Determining Importance

Identifying important ideas and information while reading is called *determining importance*. Skilled readers use clues to decide which ideas are most essential or valuable in building understanding of the text. It is important to be able to distinguish between your own ideas of what is most important and what the author stresses in the book.

Readers who determine importance effectively . . .
- Recognize and use clues from text and formatting (headings, bold print).
- Sort main ideas and supporting details.

Distinguish between what might be interesting to them and what the author considered most important.

Determining Importance

For each character, write one sentence that captures his or her most important traits.

If you were making a movie of this book and had to cut some scenes, which scenes would you cut and why?

What is the most memorable part of this book for you? Do you think this part would be most memorable for every reader? Why or why not?

What is the most important idea the author conveys? How does this compare with what *you* found to be most relevant and interesting?

Making Connections

Making connections allows you to relate what you read to what you already know. Strategic readers make connections with other texts, their own lives, and their broader knowledge of the world. These are called text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Using this strategy will help you make predictions, remember new information, and expand your background knowledge.

Readers who make connections effectively . . .
- Take time while reading to recognize and think about ways the text reminds them of other books or experiences.
- Distinguish between connections that enhance and connections that distract.

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ST-2

Making Connections

How does the information in this book add to what you already knew about the topic?

What advice would you give the main character if he or she were starting as a new student at your school? Whom do you think he or she would sit with at lunch?

In what ways does this book remind you of other books you have read? How does this connection enhance your understanding of the book?

In what other topics or ideas might people who like this book be interested? Why?

Making Inferences

Inferences are the conclusions that you are able to draw and support with evidence from your reading. Interpreting clues in the text, using background knowledge, and recognizing key ideas will enable you to understand unfamiliar words, identify central ideas and themes of the book, and make predictions.

Readers who make good inferences . . .
- Identify important information in text and draw conclusions from it.
- Support their conclusions with specific evidence from the text.

Make predictions based on an understanding of what they have read so far and connections to key ideas.

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ST-3

Making Inferences

What do you think is likely to happen next in the book? What evidence supports your prediction?

Describe something about the book that was not stated in the text but that you inferred from reading it. Explain how you came to the conclusion.

Does the book have a table of contents? If so, what clues does it give you about the plot?

Identify a word from the book that was new to you. How did you figure out the meaning of the word?

ST-3

Metacognition

Metacognition is the process used by individuals to plan, monitor, and evaluate their thinking. Skilled readers also use this strategy to monitor their comprehension by stopping, thinking, and reacting to information as they read.

Readers who successfully monitor comprehension . . .
- Recognize when they are understanding what they are reading and when they are struggling.
- Identify a purpose for reading and a plan for remaining focused while reading.

Use strategies that enable them to continue to build their vocabulary and background knowledge.

ST-4

Metacognition

Describe a point in the story at which you didn't want to put the book down. What made that moment so compelling?

What observations can you make about the overall layout of the book? How did the layout affect the way in which you are reading the book?

Identify a part of the book on which you had to spend extra time. Explain the strategies you used to understand the information.

Describe a time when you got distracted while reading this book. Was the distraction related to the book or an aspect of your environment?

ST-4

Questioning

Questioning is a strategy readers use to focus their learning, clarify any confusion about the text, and reflect on and wonder about what they read.

Readers who use questioning effectively . . .
- Recognize when they are confused while reading and pause to review their questions.
- Read purposefully by listing questions they intend to answer as they read.
- Pause to wonder about new ideas or questions connected in some way to what they are reading.
- Go back in the text or use other resources to answer their questions.

Questioning

Make your own bookmark to leave in this book for the next reader. Be sure to include an easy question, a difficult question, and at least one thought-provoking question.

Describe a strategy that you have used to identify a good place in this book to stop and ask yourself questions. Will this strategy work with other texts? Why or why not?

Think of two questions you have about the protagonist. How do you think the questions will be answered as you continue with the story?

What questions would you want to ask an expert on this topic after reading the book?

Questioning

Questioning

Synthesizing

Synthesizing enables readers to draw together important ideas and details in order to explain the central message of what they have read. This strategy is related to summarizing because it involves recalling significant details of the text, but it also requires you to combine them with background knowledge to enhance your understanding.

Readers who summarize and synthesize well . . .
- Successfully and succinctly retell what they have read, including important details and leaving out less critical information.
- Identify important ideas in text and explain how the details support the big ideas.
- Are able to revise their thinking as they read.

Synthesizing

Select a chapter of the book and give it a new title. Explain your rationale for your title.

What is the central conflict in the book? Would you describe it as an example of *man vs. self, man vs. man, man vs. nature,* or *man vs. society*? Why?

How would you adapt this book to appeal to a younger or older audience?

Create a new problem for the protagonist that is similar to a problem you once faced. Do you think the protagonist would respond to the problem the same way you did? Why or why not?

ST-6

Synthesizing

Select a chapter of the book and give it a new title. Explain your rationale for your title.

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ST-6

Synthesizing

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ST-6

Visualizing

Visualizing involves creating sensory images of what is read. The pictures, emotions, and sounds that skilled readers develop while reading may come from the details provided in the text as well as from the personal connections and background knowledge that they bring to what they read.

Readers who use visualizing well . . .
- Read descriptive passages carefully.
- Can describe or draw images of characters, settings, etc.
- Identify specific text passages or details that inspired their visualizations.
- Use sensory images to help remember key ideas.

Visualizing

If you were to design a soundtrack for this book, what type of music or songs would you use? Why?

Imagine one character's closet. Describe at least five things that you would expect to find there. (Remember, many people's closets contain more than clothing!)

Choose one scene from the book that you would like to illustrate. What color palette and artistic media would you use? Why?

Find a scene in the book that left a strong picture in your mind. What language did the author use that helped to create that visualization?

Visualizing

Visualizing