

Fireflies!

By: Julie Brinckloe

Monday

Effective readers **make inferences** to try to understand more than what the author has written.

- **SET UP:**

- Book
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Handout Chart (attached at end of entire lesson plan)

- **BEFORE:**

- “Someone tell me what you know about making inferences?”
 - Allow students to share.
 - “Making inferences is like reading in between the lines. It occurs when you understand something that is not directly stated. To do this, you have to combine your own background experience and knowledge with the clues the author gives you.”
- “Something important to note is that making an inference and making a prediction is not the same thing. Let’s think about the differences.”
 - Allow the students to share.
 - “They are closely related, but still different. Making a prediction is like continuing the sequence of events; it is about what comes next. Making an inference is looking for what is implied instead of what is stated. A prediction should be made on text and picture evidence; while an inference combines text clues with your own experiences.”
- “Let’s practice making inferences. I want everyone to make a chart on your paper. One column should say “What I See,” one column should say, “What I Know,” and the last column should say, “My inference.”
- “If I were to tell you, ‘There are big, black clouds in the sky.’ How would you fill in the rest of this chart? What could you infer from that statement?”

- **EXAMPLE INFERENCE:**

What I See	What I Know	My Inference
There are big, black clouds in the sky.	Dark clouds mean rain.	I think it is going to rain.

- “Let’s try it with a short story now. Fill in the chart after I finish reading. As I read, be thinking about what you can infer from the story.”
 - "Achoo!" Patti sneezed. She sneezed again and then a third time. She felt very warm and her head hurt. She dragged herself out of bed and called her boss. She told her boss she wouldn't be going to work, then she went back to sleep.”
- “What did everyone infer from the story?”

What I See	What I Know	My Inference
Patti is sneezing, feels warm, and skipping work.	I know when I feel like that and have to miss school, I am sick.	Patti is probably very sick.

- “Great! Now we are going to do the same thing but with our story.”
- **DURING:**
 - “Now, we are going to read our story *Fireflies!* to try to make some inferences about the story. Remember to use the clues the author gives and your own background knowledge to fill in your chart and make inferences.”
 - Remind them of the purpose one other time while reading.
- **AFTER:**
 - “Now that we finished reading our story, let’s talk about what we inferred from the story. Tell me what you inferred.”
 - Give the students a moment to think.
 - If they give you some kind of inference, work backwards in the chart with them. Have them fill in their inference, then get them to tell you what prior knowledge they used to infer that, and finally get them to tell you what part of the book they saw it in.
 - Some possible inferences include but are not limited to:

What I See	What I Know	My Inference
There are blinking lights flying around outside. (p. 3)	Usually if I see blinking lights outside flying around, it is fireflies.	There are probably fireflies outside!
Mom says, “Don’t let your dinner get cold.” (p. 3)	My mom tells me things like this when I am distracted and not eating my dinner.	The boy probably is not eating his dinner because he is distracted by something else.
He is quietly poking holes in the jar with scissors so his mom won’t find out he is dulling them. (p. 7)	When my mom tells me not to do something and I do it anyway, I try to do it secretly.	He will probably get in trouble if his mom catches him dulling the scissors.
Someone from the houses calls for the children to come inside because it is late. (p.16)	When I am playing outside and it gets late, my parents call for me to come inside.	The children’s parents are probably the ones that called for them to come inside.
Mom kisses him and turns out the light. The picture also shows him in his bed. (p. 18)	When I am getting ready to go to sleep, my parents usually come in to say goodnight and turn out my light.	The little boy is probably getting ready to go to sleep.

*More continued on next page.

What I See	What I Know	My Inference
The boy saw the fireflies were behaving weird and had a lump in his throat. (p. 22)	When I am worried about something, sometimes I get a lump in the back of my throat.	The boy must be worried that the fireflies are dying.
The fireflies are falling to the bottom and their light got really dim. (p. 23)	When fireflies stop flying, fall to the ground, and aren't lighting up, something is wrong.	The fireflies in the story are probably dying.

TIME FILLER:

- “We are going to play charades! In order to guess what is being acted out, you have to make inferences! Take what the actor gives you and add in your background knowledge to make your inference.”
- Tell one student to act out:
 - Making a bowl of cereal
 - Weeding the garden
 - Washing and folding laundry

Tuesday

Effective readers use **cause and effect** to help them gain a better understanding of the story.

- **SET UP:**
 - Book
 - Paper
 - Pens or pencils
- **BEFORE:**
 - “Let’s talk about cause and effect.”
 - Pause and see what the students give you.
 - Build off of what they say and try to pull out an answer similar to this:
 - “The cause is the reason something happens, and the effect is the result of that event. It is important because cause and effect help us to better understand the story.”
 - “I want us to do a little bit of practice with cause and effect before we read *Fireflies!*”
 - “Everyone draw cause on the left side of your paper and effect on the other side. Now draw a line down the middle. I am going to read you this short story, and we are going to figure out some cause and effect examples.”
 - Read the story.
 - “Yesterday, after playing with my hamster on the floor, I put him back into his cage. But, I didn’t close the lid tightly and he escaped. I didn’t know he was loose until I saw something run by my feet. I jumped up quickly and hit the lamp on the table next to me. The lamp fell and crashed to the ground, making a loud noise. Soon, my dad was in the

room upset that he was awoken from his nap. I walked over to apologize when I stopped just in time. My hamster was sitting in front of me, looking up, and smiling. I reached down to grab him, and he took off under the couch and into the kitchen. When I heard the scream, I knew my mom had seen my pet. She scooped him into a colander and popped him back into his cage. I tightly secured the top, and he was back in his home.”

- “Now, write ‘I did not close the lid tightly’ under cause. Let’s talk about what the effect was?”
 - Pause to let them tell you.
 - Be sure to elaborate or do whatever it takes to receive a similar answer from the students. Do not simply give it to them to move on.
 - “The effect is my hamster escaped.”
- Chart has examples to be given and answers. The answers are in italics and should not be read to the students.
- Following the same patterns as the above example, do as many examples as time permits.

Cause	Effect
I did not close the lid tightly	<i>My hamster escaped.</i>
<i>The hamster ran by me and startled me.</i>	I jumped up and hit the lamp.
The lamp crashed to the floor and made a loud noise.	<i>The noise woke up my dad.</i>
I saw my hamster and tried to grab him.	<i>The hamster ran away (into the kitchen).</i>
<i>My mom saw the hamster (in the kitchen).</i>	My mom screamed.

- “Now that we have practice with this short story, let’s try it with our story.”
- **DURING:**
 - “Read the story to the kids and be sure to remind them of our purpose for reading.”
 - “We are reading to determine cause and effect in our story.”
- **AFTER:**
 - “Now everyone flip your paper over and draw another cause and effect chart. Someone give me an example of an event in our story, or the “effect,” and what may have caused it.”
 - Allow the students to share. There are numerous possibilities.
 - Once a student gives an example, tell all of the students to write down the example under the “events” column.
 - “Now let’s discuss as a group what may have caused this event.”
 - “Now, let’s flip it around, can anyone give me a cause and we can try and come up with the effect for it?”
 - Follow the same guidelines as before.
 - Possible examples from the book below:

Cause	Effect
The boy saw fireflies out his window. (p. 3)	He asked his parents if he could go play outside.
Mom says, "Don't let your dinner get cold." (p. 3)	The boy eats his food quickly.
The jars were dusty. (p. 6)	The boy polished them.
The boy wanted the fireflies to be able to breathe in the jar. (p. 7)	He poked holes in the jar.
The children were trying to catch all the fireflies. (p. 11)	They ran around like crazy outside.
People called from the houses for the children to come inside. (p. 16)	The children all ran inside.
The boy saw the fireflies were acting differently. (p. 22)	He was worried and had trouble swallowing.
The jar was nearly dark as the fireflies' lights faded. (p. 24)	He let the fireflies go.

TIME FILLER:

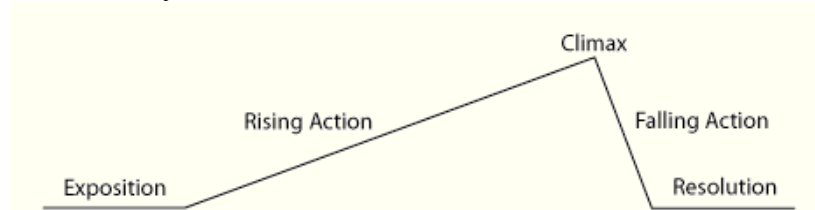
- I want everyone to tell me the story of the last vacation you went on, and then we will discuss some cause and effect events from your story. Everyone will get a turn. Remember this is a group discussion.

Wednesday

Effective readers are able to develop the **plot** of the story by putting important sequences of events in order.

- **SET UP:**
 - Book
 - Paper
 - Pens or pencils
- **BEFORE:**
 - "Someone tell me what they know about the plot of a story."
 - Allow the students to share.
 - "The plot is the important sequence of events that make up a story. It usually develops in 5 major stages. Let's talk about the stages of the plot."
 - This may be a relatively new concept and may require more teaching.
 - "The 5 stages are exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution."
 - "The **exposition** gives us the important information about the characters, the setting, and the situation at the beginning of the story."
 - "The **rising action** is when some event happens in the story to complicate it or to move the story along."
 - "The **climax** is the emotional high point or the turning point of the story. Some stories have easy to spot climaxes while others are not as obvious."

- “The **falling action** comes next and is when the author tries to tie up the loose ends before the story comes to an end, and this is called the **resolution**.”
- “I want everyone to draw a chart like this.”



- “On this chart will be where you plot your 5 key points to the story. Let’s practice with the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.”
- “Three bears decide to go for a walk while their porridge cools down. A little girl named Goldilocks, wanders into their house and finds the three bowls of porridge. The first one she tastes is too hot, the second is too cold, but the third one is just right, so she eats it all up. After that, she decides to take a nap. She finds a room with beds. The first bed is too hard, the second bed is too soft, but the third is just right and she curls up and falls asleep. Meanwhile the bears come home, and much to their surprise they discover their porridge is gone! After that, they find her in one of the beds. She wakes up terrified when she hears the bears and runs away as fast as she can. The bears never saw her again after that.”
- “Now, let’s practice plotting the plot on our diagram. What is our exposition?”
 - Allow the students to answer. Make sure everyone comes to a general consensus of what the answer should be and everyone should write it down.
 - Exposition- A little girl, named goldilocks, wanders into the house of three bears while they are out for a walk. Their house is in the woods.
- “Great! Now what is the rising action?”
 - Follow the same process
 - Rising action- Goldilocks eats the porridge and goes to sleep in the bear’s bed.
- Continue to follow this pattern for the other three parts.
 - Climax- The bears find Goldilocks asleep in the bed.
 - Falling action- She wakes up, gets very afraid when she sees them, and runs away.
 - Resolution- She never bothers the bears again.
- “Now that we practiced finding the plot with that short story, let’s try it with our story, *Fireflies!*”
- **DURING:**
 - Read the story to them.
 - Remind them to be thinking of the 5 points of the plot and where different points of the story would fall into that category.
 - Stop about half way through and remind them that they should already know what their exposition is and have a general idea of what the rising action may be.
- **AFTER:**

- “Let’s think. Pair. Share. Partner up and discuss the different points of the plot for this story.”
 - Give the students the book so they can go through it and find the points they are looking for.
 - Give the students a little bit of time to do this. Make sure they are collaborating together and that one is not just doing all of the work.
- “Now, let’s share as a group.”
 - Allow the students to share. Answers may vary slightly, but it should be close to these general answers.
 - Exposition- It is a late summer night in a little neighborhood, and a little boy discovers fireflies outside his window.
 - Rising action- The children all catch fireflies and take them home. The little boy watches as the fireflies stop flying in the jar and their lights begin to dim.
 - Climax- He gets really sad because he thinks they are dying. He opens the jar and waits for them to fly out and be free.
 - Falling action- The fireflies lights brighten again, and they fly away unharmed.
 - Resolution- The boy watches as they fly away, and he is happy because they were okay.

TIME FILLER:

- I want you to work with a partner to draw the plot diagram and plot the events of the story *The Three Little Pigs*.

Thursday

Effective readers think about what **motivates** a character to do certain actions and why this is important to the story.

- **SET UP:**
 - Book
 - Paper
 - Pens or pencils
- **BEFORE:**
 - “We have talked about character motivation before, let’s think about why it is important to consider what motivates a character to do something.”
 - Allow the students to each contribute something to the discussion.
 - “Character motivation is important because it helps us to better understand the character and better understand the story.”
 - “Let’s think about the movie *Finding Nemo*. What do you think motivated the dad fish, Marlin, to do the things he did?”
 - Let the students discuss.
 - “What about Dory? What about Nemo?”
 - Continue to allow the students to discuss.
- **DURING:**

- “Now we are going to read our story to figure out what motivated the little boy to do the things he did in the story. Let’s try to figure out what motivates the boy to set the fireflies free even though he didn’t want to.”
 - Be sure to remind them of the purpose for reading.
- **AFTER:**
 - “In our story, the little boy released the fireflies even though he wanted to keep them forever. Let’s talk about this for a minute.”
 - Pause and see if the students have anything to say about this.
 - “What do you think motivated him to do this?”
 - Possible answers:
 - “He knew they were going to die if he kept them.”
 - “It was making him sad watching their lights fade out.”
 - “What do you think would have happened if he decided to keep them?”
 - Possible answers:
 - “They would have died.”
 - “His mom and dad would be mad at him for killing them.”
 - “He would have to throw the dead bugs away and clean out the jar.”
 - “Do you think the other kids in the neighborhood released their fireflies too?”
 - Let them give their responses.
 - “What if the kids didn’t release them?”
 - Possible answers:
 - “All of the fireflies would have died.”
 - “There would be a lot less fireflies out the next day.”
 - “The little boy had to release the fireflies even though he wanted to keep them. Have you ever felt this feeling before?”
 - Pause to see if the students respond with anything.
 - If they don’t respond say, “Have you ever been motivated to do something that you really didn’t want to do? What motivated you? Tell me about it.”

TIME FILLER:

- Let’s vote on everyone’s favorite movie. Once we pick it, we will try to decide what motivated the main character to perform the actions he or she does in the story.

Other (1)

Effective readers can come up with the **theme** of the story using clues the author gives.

- **SET UP:**
 - Book
 - Paper
 - Pens or pencils
- **BEFORE:**
 - “Let’s talk about the theme of a story.”
 - Pause for the students to each contribute their answers.

- “All stories have a theme that the author is trying to tell us. Some themes are easier to pick out than others. Someone tell me a time when you saw a movie or heard a story and let’s talk about the possible theme of the story.”
 - Allow the students to share. This may take a little while, but do not accept ‘I can’t think of anything’ as an answer.
 - Some examples if the group does not contribute many ideas:
 - *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*- Christmas is not about the presents, decorations, tree, or food. Christmas is about being with your family and giving to others.
 - *Toy Story*- It is important to put aside your differences and jealousies. Sometimes your worst enemy may really be your best friend.
 - *The Gingerbread Man*- Don’t be arrogant.
 - *The Little Engine That Could*- Never give up until you achieve your dreams.
 - *The Three Little Pigs*- Hard work pays off.
- “Now, let’s read *Fireflies!* to see if we can come up with the theme of the story. Remember to use different clues that the author leaves us.”
- **DURING:**
 - Read the story and be sure to remind the students of the purpose for reading the book at least one other time.
 - “Try to guess what the author was thinking while he wrote the story. Use all your available clues to help you figure out the theme.”
- **AFTER:**
 - “Now that we read, I want you to write down what you think the theme of this story is.”
 - Give the students a minute to write their answers down.
 - “Now, I want you to discuss your answers with the group and together come up with the best theme for this story.”
 - Make sure the students are working together and contributing to the discussion.
 - “Tell me what theme your group came up with, and then I want each of you to tell me what part of your individual theme was contributed to the group’s theme.”
 - Try to build on whatever the students give you and encourage them to point out exact instances from the book that helped them develop that theme.
 - Possible themes for the book are:
 - “Sometimes we have to think about what is best for others and not for ourselves.”
 - “Doing the right thing isn’t always the easiest, but it will feel the most rewarding when all is said and done.”

TIME FILLER:

- “Now I want you all to work together to act out a story or movie with a theme. I will try to guess the theme of the story from your skit!”

Other (2)

Effective readers **formulate an opinion** about a book as they read it, so they can decide whether or not to recommend it to others.

- **SET UP:**
 - Book
 - Paper
 - Pens or pencils
- **BEFORE:**
 - “When you read a book, you make certain opinions about it, sometimes without even realizing. There might be some parts you like more than others; however, someone else who reads it may have a totally opposite opinion than you. Some things you love, others might hate. Let’s talk about that.”
 - Pause to see if the students give you anything. Wait for about a minute.
 - “I want everyone to think of a time you really, really liked something, but someone else didn’t like it. Tell me about it.”
 - Allow the students to share their personal experiences.
 - “Did it cause any issues?”
 - Let them share again.
 - “I want everyone to make 4 columns on your paper. Set it up like this.”

I liked...	Because...	I didn’t like...	Because...

- **DURING:**
 - “Now we are going to read the story and think about the things we like and don’t like. We are also going to think about the reasons behind those feelings.
 - Be sure to remind them of the purpose while reading the story.
- **AFTER:**
 - “Now I want everyone to take some time and write at least 2 things you liked and 2 things you didn’t like about the book. Make sure to give your reasoning for your decisions.”
 - Give the students a while to work on this.
 - Offer the book to them for help if they need it.
 - “We are going to share our likes and dislikes now to see if any are similar. Tell me why you feel that way.”
 - Each student should alternate giving an answer to the discussion. One student should say what he or she liked and why and then a different student should take a turn.

- Make sure each student shares at least one like and dislike, but if time permits then share all.
- “Now let’s discuss the similarities and differences between our opinions.”
 - Allow the students to respond.
 - If not a lot of responses try prompting by saying something like, “Did anyone have similar likes? Did anyone have similar dislikes? Why were they the same or why were they different?”
- “Would you recommend this book to others to read?”

TIME FILLER:

- “Think of your favorite movie. Now pretend I told you that I really don’t want to see it because it looks boring. What would you tell me to try to convince me to see it?”

