

## 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 #18: Pointed Reading

Pointed reading is a strategy to get students to reread text in order to develop fluency and improve comprehension. The single best way to improve reading is to read. Good readers fix-up by rereading. This strategy helps illustrate to students the importance of rereading text.

1. Pass out a Xerox copy of a poem to each student. Choose something at the instructional level for most of your readers. You want this to be challenging for them.
2. As with all poetry, it should be read aloud. Read it aloud to your students modeling good fluency and expression.

Have them write down at the top of their paper a score (1-10) to indicate how well they understood the poem on this first reading.

3. Then tell the students to go back and underline things in the poem they really liked or which meant something to them. Your kids will need a goal, so suggest that they go back and find at least three things to underline. This will be their second reading.

Have them jot down a score at the top of their paper indicating how well they understood the poem this time.

4. Now tell your students that you are going to read aloud the poem again to them, but ask them to join in orally on the parts that they have underlined. I know that when I tried this, I was worried I might be the only one to come in on a particular part of the poem. Actually, just the opposite happened. We became a community of readers. You will discover that several kids will read a word or a phrase together. When they hear someone else reading right along with them, it validates their prediction that it was a main idea or an important part of the text. Every piece of literature has those strong words and ideas that seem to float above all the others. As the poem continues, the extra voices in certain points punctuates the meaning, the essence of the poem. It really is pretty interesting to hear how the poem changes its tone with this additional voice support.

Have them jot down at the top of their paper how well they understood the poem after this third reading.

5. Discuss with the students the importance of rereading. Hopefully they will tell you that their comprehension improved simply having read this poem three times. Couple repeated readings with other



research-based strategies, and kids will walk away from text with improved comprehension. Hopefully this will be concrete evidence for them. Remind them that reading is revision. Every time we reread, our level of understanding changes. Tell them to think of reading like we draft in writing.

Are you wondering yet why this might be called pointed reading? That's because you are a good reader, and good readers ask questions along the way, don't they? :)

Well, we were told during this presentation that mystical chants are written with underscoring. The underscoring is also called pointing, and this evolved into the reading strategy called pointed reading.

### *Source*

Dr. Kylene Beers, presentation at NCTE, November, 2003  
When Kids Can't Read - What Teachers Can Do, Heinemann, 2002

