

## **Interactive Reading**

Interactive reading is a systematic approach to reading aloud using research-based techniques. Before an interactive read-aloud, a skilled adult reader helps to build word and background knowledge by pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts, models comprehension strategies, and allows children to make predictions and connect the story to their own experiences. During reading, the reader guides children to participate actively in the listening experience.

The teacher's directions in the *BOP-K* interactive read-alouds include child-friendly definitions of new vocabulary words, recommendations for think-alouds (beginning in Lesson 3), and suggestions for questions (both recall and open-ended). You may also develop your own questions and definitions based on an individual child's needs and the flow of the dialogue during reading. Following an interactive read-aloud, revisit the child's predictions and discuss key ideas or details. Reading the same text multiple times allows you to guide the child from a literal understanding of the content to an expanded, more analytical exploration of characters, events, themes, or factual information—always scaffolding the listening experience through modeling and thoughtful questioning.

The approach used in this Interactive Reading guide was adopted from the effective read-aloud techniques introduced in the article *Repeated Interactive Read-Alouds in Preschool and Kindergarten* (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007). For more information, visit: [Reading Rockets: Repeated Interactive Read Alouds in Preschool and Kindergarten](#).

### **Think-Alouds for Listening Comprehension**

Good readers know that reading is a two-way process of interacting with the text, rather than a passive experience. There are many strategies that proficient readers use to comprehend both stories and informational text. During teacher-modeled think-alouds, the teacher verbally describes these thought processes to help children become aware of comprehension strategies.

The use of questions and comments during the read-aloud (“I wonder what I will learn about the beach when I read this story?” “This reminds me of when...”) builds connections between reader and material in an individual, meaningful way. Predictions can be made, and the reader can stop at points throughout the story to revise or check the accuracy of those predictions. In a think-aloud, teachers model using background

knowledge and problem-solving skills, as well as rereading when meaning is lost. In addition, children can be introduced to book conventions, such as the opening “Once upon a time” in fairy tales, and become familiar with the structure of informational texts (e.g., Table of contents, headings, lists).

Having a child participate in think-alouds, after exposure to teacher modeling, provides a window into the way the child gains meaning from the text. Even after the child has begun to use these strategies by making predictions, activating background knowledge, and relating the text to their own lives, think-alouds continue to be beneficial, as they support the understanding of more complex stories.

### Think-Aloud Category Descriptions

The following chart explains the function of each category. Use the suggestions that work best for you and the child.

Category	Purpose
Preview topic	Helps the child to activate background knowledge or put the story in context
Set purpose for reading	Guides the child to listen for key ideas and themes in the story
Picture descriptions	Describes an aspect of the story represented only in the illustration, or includes a detail or concept a child may not have learned incidentally
Literacy conventions	Focuses on aspects of a genre, including phrases such as “once upon a time”
Text-to-self connections	Compares part of a story to a child’s personal experience
Text-to-text connections	Compares the text to another familiar story or song, such as <i>We All Go Traveling By</i> to <i>The Green Grass Grows All Around</i> (teacher may choose texts more familiar to the child)
Monitor comprehension	Guides understanding or clears up confusion; may include the use of questions

Category	Purpose
Fluency and expression	Models appropriate rate, expression, and phrasing when reading aloud; points out when the author uses some form of emphasis on words in print, such as bold, italic, or differently-sized font, or specific punctuation marks for additional emphasis, including within character dialogue
Clarify meaning	Explains complex concepts or vocabulary words in context
Visualization	Creates a mental image or understanding of a scene; describes the use of specialized artwork in illustrations
Summary	Helps the child to focus on and remember the important parts of the story

### **Describing Pictures During Read-Alouds**

Picture description suggestions are also included within the lessons during interactive read-alouds. Most books written for young children include pictures that enrich the content of the story. In some cases, a picture actually tells part of the story without support from the text. For example, at the end of the book *Ruby in Her Own Time* (BOP-K Lesson 3), Ruby's return with her own brood of ducklings appears in a two-page picture spread at the end of the book; however, the text does not mention that she now has a mate and her own family.

When preparing to read a print picture book to a young child, it is helpful to preview the pages and identify content that is conveyed in the pictures but not in the text. As you read aloud, describe those pictures that will add to the child's understanding of the story. Pay particular attention to important picture details that are not described in the text.

For further guidance related to picture description, see the Kindergarten Teacher Resources page at [www.aphbop.org](http://www.aphbop.org). You may also wish to share this information with classroom teachers and parents.

### **Reference**

McGee, L. M., & Schickedanz, J. A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and kindergarten. *The Reading Teacher, 60*, 742-751.  
<https://doi:10.1598/RT.60.8.4>

