



Invested Reading

✿ WHAT

Invested Reading, also known as the subtext strategy, is a versatile, thought-provoking, practical comprehension tool, rooted in dramatic play, that invites readers to imagine others' internal monologues—in other words, what others are thinking. It offers a fresh take on "close reading" by breathing life into ordinary topics and leading readers to sophisticated, fulfilling engagement with a range of texts.

✿ WHY

Fiction. Invested Reading invites all readers, children and adults, to approach fiction in new and deeper ways by studying the text and illustrations and by "stepping inside the story world" to imagine what characters are thinking. It offers many benefits, including helping readers learn to infer, empathize with characters, appreciate multiple perspectives, and comprehend not just deeply, but broadly.

Nonfiction. Readers explore nonfiction texts from outside the text, first capturing their own personal responses to it. Then they each create an imagined reader of their own, whose perspective is different from their own—sketching and creating a backstory for that reader. Next, they revisit the text as their imagined readers, coming up with and recording their responses to the text. Finally, students participate in a "Town Meeting" as their imagined readers, where they discuss the issue under study. These conversations help readers recognize that even "simple" issues are not black and white. As a result, students begin to appreciate not only the complexities surrounding the issue, but the consequences they have as well.

Invested Reading helps striving readers read deeply, think critically, and understand texts and the implications for their characters. Invested readers become more empathetic, less judgmental, and develop a "social imagination" critical to life in our complex times.



HOW

Invested reading:

- provides the scaffolding strivers need to share thoughts, explore issues, and participate in sophisticated discussions.
- integrates speaking, listening, reading, writing, and visual and performing arts, offering different ways for kids of all abilities to enter a text comfortably.
- helps kids develop a powerful capacity to empathize with and appreciate the perspectives of others, creating kinder, gentler citizens committed to fairness and social justice.
- grabs kids' hearts and minds, making literacy learning emotional and memorable; indeed, kids often continue discussions at home with their families.
- helps kids read the socially complex world to make informed, productive life choices.
- helps students develop a sense of agency that positions them not only to approach reading powerfully, but also to live powerfully outside of school, inspiring "make-a-difference-in-your-own-community" social action.
- opens the door to a whole new way of thinking about comprehension and communication.

By Jean Anne Clyde, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emerita at the University of Louisville. (From Stephens, D., Clyde, J.A., Harste, J. (In press). Reading Strategies for Deep Thinking. New York: Scholastic.)