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STRATEGY GUIDE

Making Connections



Grades 3 - 8

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Strategy Guide
Series

Differentiating Instruction

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ABOUT THIS STRATEGY GUIDE

In this strategy guide, you'll learn how to model how students can make three different kinds of connections (text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world). Students then use this knowledge to find their own personal connections to a text.

RESEARCH BASIS

A majority of students in the upper elementary and middle grades are beyond decoding instruction and need more assistance with comprehension to help them become successful, independent readers. Strategic reading allows students to monitor their own thinking and make connections between texts and their own experiences. Students who make connections while reading are better able to understand the text they are reading. It is important for students to draw on their prior knowledge and experiences to connect with the text. Students are thinking when they are connecting, which makes them more engaged in the reading experience.

Students gain a deeper understanding of a text when they make authentic connections. However, teachers need to know how to show students how a text connects to their lives, another text they have read, or the world around them. In this strategy guide, you will learn how to model text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections for your students so that they may begin to make personal connections to a text on their own.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

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- Before practicing this strategy in the classroom, create a list of personal connections to the particular text for which you will be modeling this strategy.
- Explain to students that you are going to practice the comprehension strategy of making connections to find ways that students can personally relate to a text. Ask students to think about the following questions. You may choose to write these on the board or chart paper for students to see.
 - Focusing on text-to-self connections:
 - What does this story remind you of?
 - Can you relate to the characters in the story?
 - Does anything in this story remind you of anything in your own life?
 - Focusing on text-to-text connections:
 - What does this remind you of in another book you have read?
 - How is this text similar to other things you have read?

- How is this text different from other things you have read?
- Focusing on text-to-world connections:
 - What does this remind you of in the real world?
 - How are events in this story similar to things that happen in the real world?
 - How are events in this story different from things that happen in the real world?
- Using the Making Connections Posters ([Text-to-Self Connection](#), [Text-to-Text Connection](#), and [Text-to-World Connection](#)) as visual aids, introduce the three types of connections: Text-to-Self Connection, Text-to-Text Connection, and Text-to-World Connection. Explain how readers often make connections to a story to help them better understand the text.
- Use the think-aloud strategy to model how to make each type of connection, using your list of personal connections to the particular text. Make sure to emphasize connections that actually help enhance your understanding of the novel and others that are merely “there.” Examples to share with the students follow. Ask students to share a few quick examples of both kinds of connections, and explain why some might help their understanding of the text more than others.
 - Good connections that enhance understanding:
 - When I was in second grade, I moved to a new school like Shirley did. I remember feeling like everyone ignored me and missing my home, so I can relate to what she’s going through.
 - Surface-level connections that are merely “there”:
 - Shirley likes the Dodgers. So do I.
- After you are certain that students have a firm understanding of making connections, allow them to begin listing their own connections to the text using the Double-Entry Journal and then expanding their connections with the Planning Web.
- Finally, students can organize and write an essay about a connection to the text using the Essay Map interactive or choose a different student interactive to use to create a project based on a connection to the text.

RELATED RESOURCES

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LESSON PLANS

Grades **4 - 6** | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson

[Guided Comprehension: Making Connections Using a Double-Entry Journal](#)

Based on the Guided Comprehension Model by Maureen McLaughlin and Mary Beth Allen, this lesson helps students learn three types of connections (text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world) using a double-entry journal.

Grades **9 - 12** | Lesson Plan

[What Did They Say? Dialect in *The Color Purple*](#)

Y’all set down a spell and learn ‘bout dialects!” In other words, your students will use *The Color Purple* to explore dialect and how it reveals information about the characters.

Grades **6 - 8** | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson

[Making Personal and Cultural Connections Using *A Girl Named Disaster*](#)

Struggling to survive is one of the many themes explored in *A Girl Named Disaster*. As students read, they look for connections between themselves and the main character, Nhamo.

Grades **4 - 7** | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson

[Boars and Baseball: Making Connections](#)

In this lesson, students will make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections after reading *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*. After sharing and discussing connections, students choose and plan a project that makes a personal connection to the text.

PRINTOUTS

Grades **3 - 8** | Printout | Graphic Organizer

[Double-Entry Journal](#)

This printout helps students record ideas and situations from texts in one column, and their reactions in the second, thus making a connection between the text and themselves, another text, or the world.

Grades **3 - 8** | Printout | Graphic Organizer

[Connection Web](#)

Students use this printout to expand on connections they have made to a text and use those details to write essays or create projects about the text.

Grades **3 - 8** | Printout | Graphic Organizer

[Connection Stems](#)

Connection Stems give students the language (and a reminder) to support their understanding by tying new learning to what they know about themselves and their world.

Grades **3 - 8** | Printout | Graphic Organizer

[Making Connections](#)

Using this printout, students make personal associations to a text by finding and describing text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.

STRATEGY GUIDES

Grades **K - 8** | Strategy Guide

[Using Partner Talk to Strengthen Student Collaboration and Understanding](#)

In this strategy guide, you'll learn about Partner Talk—a way to provide students with another learning opportunity to make learning their own through collaboration and discussion.

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