

High Impact Strategies for EAL Learning

Summer Symposium
August 20, 2026



Session Description

Language is learned through explicit instruction (meaning making), intentional interactions, and implicit exposure with opportunities to practice using the language in authentic ways. This interactive session will focus on 5 high impact strategies that support EAL learners in inclusive classrooms: build vocabulary, use visuals, provide language scaffolds, intentional talk opportunities, and integrate writing and speaking with reading.

“Language is learned through explicit instruction (meaning making), intentional interactions, and implicit exposure with opportunities to practice using the language in authentic ways.”

Kathy Salmon, 2024



Facilitator

Dr. Kathy Salmon

- Education Consultant
- EAL, Literacy, and Leadership Specialist
- Retired School Principal
- Co-writer of Benchmarks 1.0 (2010) & 2.0 (2019)



Calgary Board
of Education



Learning Intentions

To acquire high impact strategies to support meeting the diverse needs of EAL learners in inclusive classrooms.

TQS

Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge 3

A teacher applies a current and comprehensive repertoire of effective planning, instruction, and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of every student.

Agenda



Visuals



Vocabulary

A-Z



Language
Structure &
Supports



Intentional
Talk Time



Integrate
speaking and
writing with
reading



01

Visuals

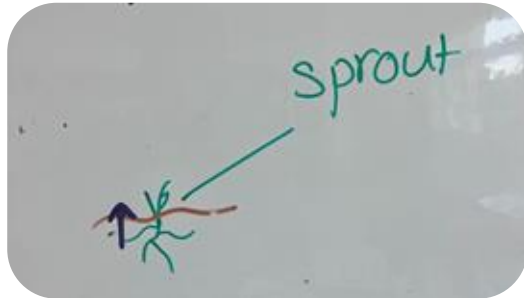
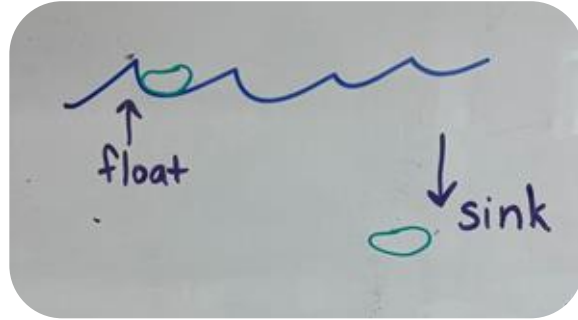


Using Visuals

- Facilitates comprehension
- Offers multimodal learning experiences
- Contextualizes vocabulary
- Bridges cultural gaps
- Promotes independent learning



Temporary



Long Term

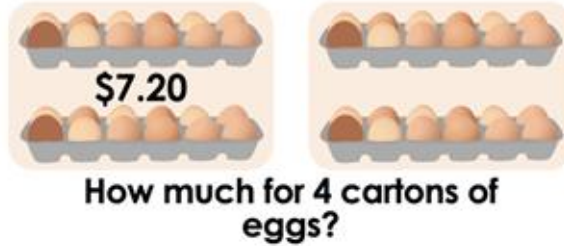


PE



Math

If the cost for 2 cartons of eggs is \$7.20, how much would it be for 4 cartons of eggs?



Science

STATE OF MATTER



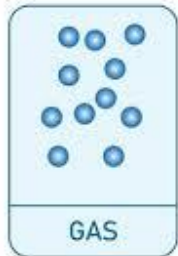
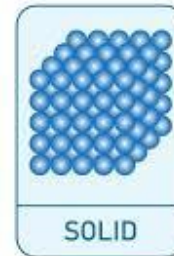
SOLID



LIQUID



GAS



Strategy in Practice

What visuals are you using unit right now? What additional visuals do you think would help your students?



02

Vocabulary



Making Meaning of New Vocabulary

- Meaning is made explicit through the language itself; teachers use specific instructional strategies (e.g., use of visuals, demonstrations, group work) to help students understand and use the language of schooling. (Cummins)
[Source](#)
- Comprehensible input is the essential environmental ingredient for language acquisition (Krashen 1982, 1985b). [Source](#)

Vocabulary knowledge

Word
Walls

Concept
Maps

Anchor
Charts

Realia

X Point
Model

Clines



Make it Visible

Word Walls

- **Visual Display:** Create a dedicated space in the classroom where new vocabulary words are displayed. This serves as a constant visual reference for students.

Concept Maps

- **Visual Organization:** Use diagrams to illustrate relationships between words and concepts, helping students see connections and hierarchies in vocabulary.

Anchor Charts

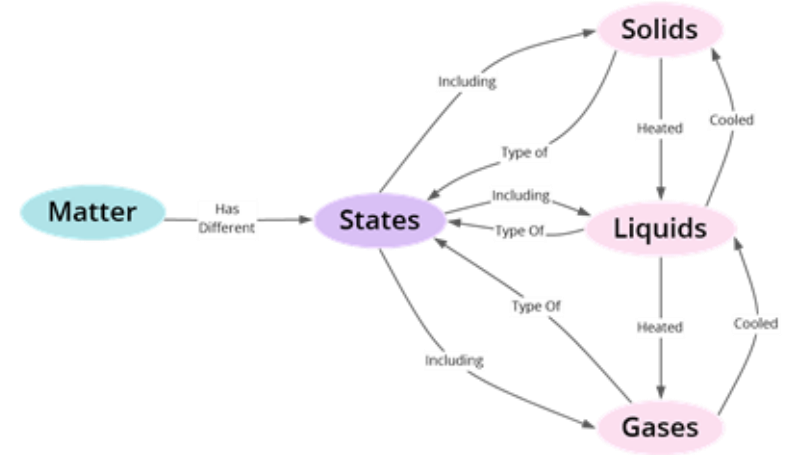
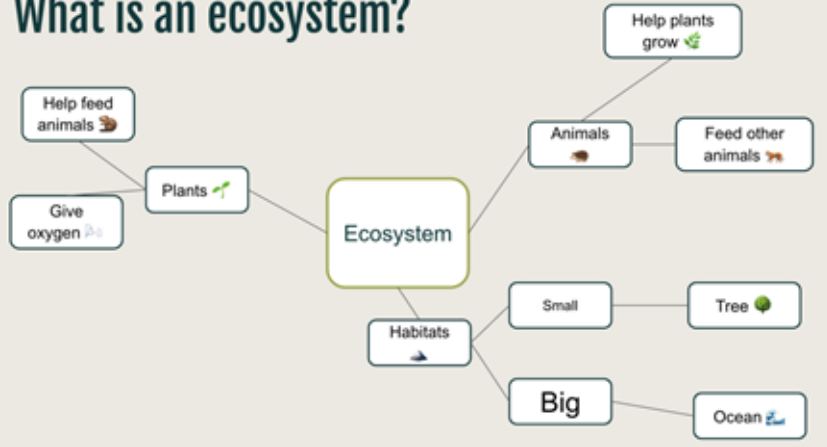
- **Reference Tools:** Develop charts that summarize vocabulary words, their definitions, and examples. These can be created collaboratively with students and displayed in the classroom.

Word Walls



Concept Maps

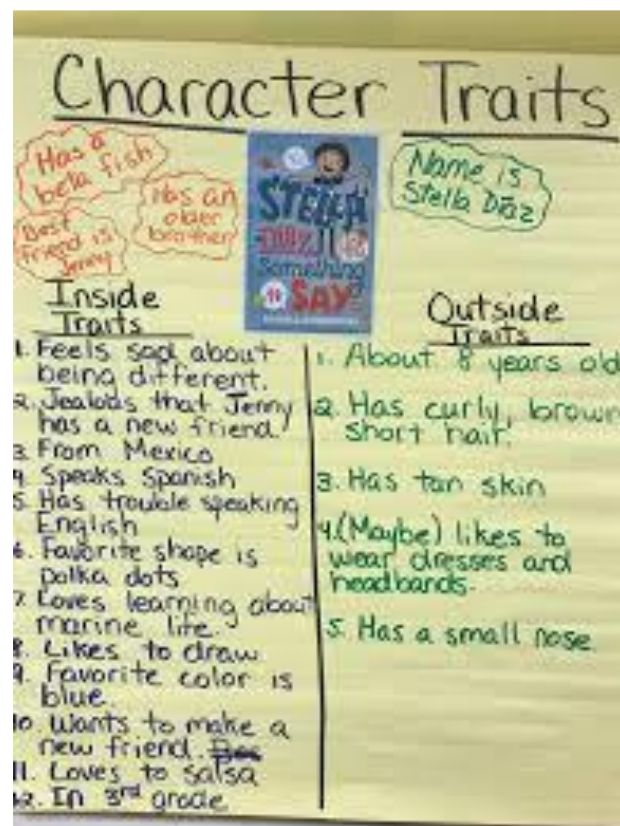
What is an ecosystem?

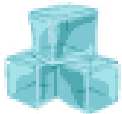




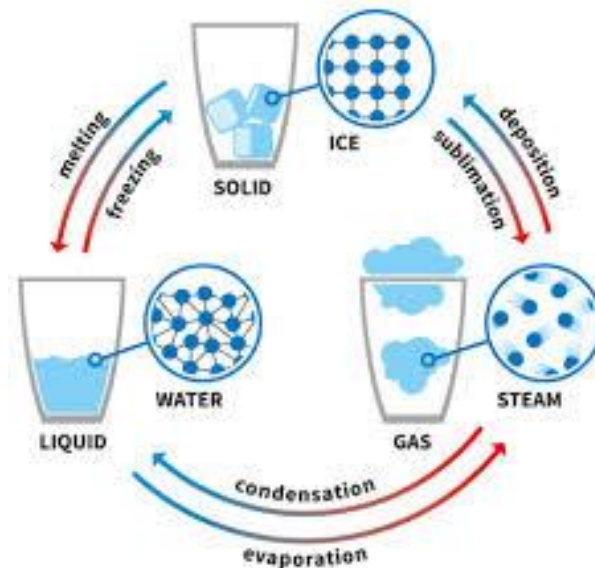
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Anchor Charts



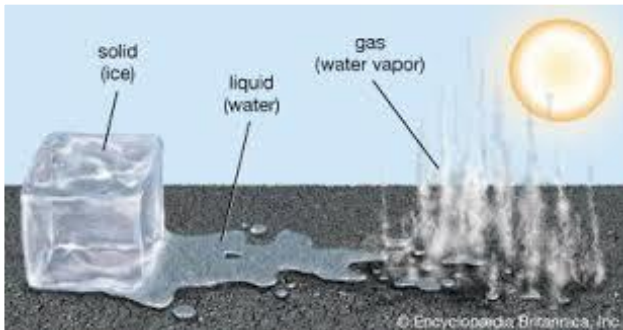
Solid	Liquid	Gas
		
▪ Rigid ▪ Fixed Shape ▪ Fixed Volume ▪ High Density ▪ Closely tight and organized particles ▪ Slightly Compressible	▪ Not Rigid ▪ No Fixed Shape ▪ Fixed Volume ▪ Average to High Density ▪ Closely tight but not disorganized particles ▪ Slightly Compressible	▪ Not Rigid ▪ No Fixed Shape ▪ No Fixed Volume ▪ Low Density ▪ Far apart and disorganized particles ▪ Highly Compressible

[Image Source](#)



[Image Source](#)

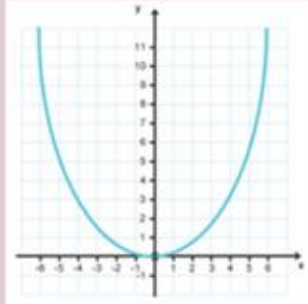
Realia

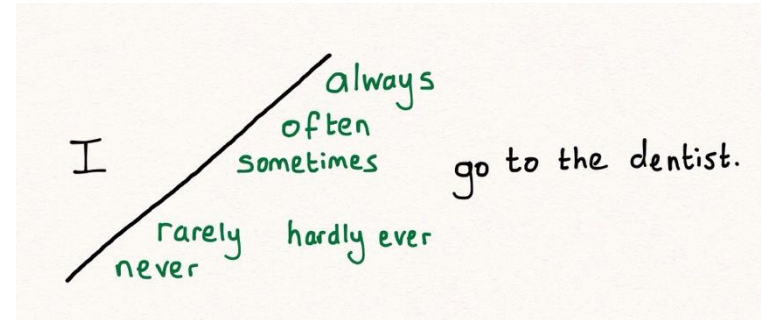
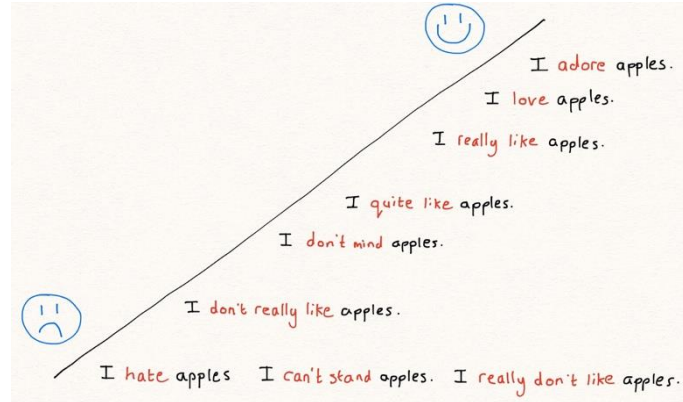
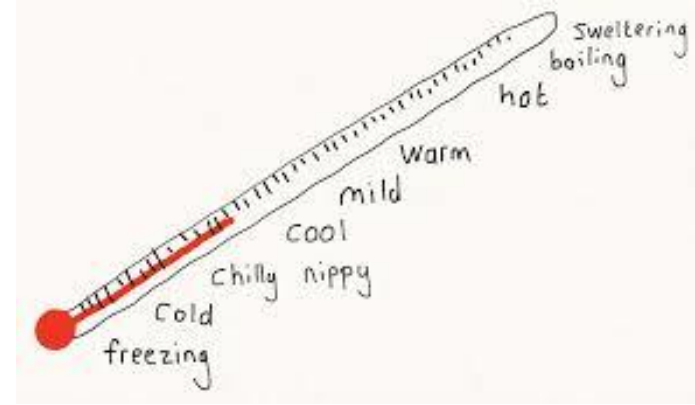


X- point model



	Ledimentary Rock - Primary Mineral rock. Can form when water evaporates and leaves dissolved minerals behind.	Rock Salt
	Metamorphic - Foliated, is fine-grained. Formed from shale and used for roofing and flooring.	Slate
	Metamorphic - Foliated, it often contains significant amounts of mica.	Schist
	Metamorphic, from foliated rock that is produced from the metamorphism of limestone. It is composed primarily of calcium carbonate.	Marble
	Metamorphic, from foliated rock that is produced by the metamorphism of sandstone. It is composed primarily of quartz.	Quartzite
	A nonfoliated metamorphic rock with many stretched or distorted pebbles inside.	Meta-conglomerate
	Foliated metamorphic rock with banding. Medium to coarse grained. Minerals are segregated into bands. If a rock is not rock.	Gneiss

Definition:	Word or Concept:	Diagram:	
Domain is the R	Squaring functions		
Range is [0,∞)			
Decreases [0,∞)	Synonyms & Examples		
Symmetric on the y-axis			
	$F(x)=ax^2$		
	a = Parameter		





Teaching Vocabulary

Explicit Instruction

- Clearly define learning objectives.
- Introduce new concepts or skills with direct teaching.
- Use modeling to demonstrate how to apply the new knowledge.

Guided Practice

- Provide opportunities for students to practice with teacher support.
- Use collaborative activities where students can work together.
- Monitor and assist as students attempt tasks, offering prompts and cues.

Authentic Use

- Encourage students to apply their learning in real-world contexts.
- Design tasks that mimic genuine situations where the knowledge or skills would be utilized.
- Foster discussions and projects that require the use of the new vocabulary or concepts.



Making Meaning

Total Physical Response (TPR)

- **Action-Based Learning:** Students learn new vocabulary through physical movements that correspond to the words, reinforcing memory through kinesthetic activity.

Pairing Words with Pictures

- **Visual Associations:** Combine vocabulary words with relevant images to create strong mental connections, making it easier to recall meanings.

Gestures and Actions

- **Kinesthetic Engagement:** Use gestures or body movements to represent vocabulary words, helping students remember them through physical activity.



Making Meaning

Etymology

- **Word Origins:** Teach students about the roots, prefixes, and suffixes of words, which can help them decipher meanings and understand related vocabulary.

Words with Multiple Meanings

- **Contextual Exploration:** Introduce words that have different meanings based on context. Discuss examples to illustrate how usage can change meaning.

Schemas

- **Prior Knowledge Activation:** Encourage students to connect new vocabulary to their existing knowledge or experiences, helping them build a framework for understanding.

Strategy in Practice

Word
Walls

Concept
Maps

Anchor
Charts

Realia

X Point
Model

Clines

Which strategy will you use?



03

Language Supports and Structures



EXAMPLES



**Sentence
Parts**

**Sentence
Frames**

**Sentence
Starters**

Sentence Parts

What is it?

- Give students sentences in parts. Students manipulate the parts to make a complete sentence.



Image Source



Sentence Parts Examples

Social Studies

"Calgary is located south of Edmonton."

Science

"The plant grows tall."

Math

"There are 5 apples. 3 more apples are added. How many apples are there in total?"

Social Studies

"The Industrial Revolution led to the growth of cities and the rise of the middle class."

Science

"If I add heat to the water, then the temperature will increase."

Math

"The ratio of boys to girls in the class is 3:2, meaning that for every 3 boys, there are 2 girls."

Social Studies

"Abraham Lincoln argued that slavery was a moral wrong in order to rally support for the Union cause."

English

"The rhetorical question in the opening paragraph encourages the reader to reflect on the author's central claim."

Math

"The Pythagorean Theorem states that in a right triangle, the square of the length of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the lengths of the other two sides because of the properties of similar triangles."

Sentence Frames

What is it?

- Sentence frames provide a more structured template for constructing a complete sentence.
- Student must fill in appropriate word or phrase, but the grammatical structure is maintained.

BELIEFS and VALUES

During the Middle Ages, Western Europe was a very religious society based on faith in the Roman catholic Church.

Life was very hard during medieval times: sickness, famine, and war were a constant threat.

Consequently, the hope of a better life after death was very important.

During the Middle Ages, most Christian Europeans shared a religious worldview that God was the centre of human existence. The beliefs of the poor presented a worldview in which they accepted a harsh, short life on earth, believing they would be rewarded after death by going to heaven.

Wealthier people also lived life with religion as a central part of their beliefs.

Both rich and poor in medieval society looked to the afterlife. They donated money and property to the Church, hoping God would reward them with heaven after they died.

The Church encouraged donations and used the money to expand its influence and build thousands of churches across Europe during the Middle Ages.

Some of these churches are stunning architectural feats which are still standing.



Sentence Frames Examples

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
The _____ is/are _____.	If _____, then _____.	The author's use of _____ suggests/implies _____.
The dog is brown .	If I study hard , then I will do well on the test .	The author's use of vivid imagery suggests a sense of wonder and excitement .

My favorite _____ is/are _____.	_____ increases _____ because _____.	_____ can be expressed as the equation _____, where _____.
My favorite fruit is apples .	Exercise increases heart rate because it requires more energy .	The relationship between force, mass, and acceleration can be expressed as the equation $F = ma$, where F is force, m is mass, and a is acceleration .

Sentence Starters

What is it?

- Sentence starters are single words or short phrases that begin a sentence.
- They provide a prompt to help the learner start a sentence, but leave the rest of the sentence structure open-ended.

"The book/story I am reading is called..."

"The author uses this word/phrase to show..."

"The main character in this novel undergoes a transformation when..."

Sentence Starter Examples

Social Studies

"We are studying..."

Science

"We are learning about..."

Math

"This problem is about..."

Social Studies

"This lesson is about the history of..."

"People in this country/culture believe that..."

Science

"In this experiment, we will see if..."

"The main idea in this topic is..."

Math

"To solve this equation, I can start by..."

Social Studies

"To understand the impact of this political movement, it is important to consider..."

"The significance of this cultural practice lies in..."

Science

"The purpose of this experiment is to investigate..."

"Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that..."

Math

"When working with fractions, it's important to remember that..."

Strategy in Practice

Take your unit of focus
create the sentence
structure supports (parts,
frames, starters)



04

Intentional Talk Time





Reading and writing float on a sea of talk.

— James Britton

If you want students to talk, you need to be intentional about providing supports and **time**.

Talk tasks

1. Provide opportunities
2. Provide supports (vocabulary, structure support, visuals)
3. Provide modeling
4. Provide guided practice

Talk Strategies

Think - Pair - Share



Jigsaw



[Image source](#)

Round Robin



[Image Source](#)

Fishbowl



[Image Source](#)

Gallery Walk



[Image Source](#)

Role Play



Talk Strategies

Think-Pair-Share:

- **Description:** Students first think about a question or problem individually, then pair up with a partner to discuss their thoughts, and finally share their insights with the larger group. This method promotes critical thinking and helps students articulate their ideas.

Jigsaw:

- **Description:** In this cooperative learning strategy, each student becomes an "expert" on a specific part of a topic. Students meet in "expert groups" to discuss their section, then return to their original groups to teach their peers, ensuring that everyone learns about the complete topic.

Round Robin:

- **Description:** Students sit in a circle and take turns sharing their ideas or responses to a prompt. Each student has a set amount of time to speak before passing the turn to the next person, ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute.

Talk Strategies

Fishbowl:

- **Description:** A small group of students sits in a circle (the fishbowl) and discusses a topic while the rest of the class observes. After a set time, roles can be swapped. This method encourages active listening and allows for peer observation of discussion techniques.

Gallery Walk:

- **Description:** Students create visual presentations (e.g., posters) on different topics and then walk around the classroom to view each other's work. They can engage in discussions about the presentations, fostering dialogue and peer feedback.

Role Plays:

- **Description:** Students assume roles in a simulated scenario related to the lesson. This method encourages communication and helps students practice language and social skills in context.

More...Talk Strategies

Debates:

- **Description:** Students are divided into teams to argue for or against a specific position on a controversial issue. This method develops critical thinking, public speaking skills, and the ability to consider multiple perspectives.

Peer Teaching:

- **Description:** Students take turns teaching their peers about a specific topic or concept. This method reinforces their understanding and allows them to practice communication skills.

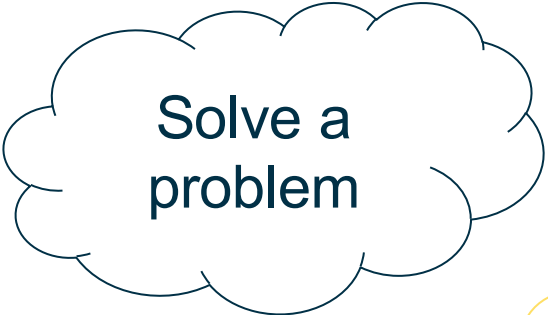
Consensus Building:

- **Description:** In this method, students work together to reach a mutual agreement on a topic or decision. It encourages negotiation, collaboration, and respectful dialogue.

Socratic Seminar:

- **Description:** Students engage in a group discussion guided by open-ended questions. The focus is on dialogue rather than debate, encouraging students to think critically and articulate their ideas based on text or themes.

Immersive Talk Tasks



Solve a
problem



Share a
Personal
Experience



Make a
Decision



Create
Something



Debate a
Topic

Immersive Talk Tasks

- 1. Solve a problem:** These tasks test learners' logic and include puzzles and problems. They have a single correct solution. For example, learners work together to solve a mystery.
- 2. Make a decision:** Learners gather and share information in order to arrive at a decision. Although there are a number of possible outcomes, they work towards one, such as who gets the scholarship money or what activities would suit a particular group of people on a three-day trip to a popular tourist destination.
- 3. Create something:** These collaborative tasks result in a product, for example, a poster, an advertisement, a class newspaper, a collectively composed story, or a set of survey results (Willis and Willis, 2007).
- 4. Share a personal experience:** These tasks are based on the learners' own experiences and include storytelling, anecdotes and memories of the past (Willis and Willis, 2007).
- 5. Discuss or debate a topic:** These involve an exchange of opinions and ideas on various issues and topics, in which individuals or groups can come to independent conclusions and even defend their position.

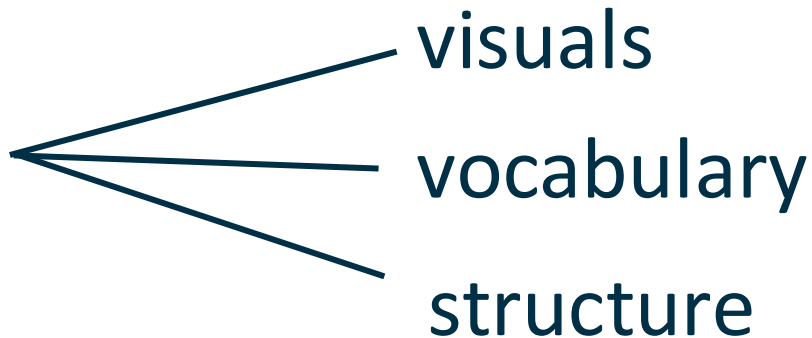
Citation:

Hendra, L. A. & Jones, C. (2018). *Motivating learners with immersive speaking tasks*: Part of the Cambridge Papers in ELT series. [pdf] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ways to Support

- Opportunities

- Supports



- Modeling

- Guided Practice

Strategy in Practice

How can you get your kids to talk more in class?

What talk strategy do you want to try and implement?



05

Integrate Speaking and Writing with Reading



How?



01

Read Alouds

02

**Disciplinary
Reading**

03

**Reading
Routines**



Read Alouds



Elementary

- Diverse Vocabulary
- Contextual Learning



Middle School

- Textual Analysis
- Connections to Background Knowledge



High School

- Rich Literary Texts
- Discussion of Nuance

Disciplinary Reading



Level Texts



Close Reading



Annotation

Symbol	MEANING
★	This is important.
☆	Key word or detail.
✓	I understand this question/idea.
□	Unfamiliar word.
?	I don't understand.
!	That's surprising or new info!
∞	I made a connection.
✗	I'm thinking...

Comprehension Tasks



Leveling Text

- Know your students reading skills
- Use AI to help level texts
 - Know key concepts
 - Provide key vocabulary
 - Be aware of sentence structure
- Provide 2 - 4 levels
 - It doesn't need to be perfect



Leveling Text

Garbage is not good for plants. Garbage does not give nutrients to the soil. Plants need nutrients from the soil. Animals like to eat garbage. Garbage is not good for animals to eat. Animals can get sick. Animals may not hunt and eat garbage.

Plants need nutrients from the soil. Garbage can be toxic to the soil. It may not decompose. The garbage can take up space, block the rain from the roots or the sun from the leaves. These are reasons why garbage is harmful to plants. Animals can get used to eating garbage and not want to hunt for food. This is a bad habit. Animals may want to live closer to humans and not in the wild. This can be dangerous for humans and the animals. Animals may get hit by cars or hurt by humans. Humans may get bitten or hurt by animals.

If animals get used to eating garbage then they will no longer be able to hunt and find food for themselves. They may also become a nuisance to humans or be dangerous. Garbage may not be able to decompose and may be toxic to the soil. Plants will not be able to get the nutrients they need from the soil. Garbage is harmful to plants because it may add chemicals and other substances to the soil that the plant is not used to. The plant may not grow as big, have as many flowers or fruits, or produce as many seeds.

Close Reading

read same text multiple times!

1st Reading... students read/annotate, think, quick write, and discuss with partner.

2nd Reading... teacher reads while students listen... then think, write, discuss.

3rd Reading... students reread to find evidence, then respond in writing citing text!

• Close read means DIGGING DEEPER!



First reading:
break the
surface

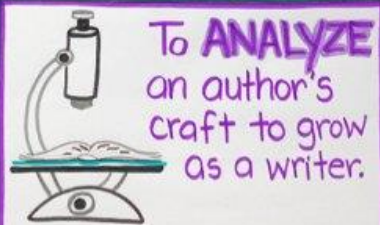
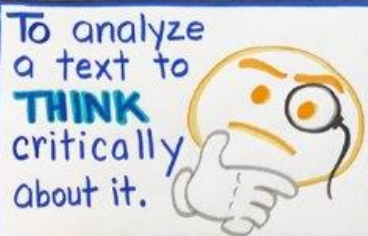
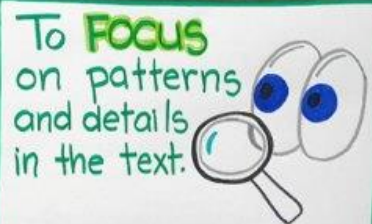
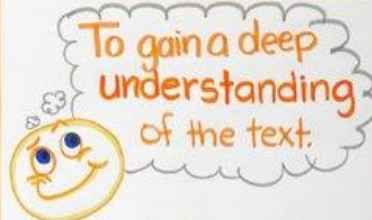


Second reading:
get more info/
gain better understanding



third reading:
attain a "deep"
understanding

Why do readers CLOSE READ?



Establishing a Routine for Close Reading

1. Pre-teach the vocabulary and concepts.
2. Set a purpose for reading.
3. Model close reading.
4. Provide guided practice and check for understanding.
5. Provide independent practice.
6. Organize discussions and debates.
7. Have students write about the text.

adapted from the Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education, Inc.

Close Reading in Math

1. Read the problem (first read)
2. Read the problem – underline important words (second read)
3. Read the problem – circle important numbers (third read)
4. What are you solving for?
5. Write the equation
6. Solve it
7. Write the answer in a sentence

Mentor Example of an Annotated Question

An empty shipping box has a mass of 2.75 kilograms. An electronics store is packing 5 identical laptops in the shipping box. Each laptop has a mass of 1.65 kg. The cost to ship the box was \$40.00 for the first 5 kg and \$3.15 for each kilogram over 5 kg. What was the cost to ship the packed box?

Show your work.

Empty Box 5 laptops

Deconstruct the problem sentence by sentence + underline important information. →

2.75 kg

1 laptop = 1.65 kg

Cost to ship
5 kg = \$40.00
+ 1 kg = \$3.15

1.65 × 5 = Weight of laptops

1.65
× 5
8.25 weight of laptops

+ 2.75
11.00 kg = Weight of box with laptops

Find the invisible question and solve. (when applicable)

Organize + Show all your work. Don't forget to include labels + units!

5 kg = \$40

11.00 kg
- 5.00 kg
6.00 kg

Each kg over 5 costs \$3.15
6 × 3.15 = Weight of extra kg

3.15
× 6
18.90

40.00
+ 18.90
\$58.90

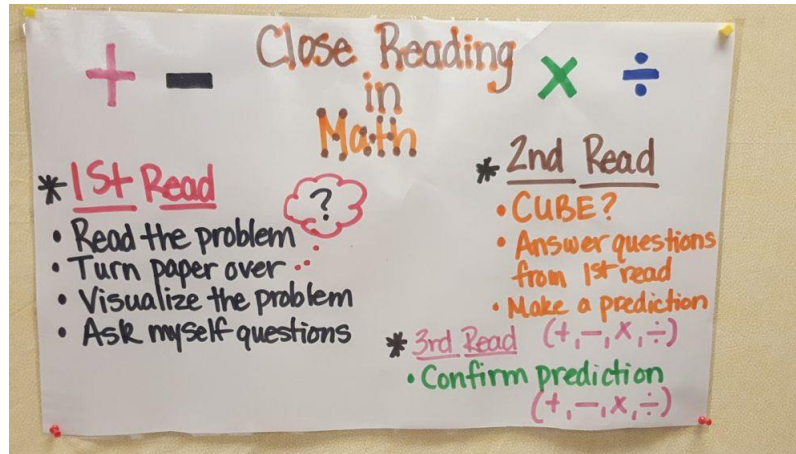
Check your work and ask, "Is my answer reasonable?"

Total cost to ship the packed box: \$58.90

Answer: \$58.90

Target Sentence

Close Reading In Math



Close Reading in Science

1st Read

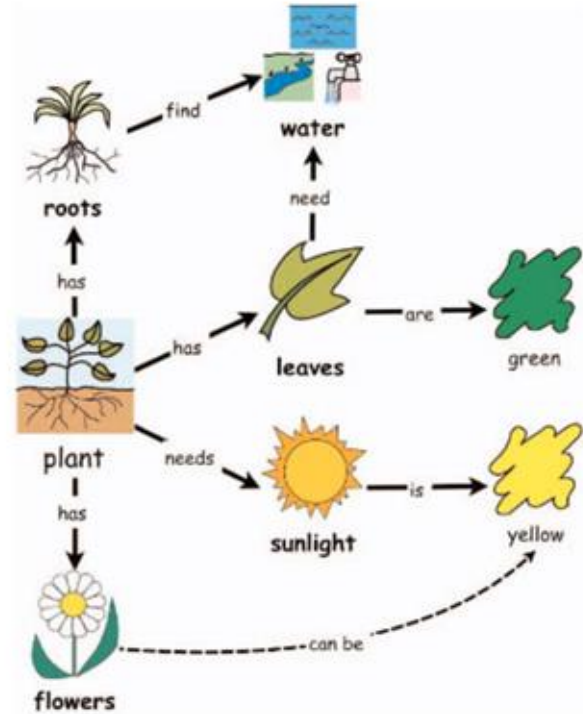
- Key Words
- Unknown Words
- Talk with partner

2nd Read

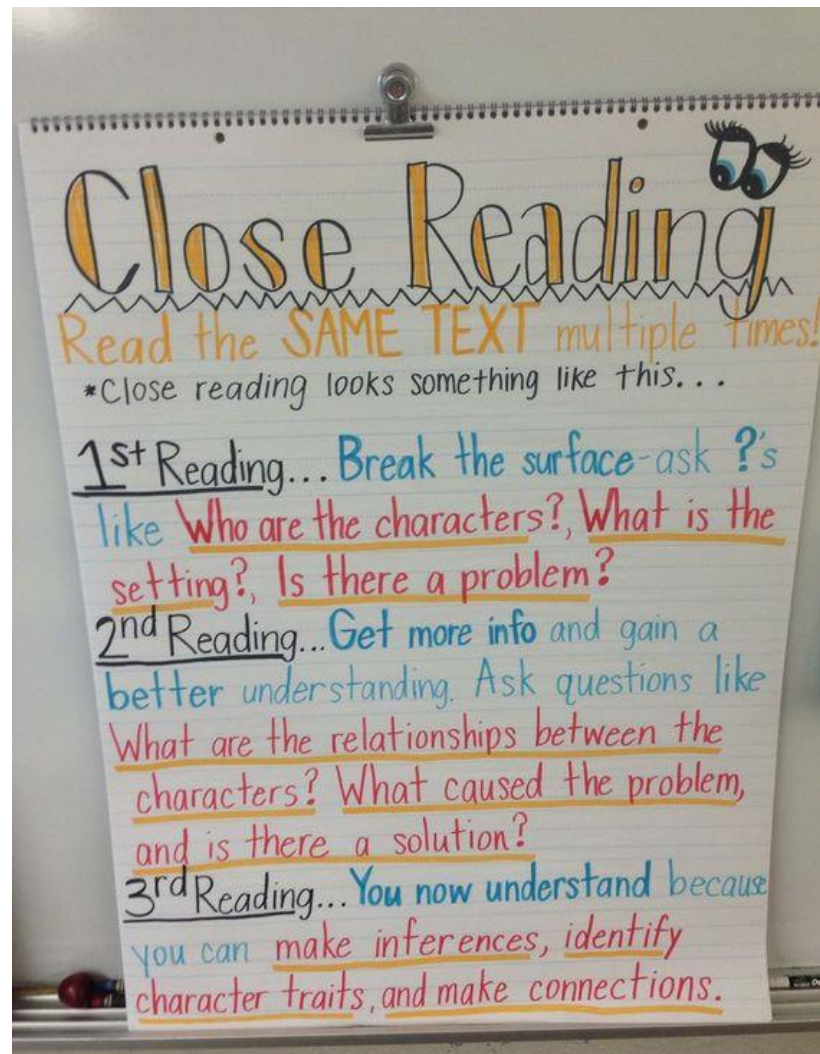
- Headings and categories
- Highlight key parts
- Map out information

3rd Read

- Clarification
- Organization
- Concept Map



Close Reading in English Language Arts



Close Reading in Social Studies

1st Read

- identify key words
- Identify unknown words, (context cues, word analyze, translate, look-up)
- Discuss with partner

2nd Read

- Identify headers and categories
- Highlight with colour
- Begin to map out the information with partner

3rd Read

- Seek clarification of information
- Refine organization of information
- Create concept map

Unique Aspects of History/Social Studies Texts

Text Features

- Parts/components of a book that are created to help a reader locate and learn information

Examples

- headings, graphics, maps, captions, main idea boxes, table of contents, illustrations, colors and symbols, timelines, bolded words

Text Structures

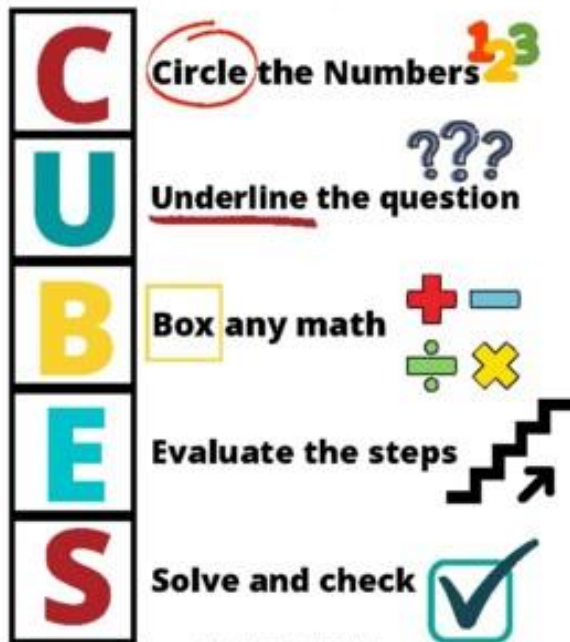
- Various patterns of how the text is written

Examples

- Cause-Effect
- Compare-Contrast
- Problem-Solution
- Concept-Definition
- Goal-Action-Outcome

Annotation

Problem Solving Strategy



@The_Funny_Teacher_Closet

SYMBOL	MEANING
*	This is important
<u>underline</u>	Key word or detail
✓	I understand this question/idea
○	Unfamiliar word
?	I don't understand...
!	That's surprising or new info!
∞	I made a connection.
Words & Comments	"I'm thinking..."

Comprehension Tasks



ANSWER
QUESTIONS.



TAKE NOTES



COMPLETE A
GRAPHIC
ORGANIZER



EXPLAIN
SOMETHING
VERBALLY



CREATE A
CONCEPT MAP

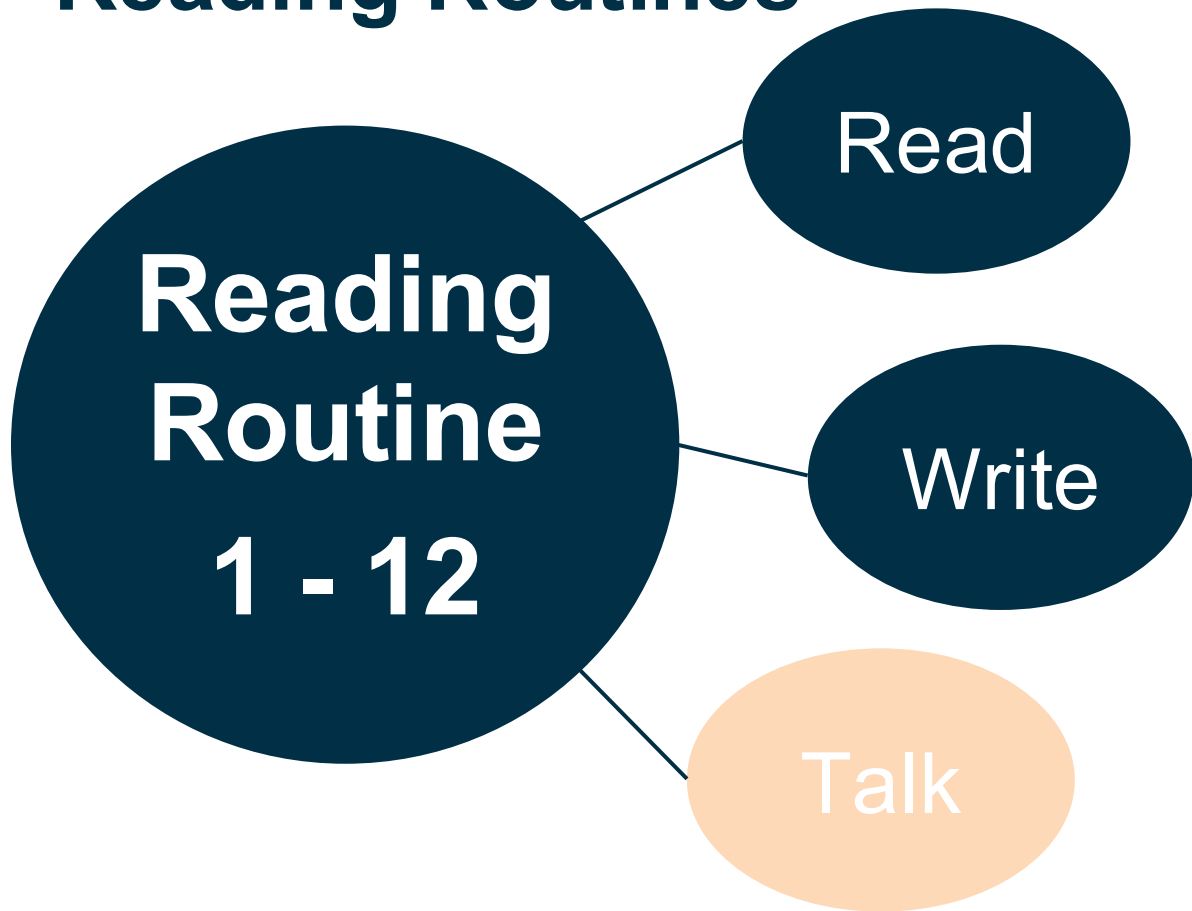


WRITE A SUMMARY



VOCABULARY
ACTIVITIES
(DEFINITIONS,
MATCHING,
CATEGORIZING)

Reading Routines



Strategy in Practice

Try your hand at leveling a text.

Create a close reading strategy that may work well for your students.

Make a list of potential read alouds.



Session Feedback Survey



APLC Post Session Survey
Thank you for attending this session. To help us enhance the delivery of future sessions, we ask that you complete this short survey. Your feedback is important and appreciated! Note: Your survey will be submitted anonymously.

<https://aplc.ca/survey/?id=15805>

Thank you

Please complete the survey

aplc.ca

