

Teaching the Think Aloud Reading Strategy

Think Aloud is a strategy that teaches readers how to *think* about reading. Good readers are actively engaged with the text as they read. They consciously or subconsciously:

- 1) make predictions about what is going to happen next;
- 2) visualize what the words are describing;
- 3) question the author's intent or meaning of a word or phrase;
- 4) make connections to similar things they are already familiar with;
- 5) stop to clarify their understanding or re-read a passage; and
- 6) evaluate or reflect on what determinations they have made about what they just read.

In Think Aloud/Read Aloud you will model how to think about reading as you verbalize thoughts that go through your mind as you read aloud to the students. It may seem a little strange at first, but it will help your readers to learn how to do this for themselves and improve their own comprehension.

Remember not to worry! You will not be introducing anything new. I use this technique in our classroom. However, repetition helps to reinforce strategies and increases student retention. These instructions will help you remind the students of strategies to use **before**, **during**, and **after** reading.

I will provide the text for you to read and copies for the students to read along with you. I will provide handouts, sticky notes, bookmarks and any other supplies needed for the activity. I will also provide a list of sample Think Aloud questions for you to use as you read and "think" aloud.

1. Tell me what we are going to do. (Approximately 5 minutes.)

- The first step is to tell the students that today they will be practicing Think Aloud strategies as you read to them and then they will practice using the Think Aloud strategies as they read on their own.
- Remind them that the Think Aloud strategy helps them to remember what to do before, during and after reading.
- Ask them to tell you some of the steps used by good readers that we practice in Think Aloud. They can refer to the Think Aloud poster if needed.
- Tell them that you are going to read to them and you want them to follow along in their copy.
- Pass out the Think Aloud Strategy Checklist ([click here to print a copy.](#)) Read through the checklist as the students follow along with their copy.
- Ask the students to listen carefully as you read and think aloud and put a tally mark in the correct column each time they hear you use one of the strategies.
- Tell them that you will give them a visual clue each time you use one of the strategies on the checklist. You will hold your finger to your mouth like "I wonder" or hold it to your forehead like "I'm thinking."

2. Show me how to do it - **Think Aloud** (Approximately 10 minutes)

Model what it is we want the student(s) to do. Demonstrate by talking about what you are doing and thinking as you work through the text (thinking aloud).

- Introduce the short reading selection by reading the title and author. Ask them to follow along in their own copy.
- Look at the title, cover and some other illustrations and tell what interests you about the book. Make some predictions about what it might be about and use your finger clues.

- Ask the students what you just did. Find out if they put a check mark in the Predictions column. Have them do it if they did not.
- Read the text and model thinking aloud as you go. (I will have some suggested comments and questions that you can use.) Remember to use your finger clues each time you Think Aloud.
- Model each type of behavior in the checklist. Comment about any of your predictions that came true or that needed correction. Remember your finger clues.
- When you finish the selection, touch your finger to your mouth and then evaluate it by telling what you liked best about it.
- Ask the students to share what behaviors you used and how many check marks they counted.

3. Help me do it - **Think Along or Think Together** (Approximately 10 minutes.)

We call this guided practice. Have the student(s) make some predictions, ask some questions, visualize, etc. First have them Think Along with you, and then transition to having them Think Together with each other with prompts from you. At this point you are making sure they understand the process and will be able to do it on their own.

- Introduce another short reading selection by reading the title and author. Ask them to follow along in their own copy.
- Give them another checklist.
- Have them look at the title, cover and other illustrations. Tell what interests you and ask them what they find interesting.
- Make a prediction and then ask them to make some predictions. Write their predictions on the flip chart Checklist.
- Think aloud a question you wonder about as you begin to read the book. Ask them to pose some questions. Write their questions on the flip chart.
- Tell them to follow along and use their checklist to check off all the behaviors they hear. Remind them to put a check for each prediction and question you recorded.
- Read the text and model thinking aloud as you go. (I will have some suggested comments and questions that you can use.) Remember to use your finger clues each time you Think Aloud. Invite them to participate in Think Along as you read.
- When you finish the selection, ask them to help evaluate it by telling what they liked or didn't like about the selection. Did their predictions come true? Were their questions answered?
- Ask questions about what they thought of the characters, or how the author presented the information. Where the characters interesting or was the information useful?

4. Let me do it - **Think Aloud with Partner** (Approximately 10 minutes)

Time for independent practice. Once the students have demonstrated that they understand how and when to apply the strategy, we let them do it. They will work with a partner with one reading and thinking aloud while the other monitors behaviors with a checklist. Then they will switch partners.

- Explain to the students that they will now do partner reading. One will be the reader and practice using the Think Aloud strategy, while the partner is the monitor who uses the checklist to listen for and check off behaviors used. They will switch roles when the first person finishes the reading and does his/her evaluation.
- Pass out additional checklists and a Read Aloud bookmark for the reader.

5. Check my understanding.

- Closely observe the readers and the monitors to make sure they understand what to do. Offer prompts if needed.
- Collect the checklists when the activity is complete and return them to me.