

Using *DRTA* (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) to Predict When Reading

DRTA Procedure

1. Select an unfamiliar big book or enlarged text (overhead transparencies, charts) so that your students can join in the reading.
2. Prepare a DRTA by marking breaks at thought-provoking stopping points in the text, points where your students can form and justify their predictions in response to questions similar to 'What do you think will happen next?' and 'Why do you say that?'

In fiction, these points often occur just after a problem is introduced, and your students can predict possible solutions, using their knowledge of story grammar.

3. Explain the purpose of DRTA and the procedure involved. Explain to your students how you stop at different points when you are reading, perhaps when you finish reading a paragraph, to check if you understand what you have read so far. Explain how you then refocus on your purpose for reading, form new predictions, read, stop and reflect, and repeat the cycle.
4. Explain that thoughtful readers always think about what they know about a text and use this knowledge to form predictions about what the text might be about. Let your students know that there is no right or wrong prediction, as long as it is relevant to the topic.
5. Introduce the text to your students. Read the title, or ask your students to read the title, and ask them to predict what the text might be about. Encourage them to use their relevant background knowledge of the topic, available text features, and their knowledge of genres to predict and justify their predictions. You can list your students' predictions on chart paper to refer to throughout the DRTA.
6. Read with your students, stopping at the first marked break. Ask your students to confirm, reject or modify their predictions in light of what they learned. Ask them to explain their decisions. Was the information explicitly stated, and in the text, or did they make inferences.
7. Then ask your students to form and justify new predictions before you read to the next stopping point. Ask them to evaluate their predictions after each section of text is read and refer back to the text to compare their predictions with the text.
8. Continue the cycle of reading, predicting, confirming, or revising, until the text has been read.
9. Ask your students to explain to you how using their background knowledge, and predicting, justifying, confirming, rejecting, and revising their predictions will help them when they are reading independently.
10. Most importantly, help your students assess how well they predict, justify, confirm, reject or modify predictions when they read. Help them set personal goals about what they would like to do better in relation to these strategies and record their comments. You can refer back to these notes during individual Reading Conferences with your students.

From: Snowball, Diane. Teaching Comprehension: An interactive professional development course (CD-ROM Level K-2). NY, AUSSIE Interactive, 2005. Available in Canada from Thomson Nelson.