Guiding Comprehension

Teaching for Meaning





Guiding Comprehension – Teaching For Meaning

"Comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text"

Pardo, 2004

The teaching of reading needs to include a range of comprehension strategies. Comprehension strategies can be defined as the "mental processes" that good readers use to understand text. Comprehension strategies need to be explicitly taught.

The diagram below illustrates the 3 levels of comprehension, ranging from the lower order literal type to the higher order evaluative type.

Evaluative Synthesising
Determining Importance
Summarising and Paraphrasing
Self Questioning

Inferential Connecting
Comparing
Inferring
Predictina

Literal

Creating Images
Skimming
Scanning
Self Questioning



Reading Strategies Definitions and activities to support implementation



denotes task card template located at end of resource book)

Creating Images

Readers create images using the senses to help them to draw conclusions, make predictions, interpret information, remember details and assist with overall comprehension

Activities for Creating Images

Picture This: Teacher reads a section of a text without showing any illustrations and children draw a visual representation of their interpretation of character/ setting/ event from that piece of text.



Sensory Chart: Pairs of children select section of text and record pictorially or using key words what text *looks like/feels like/sounds like.*

Post Your Senses: Pupils record brief details on post it notes based on images they form as they read text. They stick the post it notes onto the appropriate part of the text.



Changing Images: Teacher reads a section of a text without showing any illustrations. Teacher stops reading at a selected place in the text and asks children to sketch or write the mental image they have created. Children label this, Image 1- My First Image. Teacher reads more of the text and children are given time to re-create their image based on the new information. Children label this, Image 2- My Second Image. Children should be asked to discuss any changes made to the second image.



Open Mind Portrait: Children are asked to create character portraits and include key words to describe the character's thoughts and feelings.

Information Images: Children create key images based on informational text i.e. in a science or nonfiction book.

Self questioning

Self-Questioning encourages readers to constantly think of questions before, during and after reading to assist them to comprehend text. Self-formulated questions provide a framework for active reading and engagement as students go in search of the answers.

Activities for Self Questioning



Clouds of wonder: Pupils discuss text and generate "I wonder" questions represented on cloud shapes on a sheet. This can be done at regular intervals throughout the reading of a text.



Stop and Think Cards: Children are given prompt cards with questions directing them to reflect on their understanding of section of text. i.e. *Do I understand what that part was about? Could I explain that part to somebody else?*



Before, During, After Question Sheets: Children compose and record questions in 3 separate columns on a sheet: *Before Reading, During Reading, After Reading.*

Written Conversation: Pairs of children exchange their thoughts and explanations of events in a text with each other in written form- no talking allowed.



Skimming

This involves glancing quickly through a text to gain a general impression of the content. Graphics, italics and headings are useful cues when skimming a text.

Activities for Skimming

Picture Flick: Children are given an opportunity to flick through illustrations to get an initial sense of the contents, characters and settings. They make predictions based on this quick glance at the text.

Graphic Overlays: Pupils overlay text with tracing paper/ acetate, and outline chunks of text/ graphs/ headings etc. These sections are labelled on the overlay. This helps with the gathering of information where text is presented in columns interspersed with graphs/ pictures.



Sneak Preview: Pupils complete Sneak Preview sheet to gain information before they read the text fully. The sheet can have sections for cover, headings, illustrations, author etc. Children fill in brief details in each section based on a quick skim through the text. After reading the text the children should discuss how their sneak preview prepared them for the text.



Scanning

Scanning involves glancing through material to locate specific details, such as names, dates, places or some particular content.

Activities for Scanning

Hunt the Text Challenge: A set of quiz cards are created with questions seeking specific information i.e. page number, date, heading, title etc. Teacher reads out questions and asks children to locate the information as quickly as they can.

Beat the Buzzer: Pupils can devise questions as above and record these on cards. Teacher collects all questions and asks them to the entire class. Children giving answers must also locate the page number and/or paragraph in which the answer appears.

Retrieval cards: In advance of reading the text the children get a list of headings from the teacher about a piece of text i.e. habitat, food, size. Children scan the text to get this information and make generalisations before reading the text fully. This works well for informational texts i.e. species of dinosaurs, animals that hibernate etc.



Interesting Words Charts: Pupils skim text for new / interesting vocabulary. Teacher records words on Interesting Word Chart along with page and paragraph number. Children are asked to look for clues in the text that might help explain what the word means. They record this contextual clue beside the new word. They can also record their own interpretation of what it means. Finally they are asked to check the meaning in a dictionary/ thesaurus/ glossary.



Predicting

Prediction helps readers to activate their prior knowledge about a topic, so they begin to combine what they know with the new material in the text. Predictions are based on clues in the text such as pictures, illustrations, subtitles and plot.

Activities for Predicting

Split Images: Students work in pairs. Child A describes and elaborates on illustrations in the text. Child B is not permitted to look. Child B looks at the next picture and builds on Child's A description and prediction. The process of alternating predictions continues until text is completed.



Personal Prediction: Children predict using title, author, cover page etc. Children are then given key words from the text and asked to refine their earlier predictions.

Check the Text: Teacher hides text and shows only illustrations, diagrams, pictures. Children predict and create their own text to match the illustrations.



Crystal Ball: Whole text has been read. Divide children into groups, each group is allocated a character from the text. Each group brainstorms information about their character, i.e. likes, dislikes, interests, personality traits that were stated explicitly or implicitly in the text. Then each group predicts the future for their character based on evidence from the original text and shares with other groups.



Think Sheets: Key headings and chapter titles are used to construct questions based on the text. Allow children to think/pair/share and suggest answers prior to reading and compare these after having read the text.

True/False - Statements about events in the story are recorded by children before reading the text. Children then compare the statements after reading for confirmation/rejection.



Connecting

Connecting allows readers to comprehend text by making strong connections between their prior knowledge and the new information presented in text.

Activities for Connecting

Connecting with the text: Children mark areas in the text with post it notes to show places in the text with which they have made a personal connection i.e. own experience, previous reading material, similar characters.



Before and After Chart: Information is organised on a chart into 3 columns

- What we know before reading the text
- What we now know after reading the text
- What other information we would like to find out

Think and share: children list key events in the story on one side of a page/chart. Each child takes on a character from the text and considers how this character was feeling during each event. These thoughts are recorded on the right hand side opposite the particular event.

Linking texts: After a number of texts are read, children are asked to list these and illustrate the commonalties between the texts by drawing in linking lines. The similarity is recorded on the linking line.

What's in a Text?: A group of children are given a common text to read. Teacher provides a list of questions about the text which encourage children to make connections with other texts i.e. What other texts have you read that were fairytales? What do you know about fairytales? What kind of characters are found in fairytales?



Comparing

This strategy is closely linked to 'Connecting'. When making connections to the text, self, other texts and the outside world, pupils also make comparisons. There is an emphasis on identifying similarities and differences.

Activities for Comparing

Venn Diagram: Children use 2 overlapping circles to record features that are unique to each text on each circle. Common features are recorded in the overlapping section. Features to be compared could include topics, characters, plots, facts etc.



Just Like: Children compare characters with themselves, with similar characters in other texts (witch in various stories) or with people child knows e.g. Grandma.



Double Entry Journal: Children record key events from the text on one side of a journal page and on the other they note down connections with real life events or other books.

Inferring

This strategy allows the reader to move beyond the literal text and make assumptions about what is not explicitly stated in the text. It can involve predictions, conclusions and interpretations that are neither confirmed nor rejected.

Activities for Inferring

Character Self Portrait: Child adopts role of character, and using sentence starters given by the teacher, they create a profile for that character using explicit and implicit cues from text i.e. *I live in a, I like*



Interviews: Children in pairs conduct interviews where one child takes on a character and the other composes questions to ask the character. Teachers should model the type of questions required – ones which will focus on finding out more about the character than is explicit in the text.



Rating Scales: Children choose a character to rate. The characters traits are discussed and recorded. i.e. Rude, Cowardly, Kind.

Using a simple rating scale: Very, Quite, Not at all, the children tick the appropriate rating. Children need to justify their rating with evidence from the text.

This activity should be done at regular intervals throughout the text to record changes in characters behaviour etc.

Report Card: Children prepare a report card for a character in the text based on a number of "subjects" i.e. cooking, making friends, helping out. Children decide on a grade to give the character for that trait and provide a supporting comment that shows engagement with the text.

What's my Point of View?: Class identifies four or five key events from a text. In groups children adopt a character and discuss each of the key events through the perspective of their adopted character. Teacher re organises groups so that each character is represented in each group. Each character's point of view gets heard in each group.

Developing Dialogue: In pairs children each choose a character and one key event. The children compose a dialogue in relation to that event which encourages them to draw inferences about the characters. Dialogues are shared with the class and children discuss the various dialogues that were created.



Synthesising

This strategy allows a reader to bring together information that may come from a variety of sources. It involves readers piecing information together, like putting together a jigsaw.

Activities for Synthesising

Turn on the Lights: While reading a piece of text, children are asked to make note of any point in the text where something is clarified or has helped increase their understanding. These points represent the AH HA! moments that all readers have during reading.

Plot Profile: Having read the text thoroughly children are asked to list the main events in the story in sequence. Each event is then rated for its impact or excitement level in the story, say 1 to 10. Each event can be plotted along a horizontal axis and matched with its excitement level on the vertical axis. The points are joined up to form a trend of excitement levels in the story from beginning to end.

Great Debate: Teacher presents the class with an open-ended statement related to topic/text read. In groups children formulate affirmative or negative responses to the statement and justify their position on the matter. Children should share and compare their standpoints towards eventually drawing conclusions.

Synthesis Journal: Pupils gather information on selected topic from several sources i.e. various textbooks or reference books chronicling the same topic. Children record key information from each source to build up a comprehensive picture on a topic. This works particularly well for History when children need to view events from the perspectives of different authors or writers.



Determining importance

This strategy encourages readers to constantly ask themselves what is important in a phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter or whole text.

Activities for Determining Importance



What's Your Story: Having read the text fully first, children record on a sheet key pieces of information from the text in categories i.e. Setting, Main characters, Events. If this is done for different texts, the sheets can be used to compare texts.

Famous Five Key Word Search: Children are asked to identify five key words in a text. They record these on post it notes and call them VIPs- Very Important Points. In small groups children compare their VIPs and provide justifications for choosing these words.

Main Idea Pyramid: Having read a text the class brainstorm important facts and record these on post it notes. The notes are grouped into categories or topics and placed at the bottom of a 3 tiered pyramid. Each group of notes are consolidated to make a shared point and this is recorded in the next layer up of the pyramid. The idea is that finally one main message will be recorded at the top of the pyramid.



Summarising and paraphrasing
Summarising is the ability to reduce a larger piece of text so the focus is on the most important elements in the text. The restating or re-writing of text into other words is referred to as paraphrasing. Summarising and paraphrasing involve using the key words and phrases to capture the main focus of the text.

Activities for Summarising and Paraphrasing

Oral Summaries: Taking one section of text at a time groups are asked to read silently and collectively generate a summary of text through discussion and substantiation.

Reciprocal Retells: As above but in this activity children in small groups take a specific event each from the text. They each retell the main points of their chosen event. Child A begins with a summary of their event and passes the story onto Child B etc. The whole summary is then shared with the class.

Main Idea Sort: Works well with information texts. Teacher records key words / phrases onto cards. Pupils then arrange these to create an outline of the text and re-tell in summary form.

Newspaper Report: Familiarise pupils with organisation of newspaper article beforehand. Using a piece of text, children organise the information according to the newspaper format i.e. Headline, date and place, main happenings, conclusion.



66 Words: Children are challenged to read a text and create a summary in 66 words or less. The children are given a grid of 66 rectangles to record the summary- one word per rectangle. This makes children more judicious about choosing words and encourages them to only use the main ones. Children compare their 66 word grid in groups and try to come to a group consensus about the final 66 words. When complete they should discuss why they included/omitted certain words.



How to teach Comprehension Strategies

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Role of the Teacher Degree of control Role of the Student

Modelling The teacher demonstrates and explains the reading strategy being introduced. This is achieved by thinking aloud the mental processes used when using the strategy The students participate by actively attending to the demonstrations.

Sharing The teacher continues to demonstrate the use of the strategy with a range of texts inviting students to contribute ideas and information. Students and begin to

contribute ideas practise the use of the strategy in whole-class situations.

Guiding **Applying** The teacher offers The teacher support and provides scaffolds encouragement as for students to use necessary. the strategy. Teacher provides feedback. Students work with help from the teacher and peers to practise the use of the strategy using a variety of

The students work independently to apply the strategy in context across the curriculum.

Pearson & Gallagher, 1984

Gills Questions - Planning for comprehension

- 1. What do my students know about this topic?
- 2. What specific *vocabulary* or *concepts* do they need to understand before they can understand this passage?
- 3. How can I get my students *interested* in this topic?
- 4. What *purpose* can I provide for the reading?
- 5. What *activities* will help my students engage in this text?
- 6. Do parts of this text allow for purposeful <u>repeated readings</u>?
- 7. Is there potential for teaching *word identification* strategies in this text?
- 8. What *strategies* do my students need to learn?
- 9. What *strategies can I demonstrate* with this particular text?



Reading with your child

Top Ten Tips for Parents / Guardians



try and guess unknown

words.

Top Tell Tips for Farents / Guardians				
Infants – 1 st Class	2 nd and 4 th Class	5 th and 6 th Class		
Reading	Reading	Reading		
 Read to your child as 	 Continue to read to your 	1. Encourage your child to		
often as you can.	child everyday.	visit the local library as		
2. Talk about books /	Read some of the books	often as possible.		
characters / plots.	your child enjoys so you	Recognise and praise		
3. Enrol your child in the	can discuss them with	your child's efforts in		
local library.	him/her.	reading.		
Provide a good role	Encourage your child to	3. Ensure your child has		
model by reading	read to younger	access to a wide range		
yourself / other family	brothers/ sisters.	of reading material –		
members.	4. Ensure that your child	newspapers,		
Keep audio tapes of	knows that you value	magazines, guides etc.		
familiar stories to play	and enjoy reading	4. Take an interest in		
in the car.	yourself.	different children's		
6. Vary the type of	5. Make sure there is a	authors.		
books read – stories /	wide variety of reading	5. Discuss ideas and points		
poems / information.	material in your home –	of view proposed by		
7. Accept your child's	newspapers, magazines,	newspaper articles etc.		
efforts with praise.	information, cookery	6. Provide a well lit study /		
8. Concentrate on what	books etc.	reading area.		
he /she got right.	Enrol and encourage	7. Ensure that you value		
9. Make reading	your child to visit the	and enjoy reading		
together enjoyable.	local library once a	yourself.		
10. Take part in school	week	8. Allow your child to		
based initiatives like	7. Discuss favourite	choose his /her own		
'Shared Reading'.	authors.	reading material.		
	8. Encourage your child to	9. Encourage your child to		
	read articles / headlines	read for information –		
	in newspapers.	timetables / weather		
	9. Encourage your child to	forecasts / menus		
	guess unknown words.	10. Encourage your child to		

10. Take part in school

based initiatives like

'Shared Reading'





PREDICTION

Thinking about what might happen in the story and looking at the clues in the text and pictures will help me understand what it is about!



I think this story is about.....

I predict that
will happen
next......

From what I know....I don't think.....

That's not what I thought would happen...



SELF-QUESTIONING

Asking questions helps me understand a text. Remember to ask questions before, during and after you read!



I wonder...

How could that be?

Why do you think?

Who... What...

Where... When...

What did that mean?



CREATING IMAGES

Making a picture in my head as I read can help me understand a text better!



When I read this I can see

I can smell, hear, taste,

I can feel.....

I can see the picture in my head...it looks like...



6

Uestioning

rediction





MAKING CONNECTIONS

Sometimes when I read I can make a connection to something I already know!



That reminds me of a time when.....

That reminds me of somebody.....

That reminds me of another book where.....

When I was young I remember...and this sounds very similar...



SKIMMING

If I quickly flick through the text I can get an overall idea of what the text is about.



By quickly flicking through the text I know that...

I think this will be useful because I can see by the headings that it includes....



INFERRING

Sometimes as I read I need to make inferences. When the author doesn't answer my questions I must infer.

hints...

Using these different clues I can infer that...

After reading that text I think that...

Maybe....

It could mean that....

Perhaps....



Inferring

Skimming Skimming

Connections Making





SUMMARISING

When I summarise I can think about what I have read and then focus on the important elements

hints...

First, next, finally, then....

I think the purpose of this text was to...

I can think about the most important parts and retell them in my own words...



COMPARING

When I am comparing I can look and see what is the same or different!



I can compare characters, events, settings....

If I make a connection I can compare it to something I know already...

I know that this is the same....

I know that this is different to....



SYNTHESISING

When I use all my strategies to combine what I know with new information to understand the text I am synthesising.



Helpful

hints...

Now, I get it!

This makes me think of...

I learned that...

I understand this because...

Using all the strategies I know, I think this is about...

So, this bit helps me understand...



om porling

Sumarising





MONITORING COMPREHENSION

I know how to use different ways to help me when I get stuck on what the meaning of a text is.

Helpful

hints...

When I get stuck on a word or when I get confused I can:

...use what I know to think about the word

...reread

...read on

....use my questions and connections



DETERMINING IMPORTANCE

I can understand the main ideas of the text and what the author's message is.



The text was mostly about...

The important details were...

I will underline the key words...

I think andare important



SCANNING

Scanning helps me find information in a text, such as contents, illustrations and index.

I look for information, like names and dates...

By looking closely at the text I have discovered that...

I can also look for headings and/or information that might be highlighted...



Scanning

mportance etermining

Comprehension Monitoring



Planning framework

Strategy
Objective/Learning Intention
Language
Lunguage
Integration
Lesson Outline
Modelled
Widdelied
• Shared
Guided
Guided
Independent
Р асомияса
Resources



Inferring

I think that he is thinking this because

I think the character is because



Scanning

I scan for important information.

If I am scanning for who I look for capital letters (names), if I scan for when I look for days (capital letters), dates, years, times (numbers)



Creating Images

When I read this I can see
I can smell, hear, taste, touch.......

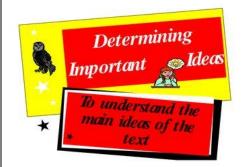


Determining Importance

The main points are.......

This is really important because

Who, What, When, Where, Why ...





Predicting

I think this story is about......

I predict that will happen next.......



Connecting

That reminds me of a time when......
That reminds me of somebody......
That reminds me of another book where......





Comprehension Strategy Task Sheets

The following task cards can be used to consolidate strategies for children.



At A Glance

Text: Author: Illustrator:	What I notice about the cover:
What I notice about the illustrations:	What I notice about the title and headings:
What I notice about the author:	Questions I have about the text:



Double Entry Journal		
Text:	Author:	
Topic:		
Ideas from Text:	Connection or comparison:	



Double Entry Journal				
Text:				
Topic:				
From the Text: (Quote)	Page No.	Connection or comparison: (Questions; Connections; reactions; predictions)		

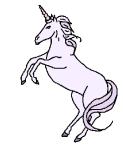


Double Entry Journal			
Text:			
Topic:			
Quotation:	0	Why I find this	
	Page No.	quotation interesting or	
		important:	



What a Story!





Title: ______

Text Type and Topic	Setting
Events or Action	Characters
LVEITS OF ACTION	Characters



BDA Activity Sheet

Text	Author
Illustrator	

My Questions	My Questions	My Questions
BEFORE Reading	DURING Reading	AFTER Reading



Before	and	After	Statements.
DUILL	ullu		

Text:		

Selected Statements from the Text	Before Reading		After Reading		Reference Explain your
	True	False	True	False	answer referring to the text



Changing Images WorksheetName

Name	Date
My first image	My Image after talking with
My image after hearing more of the text.	My image at the end of the text.





Just Like				
Character: Text:				
Character Trait	Just like me:	Like someone I know:	Reminds me of character:	



Rating scale

Text:			Character or _l	person:		
Trait	Very	Quite	No information	Quite	Very	Opposite trait
Justification:						
Trait	Very	Quite	No information	Quite	Very	Opposite trait
Justification:						
Trait	Very	Quite	No information	Quite	Very	Opposite trait
Justification:						
Trait	Very	Quite	No information	Quite	Very	Opposite trait
Justification:						
Trait	Very	Quite	No information	Quite	Very	Opposite trait
Justification:						



My Crystal Ball.

Character:	
	<u> </u>
	•



Personal Predictions

Take a close look at the title, author and cover of your text. Use this information to make a prediction about the text.

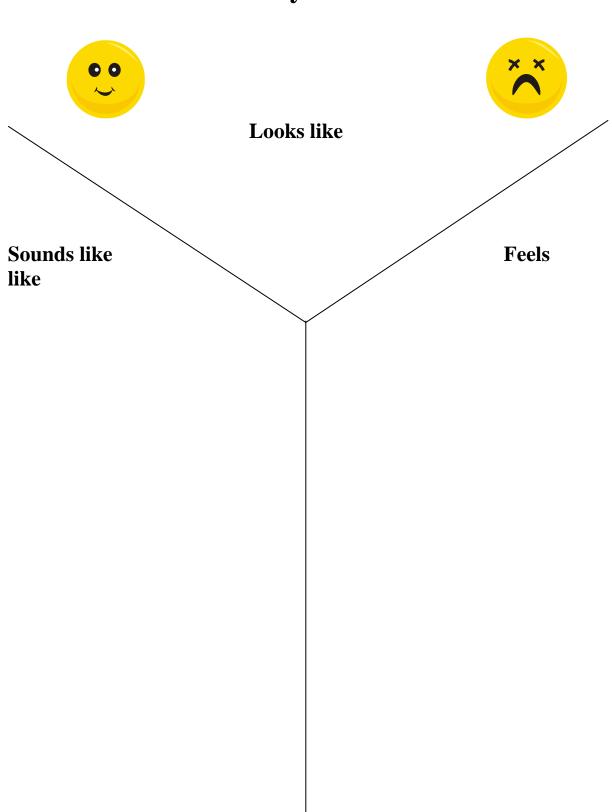
+ y=?

My Personal Prediction 1					
Sort the following	ng key words into a	category belo)W.		
Characters	Setting		Events or Action		
I I a a this informs	otion to odd to warm	mus di sti sm			
Ose uns informa	ation to add to your	prediction.			
My Personal Prediction 2					

Share and compare this prediction with a friend.



Sensory Chart





	Sneak P	review	
Text:			!
Author:			
Illustrator:			
What I notice about the ILLUSTRATIONS		What I notice about the COVER	
What I notice about the AUTHOR		What I notice about the HEADINGS/TITLES	
		QUESTIONS I have about the text	
		/	



Stop and think card

Do I understand what that was about?

Were there any parts I did not understand?

Could I explain what I have just read to someone else?

What might the next part be about?

Are there any questions I need to have answered?

Congratulations! Read ON!

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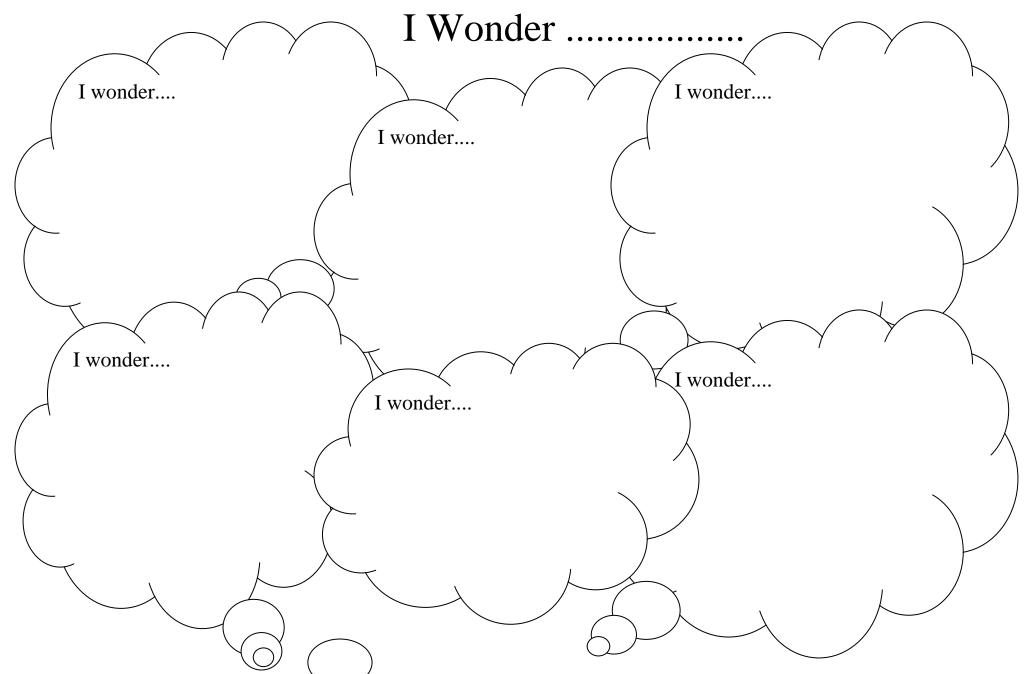
Could I explain what I have just read to someone else?

What might the next part be about?

Are there any questions I need to have answered?

Congratulations! Read ON!







Interesting Words Chart						
Word	Page and/or	Any help	Your explanation	Meaning		
	Paragraph	given in the	_	from another		
		text		source		



