

# TEACHING TIDBITS: READING

## An ABC Escapade through Egypt

[www.bernadettesimpson.com](http://www.bernadettesimpson.com)

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### Notes on Reading Aloud

*"Reading aloud to students offers the highest level of teacher support and allows teachers to demonstrate strategies effective readers employ in their reading...Most importantly, reading aloud facilitates language acquisition for students new to English. Through teacher read alouds, English language learners receive frequent exposure to comprehensible input and quality language models."* (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 57)

When writing *An ABC Escapade through Egypt*, I read it aloud to myself constantly, hoping to ensure an easy and comfortable read aloud. Before reading aloud to your students, though, you may want to practice reading the page. I never intended for the book to be read aloud (or silently!) from cover to cover. So, when sharing this book with children, you can:

- read only the alliterative phrases at the top of the pages
- let a student or child choose the letters they want to hear
- read one page aloud a day – in any order!
- read only the vowel pages on one day
- choose a word to spell (e.g. Cairo, Egypt, or the name of a student, school, or place) and read only those letters
- take turns reading, allowing the students to read the phrase, a paragraph, or a whole page

Check out these websites for more information and tips on reading aloud:

#### **Reading is Fundamental: Reading Aloud**

<http://www.rif.org/parents/readingaloud/default.aspx>

#### **Literacy Connections: Reading Aloud – Tips for Parents and Teachers**

<http://www.literacyconnections.com/ReadingAloud.php>

#### **Reading Rockets: Various Articles on Reading Aloud**

<http://www.readingrockets.org/search/?>

[cx=004997827699593338140:nptllrzhp78&q=reading+aloud&sa.x=0&sa.y=0&cof=FORID:11](http://www.readingrockets.org/search/?cx=004997827699593338140:nptllrzhp78&q=reading+aloud&sa.x=0&sa.y=0&cof=FORID:11)

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### Notes on the Reading Process

The reading activities in the following section are based on the **stages of the reading process** and can be used with the book as a whole or with an individual letter or page. Teachers and parents may assist learners through each stage of the process – **before reading, during reading, and after reading** – but the activities should be modified to meet your students' needs, abilities, and interests.

The Reading Process, Briefly:

**"Before reading**, strategic readers preview the text by looking at the title and the text to evoke relevant thoughts, memories, and associations. They build background by

questioning themselves to see what they already know about the topic, the form in which the topic is presented, and the vocabulary that might communicate the ideas about the topic. They set purposes for reading by asking themselves what they want to learn during the reading episode.

**During reading**, strategic readers create a dialogue with the author, striving to reformulate what the author is saying. They check their understanding of the text by paraphrasing the author's words and they monitor it by imagining, inferring, and predicting. They integrate their new understanding with existing knowledge. They are continually revising their purposes for reading as they read.

**After reading**, strategic readers summarize what they have been reading and contemplate their first impressions. They reflect and take second looks to develop more thoughtful and critical interpretations of the text. Finally, they make applications of the ideas encountered in the text by extending these ideas to broader perspectives (Flood & Lapp, 1991, p. 732).

Successful language learners adapt these strategies as they construct meaning from a variety of literary and media texts and experiences."

Retrieved from <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/xla/ela15d6.html>

Learn more about the reading process by checking out these sites:

**International Children's Education: Encouraging a Reading Process**

[http://www.iched.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site\\_id=iched&item\\_id=reading\\_process](http://www.iched.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=iched&item_id=reading_process)

**Thinkfinity Literacy Network's Free Online Course – Before, During, and After Reading**

<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/TLN/courses>

**Reading Rockets.org: Strategies that Promote Comprehension**

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/29202>

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## Possible Reading Activities

### Before Reading

[KWL Charts](#)

[Anticipation Guides](#)

[Sample Anticipation Guides for An ABC Escapade through Egypt](#)

### During Reading

[Think Alouds](#)

[Asking Questions](#)

[Using Graphic Organizers](#)

[Using Graphic Organizers with An ABC Escapade through Egypt](#)

### After Reading

[Reading Journals](#)

## Before Reading

"The two most important resources that all learners possess in terms of the reading process are language proficiency...and background knowledge related to the text (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997)." (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 112)

*"No matter how well-written material is, if readers do not possess background knowledge or interest in reading the material, students will find it hard to read." (Richardson & Morgan, 132)*

Before reading is the time to determine what your students already know about a topic and, if the students have limited background knowledge, to build on that knowledge of both content and language. Also, this is the time to ensure the students are interested and motivated to read the book. Following are two activities geared towards activating and building background knowledge and interest. These activities can be modified to use with the book as a whole or an individual page.

### KWL Chart

This is a great activity to use to determine what your students already know about a specific topic, to activate this prior knowledge, and to build on it if necessary – perfect for use with nonfiction literature. It's also an activity that spans the entire reading process – before, during, and after. Students make a 3-column chart, labeling the columns as:

#### **What I Know – What I Want to Know – What I Learned**

When working with a group of children, I like to have the students complete the “K” column independently first (good writing practice) and then engage the students in a group discussion (a great opportunity to develop oral language), creating a class chart on the white board or overhead projector. This is the ideal time to **correct any misconceptions** and **introduce vocabulary** relevant to the reading that the students may be unfamiliar with. (You may choose to have the students work in pairs or as a class from the beginning. Depending on the age and ability of the students, it may be beneficial for the students to do the talking and the teacher to do the writing instead of having each student write their own chart.) Completing the chart with a group allows students to **share what they know** with each other, building the background knowledge of any fellow student who may not know as much. And if you find the students know nothing, it's up to you to give them some background knowledge – perhaps through discussion, sharing other books or stories, looking at photographs, etc.

After completing the “What I Know” section, students can brainstorm questions that they want to find the answers to and that they think may be answered in the book (prediction). Again, you can have the students work independently, in pairs, or as a class. Guiding students to ask good questions about the topic helps build students' interest and gives them a purpose for reading – to find the answers!

Check out these websites for blank KWL charts:

#### **Education Place: Free Graphic Organizers as PDFs, including KWL charts**

<http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

#### **teAch-nology: KWL Generator**

[http://www.teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/graphic\\_org/kwl/](http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/graphic_org/kwl/)

### Anticipation Guides

This is another activity that activates students' prior knowledge, encourages interest in the subject, provides a purpose for reading, and is used before and after reading. Teachers create a series of statements that relate to and tap into what the students already know – and help them anticipate what they will be reading. Students consider

what they know and can choose to agree or disagree with the statement. They do this once before reading and again after reading, supporting their responses with evidence from the text.

Slips of paper can be given to each student or the statements can be written on an overhead and discussed as a class, with the students marking their responses at their desks. The activity can also be done orally, especially useful with younger readers who may show their response by raising their hands.

The statements you choose to include will depend on your purpose for reading and your students. Whether they are native English speakers or English language learners and whether or not are familiar with Egypt will be two important variables to consider.

Check out these websites for more information on anticipation guides:

**AdLit.org (All about Adolescent Literacy): Anticipation Guides**

<http://www.adlit.org/strategies/19712>

**National Education Association: Anticipation Guides**

<http://www.nea.org/tools/18324.htm>

**JustReadNow: Anticipation/Reaction Guide**

<http://www.justreadnow.com/strategies/anticipate.htm>

**Sample Anticipation Guides for An ABC Escapade through Egypt**

Below are sample anticipation guides I created to give you an clearer idea and to help get you started. Some are for individual pages and one is for the whole book.

Yes	No	<b>Jerboas</b>
		Jerboas can jump up to 7 meters.
		Some jerboas have four toes and some only have three.
		Jerboas live in deserts and other rocky areas.
		Jerboas like to play during the day and sleep at night.
		Jerboas are rodents with long tails.

Yes	No	<b>Foxes</b>
		Foxes burn their paws on the hot desert sand just like people
		Foxes have large ear bones to help them hear better.
		Foxes can go without drinking water for several years.
		Foxes are the smallest member of the dog family.
		Foxes only eat meat.

Yes	No	<b>Prickly Pear</b>
		A prickly pear is the same as a prickly fig.
		It's very easy to remove the prickly spines of this fruit.
		Prickly pears grow on cacti.

		You should not eat the small black seeds of this fruit.
		Prickly pear is sold in springtime.

Yes	No	<b>Hieroglyphics</b>
		There are over 700 hieroglyphic symbols.
		Hieroglyphics are easy to read.
		There are no vowels in hieroglyphics.
		Boys and girls in ancient Egypt learned how to write hieroglyphics.
		Some of the first hieroglyphics were magic spells.

Yes	No	<b>Red Sea</b>
		Egypt is part of two continents – Africa and Asia.
		Most people in Egypt do not visit the beach for their holidays.
		There are only a few places to visit along the Red Sea coast.
		Windsurfing and snorkeling are popular activities.
		The closest beach to Cairo is Ain Sukhna.

Yes	No	<b>Egypt</b>
		Egypt's national football team has won the African Cup 9 times.
		A loaf of baladi bread costs only LE 0.05 or five piastres.
		A camel's hump is full of water.
		A date pit was found in Egypt that was 6,500 years old.
		In the past, women used egret feathers as decorations in their hats.
		You must know how to sail if you want to rent or ride a feluka.
		There are more goats in Egypt than camels.
		There are over 700 hieroglyphic symbols.
		Incense only comes in cones and sticks.
		Jerboas are large rodents that live in the desert.
		The largest platter of konafa ever made was 20 meters <sup>2</sup> .
		"A Big Piece of Watermelon" is the name of a lantern design.
		Egypt grows over 100 types of mangoes.
		The Nile River runs through 9 countries.
		Olive trees can live to be 1,500 years old.
		Prickly pears are different than prickly figs.
		Women have been sewing quilts in Egypt for hundreds of years.
		Egypt is part of two continents – Africa and Asia.
		Egypt was part of the Spice Route.
		In 2005, there were over 5 million cars in Cairo.

		Sea urchins do not have brains.
		There are over 4,000 villages in Egypt.
		In Egypt, farmers grow watermelons in the shape of pyramids.
		The fennec fox is the smallest fox in the world.
		There are many correct ways to spell 'yogurt'.
		In 1785, Karl Benz made the world's first motorcar.

[Back to Reading Activities](#)

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## During Reading

During-reading strategies help ensure comprehension by guiding students to ask questions, make connections, and determine important information.

### Think Alouds

If you are reading aloud to your class or your child, this is the perfect time to model effective reading strategies. Once students are comfortable with this process, ask them to join in – sharing what they are thinking as they read or listen.

*"A Think Aloud helps students practice the mental strategies engaged in by good readers. Teacher reads a piece of text to the class that he or she has not seen before. The teacher verbalizes his thought process, modeling his interaction with his inner voice, enabling the students to see how he makes sense of the text."*

<http://www.chambersburg.k12.pa.us/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=13834&PHPSESSID=92a4a8f2c5231e1cdb8933c26088ce77>

The following are examples of the thought processes you might model for your students:

- a. Make predictions. (Show how to develop hypotheses. )
- b. Describe any pictures forming in your head while you read. (Show how to develop images during reading.)
- c. Share an analogy. (Show how to link prior knowledge with new information in the reading selection.)
- d. Verbalize a confusing point. (Show how you monitor your ongoing comprehension and become aware of problems.)
- e. Demonstrate fix-up strategies. (Show how you address comprehension problems by using fix-up strategies.)

Retrieved from:

[http://chs.smuhdsd.org/learning\\_community/content\\_literacy/think\\_aloud.html](http://chs.smuhdsd.org/learning_community/content_literacy/think_aloud.html)

When reading aloud, you can stop from time to time and orally complete sentences like these:

- So far, I've learned...
- This made me think of...
- That didn't make sense.
- I think \_\_\_\_ will happen next.

- I reread that part because...
- I was confused by...
- I think the most important part was...
- That is interesting because...
- I wonder why...
- I just thought of...

Retrieved from

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/skill-builder/problem-solving/48546.html>

### Asking Questions

*"Questions can help teachers to know whether students understand text and can guide readers to consider many aspects of material. Question-generated discussions lead to the creation of meaning for readers."* (Richardson & Morgan, 184)

*"During-reading, questions can help students self-monitor their own comprehension. Teaching readers to ask questions during reading fosters understanding of difficult material and leads them to become independent learners (Hammond, 1983). Teachers can also effectively intersperse questions, or slice the text and discuss each part to reduce the amount of material students must read and understand at the same time (Wood, 1986)."* (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 112)

Again, this strategy can and should be employed before, during, and after reading. Questions asked during reading will focus on helping students monitor comprehension and apply effective strategies to help them understand what they are reading.

### Sample Questions: Before, During, and After Reading

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/ReadStrat3.html>

### Applying Bloom's Taxonomy: Sample Questions and Potential Activities

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/researchskills/Dalton.htm>

### Literacy Matters.org: Questioning

<http://www.literacymatters.org/adlit/questioning/intro.htm>

### Using Graphic Organizers

*"Student or teacher produced visual representations of learned concepts and relationships are called graphic organizers. Research have shown that notes and partial notes recorded as graphic organizers help students comprehend better than fully formed outlines."* (Richardson & Morgan, 225)

*"Visual thinking and learning utilize graphical ways of working with ideas and presenting information. Research in both educational theory and cognitive psychology tells us that visual learning is among the very best methods for teaching students of all ages how to think and how to learn."*

<http://www.inspiration.com/Parents/Visual-Thinking-and-Learning>

Graphic organizers can also be used before, during, and after reading. Examples of graphic organizers include KWL charts, Venn diagrams, jot charts, story maps, webs, and more.

## Scholastic: Graphic Organizers for Reading Comprehension

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=2983>

### Graphic Organizers with An ABC Escapade through Egypt

**Venn Diagrams:** Used to compare and contrast two different items or topics

- compare and contrast villages and cities
- compare and contrast camels to jerboas, goats, or foxes
- compare and contrast olives to mangoes, watermelon, or prickly pears
- compare and contrast other topics based on student knowledge or additional reading and research

**Web Diagrams:** Used to organize information about one topic

- characteristics of camels, jerboas, or other animals
- uses of date palms
- ways to use baladi bread, dates, or other food
- ways people use the Nile River
- animals, food, or places of Egypt (used with book as whole)

**Sequence Events Charts:** Used to sequence events in chronological order

- steps to making *doe-ah*

**Jot Charts:** Used to organize data in a two-dimensional matrix with topics/items recorded horizontally and specific characteristics recorded vertically

- record characteristic of the various animals of Egypt
- record characteristic of the various plants and/or food found in Egypt

**KWL Charts:** Used to record prior knowledge, questions about text, and answers

- use with the book as a whole or with an individual page or with a group of pages (all animals, all food, etc.)

[Back to Reading Activities](#)

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### After Reading

In this phase, our role is to help students clarify thinking, focus understanding, and retain reading material as well as link their new knowledge to their prior knowledge.

*"In addition, teachers will want to use strategies that tap into students' affective responses and deeper cognitive understanding of the material...In the postreading phase, readers should be able to reflect on what has been read and to determine if the purposes for reading were met."* (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 126)

This is the time to revisit and complete activities that were started before reading – KWL charts, anticipation guides, graphic organizers, etc. Other activities include:

#### Reading Journals

Sometimes called reading logs, response journals, or literature logs. *"Writing supports literacy development for English language learners, and journals furnish a means of assisting students to actively participate in reading, to record personal reactions and preferences, and to develop writing skills."* (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 127)

Teachers can either assign prompts to guide students' writing or allow students to choose

what they will write about. Some prompts might include:

*What are some new important facts that you learned?*

*What is the most interesting thing you have learned? Why?*

*Which new facts were you surprised to learn and why?*

*What are you interested in learning more about? Where would you look for more specific information?*

*What kind of research do you think the author had to do in order to write this book?*

*Which text features did the author use and why did one of them specifically help you learn the topic?*

*Would the information be different in any way if the book was 10 years older?*

### **Prompts for Reading Journals**

<http://www.middleweb.com/MWLresources/dbova1.html>

[Back to Reading Activities](#)

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## References

Hadaway, Nancy, Vardell Sylvia, and Young Terrell. **Literature-Based Instruction with English Language Learners**. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

Richardson, Judy and Morgan, Raymond. **Reading to Learn in the Content Areas**. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003.