

Comprehension Activity

Introduce: Identifying Details

Activity Type: Introduce

Grade: K-3

Group Size: Small Group, Large Group, Whole Class

Length: 15 minutes

Materials: A book to read out loud, chart paper or board

Goal: Given a book, students will be able to identify the details that support its main idea.

Prepare:

Choose a book that appeals to early readers.

Model/Instruct:

1. Show students the book (the front cover, back cover, and some of the pages) and ask them to predict what the book will be about. This will prepare them for the substance of the book and aid their comprehension as you read.

Today we are going to read a book entitled _____. What do you think this book is about? What do you think we will learn from this book?

2. Record the students' comments on the chart paper or board.

3. Explain the meaning of identifying details.

Today, we are going to work on finding the most important details in this book. Everything you read has a main idea. It is the most important thought or piece of information from the book. It tells the overall idea of the book. Important details are used to support the main idea.

Illustrate this point with a made-up example.

4. Tell students how they might have already used identifying important details strategies.

When you learn to play a new game, how do you know which are the most important details? Have you ever used details to figure out the main idea of a story?

Have you ever noticed that details add description to a story?

5. Read the first part of the book, pausing at appropriate places to comment on important information.

Practice:

6. Finish reading the book.

Let's talk about we have learned in this book and see if we can identify the most important details. Remember that the details will support the main idea. The details should give important information. What happened in the book? Who did what? Why? What does it look like?

7. Record students' comments on the chart paper or board.

8. Determine the most important details using the information from the chart paper or board.

Now let's look at our list. It looks like we were able to gather some good information about our topic. Let's look at each detail on our list. Let's figure out which are the three most important details. When you identify the most important details, you are able to understand the book better.

9. Ask each student to choose the three details they think are the most important. They should be able to explain why they chose each one. You may choose to have students share with a partner; otherwise, call on students to share their ideas with the class.

Adjust:

For advanced students:

Encourage these students to explain how each detail supports the main idea.

For struggling students:

Some students may have difficulty distinguishing important supporting details from the main idea. In this case it may be helpful to ask them to determine the main idea. Ask questions like these to get them to think about supporting details:

What happened in the book?

Who made it happen?

How did that person make it happen?

What is the problem? What is the solution?

What did you learn about _____?

What information makes us understand the main idea better?

For ELL students:

Before reading the book, explain the meaning of any key vocabulary or concepts that they need to understand. After reading, ask these students to tell you what the book is about. Then ask them to tell you what makes them think so; explain that these are the supporting details.