

Read Aloud Strategies for Grades 4-8

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Listening to stories is an essential part of the reading-language arts program. There are many reasons for reading and telling stories to students. Reading aloud to students with fluency and enjoyment makes reading seem an easy and desired goal to reach. Listening to stories expands students' abilities to think and comprehend, which leads to the development of critical thinking skills in reading. Learning to listen intently and to make specific responses encourages remembering.

Some stories are for telling, some for reading, and some for a combination of reading and telling. Simple stories with a direct sequence of plot incidents, such as folktales, are best for storytelling. Others, with vivid vocabulary and words that express a certain mood or exact meaning, need to be read to students to help them form mental images. Books with excellent illustrations are good to read and show to students.

Regardless of how a story is brought to students, careful preparation is necessary. A story must be shared with students by reading and rereading it, telling and retelling it. Only then can students listen with confidence and pleasure.

The "Read Aloud Strategies" for adolescent literature are designed to be examples or models for the intermediate grade teacher to follow when presenting a Directed Listening Activity. This template is designed to provide everything a teacher needs to help students to develop critical thinking skills through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. It is not designed to be a script. It merely gives the teacher guidance in how to conduct the lessons. The template should be copied so that the teacher has one for each chosen story or chapter. Before using the lesson, the teacher should pencil in details for the story or chapter to be presented. Then the teacher should review it so that it appears comfortable and natural. The sharing of literature should be a joyful, enriching time for students and teachers alike. A sample lesson is provided for using this template.

In order to facilitate learning to use the "Read Aloud Strategies" the following techniques shall be explained below: Steps for Introducing Vocabulary, Read-Aloud Techniques, Questioning Techniques, Direct and Indirect Questioning, Time Management, Literature Check- Ups, and Extension Activities.

Steps for Introducing Vocabulary:

1. The teacher says the word, and the students hear it.
2. The teacher writes the word and the students see the word.
3. The students write the word on their own papers.
4. The students say the word aloud, as in a chorus.
5. The teacher reads the context sentence that includes the word so that the students can deduce the meaning.
6. The teacher writes the part of speech and the meaning of the word for the students to copy.

Read Aloud Techniques

1. The Synonym Technique All difficult words cannot be introduced because of time constraints. The teacher may give synonyms or other explanatory words without interrupting reading.
Example: "Follow me," the ranger said, and we all **scampered** behind him.
ran quickly
2. The Omission Technique In a book where the vocabulary load is difficult, the omission technique is used. All words are not necessary for the meaning of the section being read. The teacher omits words in the text.
Example: "I wound my arms ~~frantically~~ around the bars."
3. The Read and Tell Technique Many parts of a book are not interesting for listening. Rather than read a section that is not interesting, mark the section in the book and tell about it (i.e., give a summary of the section). Then go back to reading. This technique is also useful when the teacher runs short of time. The remainder of the section to be read may be told.

Questioning Techniques

1. **Stating Details, Facts, and Information**
Who did it?
What did he do?
Where did he go?
How did he do it?
2. **Telling the Sequence of Events**
What was the first thing that happened?
What happened next? What did they do after . . . ?
What did they do before . . . ?
What was the last thing that they saw?
3. **Making Inferences** What can you infer about . . . ? Why? What makes you think . . . ? Why might you suspect that . . . ? What clues are you given about . . . ?
4. **Identifying Cause and Effect Relationships**
What caused this to happen?
What was the reason for this happening?
Why? What was the result of . . . ?
What was the effect of . . . ?
As a result of . . . , what happened?
5. **Predicting Outcomes**
What do you predict will happen? Why?
What do you think will happen? Why?
What do you foresee?
What do you anticipate?
Why might you predict that?

6. **Making Comparisons**

How are . . . and . . . alike?

How are they different?

How does this compare with . . . ?

In comparison with . . . , how is this different?

What are the similarities? What are the differences?

Which is the largest (smallest, newest, bravest, etc.)?

7. **Drawing Conclusions**

What conclusion can you draw about . . . ? Why?

What can you conclude about . . . Why?

What facts led you to conclude that . . . ?

From this evidence, what logical conclusion can you draw?

8. **Determining Main Ideas**

(In teaching Main Ideas, the teacher must give a clue, to avoid guessing on the part of students.)

The main idea of this part of the story tells . . .

What is this main idea?

The most important idea tells what the main character did.

The main idea tells what happened at the beginning of the story.

Who will state this main idea in a sentence? Now shorten the sentence to a title (or headline).

NOTE: When teaching main idea, use two levels of instruction. First, give the clue as to what the main idea is (i.e. "The main idea of this chapter tells about a boy, a pilot, and a plane crash."), and then ask for the supporting details. Later, when the students have become familiar with what a main idea is, ask for details about what occurred in the chapter and then have them formulate the main idea based on the details.

9. **Recognizing and Solving Problems**

(Identifying and evaluating problems)

What difficulty was there in . . . ?

What problem had to be solved before . . . ?

What handicap did the main character have to overcome? (Analyzing solutions)

What better way could the problem have been solved? W

hat would you have done to solve the problem of . . . ?

How did the main character overcome . . . ?

10. **Recognizing Word Imagery (identifying descriptive language)**

What colorful words create a picture in your mind of . . . ?

What word pictures give an image of . . . ?

What vivid descriptions make this story so interesting?

What sensory details give a mental picture of . . . ?

What descriptions appeal to your sense of sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste?

What imagery is used to make this scene come alive?

11. **Identifying Figurative Language (recognizing figures of speech used by the author for specific purpose)**

Simile (a clearly-defined comparison of two or more unlike things: white as snow)

Metaphor (an indirect comparison in which one thing is called another: heart of a city)

Hyperbole (an exaggeration of extravagant statement: This book weighs a ton.)

Alliteration (repetition of the same initial sound among words of a sentence or phrase: dark and dreadful deeds)

12. **Distinguishing Between Fact and Fiction/Fact and Opinion**

What parts of this story are true to life?

Could this incident really have happened? Why or why not?

Would this part of the story be true to life or fantasy?

Was the person's experience real or imaginary? How do you know?

What are the verifiable facts that are given in the story?

What evidence is there that this statement is not a fact, but only the author's opinion?

Which statements made by a character were fact and which were opinion?

13. **Recognizing Story Elements (characters, setting, theme, and plot)**

Who are the main characters? ... minor characters? protagonists?

Where does the story take place? When does it take place?

What is the main conflict in the story?

What is the most exciting event or climax in the story?

What is the author trying to teach us through this story?

14. **Analyzing the Author's Style (mode of telling the story)**

What type of sentences does the author use in telling this story? (simple, complex, narrative, dialogue, etc.)

What literary devices does the author use to make the story interesting and exciting? (i.e., alliteration, simile, metaphor, foreshadowing, flashback, etc.)

Who is narrating (telling) the story? From whose point of view is the story told? (main character, minor character, author, observer, etc.)

What is the character's point of view regarding . . . ? What type of literature is this story or novel? (fiction, non-fiction, historical, realistic, science, fantasy, etc.)

The above listed skills are used in ALL content areas. Therefore, the learning of these skills provides for reliable transfer from one subject to another.

Direct and Indirect Questioning

Each book should be read chapter by chapter so that students may listen for a purpose. Prior to reading a chapter of the story, the teacher should tell the children what they will be listening to find out (indirect question). Then ask a direct question. This question is precisely worded to match the indirect question so that students will be expecting the very same question. After the students have responded to that direct question, the teacher continues reading after a new indirect question has been asked. At the end of the lesson, additional questions may be asked to extend the students' thinking into other cognitive areas.

Time Management

Each plan for the "Read Aloud Strategies" is to be completed in 10-12 minutes. The teacher should spend 3 minutes for Motivation, Readiness, and Vocabulary Introduction. The reading aloud should take 3-4 minutes. The Direct Questions should take 3-4 minutes. The teacher should be aware of the time when reading aloud and should use the Read and Tell Technique if time is running short. The lesson is intended to be fast-paced to keep students alert and involved with the instruction. If the teacher wishes to cover the book faster, parts of the book can be consolidated and read together.

Literature Check-up

"Literature Check-ups" are to be given periodically throughout the book (roughly about every 5 chapters). These serve as a comprehension and vocabulary check. Teachers are to create a check-up and make copies for students (template provided). For questions 1-5, use your judgment and choose questions from pages 2-5. There should be a total of 5 questions for each group of 5 chapters with a variety of questions from the 14 comprehension techniques checks. Upon completion of the task, students may either grade their own, exchange with a partner, or hand them to the teacher to grade.

Extension Activities

Several extension ideas should be given at the end of each section of the book. They are to stretch students' thinking and to integrate the use of literature into other areas of the curriculum. Extension ideas may be teacher-directed activities, group or homework projects, or independent classroom follow-ups for students. Extension ideas range from simple to complex. Activities might include art projects, simulated games, role-playing, or cooking experiences. Several sample extension activities follow:

1. Write an analytical/expository paragraph summarizing the events from Chapter 1. Include information about the main and secondary characters as described.
2. Do a Reader's Theater from a scene from the first five chapters.
3. Write a sensory/descriptive paragraph entry into a make-believe diary of one of the characters that expresses how that character feels.