

Read Alouds

A read-aloud is a planned oral reading of a book or print excerpt by the teacher. The read-aloud should be related to the concept being introduced. A read-aloud, when used with think-aloud or interactive elements can engage, develop background knowledge, increase comprehension skills, and promote critical thinking among students. A read-aloud also models the use of reading strategies that promote comprehension. Students provided with models and explanations of the reasoning involved in reading, are better able to use the modeled strategies on their own.

Read-alouds are used to:

- introduce lessons.
- provide an introduction to new concepts and increase vocabulary.
- invite conversation and generate questions for discussion and investigations.
- encourage high levels of understanding.
- teach the reading process in a meaningful context.
- model fluency.
- motivate students to read.
- model scientific and mathematical thinking.
- provide content to support hands-on investigations.
- model different problem-solving approaches.
- examine illustrations, photographs, charts and graphs to promote the visual literacy needed in mathematics and science.

How to implement the strategy:

Before Reading Aloud

1. Consider the following criteria when selecting a text to read aloud.
 - a. Is the vocabulary of the text one to two grade levels above my students?
 - b. Will students enjoy it?
 - c. Is there a big idea or theme to explore that will support students in understanding the content?
 - d. Are there opportunities for thinking deeply?
 - e. Do students have necessary background knowledge?
 - f. What are the vocabulary demands?
 - g. Are the illustrations compelling?
 - h. Do the story and the illustrations present cultural diversity?
2. Develop open-ended questions that will support student discussion and depth of thought as they move in the direction of this big idea during the read aloud.

Note: This isn't a search for "right answers," nor does it eliminate the possibility of other ideas surfacing during discussion. This guiding idea is simply a plan for supporting thoughtful discussion.

3. Record the questions on post-it notes or in the margin of the book to cue you to ask the questions at strategic times during the read aloud.
4. Examine the vocabulary in the text and identify any words that students need to know in order to understand the text or big idea.
5. Develop a plan for introducing difficult or unfamiliar words quickly before or during reading.
6. Practice reading the text aloud.

During & After Reading

1. Introduce preliminary vocabulary that may be problematic but do not spend too much time on this.
2. Read the text aloud fluently, stopping to ask the questions you developed during planning.
3. Allow students to discuss their responses to the questions with partners and then share out with the group.
4. Continue this process until you reach the end of the reading selection.
5. After reading, engage students in dialogue to support deeper conversation in the direction of the big idea.
6. Support students as they mine for connections and push for deep thought, particularly around the big idea.
7. Make the text available for shared, guided, and independent reading opportunities.
8. Locate related texts for sharing with students.
9. Refer back to the text during the lesson or unit of study as needed to help students make connections.

Additional Resources:

- Albright, L. and M. Airail. (2005) *Tapping the potential of read-alouds in middle school*. Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy. 48:7. April. International Reading Association.
- Anderson, N.P. (2007). *What should I read aloud? A guide to 200 best-selling picture books*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Burkins, J.M., & Croft, M.M. (2010). *Preventing misguided reading: New strategies for guided reading teachers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Hickman, P., & Pollard-Durodola, S.D. (2009). *Dynamic read-aloud strategies for English learners: Building language and literacy in the primary grades*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Read Aloud: Elementary Science Integration Project: *Read Alouds*.
<http://www.esiponline.org/classroom/foundations/reading/readalouds.html> Teacher Read-Aloud That Models Reading for Deep Understanding
<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/teacher-read-aloud-that-30799.html>