

Instructional Read Aloud  
(with listening and turn and talk prompts)

At the beginning of a story readers figure out who is in the story and what we think we know about them. Listen hard for who is in the story.

We've realized that stories unfold very fast. We also know, that in good stories, details matter. I'm going to read that first part again. This time, see if you can figure out:

- details about the setting - not just where is it, but what kind of place is it?
- the characters' names

I love the way you are using evidence from the story to support your ideas. Good partners say to each other often: *What in the story makes you say that?* Good readers say to themselves: *What in the story makes me think that?*

In many stories, it matters what kind of people the characters are. Are they, for instance, brave or strong or determined or timid or shy. Listen and see if you can say what kind of person (give character's name) is. Also, one more thing, because often these clues arrive at the same time in the story, be ready to say something about the character's relationships with other people – are these relationships kind, loving, difficult, do people put pressure on him/her?

Readers, I love the way you used a lot of evidence from the story to back up your ideas about (give character's name). We realize, then, that when we infer, or have ideas about the characters, we can use what the characters say and do that to show us what kind of people they are. We can also look at how they treat each other, as that's a clue to their relationships.

Readers, some of you were saying that when you looked at relationships, and when you started to put together all these details about the character, you start to get a sense of what the character wants. See if you can say more about that – what the character wants, and what gets in the way. You know how stories go because you've read so many. Most stories, you know, have a big problem or obstacle or challenge that the main character faces. I'm going to read a little bit more: listen hard to see if you'll be ready to say what you think that big problem is, and where you see it in the story.

Readers, sometimes, as we read, it starts to become clear that there is one big problem that is obvious (like Doris wanting a dog in *Stray*, or Oliver wanting to dance in *Oliver Button is a Sissy*, or the boys wanting to swim in the pool in *Freedom Summer*), and there are other problems, or parts of this big problem, that are not so obvious – the reader has to figure them out by thinking about: what gets in the way of Doris, or Oliver, or John Henry and Joe, getting what they want? For instance, the problem wasn't just that Doris wanted a dog, it was that she couldn't talk to her parents about it, or the problem wasn't just that Joe and John Henry wanted to swim in the pool together, it was also that some other people didn't want that to happen.

Readers, we've recognized now the big problem the character faces, and we've said a lot about the parts of the problem – who seems to make this problem worse, who could maybe make it better. We've also said some things about what kind of person (give character's name) is. Here's something that you can do in stories – you can pay attention to what character's are feeling at certain parts of the story. Name their emotions, try to imagine what they must be feeling and be ready to say what you think is causing that feeling. I'm going to read a little bit, get ready to try that. You might use some of the words from our word wall to describe the way the character is feeling – like you might say not just sad, you might use a more sophisticated word like miserable or anxious.

Readers you said a lot about what the character has been feeling in parts of the story – and I love that you went back and described his/her feelings in earlier parts of the story, as compared to now. As I keep reading, I'm going to give you a clue now. You can tell a lot about people by how they face trouble. Do they cry and run, do they keep going, do they come up with unusual solutions? Get ready to say something about what kind of person the character is, based on how he/she is facing this trouble.

Ok, readers, we're getting near the end of the story. You know how stories go. You know that something has to happen in the story by the end – something changes. What we don't know yet, is this going to be the kind of story where the main character changes, or where other people change? And we don't know yet whether the problem will get resolved, or whether this is one of those stories where the problem doesn't go away (like in *Freedom Summer*, where the boys don't get to swim in the pool), but the main character still learns an important lesson. As I keep reading, you know your job, readers. Your job is to listen for what changes – that's not that hard. But you also have to be ready to say: what caused that change.

I love the way you had a lot to say about what caused the changes in the story – that's often called looking at cause and effect, and it also about looking at character motivation – why people do the things they do. Really good readers don't just accept change in the stories they read, they think about why things change, what causes it. Now there's one more thing. You know that stories often teach lessons. You know that there are two ways that stories teach lessons. Sometimes the main character learns a lesson (like in *Freedom Summer* or *The Stolen Party*, where Joe and Rosaura learn hard lessons about prejudice). Other times the main character teaches us a lesson (like in *Oliver Button* where Oliver teaches us to do things we believe in even when it's hard). Think about the story again. Think about what happened, and what changed, and say to your partner what lessons you think this story teaches, and *how* the reader learns those lessons.

Readers there's one last thing. Some of you were saying that you'd like to see certain parts of the story again. I want you to pay attention to that feeling. Usually, any time in the story that a reader has a strong emotional response – you are upset or pleased or nervous, it's worth looking at that part of the story to see what in the story makes you feel that way. But to look at the craft of the story, you need to have it in front of you. So I'll be giving you the story to look at when we do that.