



Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years

www.popey.ca

Supporting Successful Readers & Writers in the Intermediate Grades

February 6, 2024

8:30am - 2:15pm

Connect with us online!



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POPEY



Goals and objectives for our day together

Together we will explore ways to support successful readers and writers in the intermediate grades, as POPEY guides us through:

- reading and writing development across the grade levels
- opportunities for reading and writing both fiction and nonfiction
- literature circles as a tool for collaboration, comprehension & conversation
- instructional routines to support differentiation and inclusion

How do we learn?



- * observation of someone skilled modelling/demonstrating
- * direct instruction
- * gradual release of responsibility
- * practice / repetition
- * time / opportunity
- * encouragement / feedback
- * safety to take risks and try new things
- * relationships, motivation, engagement...

Learning is:

- * social
- * constructive
- * experiential
- * inquiry-based

With this in mind, how can we create the learning experiences our students need to build **strong reading & writing skills**?

Check-in - You and Literature Circles

How would you describe your **prior experience** and **comfort level** with Lit Circles?

1. Have not tried them yet
2. Have tried them a bit
3. Feel pretty comfortable with them
4. Feel very comfortable with them



Comparing Lit Circles and Book Clubs

How many of you have participated in Book Clubs?

How would you describe a Book Club? Turn & Talk

- * A group of people reading the same book
- * Meeting on a regular basis to talk about the book
- * Sharing thoughts, connections, reflections, opinions, wonderings...
- * A fun, social, and supportive setting to talk about books and their themes, genres, ideas, lessons, characters...



Supporting a Classroom of Talkers and Listeners

Our students need...

- * a sense of safety, joy and belonging in the classroom
- * a classroom culture of appreciation and respect
- * time to talk (built into their daily schedule)
- * a balance of partner talk, small group talk, whole class talk
- * demonstrations of and practice with:
 - ♦ compliments – what they're noticing others do
 - ♦ asking questions and listening to answers
 - ♦ sharing their opinions, with reasons/evidence
 - ♦ oral rehearsal for what they're writing

Scaffolding Comprehensive Literacy Learning

Whole class instruction – what's our purpose?

- ✓ intentional and thoughtful **conversation** to support **language development**
- ✓ **direct instruction** – mini-lessons to model what good word solvers, readers, and writers **think and do** – students observe the reading/writing process
- ✓ building **community**, connection, trust, safety, belonging
- ✓ building students' **identities** as **readers** and **writers**
- ✓ connecting students to the **joy of stories** and texts through **interactive read alouds**
- ✓ making the **connections** between thinking, talking, reading, and writing **explicit** and **meaningful**
- ✓ equip students with an **expanding toolkit** of **word solving strategies** they can use independently in their reading and writing experiences

Scaffolding Comprehensive Literacy Learning

Small group work – what's our purpose?

- ✓ teacher acting as **coach** or **guide** for students as they **practice** new literacy skills
- ✓ teacher can have **quick** and **informal** reading and writing **conferences** with students within the group
- ✓ **socially supported** activities, as students **practice** their literacy skills with a small group of peers
- ✓ students **participate** in **group** reading and writing **problem solving** and **conversations**
- ✓ students participate in **enjoyable literacy experiences** and **build their confidence** interacting with texts
- ✓ students **develop the strategies** needed to be **successful** readers and writers

Scaffolding Comprehensive Literacy Learning

Independent reading & writing – what's our purpose?

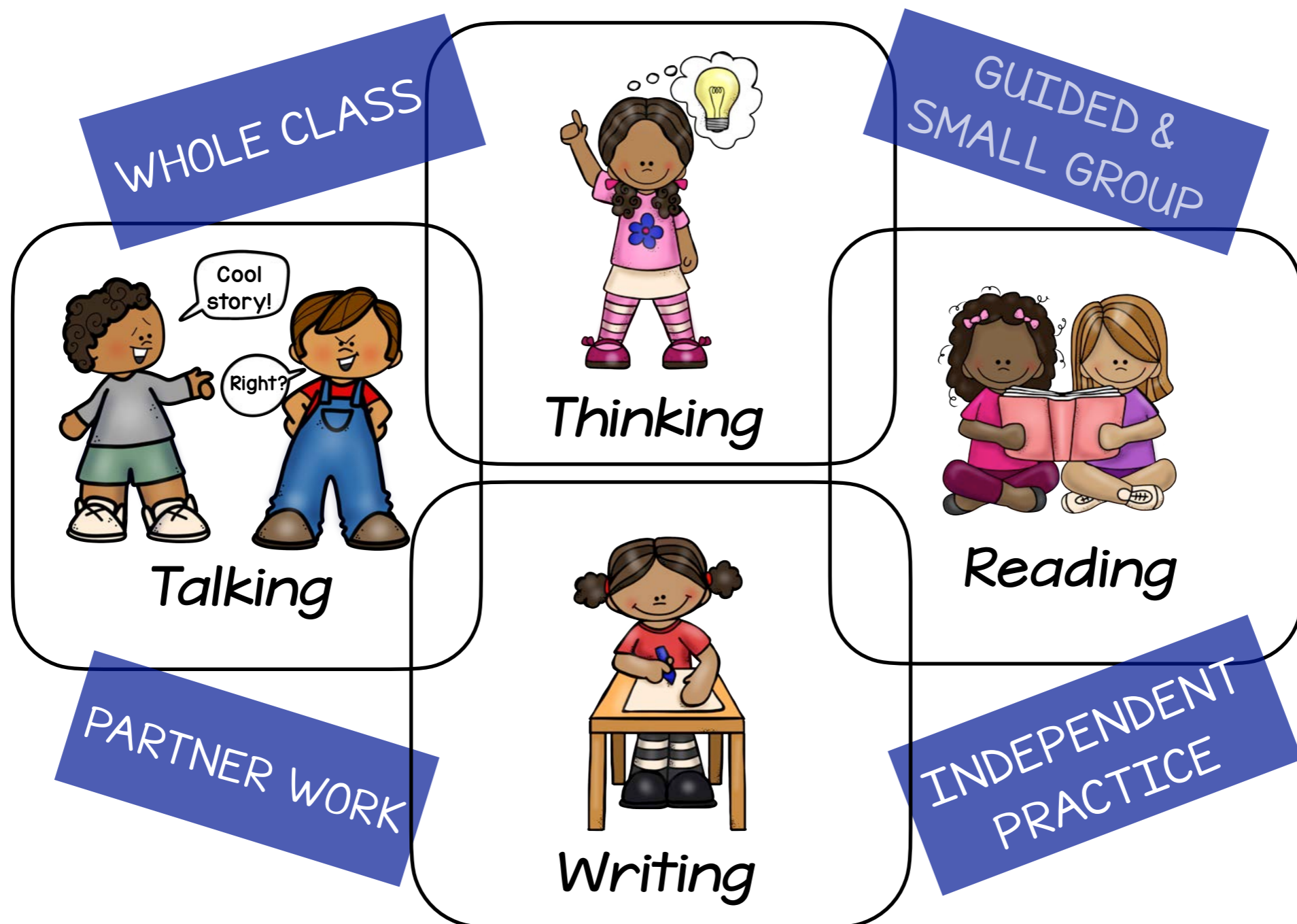
- ✓ students **choose** texts, topics and stories to **read** and **write** about
- ✓ **read and write by themselves** or with a **partner**
- ✓ have the **time** to **practice** the literacy skills they've been taught

- ✓ develop **fluency, comprehension, and writing skills**
- ✓ use **known words** and **word solving skills** to write unknown words
- ✓ use **resources in the room** to help them write

- ✓ **understanding** the **power** of reading and writing to **share stories** and **ideas** with each other
- ✓ **enjoy** reading and writing on their own
- ✓ strengthen their **identity** as a reader and a writer

Minimal teacher support: You do

Think about your **literacy routines** and how you **plan** and **schedule** for these **elements** of literacy learning:



What's a **strength** area and what's a **stretch** area for you?

BC's English Language Arts Curriculum



Ministry of Education

Area of Learning: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

BIG IDEAS

- Language and **text** can be a source of creativity and joy.
- Exploring **stories** and other **texts** helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Texts can be understood from different perspectives.
- Using language in creative and playful ways helps us understand how language works.
- Questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged citizens.

Learning Standards

Curricular Competencies	Content
<p><i>Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected individually and collaboratively to be able to:</i></p> <p>Comprehend and connect (reading, listening, viewing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access information and ideas from a variety of sources and from prior knowledge to build understanding • Use a variety of comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading, listening, or viewing to guide inquiry and deepen understanding of text • Synthesize ideas from a variety of sources to build understanding • Consider different purposes, audiences, and perspectives in exploring texts • Apply a variety of thinking skills to gain meaning from texts • Identify how differences in context, perspectives, and voice influence meaning in texts • Explain the role of language in personal, social, and cultural identity • Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and develop understanding of self, community, and world • Respond to text in personal and creative ways • Recognize how literary elements, techniques, and devices enhance meaning in texts • Show an increasing understanding of the role of organization in meaning • Demonstrate awareness of the oral tradition in First Peoples cultures and the purposes of First Peoples texts • Identify how story in First Peoples cultures connects people to land 	<p><i>Students are expected to know the following:</i></p> <p>Story/text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms, functions, and genres of text • text features • literary elements • literary devices • perspective/point of view <p>Strategies and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading strategies • oral language strategies • metacognitive strategies • writing processes <p>Language features, structures, and conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • features of oral language • paragraphing • sentence structure and grammar • conventions

The Developmental Stages of Reading



Emergent

- pretend, imitate & practice reading behaviours
- use background knowledge to predict author's message
- begin to understand concepts of print
- know that print represents sounds & words



Early

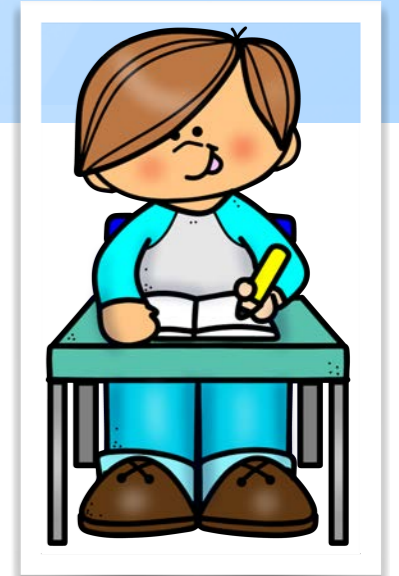
- know how sounds translate into letters & letter clusters
- understand concepts of print
- respond to texts through oral retellings and discussions
- use decoding & problem solving skills
- read high frequency words quickly and fluently
- use known words to monitor meaning



Transitional

- use knowledge of text to monitor & self-correct
- develop an awareness of how to read silently
- apply more complex comprehension strategies
- expand vocabulary; show interest in unfamiliar words
- solve multisyllabic words by noticing parts of words

The Developmental Stages of Writing



Emergent

- hold simple sentences in memory when composing
- use a combination of drawing, dictating, & writing letters
- say words slowly to identify sound-to-letter match
- write a few high frequency words with accuracy



Early


- maintain a sequence of ideas when writing a message
- construct words using larger units of sound-to-letter
- spell high frequency words correctly
- return to reread when meaning breaks down
- include more details in writing
- segment and blend sounds in words



Transitional

- use knowledge of text to plan & organize writing
- include details in logical sequence
- expand vocabulary; include new and unusual words
- attend to syllables when writing unknown words
- write longer texts with greater accuracy and speed

BC's ELA Curriculum & Quick Scales

 **Area of Learning: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS** Grade 5

BIG IDEAS

Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy.

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- English Language Arts Big Ideas
 - Learning Standards
 - * Curricular Competencies
 - * Content

Quick Scale: Grade 4 Reading Literature

This Quick Scale is a summary of the Rating Scale that follows. Both describe student achievement in March-April of the school year.

Aspect	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
<p>SNAPSHOT <i>Note: the snapshot can be used alone as a holistic scale in some situations.</i></p>	<p><i>With support, the student may be able to read and understand brief, simple stories and poems. Often needs one-to-one help. Work is often inaccurate or incomplete; tends to rely on guessing.</i></p>	<p><i>The student is able to read, understand, and respond to simple and direct stories, novels, and poetry but may need some support. Work is generally accurate but often provides little detail or support. Parts may be incomplete or confusing.</i></p>	<p><i>The student is able to independently read, understand, and respond to simple and direct stories, novels, and poems. Provides support when prompted. Work is generally accurate and complete.</i></p>	<p><i>The student is able to independently read, understand, and respond to straight-forward stories, novels, and poetry with some complex language and ideas. Works efficiently, provides details and support; may exceed requirement.</i></p>
<p>STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehension strategies word skills predictions locating detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> few strategies for correcting tries to sound out new words; may give up quickly predictions are often illogical guesses often guesses instead of looking at selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with support, may adjust strategies needs prompting to use word strategies; often begins by asking for help makes simple, obvious predictions may have difficulty locating some specific details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to adjust strategies uses a variety of word strategies; may need prompting makes logical predictions rereads and skims to find specific details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adjusts strategies effectively uses a variety of word strategies; usually efficient and successful makes logical and often insightful predictions rereads and skims for specific details; becoming efficient
<p>COMPREHENSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accuracy, use of detail and support characters sequence of events inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work is often incomplete, inaccurate; may give up may identify the main character(s) and some events difficulty recounting events in sequence often unable to make inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> most work is accurate and based on the selection; little detail or support accurately identifies most main characters retells most main events in sequence some simple, obvious inferences about characters' feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work is accurate, complete; provides some detail and support accurately describes main characters in some detail retells main events in the correct sequence some logical inferences about characters' feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work is clear, accurate, detailed; provides support accurately describes main characters and their relationships in detail retells accurately, making relationships among events clear logical inferences about characters' feelings and motivations
<p>RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> connection to experiences and other selections opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with specific prompts and support, may be able to make concrete and obvious personal connections may offer simple reactions or opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes concrete and obvious connections; may need prompting offers simple reactions or opinions with minimal support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes some connections; may involve inferences offers reactions and opinions with some support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes and explains connections that require some inferences or insights offers reactions and opinions with some specific support

- Reading Literature
- Reading for Information
- Writing Reports, Articles & Letters
- Personal Writing

- Read – the extra curriculum handouts for your grade(s)
- Reflect – what do you notice?
- Highlight – what curricular competencies can lit circles support?
- Notice – connections between reading, writing, thinking, and talking
- Share – with your discussion group

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Education

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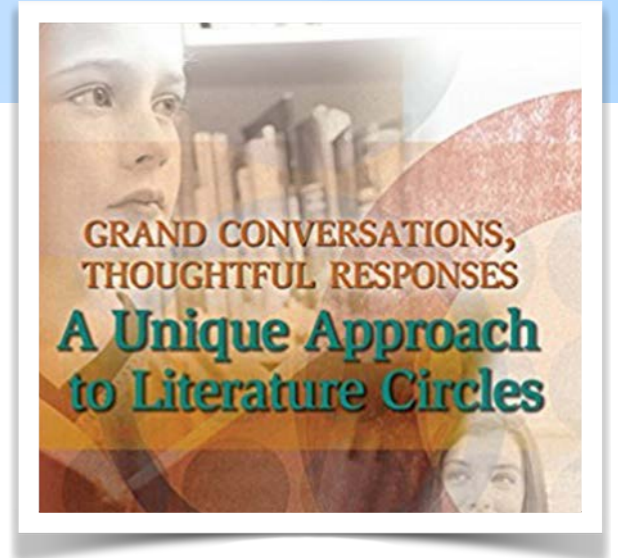
What are literature circles?



- an organizational strategy to teach and support comprehension
- students read a variety of novels
- students choose the book they'd like to read, form small groups
- students have group discussions about their reading, guided by their questions and insights
- students use journals to document their reading & their conversations
- a framework for students to increase their independence and strengthen their reading and writing skills in a supportive setting

Students engage in grand conversations, come up with thoughtful responses, and they do a lot of reading.

What are literature circles?



Important aspects of Faye Brownlie's approach:

- students have a **choice** in what – and how much – they read
- they are **not** assigned roles in their discussion groups
- they are **not** required to read at the same pace as other students in their discussion group (*no set pages to read per day*)
- it grows, strong, thoughtful, sophisticated readers

Laying the groundwork for successful lit circles

- * Read aloud every day and give **students** opportunities to **talk**
- * **Model the skills** you want them to use – **over and over** (how to respond to each other's statements, how to find and share evidence, how to disagree respectfully, how to have a conversation)
- * Alongside instruction on reading/discussion, do **community building** and **conflict resolution** activities
- * **Read many novels** for your students' age group so you're **confident** in the texts you put forward as options
- * Start lit circles with students in groups of four and the **whole class** reading the **same highly engaging novel**
- * Talk it up and emphasize the **fun and freedom** they'll have once they master the lit circle routines and structure

Setting up for lit circle success

Qualities of a good lit circle book:

- * Compelling **content** – action, suspense, dialogue, humour, controversy
- * Realistic **characters**
- * Picture books with strong, colourful **illustrations** that support the story
- * Meets a **range** of reading and interest **needs**
- * Does it arouse emotions? Is it well written? Is it meaningful?

Guiding student book choices:

- * Teach students to make good book **choices**
- * Introduce books through **book talks**
- * Build in time to **preview** the book choices
- * Students make **first, second, and third** choices

Novels

- Choose novels that have **high engagement possibility**
- Wide **variety of text complexity** ('sell' books to students, encourage self-selection of books they can 'engage' with)
- **Read all the books** so you can discuss
- **Add** to the starter book collection **as needed** (once a book has been read by most students, **remove** it from the collection and add another title)
- **Keep track** of who is reading which book



Discussion Groups

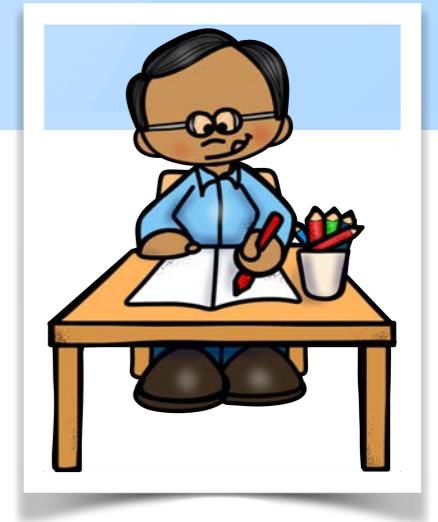


- Forum for in-depth thinking
- Teacher involved, but not leading (eventually)
- Can discuss beforehand what a 'sophisticated group participant' looks like and acts like
- Fluid intake and exit of each group (as novels are finished)
- Building independence (Say Something strategy - builds routine and confidence until conversations come more naturally)

Discussion Groups

- Discussion groups meet twice a week
- Students come to the discussion with a **passage** they've chosen to **read aloud** as a **conversation starter**. Other students respond – this is called the Say Something strategy. (15–20 minutes)
- When students complete a book, they return it and start a **new book** – joining that other discussion group.
- **Two to three** times a week, students **write journal responses**.
- Every two weeks, students complete a **comprehension activity**, done together as a **whole class** on the various books being read.
- **Large blocks of time** are most effective for group discussions (75–90 minutes)

Response Journals



- Model first
- Basic structure – T chart
- Avoid ‘re–telling’
- Increase complexity based on skill and grade

<i>What Happened</i>	<i>My Thinking</i>

Say Something strategy

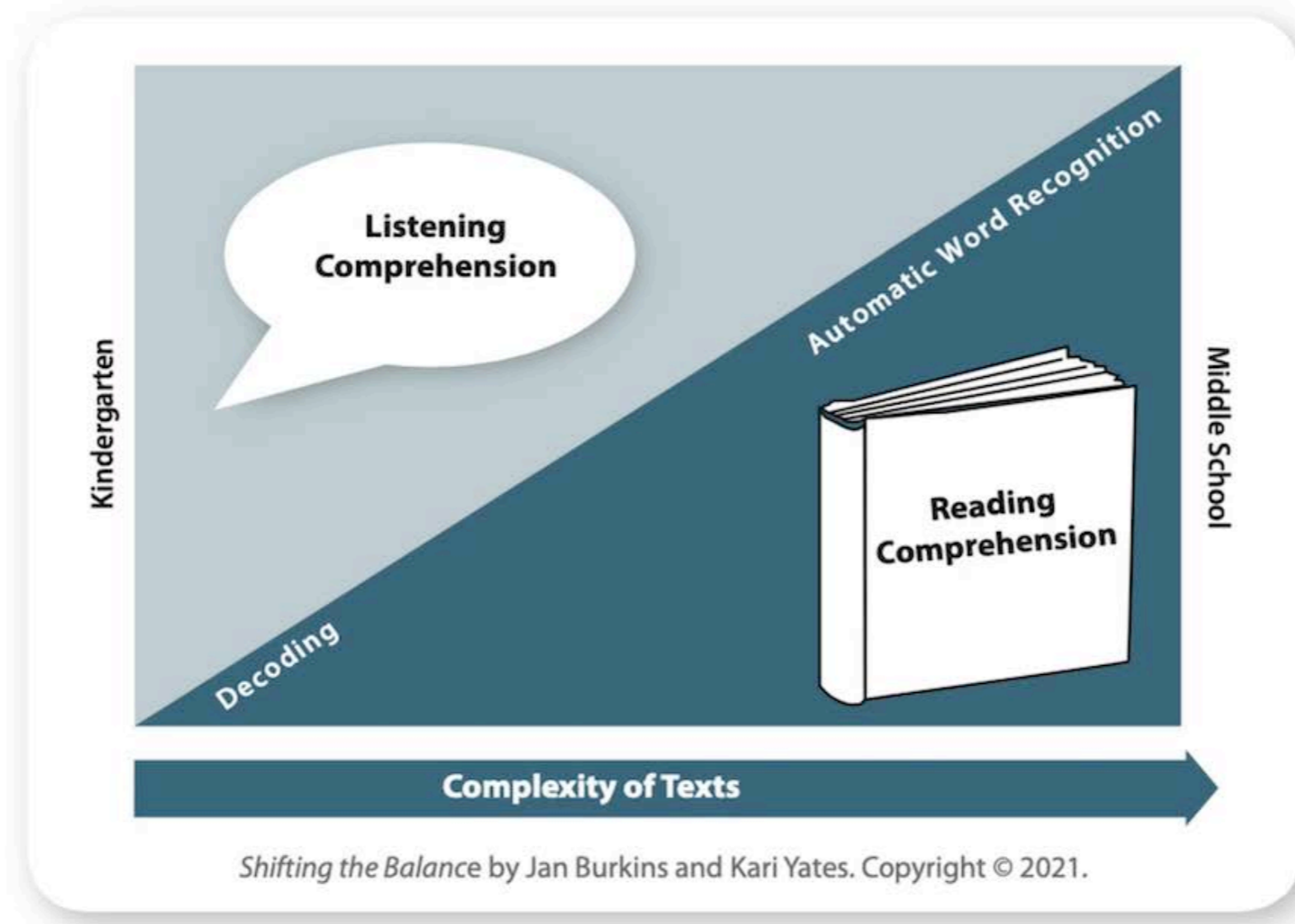
- One person shares a paragraph/sentence/phrase they've chosen from the book/article
- Each person then says something about the part read aloud (connections, opinions, wonderings, etc.) **emphasize there is no right answer*
- Important aspects:
 - All voices must be included
 - All students must feel included
 - All students must have their ideas respected
 - The discussion should move us to new understandings

- **Choose** – one of the three poems
- **Read** – it on your own
- **Reflect** – what do you notice, feel, like, or wonder about?
- **Write** – a “response journal” entry in your handout
- **Say Something** – about the poem and your thoughts
- **Share** – with your discussion group

What Happened <i>topic, theme, imagery, tone, language, feeling...</i>	My Thinking <i>connections, feelings, wonderings, thoughts, memories, experiences...</i>

Listening Comprehension & Reading Comprehension

Access to Complex Language and Opportunities for Deep Thinking



Conversations with our students are an investment in their reading comprehension

Skilled Comprehenders Use These Strategies

- * connecting to prior knowledge – **schemas**
- * self-questioning – ask themselves **questions** about the text
 - an essential component of **planning** to understand a text
- * predicting – using **prior knowledge** and **clues** from text to make **hypotheses** about the text content
- * using text **structure** – organize text information to make **meaning**
- * visualizing – mental **imagery** to remember information from texts
- * making inferences – **integrate** bits of info and fill in the **gaps**
- * summarizing – **prioritize** the importance of info to get the ‘gist’
 - this requires **complex working memory** and **cognitive flexibility**

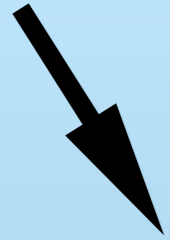
We can explicitly model these comprehension skills and engage students in conversations – and lit circles – that allow them to practice comprehension.

Principle	Why?	How?
Time	Volume of reading is key in growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– prioritize independent reading by putting it into your plans first– celebrate where students already are in their stamina
Choice	Students are more motivated to read when they get to choose what they read	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– conduct class discussions about considerations when choosing books– advertise books and have students advertise books
Talk	Talk leads to improved comprehension and builds community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– include partner time in independent reading– conduct inquiries into purposeful talk
Teacher Support	Feedback is one of the most impactful tools we have for raising student achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– design a schedule that includes conferring and small group work– take notes and be prepared to teach

Elements of a Mini-Lesson to Launch Lit Circles

Mini-Lesson Structure

I do



WE do



YOU do

- * mini, not maxi (five minutes)
- * strategy-focused
- * model, model, model
- * direct and explicit instruction
- * guided practice in a safe, supportive setting
- * transfer to independence



Comprehension Activities

Character
analysis –
character traits
with evidence

'Talk Show'
– speaking
in role

Venn
diagrams

Building a
reader's theatre

Dialogue Journal Options

01

Write a couple of sentences about your thoughts, opinions, wonderings about this type of literature

02

Give it to someone else – they will write a response to you based on your writing

03

Give it to one more person – they will write a response

Say Something - about The Lightning Thief

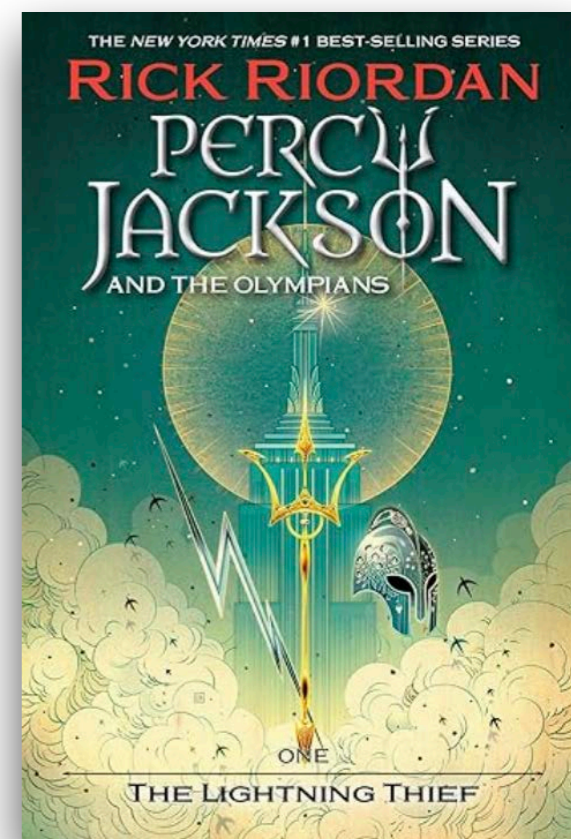
Your Turn!

Independent Work – 10

- Read – or re-read a passage on your own
- Reflect – what do you connect with, notice, like, or wonder about in the part you're reading?
- Write – a journal entry in your handout...

Join your lit circles – 15 minutes

- Say Something – about the story and your thoughts
- Share – with your discussion group



<i>What Happened</i>	<i>My Thinking</i>

Considerations for Lit Circles

Encouraging natural discussion and enthusiasm for books, while ensuring students grow as readers:

- * **choice** is essential (including graphic novels and e-books)
- * think about whether the books offered **reflect their backgrounds and interests** (also offer nonfiction books)
- * **mix up** the reading groups – allow students to choose based on their **interests**, not their reading level
- * a **simple text** can hone a reader's skills (“What does *Where the Wild Things Are* say about anger?”)
- * notice how you **model discussion** in your classroom (taking turns, allowing all to talk, being curious, not judgmental, perspective-taking)

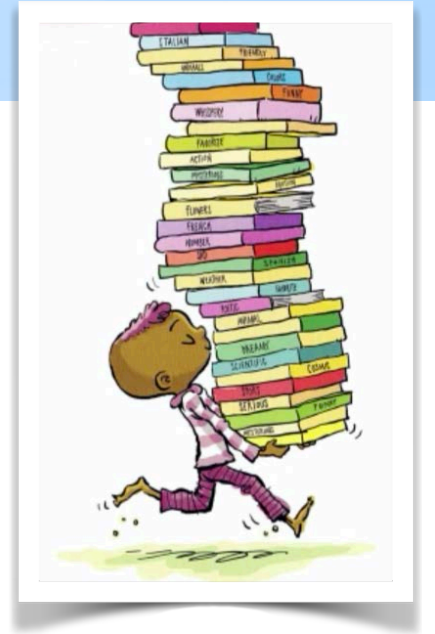
“The middle is messy, but it’s also where all the magic happens, all the tension that creates goodness and learning.”

BRENÉ BROWN



Text Sets - supporting diverse learners

Text sets are built around a particular topic or theme and represent a range of text complexity

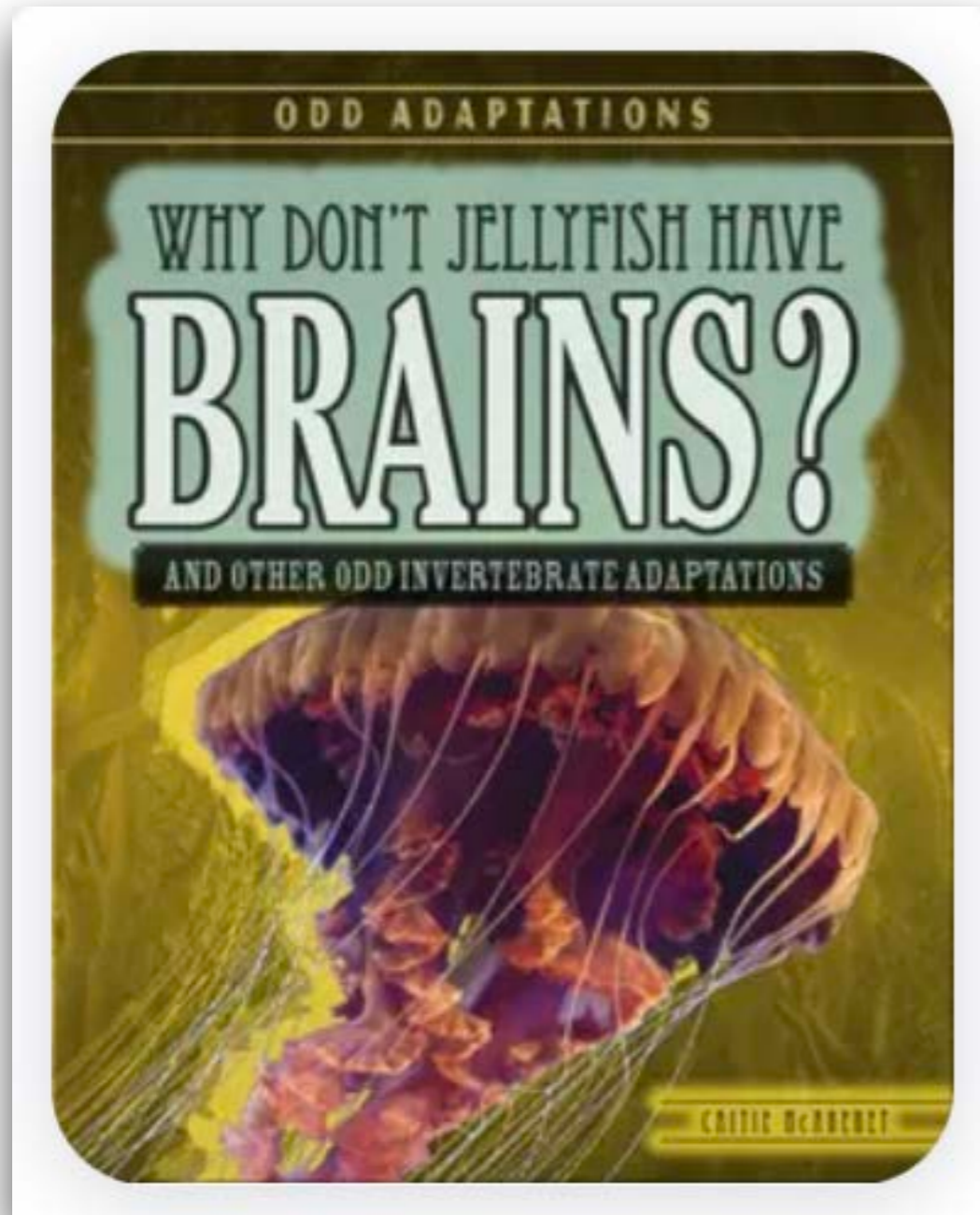


- * Multiple entry points
- * Expand vocabulary around key topic
- * Share knowledge among many different sources of information
- * Multiple sources to look for answers to questions
- * Students understand that there are multiple angles to consider
- * Conversation creates a community of curious learners

Students engage in co-construction of new knowledge about a topic.

Piquing Interest with Attention-Grabbing Read Alouds

Hook your readers on nonfiction with unusual & interesting facts



- * 97% of animals are invertebrates (most of these are insects)
- * Sponges were the first creatures on Earth
- * All jellyfish are venomous, and about half of them glow in the dark
- * The Japanese spider crab can measure 15 feet across its legs
- * Jewel wasps inject venom into their prey's brain, turning it into a 'zombie'

Supporting & connecting to new vocabulary

adaptations

bioluminescence

camouflage

evisceration

invertebrates

parasites

“The **heart** of literature circles is the **discussion group**...
What inspires students toward more effective reading is
the **chance to talk** with their classmates about what they
are reading – in **small groups** where **all voices** are
respected and heard and where all students are **included**.”

–Faye Brownlie in *Grand Conversations, Thoughtful Responses*



Resource Books

Grand Conversations, Thoughtful Responses: A Unique Approach to Literature Circles – Brownlie

Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates

Executive Skills & Reading Comprehension – Cartwright

Apprenticeship in Literacy: Transitions Across Reading and Writing – Dorn & Jones

Write from the Start: Writing Workshop in K–3 – POPEY Presentation by Lori Jamison

Trusting Readers – Scoggin & Schneewind

A Teacher's Guide to Development Across the Day – Wright

Online Resources

[BC's ELA Curriculum](#)

[Something To Talk About](#), Stenhouse podcast

[Edutopia – The Nuts and Bolts of Getting Started with Literature Circles](#)

[Getting Started with Literature Circles: Choosing Books for Lit Circles – Schlick Noe & Johnson](#)

[Harvard Graduate School of Education: Lit Circles](#)

[Epic Book – All About Asian Pangolins](#)

[Epic Books – Why Don't Jellyfish Have Brains? and Other Odd Invertebrate Adaptations](#)

Videos

[Mirrors, Windows & Sliding Doors](#)

[Pangolins – The San Diego Zoo](#)

[Balanced Lit Diet – YouTube: Dramatic Vocabulary – Introducing Action Words](#)

[YouTube: Three Year Old Telling a Story](#)