

Reading strategies this week:

Make your own subheadings

Thinking about non-fiction: in terms of summarising and retrieval, we can give the children short bursts of non-fiction (they could be about multiple different things in one session) and children would need to think what subheading could introduce these pieces of information. Chn could reframe it as a phrase and as a question.

True and False

I think another good one with non-fic, which teachers may already be doing, is some well-thought-out true and false, where children have to really accurately analyse the information they've been given to deduce whether the question given is true or false, but questions need to be well thought out and 'false' ones have to be near misses.

Ranked vocab

Let's do a vocabulary task where we pick a word, for example 'screamed' and collect +synonyms, then rank them by how they convey meaning. So if it were a horror, and the word was screamed, 1 would show the most fear and 8 would show the least fear. Then there's plenty of discussion around why we ranked them, and how the other words placed in the text would change the meaning.

The five word prediction

For prediction, let's do an activity where, before we even read the text, we show 5 words from the text (that purposely don't give away much about the text) and ask the children to predict what might happen, based on those words. Then 5 more words or phrases (these could build on the prior words), but these should give more of an inkling about what the text is about. Chn can then adjust or rewrite their prediction, again with justification from the words. Then there's a bunch of talk about how and why the children changed their minds. Then read the text and discuss how close we were.

One word summaries

Children find summarising hard so we can begin to build this skill by getting children to summarise a character or an event in one word and then going on to explain this word and providing evidence. For example, in the chapter where we meet Miss Trunchbull in Matilda we might describe her as 'intimidating' and we could find plenty of reasons in the text to back this up. Older children could pick two or three words and justify them.

Quiz Notes

This is best used with non fiction texts with multiple paragraphs. Model the idea of reading a paragraph and then taking notes of the important bits (even better, do two models, one of you taking notes of the important bits and one of you taking notes of useless bits) and then read each paragraph/section and pause for about two mins (adjust for length of text/age) for the children to make notes. Then get rid of the text at the end and give the children a quiz. Where they don't have the answers, explain why the information they omitted would have been important. Doing this for a couple of days in a row (then revisiting it every now and again) builds the skill of pulling out important information and also builds reading and writing speed.

If This Is The Answer, What Is The Question?

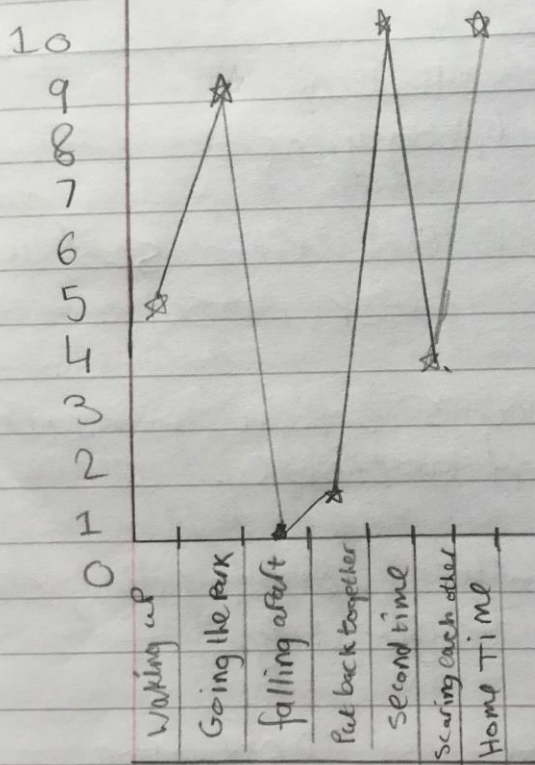
A good activity to make retrieval a bit more interesting (and can also be used for inference when children are more used to the activity). Consider the questions you would normally ask the children to get them to retrieve, then give them the list of answers instead. Model through how to structure the question and then get them to find and construct the questions for all the answers. This deepens scanning and skimming skills as well as really deepening the understanding of exactly what is being asked in certain questions.

Mood Tracking/Graphs

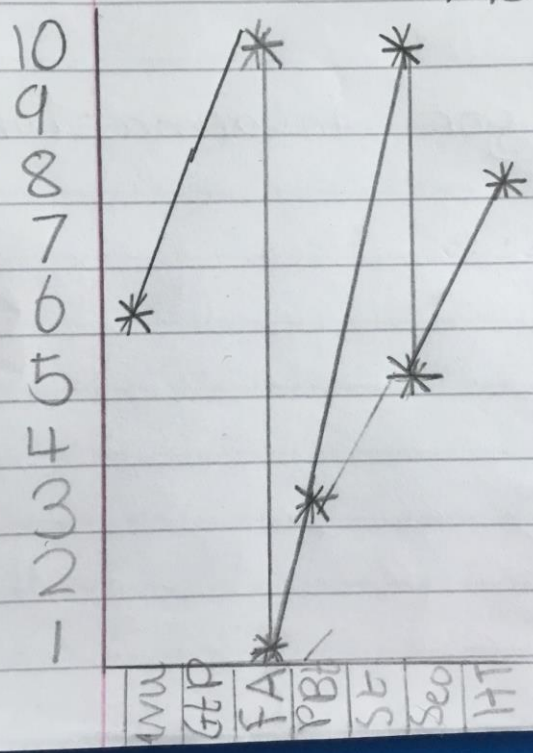
Find an extract where one character goes through a variety of different emotions (films can also be great for this one - see something like the Titanium music video or 'For The Birds'). Construct a graph and decide on what the top of it will be and what the bottom will be. I like to use :) at the top and :(at the bottom. We then consider what types of emotions other than 'happy and sad' would warrant being at different parts of the graph. As you read through the extract together, pause at certain key parts and ask children to plot a dot on the graph and write a word underneath it for how the character is feeling. Then take some from around the room and discuss why they chose that. Plot one together on the board. At the end of the extract join the dots to make a line graph and discuss the journey the character has been on. Below are some examples from Marsha in Y3 at Heygreen (thanks Marsha)

...together the right way because he was normal again

Mood



Mood



Queries and Theories

Pick a text which has an air of mystery/ends on a cliffhanger/sets a story up. Read through the text once together and then get the children to read through it for 5-10 minutes independently and come up with 'queries'. Explain these are just questions the reader asks themselves about what is happening and why. Come back together and hear each others allowing children the opportunity to magpie queries from each other. After this, give the children 5 - 10 minutes to write a 'theory' about what might happen next/what might have happened in the text. Crime reports are brilliant for this. So is the prologue of *The Dream Snatcher* by Abi Elphinstone. Text choice is really key.

Draw It/Map It

Pick a short extract of text with a large amount of character or setting description. Read it a few times with the children and unpick unfamiliar vocabulary. Then either get the children to independently read and draw what has been mentioned or repeatedly read it to them as they draw it. Descriptions of Dr Kalmenius, Boggis, Bunce and Bean or Miss Trunchbull work well for this. For 'map it' if you had an extract of text set across a whole house or an area like a bit of woodland or a spaceship, you could (with some modelling) get the children to draw a map/floor plan of how they think the area is set out. This is more difficult and takes a lot of practice but can get children really thinking spatially about a text and get them to think more considerably about time lapses etc, which can knock onto their writing.

Sub It

This is a very simple activity but can really easily expose the weaknesses of language that are quite often prevalent in our children. You can do it with whole texts or single sentences, but the idea is similar to the final question on the Benchmarking kit, in that you simply ask the children to substitute a word for a suitable synonym. One example would be 'the rain howled' and you would ask the children to substitute howled for a suitable synonym. This then lends to rich discussion about how the new words change the meaning and the subtle effects of language change.

Seeing Colours

This can be used in several different ways: the best way is through a picture book, for example *The Dot* by Peter H Reynolds. It can also be used with pictures/videos, or just through an extract of text where colour is prevalent and adds to meaning. Go through the text and get children to note where they see a colour being used. Ask them to discuss with their partner why it's being used. Repeat. Finally get them to write in their own words how colour was used to affect mood/setting/the reader etc within the text.

What Came In-Between?

This is a great little prediction activity. Take a segment of text, which can be clearly sequenced into three parts. Remove the middle section of the text. Have the children read the first part and then predict what might happen next. After this, have them read the third part. Has their perception of what happened in the middle changed? Why? What clues did they use? Children can even write their own middle segment. At the end of the session you should read the middle bit together.

Why That Word?

With this one you could get it down to just one sentence per session or even a few; however, the more context the better. I really want us to zoom in on some particular word choices this week. Why did the author pick these words? Why THAT specific word? Have a list of synonyms ready, as the idea is to unpick vocabulary, not brainstorm it, and then discuss how a different word would have changed the meaning of the passage. Let's be huge on the phrase authorial intent.

Find and Copy

This is a dry one, but it's one that always appears on the end of KS2 SATs. Children should find and copy words or phrases (and know the explicit difference between the two) that show specific things in the texts. Have a look at some of the KS2 SATs for examples of these.

The One Word Character Summary

Pick a short text, possibly a picture book or a video and read through it. Ask the children to summarise one of the characters in one word. The challenge then is that the children must justify why they've picked this word, using the text for evidence. Instantly, because they are having to prove themselves, their inferential skills really kick in and they will come up with some good stuff.

Fact Dump

An easy one for the end of a nonfiction lesson that pretty much does what it says on the tin.

Solo Work

Fact Dump:



Write down all the facts you can remember about vampires. The person with the most facts at the end of three minutes wins. Try and beat your facts record from last time (check in your book). **You may not go back into the text at this point.**