

Read, Synthesize Important Information, and Jot Down Thinking

When reading, kids need to merge their thinking with the text information. At the same time, they need to separate their thinking—their own ideas—from text information. We share an article written for upper-elementary and middle-school kids called “You Can Grow Your Intelligence” (mindsetworks.com/websitemedia/youcangrowyourintelligence.pdf) and model our thinking in an interactive read-aloud.

Preparation

We hand out a copy of the article to each student, along with a two-column thinksheet titled “What the article is about/What it makes me think or wonder about,” a clipboard, and a pencil.

1 Connect and Engage

Introduce the idea of fixed and growth mindsets by, perhaps, telling a quick version of “The Tortoise and the Hare.” Explain that scientists talk about the brain as elastic; they use the term *brain elasticity*. Have kids turn and talk about what that might mean.

2 Model

Share the thinksheet. *When readers read, they need to merge their thinking with the information to better learn, understand, and remember the information. But it is important to separate our thoughts and ideas from the writer’s information. As I read, I’m going to sift through the most important information and jot that down in the left-hand column. That way, we are sure to get the information as the writer intended. In the right-hand column I will jot down my thinking about the information.*

Share the article and have students preview it and talk about what they notice.

Okay, I am going to read a bit of this article on growth mindset and show you how I write down what the article is about and what it makes me think about.

I read the first paragraph, which explains that many people think intelligence is fixed and that people are born either smart or dumb.

Whoa, I have a lot of thoughts about that. I am not comfortable with what this says.

Write: "Many people think we are born either smart or dumb and stay that way forever." in the left column.

Now I'm going to write my thoughts about that on the right-hand side.

Write: "Why even go to school if this were true, I don't believe it. I've seen so many kids grow really smart by reading and thinking and working hard." Have kids turn and talk about what they think about this so far.

3 Guide

Now let's do this together. Jot down what you learned so far in the left-hand column and any thoughts, questions, or reactions you have on the right-hand side.

Keep reading and reasoning through the article for another page while the kids jot their thinking and turn and talk about the information on cue.

4 Practice

Okay, now it's time for you to partner up and continue to read, reason through the text, talk about the information, and jot the information and your thinking on the thinksheet. Take turns reading after each section. And remember to be an active listener. Jot down your thinking while your partner is reading and then talk about it.

5 Share

Invite kids back to the circle and have partners share one example of the information they recorded in the left-hand column and one example of the thinking they did on the right. This way they both get a chance to share. After hearing from three or four partners, since time is short, have remaining partners pair up to share. That way everyone can express his or her voice.

Great thinking today, friends. You did a nice job of recording the writer's ideas and your own thoughts about the information. We will be thinking about how to grow our brains throughout the year. This article gives us a pretty good idea of how the brain works when learning. All of us can grow more knowledgeable and thoughtful by reading, writing, and working hard. Thanks so much.