

4.



Subject: LITERACY

Comprehension Strategies

A. Determining Importance

B. Inferring

C. Synthesising

Name:

A. Comprehension Strategy: Determining Importance

IDEAS:

- Students should look for main ideas and take note of the MOST important details in a text.
- Questions for students to think about while determining what is most important in a text
 - What was the problem?
 - Was there a solution to the problem?
 - What was the solution to the problem? / What prevented the solution?
 - What events led to the solution of the problem?
 - Did any of the characters change?
 - Did any of the characters make decisions which caused a chain of events?
- Some things to do to determine text importance
 - I know these parts of the story are important because.....
 - I believe the author thinks _____ is important because
 - I think the author's opinion about _____ is _____ because
 - This text uses the (cause/effect, problem/solution, description, compare/contrast, sequence/steps in a process) text structure.
 - Can I use a graphic organiser to help me understand it?
 - Which parts are important and which parts are just interesting?
 - Is there any formatting that helps me to locate important information? (e.g. emboldened words, font changes, bullets, captions)

WHY USE THIS STRATEGY?

- By focusing on the main events, for example, the events that lead to the solution of the problem or when a character changes, students will have a better idea of what might be the most important parts of a text.
- It gives students the opportunity to sift out the important information and see the 'extra' as additional information not relevant to the main ideas of the text.
- Students get to isolate the main events that led to a solution of a problem or a reason for no solution.
- Students get the chance to notice changes in characters and characters' decisions, which impact on the main events.
- The author's possible intent and opinion can be discussed, which sheds further light on comprehension.

1. Read the summary. Because this is just a summary, there will be more main ideas in this short text, compared to larger texts. After doing this exercise, choose a long newspaper article or story and do the same exercise with it.

SUMMARY OF ROMEO AND JULIET

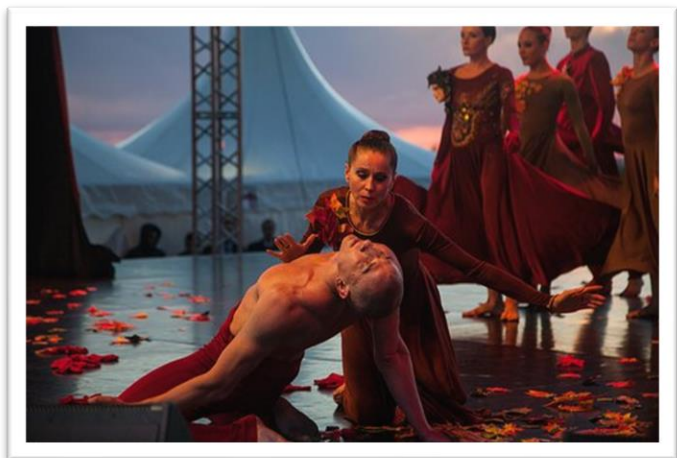
*This is a short summary of **Romeo and Juliet** by William Shakespeare. The play which is set in Verona is a story about a long feud between the **Montague** and **Capulet** families. This feud causes tragic results for the main characters in the play, Romeo and Juliet. The events contrast hatred and revenge with love and a secret marriage, forcing the young smitten lovers to grow up quickly and die tragically in despair.*

Here is a short summary of the main events of Romeo and Juliet:

*Romeo and Juliet fall in love at a party. But they come from families which hate each other. They are sure they will not be allowed to marry. Nevertheless, helped by **Friar Laurence**, they marry in secret instead. Unfortunately, before their wedding night Romeo kills Juliet's cousin in a duel, and in the morning, he is forced to leave her. If he ever returns to the city, he will be put to death.*

Juliet's parents told her she must marry Paris. Her parents do not know she is already married. She refuses in the beginning, but later agrees because she plans to fake her death and escape to be with Romeo forever; again, with the help of Friar Laurence.

Friar Laurence designs the plan. He gives Juliet a sleeping potion. She appears to be dead and was put in a tomb. However, Romeo does not know about the plan, visits her grave, thinks she is dead, and kills himself. When Juliet finally wakes up, she discovers that Romeo is dead and then kills herself.



2. What was the problem?

3. Was there a solution to the problem?

4. What was the solution to the problem? OR What prevented the solution?

5. Did any of the characters make decisions which caused a chain of events?

6. I believe the author thinks

----- is important because

7. I think the author's opinion about

----- is

----- because

8. This text uses the (cause/effect, problem/solution, description, compare/contrast, sequence/steps in a process) text structure.

9. Is there any formatting that helps me to locate important information? (e.g. emboldened words, font changes, bullets, captions)

10. What do you think are the five most important events, in order of importance?



B. Comprehension Strategy: Inferring

IDEAS:

- 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.
- Students use their background knowledge (b.k.) and clues from the text (t.c.) to make an inference.
- Students learn that inference is something you know that the author does not come right out and tell you.
- Questions for students to think about while making an inference:
 - What new information were you able to figure out?
 - Why do you think the character did _____?
 - Why do you think the character said _____?
 - Why do you think the author wrote this text?
- Students could use these sentences to make inferences:
 - The author says this, but means _____
 - If I read between the lines, the author tells me that _____
 - The clues to prove my inference are _____
 - Because of what the author said, I know that _____
 - From the clues or information, the author gives, I can conclude that _____
 - I think that _____ will happen next because the author says _____.

WHY USE THIS STRATEGY?

- Encouraging students to think about “why” a character did or said something, and “why” an author may have written the text creates an environment where students are naturally making inferences.
- This strategy requires students to evaluate or draw conclusions from information in a text.
- Students learn that authors do not always provide complete descriptions or all the information about a topic, setting, character, or event. But they often provide clues that readers can use to “read between the lines”—by making inferences that combine information in the text with their background knowledge.
- When students are taught how to make inferences, they improve their abilities to construct meaning.

I. Read the poem.

Love

*Love is a breach in the walls, a broken gate,
Where that comes in that shall not go again;
Love sells the proud heart's citadel to Fate.
They have known shame, who love unloved. Even then,
When two mouths, thirsty each for each, find slaking,
And agony's forgot, and hushed the crying
Of credulous hearts, in heaven—such are but taking
Their own poor dreams within their arms, and lying
Each in his lonely night, each with a ghost.
Some share that night. But they know love grows colder,
Grows false and dull, that was sweet lies at most.
Astonishment is no more in hand or shoulder,
But darkens, and dies out from kiss to kiss.
All this is love; and all love is but this.*

Rupert Brooke, 1887 - 1915



Background knowledge

2. Are there any words you need to look up first? Write them below.

Inferences

3. What inferences can you make about the following?

a) The author's intent

b) The speaker in the poem

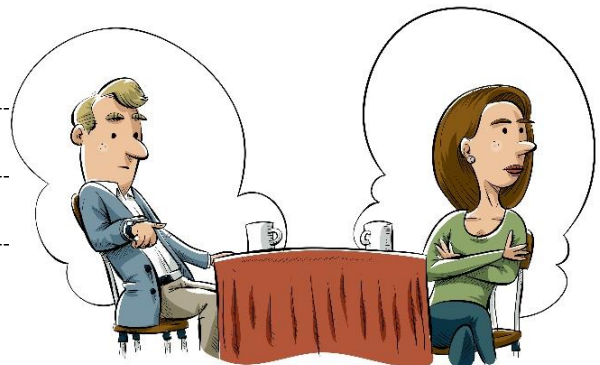
c) The possible reason for writing this poem

d) What conclusions can you come to?

Textual clues

4. What are the textual clues that help you to make inferences? Give some examples below.

5. What can you infer from this picture?



6. Look at these promotional messages. Make an inference about the type of company that is advertising and give each one a suitable company name.
- a) Special Offer! Buy 3 Get 1 Free! Tyre sale until the end of July. Visit us today on 3 Main Street for sizes and prices.
-

b) **RECEIVE DISCOUNTS ON TASTY LUNCH SPECIALS. TEXT "LUNCH" TO 777-343-555 AND GET A 2% DISCOUNT ON YOUR NEXT ORDER!**

c) Keep the kids happy this summer with free entry! Climbing walls, tunnels, games, slides, indoor and outdoor throughout the whole of August. Call us back to book a date: 555-4545-777.

d) *No more running out of the office at 4pm on Fridays to find a new outfit for the weekend! We are now open until 8pm. Find your closest store!*

e) **All your favourite reads at your reach! We are now online! Best deals for 3 days only, hurry up!**

f) *Be the first to know about discounts and offers: tanning, make-up, skincare, + more! Visit our website for a promotional code!*



C. Comprehension Strategy: Synthesising

IDEAS:

- Students take all the information from the text and tie it together.
- Students create original insights, perspectives and understandings by reflecting on texts and merging elements from text and background/prior knowledge.
- Students put the pieces together to see them in a new way.
- Questions:
 - Can the student communicate that synthesising means creating original insights, perspectives and understandings related to the text? (what)
 - Can the student communicate that synthesising is done while responding to a text? (when)
 - Can the student communicate that synthesising helps the reader stimulate original thought to create new meaning beyond the text? (why)
 - Can the student communicate that when synthesising, the reader merges new information from the text with current understandings to create original ideas? (how)
 - Can the student demonstrate synthesis in a variety of ways?

WHY USE THIS STRATEGY?

- This strategy helps text comprehension and problem solving.
- Students will be able to synthesise what is read, across the curriculum.
- 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 puzzle.



1. Read one of Aesop's fables:

The Mouse and the Boasting Rat

A Mouse lived in a granary which became, after a while, the frequent resort of a Cat. The Mouse was in great fear and did not know what to do. In her strait, she bethought herself of a Rat who lived not far away, and who had said in her hearing a hundred times that he was not afraid of any cat living. She resolved to visit the bold Rat and ask him to drive the Cat away. She found the Rat in his hole and relating her story, besought his help. "Pooh!" said the Rat, "You should be bold as I am; go straight about your affairs, and do not mind the Cat. I will soon follow you, and drive him away." He thought, now, he must do something to make good his boast. So he collected all the Rats in the neighbourhood, resolved to frighten the Cat by numbers. But when they all came to the granary, they found that the Cat had already caught the foolish Mouse, and a single growl from him sent them all scampering to their holes.

Do not rely upon a boaster.



5. Read this diary excerpt.

Monday 6th November This morning I got up early, at six o'clock, and I had tea and toast for breakfast. I could not stop thinking about problems! I did some chores around the house and took some breakfast to my neighbour, who is ill at the moment. I left home and walked to the centre, arriving at the centre at nine o'clock. I knew I had to stop thinking about my worries as I would not be able to concentrate. We had a computer class, and I was really flustered because I was struggling to understand the spreadsheets. The more I made mistakes, the worse I felt! The tutor and the other group members all tried to help me but it was like my brain was switched off or something. I think that because I have some family problems right now, my brain is stressed out with other things. The worry I feel is affecting my ability to study. I don't really know what to do! Perhaps I should talk to a friend; I might call Megan this evening. And I think I will go for a walk in the park. Fresh air to clear my head; that's what I need. When I get back, I will try and practise the spreadsheets, slowly and calmly.



a) My views on this diary entry are

b) Stop and think about this for a minute. What would you say to this person?

c) From this information, I can generalise that

