

# INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD WITH CLASS<sup>®</sup> CONCEPTS

As an educator, you know how important read-alouds can be for building warm connections, enjoying time together, and learning. Use these strategies to plan engaging and effective learning opportunities through your read-aloud, whether in-person or online.



## PLANNING AHEAD

### BE PREPARED TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING TIME

Intentional planning is key to an engaging and fun read-aloud. Always begin by reading the story yourself to be sure how it supports your learning objectives—what your focus will be as you share it with the children. As you plan, jotting your ideas on sticky notes and placing them in the book is a helpful way to keep all of your ideas at the ready. It is important to consider how you will:

- + Focus the children's attention. Some books are just for fun; others have an important message or information. Think about why you chose this book and how you will explain that to the children. Understanding the learning objective will help you as you continue your planning.
- + Involve the children. Look for ways children can participate through making sounds or movements or repeating key words from the story.
- + Ask effective questions. Look for opportunities for the children to make personal connections to the story or to make predictions or comparisons. Think about how this book fits in with other things the children know or have learned. Plan for how you can help the children think about those connections.
- + Highlight new vocabulary. Look for words that will be new for the children and think of ways to explain them in words the children will understand.

When doing a virtual read-aloud, you also need to have the technology prepared so the children will be able to see the pictures and hear you clearly. Doing a “tech check” is always a great idea.



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## SETTING THE STAGE

### SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Before you begin reading, help the children focus and prepare to listen. Being proactive prevents problems from developing. Remind the children of any classroom expectations that will help them get the most out of the experience.

*Let's find a place where you're comfortable and can see. While we read this book, we're going to wiggle and make noises. Let's remember to keep in our personal spaces so we keep each other safe.*

Just like when you're reading a book in the classroom, set clear expectations for how to participate in a virtual read-aloud. Rules can include watching an entire recorded reading, raising hands to ask questions, looking at the pictures, muting microphones, and so on.

*We are going to listen to a story. When we're listening to a story, our eyes are on the pictures, our ears are listening, and our computers are on mute.*



### CREATE A CONNECTION BEFORE READING

Set the tone for your time together by smiling and using a warm, enthusiastic voice. Explain why you chose the book and what you'll be focusing on as you read. Invite the children to make a personal connection as well.

*I'm excited to read this story with you today about a lion who is trying to make friends. Tell me what you know about lions. How do you think this lion is feeling? When have you felt that way? What is a friend?*

Even if your read-aloud is a recording and your students can't engage with you live, you can still take a moment before reading to build a connection. Smile and greet the children using a warm voice. Share how you're feeling and ask how the children are feeling.

*How are you today? [pause] I'm doing well but I miss you! I'm excited to read this book with you because it reminds me of my own dog, Molly [show picture of dog]. Do you have any pets?*



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## LET'S READ!

### MAXIMIZE STUDENT INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT

Now, it's time to see your planning come to life as you invite children to participate during the read-aloud. They can chant a rhyme with you or mimic the movements or sounds in the story. Involving as many modalities as possible helps to boost children's engagement so they can get the most out of your read-aloud.

*Show me how you jump like a bunny! And let's say it together: "Hopping, hopping, never stopping!"*

In a virtual story time, it's harder to have hands-on opportunities. However, you can still maximize children's engagement by using a variety of voices and inviting children to participate verbally and with movements. If the read-aloud is prerecorded so students can't interact with it live, remember to pause during your recording, leaving time for children to respond.

*The dinosaurs marched up the hill. ROAR! [pause] Can you roar? Let's hear your loudest roar! [pause] Let's see your biggest stomping feet!*

### MAKE CONNECTIONS AND ASK QUESTIONS

As you read, consult your sticky note ideas for the questions, connections, and vocabulary plans you made. Promote children's higher-order thinking skills by pausing and inviting children to predict, compare, share their ideas, and discuss how the story relates to their lives.

Whether your read-aloud is in person, virtual, or recorded, ask questions such as:

- + How does this character feel?
- + Why do you think they feel that way?
- + When have you had that feeling?
- + How can this character solve their problem? Why might that work?
- + Does this story remind you of anything that's happened to you?
- + Where can you see something like this?
- + What do you think will happen? What makes you think that?
- + How do you think the story will end? Let's record our predictions so we can remember them at the end of the book.
- + How is this character or situation similar to or different from another story we know?



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## WRAP IT UP!

### REVIEW THE PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

Your classroom is a busy place. But before moving from a read-aloud to the next part of your day, take a moment to summarize the discussion and ideas from the book. Whether you're reading in person or in a virtual setting, provide an opportunity for the children to connect and reflect by asking questions such as:

- + What did you think of the book?
- + What was your favorite part?
- + How would you feel if this happened to you?
- + Has anything like this ever happened in your life? What did you do?

With thoughtful planning, enthusiastic reading, and engaging opportunities to participate, your read-alouds will create special memories for the children in your classroom—and a love for learning that can last a lifetime.

