

# Think Alouds

## Background

Think Alouds help students learn to monitor their thinking as they read an assigned passage. Students are directed by a series of questions which they think about and answer aloud while reading. This process reveals how much they understand a text. As students become more adept at this technique they learn to generate their own questions to guide comprehension.

## Benefits

Think Alouds are practical and relatively easy for teachers to use within the classroom. Teachers are able to model the Think Aloud technique and discuss how good readers often re-read a sentence, read ahead to clarify, and/or look for context clues to make sense of what they read. Think alouds slow down the reading process and allow students to monitor their understanding of a text.

## Create and use the strategy

Begin by modeling this strategy. Model your thinking as you read. Do this at points in the text that may be confusing for students (new vocabulary, unusual sentence construction). Then introduce the assigned text and discuss the purpose of the Think Aloud strategy. Then develop the set of questions to support thinking aloud (see examples below).

1. What do I know about this topic?
2. What do I think I will learn about this topic?
3. Do I understand what I just read?
4. Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information?
5. What more can I do to understand this?
6. What were the most important points in this reading?
7. What new information did I learn?
8. How does it fit in with what I already know?

Teachers should next (1) give students opportunities to practice the technique, either in pairs, small groups or individually; and (2) offer structured feedback to students.

Initially, the teacher reads the selected passage aloud as the students read the same text silently. At certain points the teacher stops and "thinks aloud" answers to some of the pre-selected questions. Teachers should demonstrate how good readers monitor their understanding by rereading a sentence, reading ahead to clarify, and/or looking for context clues. Students then learn to offer answers to the questions as the teacher leads the Think Aloud strategy. As students become familiar with the Think Aloud process, they may work individually or in small groups.

Teachers may choose to have students write down responses to the Think Aloud strategy which provides a record of learning.