

Developing Language Through Reading Comprehension Strategies

Making Predictions

Questions

- To make a prediction
 - What do you think will happen next?
 - What do you think is going to happen?
 - What do you think the book is going to be about?
 - Where/when do you think _____ is going to _____?
 - How do you think the story will end?
- To support a prediction with text evidence
 - Why do you think _____ is going to _____?
 - What makes you think that will happen?
- To revise a prediction
 - *Now* what do you think is going to happen?

Prompts for Responses

- To make a prediction and support it
 - I think _____ is/are going to _____ because _____.
 - I think _____ will _____ because _____.
- To revise a prediction
 - At first I thought _____, but now I think _____ because _____.
 - Before I thought _____ was/were going to _____, but now I think _____.
 - Before I thought _____ would _____, but now I think _____.

Language Structures

- Future tenses
 - subject + *to be* + *going to* + infinitive verb: I think *they are going to clean* the river.
 - subject + *will* + infinitive verb: I think *they will clean* the river.
- Develop a list of action verbs so ELLs have language to express what they think will happen.
- Point out the use of these irregular verbs in the present and past tenses:
 - *is/was*
 - *are/were*
 - *will/would*
 - *think/thought*
- Point out how to use transition words to show a change in ideas: *before, at first, but then, now, in the end*

Involving ELLs at Every English Proficiency Level in Making Predictions

Examples are with the nonfiction book *A River Ran Wild* (Cherry 2002).

Level 1

Ask a predicting question to get a yes-or-no response.

- Question: "Do you think the people [pointing to the townspeople in the picture] will clean the river [acting out cleaning garbage from the river]? **Yes** [thumbs-up] or no [thumbs-down]?" Point to the next pages, which are **still** hidden from view, to clarify that you are asking about something that will **happen** later in the book.
- Response: Student either gives the thumbs-up or thumbs-down sign or says **the** word *yes* or *no*. Then have other students expand on the prediction, or have **the** Level 1 ELL expand on her idea in the L1 and have another student translate **if** possible.

Ask a predicting question by giving an either-or choice.

- Question: [Pointing to the next pages, which are still hidden from view] "Do **you** think the river is going to be *clean* or *dirty*?" You can write the two words on **the** board and act them out or point to pictures in the book that illustrate each **word**.
- Response: Student either points to the word or says the word. Then have **other** students expand on the prediction, or have the Level 1 ELL expand on his **idea** in the L1 and have another student translate if possible.

Level 2

Ask a predicting question and expect a short phrase or sentence as a response. **Stu-**dents will rely heavily on the language prompts to structure their responses.

- Question: "What do you think is going to happen to the river [pointing to **the** river]?"
- Response: [With teacher guidance to use the prompt] "I think the people **are** going to . . ." The student may need to finish the sentence in the L1 or get **help** from the teacher or classmates to finish the sentence in the L2.

Level 3

Ask a predicting question and expect a complete sentence as a response. Students **will** rely less on the language prompts but may need help using academic vocabulary. **They** may also make common grammatical errors.

- Question: "What do you think will happen next?"
- Response: "I think the people is going to clean up the river because now **is so** dirty."

Levels 4–5

Ask a predicting question and expect a complete sentence as a response. These ELLs have a broader academic vocabulary base and more complex grammatical structures to draw upon, so they can express more complete justifications for their predictions (at an age-appropriate level). Questions for these ELLs can either be the same as for earlier levels or include more academic vocabulary.

- Question: “What do you think will happen now that the colonists have arrived on the Native Americans’ land?” (Or more simply “What do you think will happen next?”)
- Response: “I think the colonists are going to try to take the land from the Native Americans, because in another book I saw that the colonists didn’t respect the Native Americans. They usually took their land after a while.”

Making Connections to Self, Text, and World

Questions

- What does this page/paragraph/chapter/section/book make you think of? Why?
- What does this remind you of? Why?
- Connection to self
 - Does this remind you of something in your life?
 - Have you ever _____? (comparing own experience to something in the book)
- Connection to world
 - Does this remind you of something else you know?
- Connection to text
 - Does this remind you of another text?

Prompts for Responses

- This makes/made me think of _____ because _____.
- This reminds/reminded me of _____ because _____.
- When I read _____, it reminded me of _____.
- I’ve also _____. (comparing own experience to something in the book)
- _____ is like what we read in _____ because _____.
- _____ is different from _____ because _____.

Language Structures

- Point out the use of these verbs in the present and past tenses. The present-tense verbs are in the third person (ending in *s*), which can be difficult for ELLs to include in their language use.
 - *makes/made*
 - *reminds/reminded*
- Develop ELLs’ ability to tell about something they’ve done, seen, or learned in the past, using verbs in the past tense: “This reminds me of one time when I looked out my window and I saw that it was snowing, just like Peter. I was so excited to go to the park with my dad.”
- Make an ongoing chart of verbs comparing the present- and past-tense forms to help ELLs understand how to correctly use verbs in each tense. You can have one chart for regular verbs and another for irregular verbs.
- Present perfect:
 - Subject + *has/have* + participle: “I *have seen* a big snowstorm too, just like Peter” or “I’ve *seen* a big snowstorm too, just like Peter.”

Involving ELLs at Every English Proficiency Level in Making Connections

Examples are with the fictional book *The Snowy Day* (Keats 1976).

Level 1

Ask a making-connections question to get a yes-or-no response.

- Question: "Here Peter is playing in the snow [point to picture and act out]. Do you like the snow? [Point from the picture to the student, giving the thumbs-up and thumbs-down signals.]
- Response: Student either gives the thumbs-up or thumbs-down sign or says the word *yes* or *no*. You can follow this up by asking other students if they have any personal connections to what's happening in the text. Or have the Level 1 ELL expand on his idea in the L1 and have another student translate if possible.

Ask a making-connections question by giving an either-or choice.

- Question: "On this page Peter sees the snow! Does this remind you of *winter* or *summer*?" You can write the two words on the board and act them out.
- Response: Student either points to the word or says the word.

Level 2

Ask a making-connections question and expect a short phrase or sentence as a response.

- Question: "What does this part remind you of?" Point to Peter playing in the snow.
- Response: "I like play in the snow." These ELLs will need teacher support if you would like them to use one of the language prompts to respond.

Level 3

Ask a making-connections question and expect a complete sentence as a response. These students will rely less on the language prompts but may need help with academic vocabulary. They may also make common grammatical errors.

- Question: "What does this part remind you of?"
- Response: "This remind me of that day when it snowed. I was all day playing with my brother."

Levels 4-5

Ask a making-connections question and expect a complete sentence as a response. These ELLs have a broader academic vocabulary base and more complex grammatical structures to draw upon, so they can express more detailed connections (at an age-appropriate level). Questions for these ELLs can either be the same or include more academic vocabulary.

- Question: "Does this book remind you of anything else you've read?"
- Response: "It reminds me of the book *The Mitten* because they're all in the snow. But Peter wants to be outside, and in *The Mitten* the animals all want to be inside the mitten."

Monitoring for Sense (Understanding Main Idea and Details, Sequencing, Determining Word Meaning, Cause and Effect, Rereading)

Questions/Prompts

- Understanding main idea and details
 - What is this story/section/text all about? (the main idea)
 - What happened here/on this page/in this part?
 - What details do we know about (the main idea)?
 - When . . . ? Where . . . ? Why . . . ? Who . . . ? How . . . ? How many . . . ? (to check for comprehension of details from the text)
 - When did this story/event take place?
 - Reread that sentence/page/part.
- Sequencing
 - What happened first/next/in the end?
 - What happened before/after ___?
 - Retell this story/chapter/section across your fingers.
- Cause and effect
 - What happened when _____?
 - What caused _____?
 - Why did _____?
 - What made _____?
- Determining word meaning
 - What does the word _____ mean?

Responses

- Understanding main idea and details
 - This story/section/text is all about _____.
 - I learned that _____.
 - In this part, (subject) (verb) . . .
- Sequencing
 - First . . . then . . . next . . . finally . . . lastly . . .
 - Before . . . after . . .
- Cause and effect
 - (Second event) because (first event).
 - (First event) so (second event).
 - Since (first event) (second event).
 - Due to (first event), (second event).
 - (First event) which led to (second event).
 - (First event) For this reason/as a result, (second event).
- Determining word meaning
 - I think _____ means _____.

Language Structures

- Understanding details
 - ELLs need to know the difference between question words when you ask them about details from the text: *who, what, where, when, why, how*.
 - ELLs need to understand if a question is in the present tense or the past tense: Why *do* immigrants *move* to another country? (present tense); What *did* the immigrants *see* when they *arrived* to Ellis Island? (past tense); *Did* everyone *pass* the tests in Ellis Island? Why? (past tense). In these examples, the auxiliary verb *do* expresses the present tense and *did* expresses the past tense. The main verb, such as *move, see, or pass*, doesn't change tense.
 - ELLs need to know how to respond to questions using the present tense or the past tense. Make an ongoing chart of verbs comparing the present- and past-tense forms. You can have one chart for regular verbs and another for irregular verbs.
 - Show ELLs how to change regular verbs from the present to past tense by adding the *-ed* suffix (*work/worked*).
 - Point out the formation of irregular past-tense verbs (*see/saw*).
- Sequencing
 - ELLs need to know how to use a variety of transition words: *first, next, then, later, finally, lastly, before, after, until, in the beginning/middle/end*.
 - ELLs need to use the present tense or past tense, depending on the text.
- Cause and effect
 - For explaining cause and effect, ELLs need to know how to use a variety of conjunctions: *because, so, since, as a result, due to, therefore, for this reason, consequently, thus*
 - ELLs need to use the present tense or the past tense, depending on the text.

Involving ELLs at Every English Proficiency Level in Monitoring for Sense

Examples are with the nonfiction book *Immigrant Kids* (Freedman 1995).

Level 1

Ask a sense-monitoring question to get a yes-or-no response.

- Question: "Do these children have to work? [Point to picture and act out.] Yes or no?" Show thumbs-up and thumbs-down.
- Response: Student either gives the thumbs-up or thumbs-down sign or says the word *yes* or *no*. Then have other students expand on this idea by explaining details they've learned from the text, or have the Level 1 ELL expand on her idea in the L1 and have another student translate if possible.

Ask a sense-monitoring question by giving an either-or choice.

- Question: "Is this immigrant boy in *school* or at a *factory*?" You can write the **two** words on the board and act them out, point to pictures in the book, or draw a quick sketch.
- Response: Student either points to the word or says the word. Then have **other** students expand on this idea by explaining details they've learned from the **text**, or have the Level 1 ELL expand on his idea in the L1 and have another **student** translate if possible.

Level 2

Ask a sense-monitoring question and expect a short phrase or sentence as a response. Most ELLs at this level are not yet able to use the past tense.

- Question: "Why were these children working in the factories?"
- Response: "Because they family need money."

Level 3

Ask a sense-monitoring question and expect a complete sentence as a response. ELLs at this level are typically able to use the past tense in responses but may have difficulty forming questions in the past tense or using irregular past-tense verbs.

- Question: "How did immigrant children survive in New York?"
- Response: "They helped their family get money and they worked a lot." You may want to have the student expand on this answer by helping her add **more** academic vocabulary, such as the types of jobs they had and places where **immigrant** children worked.

Levels 4–5

Ask a sense-monitoring question and expect a complete sentence as a response. ELLs at this level can typically ask questions and respond in the past tense, both with **regular** and irregular verbs. However, listen for any difficulties they might still have with **these** grammatical structures. Expect these ELLs to use a higher level of academic **vocabulary**, and if they don't, prompt them to expand on their answers.

- Question: "How did immigrating to New York affect these children?"
- Response: "When the families came to New York they thought they would have a better life, but what really happened is they had a lot of problems." [Prompt: "What kind of problems did they have?"] "Well, the tenement houses where they lived were really dirty and dangerous. They had to work a lot, and there was also a lot of diseases."

Inferring (Drawing Conclusions, Interpreting, Understanding Figurative Language, Author's Intent)

Questions

- Drawing conclusions/interpreting
 - What does this make you think?
 - Why do you think _____ happened? (based on clues from the text)
 - Why do you think _____ did _____? (based on clues from the text)
 - Where could this story be taking place? (based on clues from the text or pictures)
 - How do you think _____ is feeling? (based on clues from the text or pictures)
- Author's intent
 - Why did the author write this?
 - When it says _____, what is the author trying to tell us?
 - What is the author trying to show us?
- Understanding figurative language
 - When it says _____, what does that really mean?

Responses

- Drawing conclusions/interpreting
 - This makes me think that _____ because _____.
 - When I read/saw _____, it made me think that _____.
 - I think _____ happened because _____.
 - I think the story could take place in _____ because _____.
 - I think _____ is feeling _____ because _____.
- Author's intent
 - I think the author is trying to tell us _____.
 - I think the author is showing us _____ because _____.
- Understanding figurative language
 - I think _____ means that _____ because _____.

Language Structures

- ELLs need to use the present progressive tense to infer ideas from the text.
 - Present tense of verb *to be* + present participle (ending with *-ing*): The author *is trying* to tell us that _____; The author *is showing* us that _____; I think the character *is feeling* _____.
- ELLs may need to use a combination of the present tense and the past tense to express an inference. For example, "This makes me think that Carlos' parents knew about his problem the whole time, but they wanted him to learn a lesson." (It starts in the present tense but switches to the past tense. Changing verb tenses within a sentence can be difficult for ELLs.)
- Make an ongoing chart of verbs comparing the present- and past-tense forms. You can have one chart for regular verbs and another for irregular verbs.
- Brainstorm a list of adjectives so ELLs can make inferences about how the characters are feeling, for example: happy, excited, thrilled, sad, worried, concerned, disappointed, frustrated.
- Point out to ELLs how they should use the third person in the present tense (with an *s* or *es* at the end of the verb): I think _____ *means* _____; This *makes* me *think* _____.

Involving ELLs at Every English Proficiency Level in Inferring

Examples are with the fictional book *Carlos and the Squash Plant / Carlos y la planta de calabaza* (Stevens 1999).

Level 1

Ask an inferring question to get a yes-or-no response.

- Question: "Could this story take place in New York City? [Point to picture of the farmland, with a puzzled look, repeating 'New York City?'] Yes or no?" Give the thumbs-up and thumbs-down signs.
- Response: Student either gives the thumbs-up or thumbs-down sign or says the word *yes* or *no*. Then have other ELLs elaborate on what clues from the text help them infer when and where the story takes place. Or have the Level 1 ELL expand on his idea in the L1 and have another student translate if possible.

Ask an inferring question by giving them an either-or choice.

- Question: "Do you think Carlos is feeling *excited* or *scared*?" You can write the two words on the board and act them out.
- Response: Student either points to the word or says the word. Other ELLs can then elaborate on why they think Carlos is feeling that way, based on what's happening in the text and what they see in the illustrations. Or have the Level 1 ELL expand on her idea in the L1 and have another student translate if possible.

Level 2

Ask an inferring question and expect a short phrase or sentence as a response. ELLs at this level are able to use the present progressive tense but will probably need support to use the complete language prompts.

- Question: "How do you think Carlos is feeling in this part of the story?"
- Response: [With support to start by using the language prompt] "I think Carlos is feeling sad." [Prompt: "Why?"] "Because he have a plant in he ear."

Level 3

Ask an inferring question and expect a complete sentence as a response. ELLs at this level are developmentally ready to use the past tense in their responses, although they may not be correctly using irregular past-tense verbs.

- Question: "Why do you think Carlos lied to his mom about the squash plant growing in his ear?"
- Response: "I think he lied because he was afraid of what his mom say."

Levels 4–5

Ask an inferring question and expect a complete sentence as a response. Expect these ELLs to use a higher level of academic vocabulary and expanded details appropriate for their age level. If they don't, prompt them to expand on their answers.

- Question: "What do you think the author is trying to tell us?"

- Response: "I think the author is telling us that it's important to listen to your parents." [Prompt: "How did the author show you this?"] "The author showed that if Carlos had listened to his mom he wouldn't have the problem with the plant."

Visualizing

Questions

- When you read _____, what did you visualize/see in your mind?
- What do you see in this part? Hear? Smell? Taste?
- What picture did you get in your mind?
- What do you picture the character doing?
- What did you visualize when you read " _____"?

Prompts for Responses

- In this part I visualized/saw _____. (fill in with sensory images relating to the characters, actions, events)
- I can see/hear/smell/taste _____.
- When I read _____, I could see/hear/smell/taste _____.
- In this part/story/text I can visualize/see _____.

Language Structures

- Brainstorm an ongoing list of adjectives for colors, sizes, shapes, tastes, smells, sounds.
- Brainstorm an ongoing list of action verbs so ELLs can use them to describe what they imagine is happening in the text.
- Brainstorm an ongoing list of adverbs that describe the action (*slowly, quickly, carefully, cautiously, happily, angrily*).
- Using the present participle (ending in *-ing*) to indicate action happening in the moment. For example: "I can picture the bat *flying* with wings that look like big hands and *searching* for insects to eat."

Involving ELLs at Every English Proficiency Level in Visualizing

Examples are with the nonfiction book *Amazing Bats* (Simon 2005).

Level 1

Ask a visualizing question to get a yes-or-no response.

- Question: "Do you see the bats *migrating*? [Point to picture of the group of bats flying together.] Yes or no?" Give the thumbs-up and thumbs-down signs.
- Response: Student either gives the thumbs-up or thumbs-down sign or says the word *yes* or *no*. Then have other ELLs elaborate on what the word *migrating* means, why animals migrate, and what they envision happening when birds migrate. Or have the Level 1 ELL expand on her idea in the L1 and have another student translate if possible.

Ask a visualizing question by giving an either-or choice.

- Question: "Do you see the bat eating a *plant* or an *insect*?" Point to the object in the book, and then write the two words on the board along with a quick sketch

of each one. The student will have to look closely at the book, because the insect looks a little like a plant!

- Response: Student either points to the word or says the word.

Level 2

Ask a visualizing question and expect a short phrase or sentence as a response. ELLs at this level can use basic adjectives and common verbs in the present and present progressive tense to explain what they visualize. They will probably need guidance to use the language prompts.

- Question: "What do you see in your mind after reading this first page?"
- Response: "I see the bat is flying." [Prompt: "What does the bat look like?"] "He have big wings."

Level 3

Ask a visualizing question and expect a complete sentence as a response. ELLs at this level can elaborate by using more adjectives and verbs to express what they picture happening.

- Question: "When you read this page, what did you see happening in your mind?"
- Response: "I saw the bats hanging and they're small because they don't eat food." You could help the student use the academic word *hibernating* to further describe what's happening.

Levels 4–5

Ask a visualizing question and expect a complete sentence as a response. Expect these ELLs to use a higher level of academic vocabulary, and if they don't, prompt them to expand on their answers.

- Question: "What do you visualize the bats doing in this part?"
- Response: "I visualize the bats flying all over the place in the dark, looking for six hundred bugs to eat in an hour. And I can hear them grabbing bugs with their teeth and eating them quick so they can find more bugs to eat."

Questioning

Questions

- Ask questions before reading.
 - What questions do you have before reading this text?
- Ask questions during reading.
 - What are you wondering about as you read this part of the text?
 - What do you think the answer could be? (based on the text and student's background knowledge)
 - Have you found the answer to your question? (as the student continues reading)
- Ask questions after reading.
 - Do you have more questions now that you've finished the text?
 - What are you still wondering?
 - Did the text answer any of the questions you had?

Prompts for Responses

- I wonder _____.
 - Who ...? What ...? Where ...? When ...? Why ...? How ...?
 - What does _____ mean? (determining word meaning)
- For yes-or-no questions:
- Do ...? Does ...? Did ...? Is ...? Are ...? Was ...? Were ...? Can ...? Could ...? Will ...?

Language Structures

- Many questions start with questions words: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how*.
- These question words are followed by an auxiliary verb such as *do*, *does*, *did*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *can*, *could*, and *will*.
 - "Why did Sadako go to the hospital?"
 - The auxiliary verb indicates what tense the question is in. In this question the auxiliary verb *did* lets you know that the question is in the past tense.
- Yes-or-no questions don't start with a question word; they start with an auxiliary verb.
 - "Did Sadako finish all of the paper cranes?"

ELLs need to know the meaning of the different questions words and auxiliary verbs, and they need to know how to form questions in different tenses. Here are some of the most common tenses used to ask questions about a text.

- Present-tense questions
 - "Where *does* Sadako *live*?"
 - "Does Sadako *live* in Japan?"
- Present-progressive-tense questions
 - "Why *is* Sadako *feeling* sick?"

Here the auxiliary verb *does* indicates that the question is in the present tense. The main verb, *live*, does not change tense (not "Where does Sadako *lives*?").

- Past-tense questions
 - "How *did* Sadako *get* sick?"
- Future-tense questions
 - "Will Sadako *survive*?"
 - "Is Sadako *going to survive*?"

Here the auxiliary verb *is* is in the present tense. The subject, *Sadako*, goes in between the word *is* and the present participle, *feeling* (not "Why Sadako is feeling sick?").

Here the auxiliary verb *did* indicates that the question is in the past tense. The main verb, *get*, does not change tense (not "How did Sadako *got* sick?").

Here the auxiliary verb *will* indicates that the question is in the future tense, and the main verb *survive* does not change tense. The subject, *Sadako*, goes in between the word *will* and the main verb *survive* (not "Sadako will survive?"). In the second example, the future form *is going to* is also separated by the subject, *Sadako*.

Involving ELLs at Every English Proficiency Level in Questioning

Examples are with the nonfiction book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (Coerr 1977).

Level 1

You can ask these ELLs specific either-or and yes-or-no questions about the text, since they're not developmentally ready to verbalize their own questions in English. You can also have them share questions they have in their native language and have another student translate, if possible.

- Question: "Did Sadako make *one thousand* paper cranes? [Point to the illustration in the chapter book and write the number *1,000* on the board.] Yes or no?" Give the thumbs-up and thumbs-down signs.
- Response: Student either gives the thumbs-up or thumbs-down sign or says the word *yes* or *no*. Then have other ELLs share questions they have at this particular point in the text.

Level 2

Students at this level are typically able to use the present tense and present progressive tense. However, asking questions in these tenses is grammatically more complex. You will need to model for these ELLs how to correctly form questions in English, since the word order changes. For example, the statement "*Sadako is getting better*" changes in the question form to "*Is Sadako getting better?*" Level 2 ELLs will need significant support to form questions using the different question words and auxiliary verbs.

Level 3

Students at this level are developmentally able to use the past tense, but asking their own questions in the past tense is grammatically more complex and is more typical of a Level 4 proficiency. You will need to model for them how to correctly form questions they have in the past tense in English, and provide support as they form their own questions. Being able to correctly ask questions in the future tense is typical for Level 3 ELLs.

Levels 4–5

At these advanced proficiency levels, you can expect ELLs to be able to form their own questions about the text in a variety of tenses, including the present, past, and future tenses. Be on the lookout for gaps in these students' knowledge about correctly forming questions. They may still make common errors, such as using an incorrect word order or changing the tense of verbs instead of using the auxiliary verbs to indicate the tense.