

What Your Colleagues Are Saying . . .

I am thrilled that Maria has released her new book, *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds: Building Knowledge and Boosting Comprehension!* We used her book *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* as a foundation for my school district's interactive reading lessons. Maria selects the absolute *best* books and has carefully thought out lessons that beautifully align with our state standards. This book has transformed the way our teachers read aloud to their students. Read alouds are no longer a time for kids to passively listen. They are 100% ramped up! Kids are actively thinking, talking, and questioning throughout these lessons while being exposed to higher levels of text and rich vocabulary. Thank you, Maria!

Dr. Stefanie Steffan, Coordinator of Elementary Literacy and Title Programs
Rockwood School District

Maria's book *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* was a gift to educators everywhere. Her follow-up *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds* is equally incredible. At a time when book bans are at an all-time high, Maria sets students up to thoroughly experience an engaging, interactive, and joyful read aloud.

Vera Ahiyya, Author of *Rebellious Read Alouds* (Corwin Literacy) and Educator

As a fellow lover of picture books, I absolutely love this book! Packed full of great titles, structured lessons, extension ideas, and suggestions for paired texts, Maria Walther takes the guesswork out of read alouds and puts the research back in. This is a must-have resource for every literacy classroom.

Kayla Briseño, Coauthor of *Text Structures from Picture Books* and the forthcoming *Text Structures from Nonfiction Picture Books* (Corwin Literacy)

In *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds* Maria Walther provides another exceptional series of reading experiences that perfectly marry the art and science of learning to read! The carefully curated lessons are anchored with text, weaving the components of the Reading Rope together so seamlessly that students can't help but fall in love with reading!

Andrea Burkiett, Director of Elementary Curriculum & Instruction
Savannah–Chatham County Public School System

More Ramped-Up Read Alouds respectfully and ambitiously flaunts the power of a read aloud, taking an even deeper dive into increasing the ability to expand critical thinking, language, prior knowledge, dialogic interactions, and foundational skills all through the culturally diverse and responsive titles that allow our students to see themselves represented, fostering confidence, self-advocacy, and compassion for others. . . . The thoughtfully laid out resources make this a professional development title that will be a favorite for all.

Hilda Martinez, RTI Coordinator
San Diego Unified School District

More Ramped-Up Read Alouds represents our current understanding of all the reasons we *love* reading aloud. Maria masterfully guides us through all the benefits and gives us so many practical and pedagogical reasons to make reading aloud a part of our daily classroom routine. The books used are current, which will mean I need to expand my ever-growing collection of the best read alouds available. The books reflect all of the things we strive to model for children. You need to get *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds* for yourself, your teacher friend, or the newest teacher on staff. You will be glad that you did. Happy reading!

Katrina Murphy, Grade 2 Teacher
Chignecto Central Regional Center of Education
Nova Scotia, Canada

Imagine this resource as a direct line to Maria Walther's heart and mind! Through her thoughts on the most recent research and invitation to lean on literature to nurture children's curiosity, every empowered educator will find a text and run with it to share with their learners.

Dr. Noor Shammās, Instructional Coach
Naperville Community Unit School District 203

MORE RAMPED-UP
READ ALOUDS

*To Whitney Wheeler and her amazing third-grade class at North Grove
Elementary School in Sycamore, Illinois:*

*Henry, Mackenzie, Evan, Nixon, Ella, Alexis, Kellan, Lillian, Hazel, Eliza, Morgan, Jaxon, Jordyn, Weston,
Andy, Jameson, Connor, Mark Anne, Quinn, Carter, Novi, Adela, Everleigh, Mariah, and Fiona*

Thanks for inviting me to read, think, and learn with all of you!

MORE RAMPED-UP **READ ALOUDS** BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND BOOSTING COMPREHENSION



MARIA WALTHER



FOR INFORMATION:

Corwin
A SAGE Company
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
(800) 233-9936
www.corwin.com

SAGE Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
Unit No 323-333, Third Floor, F-Block
International Trade Tower Nehru Place
New Delhi 110 019
India

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.
18 Cross Street #10-10/11/12
China Square Central
Singapore 048423

Vice President and
Editorial Director: Monica Eckman
Executive Editor: Tori Mello Bachman
Content Development Editor: Sharon Wu
Product Associate: Zachary Vann
Production Editor: Tori Mirsadjadi
Copy Editor: Talia Greenberg
Typesetter: C&M Digital (P) Ltd.
Proofreader: Dennis Webb
Indexer: Integra
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Marketing Manager: Margaret O'Connor

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Visit the companion website at
<https://resources.corwin.com/more-rampedup-readalouds>
 for downloadable resources.

Note From the Publisher: The author has provided web content throughout the book that is available to you through QR (quick response) codes. To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

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I've had a writing deadline for a quarter-century! After completing my dissertation in 1998, I collaborated with colleagues on a college reading textbook (a daunting task!). The textbook led to an opportunity to coauthor a professional book, which inspired another and another . . . the book you're holding in your hands is number 12! I will forever be grateful for the cumulative wisdom I've gained along my writing journey from brilliant editors, insightful coauthors, and all the folks who work tirelessly behind the scenes to produce, publish, and promote my work. A huge shout-out also goes to the dedicated educators who put their own spin on my ideas and make them come to life in their classrooms. I am a better writer, educator, and human because of the guidance and expertise of these individuals and of the following people who cheered me on during the writing of *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds*:

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When this book hits the shelves, I will have been happily married for 35 years. I can always count on my husband, Lenny, for his unwavering support of my writing and of the work I do as a traveling teacher. More importantly, he pulls me away from my office and into the real world. I treasure your adventurous spirit and love traveling with you. Our daughter Katie and newly minted son-in-law Brian are often part of our experiences. Whether we're hiking up a mountain, reading in a park, or enjoying a meal out, every small moment we spend together as a family brings me joy. Now that I've written a dozen books, it's time to take a much-needed break and make more memories!

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About the Author



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Maria Walther is a seasoned educator, author, and literacy consultant with over three decades of experience teaching first grade. Her practical yet engaging approach to classroom instruction has made her a trusted partner for educators seeking effective teaching strategies. With a doctoral degree from Northern Illinois University, Maria is an avid researcher who continues to further her knowledge of literacy instruction. Maria is a strong advocate for reading aloud and has been honored for her dedication to fostering a love of reading in children with the Illinois Reading Educator of the Year and the ICARE for Reading Award. One of Maria's most cherished awards is The Most Influential Educator, given to her by a former student turned colleague. This speaks to the lasting impact she has

on those she teaches. As a prolific writer, Maria aims to provide busy teachers with practical resources. Her best-selling books *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* and *Shake Up Shared Reading* offer actionable insights into creating engaging reading experiences for kids. Collaborating with Karen Biggs-Tucker, Maria coauthored *The Literacy Workshop*, which helps educators seamlessly integrate reading and writing instruction. In *A Year for the Books*, cowritten with her daughter Katie, Maria shares routines and mindsets for building student-centered reading communities from kindergarten to eighth grade. Educators can learn more about Maria's consulting work and find helpful resources on her website, mariawalther.com, or connect with her on Instagram and X (previously Twitter) @mariapwalther and @ayear4thebooks.



Photo by Whitney Wheeler

Welcome! I appreciate you joining me and my colleagues—the creators who've poured their passion into the texts that are highlighted in the pages that follow. Their words and illustrations inspire kids to dream big, be kind, ask questions, reflect on the past, and forge new paths into the future.

The How and Why of Effective Interactive Read Alouds

From Research to Practice

Tucked on a shelf in classrooms and libraries there's a gateway that connects young minds to essential knowledge, while, at the same time, fueling imagination, and nourishing empathy. This portal is—you guessed it—none other than a picture book. When we joyfully share picture books with children, the power of the author's words brought to life by our spoken voice has the ability to shape their hearts and foster a lasting love of learning, literature, and connection. I'm inferring you selected this text to add to your professional book stack because you're already a read-aloud enthusiast. Or, perhaps you recognize that read aloud is powerful, but you want to fine-tune your techniques to make read-aloud experiences even more dynamic for your students. Welcome! I appreciate you joining me and my colleagues—the creators who've poured their passion into the texts that are highlighted in the pages that follow. Their words and illustrations inspire kids to dream big, be kind, ask questions, reflect on the past, and forge new paths into the future. When those same words and illustrations are studied and discussed during an interactive read aloud, they provide students with the wealth of knowledge needed to become insightful readers, writers, and citizens of the world.

I have dedicated nearly 40 years to studying picture books and considering their instructional possibilities. Based on what I've learned and observed, I have an unwavering belief in the power of read aloud. I believe a read-aloud experience can and should be both entertaining and educational at the same time. You might be wondering what I mean by a read-aloud experience. To clarify, here's my definition:

A Read-Aloud Experience Is . . .

A carefully planned learning event where you joyfully celebrate a text and demonstrate skilled, expressive reading by reading *to* children while they listen, notice, and wonder. During a read-aloud experience, you typically have the text in your hands and your listeners nearby. As you are reading, you strategically pause and pose open-ended questions that engage learners in collaborative conversations to help them uncover the meaning and/or message of the text.



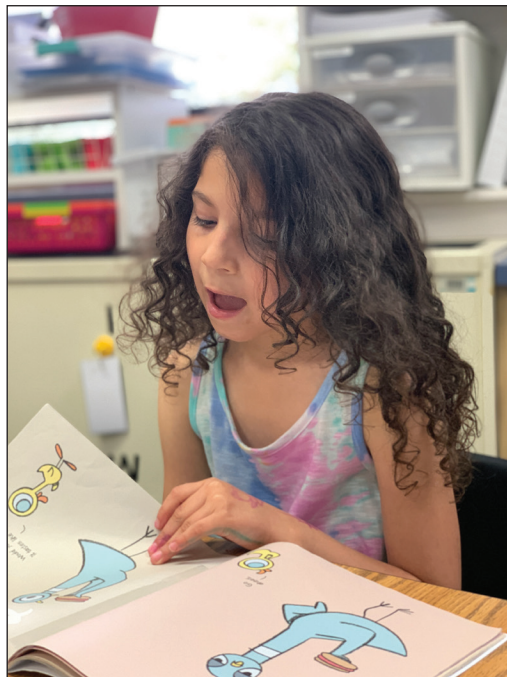
I have dedicated nearly 40 years to studying picture books and considering their instructional possibilities.

I crafted each read-aloud experience in this book as a multifaceted learning event so that you can creatively use the components to enhance your instruction. Be confident that when you share these read-aloud experiences in the way that works best for your learners you will not only be nurturing lifelong readers, but also helping kids progress toward standards-based learning goals.

In the years since *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* was published, the landscape of reading instruction has shifted and realigned to match the most current evidence-based findings. Throughout this shift, one instructional constant has been proven essential—a well-planned interactive read-aloud experience (Conradi Smith et al., 2022; D. Fisher et al., 2023; Wright, 2019). In fact, the Association for Supervision and

Curriculum Development (ASCD) Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that educators give read alouds a central role because they help students build knowledge as they grapple with complex ideas and vocabulary (ASCD, 2023b). When we view read alouds as one way to build knowledge, we see benefits across grade levels and subject areas. In the social studies realm, a picture book like *Stars of the Night: The Courageous Children of the Czech Kindertransport* (Stelson, 2023), told from the collective perspective of the children, gives upper elementary grade readers a unique insight into one aspect of the Holocaust that may not be covered in a social studies program. To enhance a first-grade science unit on the phases of the moon, read aloud *Thank You, Moon: Celebrating Nature's Nightlight* (Stewart, 2023a) to help children understand how the moon influences wildlife. I could go on listing knowledge-building books forever because finding picture books to illuminate a topic or concept is one of my favorite nerdy pastimes. In fact, I frequently get emails that begin with, “Can you recommend a good book for . . . ?”

The point here is that, due to their undisputed benefits, read-aloud experiences are a high-priority literacy routine. They should hold a permanent timeslot (or, in my opinion, timeslots) in your daily schedule. The 50 exemplar read-aloud experiences in this book will help you seamlessly enhance the components of an evidence-based read aloud and, when coupled with responsiveness to your students’ needs, improve its instructional quality (D. L. Baker & Santoro, 2023). Through adaptable approaches and real-world examples, you’ll learn how to make read-aloud experiences a staple of your teaching toolkit. We’ll begin by thinking through the comprehension conversations that add value to a read aloud.



Every word you read aloud has the potential to inspire an enthusiastic reader.

Comprehension Conversations: The Key to Interactive Read-Aloud Experiences

After reading Linda Liu's *Hidden Gem* (2023) aloud to third graders, I prompt, "Talk to your neighbor about the title *Hidden Gem*. Have you ever heard that phrase before? What do you suppose it means?" I overhear snippets of conversation:

Cai turns to his neighbor, "I think a hidden gem is something special because the rock decided it was special."

Brylee chimes in, "Me too! Remember the part in the book when the rock saw its reflection in the big gem? I think that's when it started to feel special."

The dialogue continues as learners build on each other's thinking and, in the process, uncover the theme of the story. One of the key features of a quality read aloud is text-based discourse where we, as teachers, strategically prompt listeners to discuss the pertinent parts that will lead them to understanding (D. L. Baker & Santoro, 2023). Encouraging learners to engage in comprehension conversations during read alouds is a proven instructional routine for enhancing language development (Burkins & Yates, 2021) and so much more!



Encourage learners to engage in comprehension conversations.

I want to be clear that there are many times during my day or week when I read aloud because it's just plain fun, letting students' reactions drive the conversation. Oftentimes, we read the books in what Lester Laminack (2016) refers to as the "movie read" (p. 39) or in a theatrical fashion without any pauses or interruptions. If you have time in your teaching day, you may choose to read the books featured here in "movie read" style first, and then reread to engage in the comprehension conversation. The key takeaway is that learners' interactive conversations elevate read aloud to a comprehension-building

instructional approach. Research shows that when we lead discussions that promote student talk and comprehension these conversations do the following:

- Invite learners to co-create knowledge
- Develop stronger textual understanding
- Build and reinforce knowledge and comprehension
- Are effective for a wide range of learners, including multilingual learners
- Gain power when paired with students writing about their reading

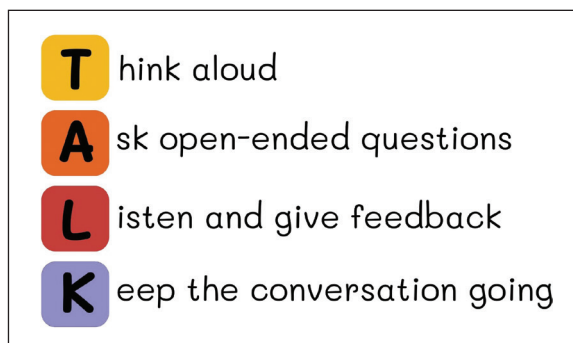
(Scientific Advisory Committee, ASCD, 2023a)

Let's quickly review the two main aspects of these interactions—teacher talk and listener's conversations.

Teacher Talk During Interactive Read-Aloud Experiences

Effective interactive read-aloud experiences are a carefully orchestrated dance among the enjoyment of the text, adult discourse, and children's interactive conversations. During dialogic read alouds, teachers encourage and extend students' comments, ideas, interpretations, and questions that are shaped by their lived experiences (Varelas & Pappas, 2006). To remember the four ways to spark students' conversations during read aloud, I created the acronym T.A.L.K.

- **Think aloud:** Explain the mental processes you use to decode text, understand words, and construct meaning.
- **Ask open-ended questions:** Pose questions and/or prompts that have more than one possible response.
- **Listen and give descriptive feedback:** Listen carefully to students' responses and offer feedback that is focused on their effort or strategy use. The goal of descriptive feedback is to point out behaviors that the child can approximate when they are reading independently.
- **Keep the conversation going:** Ask follow-up questions that prompt listeners to think critically, revise their initial ideas, provide text evidence for their claims, consider the author's purpose, make connections, and so on.



T. A. L. K. to spark interactive conversations.

As you will see when you peruse the exemplar read-aloud experiences, I use these discussion-provoking questions and prompts sparingly so as to not interrupt the flow of the book. To narrow your focus and select key stopping points when creating your own read-aloud experiences, keep your learning targets in mind. Once you've started the conversation with your questions and prompts, the next step is to teach listeners how to effectively converse with one another.

Four Ways to Spark Interactive Conversations

Think Aloud	Ask Open-Ended Questions	Listen and Give Descriptive Feedback	Keep the Conversation Going
When I look at the cover of a book, I ask myself, "What can I learn from this cover that will help me better understand what might happen in the book?"	What do you notice on the cover?	You worked hard to notice details I missed. Noticing details makes reading more interesting.	Why do you think the illustrator chose to design it this way?
I'm thinking about what the words say and noticing the character's facial expressions; when I put these together, I can infer . . .	What are you thinking?	That's a new way to think about this. How did you come up with that idea?	I wonder if your thinking will change as we continue reading.
When I'm reading a nonfiction book, I check in with myself to make sure I'm understanding the main idea and details.	Why do you think learning about this topic is important?	I noticed you used the title of the book to help you figure out the main idea. Are there other ways to figure out the main idea?	How does what you've learned connect to something else in the world or in your life?

Listener's Conversations During Interactive Read-Aloud Experiences

What happens when you invite your listeners to turn and talk? In my experience, without guidance, children typically talk *at* each other and the volume gets louder and louder until I attempt to call them back together. To facilitate students' active listening and their ability to build on each other's thinking, it's helpful to teach kids some questions and phrases to use as they converse with one another. Here's a demonstration lesson that I've found helpful:

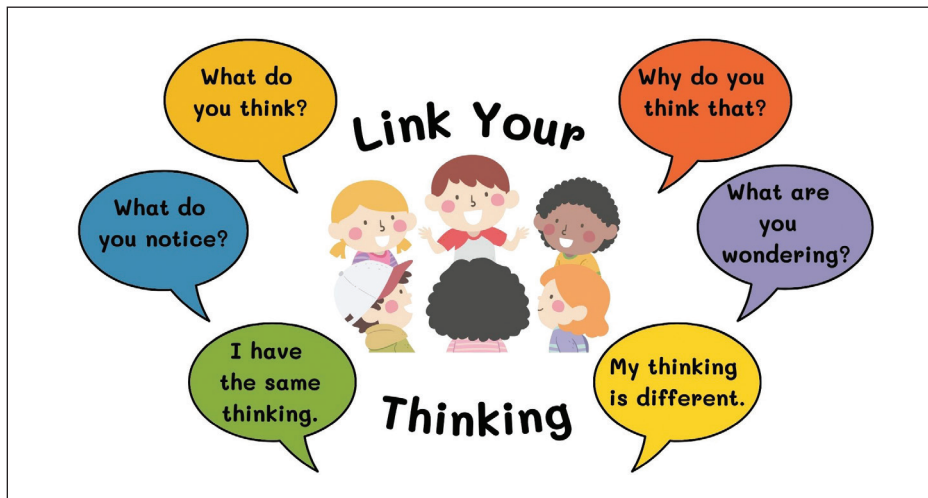
- Invite a colleague or another vocal student (you know the one!) to sit next to you as you read aloud.
- Bring some plastic math links or paperclips to use as a visual.

- Pose a question about the book. Then, use the questions or phrases to demonstrate a two-way conversation.
- Add a link to the chain each time a person talks to show that as you build on each other's thinking, your learning grows (Walther & Phillips, 2012).
- Demonstrate your two-way conversations a few times at the beginning of the read aloud, and then turn the responsibility over to partnerships as you finish the book.

I wish I could tell you that this one mini-lesson will work magic and kids will instantly use these questions and phrases. The reality is that you will have to consistently demonstrate, practice, scaffold, and give feedback throughout the year to make two-way conversations a habit.

Another way to emphasize the importance of partner dialogue is to refrain from routinely asking a few students to share out to the whole group after learners complete their peer discussion. This teaching move places more value on the ideas they're building together, emphasizing dialogic learning. In addition, it nudges children to actively engage in the conversation with their peers rather than focusing solely on what they plan to say to the whole group.

Finally, drawing attention to the importance of peer conversations is beneficial for your quieter students who typically prefer smaller interactions than talking in front of the whole class. To keep tabs on students' discussions, circulate among them gathering snippets in your teacher notebook to refer to later or to highlight during the read aloud if it will move their understanding of the text forward. Spotlighting the smart thinking of your quiet students helps boost their confidence to share during future whole-class discourse. Keep the idea of interactive conversations in focus as we move on to the "why" or "research-y" section of this introduction; remember that every word you read aloud has the potential to inspire an enthusiastic reader, an inquisitive learner, and a compassionate citizen.



Coach students as they link their thinking.

Eight More Evidence-Based Reasons to Engage in Interactive Read-Aloud Experiences

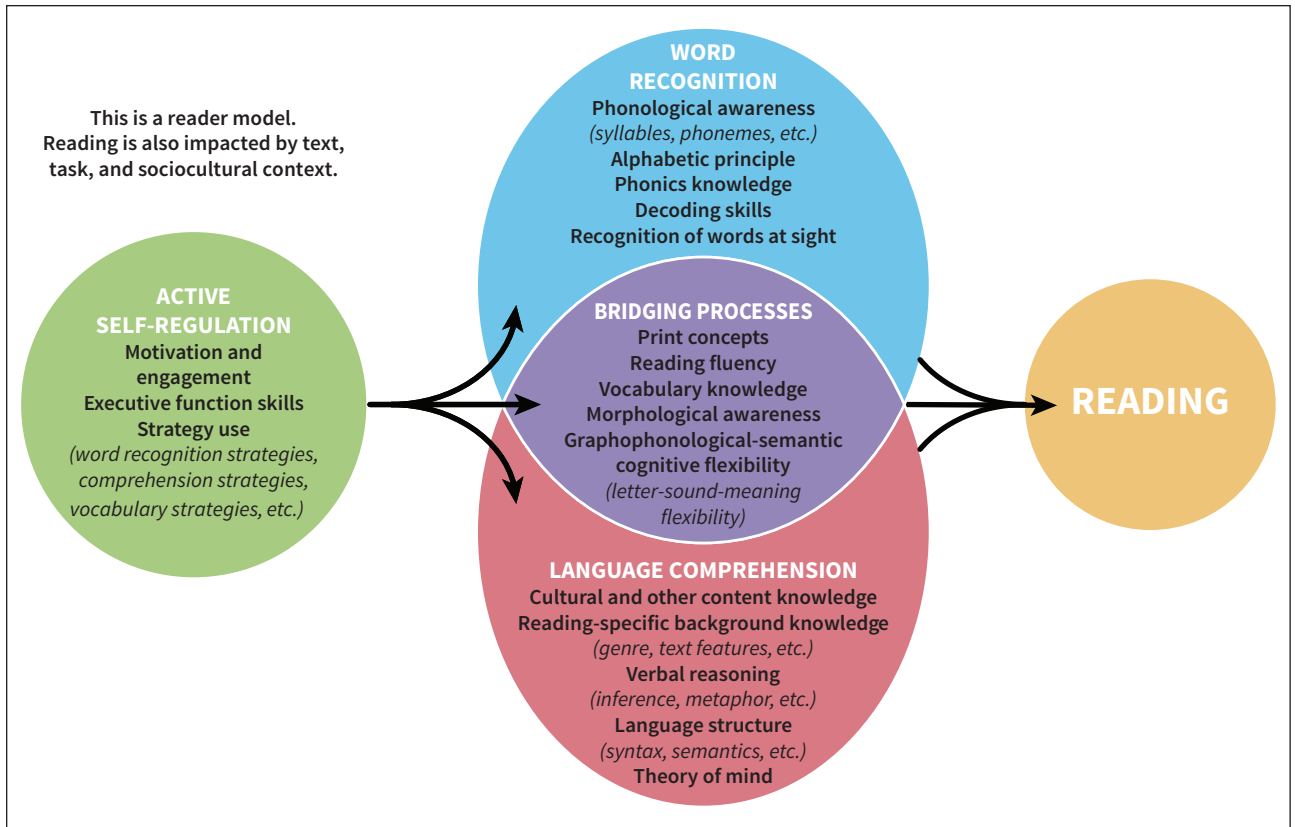
The purpose of this section is twofold. First, to provide a clear rationale for dedicating instructional time to interactive read alouds. Second, to offer actionable ideas that will ramp up your read-aloud experiences. Part of our role as educators is to stay in tune with the latest research and teaching practices by reading about and listening to experts in our field. The knowledge we gain from ongoing study helps us to hone our instruction to better address the needs of our learners. *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* (2019) included a detailed, research-based rationale for reading aloud. Readers of that book will recognize these 10 compelling reasons. We read aloud to:

- Promote reading
- Foster a strong sense of community
- Celebrate the written (and illustrated) word
- Build a foundation for future learning
- Expand vocabulary
- Showcase a proficient reader's strategy use
- Support budding writers
- Spark collaborative conversations
- Encourage perspective-taking and empathy
- Open windows to other worlds

In the time since that book published, I've continued studying the benefits of interactive read aloud. Here, I'll expand on the original rationale and add updated evidence. To provide a framework for organizing the eight additional reasons to read aloud, I'll use constructs that appear in the model developed by Nell Duke and Kelly Cartwright (2021) called the *Active View of Reading*. The Active View of Reading is a theory that expands on the *Simple View of Reading* (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), is based on a synthesis of research, and includes these four features:

- Lists contributors to reading and potential causes of reading difficulty
- Depicts word recognition and language comprehension as overlapping and explicitly identifies the processes that bridge the two
- Includes active self-regulation
- Explains how instruction in each construct can improve reading comprehension

When we examine the read-aloud experience through the lens of some of the constructs that appear in the Active View of Reading, we clearly see how this time-honored practice plays a critical role in reading instruction today and into



The Active View of Reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021)

Source: Duke, N. K., & Cartwright, K. B. (2021). The science of reading progresses: Communicating advances beyond the Simple View of Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(S1), S25–S44. <https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/rrq.411>. Used with permission of John Wiley & Sons; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

the future. View this section of the chapter as a quick-reference guide to the research that confirms the importance of intentional, interactive read-aloud experiences. Use the evidence found here to validate your professional decision making and to convince stakeholders that children should engage in *daily* read-aloud experiences (Rasinski, 2017; Venegas & Guanzon, 2023) not only during language arts, but also across the school day (Wright, 2019).

So that you can quickly zoom-in on the section that meets your needs, you'll find a brief synopsis of the four broad categories found in the Active View of Reading: word recognition, bridging processes, language comprehension, and active self-regulation. Then, under each of the broad categories, I'll outline the corresponding evidence-based reasons to engage in interactive read-aloud experiences. To make the research actionable, each of these sections follows a predictable structure to define, summarize the importance, and share ways you can leverage read alouds to elevate each of the eight constructs.

Eight More Evidence-Based Reasons to Engage in Read-Aloud Experiences

Active View Components	Evidence-Based Reasons
Word Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance phonological awareness• Support skillful decoding
Bridging Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster fluency• Build vocabulary knowledge
Language Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broaden content knowledge• Impart reading-specific background knowledge
Active Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrich efficient strategy use• Spark motivation and engagement

Word Recognition

Is it possible to enhance some aspects of word recognition using a picture book? I would argue a resounding, YES! Under the umbrella of word recognition in the Active View of Reading, you find phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, phonics knowledge, decoding skill, and recognition of words at sight. While all of these competencies are essential, phonological awareness and skillful decoding are the two components of word recognition highlighted in this section and in read-aloud experiences in Chapter 2. I want to be crystal clear before we move on that the read-aloud experiences in this book are designed to enhance, *not replace*, the structured, systematic instruction of these competencies.



Read alouds enhance, not replace, structured, systematic word recognition instruction.

Obviously, most picture books include well-chosen words. To enhance students’ phonics knowledge during read aloud, isolate and decode a few key words. This intentional teaching move will give your read alouds the extra *oomph!* they need to reinforce phonics skills for literacy learners. Making connections between systematic word study instruction and the texts you’re reading aloud emphasizes that the purpose of learning about letters and sounds is to be able to read and understand engaging books.

Effective word recognition techniques to incorporate after a read-aloud experience include playful practice with words. To do this, simply select and study words from the text that have common word families; sort a sampling of words with similar phonetic features; or collect, define, and display relevant vocabulary (Rasinski, 2017). I’ve included many ideas like these in the *Extend the Experience* portion of exemplar interactive read alouds found in Chapters 1–5. With a clear understanding of the construct guiding your way, you will find opportunities to highlight the sounds, letters, and words as you share a book. You’ll look at your texts with new eyes, and so will your students.

Enhance Phonological Awareness

- **Phonological awareness is** the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language. Typically, phonological awareness develops from larger units of language (words) to the smallest unit (phonemes). Phonemic awareness is the most essential aspect of phonological awareness and because of this, phonemic awareness should be systematically taught. Children who are phonemically aware can hear, generate, isolate, blend, segment, and manipulate sounds.
- **Phonological awareness is essential** because it is the building block for both decoding and spelling (International Literacy Association, 2020).
- **To enhance phonological awareness while reading aloud:** Read aloud picture books that contain playful words and/or onomatopoeia. Invite students to chorally read with you, and then identify familiar letter sounds in the noisy words. Other books to add to your phonological awareness collection include those that rhyme, are written with alliteration, and alphabet books where children can match the sounds to the letters.

Read These! Noisy Books to Enhance Phonological Awareness

Title/Author	About the Book
<i>The Animal Song</i> (Howley, 2023)	Animal band members Croc, Bear, and Weasel fill the forest with music all summer long. When winter blows in, all of the animals ask them to stop so they can go to bed. With a “snap-poom-jingle-jangle,” the band moves on to entertain in town (where it never sleeps!). The band members perform for the townspeople until they’re exhausted and return to the forest just in time for spring. But now instead of playing, the band wants to sleep!
<i>Ear Worm</i> (Knowles, 2022)	Little Worm has this song stuck in his head: “Shimmy shimmy, no-sashay, shimmy shimmy, no-sashay!” Owl explains that a tune stuck in your head is called an “ear worm” and then performs his ear worm. When Little Worm goes on a quest to find the origin of the melody, he gathers a merry band of singing animals, each with their own unique ditty. After Papa Worm tucks him in for his nap and returns to his chores, Little Worm discovers where he heard the song before.
<i>Song in the City</i> (Bernstrom, 2022) [See Read-Aloud Experience on page 78]	Emmalene navigates the world with a National Federation for the Blind (NFB) white cane. On her way to church with Grandma Jean, she hears a busy city symphony, but her grandmother calls it a commotion. Once in church Grandma enjoys the music while Emmalene pouts because Grandma Jean won’t listen to her city music. Finally, she covers Grandma Jean’s eyes and, together, they listen to the city song.

Support Skillful Decoding

- **Decoding is** the ability to use the knowledge of the connections between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes).
- **Decoding is essential** for readers because it is “the bridge between phonics knowledge and proficient word reading” (Lindsey, 2022, p. 34). In other words, decoding is the way children get the spellings of words in their memory so they can read those words by sight. When readers can automatically connect letters to sounds in words that are seen and heard, that helps them retain those words in their memory (Ehri, 2020).
- **To enhance skillful decoding during and after a read aloud:** Now and then, pause to demonstrate sound-by-sound decoding in single-syllable words. For instance, after studying the short /o/ sound, introduce the title of the Caldecott-winning book *Hot Dog* (Salati, 2022). Demonstrate how to decode the words *hot* and *dog* and remind students that sound-by-sound decoding is an effective way to figure out unknown words. Alternatively, reinforce students’ knowledge of the long /i/-silent e, as you enjoy the repetition of the title: *MINE!* (Fleming, 2023). See page 84 for a read-aloud experience featuring this book.

Language Comprehension

Language comprehension is also known as listening or linguistic comprehension and is comprised of cultural and other knowledge, reading-specific background knowledge, verbal reasoning, language structure, and theory of mind.

Theory of mind is the ability for readers to understand that people’s beliefs, desires, and emotions drive their actions and that other people’s mental states might be different than theirs. While reading aloud narrative texts, you can boost comprehension by highlighting the social knowledge children need to have in order to make inferences (D. Fisher et al., 2023). Here are a few questions and prompts that foster theory of mind:

- Can you infer how that character is feeling at this point in the story? Use the clues in the text and in the illustrations. Which words would you use to describe that emotion?
- Imagine how you would feel in this situation. Describe that emotion.
- How did the character react to that event? Explain how you would react.
- Notice how the character’s feelings have changed. What caused the change?
- Ponder the themes or big ideas in this story. Did you learn any lessons you can use in your own life?

Listening comprehension is a crucial element of reading because it enables learners to derive meaning from text and it improves parallel with decoding skills. Children develop linguistic knowledge through exposure to language in their environment and their development is enhanced with explicit instruction. As students progress through elementary school, the significance of language comprehension continues to grow (Silverman et al., 2020). Interactive read-aloud experiences shine the light on language comprehension because they offer rich, immersive opportunities to introduce children to ideas and

information they might not typically come across in their daily experiences. Plus, sharing appealing fiction and nonfiction picture books gives listeners the chance to experience material that might be too challenging for them to read on their own, yet well within their capacity to understand when it's read to them (McClure & Fullerton, 2017; Silverman & Keane, 2022). As learners engage with a story, follow along with the plot, and work to understand the meaning that is conveyed through pictures and words; they are steeped in rich vocabulary and storytelling patterns. Although read aloud helps to strengthen all of the aspects of language comprehension, we will further explore content knowledge and reading-specific knowledge here.

Broaden Content Knowledge

- **Content knowledge** are understandings related to the natural and social world.
- **Content knowledge is essential** for readers because students who have content knowledge about a topic can better understand a text about that topic (Cabell & Hwang, 2020). Readers can use their knowledge to make connections within and beyond the text, visualize what is happening, and remember what they've read (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2018).
- **Read aloud builds content knowledge by** introducing students to a broad range of texts and genres. When you intentionally integrate read alouds into your content area instruction by creating text sets of conceptually or thematically related materials, and choose books with characters from a broad range of cultures and backgrounds, you are building content knowledge (Wright, 2019). I've always been a collector of text sets because they offer children wider exposure to the same topic or experience. If you follow me on social media, you'll see that I post pairs, trios, and sets of books that you can share and compare. To guide you in gathering text sets, I've included a sampling of text sets in Appendix A. You can find additional multigenre text sets in *Shake Up Shared Reading* (Walther, 2022).



Build content knowledge by extending the read-aloud experience.

A Sampling of Content-Rich Read Alouds

Topic	Title and Summary
Engineering: Bridges	<p><i>Bridges</i> (Majewski, 2023)</p> <p>Marc Majewski begins this ode to bridges with a collection of structures that have opposing physical characteristics: a high bridge—a low bridge, a long bridge—a short bridge. Then, he transitions to the ways that bridges connect us, mark history, and tell stories. Each page identifies the bridge's country and gives a one-sentence fact sparking questions and investigations on Google Earth to pinpoint its exact location. A brief paragraph about each bridge appears in the backmatter. Pairs perfectly with <i>A Book of Bridges: Here to There and Me to You</i> (Keely, 2017), featured in <i>The Ramped-Up Read Aloud</i> (Walther, 2019).</p>
Science: Food Chain	<p><i>Creep, Leap, Crunch! A Food Chain Story</i> (Shaffer, 2023)</p> <p>Like the book, I wrote this summary to the tune of "There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly." Get ready to sing. . . . There was a cumulative tale about temperate deciduous forest that reads like a song with a repeated chorus. The repeated chorus highlights the food chain while animals gobble and munch again and again. There's also a part where resiliency is featured as animals scramble to evade the larger creature. And then it's done!</p>
Math: Exponential Growth	<p><i>One Chicken Nugget</i> (Bentley, 2023)</p> <p>Frank, the purple monster, loves the chicken nuggets from Celeste's food truck so much he scares away her customers and eats all of her inventory. To solve her problem, Celeste poses the "Double or Nothing Nugget Eating Challenge." To win free chicken nuggets for life, the contestant has to eat double the number of nuggets as the previous day for 30 straight days. Read to find out who wins! The back endpapers explain the origin of the folktale and exponential numbers.</p>

Impart Reading-Specific Background Knowledge

- **Reading-specific background knowledge is** an understanding of how both narrative and informational texts work. Children who have reading-specific background knowledge can differentiate among genres, identify story elements, recognize various nonfiction text structures, access text features to help them grasp information, and contemplate the author's craft and purpose.
- **Reading-specific background knowledge is essential** because it supports readers in comprehending texts and reading strategically and critically.
- **Read aloud imparts reading-specific background knowledge** when you share informational texts and draw students' attention to the way in which the author teaches the reader about the topic and how their choice of print and visual features reflects their purpose. As you emphasize and analyze the inner workings of informational texts, students begin to recognize the presence of argument and persuasion (McClure & Fullerton, 2017). Dedicating read-aloud time to unpacking the distinctive formats of nonfiction texts empowers students to explore and gain a deeper appreciation for them. As an added bonus, instruction on text structure enhances overall comprehension (Young et al., 2023). To help students distinguish

between the genres of fiction and nonfiction, share and compare paired texts on the same topic. Read-aloud experiences that focus on reading-specific background knowledge are powerful tools for enriching students’ reading abilities and fostering a deeper understanding of the written word.

Paired Texts on the Same Topic

Topic	Fiction Title	Nonfiction Title
Foxes	<i>How to Find a Fox</i> (Magruder, 2016)	<i>How to Find a Fox</i> (K. Gardner, 2021)
Storms	<i>I Am the Storm</i> (Yolen & Stemple, 2020)	<i>Disasters by the Numbers: A Book of Infographics</i> (S. Jenkins, 2021)
Puffins	<i>When the Fog Rolls In</i> (Fong, 2023)	<i>Puffin</i> (M. Jenkins, 2022)

Bridging Processes

As the term implies, the bridging processes impact both of the categories we’ve already discussed—word recognition and language comprehension. The bridging processes include print concepts, reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, morphological awareness, and graphophonological-semantic-cognitive flexibility, or “the ability to simultaneously consider and actively switch between letter-sound (graphophonological) and meaning (semantic) features in printed words” (Duke & Cartwright, 2021, p. 535).

When designing reading instruction, it’s important to consider these bridging processes, as they effect both decoding and linguistic comprehension. The two bridging processes highlighted in this book because they are strengthened during read aloud are reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge. Before delving into these two constructs, I’d like to emphasize the role read aloud also has in developing the bridging process of print concepts. Print concepts include initial proficiencies such as noticing print and recognizing it has meaning; to more developed concepts like directionality and the ability to contrast letters, words, and sentences; to the most advanced—finger pointing to track print. Our goal in teaching print concepts is for children to use the knowledge they gain to navigate and create texts (Lindsey, 2022). With this aim in mind, take a moment here and there during a read-aloud experience to show and demonstrate how print works by naming basic book parts, highlighting the role of the author and illustrator, or pointing out the purpose of elements like punctuation, speech bubbles, captions, and so on. When we intentionally refer to the text and demonstrate how it functions, learners make substantial gains in print knowledge (Wright, 2019).

Foster Fluency

- **Fluency is** the ability to automatically decode the words within a written passage and read those words with appropriate intonation and phrasing (prosody) that mirrors the text’s intended meaning.

- **Fluency is essential** for readers because “there is a strong correlation between prosodic oral reading and silent reading comprehension” (Rasinski, 2017, p. 520). That is, when children are able to read with expression, they grasp the meaning and message of the text more efficiently.
- **To foster fluency during and after read-aloud experiences** add a few fluency-enhancing practices like choral reading and performance. Choral reading is a scientifically validated method for improving fluency. Rereading portions of or an entire text in unison gives students a feel for the author’s language. Predictable, cumulative, and repetitive texts naturally encourage choral reading. Listeners will sing along with the cumulative pattern borrowed from “There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly” as a ravenous pea eats his way across the royal dinner table in *The Princess and the (Greedy) Pea* (Hodgkinson, 2023).

An authentic after-reading approach to developing fluency through repeated reading is performance. Whether children are performing a poem or preparing for Readers Theater, trust they are improving not only their fluency, but also their word decoding and even comprehension (Rasinski et al., 2020). A few of my favorite books for Readers Theater are listed in the chart below.

Read These! Books That Are Perfect for Readers Theater

Title/Author	About the Book
<i>Hurry, Little Tortoise, Time for School!</i> (Finison, 2022)	It’s Little Tortoise’s first day of school, so she paints on her racing stripes, grabs her Super Tortoise lunch box, and is on her speedy way. First, Cheetah races by. Cheetah is followed by a llama, a group of monkeys, a pangolin (I think!), and a snail. Just as Little Tortoise is nearing the school, Cheetah races by and knocks her over, shell side down. Fortunately, her teacher, Mr. Sloth, is also a slow mover. Together, they arrive just in the nick of time. But a surprise awaits . . . you’ll have to read the book to find out!
<i>The Red Jacket</i> (Holt, 2023)	Bob, the seagull, is feeling left out and lonely. When a cheery, chirping bird notices Bob’s glumness, he gives him his red jacket (with french fries in the pocket). Bob is so thrilled with his “swanky stylish” coat that he enthusiastically greets his fellow sea creatures. When a wave whooshes the jacket away, his new friends help him find it. Bob pays the kindness forward by gifting the red jacket to a gloomy turtle.
<i>Somewhere in the Bayou</i> (Pumphrey, 2022b)	An opossum, a squirrel, a rabbit, and a mouse are looking for a place to cross the bayou. They spot a floating log. But what’s lurking in the water next to the log? A long, green tail. Rabbit makes assumptions about the tail. First, it thinks the tail is sneaky. So, opossum tries to quietly sneak by. Next, rabbit presumes it’s scary. So, squirrel loudly squeaks across. Then, rabbit determines the tail is mean and pokes it on his way across. Alone, mouse discovers that the tail is actually stuck and frees the alligator.

Build Vocabulary Knowledge

- **Vocabulary knowledge is** both knowing the correct pronunciation and monitoring whether the text that includes that particular word makes sense (Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

- **Vocabulary knowledge is essential** for readers because knowledge is vital to comprehension. As we've already learned, readers need to acquire orthographic or word-reading knowledge. In addition, they need linguistic knowledge and general knowledge. In the area of linguistic knowledge, vocabulary is essential because understanding the individual words in a text helps readers better understand the text (Castles et al., 2018).
- **Read aloud builds vocabulary knowledge by** providing the opportunity to highlight and define useful words. A sensible vocabulary-building strategy I learned from Patricia Cunningham (2017) is *Three Read-Aloud Words*. The three words are selected from one read-aloud selection each week as “Goldilocks” words—words that are not *too easy* and generally known by most of your students or words that are not uncommon, obscure, or *too hard*. This idea echoes *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*, where the authors state, “An excellent source of words that will expand young students’ vocabularies are trade books that are designed to be read aloud to children” (Beck et al., 2013). They call the words *Tier Two* words and define Tier Two words as those important and useful words that are unfamiliar to children yet they can define them using words they already know. Tier Two words provide new, more precise labels for established concepts (Beck et al., 2002). For instance, most kids understand the concept of being mad, but they may not be as familiar with words like *aggravated*, *furious*, or *disgruntled*. For each read-aloud experience in this resource, I selected *up to* three key vocabulary words using the Tier Two criteria. Depending on the needs of your students, you can choose to teach the words before, during, or after the read-aloud experience by adapting the during-reading procedure on page 18.



Highlight and define key vocabulary.

Teaching Key Words During Read-Aloud Experiences

1. Before reading, show the key vocabulary words to your students, one at a time. Teach your students to pronounce each word, but *do not* ask them to share the meanings for two reasons: First, several students guessing the meaning of the word wastes precious instructional time that could otherwise be used for them to hear a precise, kid-friendly definition. Second, students are likely to retain the incorrect word associations they've heard, making it more challenging for them to grasp the true meaning (Beck et al., 2013).
2. Place the words where your students can see them.
3. Read aloud the text and invite listeners to show a silent “stop” signal when they hear one of the key vocabulary words in the book. At this point, pause and help students learn the meaning of the word using the steps below. While this sequence includes seven steps, once you give it a try, you'll be able to incorporate your own language, seamlessly integrating vocabulary teaching into your read-aloud experiences.

The example that follows uses the word *vanished* from the *Song in the City* read-aloud experience found on page 78.

1. Read the word in the text.	“Emmalene left Grandma Jean and she <i>vanished</i> out the back.”
2. Review the story context for the word.	See how the people are walking away out the back door. Once they're outside, you can't see them—they've <i>vanished</i> .
3. Provide a kid-friendly definition of the word.	<i>Vanished</i> means something you can't see anymore.
4. Ask children to say the word.	Say the word <i>vanished</i> with me.
5. Offer examples of the word used in familiar contexts different from the story context.	Our sidewalk chalk drawings <i>vanished</i> when it rained.
6. Engage children in activities to get them to interact with the word.	Tell your partner something that <i>vanished</i> . Say, “_____ <i>vanished</i> when . . .”
7. Invite students to say the word again to reinforce its phonological representation and meaning.	What's the word that means disappeared from being seen?

4. Showcase the key vocabulary words alongside the book cover and encourage students to be on the lookout for these words. Place a tally mark next to each word that a student reads, hears, or notices in print. Additionally, challenge yourself to incorporate these words into your conversations over the course of the week.

Active Self-Regulation

The act of reading is complex and multidimensional. Each unique reader uses a coordinated, interconnected, and orchestrated set of processes and actions (Compton-Lilly et al., 2023). When you reflect on the components that we've explored thus far—word recognition, language comprehension, and the bridging processes—it's hard to believe that there's another set of processes and actions that proficient readers employ, but active self-regulation is crucial to reading success, too.

Active self-regulation has three constructs: strategy use, motivation and engagement, and executive functioning. I'll address the role read aloud plays in enriching effective strategy use and sparking motivation in the sections that follow. First, though, we'll unpack executive functioning and how it supports comprehension.

Executive functioning skills include cognitive flexibility, inhibition (self-control), and working memory. You might be curious how these skills play out as children listen to a narrative:

- **Cognitive flexibility** is the ability to switch attention back and forth between concepts; listeners use this as they ponder story events and compare them to their own experiences.
- **Inhibition or self-control** is a reader's ability to control their impulses and ignore distractions.
- **Working memory** helps children remember the events that have happened so far while continuing to listen to the story (DeBruin-Parecki & Cartwright, 2023).

There are simple and effective ways to nurture students' executive functioning skills during read alouds. To build listeners' cognitive flexibility, pause and prompt them to think about a time when they've had a similar experience. Ask them how they would react to the event in the book. You can develop students' working memory by stopping mid-book to ask, "Catch me up, what happened so far?" As you're engaging in book experiences, informally assess learners' executive functioning skills and then continue to provide additional scaffolding and support during read aloud and beyond.

Enrich Efficient Strategy Use

- **Strategies that help readers are** the thinking processes that they use to recognize words, define unknown vocabulary, read fluently, comprehend texts, and regulate themselves and their interaction with texts.
- **Enriching efficient strategy use is essential** for readers because proficient comprehenders use strategies. Some children learn these thinking processes naturally while others benefit from explicit instruction (Duke et al., 2021).
- **Read aloud enriches efficient strategy use** when you demonstrate how you use reading strategies such as making predictions, asking questions, and summarizing, students begin to understand and interpret texts more effectively, leading to improved reading comprehension. During read-aloud experiences, pause to figure

out the main idea, identify story elements, think critically, and analyze the text. This cultivates higher-order thinking skills and encourages students to make connections and draw conclusions. Whether reading fiction or nonfiction, the comprehension strategy of inferring has been proven essential for successful comprehension (DeBruin-Parecki & Cartwright, 2023), should be modeled and explicitly taught starting in the early grades (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2018; Hwang et al., 2023), and can be fostered during discussion about children’s literature (Kelly & Moses, 2018).

I’ve included a few tips I learned from combing through the research on how read alouds can help children enrich comprehension, specifically by teaching them the strategy of inferring. Then, in the comprehension conversations in each read-aloud experience, you’ll find book-specific ideas for enriching efficient strategy use.

Inferring During Read Alouds

Kid-friendly explanation of inferring:

To infer, pay attention and connect events or ideas across a text. Think about what you already know, your schema, and use the clues in the text and illustrations to fill in the ideas or information the author left out. Some people call this “reading between the lines.”

The subskills involved in inferring include:

- Attending to key details.
- Remembering events or information across a text using working memory.
- Paying attention to when things aren’t making sense.
- Supporting inferences with textual and visual details.

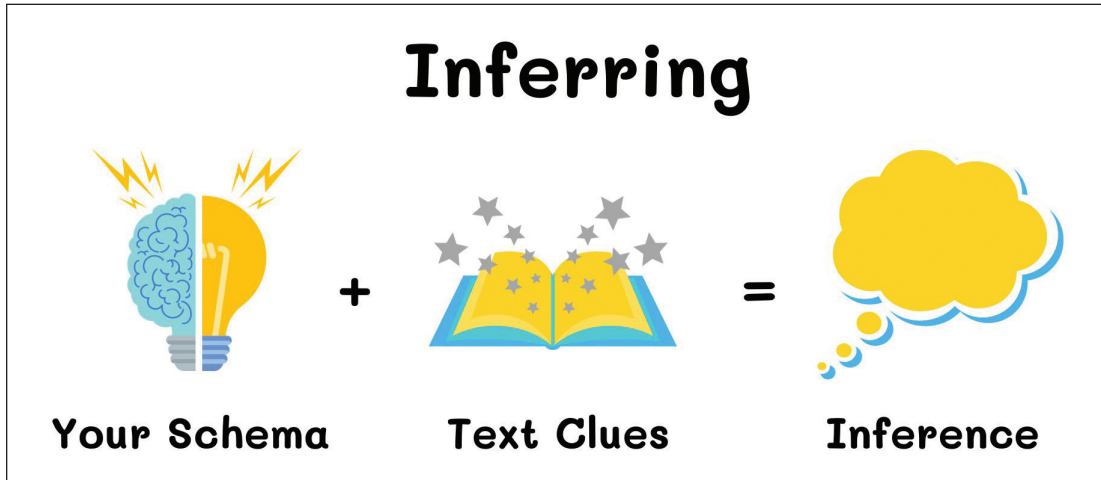
To support students in forming inferences:

- Ask high-level questions that invite children to access prior knowledge, go beyond the text, and connect to ideas, situations, and experiences using their cognitive flexibility.
- Encourage dialogue where students offer evidence, examples, clarification, and elaboration.
- Explicitly demonstrate how to make inferences. Here are a few examples:
 - I read *this*. I saw *this* in the illustrations. When I put these two ideas together, I can infer *this*.
 - I remember *this fact* from earlier in the book. Now I learned *this fact*. I can infer that the two facts are connected because . . .
 - When I had a similar experience, I felt *like this*. The character said *this* and looks like *this*. I can infer the character is feeling *like this* because . . .

Select picture books that invite inferring:

- Stories with open-ended conclusions for inferring the ending.
 - *Down the Hole* (Slater, 2023) Can you infer what happened to the fox?
- Stories that illuminate social-emotional competencies like identity, feelings, friendship, giving, kindness, and so on to infer the author’s message, themes, or big ideas.
 - *How This Book Got Red* (Greanias, 2023)

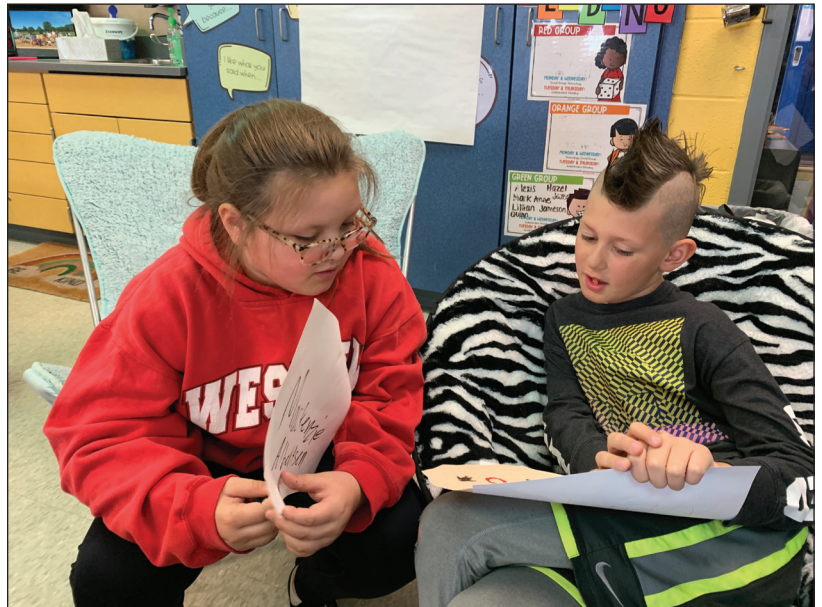
(Kelly & Moses, 2018)



Explicitly teach inferring.

Spark Motivation and Engagement

- **Motivation is** the internal and external factors that drive a child to initiate, sustain, and direct their efforts toward completing a task—in this case, reading.
- **Engagement occurs** when children actively participate in and invest their attention in the act of reading.
- **Motivation and engagement are essential** for readers because motivated students are more likely to participate in reading activities willingly and with enthusiasm. Therefore, motivation is a crucial factor influencing reading comprehension (Duke et al., 2021). When researchers examined various approaches to enhancing reading motivation including guidance on self-regulation (refer to page 19), initiatives to cultivate students’ reading interests, instilling in them an appreciation for the value of reading, and encouraging a shift in their mindsets around reading successes and challenges as readers, there were positive effects on word reading, reading fluency, and reading comprehension (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Engaged readers are also more likely to comprehend and retain information. When students are actively engaged in the reading process,



Engaged readers interact with and respond to the material.

they are better able to connect with the text, make sense of the content, and remember key information. Engagement goes beyond reading and includes a willingness to interact with and respond to the material.

- **Read aloud sparks motivation and engagement by** fostering positive attitudes about both reading and learning, as well as forging lasting connections with books. Selecting read-aloud texts that match students’ interests, lived experiences, and learning needs heightens their motivation. Consider polling your learners about their favorite picture books and including them in your selections during the year. Frequent read-aloud experiences cultivate a positive and supportive environment, another factor that enhances motivation and engagement. Finally, the thought-provoking questions and prompts you pose during a read aloud challenge students to think deeply, thereby enhancing their interest and engagement.

Read These! Books That Portray the Joys of Reading

Title/Author	About the Book
<i>Everything in Its Place: A Story of Books and Belonging</i> (David-Sax, 2022)	Nicky feels safe spending her recess shelving books in the school library. When she learns that the librarian, Ms. Gillam, is going to a conference, she begins to worry about spending a whole week outside at recess. After school at her mother’s café, Nicky notices the people who are there alone. Her favorite solo customer is motorcycle-riding Maggie, with whom she shares a love of reading. When Nicky asks Maggie if it is scary riding a motorcycle, Maggie replies, “Everything in life is a risk.” Later, when Maggie shows up at the café with her motorcycle “sisters,” Nicky begins to realize that you don’t have to be exactly the same as your friends to belong. In the end, while reading a poem by Mary Oliver, Nicky finds a fellow poetry lover to hang out with at recess.
<i>This Is a Story</i> (Schu, 2023)	The story told in Lauren Castillo’s illustrations goes this way: A father and his two children are off to enjoy a day together. First, they stop by the park to fly a seahorse kite. Then, they head to the library. There, they are met by the librarian, who resembles the author and former school librarian, John Schu. Seeing the child’s seahorse kite and fish shirt, the librarian picks out <i>Sea Horse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea</i> by Chris Butterworth and that child, in turn, picks out <i>City Cat</i> by Kate Banks for their sibling, who is carrying a cat stuffie. John Schu’s sparse, lyrical text celebrates the connection between a book and a reader and the limitless possibilities of the world of reading.
<i>¡Vamos! Let’s Go Read</i> (Raúl the Third, 2023)	In the fourth installment of the <i>¡Vamos!</i> series, Little Lobo and friends embark on a library adventure during a book festival. The story celebrates the wonders found inside a library, showcasing classes, digital resources, and the librarians who open doors to a world of free entertainment and information. The distinctive artwork includes labels in both Spanish and English. Readers will pore over the engaging illustrations, spotting new details each time they reread.

With all of these benefits, it's easy to see why the International Literacy Association (2018) declared that, "Reading aloud is undoubtedly one of the most important instructional activities to help children develop the fundamental skills and knowledge needed to become readers" (p. 2). While research is helpful in guiding our instructional decision making, the reality of classroom life is that we need reliable and sensible strategies for putting that research into action. The book you hold in your hands does just that. I'll round this introduction out with some techniques to ramp up your read alouds along with a quick book tour.



Read aloud helps children develop the skills and knowledge needed to become readers.

Six More Secrets to a Successful Interactive Read-Aloud Experience

In *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* I outlined six secrets to successful read-aloud experiences. Here's a quick recap of the key ideas:

- **Strategic book selection:** As you can see from the list of criteria on page 24, many factors go into selecting texts to read aloud. While these criteria offer valuable guidance, your overarching consideration should always be the interests, lived experiences, and needs of the group of children sitting in front of you.

Criteria for Strategic Book Selection

- Characters and creators with varied voices
- Rich language
- Fascinating illustrations
- Thought-provoking themes
- Kid-appealing content
- Original premise
- Unique perspectives
- Horizon-broadening topics

Source: Walther (2019)

- **A comfy place to read and listen:** Create a space where all learners can feel comfortable, see, and hear. If your kids will be sitting on the floor, you might consider adding some inexpensive plastic footstools to give a boost to those seated in the back.
- **Expressive oral reading:** Read aloud is a performance art. Find a style that works for you. Match the tone of your voice to the mood of the text; vary your pitch; use pacing pauses, and volume, for dramatic effect; and read rhyming texts and poetry with a toe-tapping beat.
- **Frequent brain breaks:** Always leave students wanting more. In other words, don't be afraid to stop in the middle of a read-aloud experience if interest and enthusiasm are waning. Simply say, "I'm going to leave you in suspense until next time." Then, take a brain break!
- **Joyful and purposeful classroom climate:** I'm a fan of strategic seating during read aloud. Using what I've learned about my students, I give them designated "places for learning." These places are flexible, change often, and facilitate pairing students with supportive turn-and-talk partners.
- **Meaningful technology connections:** While there are many meaningful technology connections you can use to extend your read-aloud experience, I want to offer a word of caution about playing video recordings of read alouds. Remember all the insights we gained regarding the interactive nature of a comprehension-building read aloud? When your students watch someone else reading aloud, your opportunity to question, prompt, and give feedback is lost. Also missing is the emotional bond that is developed between reader and listener. In addition, unless the video is produced by the author or publisher, the content may infringe on the rights of the creators. Instead of turning on the screen, visit your school or public library to borrow the books you want to share.

Next, I want to add six additional secrets I've learned from my ongoing study of read aloud and from reading to students across the grade levels and around the country.

Secret #1: Read-Aloud Picture Books Across the Grades

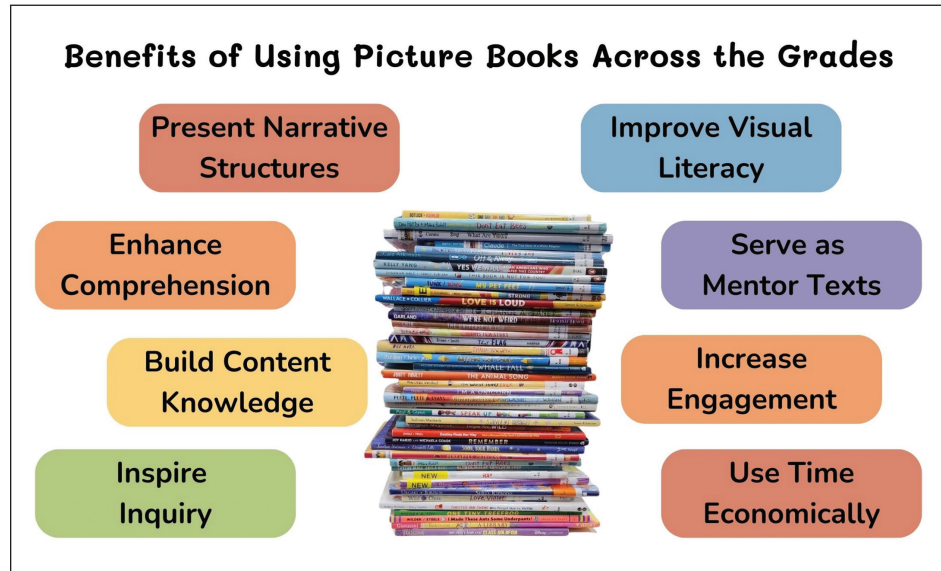
During her session at the Colorado Council International Reading Association (CCIRA) conference, Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul (2023) said, "Picture books are short

stories that belong in all classrooms.” So true! I never thought about picture books as short stories, but her analogy makes perfect sense, especially for children in the upper elementary grades. Here are just a few of the many reasons why picture books are essential across the grades:

- **Present a variety of narrative structures:** When you read aloud narrative picture books, students experience the entire arc of a story numerous times over the course of a week or month. The varied plot structures presented in these shorter stories are helpful in building the story grammar needed to understand the arc of a novel. For instance, you could use a picture book like *When You Can Swim* (Wong, 2023) as a touch point for future discussions about figurative language.
- **Enhance comprehension:** Rich ideas and sophisticated themes in many picture books offer opportunities for readers to locate evidence in the text and images to support their inferences, synthesize information in a nonfiction text, critique the text by expressing their opinions, and back those opinions with textual evidence.
- **Build content knowledge:** Informational picture books with rich visual images help learners build background knowledge for content-area topics. In science, you can zoom-in on a concept like ocean-floor ecosystems with the picture book *Whale Fall* (Stewart, 2023b), which details this little-known subject with visual examples and extensive backmatter. Picture books make history come alive. When learning about the Civil Rights Movement, a biography like *Love Is Loud: How Diane Nash Led the Civil Rights Movement* (Wallace, 2023) helps listeners make personal connections and better empathize with the situations Black people faced during that time period.
- **Inspire inquiry:** I can’t tell you how many times I’ve fallen down a research rabbit hole after reading a picture book. The same can be true for your students. Whether they want to learn more about the topic, the time period, the creator, or to research unanswered questions, picture books naturally lead to micro-inquiry investigations.
- **Improve visual literacy:** An increasing amount of information is conveyed through infographics and images, making it even more important that children acquire the ability to comprehend visuals alongside written text. While reading informational texts, prompt readers to notice whether the message is mainly carried in the text, in the illustrations, or in a careful combination of both. Compare books on similar topics illustrated in different ways. As you enjoy stories, invite readers to consider the illustrator’s artistic and storytelling style.
- **Serve as mentor texts for writers:** Picture books showcase how authors of informational books synthesize extensive research into an accessible and information-filled text. For writers of fiction, picture books are complete ideas expressed with originality and attention to each individual word, providing a scaffold for writers as they experiment with literary language.
- **Increase motivation and engagement:** Listeners of all ages enjoy hearing a picture book read aloud. The social collaboration that occurs as you share a picture book with your upper elementary grade learners is a motivator.

- **Are an economical use of instructional time:** Keeping all of the previously listed benefits in mind, it is clear that reading aloud picture books is an efficient and effective way to do more in less time.

Using picture books across the grades proves to be a rich and versatile way to enhance your literacy instruction.



Picture books are a rich and versatile way to enhance literacy instruction across the grades.

Secret #2: Make Multimodal Connections

After listening to the book *One Tiny Treefrog: A Countdown to Survival* (Piedra & Joy, 2023) Tanisha exclaims, “That reminds me of our butterflies. We started with 20 caterpillars and now we only have 15 butterflies!” Tanisha saw the similarities between what happened in *One Tiny Treefrog* and the scientific phenomenon that had occurred in her classroom. Building bridges across the curriculum and among the texts you read aloud expands students’ content knowledge. When we model and guide children as they make intertextual links, we are helping them see themselves as both teachers and learners who make connections to better make sense of their world (Varelas & Pappas, 2006). It is also essential to connect with students’ “funds of knowledge” (Moll & Gonzalez, 1994, p. 443), or culturally developed everyday experiences. A culturally responsive and brain-friendly way of doing this is by tapping into multimodal resources related to the topic or theme of the featured book (Z. Hammond, 2015). You might choose to

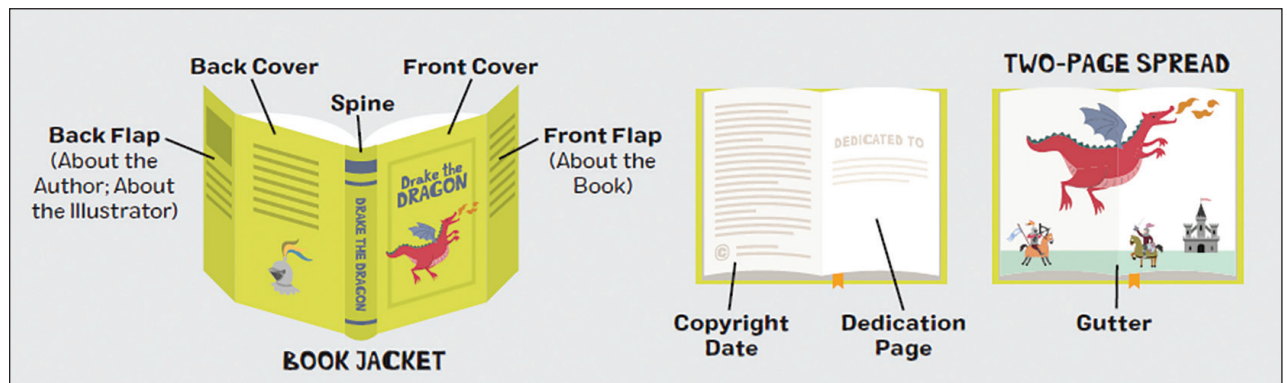
show a real object, locate the setting on Google Earth, listen to a song, display an image, or view a quick videoclip related to your upcoming read-aloud text. Making multimodal connections is essential for multilingual learners.

For all readers—but particularly those in the upper elementary grades—making connections between and among texts, including multimodal texts, is important as they learn to synthesize understandings across a variety of sources. This is where the *Similar Titles* feature in every read-aloud experience comes in handy. This feature includes two additional picture books that you can share to highlight the same learning targets as the featured selection. Then, invite students to find and investigate similarities and differences. In this volume, you'll notice texts marked with a ☆ that are a bit more complex than the main text to extend the learning or use with students in Grades 3–5. If you are looking for another idea-packed resource for incorporating multimodal texts, check out Pam Koutrakos's book *Mentor Texts That Multitask* (2022).

I'd like to emphasize that while this resource is primarily aimed at teachers of Grades preK–5, your colleagues who work with middle and high school readers can also benefit from integrating picture book read alouds into their literacy instruction. Don't hesitate to champion the idea of using read alouds when you talk with teachers across grade levels and during collaborative planning with multilevel teams!

Secret #3: Read the Whole Book—Notice and Share Unique Book Design Elements

Taking the time to notice and share unique book design elements enhances the read-aloud experience by inviting learners to study the intentional decisions the author, illustrator, and book designers make when creating a complete text. This knowledge transfers over to students' writing. Below, you'll find an overview of the parts of a picture book. To guide your whole-book conversations, take note of the information found in the *Notice the Cover Illustration* section of each read-aloud experience. There, I point out design features to share with your readers.



Read the Whole Book

Source: Walther (2021)

Notice and Share Unique Design Elements

Book Part With Definition	What to Notice in These Exemplar Texts
<p>Jacket/Dust Jacket: The paper wrapping around a hard case cover of a hardcover book.</p>	<p><i>This Is a Story</i> (Schu, 2023) <i>All Are Neighbors</i> (Penfold, 2022)</p> <p>Notice: The insides of both of these book jackets are also posters.</p>
<p>Wraparound Cover: A continuous cover illustration that spans across the front and back cover.</p>	<p><i>Beneath</i> (Doerrfeld, 2023)</p> <p>Notice: The wraparound book jacket is different than the wraparound case cover and shows the loss this family has experienced.</p>
<p>Case Cover: The outer wrapping of a hardcover book. Some people call this the undies!</p>	<p><i>I Made These Ants Some Underpants!</i> (Wilder, 2023)</p> <p>Notice: The hilarious case cover!</p>
<p>Title Page: Usually includes the title, creators' names, and publisher's logo.</p>	<p><i>Gibberish</i> (Vo, 2022)</p> <p>Notice: The illustration darkens as Dat and his mom travel to their new home. The same is true for the copyright page.</p>
<p>Copyright Page: Found in the front or back of book and includes the book's identifying information.</p>	<p><i>The Together Tree</i> (Saeed, 2023)</p> <p>Notice: Important details in the illustration. The story begins on the copyright page.</p>
<p>Endpapers: The glued pages at the beginning and end of a hardcover book.</p>	<p><i>Something, Someday</i> (Gorman, 2023) <i>The Welcome Home</i> (Bates, 2023)</p> <p>Notice: The endpapers in both books show the setting before and after the events that transpired in the book.</p>
<p>Back Cover Blurb: A short, persuasive statement about the book.</p>	<p><i>Mysterious, Marvelous Octopus</i> (Towler, 2024)</p> <p>Notice: The rhyming, poetic blurb.</p>
<p>Gutter: The center fold line in the middle of an open book that runs from the top to the bottom where the two pages meet.</p>	<p><i>This Book Just Ate My Dog</i> (Byrne, 2014)</p> <p>Notice: The characters disappear into the gutter.</p>
<p>Backmatter: Supplementary material in the end of the book.</p>	<p><i>I Was: The Stories of Animal Skulls</i> (Hocker, 2024)</p> <p>Notice: The human skull diagram and accompanying text that compares the parts of human and animal skulls.</p>

Secret #4: Model, Explain, and Think Aloud

Recall the T. A. L. K. acronym on page 5. The *T* stands for think aloud. When you pause during a read aloud to model, explain, or verbalize your thought processes, you are demonstrating the metacognitive strategies that your readers can use as they coach themselves (Afflerbach et al., 2008). By showcasing these intentional mental actions, you provide learners with a blueprint of how to strategically approach their own reading. Thinking aloud encourages them to become more aware of the strategic actions they can use when faced with challenging texts or unfamiliar content. As an added bonus, thinking aloud builds a sense of agency and self-regulation. Without a doubt, the act of pausing to model and explain becomes a valuable instructional strategy that extends beyond immediate comprehension, contributing to the development of life-long learning skills. To help you keep this important practice at the top of your mind, there are frequent instances of inner monologue in the comprehension conversations throughout this resource.

Secret #5: Highlight Creators With Varied Voices

I intentionally selected the picture books in this volume to highlight creators with varied voices. We know from the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop the importance of offering self-affirming books to our readers, books where they see their lived experiences reflected as an integral part of the broader human experience. In her words,

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (Bishop, 1990, p. ix)

To take this a step further, look for ways to help readers see and connect with these creators. Throughout the year, display creators' photos and quotes from their books (G. Muhammad, 2020). Update your author and illustrator studies with creators like Anituke, Daniel Bernstrom, Minh Lê, Oge Mora, Kenard Pak, LeUyen Pham, and Christian Robinson. For additional books and ideas for highlighting creators with varied voices, I recommend *Rebellious Read Alouds: Inviting Conversations About Diversity With Children's Books* (Ahiyya, 2022) and *Antiracist Reading Revolution: A Framework for Teaching Beyond Representation to Liberation* (Cherry-Paul, 2024).



Update your author studies and include photos of the creators.

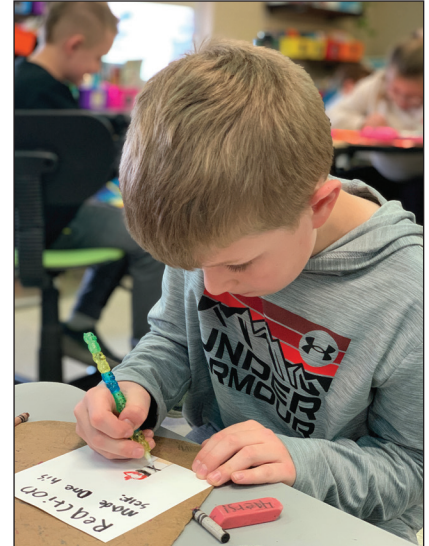
Secret #6: Embrace a Blank Sheet of Paper

Students can do a lot with a blank sheet of paper. When you offer learners a “blank slate” on which to respond to their reading or learning, you are strengthening decision making, inviting innovation, and fostering creativity. Here are ways to extend the read-aloud experience using a blank 6 x 18-inch strip of white construction or drawing paper:

- After enjoying a story, fold the strip in thirds and have children record the beginning, middle, and end.
- After reading a biography, readers can use an unfolded strip to create a timeline of a person’s life.
- After learning from an informational book, fold the strip into fourths and ask students to record the main idea and three key details.

In the *Extend the Experience* section, you will find ideas that use a blank sheet of paper and a few printable templates that feature response ideas. I worked to make the printable templates as open-ended as possible so that your students could easily replicate them using a blank sheet of paper. View each template as one example of what your learners might do rather than the only option.

If you work with upper elementary grade readers, you might occasionally choose to have readers track their thinking *during* a read-aloud experience on a blank sheet of paper in a spiral notebook we call a *Literacy Notebook* (Walther & Biggs-Tucker, 2020). To do this, decide on the standard or big idea you want to target and then pause a few times for students to record their thinking. Like any during-read aloud processing, be mindful to limit the number of times you ask students to stop so you do not interrupt the flow of the book. You'll find a few ideas to get you started below.



Embrace a blank sheet of paper.

Possible During-Read Aloud Literacy Notebook Responses

Standards-Based Big Idea	Literacy Notebook Response Idea
Describe a character using thoughts, words, and actions (works well while reading character-driven, realistic fiction books).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before Reading: Invite students to create a T-chart labeled with the headings: <i>I noticed</i> and <i>I learned this about the character</i>. • During Reading: Pause on a few key pages where the character's thoughts, words, or actions offer insight into the character. • After Reading: Students use read-aloud notes to discuss or create a product that represents the character.
Describe the relationship between a series of historical events (works well while reading biographies).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before Reading: Show learners how to orient their <i>Literacy Notebook</i> landscape and draw a line. • During Reading: Pause so that listeners can record key historical events on their timeline. • After Reading: Use the timeline to converse about the connection among the events and the impact of those events on the subject of the biography.

Now that you've added a few more strategies to your read-aloud toolkit, I'll highlight the features found in Chapters 1–5.

Features You Can Count on From *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud*

I taught with a lively and quick-witted first-grade teacher named Larry who watched the way I worked and would frequently ask, “Why are you always reinventing the wheel?” Reflecting on that question, I realize that planning with colleagues and reimagining instructional possibilities is another one of my favorite nerdy pastimes. With that said, although I reinvented many parts of this new volume, there are a few features of the read-aloud experiences that have worked well for teachers and librarians, so why change them? In this book, I have followed basically the same format as *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud*. (Larry would be so proud of me!)

Standards-Focused Read-Aloud Experiences

Like my other books, the learning targets in this volume are rooted in standards. If you’ve spent as much time studying standards as I have, a quick glance at the learning targets provided in the *Read-Aloud Experiences At-A-Glance Charts* that appear at the beginning of each chapter will confirm that ELA Standards were on a screen in front of me as I crafted each read-aloud experience.

Providing one alignment document that reflects standards in all 50 states and Canada is challenging due to the slight variations. Therefore, instead, you’ll find a complete *Learning Target Chart* located on the companion website that includes all of the featured book titles, standards-aligned learning targets, key vocabulary words, similar book titles, and any pertinent resource links. Use this chart to guide your planning and selection of read-aloud experiences to match your specific standards and curriculum. (Visit the companion website at resources.corwin.com/more-rampedup-readalouds.)

Predictable Lesson Format

As you can see from the infographic on pages 34–35, each read-aloud experience follows the same, predictable format that appears in both *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* and *Shake Up Shared Reading*. This easy-to-follow format has proven helpful for classroom teachers, literacy coaches, librarians, and even substitute teachers.

Robust Comprehension Conversations

In the review of the research earlier in this chapter, we learned the significance of a thoughtfully planned and interactive comprehension conversation. This effective teaching strategy creates a dynamic learning environment for both you and your students. As children actively participate in growing comprehension together, you’re nurturing a community and fostering collaboration. To that end, you can expect that comprehension conversations, the heart of the interactive read aloud-experience, are filled with open-ended questions, cues for listeners to co-create knowledge, and follow-up questions aimed at promoting critical thinking. Drawing on the insights I’ve

learned from researching for this volume, I must confess I may have slightly reinvented the collaborative conversations to make sure they are even better than last time!

What's New in *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds*?

One of the most frustrating aspects of writing a professional book is that as soon as it's published, you can think of a handful of ways you would like to revise it. In writing this volume, I've done my best to improve upon the content in *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* in a few, specific ways. I hope you find these upgrades valuable as you read aloud in the company of children!

Recently Published Picture Books

I've always challenged myself to include an updated selection of picture books in every professional resource I've written. To that end, the 50 featured texts and most of the similar titles are different than those found in either *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* or *Shake Up Shared Reading*. This gives you the flexibility, if you have my other books, to mix and match for a grand total of 201 read-aloud experiences to best meet the needs of your learners and your literacy curriculum. If you don't have the other resources, you are holding a book with teaching ideas for 50 of the best picture books I could find at this moment in time.

Timely Topics

Instead of focusing on the community-building concepts that we typically highlight during the first months of school like those found in *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud*, Chapter 1 is aimed at promoting ongoing conversations to maintain a happy and caring learning environment all year long.

And now that you know the importance of building content knowledge, you'll be excited to learn that this volume includes a chapter on integrating read-aloud experiences into science, technology, engineering, art, and math or STEAM learning with an eye toward standards-based science, engineering, and math practices. The books in Chapter 4 introduce readers to the thinking practices of scientists, engineers, artists, and mathematicians.

Ideas for Upper Elementary Grade Readers

I've met many teachers who learn alongside students in Grades 3–5 and have successfully enhanced the ideas in *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* to meet the needs of their learners. As we discussed these modifications, we came to the conclusion that the comprehension conversation that occurs before, during, and after the read aloud typically works as it is written. It is the ideas in the *Extend the Experience* section that are easily adjusted to match the expectations for upper elementary grade learners. I also know the reality of your busy teaching day, so I've helped you out in this volume by including an additional, innovative *Upper Elementary Extend the Experience* ideas for each of the 50 featured titles.



Read-Aloud Experiences at a Glance

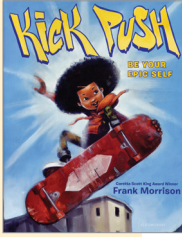
Read-Aloud Experience Title:

To assist you in intentionally selecting picture books for your read-aloud experiences, I've categorized each read-aloud title by strategy and learning target. A complete list of titles and learning targets appears in the Learning Target Chart found on the companion website (resources.corwin.com/more-rampedup-readalouds). It's nearly impossible to put a well-crafted picture book neatly into one category. My hope is to give you a starting point knowing that you'll let your students and their responses to the books be your guide.

Book Title: The 50 titles featured in this resource were selected to represent a range of recently published books and spotlight those written and illustrated by people who are from underrepresented and/or marginalized backgrounds.

About the Book: Here I include a teacher-focused summary of any insights I've learned about the author, illustrator, or behind-the-scenes tidbits about the creation or design of the book.

Learning Targets: This section will help you zero in on what you are aiming for students to be able to know and do as a result of the experience.




Let Your Talents Shine

Book Title: *Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self* (Morrison, 2022)

About the Book: Ivan, nicknamed Epic because of his epic skateboard tricks, moves into a new home. When Epic's tricks aren't grabbing the attention of the kids in the neighborhood, he tries fitting in by playing other sports. After this strategy doesn't go as planned, he takes his parents' advice and skates over to the bodega for a treat. There he finds a new crew and, together, they head out for a skateboarding session.


To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who embrace individuality
- Characters who are passionate about their hobbies



Learning Targets:

- I notice and track the actions and feelings of characters.
- I pay attention to my own actions and feelings.
- I talk, write, or draw about how a person's actions and feelings make them unique.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration:

What is the boy on the cover doing? [skateboarding] Do you see anything in the illustration that makes it seem like he's moving? In the creator's note, Frank Morrison tells us that he painted the illustrations using his "signature style of mannerism" to capture the vibe of skateboarding tricks. When artists use mannerism, they stretch out parts of a person's body or twist them in an exaggerated way to show movement. Mannerism gives the painting energy. See if you notice his style as we enjoy this story.

Set a Purpose: Just like Frank Morrison, we all have a "signature style" because we do just about everything in our own, unique way. As you probably predicted by looking at the cover, in *Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self*, you're going to meet a boy who loves to skateboard. Pay careful attention to how his actions and feelings change over the course of the story. Let's go for a ride!

During Reading

- *Front endpapers:* Take a look at the front endpapers. Can you figure out what is going on? [It looks like someone is moving to a new home.] Let's start reading to see if we can figure out which character is moving.
- *A new day in a new neighborhood page:* Use the clues from the text and illustrations to infer how Epic is feeling at this point in the story. [excited, confident, happy] Share the clues you used with a partner.
- *KICK PUSH PLOP page:* Uh-oh! What's changed? Trade ideas with your *compadres*. The word *compadres* on this page means buddies or friends. How would you feel in this situation?

42 • More Ramped-Up Read Alouds

Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration:

Take a moment to glance at the book cover that appears with each read-aloud experience. In this part, I guide you in previewing the book. This preview might include noticing the artistic and design techniques used on the book jacket and, if applicable, on the case cover (the hard cover underneath the paper book jacket), pondering the connection between front and back cover, discussing the title, and exploring other ideas to build excitement and invite wonder.

Set a Purpose: View the purpose statement like an invitation to your listeners to inquire and investigate something in the book. The purpose statement will align with the learning target(s).

Bracketed Text

The text that appears in brackets includes teaching tips and other insights that are directed at you, the teacher, rather than the students.

During Reading

Because most picture books don't have page numbers, I use the first few words on the top of the left-hand page to point you in the right direction. The questions and prompts are designed to be asked *after* you've completed reading the entire two-page spread. As to not disrupt the flow of your read aloud, I've included only a handful of questions at critical key points. In my opinion, asking too many questions distracts your listeners. It is better to let the author and illustrator magic do the job!

Embrace Individuality

1

- *Bright and cheerful, Epic decided to try fitting in with the neighborhood kids* page: Epic is following his dad's advice and keeping an open mind. Does it look like it's working? Why or why not? What would you tell him to do next?
- *Epic hopped inside the bodega and grabbed his favorite snack* page: How do you think Epic feels when the kids in the bodega say, "Sick moves, bro"?

After Reading

- Share something you learned about Epic by paying attention to his actions and feelings.
- Epic loves skateboarding. Do you have any activities that you enjoy? How do you feel when you're doing them?



Extend the Experience

- As we skated along with Epic, we noticed that his feelings changed at different points in the story. Let's revisit three key events in the story to identify and record Epic's emotions. [Revisit the pages that begin with these sentences to record Epic's emotions:
 - *A new day in a new neighborhood?*
 - *"What's going on, Epic?" Dad wants to know.*
 - *Back home they started a gnarly game of Skate.*]How does tracking a character's actions and feelings help you as a reader?
- Think back to a story you've just read, a movie you've watched, or a recent experience. Design a diagram to track the events and emotions that happened during that story, movie, or personal experience.

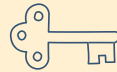
Similar Titles

● **Skater Cielo** (Katstaller, 2022) [Spanish Edition: *Cielo la patinadora*]

About the Book: When Cielo skates, nothing can stop her except a deep pool called *The Whale*. After falling hard while trying to skate *The Whale*, Cielo loses her confidence and stuffs her skateboard into the back of her closet. Then, Cielo meets Mia and Miro, who cheer her on until she overcomes her fear of *The Whale*—one fall at a time.

● **When Langston Dances** (Langley, 2021)

About the Book: Langston likes basketball, but he *loves* to dance. Inspired by a performance of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater he begins practicing until he's ready for his first day of dance school. Encouraged by his mother, he joins the class clad in his basketball gear. The teacher, Ms. Marie, gives him a pair of black ballet slippers, advises him to work hard, and he does!



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- **cheerful:** filled with happy feelings
- **defeated:** feeling like you've lost or haven't been able to do something
- **drenched:** soaking wet



Upper Elementary Extension:

Skateboarding was added as an Olympic sport in 2020. Curious learners can research past and future Olympic skateboarding events and/or athletes and share their findings with the class.


Chapter 1: Maintain a Happy and Caring Learning Community All Year Long • 43

Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly

Definitions: When highlighting vocabulary during a read aloud, it is helpful to provide kid-friendly definitions. In this feature, you will find key words along with a definition to share with your learners.

Extend the Experience: The extension will differ based on where the text and conversation naturally lead. For consistency and to assist you with your planning, they will follow this pattern: the first extension will align with the learning target and purpose statement, and the second extension will vary.

Similar Titles:

I scoured my independent bookstore and public library shelves to find related titles with comparable themes that lead students to similar read-aloud conversations. You might choose to read these titles to reinforce learning targets, compare and contrast with the featured title, or continue the conversation with a small group of students. Titles marked with this icon  are more suitable for upper elementary grade listeners.

Upper Elementary Grade Extension:

This extension is written to you, as the teacher, and offers a suggestion to enrich your upper elementary grade students' book experience. These suggestions are designed to expand learners' content knowledge by inviting them to inquire, write, create, and explore ideas beyond the text.

After Reading

The concluding questions and conversation starters bring the experience full circle by drawing students' attention back to the purpose of the read aloud (other than simply for fun!). Their intention is to prompt students to apply what they've learned from this book to their lives, their learning, or their own writing.

Kid-Friendly Definitions for Key Vocabulary Words

The teaching sequence outlined on page 18 emphasizes the importance of sharing kid-friendly definitions of the key vocabulary words. Studies indicate the importance of presenting children with accessible definitions when teaching individual words (Cobb & Blachowicz, 2014).

However, that is easier said than done. I often find myself stumped to formulate an on-the-spot definition. To assist you in defining the key vocabulary words in this book, I've provided child-friendly definitions comprised of words typically familiar to young children. To enhance the explanation, consider incorporating a relevant example or displaying a corresponding image.

How to Find More Time to Read Aloud

Teachers often ask, "How do I fit read-aloud experiences into my already packed schedule?" Here are a few ideas on how you can *flexibly* use the read-aloud experiences in this resource:

- Split a picture book read-aloud experience into sections like you would a chapter book. Then, read the beginning in the morning, the middle after lunch, and the conclusion at the end of the day. This strategy provides more time for students to converse and also offers an opportunity for listeners to recap what they've learned so far from a nonfiction book or retell the story bit by bit—strengthening working memory.
- Integrate read-aloud experiences into your content-area instruction. Supplement your science or social studies materials with a picture book to build or extend students' knowledge about the topic. See the sample first-grade schedule during a science unit on animals. Notice that all of the books focus on animal characters or include animal facts.
- Weave read-aloud experiences into a published reading series. Add picture book read alouds to build background knowledge about the theme, topic, or focus strategy. Extend the learning by sharing similar books to compare and contrast with the publisher's selection.

Reading Aloud Across a First-Grade Day

Schedule	Read-Aloud Experience
Morning Meeting Learning Target: I think of ways to spread kindness.	<i>The Red Jacket</i> (Holt, 2023)
Reading & Social Studies Learning Target: I infer characters' feelings.	<i>How This Book Got Red</i> (Greanias, 2023) [See Bonus Read-Aloud Experience on the companion website (resources.corwin.com/more-rampedup-readalouds)]

Reading Aloud Across a First-Grade Day (Continued)

Schedule	Read-Aloud Experience
Snack Time or After Lunch Learning Target: I like reading funny books about animals!	<i>Lucky Duck</i> (Pizzoli, 2024)
Writing & Science Learning Target: I notice patterns in nonfiction texts while I learn about animal characteristics.	Read aloud <i>one or two pages of Butt or Face?</i> (Lavelle, 2023) [See Read-Aloud Experience on page 184]
End of Day Learning Target: I use clues to guess an animal.	Read aloud <i>one poem from Champion Chompers, Super Stinkers and Other Poems by Extraordinary Animals</i> (Ashman, 2023) [See Read-Aloud Experience on page 202]

Weaving Ramped-Up Read Alouds Into a Publisher’s Reading Program

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Introduce theme and/or strategies using a picture book from <i>More Ramped-Up Read Alouds</i> .	“Shared reading” of story of the week per publisher’s directions.	“Close reading” of story of the week per publisher’s directions.	“Response to reading” with story of the week per publisher’s directions.	Share and compare story of the week with a picture book from <i>More Ramped-Up Read Alouds</i> .

Let the Reading Begin!

With the confidence that comes from knowing exactly why we must redouble our efforts to share high-quality interactive read-aloud experiences with children, it’s time to pull a picture book off the shelf. Savor the illustrations. Study the text. Then, with enthusiasm and intention, let the reading begin!



“Sari-sari means ‘a good variety’—just look around and you’ll see. What help can you give your community?”

—Lolo’s Sari-Sari Store
by Sophia N. Lee and Christine Almeda



Maintain a Happy and Caring Learning Community All Year Long

Read Beyond the Pages

Picture books expand learners' horizons and extend the boundaries of your teaching space. During the interactive read-aloud experiences in this chapter, listeners will meet children, caregivers, and a few creatures. Guided by your questions and prompts, students step into the lives of these characters, fostering social awareness and comprehension. The narrative-focused conversations help children appreciate the viewpoints, thoughts, and emotions of others—developing their theory of mind. As learners explore characters' mindsets, they have opportunities to reflect on their own perspectives, fostering a deeper awareness of themselves and their peers. The learning events in Chapter 1 will not only enhance your students' literacy development, but they will also help to support a community where empathy, resilience, and kindness flourish as you introduce readers to characters who do the following:

- Embrace individuality
- Reach for goals
- Face challenges
- Nurture relationships
- Spread joy and kindness

Together, let's cultivate a vibrant learning environment where thought-provoking stories nurture a deep sense of connection and understanding. As educators, you play a pivotal role in steering students beyond the books as they create spaces where every individual is seen, heard, and valued.

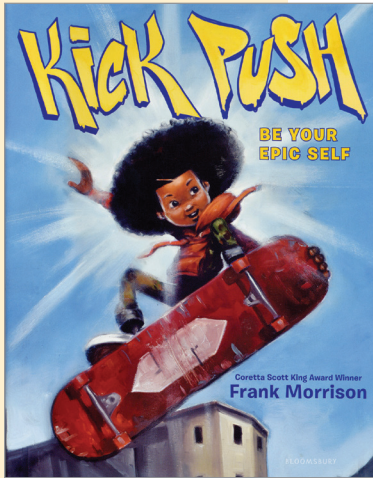


Scan here to find a complete learning target chart with book-related online links, a bonus read-aloud experience, and printable resources.

<https://qrs.ly/h5fv5pt>

To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

Big Idea: Featured Title	Learning Targets
Let Your Talents Shine: <i>Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self</i> (Morrison, 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice and track the actions and feelings of book characters.• I pay attention to my own actions and feelings.• I talk, write, or draw about how a person's actions and feelings make them unique.
Make Space for Yourself: <i>BIG</i> (Harrison, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice and track the words, actions, and feelings of characters.• I pay attention to my own words, actions, and feelings.• I talk, write, or draw about how words and actions impact my feelings and the feelings of others.
Celebrate Strengths: <i>Spanish Is the Language of My Family</i> (Genhart, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think about the actions characters take to reach their goals.• I set my own goals.
Persist: <i>The Perfect Plan</i> (Gilbert, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I predict the actions characters take to reach their goals.• I ponder whether a story is real or make-believe.• I set my own goals.
Be Confident: <i>Daddy Dressed Me</i> (M. Gardner & Gardner, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I use details to describe characters and events.• I notice how characters react to events and challenges.
Be Optimistic: <i>The Bright Side</i> (Otis, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I use details to describe characters' traits.• I explain how characters react to events and challenges.• I connect characters' actions to their traits.
Reach Out: <i>The Together Tree</i> (Saeed, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice how characters' words and actions affect people around them.• I think about how my words and actions affect people around me.• I look for ways to reach out to people.
Compromise: <i>The Only Astronaut</i> (Jain, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice how characters' words and actions impact people around them.• I think about how my words and actions impact people around me.• I look for ways to compromise.
Show Appreciation: <i>Stickler Loves the World</i> (L. Smith, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice how characters' mindsets and actions impact people around them.• I think about how my mindset and actions impact people around me.• I look for ways to spread joy.
Share and Care: <i>All Kinds of Special</i> (Sauer, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice how characters' mindsets and actions affect people around them.• I think about how my mindset and actions affect people around me.• I look for ways to spread kindness.
Bonus Lesson (online) Share and Care: <i>The Last Stand</i> (Eady, 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I notice how characters' mindsets and actions affect people around them.• I think about how my mindset and actions affect people around me.• I look for ways to spread kindness.



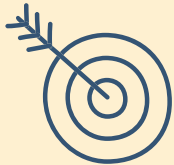
Let Your Talents Shine

Book Title: *Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self* (Morrison, 2022)

About the Book: Ivan, nicknamed Epic because of his epic skateboard tricks, moves into a new home. When Epic's tricks aren't grabbing the attention of the kids in the neighborhood, he tries fitting in by playing other sports. After this strategy doesn't go as planned, he takes his parents' advice and skates over to the bodega for a treat. There he finds a new crew and, together, they head out for a skateboarding session.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who embrace individuality
- Characters who are passionate about their hobbies



Learning Targets:

- I notice and track the actions and feelings of characters.
- I pay attention to my own actions and feelings.
- I talk, write, or draw about how a person's actions and feelings make them unique.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration:

What is the boy on the cover doing? [skateboarding] Do you see anything in the illustration that makes it seem like he's moving? In the creator's note, Frank Morrison tells us that he painted the illustrations using his "signature style of mannerism" to capture the vibe of skateboarding tricks. When artists use mannerism, they stretch out parts of a person's body or twist them in an exaggerated way to show movement. Mannerism gives the painting energy. See if you notice his style as we enjoy this story.

Set a Purpose: Just like Frank Morrison, we all have a "signature style" because we do just about everything in our own, unique way. As you probably predicted by looking at the cover, in *Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self*, you're going to meet a boy who loves to skateboard. Pay careful attention to how his actions and feelings change over the course of the story. Let's go for a ride!

During Reading

- *Front endpapers:* Take a look at the front endpapers. Can you figure out what is going on? [It looks like someone is moving to a new home.] Let's start reading to see if we can figure out which character is moving.
- *A new day in a new neighborhood* page: Use the clues from the text and illustrations to infer how Epic is feeling at this point in the story. [excited, confident, happy] Share the clues you used with a partner.
- *KICK PUSH PLOP* page: Uh-oh! What's changed? Trade ideas with your *compadres*. The word *compadres* on this page means buddies or friends. How would you feel in this situation?

- *Bright and cheerful*, Epic decided to try fitting in with the neighborhood kids page: Epic is following his dad's advice and keeping an open mind. Does it look like it's working? Why or why not? What would you tell him to do next?
- *Epic hopped inside the bodega and grabbed his favorite snack* page: How do you think Epic feels when the kids in the bodega say, "Sick moves, bro"?

After Reading

- Share something you learned about Epic by paying attention to his actions and feelings.
- Epic loves skateboarding. Do you have any activities that you enjoy? How do you feel when you're doing them?



Extend the Experience

- As we skated along with Epic, we noticed that his feelings changed at different points in the story. Let's revisit three key events in the story to identify and record Epic's emotions. [Revisit the pages that begin with these sentences to record Epic's emotions:

- *A new day in a new neighborhood?*
- *"What's going on, Epic?" Dad wants to know.*
- *Back home they started a gnarly game of Skate.*

How does tracking a character's actions and feelings help you as a reader?

- Think back to a story you've just read, a movie you've watched, or a recent experience. Design a diagram to track the events and emotions that happened during that story, movie, or personal experience.

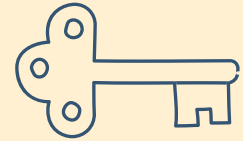
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About the Book: Langston likes basketball, but he *loves* to dance. Inspired by a performance of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater he begins practicing until he's ready for his first day of dance school. Encouraged by his mother, he joins the class clad in his basketball gear. The teacher, Ms. Marie, gives him a pair of black ballet slippers, advises him to work hard, and he does!



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- cheerful: filled with happy feelings
- defeated: feeling like you've lost or haven't been able to do something
- drenched: soaking wet



Upper Elementary Extension:

Skateboarding was added as an Olympic sport in 2020. Curious learners can research past and future Olympic skateboarding events and/or athletes and share their findings with the class.

joyful
groovy
cool
excited

Epic is off to find a new crew.

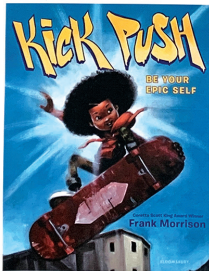
frustrated
disappointed
forlorn
upset

Epic hasn't found new friends.

joyful
groovy
cool
excited

Epic finds a new crew.

Track Epic's Feelings



This helps me as a reader to...

- pay attention
- make connections
- remember important events

Track Character's Feelings Chart

Feelings when I go down the huge water slide

SPLASH

abhh

finely

happy relieved wanted to go again

at the bottom of slide

because going down the water slide

excited happy

yay

wooh

because at the top of water slide yay

ok a little overwhelmed

getting closer to the top

Scared a-fraid

nervous afraid

splash

☆

☆

☆

Tracking Actions and Feelings About a Personal Experience Work Sample



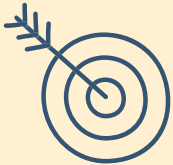
Make Space for Yourself

Book Title: *BIG* (Harrison, 2023)

About the Book: What does it mean when we say to a toddler, “What a big girl you are!”? How does the meaning of the word *big* change as girls grow older? Vashti Harrison explores these questions through the eyes of a child who finds enough strength and self-love to stand up for herself. *BIG* was the 2024 winner of the Caldecott Medal and a Coretta Scott King Award Author and Illustrator Honor book.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who embrace individuality
- Themes of self-acceptance



Learning Targets:

- I notice and track the words, actions, and feelings of characters.
- I pay attention to my own words, actions, and feelings.
- I talk, write, or draw about how words and actions impact my feelings and the feelings of others.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- What stands out when you first look at this book cover? [Discuss why they think Vashti Harrison made the title *BIG* stand out.] Vashti Harrison created the illustrations using digital tools and chalk pastel. Notice the colors she chose to use in her pictures.
- Let’s peek at the back cover. Tell a friend something you learned about the girl. [She likes ballet.] [If you are able to reveal the case cover under the book jacket, discuss the words that appear there. Also, notice the phrase “I Love You” hidden among the scribbles on the endpapers.]

Set a Purpose: The title of this book, *BIG*, is a word that we use a lot like when we say things like, “It’s no big deal!” or “Today’s your big day!” Words can have different shades of meaning or make us feel differently depending on the situation. Keep that in mind as we read this story together.

During Reading

- *She learned her ABCs and 123s* page: Look at the girl’s face. Can you infer how she’s feeling? When the adults say, “What a big girl you are!” what do you think they mean?
- *until it wasn’t* page: Tell a friend about what you see happening on these two pages. How is the meaning of the word *big* changing?
- *The words stung and were hard to shake off* page: How does this page make you feel? Explain what you’ve learned so far about the power of words.

- *and started to see things more clearly* page: Notice the words in her sea of tears. Which word is she picking up? Can you figure out what the author means by “she started to see things more clearly”?
- *These are yours* page: Why do you think she’s giving some words back and keeping others? What has she discovered about herself?

After Reading

- What did you learn about the shades of meaning of the words we say to one another? How might you use what you learned when talking to your friends or to family members/caregivers?
- Did you notice that the girl didn’t have a name? Why do you suppose Vashti Harrison chose not to name her?



Extend the Experience

- In the end, the girl makes space for herself and chooses adjectives like “smart, funny, and kind” to describe herself. Make a list of adjectives that you would use to describe yourself. Draw a self-portrait and write those adjectives around your picture. [If needed, co-create an Alphabet of Adjectives Chart to support your writers.]
- If you hear someone using words in a hurtful way, what can you do?

Similar Titles



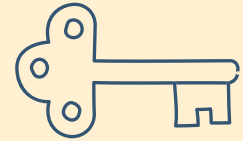
***Baller Ina* (Casal, 2023)**

About the Book: Liz Casal’s debut picture book features Ina, who loves basketball as much as she enjoys ballet. The rhyming text follows Ina from the ballet studio to the basketball court, where she encounters a player who questions her skills. Ina confidently replies, “Wait until you see me fly.”



***Wallflowers* (Joy, 2023)**

About the Book: Written for all children who prefer to quietly watch and listen but still want to be seen, heard, and celebrated.



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- **advice:** ideas someone shares to help you solve problems
- **exposed:** feeling like everyone can see you without any protection
- **judged:** when people have opinions about you and/or your actions



Upper-Elementary Extension:

The word *big* took on nuanced meanings. Extend the idea of nuanced meanings by exploring words with multiple meanings. Have pairs of students illustrate the multiple meanings of words using the *Multiple Meaning Word Cards Printable*. [Located on the companion website (resources.corwin.com/more-rampedup-readalouds),]

An Alphabet of Adjectives			
A athletic awesome artful amazing	B umpy bright brave beautiful	C olorful creative clever charming	D azzling delicious depen dable delightful
E nergetic easygoing enthusiastic enchancing	F est Funny fluffy friendly fantastic	G igantic grateful greasy grateful generous	H ard, happy high humorous helpful
I nteresting Inventive intense incredible	J umpy jolly juicy joyful	K ind hearted knowledgeable kooky kind	L oud lucky lovely loving
M essy magical merry	N ice Neat noisy	O utstanding outgoing original	P atient Playful polite
Q uirky quiet quick quaint	R ough respectful reliable responsible	S mart slimy soft sweet	T alented tall talented thoughtful
U nusual useful ultimate unbelievable	V aliant valuable vast versatile	W itty warmhearted wondering wonderful	XYZ young Yummy youthful zippy

Alphabet of Adjectives Chart

Multiple Meaning Words

Teacher Directions: Print word cards. Give one card to each pair of students. Invite them to work together to draw the different meanings of the word.

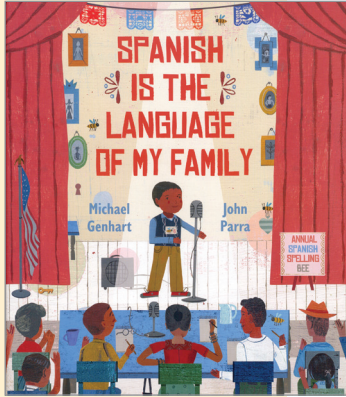
bark

bat

bowl

rock

Multiple Meaning Word Cards Printable



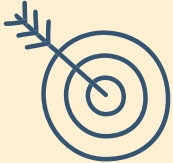
Celebrate Strengths

Book Title: *Spanish Is the Language of My Family* (Genhart, 2023)
[Spanish Edition: *El español es la lengua de mi familia*]

About the Book: Manolo is the first to sign up for the Spanish Spelling Bee because Spanish is the language of his family. As his abuela helps him prepare, she shares stories from her childhood, when speaking Spanish was not allowed. After hearing the punishments that Abuela, her family members, and friends endured, Manolo is even more determined to win the spelling bee. In addition to the Spanish alphabet, backmatter includes an author's note and information about the National Spanish Spelling Bee, the prohibition of speaking Spanish in public schools, and Children's Day/Book Day on April 30.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who set goals
- Books that promote a love of words



Learning Targets:

- I think about the actions characters take to reach their goals.
- I set my own goals.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

Who is under the spotlight? [a boy] Why do you suppose John Parra is highlighting this boy? [Perhaps he's the main character.] Use the details in John Parra's illustrations to infer what this boy might be doing.

Set a Purpose: The details in the cover illustration helped you predict that the boy is going to be in a *spelling bee*. A spelling bee is a competition in which the person who is able to spell the most words correctly wins. Let's R-E-A-D to hear about what the boy does and learns to get ready for the spelling bee.

During Reading

- *I don't know how to spell some words yet* page: What is Manolo's goal? Has he done anything to try and achieve his goal?
- *I work even harder* page: Why do you suppose he is working even harder now? [Because of the sad stories his abuela told him.] Tell us an adjective you would use to describe Manolo. [determined, hardworking, motivated, confident]
- *But studying all these words is hard* page: Have you ever felt frustrated or tired when you were trying to do or learn something? What could you do to cheer someone up who's experiencing these emotions? Swap ideas with a neighbor.
- *My first word is poderoso* page: The boy tells you exactly how he's feeling on this page. Let's reread to find the words he uses. [powerful, proud, strong] Why do you think his mood has changed at this point in the story?

After Reading

- How would you describe Manolo's mood when he achieved his goal?
- Predict what Manolo's next goal might be.



Extend the Experience

- Manolo had a goal and took action steps to reach his goal. Take a moment to think of a goal you have for yourself at school or at home. Write down that goal and the three things you will do to reach that goal on the *Goal Setting Printable*. [Located on the companion website (resources.corwin.com/more-ramped-up-readalouds).]
- Go back through the text and find three words you want to learn how to spell in both English and Spanish. Practice the words with a friend.

Similar Titles

- ***Planting Stories: The Life of the Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré* (Denise, 2019)**
[Spanish Edition: *Sembrando historias: Pura Belpré: bibliotecaria y narradora de cuentos*]

About the Book: In the 1920s, Pura Belpré shared her abuela’s stories from Puerto Rico with the children who gathered at her feet in the New York Public Library. Pura sets her sights on publishing these stories and as she works toward this goal, she continues to plant story seeds across the country—seeds that change many young readers’ lives.

- ***Words of Wonder from Z to A* (Avant-Garde, 2023)**

About the Book: In 2021, 14-year-old Zaila (Zl-eela) Avant-Garde became the first Black American to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee. In this reverse alphabet book, Zaila’s passion for words and her positive, can-do attitude radiate off the colorful pages. The book begins with her first name and ends with her last name. In between, she highlights inspiring words like *resilience*, *optimism*, and *joy*. Each page features a quote about the word from a noteworthy individual. The backmatter includes the origins of all 26 words.

Name _____

My Goal: _____

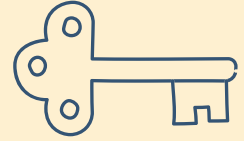
Steps Toward Reaching My Goal:

1 → _____

2 → _____

3 → _____

Goal Setting Printable



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- frustrated: feeling upset or angry when something is challenging
- shame: feeling like you did something wrong or bad
- triumphant: feeling happy and proud that you did or won something



Upper Elementary Extension:

In the backmatter, there is a note about Children’s Day/Book Day on April 30. Invite interested students to plan and prepare a celebration of book joy. Find more information here:



Children’s Day/Book Day Information
<https://qrs.ly/1vfn8p2>



Learning Targets:

- I predict the actions characters take to reach their goals.
- I ponder whether a story is real or make-believe.
- I set my own goals.

Persist

Book Title: *The Perfect Plan* (Gilbert, 2021)

About the Book: In order to make her dream of building the perfect tree fort come true, Maya researches, designs, plans, and gathers her supplies. Unfortunately, it proves a bit more challenging than she thought. Not willing to give up on her dream, Maya enlists the help of the forest animals and, together, they construct a treehouse that exceeds her imagination.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who set goals
- Characters who get help and persist



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- Use the details in the cover illustration to help you predict what she is planning. Show a friend the details that helped you make that prediction.
- Front Endpapers: What do you think she's doing? [Looking at animal's homes.] How might that help her carry out her perfect plan?

Set a Purpose: Do you predict this story will be real or make-believe? Will her perfect plan work? There is only one way to find out the answers to these questions—let's read!

During Reading

- *Maya dreamed of having a fort* page: What is Maya's dream? [Having an incredible and wonderful tree fort.] Another word for a dream is a goal. Predict what Maya will have to do to build a tree fort.
- *But Maya wasn't ready to give up yet* page: Hmmm! What did Maya do to help her reach her goal? [Asked the beavers to help.] Could this happen in real life? Talk with a buddy.
- *Maya and her team hurried over to the moose* page: Look in the picture: The moose *lugged* the heavy branches. I lug my heavy backpack to school every day. Lugged is when you've pulled, lifted, or carried something heavy. Tell your neighbor something you've lugged around. Start with, "I've lugged around my ____." Say the word that means to have pulled, lifted, or carried something heavy. [lugged]
- *Maya and the animals studied the fort they had built together* page: Explain what keeps happening to Maya's plan. [Something goes wrong.] Does Maya give up? Predict what she's going to do now that it's raining.

After Reading

- Retell the steps Maya took to reach her goal of making a dream tree fort.
- Do you think this story is real or make-believe? Explain your reasons.

**Extend the Experience**

- Maya doesn't give up when trying to reach her goal. She's resourceful and figures out smart strategies. Let's look back over the story and jot down her strategies.
- Throughout the story, Maya enthusiastically describes her tree fort. Help me find the adjectives she chooses and record them on a chart. You can refer to this chart when you're looking for words to paint a clearer picture in the stories you're writing.

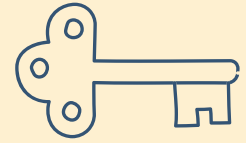
Similar Titles

Jabari Tries (Cornwall, 2020) [Spanish Edition: Jabari trata]

About the Book: After overcoming his fears in *Jabari Jumps* (Cornwall, 2017), Jabari sets out to design a flying machine. His sister Nika wants to help. When Jabari resists, his dad steps in and encourages him to view his sister as his inventing partner. After a few attempts, a bit of frustration, and some wise advice from their dad, Jabari and Nika find success. [Find book experiences for *Jabari Tries* in *Shake Up Shared Reading* (Walther, 2022) and for *Jabari Jumps* in *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud* (Walther, 2019).]

Sal Boat: A Boat by Sal (Heder, 2022)

About the Book: Sal loves the water and decides to build himself a boat. He scours the seaside town for found materials and soon everyone has words of advice—sometimes too much! Determined to prove himself a worthy boat builder, he refuses to accept help until a girl asks, “So how are you going to launch it?” Then, Sal learns the value of teamwork and community.

**Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:**

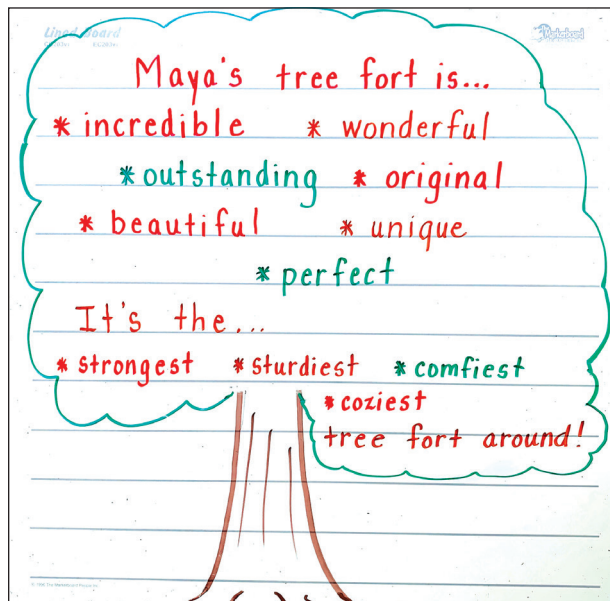
- eagerly: feeling happy or excited about something you want to do or get
- gasped: breathed in quickly because you were surprised
- heaved: lifted up

**Upper Elementary Extension:**

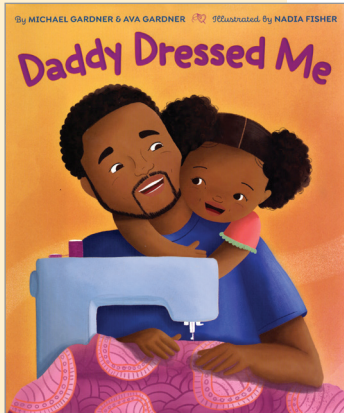
Have students draw a design for their dream fort either by hand or using a 3D design program.



Goal-Reaching Strategies Chart



The Perfect Plan Adjective Chart



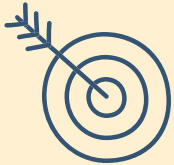
Be Confident

Book Title: *Daddy Dressed Me* (M. Gardner & Gardner, 2023)

About the Book: Ava’s dad is creative. He cooks, he builds, he decorates, but the thing he enjoys the most is sewing special outfits for Ava. At school, Ava finds out they will be celebrating “Move Up Day” by reciting a poem. Although she is excited about advancing to first grade, she’s also apprehensive about missing her favorite kindergarten activities and “extra worried” about reciting a poem on stage. Daddy eases her fears by making her a special dress and helping her practice her poem. As he stitches and she rehearses, Ava gains confidence and performs her poem with pride.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters or situations that are relatable to children
- Characters who face and overcome challenges



Learning Targets:

- I use details to describe characters and events.
- I notice how characters react to events and challenges.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

Think about the title *Daddy Dressed Me* and look at the picture. How do you think these characters are related? [dad and daughter] Now, let’s search the back cover for more clues. Here’s a photograph of Michael and Ava Gardner—they are *coauthors* of this story. That means they wrote it together. Do you notice anything about their outfits? [they match]

Set a Purpose: Even before we started reading, we used clues from the cover illustration and photograph to learn a little more about the characters. Readers pay attention to details to get to know the characters in a book. Let’s continue to be detail detectives as we enjoy *Daddy Dressed Me*.

During Reading

- *But, most of all, Daddy was best at sewing* page: What have you learned about Ava’s daddy so far? Do you know any grown-ups who like to sew?
- *Ava’s heart went thump, thump, thump* page: Ava is having mixed feelings about Move Up Day. Tell a neighbor one of Ava’s emotions. Ask them to tell you another. Can you think of a time when you weren’t sure how you were feeling and felt mixed up, like Ava?
- *Daddy held Ava close* page: Ava’s daddy *assured* her that he would help her practice. That means he wanted her to know that she could feel safe and confident that he would truly help her. What else did he offer to do? [make her a special dress] How did Ava react to that?

- *Back home Ava drew a picture of her dream dress* page: Turn and tell a neighbor how Daddy is thinking and explain the clues you used to figure it out. Why is it important to pay attention to characters' thoughts and moods?

After Reading

- What did Ava do when faced with the challenge of reciting a poem at Move Up Day? [practiced, worked hard, learned from her mistakes]
- What did Daddy do when faced with the task of making a complicated dress? [worked hard, learned from his mistakes]



Extend the Experience

- We all face difficult situations. Let's add to the strategies we learned from Ava and her dad. What else could you do when faced with a challenge?
- In this story, Ava's dad made her a dress to help her feel more confident and face the challenge of reciting a poem on stage. Design a piece of clothing that solves a problem. [If possible, display a few examples—I showed my zip-off hiking pants and a hat with an opening for a pony tail.] Begin by sketching your design on a whiteboard or piece of paper. Then, use construction paper or other materials to create your design.

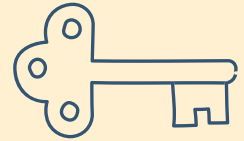
Similar Titles

Sydney's Big Speech (Newsome, 2024)

About the Book: *Sydney's Big Speech* is a celebration of self-discovery, empowerment, and the transformative power of words. It's the first day of school, and a shy girl named Sydney is unable to work up the courage to share anything about herself. When she hears that she has to give a speech, she's overwhelmed by fear that "the words won't come out." Sydney confides in her wise and supportive dad, who introduces her to the inspiring speeches of groundbreaking Black women: Kamala Harris, Condoleezza Rice, Carol Moseley Braun, and Shirley Chisholm. Through these videos, Sydney learns the impact of using wise, energetic, and powerful words.

Walter Finds His Voice: The Story of a Shy Crocodile (Ha, 2023)

About the Book: Shy Walter floats just below the surface of the swamp. When he's nervous to sing with his friends or startled by their birthday surprise, Walter submerges himself. This changes when the heron twins decide to play catch with Walter's pal Turtle. Seeing Turtle in trouble prompts Walter to intervene and gives him newfound confidence.



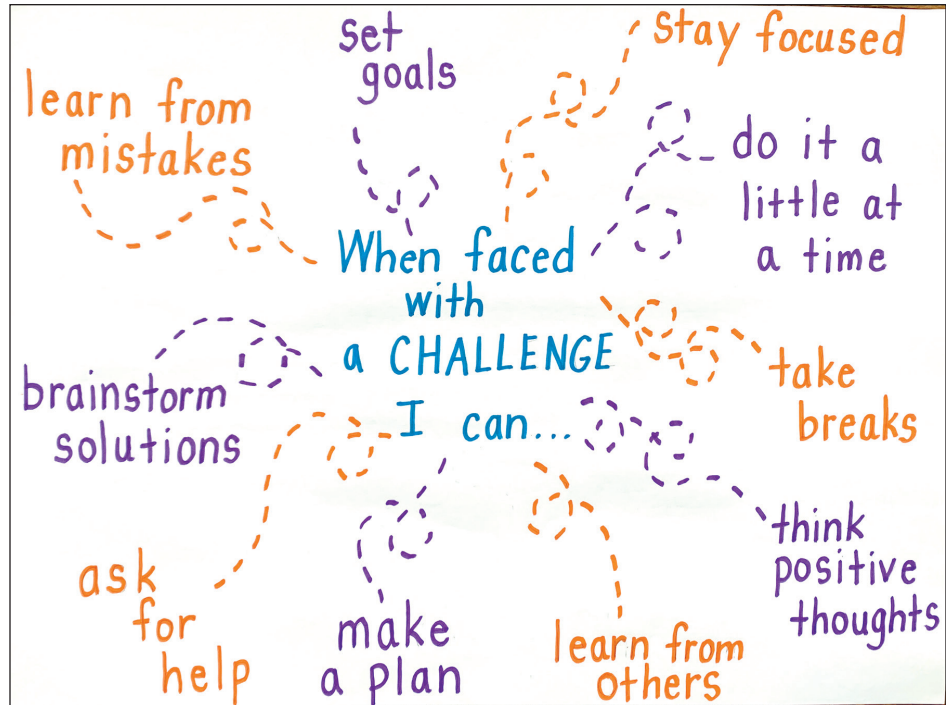
Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- **complicated:** needs more time or effort to do or understand; not simple
- **confident:** feeling sure and happy about yourself
- **invincible:** so strong that nothing can hurt you or make you feel bad

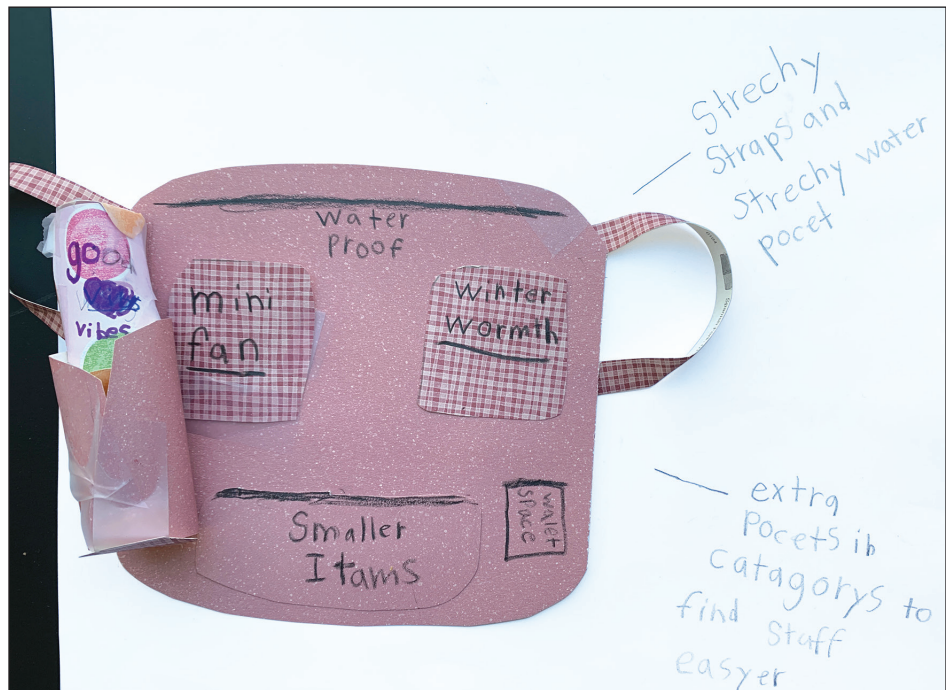


Upper Elementary Extension:

Provide students with the opportunity to practice and recite their favorite poems individually, in pairs, or in small groups.



Strategies for Facing Challenges Chart



Clothing Design Work Sample



Learning Targets:

- I use details to describe characters' traits.
- I explain how characters react to events and challenges.
- I connect characters' actions to their traits.

Be Optimistic

Book Title: *The Bright Side* (Otis, 2023)

About the Book: Based on the author's personal experience, a boy tells the story of leaving his house and living on a school bus. While on the bus, he is home-schooled. His family helps him think flexibly, use his imagination, and persist to overcome challenges. When he finally goes to school, he has a difficult time adjusting until his class is faced with an unexpected problem. Using his positive mindset and the skills he's learned from his prior experiences, he shows his teachers and classmates how to look at the bright side.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who face and overcome challenges
- Themes of positivity and persistence



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

Compare the school bus on the wraparound cover to a school bus you've seen or ridden on before. What is the same? Are there any differences? [Notice the household items that appear in the bus.] Along with the title, *The Bright Side*, the cover reads, "When your home is an old bus, optimism is your superpower!" When someone has *optimism* or is *optimistic*, they believe or hope that good things will happen. Why do you suppose the title of this book is *The Bright Side*?

Set a Purpose: In stories, the things that happen are called events. Like people, characters react differently to events. When you pay attention to a character's reactions, it helps you to get to know that character. Let's open the book and meet the main character of *The Bright Side*.

During Reading

- *It was hard saying goodbye to my friends* page: Notice the boy's reaction to leaving his friends. If you were in the boy's shoes, would you be able to look on the bright side?
- *You do something you didn't know you could do* page: What has the boy learned so far? If you had to describe him to a friend, what would you say? Take turns using the sentence stem, "The boy is _____." Do you notice anything different about the illustrations? [Colorful designs appear when he's looking on the bright side.]
- *I'm excited to finally make some new friends* page: Describe his reaction to going to "a real school."
- *I start to worry that none of these kids will want to be my friend* page: Combine clues from the words and illustrations to infer how he's feeling here. Share your inference and clues with a friend; ask them to share theirs.

- *If we look on the bright side* page: Notice what’s happening on this page. [They’re making pizza toast and doing a shadow puppet show.] Where did he get these ideas? [From the time he spent living on the school bus.]

After Reading

- What did you learn about the boy from noticing how he reacted to the events in the story?
- On the back flap there is a picture of Chad Otis and his family. It says, “Chad Otis lived on a school bus for about four years and didn’t go to school with other kids until the third grade!” Talk about that with a classmate.



Extend the Experience

- Select a memorable event from the story. On one side of a blank piece of paper write and/or draw the event. Then, flip the paper over and show how the boy reacted to that event. Think about what you learned about the boy’s character traits from his reaction.
- It’s healthy for your brain to be optimistic or look for the bright side. Let’s help each other remember to think positive thoughts when disappointing or unexpected things happen.

Similar Titles

● *Saturday* (Mora, 2019) [Spanish Edition: *Sábado*]

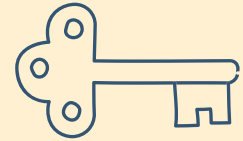
About the Book: Every Saturday, Ava and her mother spend the day together. They go to story time at the library, get new hairdos, picnic on the grass, and do something else special. This Saturday, they are planning to see a one-night-only puppet show. Even though everything that could go wrong does, Ava’s mom reassures her that it will still be a splendid day. When her mom realizes that she’s left the puppet show tickets at home, it’s Ava who reminds her mom that the most important thing about Saturdays is that they spend them together. Scan the QR code for a bonus read-aloud experience for *Saturday*.



Bonus Read-Aloud Experience for *Saturday*
<https://qrs.ly/hhfn8p6>

● *Yenebi’s Drive to School* (Santamaria, 2023) [Spanish Edition: *El viaje de Yenebi a la escuela*]

About the Book: Up at four o’clock in the morning, Yenebi wakes her little sister Melanie for their drive to school with Mami—a drive that includes waiting in what Yenebi describes as her “archenemy . . . La Línea.” The line is packed with lanes of cars waiting to cross the border into the United States. During their multihour wait, they see vendors selling their wares and carts rolling by with mouth-watering food. The trio enjoys their breakfast together and soon the vendors are replaced by border agents as they inch forward for their turn. Passing through customs, it’s now seven o’clock and they’re on schedule to make it to school on time. In the author’s note, Sendy shares a bit about her lived experience as a Mexican American living in a border city.



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- **antsy:** not able to relax, sit still, or stay quiet
- **jumbled:** mixed up or confused

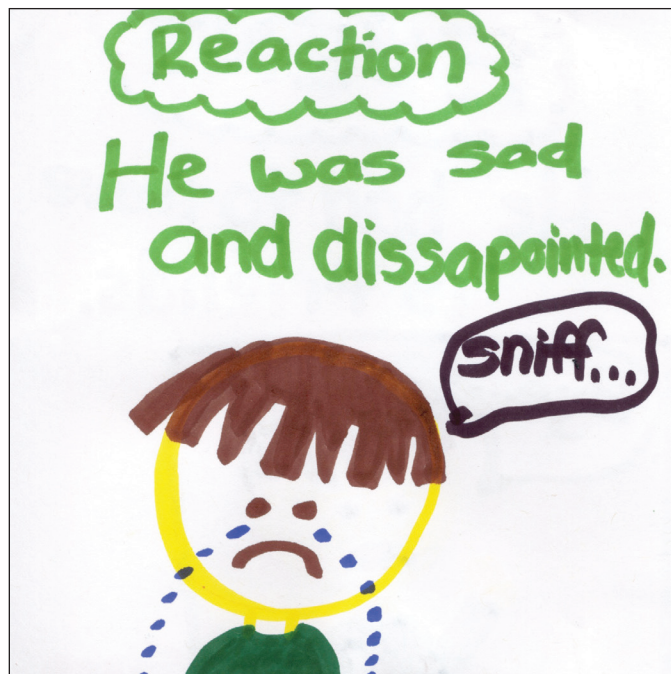


Upper Elementary Extension:

Initiate a micro-inquiry project to discover unique kinds of houses. Give students 15–20 minutes to locate a photo and write a fun fact or two about the most unique dwelling they can find. Post their findings and do a gallery walk to see them all.

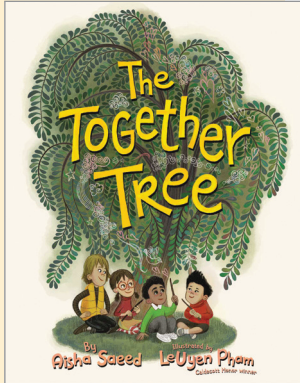


Wacky House Article
<https://qrs.ly/22fn8p5>



Event and Reaction Work Sample

My Favorite Read Alouds for Facing Challenges



Learning Targets:

- I notice how characters' words and actions affect people around them.
- I think about how my words and actions affect people around me.
- I look for ways to reach out to people.

Reach Out

Book Title: *The Together Tree* (Saeed, 2023)

About the Book: It's springtime when Rumi joins his new class. During recess, Rumi sits under a shady old willow tree twirling a stick while the other kids play. Later, Asher and Ella make fun of Rumi's colorful, decorated shoes, but Han doesn't say anything. When Asher's bullying escalates to pebble throwing, Han reaches out and asks Rumi to play. Han notices that Rumi has created beautiful drawings in the dirt under the tree. Eventually, after a written apology from Asher, all of the kids play together under the tree.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who navigate relationships at school
- Stories that highlight relationship building



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

Looking at the cover of a book gives you a sneak peek and little clues about the story inside. In this book, LeUyen Pham combined different art tools and techniques to make her illustrations unique and interesting. This type of art is called *mixed media*. Tell a neighbor something you noticed on the cover of *The Together Tree*. Share any predictions you have after studying the cover.

Set a Purpose: It looks like these four friends are having a nice time underneath the tree. Let's read to find out more about them and see if we learn any lessons about being together.

During Reading

- **Title page:** Look at this page carefully. Share something you notice. [The boy with the green shirt is off by himself.] Hmmm! I wonder why.
- **Rumi joined Ms. Garza's class on the first warm day of spring page:** Put yourself in Rumi's shoes. How might it feel to join a class in the spring? Can you infer how he's feeling by his facial expression and body language?
- **When he heard a laugh, he looked up page:** What could Han have done instead of staying quiet?
- **Then Asher picked up a pebble page:** Describe Asher to your partner. [Discuss the fact that Asher is a bully because he is being unkind on purpose and keeps trying different things to make Rumi feel scared, sad, and unsafe.] How should Ella and Han handle this situation?
- **"Rumi!" Han called out page:** What changed? Why do you suppose Asher is illustrated in black and white now? Let's turn to the next page to see what Rumi was doing with his twig.

After Reading

- Why do you think this book is called *The Together Tree*? What should you do when someone new joins a group?
- In the author's note, Aisha Saeed explains that this story was based on her son's experience of being bullied in kindergarten. Why do you think she wrote this book?

**Extend the Experience**

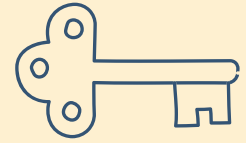
- Let's make our own *Together Tree* like the one on the back cover of this book. On this heart-shaped piece of paper, draw and/or write one way you could reach out to someone who looks like they're feeling lonely or left out. Then, we'll put the "leaves" together on our tree.
- Write, draw, or talk to finish this sentence: A lesson I learned from reading *The Together Tree* is . . .

Similar Titles***The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018)**

About the Book: Based on a poem about her great-grandfather's experience titled "It'll Be Scary Sometimes," Woodson's book shares the heart-wrenching stories of children starting the school year feeling different from their classmates. In the end, when a girl decides to speak up and share her story, she finds that she has something in common with one of her classmates and a friendship begins.

***The Proudest Blue: The Story of Hijab and Family* (I. Muhammad & Ali, 2019)**

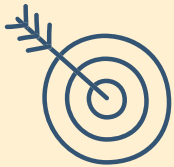
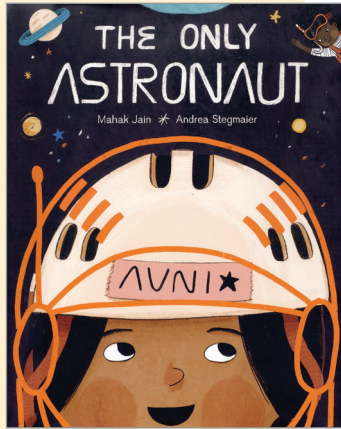
About the Book: It's the first day of sixth grade and Asiya's first day of wearing hijab. Her younger sister Faizah, who is the narrator, thinks Asiya looks like a princess in her bright blue hijab. Asiya expresses her faith with strength and pride even when faced with bullies. According to the author's note, Olympic gold medalist Ibtihaj Muhammad wrote this story so that readers "can see two sisters taking pride in hijab." Fun fact: The sisters in the story are named after Muhammad's sisters.

**Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:**

- sputtered: moved with jerky action
- wandered: walked somewhere without a plan

**Upper Elementary Extension:**

Pose and discuss this prompt—Ponder what the tree symbolizes in the story. Explain using evidence from the text and illustrations.



Learning Targets:

- I notice how characters' words and actions impact people around them.
- I think about how my words and actions impact people around me.
- I look for ways to compromise.

Compromise

Book Title: *The Only Astronaut* (Jain, 2023)

About the Book: Space enthusiast Avni builds a movable spaceship out of cardboard boxes and other found materials. After an imaginary asteroid crash, she decides that space travel is a bit too challenging alone and makes it her mission to find an assistant. Following a few failed attempts to recruit a helpful assistant, Aquanaut Aya volunteers to join Anvi but has her own ideas about their shared adventures. Finally, Avni realizes that having a creative copilot makes the mission much more rewarding.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who compromise
- Characters who engage in imaginative play



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- When you look at this cover, what's the first thing that catches your eye? Are there any other small details that might be important? Think about the title *The Only Astronaut*. Why do you suppose one girl takes up most of the cover and the other girl is peeking out of the corner?
- Front endpapers: What can you infer about Anvi by looking at her room?
- Back endpapers: Where have we seen this girl before? [On the cover.] What can you learn about her by looking at her room?

Set a Purpose: We've already learned a little about Avni and the other girl in this book by studying the endpapers. Let's find out more about the girls and their relationship.

During Reading

- *My house is a space station, and every day is launch day* page: Do you recognize any of the materials Avni used to make her space ship? Trade ideas with a friend.
- *Phew* page: What is Avni's mission? [find an assistant] Do you think it will be easy to find one? Why or why not?
- *Kai didn't work out, but astronauts never give up* page: Why does she keep adding to her astronaut's log? [Because she is learning more about the kind of assistant she wants.]
- *We climb into the rocket ship* page: Why do you suppose the illustration where they're taking off has blue and orange speech bubbles and drawings? [Blue shows Aya's words and imaginary world, orange stands for Avni's.] Look at Avni's face. Can you infer how she's feeling about Aya's ideas?
- *The ship jerks* page: Look carefully at the illustration. What happened? [Part of Avni's rocket ship got caught on the girl's bike and Aya saved her.] Predict what you think will happen next.

After Reading

- What’s the difference between a copilot and an assistant? When you’re playing with your friends, which would you rather be?
- In this story Avni had to *compromise*, or give up a little bit of what she wanted to make both she and Aya happy. Compromising is a friendly way to solve problems. Can you think of a time when you had to compromise with a friend or family member/caregiver?

Extend the Experience

- Let’s practice four things we can do to help us when we need to compromise:
 - Talk: Calmly tell your friend what you want and listen to what they want.
 - Empathize: Think about how your friend is feeling about the situation.
 - Problem Solve: Brainstorm creative solutions together.
 - Be Flexible: Understand that there is more than one right answer or way to do something. Be willing to try your friend’s solution.
- Get ready for a box challenge! [To pose a box challenge, create a schedule that allows enough time for each student to have a week to complete the challenge. When it is that child’s week, send home the book *What to Do With a Box* (Yolen, 2016) with the *Box Challenge Family/Caregiver Letter Printable* located on the companion website (resources.corwin.com/more-rampedup-readalouds). Enjoy seeing all the creative designs!]

Similar Titles

 ***I Lived Inside a Whale* (Li, 2024)**

About the Book: The story begins on the front endpapers, where we meet a girl reading in a whale chair surrounded by books. Inspired by the book, she decides to escape her too-noisy life by hiding out inside an imaginary whale. Soon, an “intruder” in the form of a bow-tied boy breaks the silence. Annoyed, she ignores him for a while. Finally, they compromise: She’ll play with him, if he’s quiet first. In the end, the boy listens to her as she shares the stories she loves and encourages her to share them with others.

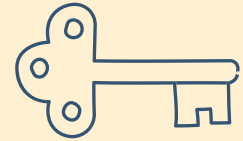
 ***Yuna’s Cardboard Castles* (Tang, 2022)**

About the Book: Inspired by the author’s lived experience moving from Hong Kong to the United States, newcomer Yuna tries to fit in with the kids in her American home. To do this, she uses her origami skills to create an imaginary paper and cardboard world. Eventually, Yuna and the rest of the neighborhood children connect through imagination and the language of play.



The Aquanaut Book Trailer

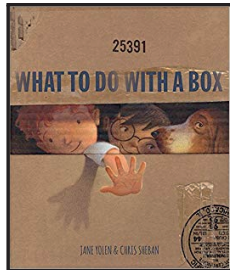
<https://qrs.ly/zffn8p8>

**Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:**

- assistant: a person who helps
- distracted: not able to focus or concentrate
- mission: a special job to complete

**Upper Elementary Extension:**

Introduce students to Dan Santat’s graphic novel *The Aquanaut* (2022) (using the book trailer linked from the QR code to the left). Invite interested readers to sign up on a sticky note for their chance to read the book. Once the first reader finishes, they pass it to the next one on the list, and so on.



THE BOX CHALLENGE!

Dear Student,

It's your turn to get creative at home! The directions are simple:

1. Read the enclosed book with someone.
2. Find a box that is no bigger than 14 x 14 inches. Use your imagination to turn it into something unique. *You can brainstorm ideas with your family, but make sure that you do your own work.*
3. Bring your Box Creation to school on _____ to share with the class! **If it is too big to carry, you can bring a picture of your creation to school instead.**

HAPPY CREATING!

Your Teacher

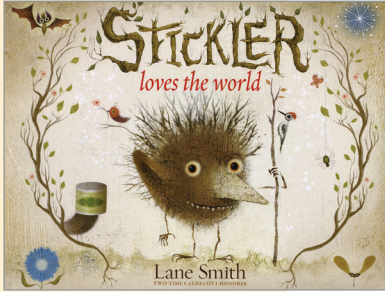
Dear Families and Caregivers,

This activity is **OPTIONAL**. PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM AND RETURN TO SCHOOL. Provide your child with any supplies or help they may need, but please let your child do their own thinking and work. Encourage them to make mistakes and learn from those mishaps. That's part of the problem-solving process. Happy creating!

_____ My child **is participating** in the box challenge this week.

_____ My child **is unable to participate** in the box challenge this week.

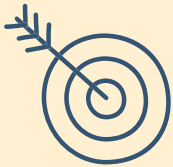
Box Challenge Family/Caregiver Letter Printable



Show Appreciation

Book Title: *Stickler Loves the World* (L. Smith, 2023)

About the Book: Stickler notices and celebrates the beauty found outdoors with its multiple, ever-changing eyes. It happens upon a stranger with a pea can stuck on his head and instead of noticing it's their friend Crow, Stickler assumes it's a stranger from another planet. Stickler gives Crow the grand tour pointing out Earth's treasures. When the pea can pops off Crow's head, Crow thanks Stickler for opening his eyes to the spectacular natural sights. Fun fact: The character of Stickler first appeared in Lane Smith's book *A Gift for Nana* (2022).



Learning Targets:

- I notice how characters' mindsets and actions affect people around them.
- I think about how my mindset and actions affect people around me.
- I look for ways to spread joy.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who spread joy
- Characters with positive mindsets



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

When you look at this cover, where do your eyes go first? What other details do you notice in Lane Smith's illustration? What's your opinion so far: Do you think Stickler is a good name for this character? Why or why not? Lane Smith used a mixture of art tools, including paints and a digital pencil, to draw Stickler and the world it loves.

Set a Purpose: We're going to read to learn more about Stickler and find out why it loves its world. Notice Stickler's mindset, mood, and the way it acts with other creatures.

During Reading

- *"Three new sticks!"* page: I'm going to flip back and forth between this page and the one before it. What do you notice? [They are almost exactly the same. On the first page you only see eyes and outlines, on the second one you can see the details and creatures.] What might Stickler love more than sticks? Share with a neighbor.
- *"Elpppp!" said a voice* page: Can you figure out what the stranger is saying? [Get this off my head.] Is it really a stranger? [It might be Crow.]
- *Over here* page: How would you describe Stickler's mindset or attitude about the wonders of its planet? What is the stranger saying on this page? [Seasick—notice the swirls above its head!]
- *The colors of SUNSET* page: Can you infer what Crow means when he says, "Today you really *did* open my eyes"?

After Reading

- How did Stickler's mindset and actions impact Crow? If you were to describe Stickler to a friend, which words would you use? Start with: Stickler is _____.

- Think back to what happened in the story. What are some of the ways that Stickler spread joy?



Extend the Experience

- On the pages that begin with *Everything else* and *But Stickler tried anyway*, Stickler uses adjectives to describe its wonder-filled world. Draw a picture of your favorite outdoor space and label the things in your illustration like Stickler did. See how many different adjectives you can use.
- Stickler appreciated the spectacular sights it saw in nature and showed that appreciation by sharing them with Crow. Let's brainstorm different ways you can show appreciation.

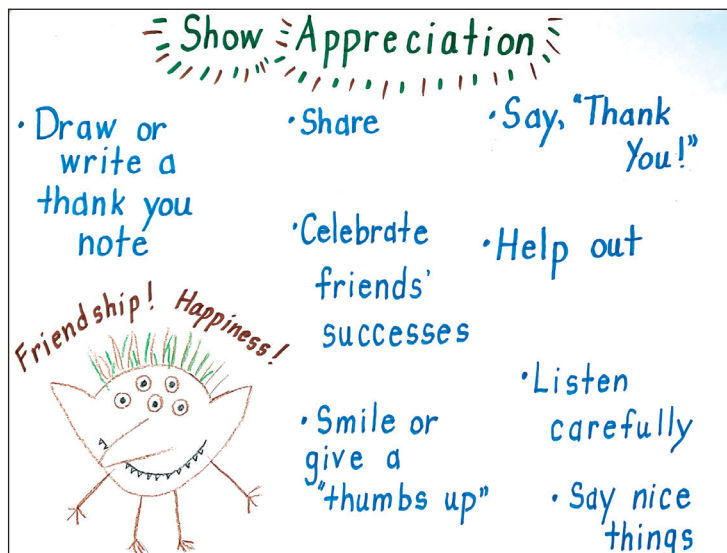
Similar Titles

● *How to Send a Hug* (Rocco, 2022)

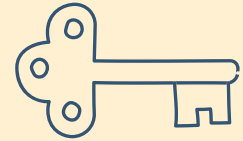
About the Book: Artie is an expert at giving in-person hugs. When she wants to send a long-distance hug to her Grandma Gertie, she knows exactly what to do. She writes her hug on a piece of paper, tucks it in a “jacket” (an envelope), and sticks a “ticket” (a stamp) in the corner. Now, the hug is ready to give to a “Hug Delivery Specialist” (aka a postal carrier). While Artie waits to get a hug back, readers see different ways mail is delivered to seven locations. Then, a two-page spread features the seven grateful hug recipients along with snippets of their letters. A heart-warming celebration of the lost art of letter writing.

● *The Red Jacket* (Holt, 2023)

About the Book: Bob, the seagull, is feeling left out and lonely. When a cheery, chirping bird notices Bob's glumness, he gives him his red jacket (with french fries in the pocket). Bob is so thrilled with his “swanky stylish” coat that he enthusiastically greets his fellow sea creatures. When a wave whooshes the jacket away, his new friends assist him in locating it. Bob pays the kindness forward by gifting the red jacket to a gloomy turtle.



Ways to Show Appreciate Chart



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- bursting: suddenly popping open or breaking out
- impressed: feeling amazed when you look at someone or something



Upper Elementary Extension:

Provide students with loose parts or art supplies to design their own imaginary character. Once completed, they can use their created character as inspiration for a narrative.



Share and Care

Book Title: *All Kinds of Special* (Sauer, 2023) [Spanish Edition: *Tan especial*]

About the Book: Mia and her mom move into their new home. They are excited that it has a yard and a mango tree. Mia is thrilled to eat their first mango, but soon there are too many mangos. When Mia’s mom asks her to come up with an idea, Mia decides they should share the mangos with their neighbors. What happens next is *All Kinds of Special*.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who display kindness to fellow community members
- Themes that highlight the power of community



Learning Targets:

- I notice how characters’ mindsets and actions affect people around them.
- I think about how my mindset and actions affect people around me.
- I look for ways to spread kindness.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- Does anyone recognize the fruit the girl is holding in her hands? [Pause for responses.] It looks like a mango to me, but we’ll have to read to find out.
- Case Cover: Peek underneath the wraparound book jacket at the front and back of the case cover. What do you notice? [The front case cover has a girl by herself under the tree, the back case cover shows her with someone else.] Hmmm! I wonder why the book jacket and the case cover are different.

Set a Purpose: I’m so curious about why the title of this story is *All Kinds of Special*. Can you think of something you would consider “all kinds of special”? Swap ideas with a friend. Pay close attention to the special things that happen in this story.

During Reading

- *Our apartment was all kinds of special* page: Can you infer what made that one good-bye *extra* hard? Notice the word *extra* is in italics. Italics is used to read it with emphasis, like this: “One good-bye was EXTRA hard.”
- *Don’t get me wrong* page: What makes this mango so special? [It grew from their own tree.]
- *My knee won’t stop bouncing as Mama prepares our mango* page: Why do you think the page where she’s eating the mango looks different? [Because she’s imagining summer.] Can you name a food that makes you imagine a certain season?
- *Side by side, we study our tree* page: Predict what Mia and her mom will do with all of the mangos. What would you do with them?
- *And another makes me think our mango tree is about to grow something extra sweet* page: Can you infer what extra-sweet something might grow? [their friendship]

After Reading

- Retell some of the special things that happened in this story. What made them special?
- How did Mia spread kindness? [by sharing the mangos] What happened because she shared the mangos? [They met people in their neighborhood, she made new friends.]

Extend the Experience

- Make a list of special things you could do for friends at school or people in your community that would show them you care. (Figure 1.24)
- Remember the page where Mia said the mango “tastes, smells, looks and feels like summer”? Think of a food that reminds you of a certain season or place. Draw a picture of yourself eating that food in that place or during that season.

Similar Titles

All Are Neighbors (Penfold, 2022)

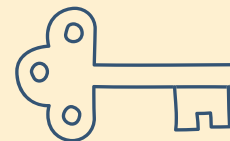
About the Book: From the creators who gave us *All Are Welcome* (Penfold, 2018) and *Big Feelings* (Penfold, 2021) comes a rhyming glimpse into a diverse and vibrant community of folks who live, work, and play together. Ideal for illustration study as readers follow a mother, child, and infant as they are welcomed into their new home by friendly neighbors and many other community members.

Lolo’s Sari-Sari Store (Lee, 2023)

About the Book: A girl shares fond memories of her time spent in the Philippines working alongside her Lolo (grandfather) at his sari-sari store, a shop with a variety of goods, similar to a convenience store. As they fulfill the needs of their neighbors, Lolo imparts his wisdom. He encourages her, through words and actions, to give back to the community, be a listening ear, make others happy, notice what people need, and share what she can. Now living with her mother in the United States, the girl struggles to feel the same sense of belonging. Guided by the example of her grandfather, she seeks out people to assist and befriend.



Spread Kindness Chart



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- nudging: gently pushing or encouraging you to do something
- prop: to rest or lean on something
- situation: all of the things happening at a certain time or place



Upper Elementary Extension:

Challenge learners to find one fact about mangos that no one else will know and turn the fact into a true or false quiz question. Quiz each other during free moments between activities.