

Whole Class Reading Guide

Front Cover

The front cover section invites students to “judge a book by its cover”. With no information beyond what is presented on the cover (no blurb, no opinions, no reviews, etc.), students infer, activate prior knowledge, and build a class discussion. These discussions often uncover good plot details (or alternate plot details), illustration tricks, and nuances, forming a puzzle that will slowly unfold as you study the text. The front cover question is consistent across all comprehension packs, as it leads to a wide variety of responses. Building hype and intrigue around the text is key to sustained engagement.

First Sentence

The first sentence is revealed to students in its own slide. A key stage in building hype and intrigue it gives context from the front cover, it allows students to know where the story will immediately begin. Some are taken from prologues, others from the first chapter.

Extending the sentence

Extending the sentence is a writing-based task where students can explore and play with sentence structure, drawing on their prediction skills. Using the first sentence as a stimulus and continuing with conjunctions.

Expanding the Sentence*

Expanding the sentence is an optional task within the packs. Students using the first sentence are given a scenario that they must create. Students are expected to change the tone, further explore ideas and activate deeper-level thinking as writers. This task can culminate many of the prediction-based ideas into a bigger picture and plot line for the story they are about to experience.

Miscellaneous*

Stories include extras and when they do they are worth exploring as pre-reading tasks. Often maps, blurbs, short prologues, and letters. These can further explore the universe the students will soon be delving into. Other times author studies, geographical studies, reviews, or background information is explored to bring real-world connections to the stories. This may be because the book is set in a foreign country that requires context, or the book may explore a medical condition that requires background knowledge to engage comprehensive thinking.

*not included in all comprehension packs

Chapter Review Questions

The chapter review questions are the main aspect of the whole class reading comprehension packs. The questions are designed to engage and challenge students to think deeper, critically, and creatively about the text they are sharing as a class. Students are asked to summarise key ideas, explore the emotion or changes in characters, and evaluate the impact of a chapter and how it will affect the story. Students are called on largely to synthesise information and visualise the progression of events. Some questions require students to discuss their answers (table talk) as a small or large group rather than write to diversify the delivery of the thinking skills mentioned above.

The most important part of these comprehension packs is that students enjoy the text and are sharing the experience together with their teacher. As the story progresses, the questions become less frequent. This is to ensure that students are engaging in reading for fun not just for work. Often a discussion will generate organically which takes the place of the chapter review question and leaves the class wanting more.