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- helping beginning teachers to succeed and remain in teaching.
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- promoting the use of technology as a tool.
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ACTIVE LITERACY STRATEGIES:

Connecting Readers To Text

Grades K - 8



Prepared by: Vinny Danzer
Literacy Network Coordinator

Introduction



Learning to read has always been a concern for parents and teachers. For years, teachers concentrated on having children master one skill at a time, and a bottom-up approach pervaded teaching and learning.

In the past decade, educators and researchers (Smith, 1985; Goodman, 1986) have helped to redirect this type of instruction. Reading instruction today focuses on an interactive model where students read, write and talk to each other about what they have read. The shift has been one from basic skills to critical literacy which encourages children to use language in all its forms to think and communicate.

Teacher Center Literacy Network

The Literacy Network is a staff development program facilitated by Teacher Center personnel in New York City schools. This program gives teachers a menu of instructional options to choose from and a foundation in theory to guide them in selecting strategies most suitable for their classroom materials.

The core material of the Network is organized around the following components:

- The Comprehension Process.
- Vocabulary Instruction.
- Narrative Comprehension.
- Expository Comprehension.
- Decoding.
- Cooperative Literacy Lessons.

Ongoing staff development is another important aspect of the Network. A cadre of teachers from each school, along with Teacher Center staff, meet continuously throughout the school year to support one another as they share and compare their classroom lesson experiences and continue to learn new strategies.

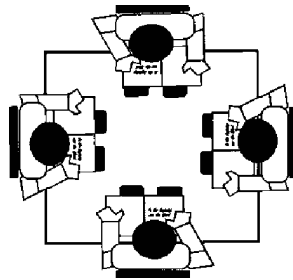
This ready reference chart is the result of the continuous efforts of the Literacy Network support team to promote self-reflection, risk-taking and a closer tie-in between theory and practice that will facilitate literacy learning in the classroom.

The Literacy Network Team

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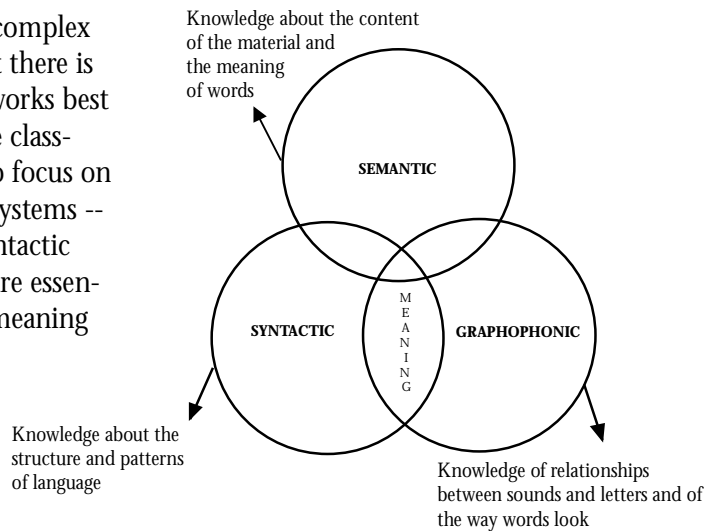


The current active - constructive model of comprehension requires that teachers shift from the text as an object of study to a consideration of what the reader brings to the text, e.g., the prior knowledge and strategies that the reader uses as he/she builds a model of what the text means.

This ready reference flip chart was developed to provide teachers with ideas for teaching children strategies that facilitate learning and can be used across all curriculum areas. We hope that the strategies presented here will stimulate thinking, writing, discussion and enthusiasm for reading in the classroom.

Three Cueing Systems

Learning to read is a complex process and as a result there is no one strategy that works best to teach reading. The classroom teacher needs to focus on all three reading cue systems -- the graphophonic, syntactic and semantic -- that are essential to providing the meaning of a text.



All three types of cues help children construct meaning. By teaching children how to read using only one cueing system, we fail to show them the variety of strategies they will need to comprehend the text. When we teach children how to use all three systems, we provide them with the variety of reading strategies they need to become fluent readers.

Paragraph Frames

Sequence Frame

Here is how two birds raised a family in our tree. First, _____.
Then, _____. Finally, _____.

Comparison Frame

_____ and _____ are alike in several ways.
First, both _____. Second, they _____.
Finally, they both _____.

Contrast Frame

_____ and _____ are different in several ways.
First of all, _____ while _____. Secondly, _____
_____ but _____. Finally, _____.

Framed Paragraphs

Framed Paragraphs are a way to teach students about the different organizational patterns found in texts. The frames provide students with textual organizational cues which in turn help students to write well-formed paragraphs. Students are guided to recognize the frames that are appropriate to the material being studied. Gradually, as students gain confidence in writing, frames are no longer necessary.

1. The teacher identifies the text frame that represents the organization of the material the students have read.
2. Students are provided with part or all of a topic sentence, the beginning of several sentences that will develop the topic sentence and all or part of a concluding sentence.
3. The students fill in the framed paragraph with information based on their reading. The result is a well organized summary.

Appropriate transition words for the different text structures are:

- **Sequence:** *first, next, then, finally.*
- **Main Idea/Detail:** *moreover, besides, then, first, finally, last.*
- **Comparison:** *similarly, likewise, in like manner.*
- **Contrast:** *but, yet, however, on the contrary.*
- **Conclusion:** *therefore, accordingly, thus.*

Prior Knowledge

Research over the past two decades has clearly established that the process of constructing meaning through reading, writing, speaking and listening is based on the prior knowledge that individuals bring to the situation (Adams and Bertram, 1980; Anderson and Pearson, 1984). Prior knowledge needs to be thought of in two ways: **Overall Prior Knowledge**- the entire base of knowledge that students possess. This develops as a result of all their accumulated experiences both in and out of school; and **Topic Specific Prior Knowledge**- the specific information needed for a particular theme or experience (Cooper, 1993).

Teachers need to consider (ask themselves): What prior knowledge needs to be activated/developed for each story, book or theme? Do my students have any misconceptions about the topic that could interfere with meaning construction? How can I help my students become independent in using strategies to activate their own prior knowledge?

Pre-Reading Strategies

Recent research has revealed that a reader's organized knowledge of the world provides the basis for his or her comprehension of ideas in texts (Yopp and Yopp, 1992). Very often students do not integrate what they read with what they already know and as a result, teachers will need to help students acquire the appropriate knowledge.

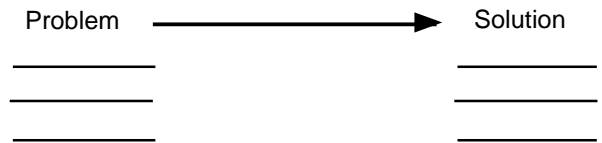
Pre-reading Strategies can be used to:

- activate and build background knowledge.
- generate curiosity.
- elicit feelings and experiences around a specific topic.
- foster identification with characters.
- set a purpose for reading.
- motivate students.

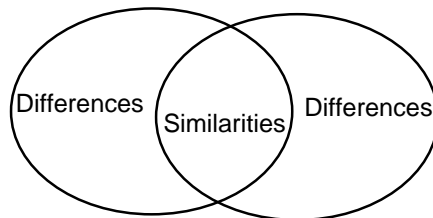
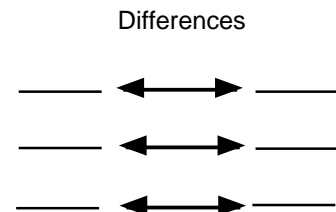
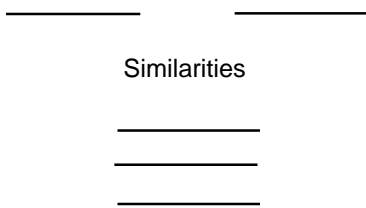
CAUSE/EFFECT



PROBLEM/SOLUTION



COMPARE/CONTRAST



	Man-eating Marsupials	Plant-eating Marsupials
feet		
teeth		

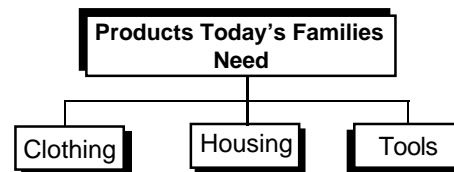
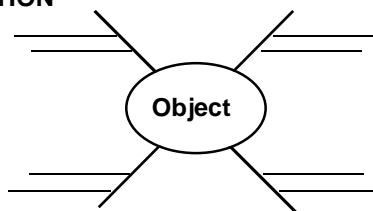
Graphic Organizers

A Graphic Organizer is a cognitive map in which important aspects of a concept, topic or unit of study are identified and arranged in a visual pattern with appropriate labels. “The use of graphic organizers encourages students to see information as components of systems or as contrasting concepts, rather than isolated facts. Once this information has been recorded on a graphic organizer, students can use the pictorial outline to form more abstract comparisons, evaluations and conclusions,” (Black and Black, 1990). Graphic organizers are most often used to review material that has been studied but they can also be used as a pre-writing tool to help students organize their ideas as well as integrate prior knowledge with new information.

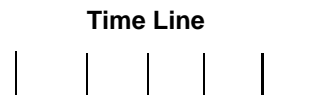
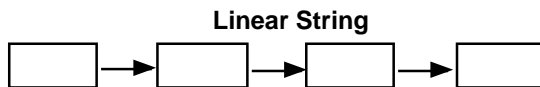
1. The teacher pre-reads the selection to determine the text structure and important ideas related to the theme.
2. The teacher prepares a graphic organizer that depicts the main concepts of the text.
3. The teacher and students complete the organizer individually, with partners or in cooperative groups.
4. The teacher should practice with the students, how to identify text patterns so that students can construct their own organizers.
5. Completed graphic organizers can help students organize their thinking for writing, for visual/oral presentations and for problem-solving.

Graphic Organizers for Common Text Structures

DESCRIPTION



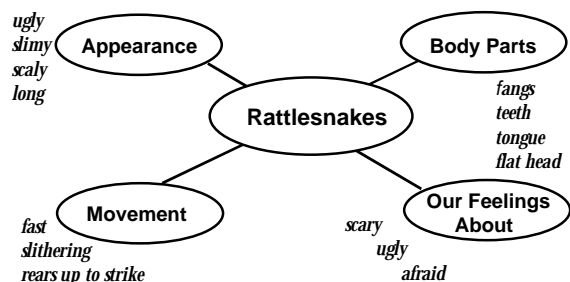
SEQUENCE



Semantic Mapping

Semantic mapping is a visual diagram which helps students see the relationships between words and concepts. This activity permits students to first generate many ideas randomly and then organize the ideas into logical groups or categories for greater understanding and retrieval of information. Recent brain research supports the value of mapping, because the “chunking” of information is a proven means of facilitating recall and comprehension of information. This strategy has been used effectively as a pre- and post-reading technique, a pre-writing activity, a study skill strategy and a vocabulary development strategy.

1. Select a topic that consists of sets of related ideas from a selection to be read.
2. Brainstorm a list of related words from students' prior knowledge, readings or class discussions.
3. Discuss and group words.
4. The teacher may introduce additional words essential to the topic and place these additional words in the appropriate categories.
5. After reading, new words and categories are added.



Anticipation Guide

Anticipation Guides are an effective way to activate thoughts and information about a topic. Before reading a selection, students respond to several statements that challenge or support their preconceived ideas relating to key concepts in the reading. Because student answers are based on their own thoughts and experiences, they should be able to explain and defend their positions in large and small group discussions. This process arouses student interest, sets purposes for reading and encourages higher-level thinking -- all important aspects of pre-reading motivation. Anticipation Guides can also be used after reading to evaluate how well students understood the material and whether or not misconceptions have been corrected. They can be used in any content area and work well with print and nonprint media such as films.

- 1) Identify the major concepts and details in the reading. (What information or ideas should be the focus of the student's attention?)
- 2) Consider student experiences or beliefs that the reading will challenge or support. (What do students already know or believe about the selection they will be reading?)

Discussion Web

The Discussion Web (Duthie, 1986) is a strategy that promotes critical thinking by encouraging students to take a position **for** or **against** a particular point of view and requires them to establish and support evidence for their selected point of view. This activity can be adapted to both narrative and expository texts.

1. After reading, the teacher poses a question or writes a statement for which there may be varying points of view. Support for the **yes** or **no** sides may come directly from the story or be argued from the students' point of view.
2. Students can work with a partner in groups of four to fill in both the **yes** or **no** sides to organize their opinions about the question or statement.
3. When this activity is completed, the teacher facilitates a whole class discussion around the statement/question. The goal is to foster a more effective student-centered discussion rather than reach consensus on the issue.

Discussion Web for *The Hundred Penny Box* by Sharon Bell Mathis

Yes	Should	No
	Michael's mother buy Aunt Dew a new box to replace the old one?	

Literature Report Card

The Literature Report Card is a strategy for students to evaluate a character's traits and to give reasons for the assigned grade. Younger readers are provided with the traits or subjects to be evaluated. Older students may decide and develop their own "subjects" for assessment. As in a school grading system, positive terms are used in determining the descriptors to be graded. This activity works well as an individual activity, with partners or in a cooperative group.

Literature Report Card for: Annie **In:** Annie and the Old One

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
Listening	A	Enjoyed listening to grandmother's stories.
Responsibility	C	Let sheep out of pen. They may have gotten hurt or run away.
Attendance at School	A	Went on yellow school bus every weekday.
School Citizenship	C	Threw teacher's shoe in trash can.
Progress	A+	Came to understand you cannot hold back time.

- 3) Create three to five statements that may challenge or modify your students' pre-reading understanding of the material. Include some statements that will elicit agreement between the student and the information in the text.
- 4) Present the guide on the board, on an overhead projector, or on paper. Leave space on the left for individual or small group response. As each statement is discussed, students first fill out the guide individually and then defend their responses to others in small groups or within a class discussion.
- 5) After reading, return to the Anticipation Guide to determine whether students changed their minds regarding any of the statements. Have students locate sections in the reading that support their decisions.

Anticipation Guide

The teacher created the following anticipation guide based on a passage in a 7th grade health book that the students were going to read:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Relaxing in bed is just as restful as actually sleeping. | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Everyone dreams during sleep. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. If you dream a lot during the night, you'll probably wake up feeling tired. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Most teenagers need at least 9 - 10 hours of sleep each night. |

K - W - L Plus

K-W-L Plus, a reading/thinking strategy, provides an organization for students to list 1) what they **know (K)** about a topic; 2) what they **want (W)** to learn about a topic; and 3) what they **learned (L)** about a topic -- plus mapping text and summarizing information. After learning K-W-L Plus under teacher direction, students can complete this activity individually or in small groups.

1. Distribute copies of a K-W-L worksheet (see example). Guide students in brainstorming ideas and discussing what they know about the topic. Students fill in the **K** column, what they know about a topic.
2. Teacher guides the students in categorizing the information they have generated and anticipating categories of information they may find in the reading. Students then complete the "Categories" section on the worksheet.
3. The teacher leads a discussion to help students formulate questions about what they want to know about the topic. Students then fill in the **W** column.
4. Students read the selection.
5. Students fill in the **L** column of the chart listing the things they learned from the reading.
6. Students use the **K-W-L** worksheet to construct a semantic map which categorizes all the information they have learned about the topic.
7. Students use the semantic map to produce a summary.

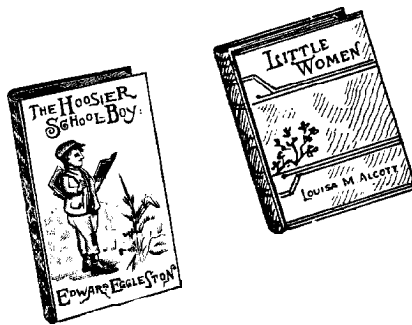
Character Weave for *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, by Patricia MacLachlan

Character	Physical Appearance	Behavior	Feelings
Anna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • girl, about 9 or 10 years old • fair • thin • long hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperative • performs chores • caring toward brother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guilt toward Caleb • misses mother • worries that Sarah will leave • anxious for Sarah to stay
Caleb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a few years younger than Anna • curly hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loud and pesky • asks questions • can read • imitates Sarah's speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • caring toward Papa • frightened of rain and thunder • agreeable
Sarah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tall and plain woman • fair • long hair • thick braids • hands large and rough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • works hard • can sing • likes books • good at adding • good carpenter • cuts hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misses the sea • independent • confident • caring • affectionate
Jacob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • father • farmer • usually wears suspenders • curly hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertised for wife • bakes bread • plows field • quiet and shy • works hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lonely • sad • caring toward children • confident (gives Sarah independence)

Character Weave

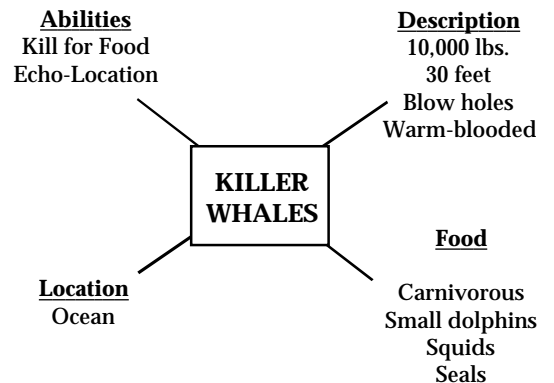
Character Weaves help students examine the main characters in a story and identify the characteristics, e.g., physical appearance, behavior and feelings. As the character weave is being completed, students may verify their notions by re-examining the events in the story. This activity should first be modeled by the teacher as a whole group activity. Once students are familiar with the process, they can do character weaves individually or in cooperative groups.

1. After a story has been read, the teacher presents a blank story map to the students. Under the character column, the class helps the teacher list the characters from the story.
2. The students discuss the traits of each character and the teacher lists them in the appropriate boxes. If there is any disagreement as to what is to be written down, the students re-examine the text to verify their statements.
3. Completed character weaves can be used to compare and contrast the behavior of specific characters throughout the story.



Topic: Killer Whales

K Know	W Want to Know	L Learned				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - live in oceans - are vicious - eat each other - are mammals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why do they attack people? - how fast can they swim? - what kind of fish do they eat? - how long do they live? - how do they breathe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - weigh 10,000 lbs. and get 30 ft. long - eat squids, seals and dolphins - are carnivorous - breathe through blow holes - have echolocation - found in oceans - are warm-blooded - have good vision under water 				
<p><u>Categories of Information We Expect to Use</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Abilities</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Food</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Description</td> <td style="border: none;">Location</td> </tr> </table>			Abilities	Food	Description	Location
Abilities	Food					
Description	Location					



Adapted from: *Strategic Learning in the Content Areas*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Education, 1990.

Possible Sentences

Possible Sentences is a five-part strategy designed to: assist students in learning new words that they encounter in their readings; encourage them to create sentences they may find in their reading; and provide motivation and a purpose for reading. This activity is most appropriate for use with content area material.

1. The teacher extracts essential words from the text about to be read and lists them on the board. For example, from a piece *Insect Eating Plants*, the following words were selected for study:

nectar	carnivorous	Great Green Swamp
nutrients	Venus Flytrap	digests
insects	plants	catch

2. Students are instructed to use two words from the list to create a sentence they believe might possibly be found in the text. The sentences are written on the board exactly as stated, even if the information is false. Encourage students to use every word at least once. Sentences that might be created from the above word list are:
 - a) The Venus Flytrap lives in the Great Green Swamp.
 - b) Nectar is a nutrient that plants need to live.
 - c) Carnivorous plants digest insects.
 - d) The flowers of the Venus Flytrap catch insects.
3. Students are asked to read the text to verify the accuracy of their answers.
4. Each sentence is evaluated and discussed. Inaccurate sentences are omitted or altered to make them true. For example, sentence "d" is inaccurate and should be changed to state that it is a kind of leaf that traps the insects that land on the Venus Flytrap.
5. The teacher asks students to generate new sentences once the original sentences have been evaluated. These sentences are also examined for accuracy.

Story Map

Title: *Freckle Juice*
Author: Judy Blume
Characters: Andrew, Miss Kelly, Andrew's Mother, Sharon, Nicky
Problem: Andrew wanted freckles

- Event 1: Andrew thinks freckles are to be envied and asks Nicky how he got his freckles.
- Event 2: Andrew pays his classmate, Sharon, fifty cents for her secret formula for freckles.
- Event 3: Andrew gets sick and misses school after mixing all the ingredients and drinking the mixture. Still no freckles.
- Event 4: Andrew's mom makes him go to school after two days.
- Event 5: Andrew is angry at Sharon and paints blue freckles on himself.
- Event 6: Andrew's teacher, Miss Kelly, gives Andrew a secret freckle removing formula.
- Event 7: Andrew discovers that Nicky really hates his freckles.

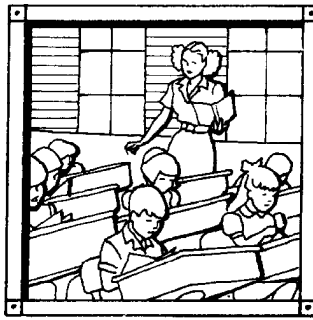
(Events can be added or deleted as needed.)

Solution: Miss Kelly makes Andrew understand that he looks good the way he is.
Value: Be happy with who you are.

Story Maps

Story mapping is a strategy that provides a framework for logical organization of events and ideas of central importance to the story. During the process of constructing a story map, students take a look at characters, the problem of a story, sequential events and solutions to the story problem. Story maps can be completed as a whole group activity, as a cooperative learning activity, or in reading groups for primary students.

1. After a story has been read, the teacher presents a blank story map to the students.
2. The teacher and students, together, come up with the appropriate information to complete the map. Often it is helpful to come up with the problem/solution before stating events. By doing this, students are able to focus on events in sequential order leading to the solution.
3. The completed story map provides an opportunity for discussion and/or writing. As students become more proficient in mapping, they can work on maps independently or in cooperative groups.



During Reading Strategies

While students are reading, there are many strategies a teacher can use to enhance the interactions between the students and text. These activities will encourage students to react to ideas, events or characters and to identify with material that they find interesting or meaningful. The classroom environment should be one in which students are prompted to respond personally to works of literature and content material and allowed to discuss and compare their responses with their classmates.

During Reading Strategies Can Be Used To:

- prompt reactions to ideas.
- encourage personal responses.
- highlight the author's language.
- facilitate comprehension.



Literature Map

Literature Maps enable students to respond to literature while reading. Students label boxes on a folded piece of paper into four or more sections with a category name. “Categories may include: setting, themes, predictions, vocabulary, questions, symbols, imagery or the names of characters,” (Yopp and Yopp, 1992). The student’s task is to write what he or she considers the most important or interesting information as it relates to each section. This information is recorded as the student reads the chapter or the book. When the maps are completed by individual students, they are discussed and shared with the whole class. This task helps students become more actively involved in their reading and all students have an opportunity to contribute to the class map and feel successful.

Title: *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*

Author: E. L. Konigsburg

<u>Claudia</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- adventurous- creative- smart- bossy- a spender	<u>Jamie</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- loyal- smart- a good money manager
<u>Mrs. Frankweiler</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- eccentric- kind- warm- generous	<u>Setting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Westchester- Metropolitan Museum of Art- mansion

Post-Reading Strategies

Post-Reading Strategies encourage reflection on some aspect of the text, such as character, important ideas, themes, issues or concepts. “The activities facilitate the organization of ideas and provide a structure for meaningful discussion in which all students may share their ideas and interpretations” (Yopp and Yopp, 1992)

Post-Reading Strategies can be used to:

- assist in the organization of information.
- prompt reflection.
- foster the integration of prior knowledge and new information.
- facilitate analysis and synthesis.
- promote deeper comprehension.



Double Entry Journal

Double Entry Journals give students an opportunity to select passages they find meaningful in a reading selection and then to respond as to why these passages were meaningful to them. This activity fosters the connection between reading and writing.

1. Students fold a piece of paper in half, lengthwise.
2. In the left hand column, the student either writes a sentence or paragraph from the selection that was particularly meaningful to them, along with the page number.
3. In the right hand column, the student reacts to the passage.
4. Students can share their responses with the class or literature discussion group or opt to keep their responses private.

Title: *War with Grandpa*

Author: R. Smith

Interesting Information	Reaction or Related Experience
Grandpa has moved in with his family and taken over his grandson Pete's bedroom.	I was confused because Pete's parents didn't tell him that grandfather was moving in. Why didn't they tell him sooner? At least Pete could have moved all his things out ahead of time.

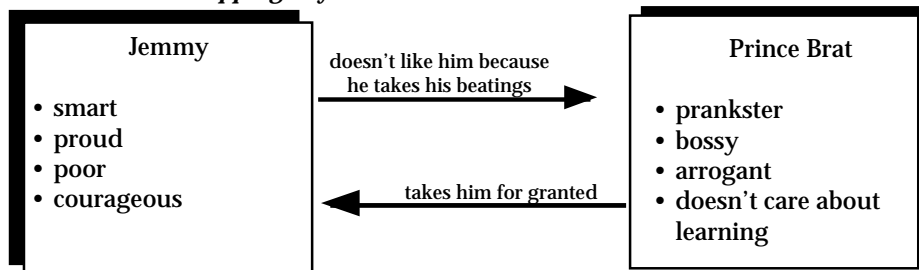
Character Map

Character maps help students become aware of the personality traits of particular characters in a book, as well as see the relationships between characters.

1. After a portion of a book has been read, the students and teachers identify two or more characters for analysis.
2. Each character's name is placed at the top of a box on a piece of paper. Students are asked to list the character traits under the characters' names.
3. Students draw an arrow from one character to the next and write words or phrases to tell how the first character feels about the second character.
4. Another arrow is drawn from the second character to the first and the students write about his/her feelings or relationship to the first.

Title: *The Whipping Boy*

Author: Sid Fleishman



Feelings Chart

A Feelings Chart is a useful tool to help students analyze characters' reactions to one or more events in a piece of literature. An outcome of this activity is that it often results in the students comparing and contrasting the characters. This activity can be conducted as a teacher facilitates with a large chart in front of the classroom and the whole class participates. In small groups, or individually, students can complete their own charts and then share their responses with the entire class.

Title: *Cinderella*

Author: Charles Perrault

Events	Cinderella	The Sisters
1. The invitation arrives	Sad because she cannot attend	Excited and mean to Cinderella
2. The night of the ball	Radiant, happy	Jealous
3. The prince's servant brings the slipper to Cinderella's house	Worried and then relieved	Hopeful, then angry and surprised

Reading Logs

Reading Logs also integrate reading and writing but are more structured than double-entry journals. The teacher provides the students with prompts for writing after they have read a selected piece of text. These logs help students focus on information, compare it, find patterns, ask questions, predict, summarize, shift perspectives, activate prior knowledge and remember what was learned.

Prompts for Narrative Texts	Prompts for Expository Texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the main character of the story? What kind of person is the character? How do you know? • Are there any characters that changed in some way during the story? If they changed, how are they different? • What incident, problem or situation does the author use to tell the story that helped you to anticipate the outcome? • Were you reminded of something in your own life as you were reading? • Does the story as a whole create a certain mood or feeling? What is the mood? How is it created? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I already know about this topic? • What do I want to learn about this topic? • Some things I might do to learn about this topic are _____. • What I learned that I already didn't know about my topic _____.
	Prompts for Specific Topics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are today's Native Americans different from their ancestors? • Describe how you think the earth moves. • Many animals have become endangered on our earth. What might have caused this? • Write a letter to a friend in another class, telling about our class trip and what you learned today.