

Planning for Repeated, Interactive Read Alouds: **Book Discussion Guide for Pre-K/Early Childhood**

Introduction

Children learn language, print concepts, and increase knowledge and understanding of the world around them when they are read to and exposed to a variety of texts. During an interactive read aloud, children will participate through questioning and discussion.

Repeated interactive read alouds give children multiple opportunities to think critically about a book and engage with new vocabulary in a meaningful way. This instructional practice also allows numerous opportunities for children to participate in analytic talk. Frequent participation in analytic talk leads to accelerated growth in literacy development (Dickinson & Smith, 1994 as cited in McGee & Schickendanz, 2007). In an interactive read aloud, the teacher encourages analytic talk by modeling analytic thinking and asking high-level questions. McGee and Schickendanz describe analytic talk as involving “making predictions or inferences that explain a character’s motivation or connect events from different parts of the story” (2007).

This book discussion guide will assist teachers in planning questioning, thinking, and vocabulary instruction as well as social-emotional lessons and suggestions for integration of the text in play centers.

Effective planning would include a focus in the following areas:

- Social-Emotional Learning Themes
- Vocabulary Instruction
- Modeling Thinking
- High-level, inferential questioning to encourage children to
 - o Reflect
 - o Predict
 - o Make connections
 - o Communicate understanding

Choosing a Book

The use of a sophisticated storybook for an interactive read aloud can help expand vocabulary and enhance oral comprehension. A sophisticated storybook is one with a rich repertoire of vocabulary and where the reader must infer characters’ thoughts and motivations and connect them to actions (McGee and Schickendanz, 2007). Using this book discussion guide planning tool alongside a sophisticated storybook will provide a high-quality early literacy experience in the classroom.

When choosing a sophisticated story, consider the following:

- Is this story likely to be interesting to children?
- Does the story have complex characters and/or a problem and a solution?
- Does the story have a rich vocabulary?
- Does the story have social emotional learning themes embedded throughout?
- How long does this story take to read out loud?

Evaluation Alignment	
ECERS-3 (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, 3rd Edition) Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language and Literacy: 12. Helping children expand vocabulary - Language and Literacy: 13 Encouraging children to use language - Language and Literacy: 14. Staff use of books with children
TEAM (Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model) Alignment:	<i>This guide can be used to provide evidence for indicators in activities and materials, instructional plans, student work, standards and objectives, presenting instructional content, questioning, thinking, and problem solving.</i>
CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) Alignment:	<i>This guide can be used to help boost performance on CLASS within the Concept Development dimension (analysis and reasoning, creating, integration, connections to the real world), Quality of Feedback (scaffolding, feedback loops, prompting thought processes, providing information), and language modeling (open-ended questions, repetition and extension, advanced language).</i>

Text: Title by Author	
Overarching Purpose: Over the 3 read aloud span, students will gain understanding about the text through teacher modeling, questioning, and discussion. This understanding of the text will allow students to orally reconstruct the story with prompting and support in the third read aloud. Reconstructing the story allows students to not only retell the story, but also talk about character emotions and use specifically taught vocabulary to demonstrate understanding.	
1st Read Objective: With modeling, prompting, and support, TSW ask and answer questions about the story.	
2nd Read Objective: With modeling, prompting, and support, TSW ask and answer questions about the story to further their understanding.	
3rd Read Objective: With prompting and support, TSW orally reconstruct the story.	
Standards Alignment	
TN-ELDS (Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards)	<p>PK.RL.KID.1 With modeling, prompting, and support, ask, and answer questions about a story read aloud.</p> <p>PK.RL.KID.2 With prompting and support, orally retell familiar stories including details.</p>

Social Emotional Learning Themes

Interactive read alouds are a valuable opportunity for social emotional learning. When participating in a read aloud, children have the opportunity to empathize with character feelings and actions. As you plan your interactive read alouds, consider the following questions.

1. What social-emotional learning themes are in this book?
 - a. What happens in the story?
 - b. How does the character feel? How do they show their emotions?
 - c. Is there a problem? Is there a solution? How do(es) the character(s) solve the problem?
2. How will the children identify with the story?
3. What can the children learn from this story?

**TN-ELDS
Social-Emotional
Standard(s):**

Depending on theme, add the TN ELDS standards that apply.

Vocabulary

Repeated read alouds teach vocabulary words because the word is used in context and often has images to go along with the word. This contextual understanding of the word associated with visual images creates a web of meaning connected to the word. Additionally, the repeated read aloud helps a child hear the word multiple times. Repetition of the word is the recurrent exposure needed for vocabulary to become part of a child’s schema (D. Dickinson, personal communication, February 7, 2020).

As you plan your target vocabulary, consider the following questions.

- Is the word essential to the understanding of the story?
- What is a child-friendly definition for the word?
- What instructional strategy will I use to teach this word?

It is important to remember that young children need to hear new vocabulary used often in order to retain understanding of a word. After teaching new vocabulary during an interactive read aloud, teachers should use this vocabulary as often as possible during daily interactions. The vocabulary planning template included in this book discussion guide is designed to support teachers in planning 3-6 target vocabulary words per story.

As you consider instructional strategies, use the following information from Horst, Stewart, and True (2019):

Rich explanations should be embedded in the story naturally so they enhance children’s understanding without creating distractions. Here are some strategies to use:

- Point to an illustration of the targeted word: *Cocoon*.
- Embed a simple definition: *A cocoon is where a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.*
- Provide a synonym and/or a simile: *A cocoon is a protected place for growing something, like a seed in a pot of dirt.* Synonyms and similes help children build vocabulary based on words they already know.
- Use a gesture if a word permits: Rub your tummy to demonstrate *hungry*. (p. 6)

Word <i>In order of appearance</i>	Child-Friendly Definition	Instructional Strategy <i>Point to illustrations, tell a definition, provide a synonym or simile, use a gesture</i>

First Read Aloud

The first read aloud should focus on the main character's thoughts and actions. The teacher can comment and model thinking throughout the story, and ask more questions after the story. There should be a lot of direct vocabulary instruction during this first read-aloud.

Book Introduction	Book Reading	After Reading - Discussion
<p>Share the purpose of your read aloud. Introduce title. Introduce the character and the problem using illustrations on the front and back cover. Consider asking a prediction question. Let's read to find out _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“</p>	<p>Model your thinking as a reader, including the students in discussion. Ask and answer questions to prompt and support student comprehension. Follow your vocabulary instruction plan, making sure to explain specific planned vocabulary.</p>	<p>Return to the purpose statement shared in the intro. Today we read to find out _____. Ask the students your overarching question.</p> <p>Prompt and support students in their thinking by including scaffolded, supportive questions to guide them to meet objectives. Expand on student answers when responding and model correct syntax.</p> <p>Encourage students to answer in a complete sentence. The teacher may need to model sentence starters.</p>

Second Read Aloud

The second read aloud should occur 1-2 days after read aloud 1. The second read aloud should focus on other characters and/or conflicts. Vocabulary instruction includes expansion of the definition from the first read aloud.

Book Introduction	Book Reading	After Reading - Discussion
<p>Show students the book, reminding them that they have previously read this. Ask a few questions about the character and the problem. State your purpose: Today we are going to read to _____</p>	<p>While reading, remember to explicitly teach vocabulary. Model your thinking as a reader, including the students in discussion. Ask and answer questions to prompt and support student comprehension.</p>	<p>Return to the purpose statement shared in the intro. Today we read to find out _____. Ask the students your overarching question. Prompt and support students in their thinking by including scaffolded, supportive questions to guide them to meet objectives. Expand on student answers when responding and model correct syntax. Encourage students to answer in a complete sentence. The teacher may need to model sentence starters.</p>

Third Read Aloud

The third read aloud should occur within one week of the second read aloud. The third read aloud is a time for children to reconstruct the story. When children reconstruct a story they are able to retell the story, discuss character emotions and feelings, use vocabulary and language specific to the text, and discuss story problem(s) and solution(s) to demonstrate understanding. During the third read aloud, the teacher serves as a facilitator, prompting children to reconstruct the story by asking questions and making comments. Vocabulary instruction includes using vocabulary in sentences that do not relate to the story.

Book Introduction	Book Reading	After Reading - Discussion
<p>Show students the book, reminding them that they have previously read this. Ask some questions about the character and the problem. State the purpose for reading.</p>	<p>Show illustrations and ask students what is happening on that page. Allow students to reconstruct the story. Ask students to predict what will happen on the next page. Emphasize vocabulary using instructional strategies. For some words, extend the meaning into a familiar situation not in the story. Read the entire story or just parts of it based on student ability to retell the text.</p>	<p>Reinforce the purpose to students. Have students evaluate the book. Ask them what parts they like or do not like and why.</p> <p>If students have not mastered the retelling objective, return to the scaffolded support questions from the first 2 reads.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Extension Question*: When students have mastered the retelling objective, ask students to apply this story to their own life.</p> <p>*This question can be posed as a turn and talk or writing/drawing activity if your students are ready.</p>

Integrating this book in other centers:

This section is used to plan ways for this story to be integrated into play centers. All stories may not fit into all play centers. The listed centers are only a suggestion. Additional centers can be added simply by adding another line to the table.

Library	
Art/STEM/Maker's Space	
Writing	
Dramatic Play	
Toys and Games	
Blocks	
Discovery	
Sensory	
Music and Movement	
Cooking	
Puppets	

References:

- Dickinson, D.K., & Smith, M.W. (1994). Long-term effects of preschool teachers' book readings on low-income children's vocabulary and story comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 29, 104–122.
- Horst, Kathleen M., Stewart, Lisa H., & True, Susan. (2019). Joyful Learning with Stories. *YC: Young Children*, 74, 14. Retrieved from <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=edb&AN=135026370&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=s8863735>
- McGee, Lea M., & Schickedanz, Judith A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and kindergarten. *The Reading Teacher*. 60(8), 742-751. Retrieved from <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/repeated-interactive-read-alouds-preschool-and-kindergarten>