



This booklet is designed to promote discussion about a text between partners or among a small group of readers. Each page has two general questions about how you responded to the text as a reader and several specific questions that are designed to help you answer the bigger, more general questions. The questions (general and specific) should be viewed as a springboard to help you engage in a lively discussion. You do not have to answer them all. Just respond to the ones you find interesting or that spark an idea. Take turns so that a different person is the first to respond to each page. However, both partners or everyone in the group should share their responses. Enjoy your discussion.

1.

Planning and Goal Setting

Readers set goals and make plans for achieving those goals even before they start reading a text. For example, they might decide to read for pleasure, to learn how to do something, to develop better vocabulary, to prepare for a test, or to write an essay. Readers formulate their plans regarding how to approach the text depending on their goals.

- What was your purpose or goal as you read this text?
- What plans did you make to achieve your goal or goals?
- How did planning and goal setting impact your reading of the text?

Did planning and goal setting help you to stay more focused as you read?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- My purpose is...
- My top priority is...
- I will accomplish my goal by...

2.

Tapping Prior Knowledge

What kind of prior knowledge (ie. background information), if any, did you bring to the reading of this text?

For example:

- Was there anything about the title that tapped information you already had?
- Did you have prior knowledge of the topic that helped you understand what you were reading?
- Did you have knowledge about the author or the genre (ie. poetry, short story, drama, essay, etc.) that influenced your reading?
- As you were reading, did you come across information that reminded you of something you already knew?

Did having (or not having) prior information make this text easier (or harder) to understand and relate to?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- I already know that...
- This reminds me of...
- This relates to...

3.

Asking Questions

What questions did you ask yourself as you read this text?

For example:

- Did you find yourself asking questions about what was happening in the text?
- Did you find yourself asking the question why (about events, characters, language the author used, etc.)?
- Did you find yourself wondering what would happen if...?

Did asking questions motivate you to keep reading to find the answers or was it frustrating?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- I wonder why...
- What if...
- How come...

4.

Making Predictions

What predictions did you make as you were reading?

For example:

- Did anything about the title of the text (or pictures, if there were any) cause you to make a prediction even before you started reading?
- As you were reading, did you find yourself predicting what was going to happen next?
- Did you find yourself thinking in terms of If...then (ie. If x happens then I'll bet that y will result.)

Did your predictions come true or did the text surprise you and turn a different direction?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- I'll bet that...
- I think...
- If _____, then...

5.

Visualizing

What pictures did you see in your head as you read this text?

For example:

- What specific pictures stand out in your mind?
- Did it feel like you were seeing photographs or watching a movie?
- What was it about the author's writing that helped you make mental pictures?

What affect did being able to make pictures in your head (or not being able to make pictures) have on you as a reader?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- I can picture...
- In my mind I see...
- If this were a movie...

6.

Making Connections

As you read, what personal connections were you able to make between your experience and the text?

For example:

- Did the text call up personal memories for you (of experiences, events, people)?
- Did the text remind you of other books, stories, poems, movies, etc, you have read or seen?
- Did the text make you think of real events in the news or in history books that have occurred in the present or past?

To what extent did your ability to connect (or your inability) to connect with this text influence you as a reader? Were you more or less involved in it because of the connections you did or didn't make?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- This reminds me of...
- I experienced this once when...
- I can relate to this because...

7.

Summarizing

A summary is a brief statement of the main ideas, key points, or basic gist of a text. It involves what is literally happening or being said, determining what details are important, organizing information, and stating it coherently and concisely in one's own words.

- In your own words, what is literally happening in this text? What is the basic gist?
- In a nutshell, what does the text say?
- What essential information does the reader need to know about the characters, plot and setting in order to understand what is taking place?
- Was it easy or difficult for you to summarize this text? Why?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- The basic gist is...
- The key information is...
- In a nutshell, this says that...

8.

Adopting an Alignment

To what extent were you able to get "into" this text?

For example:

- Did you feel like you were able to get inside the setting of this text and *be* there? If so, what helped you to enter the text-world? If not, what made getting into the text difficult?
- Did you identify or feel a kinship with a particular character?
- Did something happen in the text in terms of events that really gripped you and drew you in?
- Did you feel like you could relate to the author? If so, why? If not, why not?

How did being able to get into the text (or not being able to get into it) make you feel about what you were reading?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- The character I most identify with is...
- I really got into the story when...
- I can relate to this author because...

9.

Forming Interpretations

When we focus on what the text says, on what is literally happening or being said, we are reading. When we focus on what the text means, what its message is, we are interpreting. Interpretations are created by the reader in response to the writing of the writer. What is your interpretation of the meaning text you have just read?

For example:

- What is the message or BIG IDEA of all or part of this text, in your opinion?
- What in the text made you come up with the message or BIG IDEA that you did?
- Did your interpretation of the text stay the same as you read or did it change or grow as you continued to read? If it changed or grew, what happened that influenced your interpretation?

When you read something that has a deeper meaning and you figure out what it means to you, how does that make you feel as a reader?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- What this means to me is...
- I think this represents...
- The idea I'm getting is...

10.

Monitoring

Did you ever think about yourself as a reader while you were reading and talk to yourself inside your head? If so, you were using a cognitive strategy called monitoring.

For example:

- Did you ever get confused and tell yourself you were not getting it and needed to go back and reread?
- Did you ever tell yourself you were on the right track and to keep reading?
- Did you come across any words you didn't know and think about how to figure out the meaning or decide to keep reading and worry about it later?

Did thinking about your responses while you were reading and sending yourself messages to stop and backtrack or to full steam ahead help you to understand the text better?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- I got lost here because...
- I need to reread the part where...
- I know I'm on the right track...

11. Clarifying Understanding

As you were reading, you may have come across passages where your monitor told you that you were confused and you said to yourself "I don't get this" or "I need to understand this better."

- At what points in the text did your monitor tell you that you needed to clarify your understanding?
- What did you do to make your understanding of the parts of the text that were confusing to you clearer?
- How did clarifying your understanding help you to engage in some of the other cognitive strategies like making predictions, visualizing, or forming interpretations?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters

- To understand better, I need to know more about...
- Something that's still not clear is...
- I'm guessing this means _____, but I need to...

12. Revising Meaning

When we are reading a text, we often make predictions about what will happen next or we formulate interpretations about the message the text is conveying only to find our expectations thwarted when the text takes a surprising turn. This causes us to revise meaning and, just like a writer who creates a second draft of a text on the page, to create a new draft of the text that is unfolding in our imagination.

- Did your sense of the text stay the same as you read or did your interpretation change?
- What happened in the text that caused you to revise meaning?
- What new ideas did you get about what you were reading after you had to stop and revise meaning?

What impact did the act of revising meaning have on your enjoyment of the text? Did the challenge of revising your understanding make the task of reading more or less enjoyable for you?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- At first thought _____, but now I...
- My latest thought about this is...
- I'm getting a different picture here because...

13. Analyzing Author's Craft

What do you notice about the way the author uses language to get his or her ideas across?

For example:

- Is there anything about the author's style or craft (ie. the use of descriptive language, figures of speech like similes or metaphors, action words, dialogue, or particular types of sentences) that you found particularly effective?
- What golden words, lines and phrases stand out that made the writing vivid for you?
- How did the author's style help you (or hinder you) as you made meaning from this text?

Is there anything the author of this text did that you would like to try in your own writing?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- A golden line for me is...
- This word/phrase stands out for me because...
- I like how the author uses ____ to show...

14. Reflecting and Relating

What does this text mean to you personally? As you step back and reflect, what lessons, if any, can you take away from this text for your own life?

For example:

- Is there anything about the impact of this text upon you as a reader that has caused you to rethink what you already know about this author, genre, topic or arrive at any insights about your own life that you will take away with you? If so what new perspectives do you have?
 - Is there anything you think differently about as a result of reading this text?
 - Is there anything you will do differently as a result of reading this text?

What was it about this text that enabled you to relate it to your own life, if you were able to?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- So, the big idea is...
- A conclusion I'm drawing is...
- This is relevant to my life because...

15.

Evaluating

Reflect upon the process of your meaning making as a reader and evaluate the quality of your experience. To what degree was the experience rewarding (or unrewarding) for you? Why?

For example:

- On a scale of 5 (It was great!) to 1 (It was awful!), how would you rate this text?
 - What did you like best or least about this text?
 - What did the author do (or not do) that caused you to respond to the text as you did?
 - Will you read another text by this author or on this topic? If so, why? If not, why not?

Now, talk about the quality of your discussion as you went through this booklet with a partner or in your small group. What went well? What might you do differently to improve your discussion next time?

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters:

- I like/don't like ____ because...
- My opinion is ____ because...
- The most important message is ____ because...

Congratulations! You have just engaged in all of the cognitive strategies of a highly accomplished reader.

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters

Forming Interpretations

- What this means to me is...
- I think this represents...
- The idea I'm getting is...

Monitoring

- I got lost here because...
- I need to reread the part where...
- I know I'm on the right track because ...

Clarifying

- To understand better, I need to know more about...
- Something that is still not clear is...
- I'm guessing that this means _____, but I need to...

Revising Meaning

- At first I thought _____, but now I....
- My latest thought about this is...
- I'm getting a different picture here because...

Analyzing the Author's Craft

- A golden line for me is...
- This word/phrase stands out for me because...
- I like how the author uses _____ to show...

Reflecting and Relating

- So, the big idea is...
- A conclusion I'm drawing is...
- This is relevant to my life because...

Evaluating

- I like/don't like _____ because...
- My opinion is _____ because...
- The most important message is _____ because...

Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters

Planning and Goal Setting

- My purpose is...
- My top priority is ...
- I will accomplish my goal by...

Tapping Prior Knowledge

- I already know that...
- This reminds me of...
- This relates to...

Asking Questions

- I wonder why...
- What if...
- How come...

Making Predictions

- I'll bet that...
- I think...
- If _____, then...

Visualizing

- I can picture...
- In my mind I see...
- If this were a movie...

Making Connections

- This reminds me of...
- I experienced this once when...
- I can relate to this because...

Summarizing

- The basic gist is...
- The key information is...
- In a nutshell, this says that..

Adopting an Alignment

- The character I most identify with is...
- I really got into the story when...
- I can relate to this author because...