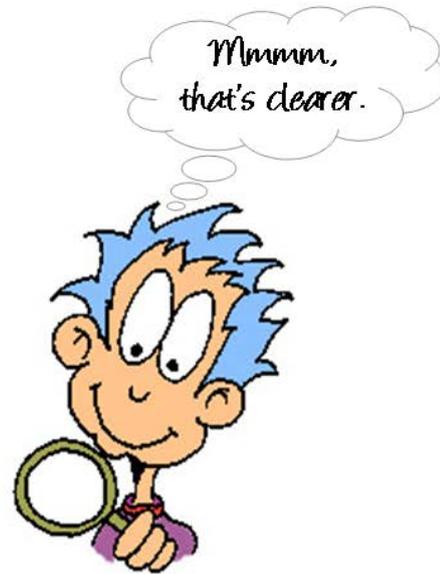
**Leader:** What aspects of this paragraph do you need to clarify?  
(make clear)

**Group members:**

“I’d like to know what the word ... means.”

“Where is ... located?”

“How is this word pronounced?”



Adapted from Adrian Bruce <[www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com)>

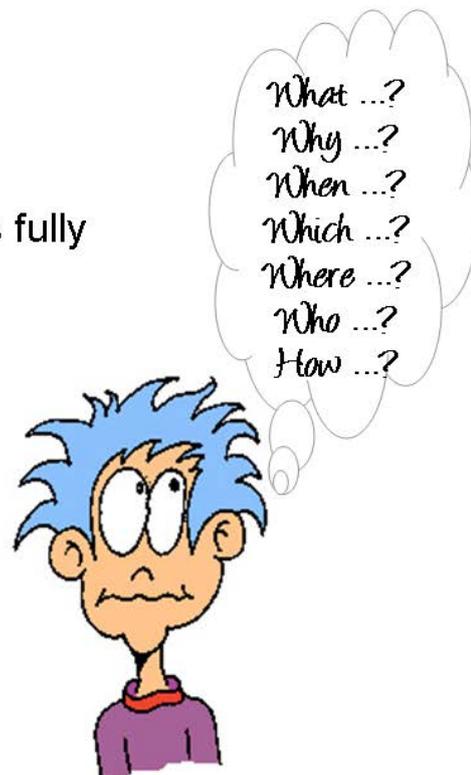
## 4. Questioning

**Leader:** To check if someone has fully understood this passage, what questions could you ask them?”

**Group members:**

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

Then the whole group answers the questions.



Adapted from Adrian Bruce <[www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com)>

## 5. Summarising



**Leader:**

“**[Name]** would you please say / write a sentence or two to summarise this passage?”

“State the main points of this paragraph please **[name]**.”

“What are the most important facts / pieces of information in this paragraph please **[name]**.”

Adapted from Adrian Bruce <[www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com)>

## 6. Swap leaders



**Leader:** Ask the person to your left to be the next leader.

*Can you be the next leader please **[name]**?*

Adapted from Adrian Bruce <[www.adrianbruce.com](http://www.adrianbruce.com)>

# 16 Say something

Years 1–9

While reading a narrative, the teacher stops at key points in the story, points to a student and asks them to ‘say something’ about what they are thinking.

## Learning focus

Using this strategy, teachers teach the comprehending process and monitor students’ skill in connecting an idea with:

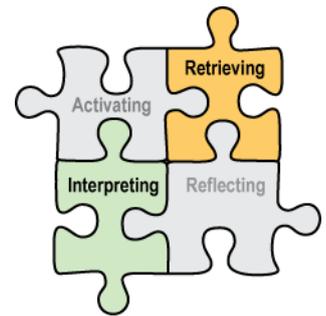
- other ideas in the text
- other texts
- prior knowledge retrieved from memory.

Teachers can provide immediate feedback and guide attention to important information that may have been overlooked. Students have opportunities to deal with texts at surface and deeper levels and to see that multiple interpretations of the same text are possible.

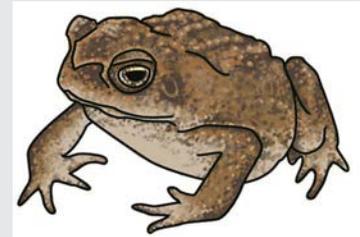
## Suggested implementation

Explain to students that during the reading you will be using the ‘Say something’ strategy.

1. While reading to the students, stop reading at a key point in the story and demonstrate your thinking by ‘saying something’, for example:
  - summarising events to date
  - making a prediction
  - commenting about a character (feelings, personality actions, etc.)
  - identifying a problem or possible problem
  - generating a number of solutions
  - linking interactions between characters with story actions and events (causes and effects)
  - discussing what students, as the readers, are wondering at this point in the story.
2. Once students are familiar with the strategy, stop at a key point in the story, point to a student and say ‘Say something!’ The student should then say what they are thinking about at that point in the story, based on your previous modelling. Point to other students and ask them to say something. Encourage discussion.
3. Repeat this process at other key points throughout the chapter or section to be read.
4. When you have finished reading the section or chapter, reflect on what has been read and record key information about characters (feelings, actions) and plot (events, problems, unexpected twists or turns). Record what students are wondering at this point in the story.
5. Ask students to predict what will happen in the next chapter and identify the information that supports their views (e.g. prior knowledge, other stories).



### Connecting with prior knowledge



*‘Toads have poison inside their bumps; they taste bad to predators. Poison can make us sick. I don’t want to get poison on my hands!’*

### Connecting with other stories



*‘The wolf in this story is not nearly as mean as the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood.’*

## Predicting and inferring during reading the novel *A Real Princess* by M McAlister

Predictions	Based on (source)	Name the link (evidence)
<p>Our predictions after looking at the cover</p> <p>(a) This will be a story about two children pretending to be princesses.</p> <p>(b) ...</p>	This story	Picture and words on front cover. I think they're pretending to be princesses because it looks like the girl with the big dress on is just dressing up. I think this because she has boots on, not shoes.
<p>Our predictions after Chapter 2</p> <p>(a) This could be about two girls switching places.</p> <p>(b) ...</p>	Other stories	Hilary doesn't want to be at camp and wants to be a princess and then Amelia arrives and she is a princess who loves the idea of being at camp. In stories that have two kids wanting what the other has, they usually swap.
<p>Our predictions after Chapter 3</p> <p>(a) Hilary and Amelia will be friends.</p> <p>(b) ...</p>	My own experience	I know that when you share your things with someone they usually like you and become your friend.

## Acknowledgment

This strategy draws on ideas from: Freiberg, Jill 2005, *Teaching Text Processing*, English Education 2 Course Reader 2042EPS English Education 2, Griffith University, Gold Coast Campus

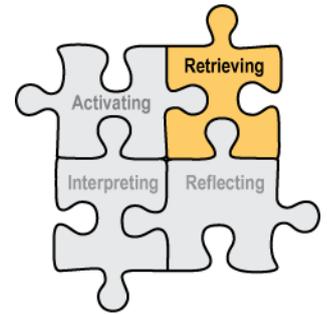
# 17 Semantic vocabulary map

Years 1–9

By categorising, students explore and reinforce vocabulary concepts.

## Learning focus

This strategy improves vocabulary and categorisation skills, develops understanding of the similarities and differences in related words, and helps expand and retain content area vocabulary and concepts.



## Teacher preparation

This strategy is suitable for the end of a unit after students have carried out reading, listening, speaking, and writing tasks revolving around a common theme or topic (e.g. pets, energy). It works particularly well as a group activity.

## Suggested implementation

1. Ask students to say aloud any words they can think of or remember related to the topic they have covered in the unit. Write the words on the whiteboard as the students provide them.
2. When sufficient words, especially key words related to the topic, have been mentioned, ask the students to draw a vocabulary map by grouping the words under suitable headings or categories. Students may add new words not indicated on the board.
3. When students have categorised as many words as possible, ask them to collect the remaining words in a 'miscellaneous' category.
4. If applicable to the topic, ask students to indicate links between words in different categories but where the ideas are associated.
5. Finally, ask groups to describe their reasoning for the categories they used and their sorting. Alternatively, ask each group to record their vocabulary maps on sheets of butchers paper and put them up on the wall when finished. Groups look at each others' vocabulary maps and note differences and similarities with their own. Lead a class discussion of the differences and similarities in students' thinking, asking them to explain their reasoning.

## Acknowledgment

This strategy draws on ideas from: Johnson, Dale D & Pearson, P David 1978, *Teaching Reading Vocabulary*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, USA.

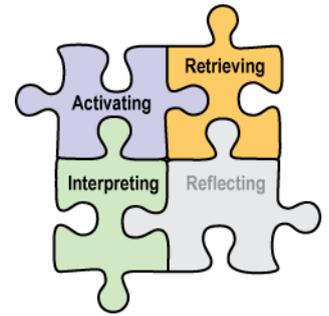
# 18 Semantic webs

Years 1–9

Students construct a graphical summary of the main concepts and ideas in a text.

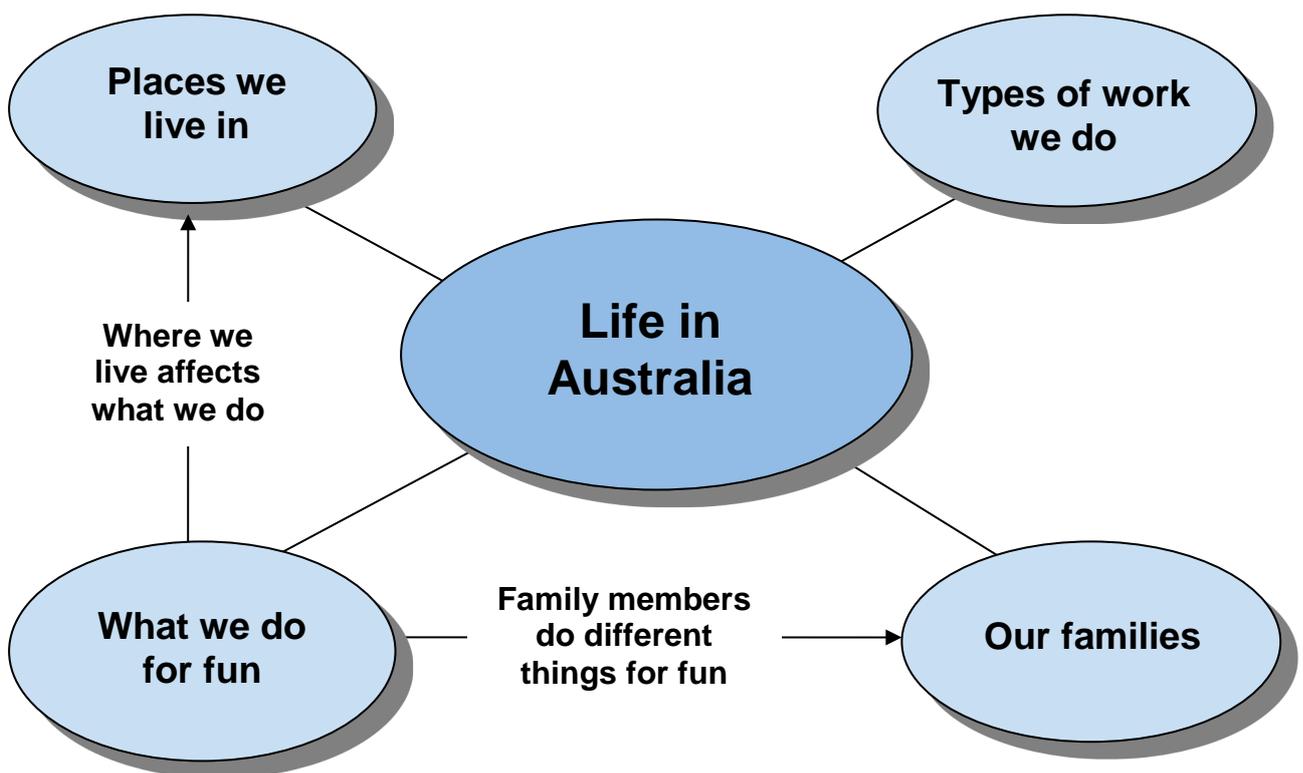
## Learning focus

Semantic webbing helps activate and categorise prior knowledge, promotes meaningful vocabulary development and aids memory. It can be used before and after reading, and as a basis for summary writing.



## Teacher preparation

1. Select a central theme or topic (e.g. a word, question or statement).
2. For younger students, provide a framework or 'web' that shows relationships within the topic, such as the one shown below.
3. Select a text to be summarised.



## Suggested implementation

In small groups and whole-class situations:

1. Present the selected topic to the students. Use the framework you prepared showing the relationships within the topic.
2. Before reading, think about the topic and identify known ideas, information or issues.
3. Read the text with the students.
4. Use Strategy #24, Top-level structuring, page 67, to identify major aspects of the text.
5. Construct a semantic web to indicate relationships between ideas.

## More information

Semantic webbing is also called semantic networking, concept mapping, mind mapping or plot mapping.

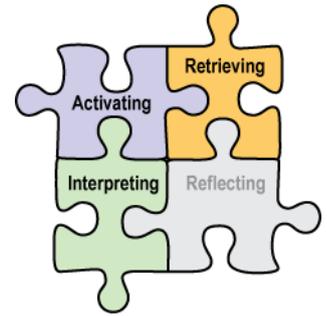
# 19 Shared reading

Years 1–7

After talking about the text and listening to the teacher read, students participate in reading and examining specific parts of the text.

## Learning focus

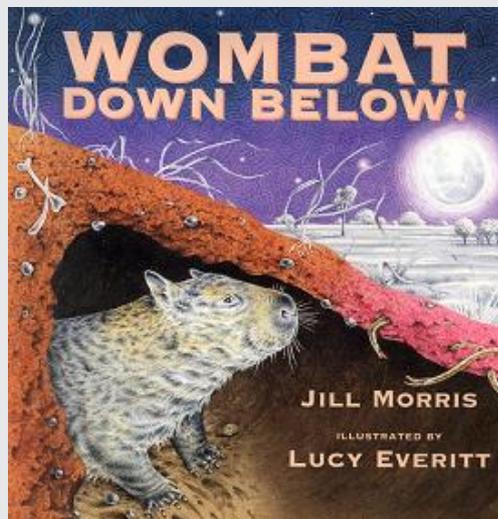
The teacher's introductory reading provides a model for reading, allowing students to hear the sentence patterns and vocabulary of written language.



## Suggested implementation

### Talking about the text

1. Sit beside an easel or stand on which the book is displayed. A large version of the text (big book) is desirable but not essential. If electronic texts are used with the whole class, use a data projector and screen.
2. Talk about the front cover or homepage. Draw students' attention to the clues in the title and illustrations.
3. Ask students to predict the subject matter and text type and give reasons for their predictions. Check predictions by looking at the illustrations throughout the book; quickly explore the storyline or information. Link events or information to students' prior knowledge and shared experiences (see example below).



Morris, J 2004, *Wombat Down Below*, illus. L Everitt, Greater Glider Publications, Maleny.

What will this book be about? What are the clues?  
*(Use knowledge of letter patterns to decode words in the title and link vocabulary to image.)*

Will this be a story or a recount about one wombat? Why do you think that?  
*(Use prior knowledge of narrative and recount titles. Note the singular word 'wombat'.)*

Are there any clues that might tell you some more about what the author has written about in the book?  
*(Use knowledge of other texts, together with the print and visual information and symbolism to hypothesise about the point of view the author and illustrator might want to convey.)*

Look at the image of the wombat. How do you feel about the wombat? How did the illustrator prompt you to feel like that?

*(Use the visual information to show that the reader is being asked to identify with the wombat in a positive way.)*

### **Teacher's introductory reading**

4. Read the book to the students.
5. Confirm or reject earlier predictions.
6. Share responses together after the reading is complete.

### **Collaborative reading**

7. Read together. Expect students to participate in the reading.
8. Begin to hand over control of the reading to students. For example, when students are reading along confidently with a predictable text, stop reading at various points and allow students to continue with the reading.

### **Study specific parts extracted from the text**

9. Study specific sentences and words extracted from the text to teach or consolidate specific grammar and orthographic knowledge.

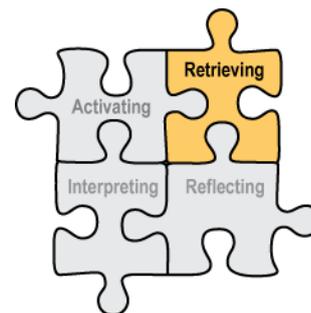
## 20 Skimming and scanning

Years 7–9

Students learn to skim and scan text to quickly get a general sense of a text and find information.

### Learning focus

Skimming allows students to quickly find the main idea of a paragraph, page, chapter or article and a few (but not all) of the details. Scanning allows students to quickly find a specific detail in the text without trying to understand or read the rest of the piece.



### Teacher preparation

When introducing the strategy, pick texts that students know well. This allows them to predict more accurately where in the text they might find a word, a date, a name or a fact.

### Suggested implementation

#### Skimming

1. Using the chosen text, show how to skim. Refer to the poster on the next page. Emphasise that it is not necessary to read every word.
2. Have students practise skimming.

#### Scanning

1. Using the chosen text, make predictions about where in the text you might find words, dates, names or facts. Note how the information is arranged on a page. Ask: 'Will headings, diagrams, boxed or highlighted information guide me? Is information arranged alphabetically or numerically as it might be in a telephone book or glossary?'
2. Show how to scan the text. Refer to the poster on the next page.
3. Have students practise scanning.
4. Discuss the differences between the two strategies and when each might be appropriate in reading.

## Poster: Strategy 19 — Skimming and scanning

<h3>Skimming</h3> <p>Read in this direction</p> 	<h3>Scanning</h3> <p>Read in these directions</p> 
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the first few paragraphs, two or three middle paragraphs and the final two or three paragraphs of a piece trying to get a basic understanding of the information.</li><li>2. Some people prefer to skim by reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph (i.e. the topic sentences and concluding sentences).</li><li>3. If there are pictures, charts or diagrams, a quick glance at them may help you to understand the main idea or point of view in the text.</li><li>4. Remember: you do not have to read every word when you skim.</li><li>5. Generally, move your eyes horizontally and quickly as you skim.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Knowing your text well is important. Make a prediction about where in the text you might find a word, a date, a name or a fact.</li><li>2. Note how the information is arranged on a page. Ask yourself, 'Will headings, diagrams, boxed or highlighted information guide me? Is information arranged alphabetically or numerically as it might be in a telephone book or glossary?'</li><li>3. Move your eyes vertically or diagonally down a page, letting them dart quickly from side to side, and keeping in mind the exact type of information that you want. Look for closely associated words that might steer you towards the detail for which you are looking.</li><li>4. You have scanned successfully when you have found the information you were looking for.</li></ol>

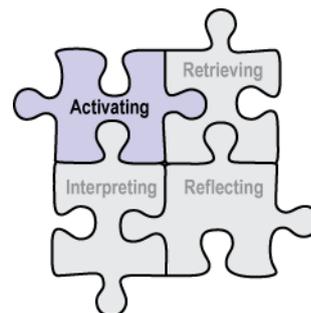
# 21 Starting with brainstorming

Years 1–9

Teachers and students work together to identify and discuss ideas and vocabulary within a topic.

## Learning focus

This strategy provides an opportunity for new vocabulary to be introduced in meaningful contexts and for learning to be focused. The strategy helps activate prior knowledge, enhance understanding, and consolidate, refine and correct personal knowledge. Students learn to work effectively in a group and to explore a range of possibilities within a topic.



## Suggested implementation

1. Present the selected topic to the group.
2. Ask group members to analyse the topic and suggest ideas (brainstorm). Accept all ideas without discussion. Write the ideas on a chart.
3. Ask group members to review and evaluate brainstormed ideas. They should delete those that are inappropriate and rank acceptable ideas according to their relevance to the topic.
4. Identify new vocabulary and technical terms used during the brainstorming and discuss their meanings.

## 22 Story mapping

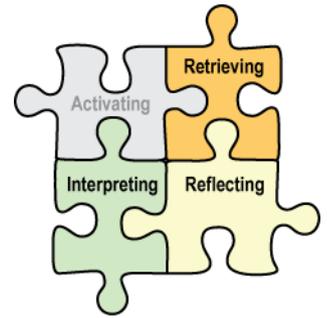
Students learn to use a story map to visually represent the episodes in a narrative text.

### Learning focus

Story maps highlight the way narrative texts are organised at the whole-text level (i.e. the generic structure). They help develop an understanding of episodes and their role, and the importance of text structure. Story mapping supports thinking about sequences and important relationships, helps monitor comprehension, retelling and writing, and aids memory.

In Years 2–5, students learn typical ways in which episodes are constructed, sequenced (setting, plot, resolution) and linked. In Years 6–9, story maps are used to consolidate students' knowledge about typical texts and to teach them about increasingly complex plot structures (such as parallel plots, plots in which an event rather than the setting introduces the story, and flashbacks).

Years 2–9



### Suggested implementation

1. Share the text either by reading it to the students or having them read it in small groups or individually.
2. Discuss the characters and setting
3. Discuss and sequence the episodes.
4. Decide on a graphic representation appropriate to the text and your purpose, e.g. a timeline, a sequenced storyboard, a map of the setting or a web showing relationships between characters. As students become familiar with this strategy they can suggest appropriate ways of representing the story, choose one of them and explain why they have chosen it.
5. Students, either individually or in groups, represent their understanding of the selected aspect of the story in drawings and text. They might, for instance, focus on character relationships or relationships between major and minor events.

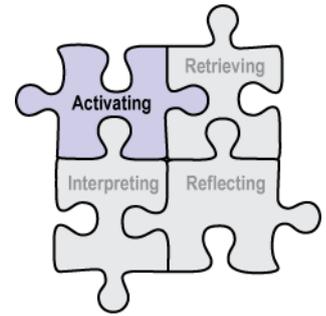
### Variations

- A. Provide a picture or map of the setting (e.g. a forest in *Little Red Riding Hood*). Have students read or listen to the story and discuss it, then mark where particular events occurred.
- B. Provide a story map outline as a planning guide for writing.

# 23 Talking places/Graffiti walls

Years 1–9

Students use spoken language to explore new knowledge about the topic of a text, then record their speculation about the topic on a graffiti wall.



## Learning focus

Speaking and listening are the modes of language most commonly used to explore new knowledge, to understand experiences and make connections between concepts and the words that represent them. Spoken language is the foundation of teaching reading. Through spoken language experiences students learn about words, word groups and clauses, and how words are used in specific contexts. They also learn about making language choices to suit different audiences.

## Teacher preparation

1. Establish the talking place, or context for talking. Bring in a collection of items that reflect the topic of the text. Include interesting things that students can speculate about (e.g. a frog aquarium for a book about tadpoles, a student café for a text about kids’ cooking, a scarecrow or old corn grinder for a text relating to farming).
2. Establish a graffiti wall (e.g. on butcher’s paper or a chalkboard/whiteboard).

## Suggested implementation

### The graffiti wall

1. Once students have noticed the talking place and begin spontaneous discussion, encourage them to record speculations on the graffiti wall.

<i>He'll scare the birds</i>		<i>I wonder why Mrs T has put him here?</i>	
<i>Maybe he's to go on a bonfire, like Guy Fawkes</i>			
		<i>Do you think he is friendly?</i>	<i>I wonder if he has a heart?</i>

2. During the discussion, model how language is used for a variety of purposes, such as giving opinions, expressing doubts and drawing conclusions.

## More information

### Teaching the language of discussion

Student participation in conversations may be imagined along a continuum. At one end students may need the teacher's help, even in simple conversation; at the other end students happily fill the roles of speaker and listener in informal and formal discussion groups.

Talk around texts is a foundation of students' developing knowledge about language and texts, but as participation varies along the continuum, teachers must explicitly teach students how to use language to connect with others and, in the process, learn about language and texts.

*First Steps Oral Language Resource Book*, Chapter 2 (from Rigby Heinemann) offers detailed, practical ideas for explicitly teaching students to participate in sharing thoughts, opinions and ideas.

### Sharing ideas in different contexts

Encourage students to share their own ideas and respond to others' ideas in different situations, for example:

- informal sharing: students share and discuss an activity in progress
- sharing circle: students take turns around a circle to present and talk about an item of work
- partner/small-group sharing: students share their work with a previously nominated partner or group during allocated sharing time, such as at the end of after-reading activities. This strategy fosters active engagement, with more turns for talking
- formal sharing of, for example, a story map completed after a read-aloud activity, and presented to the whole class, another class or assembly as students' confidence grows.

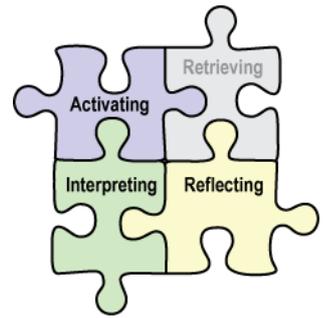
# 24 That reminds me

Years 1–9

During read-aloud activities, teachers model the process of connecting familiar and new knowledge.

## Learning focus

Making connections deepens students' understanding, clarifies meaning and helps them retrieve information from memory. Connections may relate to ideas in the text, other texts on the same topic, other texts written by the same author, or similarities/differences between characters, settings, plots, resolutions and information.



## Suggested implementation

1. Introduce the poster (see following page) and explain that making connections between ideas in different stories helps readers understand what they are reading.
2. Encourage students to discuss connections among favourite stories. Construct a concept map or semantic web to capture and extend students' ideas.
3. During read-aloud, shared or guided reading lessons, model the process of connecting ideas by thinking aloud.
4. Model the process of connecting ideas in writing by completing a 'That reminds me' worksheet during guided reading of a text. Provide individual worksheets so that students can practise the strategy during independent reading or literature circles. (see example below)

**Name:**

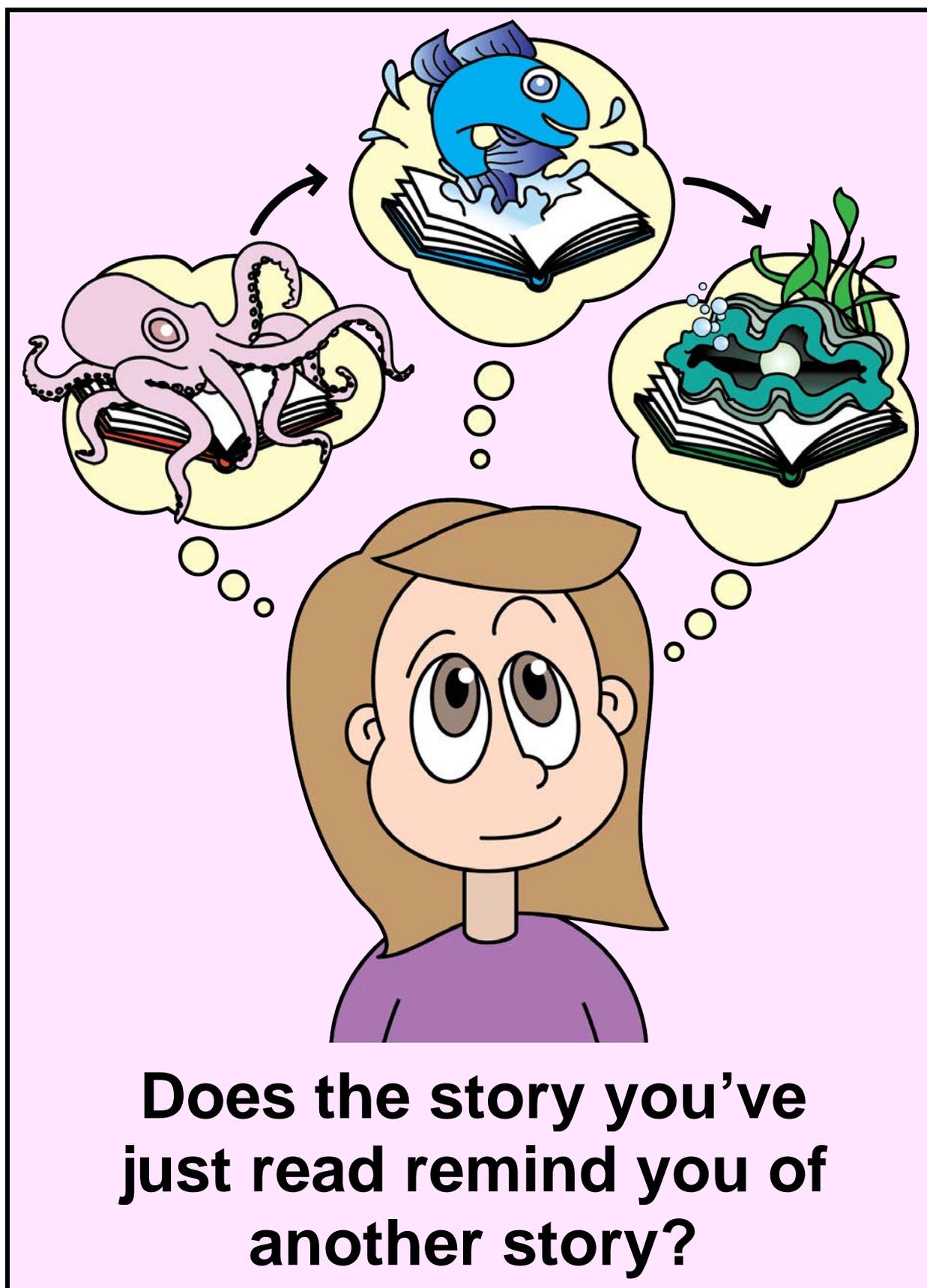
**Book title:**

1. As you read, think about what other story this story calls to mind.
2. Record your ideas.
3. Share your ideas with a group of friends.
4. Share your ideas with your group.

## Acknowledgment

This strategy draws on ideas from: Harste, JC & Short, KG, with Burke, CL 1988, *Creating Classrooms for Authors: The reading and writing connection*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.

## Poster: Strategy 24 — That reminds me



# 25 Top-level structuring

Years 1–9

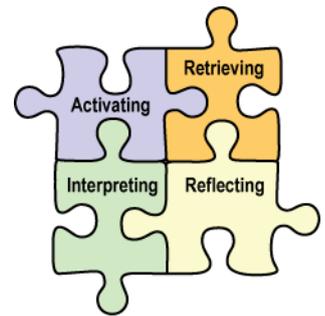
Teachers explicitly teach about top-level structures (patterns of thinking) so that students have a conscious knowledge of how writers use these patterns to communicate meaning.

## Learning focus

Top-level structures are part of prior knowledge about thinking and doing that readers bring to the task of reading. In our culture, four patterns are particularly common: comparison–contrast, cause–effect, problem–solution and description–listing.

Many readers have this knowledge at an automatic rather than a conscious level. Explicit teaching about these patterns helps students:

- find the central message of a text (main idea)
- sort out major supporting details from less important details
- organise writing clearly and logically
- remember important information
- develop control of reading and writing, and operate as strategic readers and writers.



## Suggested implementation

1. Select a text that uses one of the common structures such as comparison–contrast, cause–effect, problem–solution or description–listing.
2. Read the text, either as a shared text or individually, looking for instances of the structure. Highlight the parts of the text that signal that relationship.
3. Invite students to explain why they think that section is an example of the structure. Ask them to highlight particular words that signal that relationship e.g. for the cause–effect structure, words might include *because*, *so*, *as a result*.
4. Continue reading, looking for further instances of the structure and the language used to describe the relationship.
5. List the variety of ways used to signal that relationship.
6. Have students apply the new knowledge to another context or text.
7. Ask students to reflect — reconsider, self-correct, and modify their thoughts about the hows and whys of their thinking and learning.

Initially, students may need help with this part of the process. They will need practice in organising and describing what they have done. Creating mental pictures, shared discussions and personal writing are useful methods to stimulate this type of reflection.

# 26 Uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR)

Students and teachers silently read their own choice of text.

## Learning focus

USSR provides students with quiet time to consolidate reading skills. Through practice, students learn to sustain silent reading for ever-longer periods of time. USSR gives students important messages about reading and themselves as readers (see opposite).

## Teacher preparation

1. Set aside some quiet time for the activity. Students in the lower grades may be able to sustain silent reading for only a few minutes. Depending on the ability and interest of students, reasonable goals for USSR in primary school are 15–20 minutes and in secondary school, 20–30 minutes.
2. Make sure you have access to a timer or a clock alarm to time the activity. Turn its face away from the students to prevent clock-watching.
3. Your role is to model sustained silent reading behaviour. During the USSR session, you must read for pleasure and not mark papers or prepare work. Do not move around the classroom — this could interrupt students' reading process.

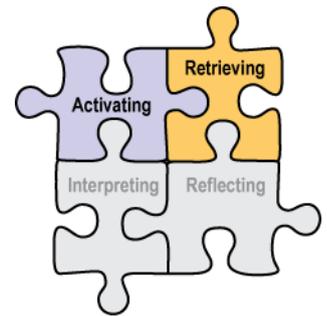
## Suggested implementation

1. Ensure that students understand what they are going to be doing during the activity, why it is important, and how it will be carried out. Display the rules for USSR (see opposite), and refer to these rules before each USSR session.
2. Give students time to choose their reading material.
3. Set the timer.

## Dealing with interruptions

- Interruptions that cause the teacher and a large number of students to look up from their reading should generally result in the end of the USSR session for that day. The interrupter should not be reprimanded; instead, the teacher should say: 'I'm sorry, but that interruption concludes our USSR session for today. Please put your reading materials away and we will go on to the next lesson.' Move on quickly to another activity, preferably one that is not seen by students as a punishment.
- After the habit of silent reading has been firmly established, minor interruptions may be handled smoothly without ending the session. For example a teacher might say, 'I hope the interruption didn't cause you to lose your train of thought' or, 'Do you think you can return to your reading without any problems?' If most students say 'yes', the teacher provides a model by returning immediately to reading.
- Minor interruptions that cause the teacher and one or two students to look up should be ignored. By returning to reading after quickly evaluating the situation, the teacher's action is saying: 'No problem. Let's continue our reading.'

Years 1–9



### USSR rules

Everybody reads

No interruptions

No-one will be asked to report what they read

### USSR: Key messages

Reading books is important.

Reading is something anyone can do.

Reading is communicating with the author.

Books are meant to be read in large sections.

Students are capable of sustained thoughts.

Teachers believe that students understand (because they don't bother to check).

Teachers trust students to decide when something is well written and when something important has been read.

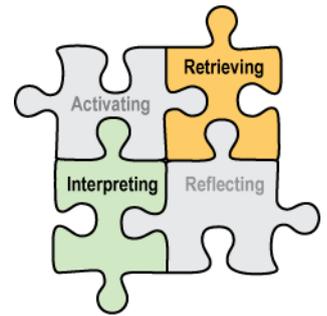
# 27 Visualising

Years 1–9

Students learn to create pictures in their minds to help comprehension and recall.

## Learning focus

Creating mental pictures helps improve comprehension of ideas in written text. It helps students transform words into higher-level concepts, and improves students' focus, attention to detail and independent reading skills. Visualisation can help students remember and apply their learning in new and creative situations.



## Suggested implementation

1. Ensure that students understand that to comprehend text they must draw both on the seen text (i.e. everything they can see on the page — words, diagrams, pictures, special typographical features) and on their own prior knowledge and experiences.
2. Read the text to students and ask them to try to 'see' in their minds what the words are saying.
3. Talk aloud about your own mind pictures derived from the text. Invite students to share, compare and explain their own images.
4. Talk with students about the importance of visualising the text in their minds to understand the idea or concept that the words are trying to convey.
5. Model the process of making notes in your learning log about the pictures that emerged as you read silently.
6. Practise guided visualisation and note-making using different text types. Encourage students to make notes about the features of texts that may help them create pictures in their minds.

Text	Visualisation
<p>The ocean's water moves constantly, pushed by prevailing winds. The winds create ocean currents: that is, water moving in one direction. Ocean currents flow in circular patterns. In the northern hemisphere, currents move clockwise; in the southern hemisphere, counter-clockwise. The temperature of the current depends on where it comes from. Warm currents originate in the tropics and bring warm water into cooler regions. Cold currents originate in the polar regions and bring cool water towards the equator.</p> <p><small>Sample text adapted from Draper, G, French, L &amp; Craig, A 2000, <i>Physical Geography: Discovering global systems and patterns</i>, Gage, Toronto.</small></p>	<p>Students make notes, draw diagrams, draw lines between relationships, etc</p>

## Variations

Have students work in pairs and allow them to work through the texts together from different subject areas.