

THIEVES: A Strategy for Previewing Textbooks

This activity will help students with comprehension by allowing them to preview the text structure in an organized manner. This pre-reading strategy will allow students to “steal” information before they actually begin reading the chapter. Students will survey the text in the following manner:

Title – Students sometimes skip the title, but it provides valuable information by establishing the topic and the context of the chapter. If the text is written in chronological order, the title may indicate where the chapter would fit on a timeline. Some questions that the student may ask while looking at the title include:

- ✓ What do I already know about this topic?
- ✓ How does it connect to the previous chapter?
- ✓ How can I turn this title into a question to focus my reading?

Headings – Headings indicate the important sections of the chapter. They help students identify the specific topics covered. Students can turn the headings into questions to create a more focused look at information covered in the chapter. Some questions that the student may ask while looking at the headings include:

- ✓ How does this heading let me know what I will be reading about?
- ✓ What topic will be discussed in the paragraphs below this heading?
- ✓ How can I turn this heading into a question that can be answered when I read this section?

Introduction – The introduction provides an overview of the chapter. It may come after the title and before the first heading. Sometimes the goals and objectives of the chapter are stated in the introduction. Some questions that students may ask when previewing the introduction include:

- ✓ Is the introduction marked or do I have to locate it?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph introduce the chapter?
- ✓ What important information will I find in the introduction?
- ✓ Do I already know anything about this?

Every first sentence in a paragraph – First sentences are often the topic sentences of the paragraph, and by reading these a student can get an idea of the information that will be contained in the chapter.

Visuals and Vocabulary – Students should look at all pictures, charts, tables, maps and graphs contained in the chapter. They need to read the captions and labels on each. This enables students to learn a little about the topic before they begin to read. Some questions that students may ask about the visuals include:

- ✓ How do these visuals relate to the content of this chapter?
- ✓ What can I learn from them?
- ✓ How do the captions help me understand the visual?

Vocabulary unlocks the meaning of the content. Students need to understand vocabulary in order to comprehend the text. Vocabulary may or may not be identified as key words. It might be highlighted or italicized in the text. Some questions that students may ask about the vocabulary include:

- ✓ Is there a list of key words and are they defined in the glossary?
- ✓ Are there important words in boldface or italics?
- ✓ Do I know the important words?
- ✓ Are there other words I don't know?

End-of-Chapter Questions – These questions indicate important points and concepts from the chapter. Just reading these questions will help students target information that is important in the text and establish a purpose for reading. Some questions that students may ask about the end-of-chapter questions include:

- ✓ What do these questions ask?
- ✓ What information will be important in this chapter?
- ✓ How do I locate this information in the text?

Summary – Many texts contain a summary at the end of the chapter. Students can read the summary to activate prior knowledge and give them an idea of the important concepts contained in the chapter.

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