

## Supporting Kids' Understanding of: PLOT & SETTING

### Skills:

*Retelling Important Events*  
*Synthesizing Problems and Solutions*  
*Synthesizing Cause and Effect*  
*Visualizing Setting*

### Prompts/Questions/Language to Help Assess Understanding of Plot & Setting

<b>Retelling Important Events</b>	Retell what happens in this chapter. Retell this chapter.
<b>Synthesizing Problems &amp; Solutions</b>	What problem is _____ having now, and how is he/she trying to solve it? What is _____'s problem in this story and how is she/he trying to solve it? How is _____ attempting to solve his/her problem? What problems is _____ experiencing right now?
<b>Synthesizing Cause &amp; Effect</b>	What are the events that lead up to _____? Explain why _____ happens here. What happens here?
<b>Visualizing Setting</b> <i>(Add starting at Level O)</i>	Describe the setting (time and place). What do you picture based on the description on pages _____?



## Strategies Which Can Help a Reader Retell Important Events

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Teaching Tip</u>	<u>Leveling Tip</u> See your manual for add'l tips	<u>Visual Resource</u>
<b>"First, Next, Then"</b>	Readers think about the important events and retell them using their fingers and the words <i>first, next, then, after that, and finally</i> . (Oral & Written Retellings)	Teacher brings a class read-aloud to an individual conference or strategy lesson to demonstrate with and then have the reader(s) try it in their independent books. <b>(Example text: <i>Fireflies!</i>)</b>	Moving to Exceptional levels N-O  Moving to Proficient levels P-W  More leveling tips on page T23 gr. 3 &4	Page T23
<b>Read the Picture</b>	Readers retell by flipping across pages, studying pictures and using them to recount events.	Teacher brings a class read-aloud to an individual conference or strategy lesson to demonstrate with and then have the reader(s) try it in their independent books. <b>(Example text: <i>How to Heal a Broken Wing</i>)</b>	Levels M and below  More leveling tips on page T23 grades 3&4	
<b>"Somebody/Wanted/But/So"</b> (Beers, 2002)	Readers retell using an overall story structure to help them determine importance without including too many details. <i>(Good for writing about reading as well)</i>	Teacher brings a class read-aloud to an individual conference or strategy lesson to demonstrate with and then have the reader(s) try it in their independent books. <b>(Example text: <i>Thank You, Mr. Falker</i>)</b>	Helpful writing about reading strategy	
<b>Read With Chapter Titles</b>	Readers use chapter titles to help them remember the most important ideas of a story. They retell by skimming through the book and rereading chapter titles to recall the story.	Students should bring more than one book to the lesson to ensure one has a table of contents to practice with. <b>(Example demonstration text: <i>Number the Stars</i>)</b>	If using this strategy ask readers to bring a few books to ensure that they have one that they can use when applying it on their own during the lesson	T24
<b>Treat Chapter Endings as Pause-and-Reflect Points</b>	Readers stop at the end of a chapter to review, "What was this part about?", therefore monitoring their comprehension /thinking about the story before moving on.	Teacher models by retelling part of a book and then thinking aloud, "What was this part about?" <b>(Example text: <i>Days With Frog and Toad</i>)</b>	All levels especially K-L  Have students place post-it notes at the end of each chapter to remind them to retell each part before reading on.	T24 Grade 3 & 4

## Strategies Which Can Help a Reader Synthesize Problems & Solutions

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Teaching Tip</u>	<u>Leveling Tip</u> See your manual for add'l tips	<u>Visual Resource</u>
<b>Imagine You Are the Main Character</b>	Readers imagine they are the main character and answer questions as if they are the character.	Possible Thinking: <i>What seems to be the problem I am having?, What am I doing to try and solve the problem?</i> <b>(Example text: Stone Fox)</b>	All levels	
<b>Tell Me What You Want, What You Really, Really Want</b>	Readers think about what a character wants and how the rising action (events) stand in a character's way of getting it.	Possible Thinking: <i>What does my character want here?, Why can't the character just have it right now?, What is standing in his or her way?</i> <b>(Example text: Those Shoes)</b>	All levels	
<b>Think Outside – and Inside – the Box</b>	Readers think about problems characters deal with that are external (on the outside) as well as internal (on the inside).	Possible Thinking: <i>What is the character struggling with from the outside?, What do I see: other characters, challenging setting, events beyond character's control?, What are the character's internal problems: feelings, changes, something on her mind?</i> <b>(Example text: "Eleven," from Sandra Cisneros' Woman Hollering Creek)</b>	Best for some Level P and most Level Q books	T26
<b>Think, "If I Were in Your Shoes..."</b>	Readers try to feel what the character is feeling.	Possible Thinking: <i>If I were the character, what would I be feeling here?, What are all the reasons I'd be feeling that?</i>	Moving to exceptional on rubric  Level N or higher	
<b>Life is Like a Video Game</b>	Readers think about how problems in books can be like obstacles in video games.	Possible Thinking: <i>Think about what new obstacle or challenge your character faced in this chapter. What is standing in the way of accomplishing what he or she wants?</i> <b>(Example Video Game: Super Mario Brothers)</b>	Helps reader to begin to think about internal problems  Moving from Approaching to Proficient at N and above	Video game obstacles are external (visible). Remember to coach readers to think about internal challenges as well.

## Strategies Which Can Help a Reader Synthesize Cause & Effect

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Teaching Tip</u>	<u>Leveling Tip</u> See your manual for add'l tips	<u>Visual Resource</u>
<b>Think, "How Did We End Up Like This?"</b>	Readers think about the concluding event and then think about why that event happened.	Readers are asked to go back into the text and make connections between events that add up to the resulting event, answering the <i>Why?</i> <b>(Example text: <i>Short Cut</i>)</b>	All levels	
<b>Connect the Dots</b>	Readers link ideas by creating a flow chart showing how events connect to each other (around the problems in the story). <i>(Writing About Reading Strategy)</i>	Possible Thinking: <i>How did one event and/or chain of events connect to another?</i> <b>(Example text: <i>The Tiger Rising</i>)</b>	Writing about reading	T27
<b>Consider Life Forces (Big Events)</b>	Readers think about the big events that affect a character's life and the actions a character takes because of them.	Possible Thinking: <i>Think about how this influences the character's actions.</i> <b>(Example text: <i>The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane</i>)</b>	All levels	
<b>If I had to Guess (Inferring Cause &amp; Effect)</b>	Readers try to name cause & effect relationships by finding important events and asking, <i>What would I say caused that to happen?</i>	<b>(Example text: <i>Henry and Mudge Under the Yellow Moon</i>)</b>	All levels	
<b>Using the Past to Understand the Future (Linking Past &amp; Future)</b>	Readers connect many events that lead to the present scene by writing significant moments on sticky notes and using them to retell in order to keep track of the multiple causes & effects found in a higher level text.	Possible Language: <i>This happened, which causes this to happen, and therefore I think...</i> <b>(Example text: <i>Oggie Cooder</i>)</b>	Moving from proficient to exceptional at Levels N and above	
<b>Uncover Setting with Objects</b>	Readers pay close attention to the objects in a story to uncover a new setting.	Possible Thinking: <i>Based on the objects that are in this scene, what might the setting be?</i> <b>(Example text: <i>Under the Quilt of Night</i>)</b>	All levels	
<b>Stay on Your Toes (Where and When Details)</b>	Readers keep track of the settings in a story by paying close attention to "where" and "when". They need to pause at the beginning of each new chapter and ask themselves if the setting has changed.	Possible Thinking: <i>Where am I in the story now?, How did I get here?, This chapter must take place...</i> <b>(Example text: <i>The Secrets of Droon: The Mysterious Island</i>)</b>	Levels K-M  Moving from Incorrect to approaching	

## Strategies Which Can Help a Reader Visualize Setting

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Teaching Tip</u>	<u>Leveling Tip</u> See your manual for add'l tips	<u>Visual Resource</u>
<b>Map It</b>	Readers can sketch a scene, or create a map of the setting (including world maps) adding labels that mention key events linked to the different places indicated on the map. This is done over the course of reading the story.	<u>Possible Thinking:</u> <i>I can revise my sketch by adding..., I can make this place/these places come alive in my mind by... (Example text: Stone Fox)</i>	Moving from approaching to proficient O and above	T30
<b>Using All Your Senses</b>	Readers close their eyes and use their 5 senses to help the setting come to life.	<u>Possible Thinking:</u> <i>Did you hear...?, Could you picture...?, Did you see...?, Did you feel...?, What do you see?, Describe your picture., Use your senses., Add more detail. (Example text: Owl Moon)</i>	Moving from approaching to proficient at O and above  Moving from proficient to exceptional at P and above	
<b>Bring What You Know</b>	Readers need to draw from what they know about the time and place in the present story.	<u>Possible Thinking:</u> <i>What else do I know about this time period?, What other books have I read, or movies have I seen that take place in the same time period? Can I add what I remember to help me "see" the setting details more clearly in this text? (Example text: Dizzy)</i>	Moving from approaching to proficient at O and above  Moving from proficient to exceptional at P and above	
<b>Research Tools &amp; Picture Books</b>	Readers can look at pictures, nonfiction texts in the classroom library, picture books that have similar settings or use the internet (Google Images?) to research a new setting.	Teachers may do this work for some students initially (for book clubs), then establish guidelines to let them do this for themselves going forward. Teachers may also want to create/consider text sets that give students different perspectives of particular settings to study. . <i>(Example text: The Babe and I (The Depression))</i>	Moving from approaching to proficient at O and above  Moving from proficient to exceptional at P and above	
<b>Use the Power of Photos and Pictures</b>	Readers can read other picture books alongside a novel that have similar settings in order to develop a more complete mental picture of the times and place.	Works especially well with Historical Fiction because the level of books and the expected age of the reader does not meet up with the grade level expectation. <i>(Example text sets: 1-The Butterfly; Number the Stars; Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat? 2-The Bracelet; Faithful Elephants; Rose Blanche)</i>	Moving from approaching to proficient at O and above  Moving from proficient to exceptional at P and above	