

## Literacy Tips



Tips for middle school educators on various topics such as grammar, writing, reading, spelling, vocabulary, cooperative learning and more.

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### Tip #12: Open House and Book Bits

Activating prior knowledge and making predictions are crucial steps in improving student comprehension. As you know, it is important to do this with fiction, non-fiction text, and other genres. Here are two strategies you might like to try: Open House and Book Bits. I demonstrated Book Bits at the November 11 in-service for those of you who might have attended. The Open House strategy is another twist on it.

#### *Open House*

Source: Dr. Kylene Beers, University of Houston

[www.allamericareads.org/lessonplan/strategies/before/openhouse.htm](http://www.allamericareads.org/lessonplan/strategies/before/openhouse.htm)

1. Discuss with the students the characteristics of an open house. People usually mingle, talk, and share information. Explain to the students that this reading strategy will help them make predictions which is what good readers do.
2. Photocopy the selection that you want students to read: chapter one from a novel, a poem, a chapter from their science or soc. st. text, etc.
3. Cut apart the photocopied selection so that you have enough segments of paper for each member of your class. Shuffle the segments and distribute them in random order to the students.

Tell each student to read over his/her segment silently.

4. "Next, tell the students that they have 10 minutes to meet and greet as many guests in the room as possible. The idea is to create an open house atmosphere in which the students spend a minute or two with other students and share the information from the chapter as revealed in their given segment. Have the students record on their sheets what they discover from others."
5. In order to help guide the students, you may want to create a "Discover" recording sheet. Your worksheet prompts will be dependent upon the genre you have chosen to read with your students. If you are reading the first chapter of a novel, have the students try to find out from each other the following: characters, point of view, setting, mood/ tone, plot/ action, conflict(s), I predict... You may want to make a class chart of all of the student predictions.
6. After completing the open house, have students return to their seats. Pass out the novels and let students read the chapter silently on their own. As a class, discuss how their



predictions compared to what they actually read.

## ***Book Bits***

Source: Linda Cornwell, Scholastic National Literacy Specialist

1. Choose a selection to be read and from it, select key phrases or sentences that are significant to the text. These book bits should reveal enough to help the students begin to make predictions but not reveal so much that they limit thinking.
2. Type up each book bit and slice them apart. Prepare enough book bits so that each member of the class has one. (If necessary, repeat a few book bits rather than give too much text away from what is going to be read.) Ask each student to silently read the book bit and think about how it might be connected to the text.
3. Then divide the class in half. Form two parallel lines in the classroom or out in the hallway with students facing each other. Students should look at the person across from them and read aloud their book bit. (Remember that half the class will be reading at the same time so encourage whisper reading.) No discussion should occur after the book bits are read. Then have one line shift down, so everyone has a new partner. Students across from each other should read their book bits aloud without discussion. Continue this pattern of shifting and reading until everyone has read aloud to each other. (This built in rereading is an excellent remediation tool. Most struggling readers will not take the time to reread text on their own.)
4. The students should then return to their seats and complete a fastwrite on what they have learned about the text so far, and they should also make predictions. Have students share their fastwrites in small groups to compare predictions.
5. Students should now be ready to interact with the chapter on their own. Have them read the entire text silently. In a final discussion, have them think about how their fastwrites compared to the real text.

