TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Making Connections

Grades 6-12

UTHealth
The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston

Training Goals

- Clarify the difference between activating and building background knowledge.
- Understand the importance of Making Connections as a foundational strategy.
- Plan and practice an introduction lesson for Making Connections.
- Plan and practice a think-aloud lesson for teaching Making Connections.

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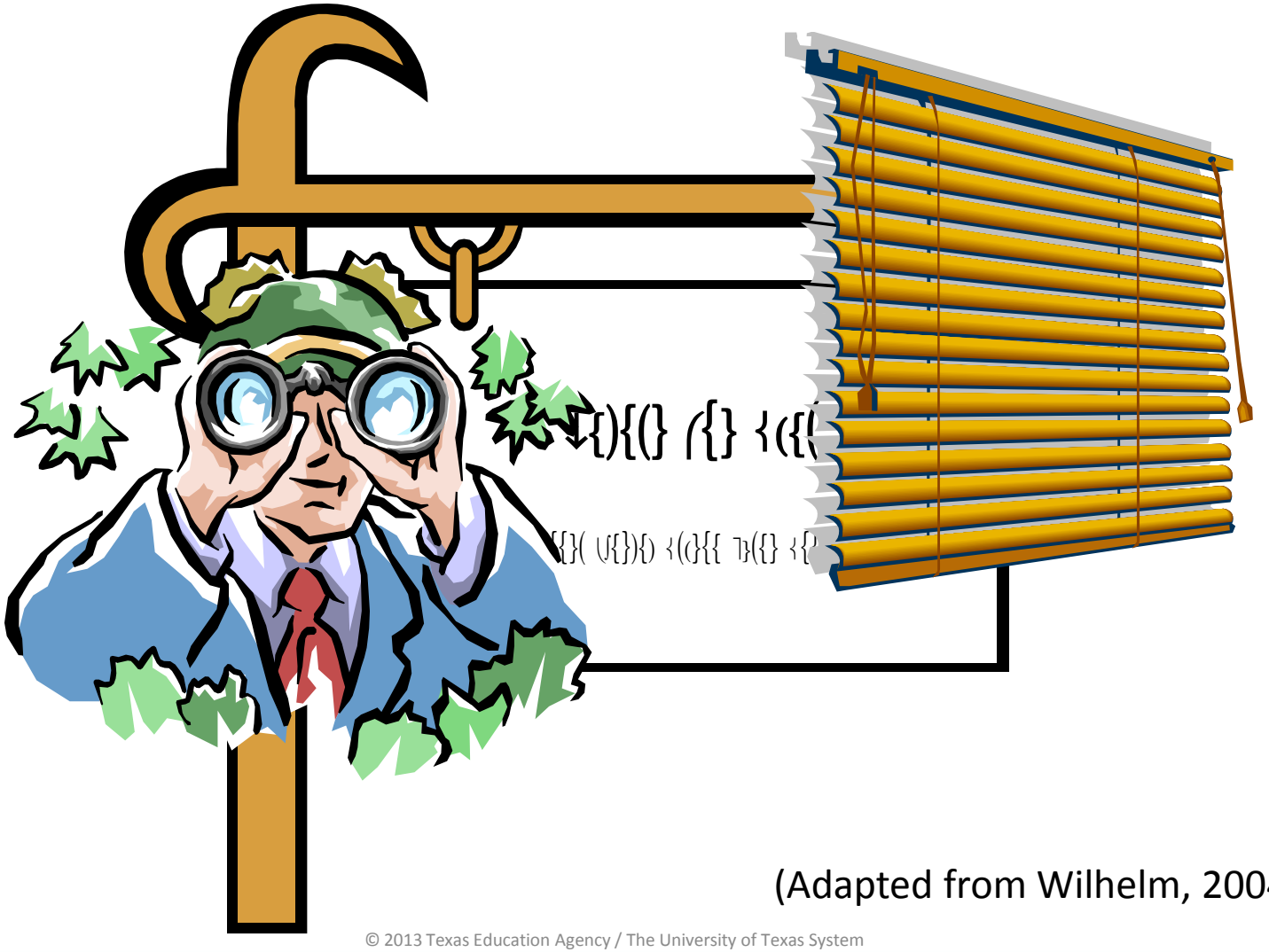
What does this store sell?



(Adapted from Wilhelm, 2004)

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Why is Background Knowledge Important?

"The many active processes of reading –

- prediction
- construction of images during reading
- monitoring of comprehension and rereading
- summarization
- interpretation

– depend greatly on prior knowledge."

(Pressley, 2000)

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"Our prior experience and background knowledge fuel the connections we make.

- the books we read
- the authors we choose
- the discussions we have
- our past experiences
- the newspaper
- the evening news
- the weekly magazines
- the internet
- and nightly dinner table conversations …

all forge connections that lead to new insight. We teach kids to think about their connections and read in ways that let them discover these threads."

(Harvey and Goudvis, 2000)

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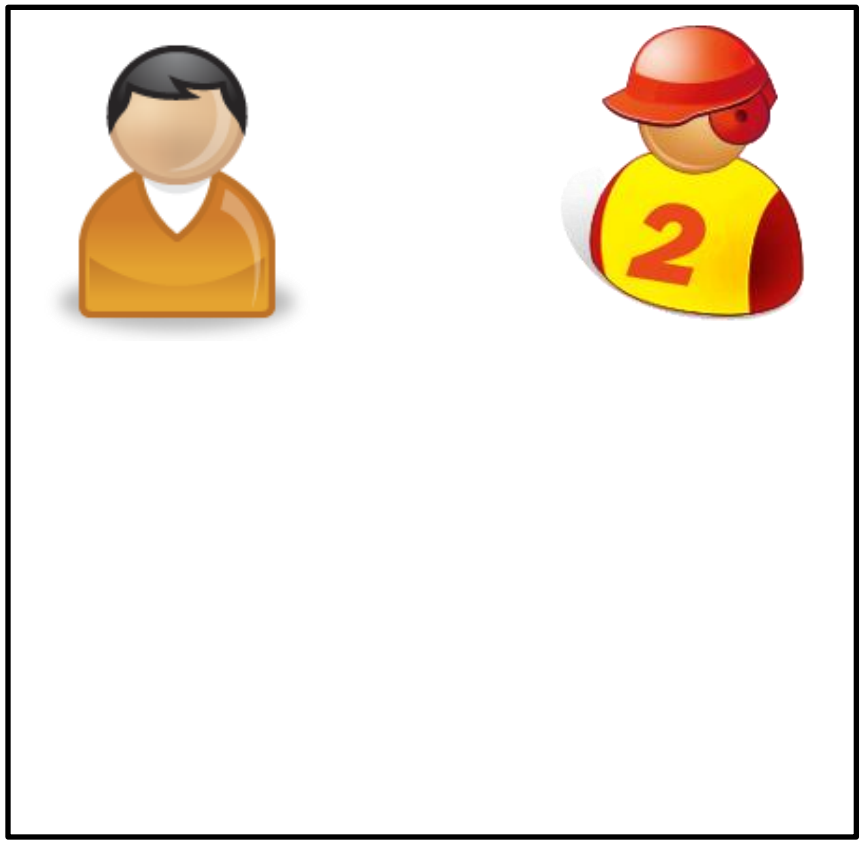
Comprehension

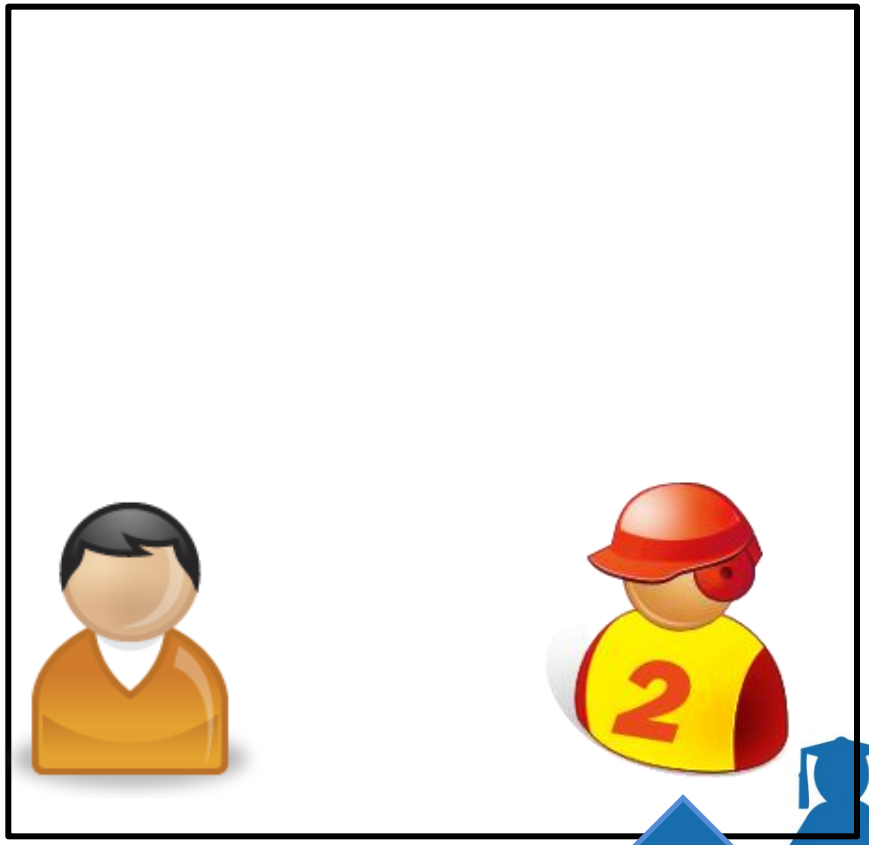
Knowledge of Baseball

Good Readers



(Recht & Leslie, 1988)

Struggling Readers



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All Students Have Background Knowledge

"…all students have background knowledge even though not all of them have the *academic* background knowledge necessary to do well in school. The background knowledge that is not germane to academic success may still be highly valuable in other contexts and, as such, should be honored along with the bearers of that knowledge."

(Marzano, 2004)

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Build? Or Activate?

Building Background Knowledge	Activating Background Knowledge
• Students know little or nothing about a topic • May take place 1-2 weeks before reading • Takes 3-4 exposures, no more than 2 days apart	• Students have some knowledge of a topic • Takes place directly prior to reading • Takes 2-10 minutes

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Building Background Knowledge

- When beginning a new unit or topic of study, assess what students do/do not know. (Wilhem, 2004)
- Pre-read selections to determine knowledge that is essential for understanding unit texts.
- Plan "virtual experiences" to build students' knowledge. (Marzano, 2004)

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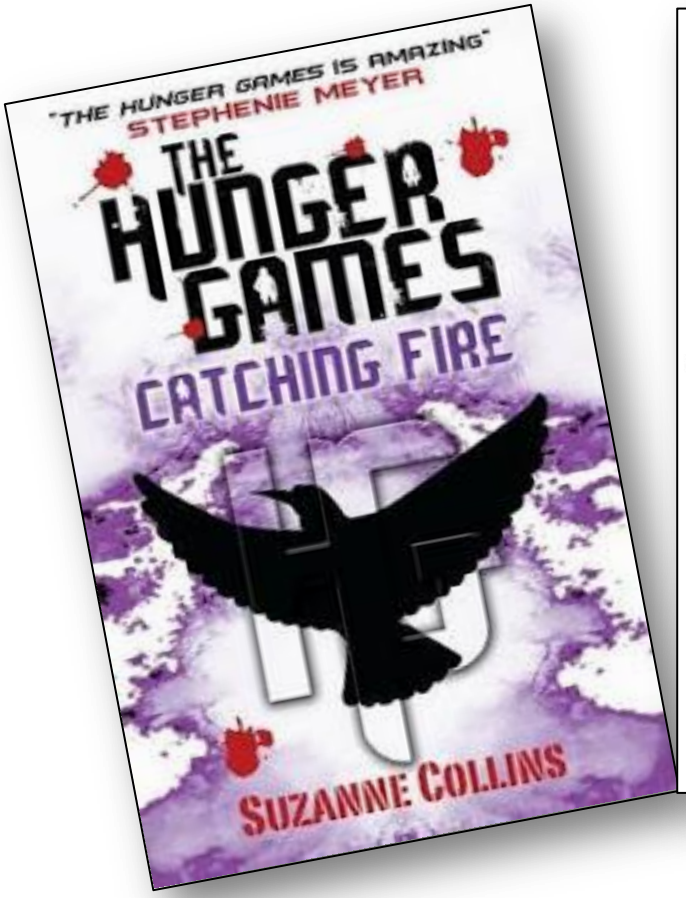
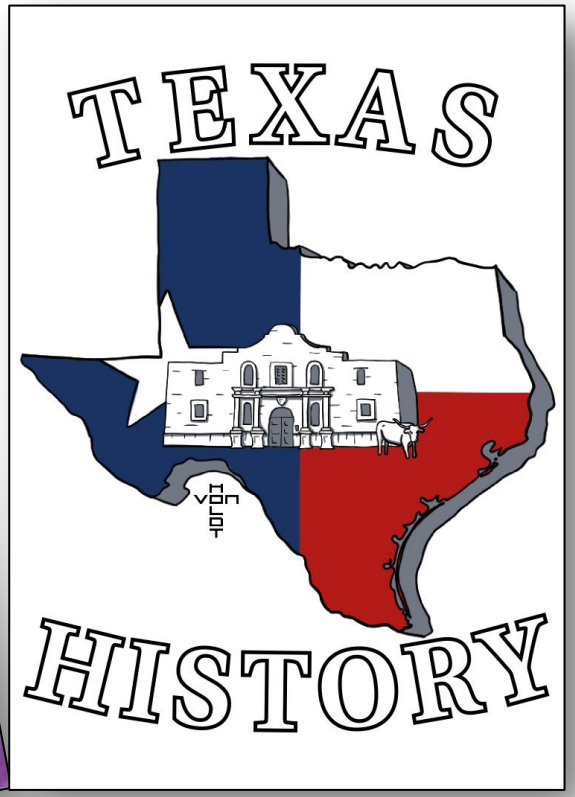
Building Background Knowledge





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For new information to become part of memory students need:

- 3-4 exposures
- No more than 2 days apart

Week prior to reading:

Monday: Read aloud a short article from social studies text about Texas Annexation.

Tuesday: Brainstorm a chart of the problems facing the Republic of Texas .

Wednesday: Show a map of the three regions of the United States as it applies to sectionalism. Discuss where Texas falls?

Friday: Quick review of what we have learned about Texas annexation.

(Nuthall, 1999).

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Activating Background Knowledge

- Activating background knowledge should take just a few moments.
- We should activate background knowledge that is crucial to understanding the text.
- The background knowledge we activate should be linked to our purpose for reading.

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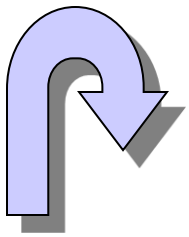
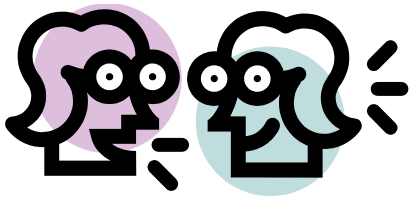
Background Knowledge

What's important for teachers to keep in mind regarding background knowledge?

How might these factors affect your teaching? Your students' learning?





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Why Should We Teach

MAKING CONNECTIONS?

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Making Connections

"We are turning out lots of superficial readers. They look and sound competent. They read smoothly and retell what they've read with some detail, but they are unable to go further – to discuss why characters behave as they do, to give a concise summary, to discuss the theme or big ideas, to talk about the author's purpose."

(Routman, 2003)

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Why Teach Making Connections?

Connections help readers:

- Relate to characters
- Visualize
- Avoid boredom
- Pay attention
- Listen to others
- Read actively
- Remember what they read
- Ask questions

(Tovani, 2000)

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Why Teach Making Connections?

Students are expected to:

- 6.3(C): Compare and contrast the historical and cultural settings of two literary works.
- 6.3(B): Analyze the function of stylistic elements in traditional and classical literature from various cultures.
- 6.10(D): Synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres.
- Figure 19(C): Monitor and adjust comprehension (e.g., using background knowledge …);
- Figure 19(F): Make connections (e.g., thematic links, author analysis) between and across multiple texts of various genres and provide textual evidence.

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Why Teach Making Connections?

Improving comprehension instruction for ELLs includes:

- Actively engaging students in monitoring, carefully selecting strategies, and reflecting on use of strategies.
- Helping students to understand how to adjust for the type of text being read, the purpose for the reading, and the format of the content.
- Alignment of comprehension instruction across the curriculum so students have opportunities to transfer and adapt strategies to new contexts.

(Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Dresler 7 Kamil, 2006; Genesee, Geva, Dressler, & Kamil, 2006; Lesaux, Lipka, & Siegle, 2006; Roit, 2006.)

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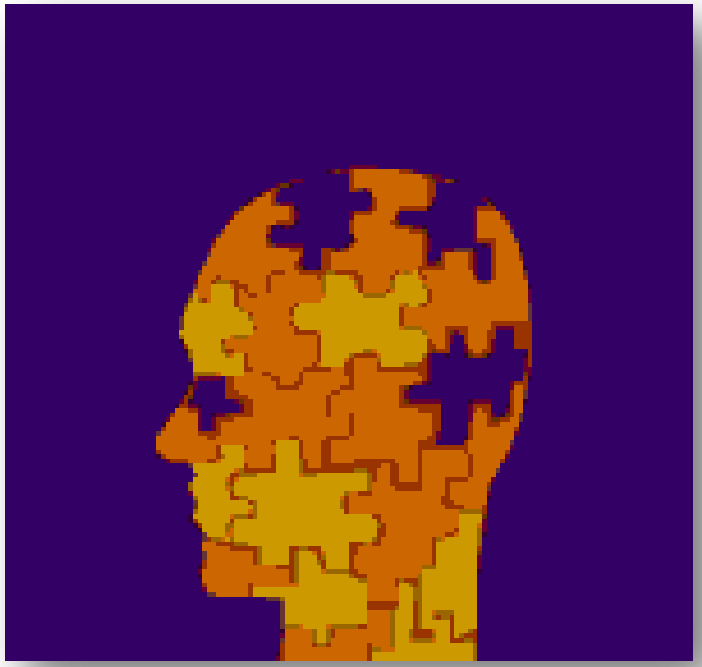

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How Do You Teach

MAKING CONNECTIONS?

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Introducing Cognitive Strategies

Strategy Instruction

Direct – Explicit – Systematic

Gradual Release of Responsibility

1. Use a real-world example to create a context (anchor lesson).
2. Give the strategy a name.
3. Define the strategy, how and when it is used, and how it helps with reading.
4. Give students touchstones, such as a hand gesture or icon, to help them remember the strategy.
5. Think aloud, using the strategy in a variety of contexts.
6. Engage students by providing opportunities for them to share their thinking during the reading. Practice shared application with planned discussion prompts.
7. Scaffold practice, providing opportunities for students to use the strategy while reading, with teacher support and monitoring.
8. Provide accountability measures for students while using the strategy independently.

Ongoing Assessment may include informal assessments such as anecdotal records, observations of class discussion, portfolios, projects, student records of thinking (post-it notes, drawings, and writings), as well as formal assessments.

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Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning

Title of Text _____

Step 1 Use a real-world example to create a context.	Anchor lesson:
Step 2 Give the strategy a name.	"Today, we are going to learn a strategy called _____."
Step 3 Define the strategy, how and when it is used, and how it helps with reading.	Strategy definition: How it helps us comprehend:
Step 4 Give students touchstones.	Model hand gesture, explain strategy poster, and refer to anchor lesson.

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Step 1: Anchor Lesson

"Today, we are going to explore our background knowledge. Did you know that everyone has background knowledge? Background knowledge is another way for saying, 'What I know.' You have lots of background knowledge because you know a lot about many things. We get background knowledge from doing things, seeing things, going places, from reading, and talking with others."

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My Background Knowledge

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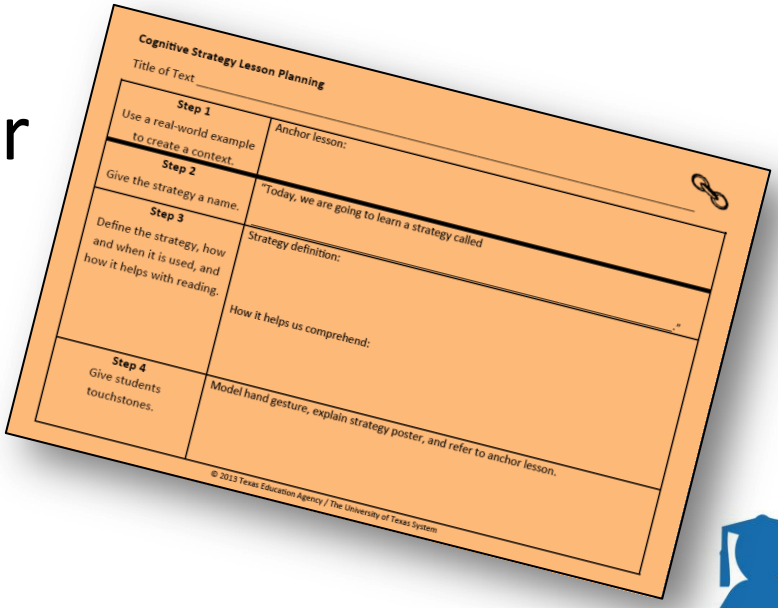
Step 1: Anchor Lesson

Use a real-world example to create a context.

Record what you will do for Step 1 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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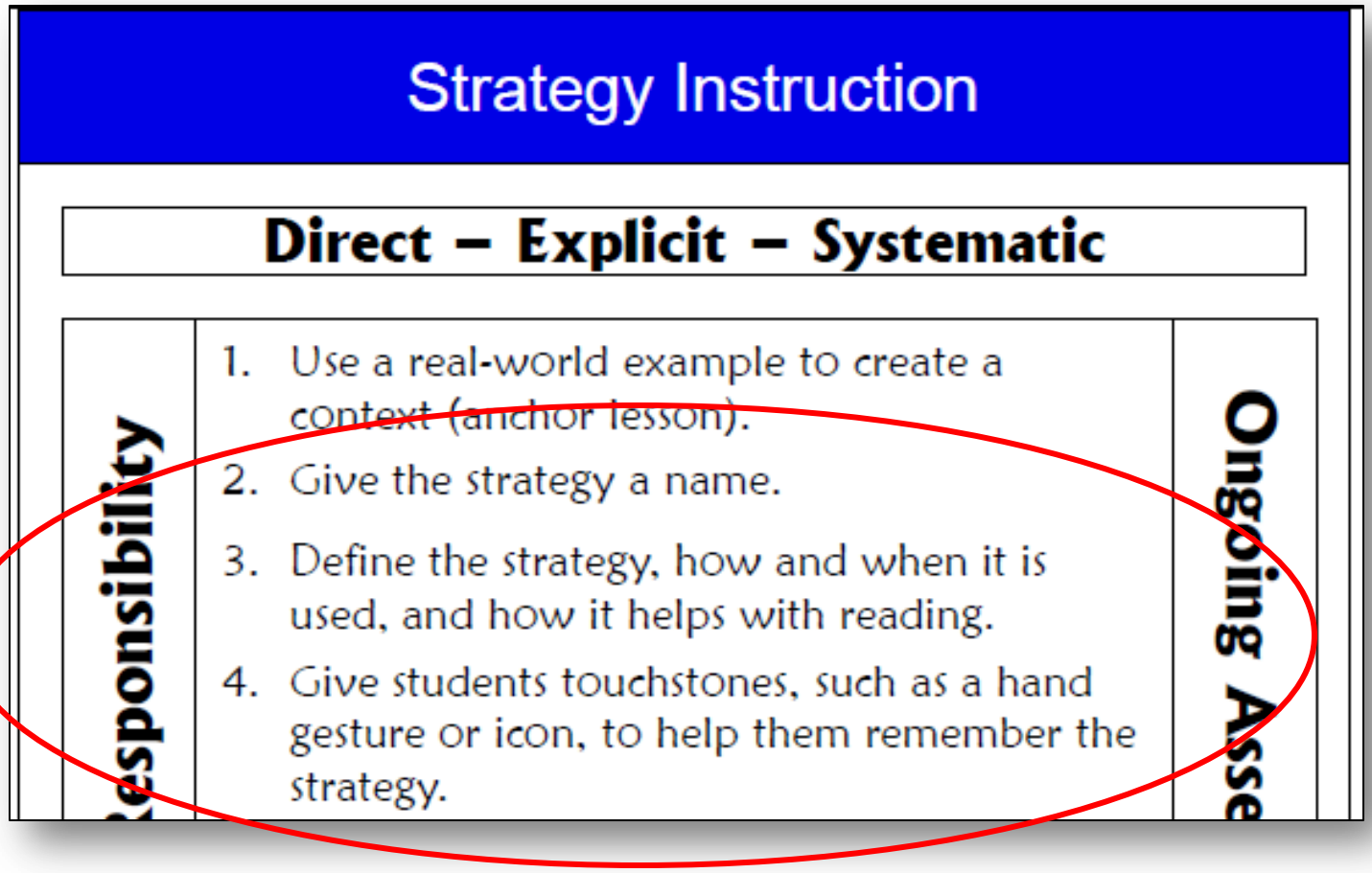
Teaching the Strategy (Steps 2-4)



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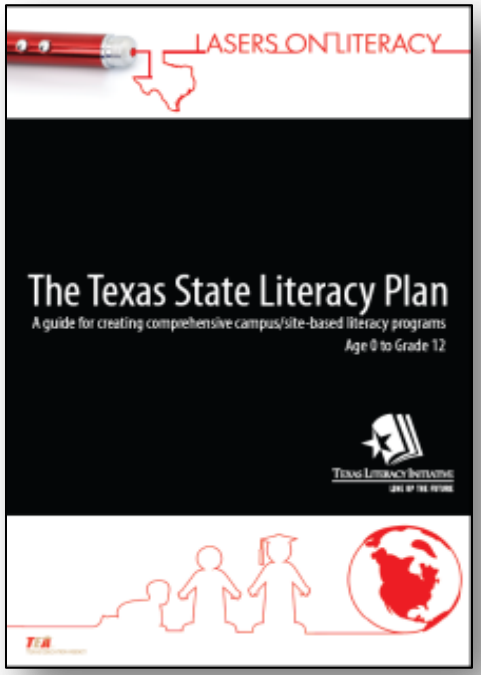
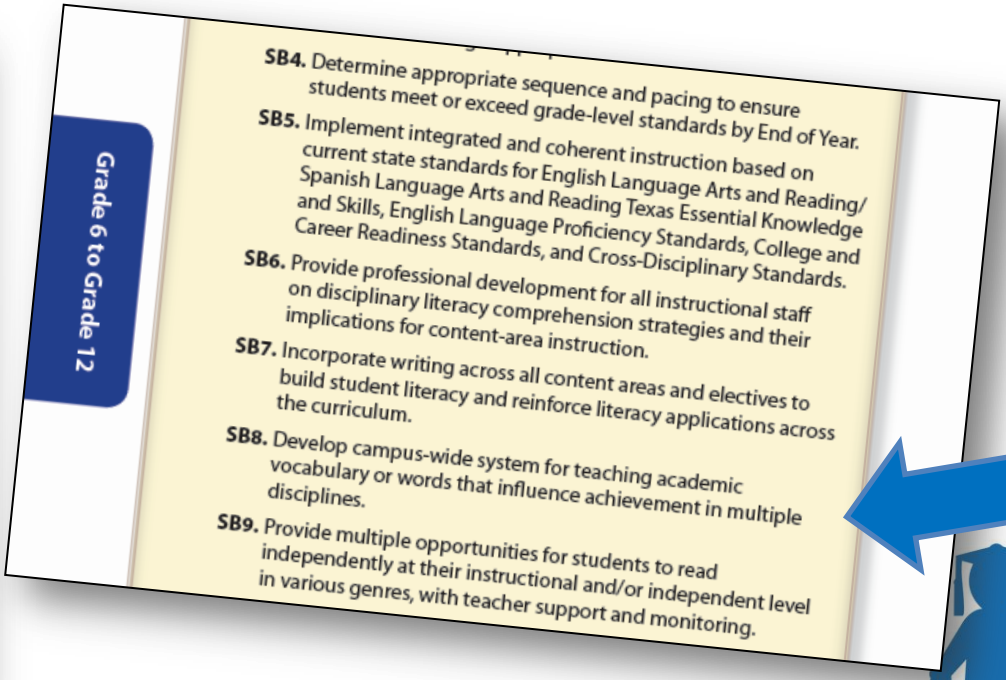
Step 2: Give the Strategy a Name

"Today we're going to learn a strategy called Making Connections."





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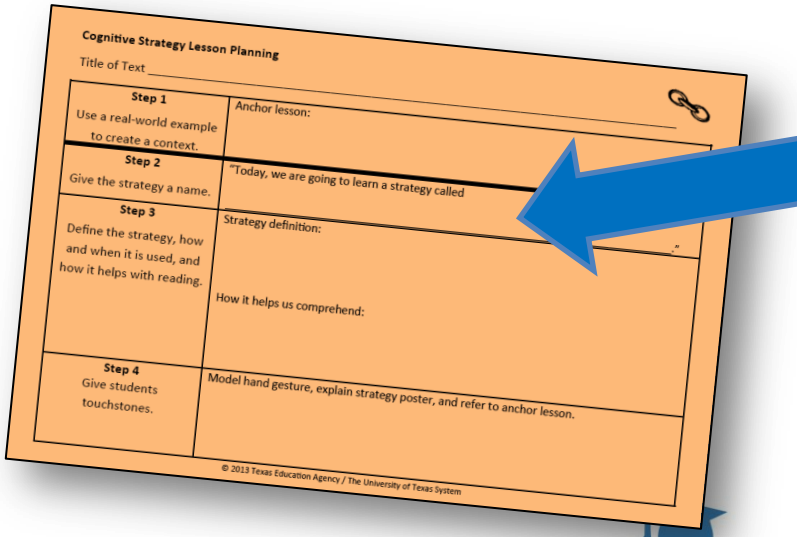
Step 2: Give the Strategy a Name

"Today we're going to learn a strategy called Making Connections."

Record what you will say for Step 2 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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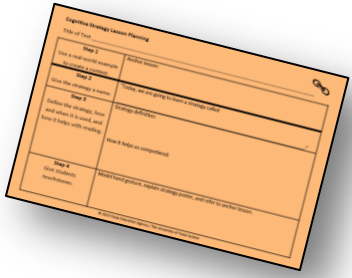
Step 3: Tell Why and How it is Used



Strategy Definition:

"We are going to learn how to use our background knowledge to help us understand what we are reading. When something in the text reminds us of something we know, we call that making a connection."

How it helps us understand:

"When we make connections while reading, it helps us understand and remember the text better."

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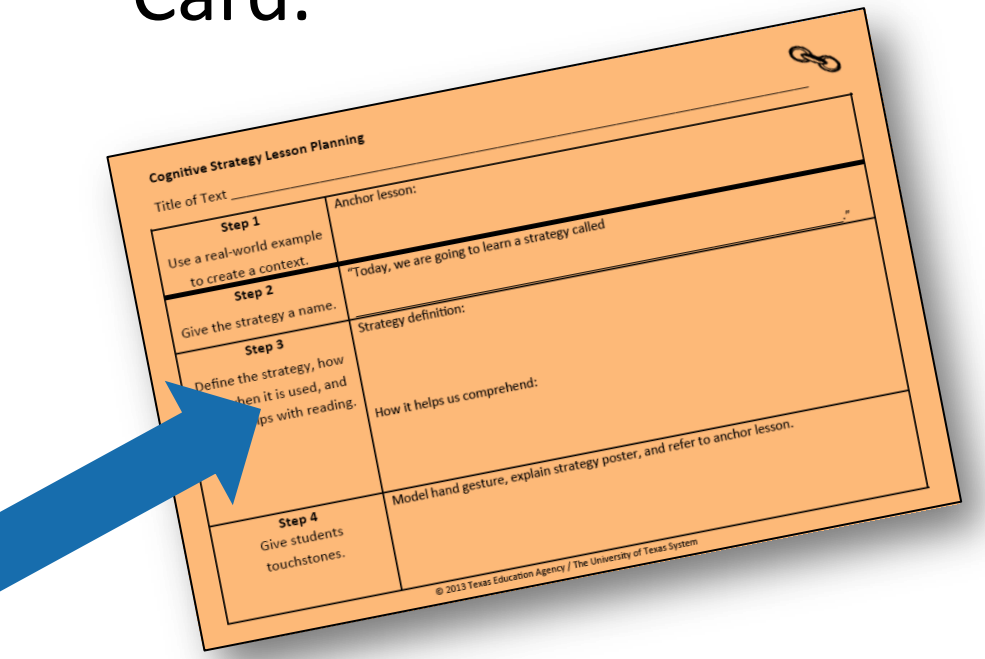
Step 3: Tell Why and How it is Used

Record what you will say for Step 3 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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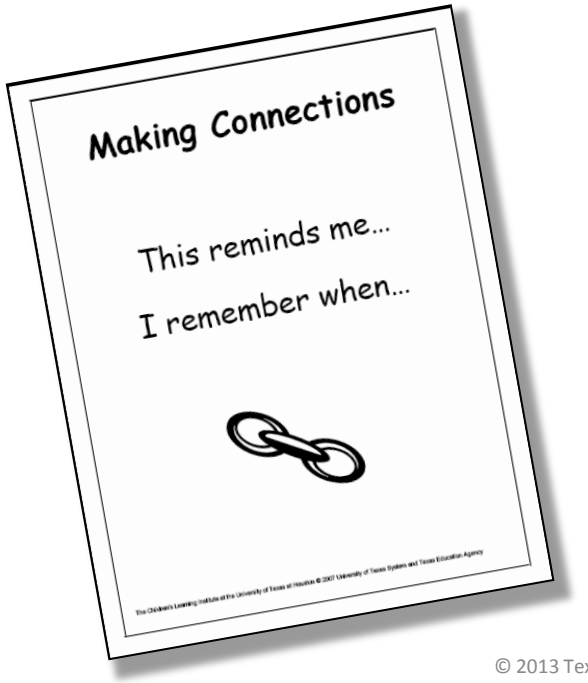
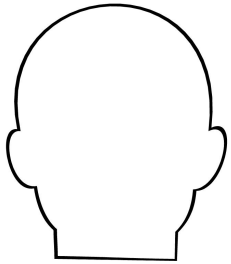
Step 4: Touchstones

Provide students with a hand motion that signals "Making Connections"



Display strategy poster in the classroom



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Step 4: Touchstones

Touchstones: Model hand gesture, explain strategy poster and refer to the anchor lesson.

"See this Making Connections strategy poster? It shows a chain link. The two links are connected. This poster helps us to remember that good readers make connections when they read. Today when I am reading, I will show you when I am making a connection to the text by crossing my fingers to make them connect. Remember, a connection is when something in the text reminds us of something in our background knowledge. For example, we all have background knowledge of cars."

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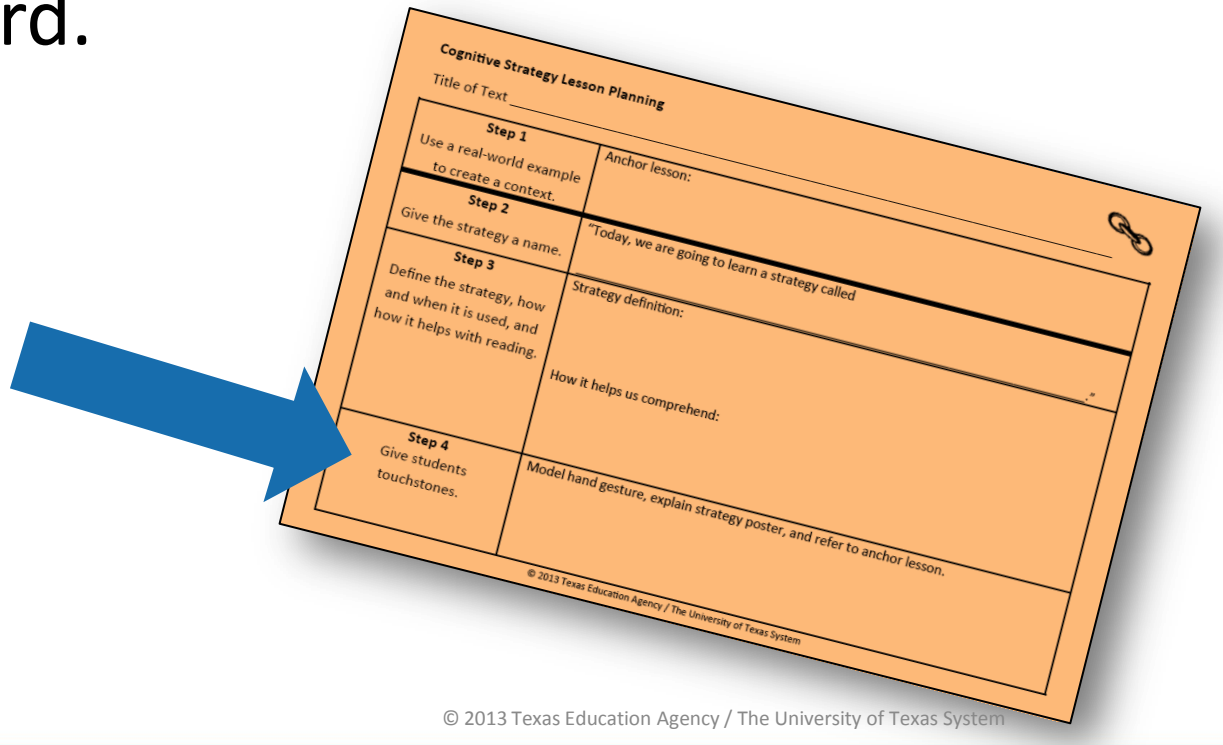
Step 4: Touchstones

Record what you will say for Step 4 on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning Card.



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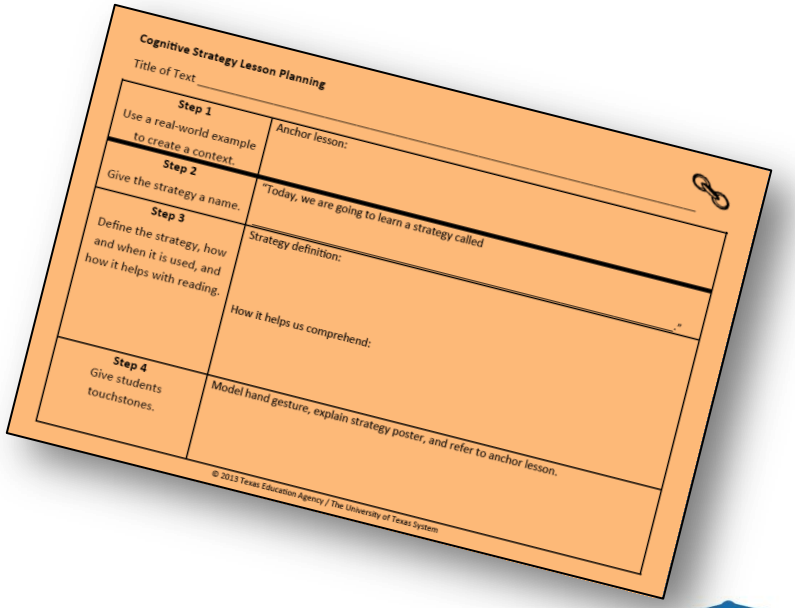
Practice Steps 2-4

You Do:

With a partner, practice Steps 2-4 of your Making Connections lesson.



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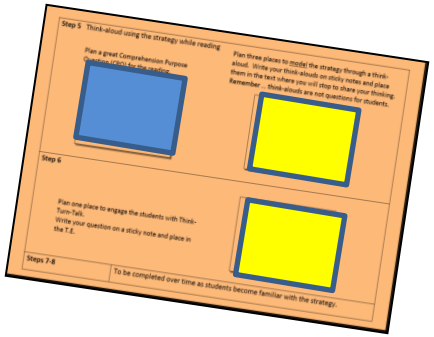
Step 5: Think Aloud (Side 2)



Step 5 is where we SHOW students how we use the strategy while reading.

We plan a comprehension purpose question (CPQ) as well as places to model thinking aloud for students.

Step 5 will differ with each lesson. We transfer the sticky notes from the planning card and place them right on the text.

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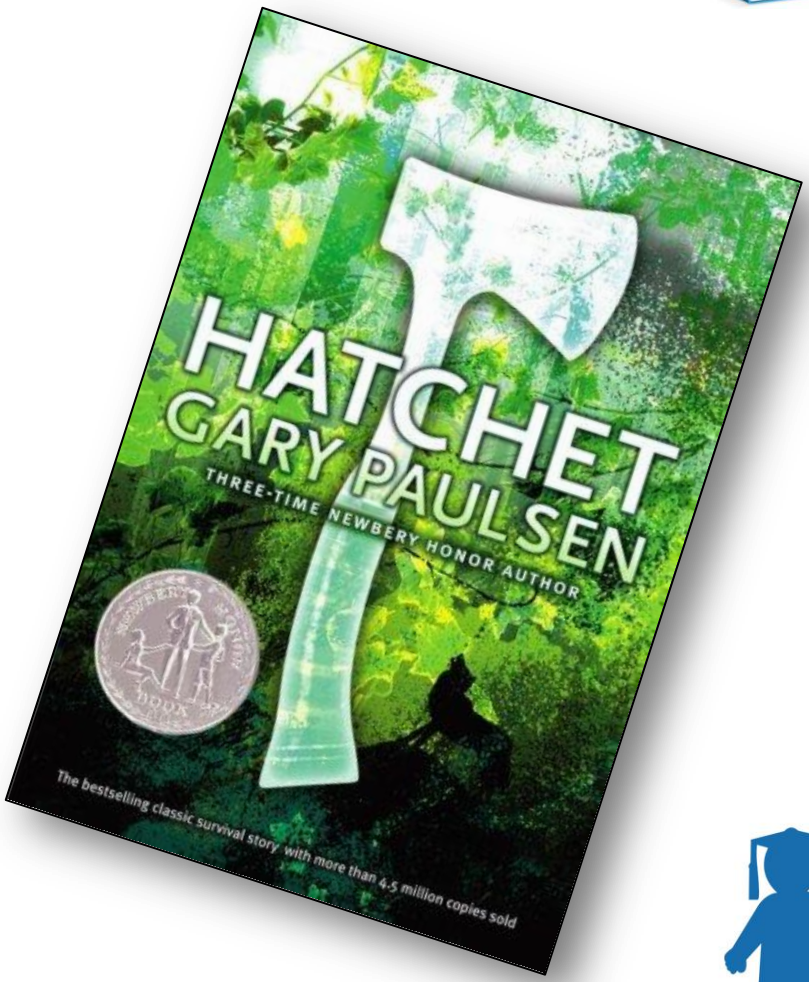
Step 5: Think Aloud

Pages 13-29

CPQ: What does Brian do to try and help the situation.

"As we read chapter 2, I will stop and think-aloud some of the connections I make while reading."



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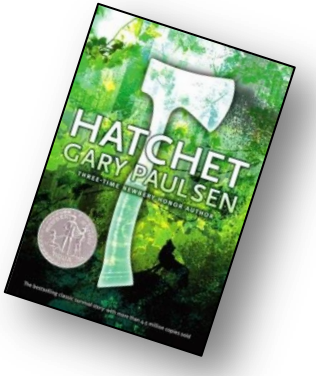
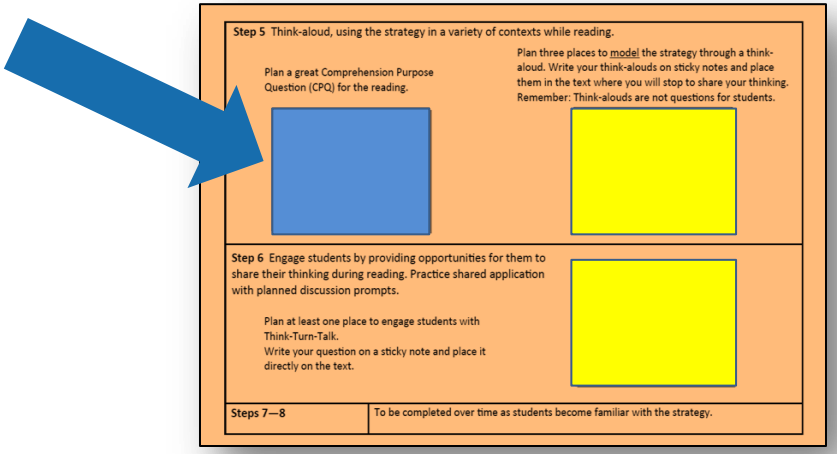
Your Turn!



1. Read pages 15-16.
2. Use the Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card to plan a CPQ for this text.



Pages 14-29

CPQ: What does Brian do to try and help the situation.

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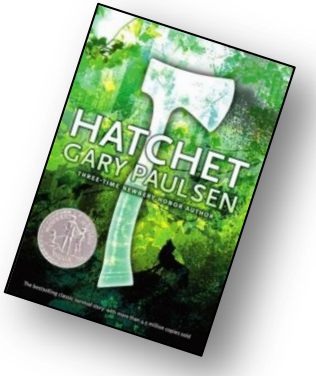
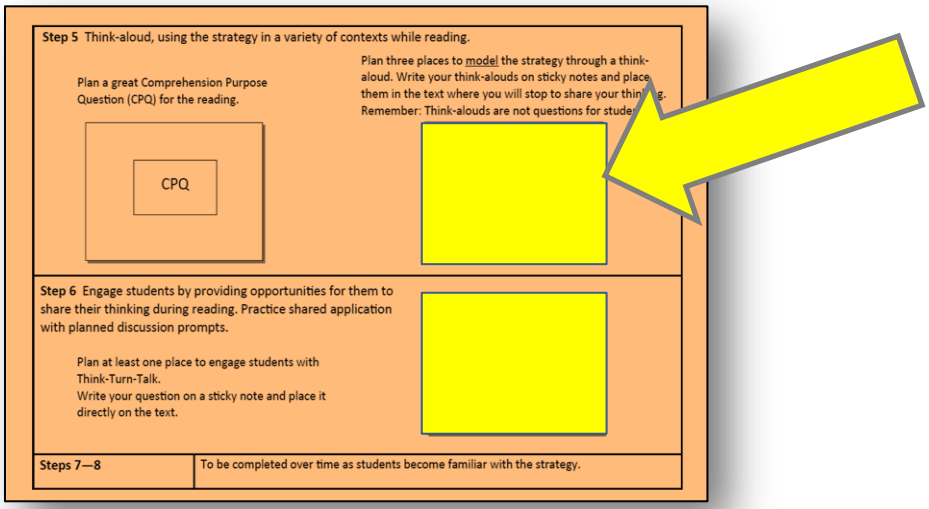
Your Turn!



3. Use the Think-Aloud sticky notes to record 2-3 places where you will stop to think-aloud making connections.



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Step 5: Think Aloud

EXAMPLE 4 **Write and solve a linear system**

KAYAKING During a kayaking trip, a kayaker travels 12 miles upstream (against the current) and 12 miles downstream (with the current), as shown. The speed of the current remained constant during the trip. Find the average speed of the kayak in still water and the speed of the current.

CPQ: What is the average speed of the kayak in still water and the speed of the current?

Larson, R., Boswell, L., Kanold, T. & Stiff, L. (2007).

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Step 5: Think Aloud

▶ Molecules

Ionic compounds are compounds formed by combining cations and anions. The attractive electrostatic force between a cation and an anion is called an *ionic bond.*

A molecular compound is formed when a nonmetal and metal combine to form a covalent bond. Covalent bonds are the type of bonds formed when two atoms *share* one or more pairs of electrons to achieve an octet of electrons. A polar covalent bond is formed when the atoms unequally share paired electrons.

CPQ: How are ionic bonds different from covalent bonds and polar covalent bonds?

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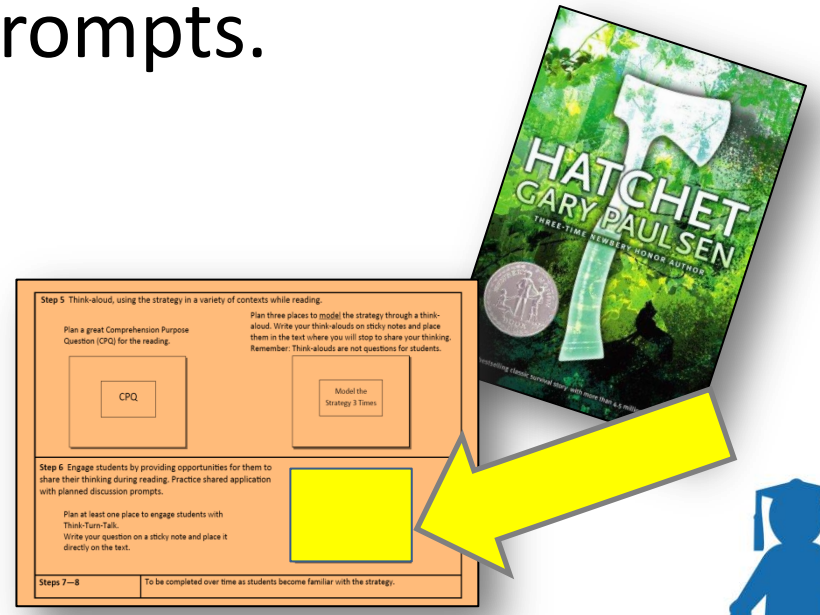
Step 6

Engage students by providing meaningful opportunities for them to share their thinking during the reading. Practice shared application with planned discussion prompts.

p. 20. “Let’s think for a moment. How do you think Brian is feeling right now? Can you make a connection to how he’s feeling?”

Turn and talk to your partner.



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How Can We Help Our Students Make Connections?

- Carefully preview texts and choose texts to which students can relate.
- Model authentic connections by thinking through the text yourself before reading with the students.
- Be explicit about the ways connections help you understand.
  - When modeling, use the stems, “That reminds me of …” and “That helps me understand the text better because …”
  - Post these stems for student reference.

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Caution

Surface-level Connections

Example: "That character has the same name that I do!"

Model: "That helps me understand better because …"

Distracting Connections

Example: "That character has a dog, and I have a dog; and one time we took the dog to the lake. We went fishing at the lake. We ate the fish for dinner. I don't like fish. I like pizza."

Ask: "How does that help you understand?"

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Caution

Weak readers often have difficulty understanding text because they make connections to background knowledge that is irrelevant to the reading task. When students are directly taught to integrate background knowledge with the text, however, they do better on comprehension measures.

(Hansen, 1981; Pressley, 2002)

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Step 7: Scaffolded Practice with Support

Scaffold practice, providing opportunities for students to use the strategy while reading with the teacher's support and monitoring.

"We are going to read an article in class today. As you read, I want you to be aware of the connections you make to what we've learned so far about the Earth's core. Record your connections on sticky notes and place them on the text. When you are finished reading the article, complete the 3 column chart we use for Making Connections and be prepared to share your thinking during small group discussion."

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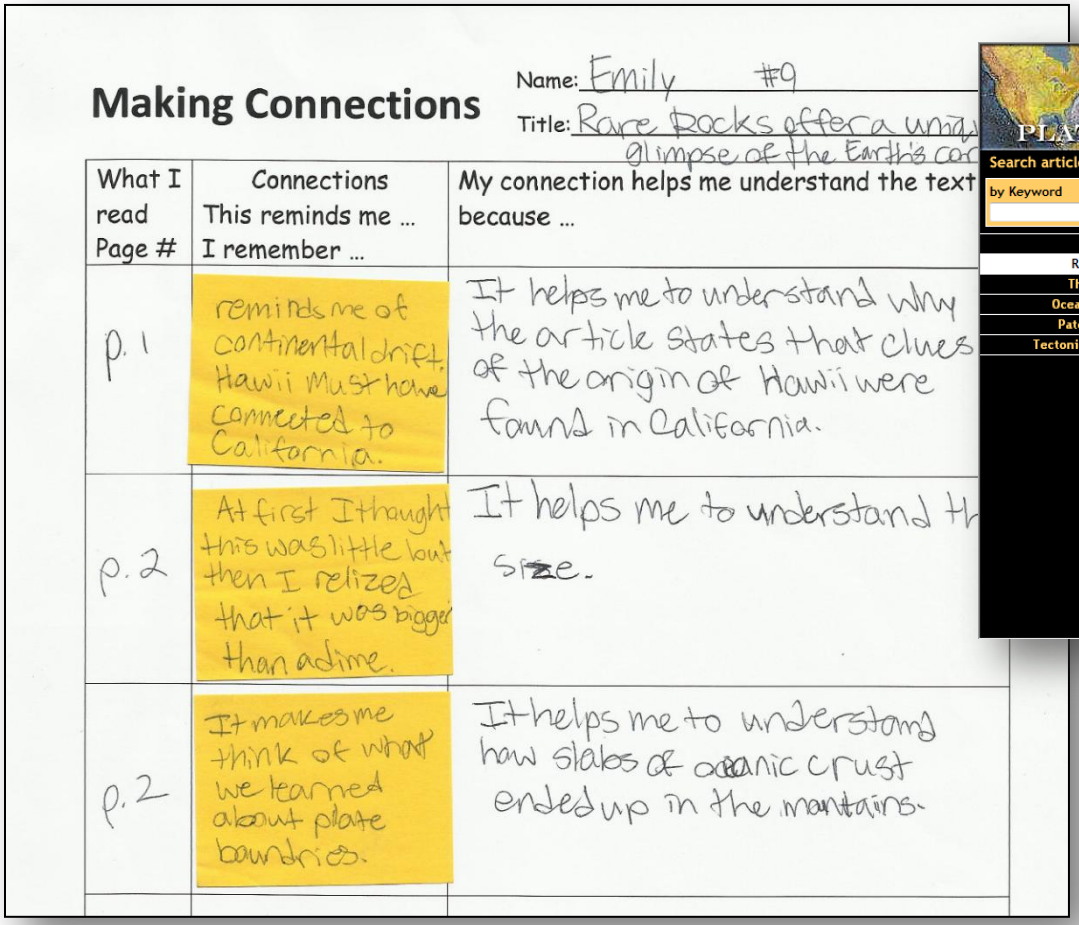
Step 7: Scaffolded Practice with Support



Making Connections

Name: Emily #9

Title: Rare Rocks offer a unique glimpse of the Earth's core

What I read Page #	Connections This reminds me … I remember …	My connection helps me understand the text because …
p. 1	reminds me of continental drift. Hawii must have connected to California.	It helps me to understand why the article states that clues of the origin of Hawii were found in California.
p. 2	At first I thought this was little but then I relized that it was bigger than a dime.	It helps me to understand th size.
p. 2	It makes me think of what we learned about plate boundries.	It helps me to understand how slabs of oceanic crust ended up in the mountains.

PLATE TECTONICS

Tuesday - January.22.2013

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Rare Rocks Offer a Unique Glimpse Of The Earth's Core; 2002

Print this article

by Mark Shwartz

Rare grains of metal from California and Oregon are providing new clues about the origin of the Hawaiian Islands -- and fueling old controversies about the evolution of the Earth's core.

In a study published in the April 19 issue of the journal Science, researchers from Stanford and the University of Copenhagen used state-of-the-art technology to measure 13 millimeter-sized grains of rock collected from slabs of oceanic crust and the lower mantle that have been pushed up on the American continental shelf in the Klamath Mountains of Northern California and Southwestern Oregon.

The samples are of particular interest to geologists because they contain large amounts of the element, osmium (Os). Th… on the surface, osmium is believed to occur in relatively high concentrations in t… low the crust.

The core is too deep f… provides tantalizing hi…

CPQ: What might we learn about the Earth's core from studying these rare rocks?

http://www.platetectonics.com/article.asp?a=65&c=5

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Step 8: Accountability

Provide accountability measures for students when using the strategy independently.

"Today when you are reading independently, I want you to be aware of the connections you're making while reading. When you're done reading, complete a quick-write in your Reading Reflection Journal, explaining the connections you made."

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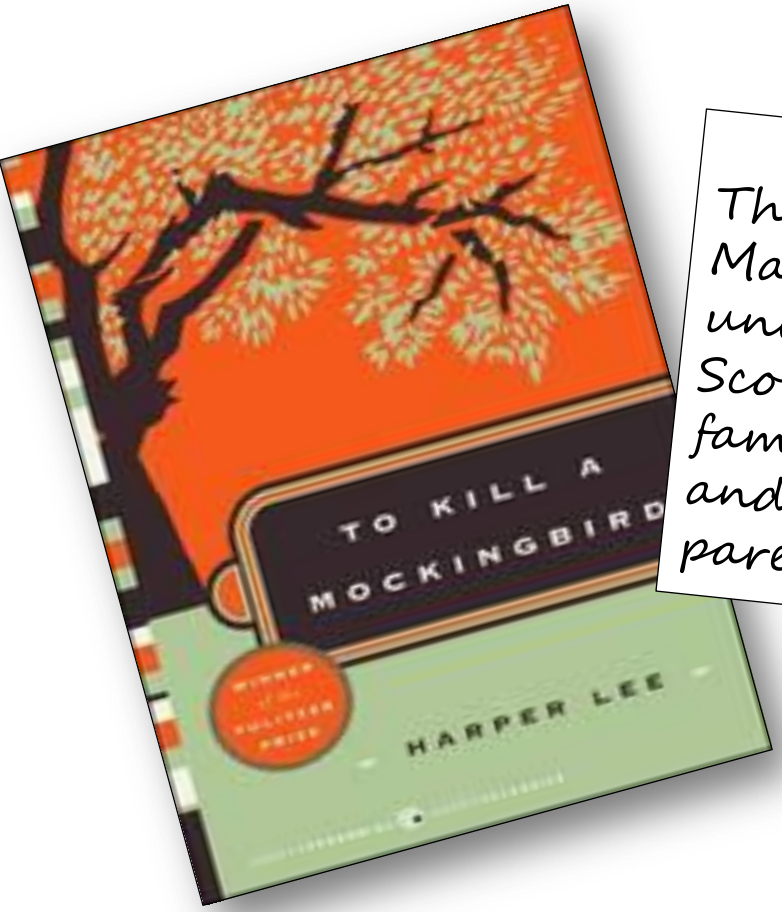
Step 8: Accountability



To Kill A Mockingbird Chapter 1

The story takes place during depression. Many people in my neighborhood are unemployed and facing hard times. Scout is raised by her father, in a single family home. My mother raises me alone and I understand how it feels to have a parent missing.

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Other Considerations When Teaching

MAKING CONNECTIONS

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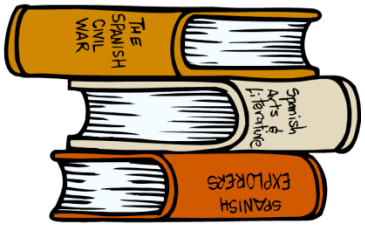
3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Self

Text-to-Text



Text-to-World

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3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Self:

"Connections between the text and the reader's experiences and memories. The more experiences and memories a reader has about a topic, the easier the material is to read."

(Tovani, 2000)

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3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Self:

- What does this story remind you of?
- Can you relate to the characters in the story?
- Does anything in this story remind you of anything in your own life?

http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/making-connections-30659.html

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3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Text:

"Connections the reader makes between two or more types of texts. The reader may make connections relative to plot, content, structure, or style."

(Tovani, 2000)

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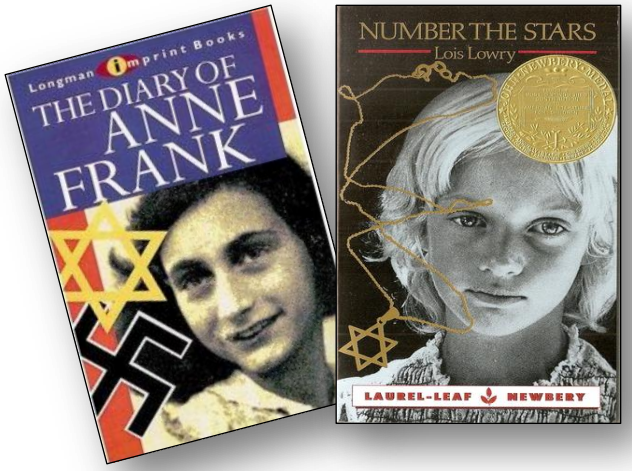
3 Types of Connections

Text-to-Text:

- What does this remind you of in another book you have read?
- How is this text similar to other things you have read?
- How is this text different from other things you have read?



http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/making-connections-30659.html

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3 Types of Connections

Text-to-World:

"Connections the reader makes between the text and what he knows about the world (facts and information)."

(Tovani, 2000)

"A connection between the text and something that is occurring or has occurred in the world."

(IRA/NCTA, 2003)

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3 Types of Connections

Text-to-World:

- What does this remind you of in the real world?
- How are events in this text similar to things that have happened in the world?
- How are events in this text different from things that have happened in the world?

The New York Times
Monday, January 21, 2013
WORLD | U.S. | N.Y. / REGION | BUSINESS | TECHNOLOGY | SCIENCE | HEALTH | Times Topics
Columbine High School
By GINA LAMB | Updated: April 17, 2008
Ed Andrieski/Associated Press
On the morning of April 20, 1999, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, walked into Columbine High School, outside Denver, and shot to death 12 fellow students and a teacher. They then killed themselves. Their actions were the result of a yearlong plot that included plans to blow up the school and kill as many as 500 people.
Headlines Ar... Web
What's This?
WONK ROOM JANUARY 16, 2013
After Columbine, Embraced Suppo... School Zones It ...
BOSTON GLOBE JANUARY 16, 2013
Judge convicts e... school plot
METAFILTER JANUARY 10, 2013
%- The differenc... them
LOS ANGELES TI... JANUARY 8, 2013
San Diego State ... shooting survivo...
SAY UNCLE JANUARY 8, 2013
Consider the so...

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine_high_school/index.html

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Tips (Steps 6-8)

- Introduce text-to-text and text-to-world connections when most students are able to make text-to-self connections.
- Allow students to make connections to non-print texts (i.e. movies, video games, television, and music).
- Use graphic organizers to chart relationships between texts.

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On THIS Day

April 5, 1968

OBITUARY

Martin Luther King Jr.: Leader of Millions in Nonviolent Drive for Racial Justice

By MURRAY SCHUMACH

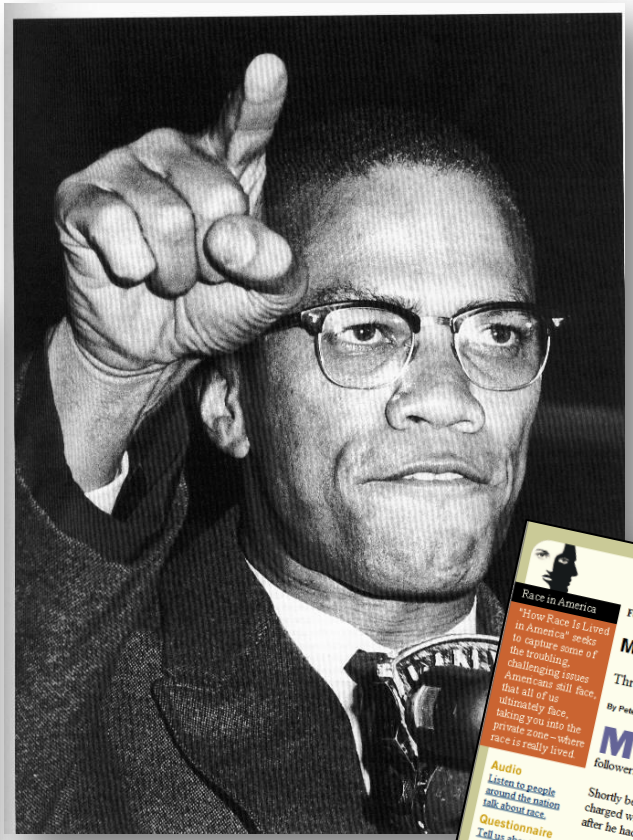
To many million of American Negroes, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the prophet of their crusade for racial equality. He was their voice of anguish, their eloquence in humiliation, their battle cry for human dignity. He forged for them the weapons of nonviolence that withstood and blunted the ferocity of segregation.

And to many millions of Ame... who preserved the bridge of... warfare threatened the Unit... sought the full emancipation... Lincoln.

To the world Dr. King ha... Peace Prize, a man with... veritable hero in the Afr...

Between Extremes

In his dedication to n... Negro extremists as... many of the nation's...



How Race Is Lived in America

Race in America

"How Race Is Lived in America" seeks to capture some of the troubling, challenging issues Americans still face, that all of us ultimately face, taking you into the private zone – where race is really lived.

Audio
Listen to people around the nation talk about race.

Questionnaire
Tell us about your experiences with race in this questionnaire.

Archives
A selection of articles, decade by decade.

Web Guide
A selective guide to race-related sites on the web.

February 22, 1965

The New York Times

Malcom X Shot to Death at Rally Here

Three Other Negroes Wounded - One is Held in Killing

By Peter Kihss

Malcolm X, the 39-year-old leader of a militant black nationalist movement, was shot to death yesterday afternoon at a rally of his followers in a ballroom in Washington Heights.

Shortly before midnight, a 22-year-old Negro, Thomas Hagan, was charged with the killing. The police rescued him from the ballroom crowd after he had been shot and beaten.

Malcolm, a bearded extremist, had said only a few words of greeting when a fusillade rang out. The bullets knocked him over backward.

Pandemonium broke out among the 400 Negroes in the Audubon Ballroom at 166th Street and Broadway. As men, women and children ducked under tables and flattened themselves on the floor, more shots were fired. Some witnesses said 30 shots had been fired.

3 Weapons Fired

The police said seven bullets had struck Malcolm. Three other Negroes were shot.

About two hours later the police said the shooting had apparently been a result of a feud between followers of Malcolm and members of the

project Share
Knowledge knows no boundaries

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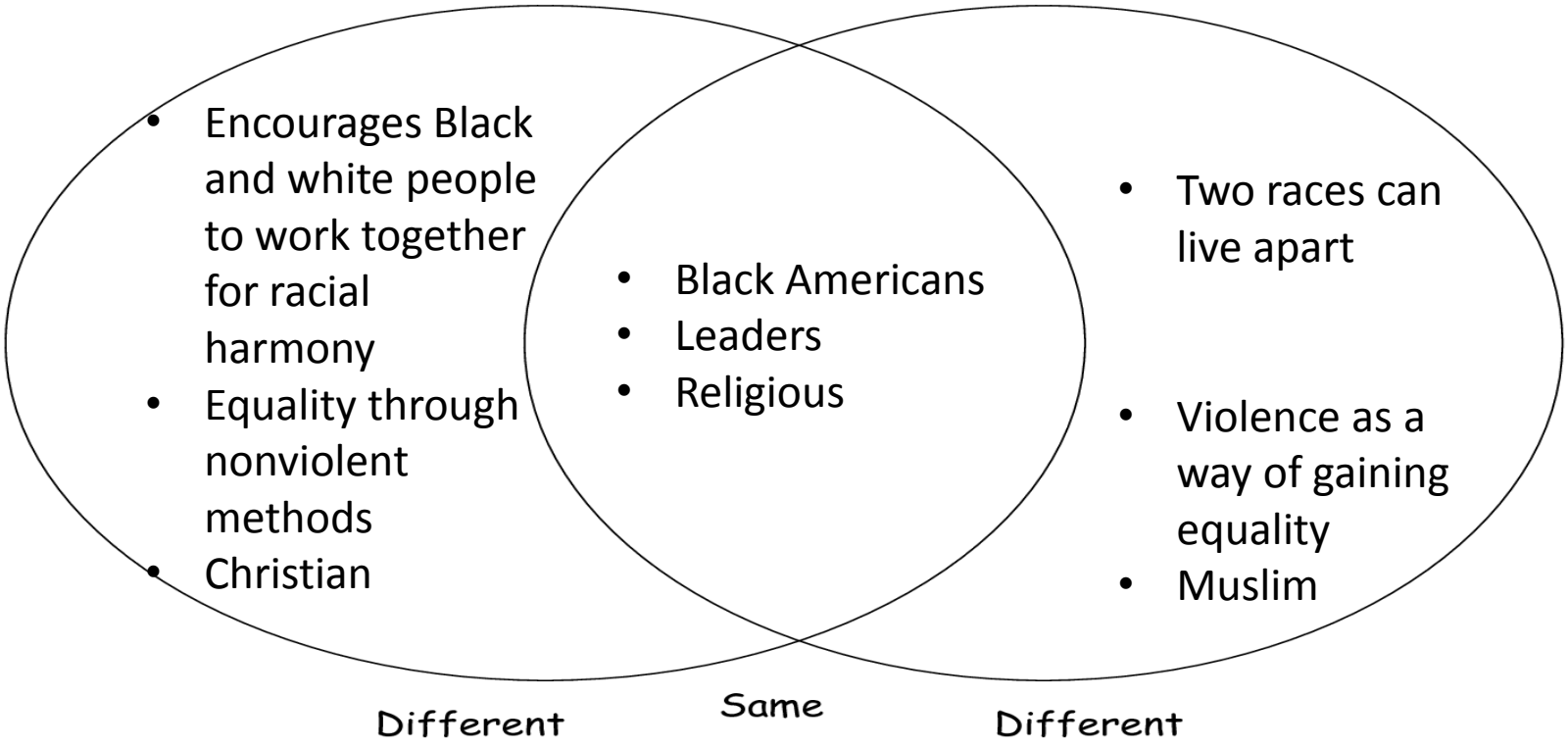
Venn Diagram

Comparing and Contrasting



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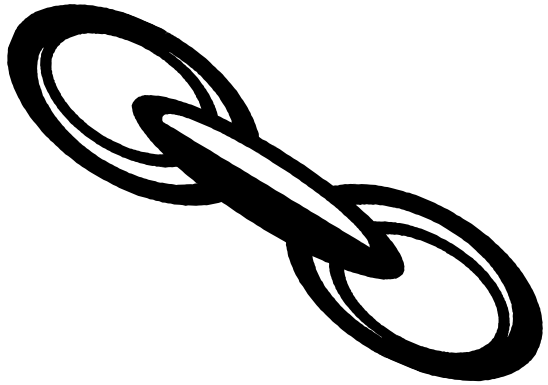
Keep In Mind …

Making Connections is the foundation for many of the other cognitive strategies good readers use. It is important that students have a good understanding of background knowledge, and how they use their background knowledge to make connections during reading.



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YOU DO:

Look at text that you will be using in class next week.

1. Plan a CPQ for the text that will link to the strategy of Making Connections.
2. Plan three places to model Making Text-to-Self Connections. Place sticky notes in the text right where you will stop to model the connections that you are making.

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"Background knowledge is a repository of memories, experiences, and facts. When information is read in isolation and not connected to existing knowledge, it is forgotten and deemed unimportant. Calling on existing knowledge and experiences is crucial if readers are to assimilate new information."

~ Cris Tovani

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