

Literacy Tips



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

Contact: Amy Goodman
Middle School Literacy Support
907-267-0221
goodman_amy@asdk12.org
www.asdk12.org/MiddleLink/LA/

Tip #2: Reading is not a passive activity, but an active one.

The comprehension strategies you should emphasize during reading are:

- making connections
- questioning
- visualizing
- inferring
- determining importance
- synthesizing

Remember to think about the gradual release method when teaching these strategies. The gradual release method starts with teacher modeling and then gradually releases the responsibility for learning over to each individual student.

1. Start with a think aloud. Do this on a piece of literature you have displayed on the overhead projector (a short poem or news article works well). Let the students see how a good reader (you) approaches one of the above comprehension strategies. Use the strategy right in front of them on the text you have chosen and let them hear what a good reader's brain is doing.
2. Then distribute another piece of literature to everyone. Ask the students to try the strategy with a partner using this new piece of literature. (Remember over the year to use many different genres for practice so they become comfortable

applying these skills in various settings. Keep the selections short so they can practice efficiently.) Ask partner pairs to describe how their practice of the strategy went. It is important to reflect with your students before moving on.

3. Finally ask students to open up a piece of literature they have brought with them (a recreational reading book). Tell them they are going to read silently for 10 minutes from wherever they are in their book. Have them estimate how many pages they can read in those 10 minutes. Give them a sticky note and have them place it at their halfway mark. The sticky should remind them to stop and practice the strategy you have demonstrated. Remember to reflect with your students about their learning. Have kids come up to the front to tell what recreational reading book they are reading, where they are in their book, and how the strategy worked for them.

Further reading

For further reading on this topic, try to find a professional article or book written by Linda Hoyt or Stephanie Harvey/Anne Goudvis. Mardell Kiesel, our K-12 literacy coordinator, has many professional books available in her office at 6th & K. (Hm, I should tell more about her for tip #3!)

