Study Skills and Test Prep

Lesson Plan | Primary and Elementary School

Lesson Time: 15-20 minutes

Read and Understand!

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Students will use different reading comprehension strategies while reading. Students will list ways they can improve their reading comprehension.

Lesson Outcomes: Students will be able to ...

- Ask questions to improve reading comprehension
- Use titles, book summaries, and pictures to improve reading comprehension

Subject Area Connection: Language Arts

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: To prepare for this lesson, find a short engaging picture book and numerous copies of nonfiction books to share with students. Pick ones with interesting pictures on the covers and summaries on the back covers.

Materials Required:

- Picture book
- Nonfiction books
- Visuals of or access to website headers/home
- pages (optional)

Key Vocabulary

Comprehension: The act of understanding

Background

There are numerous strategies that can be used to help students improve their reading comprehension. Strategies addressed in this lesson include asking questions before, during, and after reading a text, predicting what the text will be about based on the cover, and making connections between the text and something in the reader's life. Many readers will use these strategies instinctively, but others will need prompting to use them and understand their benefits. These strategies work for all types of reading whether it is a book, magazine, or website. They can even be adapted to increase understanding and comprehension of films, TV shows, or other visual media.

Use this lesson to encourage both struggling and successful readers to become better at understanding the texts that they read.

"Many readers will use these strategies **instinctively** ..."

Introduction and Modeling

Select a picture book with a well-designed front cover to show to students. Look at the front cover together and ask students to guess or ask questions about how the story will go. (Students tend to respond well to wondering questions, e.g., I wonder what will happen to that boy in the picture.).

Write all the students' predictions/questions on the board. If the title page shows a different illustration, turn to the title page and repeat the predicting/questioning process. If there is a summary on the back of the book, read this to students and repeat the process once more.

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Procedure

1. Start reading the storybook you discussed during the introduction to students.

2. After reading half the story, have students discuss whether the story is going the way they predicted. Ask students if they have new predictions to make or questions to wonder about. Ask students if the story reminds them of something else they have read, something in their own life, or something they've seen in the news or on TV. Do these connections bring up new predictions or new questions?

3. Finish reading the story. Summarize the story quickly for students. Ask them if the story went how they thought it would go. If it didn't, ask students whether they liked the way it was written or if it would have been better the way they predicted.

4. Ask students who understand the book and who could explain it to you in one sentence. Hopefully all (or almost all) students agree that they understand. Point out that the questions and predictions you made as a class helped them understand the book better.

5. Ask students to think about the steps you followed as a class before you read the book, as you were reading the book, and after you finished reading the book. Write the steps on the board. They should look something like this:
   - Before you read: Look at the book cover. Read the title. Look at the pictures. Read the summary on the back. Think about what the story will be about. Guess what will happen. Ask questions.
   - As you read: Ask questions such as: What does this story remind me of? Is the story going the way I thought it would go? Do I understand the story? What will happen next?
   - After you read: Ask questions such as: Did I like the book? Did it turn out the way I thought it would? Can I think of a better way to end the story? What does the story remind me of?

6. Tell students they can follow similar steps with anything they are reading, whether it is a nonfiction book, a magazine article, or even a website. If feasible in your classroom, you may want to look at an informational website or some other visual media and go through the steps above with children. Ask students why they might want to follow those steps. Elicit the answer that it will help them understand the book.

Discussion Questions

- Do you enjoy reading? Why or why not?
- What do you have the most difficulty with when you read?
- Do you think reading is fun? If not, what do you think would have to change so that it is fun?
- What are some things you can do before you read a book that will help you understand it better?
- What are some things you can do while you are reading a book to help you understand it better?
- What are some things you can do after you finish reading to help you understand the book better?

Evaluation

Put students in small groups and give each group a nonfiction book (or access to a kid-friendly website). Have them go through the predicting/questioning sequence you went through as a class (if online, they can look at the home page instead of a book cover). Have them read the book/webpage together and see whether their predictions were correct.

Tips for Tailoring This Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

You may wish to focus more on the individual strategies being put into play in the lesson above. After the lesson, explain the three main strategies discussed: asking questions, making connections, and using titles/pictures to predict or infer information. Spend time fleshing out these strategies with students.

For Lower Grade Levels

Keep things focused by only introducing one strategy: wondering questions. Look at the cover of the book and ask, What will happen in this book? Halfway through ask, What will happen next? or Why are the characters doing that? When you finish reading ask, What did you like best about the story?

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Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Reading

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Partnership for 21st Century Framework

Partnership for 21st Century Framework: the framework comprises the skills, knowledge, and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st Century. Partnership for 21st Century Skills www.p21.org

Core subjects: English, reading, or language arts

Make Judgments and Decisions

- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
- Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis
- Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes

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