

About Directed Reading Thinking Activities (DRTA)



Purpose of this activity:

- To provide explicit direction in reading comprehension
- To use before-during-after activities
- To develop critical thinking skills
- To actively engage learners with the print and teach them to predict
- To demonstrate to students that reading can be fun
- To help students reflect after the reading and ask themselves if they learned what they needed to know or if they should look up more information.

This comprehension reading activity guides students in making predictions about a passage, which they can confirm or refute as they read the text. This strategy provides a fun and positive way for your student to become actively engaged with a text. It also provides tutors with an opportunity to think aloud and share their own reading and predicting strategies. Think alouds help teachers transfer their own good reading skills to their students.

DRTA Steps

Before the reading

1. Carefully select points within the reading passage where you want students to stop reading.
2. Direct students to read the title, look at the picture, and read any headings. Then ask the group to predict what the reading passage will be about. If students have difficulty with this step, demonstrate the step by thinking aloud as you make predictions. Write your prediction on a white board. Encourage students to predict and write down their thoughts. Keep the discussion going until the group exhausts the topic.

During the reading

1. Ask students to read the passage until the stopping point you've designated. If they are reading material in a book or on paper, ask them to cover the rest of the text with a blank sheet of paper. If they are reading a passage online, ask them to move the text

down, so that the screen does not show the rest of the passage. See image below of the O'Henry story, *The Romance of a Busy Stockbroker*.

The Romance of a Busy Broker

O. Henry

Pitcher, confidential clerk in the office of Harvey Maxwell, broker, allowed a look of mild interest and surprise to visit his usually expressionless countenance when his employer briskly entered at half past nine in company with his young lady stenographer. With a snappy "Good-morning, Pitcher," Maxwell dashed at his desk as though he were intending to leap over it, and then plunged into the great heap of letters and telegrams waiting there for him.

The young lady had been Maxwell's stenographer for a year. She was beautiful in a way that was decidedly unstenographic. She forewent the pomp of the alluring pompadour. She wore no chains, bracelets or lockets. She had not the air of being about to accept an invitation to luncheon. Her dress was grey and plain, but it fitted her figure with fidelity and discretion. In her neat black turban hat was the gold-green wing of a macaw. On this morning she was softly and shyly radiant. Her eyes were dreamily bright, her cheeks genuine peach, her expression a happy one, tinged with reminiscence.

Pitcher, still mildly curious, noticed a difference in her ways this morning. Instead of going straight into the adjoining room, where her desk was, she lingered, slightly irresolute, in the outer office. Once she moved over by Maxwell's desk, near enough for



him to be aware of her presence. **STOPPING POINT - COVER WORDS BELOW**

The machine sitting at that desk was no longer a man; it was a busy New York broker, moved by buzzing wheels and uncoiling springs.

2. Discuss student predictions and ask them to evaluate how accurate they were with their initial predictions. Guide students in the discussion.
3. After the discussion, tell students to remove the paper and read until the next stopping point.
4. Repeat these steps until the end of the reading passage.

After the reading

Compare the initial predictions to the final results.

1. Ask students how the predictions changed? Why did they change?
2. How comfortable did they feel making predictions and finding confirmations in the text?

**Note to the teacher:**

- To successfully participate in this activity, the student will need explicit instructions.
- Provide short segments for the student to read before a stopping point.
- Choose material with subject matter that already interests your student or that lends itself well to predictions and frequent stops.
- Be sure to use an article at your student's comfort level. Pre-teach vocabulary words that might be new. Help with definitions.