



Ready Reference Form

Goal: Comprehension		Strategy: Use Prior Knowledge to Connect with Text
Definition	Readers bring information from what they already know or what they have read before about a topic and connect it with what they are reading to increase their understanding of the text and to remember what they have read.	
Why Children Need This Strategy	Using prior knowledge can help students connect their own experiences with the text to better understand and make sense of what they are reading. The term <i>prior knowledge</i> is also thought of as making connections.	
Secret to Success	Pause before and during the reading of the text to relate what is being read in the story to what is already known.	
How We Teach It	<p>Using a grade-appropriate text, we model for students how we activate our prior knowledge before we begin reading, using some of the language below. As we provide guided practice, we ask students to “listen and talk” to their elbow buddy about the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Activate or think about your prior knowledge or connections you have to the text.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">How did you feel in a similar situation?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">How did these connections help you to better understand the story?</p> <p>Language we use:</p> <p>“What experiences have you had that might be similar to what this book cover is telling you?”</p> <p>“What do you already know about this content, genre, or author?”</p> <p>“While reading: Does this part of the story remind you of anything you have done before or read before that will help you understand this section of the story better?”</p> <p>“Using what you already knew about the topic, did that information help you understand this selection?”</p>	
Troubleshooting	<p>Students pick up on using prior knowledge quickly, but at times the prior knowledge does not move them forward with deep understanding of the text. If this happens, we remind students that the goal of using prior knowledge is to connect us to the text for better understanding and retention of what we read.</p> <p>We may take out a KWL chart (Know, Want to know, Learned) and fill it out with students, coaching them through the process of drawing on their background knowledge and connecting it to the text.</p>	