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# Using Fred Gipson's Old Yeller to Practice Essential Reading Skills [4th grade]

Kathryn Morrow  
Trinity University

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# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

**Unit Title:** Using Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* to Practice Essential Reading Skills

**Grade Level:** Fourth Grade

**Subject/Topic Area(s):** Reading Skills, Reading Strategies, Reading TAKS, *Old Yeller*, Texas

**Designed By:** Katie Morrow

**Time Frame:** Fifteen 45-minute class periods (three weeks)

**School District:** Round Rock ISD

**School:** Great Oaks Elementary School

**School Address and Phone:** 16455 Great Oaks Drive, Round Rock, TX 78681  
Phone: 512.464.6850

### **Brief Summary of Unit** (Including curricular context and unit goals):

In this unit, students will practice essential reading strategies while reading the novel *Old Yeller* by Fred Gibson. They will enhance their awareness and use of skills such as using context clues, identifying the main idea and the author's purpose, making predictions and inferences, summarizing, and checking for understanding. Students will understand that good readers use specific skills and strategies to help them better comprehend a text, and they will be able to identify and describe some of those strategies. After participating in a number of learning activities, students will be able to answer the questions, "*How do reading strategies help me become a better reader?*" and "*What can I do when I do not understand what I am reading?*"

In addition to developing students' life-long reading skills, this unit is designed to review reading strategies prior to the fourth grade TAKS reading assessment. To that end, students will complete a multiple-choice assessment at the close of this unit with questions that emulate those on the TAKS test. In addition, they will work in groups to complete one of two performance assessments. For the first task, students will design a presentation to teach their peers about one of the reading strategies investigated in this unit. The presentations will be videotaped to be shared among other fourth grade classes. The second task will require the students to create a book that teaches future fourth grade classes how to be a good reader through use of the strategies they have learned.

\*Note - The novel *Old Yeller* was chosen because of its connection to the fourth grade social studies curriculum, but any novel can be used in its place.

**Unit:** Using Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* to Practice Essential Reading Skills

**Grade:** 4th

## Stage 1: Desired Results

### Understandings

*Students will understand that...*

Good readers use specific skills and strategies to help them better understand a text.

### Essential Questions

(Indicated by green text in Stage 3: Learning Activities)

What skills and strategies do good readers use?

How do reading strategies help students become better readers?

What can I do when I do not understand what I am reading?

### Skills

*Students will be able to apply the following skills while reading grade-level texts:*

- Determine the main idea of a paragraph, passage, or chapter –Sequence and summarize the plot's main events (4.6A, 4.9, 4.11A)
- Use the context of a sentence or paragraph to determining the meaning of unfamiliar words (4.2B)
- Analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author's purpose and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding (4.10)
- Make predictions about events and changes characters may undergo based on evidence from the text(4.6A,4.6B)
- Self-check for understanding and employ strategies when comprehension breaks down (4.1)

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

### Performance Task:

Students will work in groups of 3-5 members to complete one of the following tasks.

#### Task #1

The group is responsible for teaching their classmates about what good readers do. As a group, they will choose one of reading strategies they have been practicing (making predictions/inferences, main idea/summarizing, using context clues, identifying the author's purpose, or checking for understanding). They will develop a three to five minute **presentation** that teaches their audience how to use that strategy and why good readers use the strategy. Their presentation must include both spoken and visual components. Groups may decide how to present their strategy (through a skit, song, demonstration, etc.), and it must include both a spoken piece and a visual aid (poster, diagram, model, etc.).

Presentations will be videotaped to be used as a resource for other fourth graders as a review for TAKS and a lesson in becoming a better reader. Fourth grade teachers may choose to stage a "movie showing" in the days before TAKS so that students will have the opportunity to share their presentation videos among classes and review reading skills in an interesting way.

#### Task #2

The group is to create a **book** that teaches next year's fourth graders how to be good readers. Each group member will choose a different reading strategy to teach via a page (or pages) in the book. The page(s) should include an explanation of how to use the strategy and why good readers use the strategy. They should also include some kind of visual representation to help their readers remember the strategy (a cartoon, symbol, etc.). Groups will work together to think of ways to make their book interesting, such as creating characters and telling a story from beginning to end. Book pages may be computer generated or hand-made. The students will create a cover, title page, and table of contents. The table of contents will list the strategies taught in the book and will indicate which group member completed each section. Teachers with access to technology may choose to have students create a PowerPoint or PhotoStory presentation in lieu of a book.

### Other evidence:

Reading Strategies Pre- and Post- Assessment to be administered at the beginning and end of unit  
Daily Comprehension Check Quizzes  
Sticky notes (informal assessment – transferred to Reader’s Notebooks)  
Main Idea Worksheet for Chapter 6 (homework assignment)  
Context Clue King or Queen Worksheet (homework assignment)  
Chalk Talk posters (informal assessment)  
*Savage Sam/The Last of the Old-Time Cowboys* Reading Passages (traditional reading comprehension assessment)

## Stage 3: Learning Activities

### Day 1-Making Predictions

**Think-Pair-Share:** Post the following quote on the board: “*Tis the good reader that makes the good book.*” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Give students a few minutes to think about what the quote might mean, and then have them discuss their ideas in pairs. Have pairs share what they thought and what they heard with the class. Tell students that over the next few weeks, we are going to be trying to answer the question: “**What skills and strategies do good readers use?**”

Students will complete the **Reading Strategies Pre-Assessment** (attached). Encourage students to write what they know without worrying about what they do not know or remember. Let them know that this pre-assessment is going to be a tool to measure how much they have learned over the course of this unit. Teacher will collect the pre-assessment and save to be compared with post-assessment.

Tell students that *predicting* is one of the strategies of a good reader. Before reading a text, readers should “activate their schemas” by reading the title, looking at the cover or any pictures or headings and thinking about what the text might be about. They should ask themselves questions – “What does this remind me of? What might happen in this story? What am I going to learn from reading this?” Good readers make predictions before, during, and after they read.

### Tea Party Activity

Before class, teacher will write 10-12 sentences from chapter 1 of *Old Yeller* on index cards. Make enough cards for each student to have one, so some students may have the same sentence as another student. Sentences should give some clues about characters, setting, plot, etc. Pass out cards, one per student, explaining that the cards have sentences from the first chapter of the book we will be reading, *Old Yeller*. Explain the following guidelines to the class.

1. Share your card with as many classmates as possible.
2. Listen carefully to what others say as they read their cards to you.
3. Discuss with other students how your cards might be related.
4. Speculate on what these cards, collectively, might be about.

Give students 5-10 minutes to share their cards and begin forming a hypothesis about the story. Then have students get into groups of 4-5 and discuss what they heard and their hypotheses. Each group will write a “We think…” statement that briefly describes what they think the chapter is going to be about. Groups will share their statements with the class and explain how they reached their prediction. Remind students that a *prediction* is “using what you know to make a good guess about something that has not happened yet.” If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Making Predictions** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

**Homework:** Read Chapter 1 (\*NOTE\* Please emphasize that students should not read ahead throughout this unit – some activities are more effective when students do not know what is to come next)

### Day 2 – Predictions and Inferences (OY Ch. 1-2)

Discuss OY Chapter 1. Were student predictions correct? How did predicting help them as they read the chapter? (Students should realize that they were more engaged, or paying more attention, because they had already thought about what might happen.) Begin two class charts. If desired, have students record the same chart information in their readers’ notebooks. One should be titled: **What skills and strategies do good readers use?** On this chart, add the word “predicting” or “making predictions” underneath the title. The second chart will introduce a new question, “**How do reading strategies help us become better readers?**” Record student ideas about how predicting helped them – let them know we will add more to the charts as we continue to think about these questions. (Example charts attached)

Remind students that a *prediction* is “using what you know to make a good guess about something that has not happened yet.” There is another reading strategy that good readers use, called making *inferences*. An *inference* is “a new idea formed by combining what you already know (your schema) with clues you read in the text.” It is like a prediction because both involve using what you already know to make a guess about something in the text. The difference is that the reader will eventually find out if a prediction is true, while the author might not ever reveal whether an inference is true. (Note – it is OK if the distinction between these two is hazy for some students. It is more important that they are able to use these strategies than that they are able to name them.) If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Making Inferences** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

To demonstrate how students make inferences all the time, read the following passage to the class:

*He put down \$10.00 at the window. The woman behind the window gave him \$4.00. The person next to him gave him \$3.00, but he gave it back to her. So when they went inside, she bought him a large bag of popcorn.*

Ask students to “form a new idea by combining what you already know with the clues you heard in the text.” Create a list of their inferences. Some ideas:

- A man and a woman are on a date at the movies.
- The woman behind the window is selling tickets. She works at the theater.
- The woman on the date does not want the man to buy her ticket.
- The tickets cost \$3 each. The man bought two, so \$4 was his change. Maybe the movie is a matinee?
- The man will not accept the woman’s money because he is trying to be nice. He wants to treat her.
- The woman doesn’t want the man to pay for everything, so she buys his popcorn when they get inside.

Reiterate with students that TEXT + THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD = INFERENCE. Add “making inferences” to the “Good Readers” class chart. Have students share ideas about how inferences help readers – add to other chart.

Re-read OY Ch. 1 or read chapter 2 aloud as students follow along. Model or “think-aloud” making inferences as you read. Demonstrate using sticky notes to record inferences as you go. At the end of the chapter, make a prediction about Chapter 2.

Homework: Students will read Chapter 2 and use sticky notes to record three inferences/predictions as they read. They will use an additional sticky note at the end of the chapter to record their prediction of what Ch.3 will be about.

#### Extension Activities for Making Inferences

As time allows, use books such as *Two Minute Mysteries* by Donald Sobol, *Five Minute Mysteries* and *Even More Five Minute Mysteries* by Ken Weber to practice making inferences.

Have students think about signs or bumper stickers they have seen that require the reader to make an inference, or “read between the lines.” Some examples:

*(In an antique store) Lovely to look at, delightful to hold; but if you break it, consider it sold!*

*(In a football team’s locker room) I am your coach, not your mother!*

*(In a large outdoor gardening store) Unattended children will be given an espresso and a free puppy.*

Have students create their own bumper sticker or sign using inferences.

#### Day 3 – More Predictions and Inferences (OY Ch. 3-4)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 1-2

In pairs, students will share some of the inferences/predictions they made about Ch. 2 for homework. Have a few students share with whole class. Discuss, and add to “how strategies help” chart if new ideas arise. Ask students to carefully remove their stickies, write down the page number they were on, and attach them to a page in their reader’s notebooks. Title the page “*Old Yeller* Ch. 2 Inferences”

Teacher can do more modeling of inferences with Chapter 3 if students need more support with this skill. Otherwise, students will read Chapter 3 in reading groups. Give each student a popsicle stick, strip of colored paper, etc. As they read, when a student notices himself making an inference or prediction, he will place his stick in the

middle of the reading group. When the reader gets to a good stopping point (end of sentence or paragraph) the student will share his idea and the group will discuss.

Homework: Read Ch. 4 – three inferences or predictions, one prediction about Ch. 5 on sticky notes

Day 4-Identifying the Main Idea/Creating a Summary (OY Ch. 5-6)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 3-4

In pairs, students will share some of the inferences/predictions they made about Ch. 4 for homework. Have a few students share with whole class. Again, students will remove their stickies and attach them to the same page in their reader's notebooks. Have them draw a line underneath Ch. 2 stickies and title new section "Ch. 4 Inferences"

Transition (Teacher may choose to do an energizer activity or have students move locations – i.e. desks to floor)  
When good readers read, they look for the *main idea*. The *main idea* is "the most important part, or what the text is mostly about. It is the author's main message." Ask students, "Why would it be important to know the main idea?" "How can you tell when an idea is the main idea?" Discuss and record student ideas on chart paper or in readers' notebooks. Add "identify main idea" to chart. If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Identifying the Main Idea** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

Say to students, "So far, we have read 4 chapters of the novel *Old Yeller*. What do you think is the main idea of the book so far?" Have students volunteer answers. Say, "Sometimes authors choose titles for their chapters that give clues about that chapter's main idea. Fred Gipson, the author of *Old Yeller*, did not name the chapters of his book. Let's see if we can come up with chapter titles that tell about the main idea of the chapters we have read so far." (Point out that most authors do not want to give too much away with their titles, so they may hint at the main idea without fully stating it. For this activity, we do want to fully state the main idea, even if it "spoils" the story.)

Review events of Ch. 1 as a class and come up with a name together. If students need more support, do Ch. 2 together as well. For remaining chapters, have students discuss with a partner or group and record their ideas for chapter titles. Share titles with whole class and vote on the best one (or combine titles to make the best one). Create a class Table of Contents for *Old Yeller* on chart paper.

Tell students, "When you put together the main ideas, or the main events of a story, you create a *summary*. A *summary* tells only the most important facts or events in a text in the order in which they happened in the story. Summarizing is another important reading skill. By naming each chapter of *Old Yeller*, we are creating a summary of the novel." Add "summarize" to class chart. Discuss – why would it be important for a good reader to know how to summarize? If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Summarizing** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

Read Ch. 5 together. Teacher models identifying main ideas for each section (a few paragraphs at a time). Keep notes on overhead, stickies, or a chart. At the end of the chapter, come up with a main idea for the whole chapter (such as "Old Yeller Saves Little Arliss from an Angry Bear"). Add the new "title" to the Table of Contents chart.

Homework: Students will read Chapter 6. AFTER reading the chapter, students will complete the Chapter 6 Main Idea Worksheet.

Day 5 – Author's Purpose /Reader's Purpose (OY Ch. 7-8)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 5-6

Share ideas from last night's homework about the main idea of chapter 6. What would make a good title for the chapter? Vote and add title to Table of Contents.

Say, "Whenever we read, there are at least two people's ideas involved. There are the author's ideas, which we are reading, and then there are our own ideas, which we already have in our heads. [Teacher may want to create some kind of visual to make this idea clearer for students.] Our ideas influence the way we understand the author's words (i.e. prior knowledge/schema). Can anyone think of an example of this?" (Illicit student responses – discuss)

“On the other hand, the author’s ideas can also influence our ideas (i.e. we learn something new or are persuaded to believe something different).” (Illicit student responses – discuss)

“Today, we will be talking about another strategy that good readers use. Good readers think about an author’s purpose.” Discuss the following questions as a class. Where applicable, add ideas to class charts.

- What do you think it means to think about an author’s purpose?
- Why might it be important to think about the author’s purpose?
- Why do you think Gipson wrote *Old Yeller*?
- How does Gipson accomplish his purpose? (give specific examples – books in hands)

“Good readers think about an author’s purpose for smaller parts within the text as well. For example, they might consider why an author included a certain character, situation, or even why they chose certain words. Is the author trying to hint at something that is going to happen (called foreshadowing)? produce suspense? add humor?”

- Who can make a guess about Fred Gipson’s purpose for including the story about the bull fight?
- What do you think he was thinking when he wrote the second paragraph of the book? (reread aloud)

If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Uncovering the Author’s Purpose** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

“As we read today, we are going to think about the author’s purpose for the choices he made in chapter 7.” Read Ch. 7 together or in reading groups. Stop to discuss author’s purpose. After reading, discuss the main idea of chapter 7 and write a title for Table of Contents.

Homework: Read Chapter 8. Using sticky notes, mark three places in the chapter and write your thoughts about one of the following – the author’s purpose, an inference, a prediction, a main idea, a question, or an observation

#### Day 6 – Using Context Clues (OY Ch. 9-10)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 7-8

Students share “favorite” sticky note with partner. Several students share with whole group. Students write page numbers on stickies and transfer to reader’s notebooks.

One-Minute Brainstorm In their table groups, students will have one minute to list as many strategies as they can think of for figuring out the meaning of an unknown word that appears in a text they are reading. Have groups share out – make a class list if desired, or have students make their own list in their reader’s notebooks.

Remind students about the concept of using *context clues*. Using *context clues*, along with some of the other strategies the class just listed, is another thing that good readers do. Add “using context clues” to class chart. If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Using Context Clues** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

Re-familiarize students with the “Context Clue King (or Queen)” chart used in literature circles earlier in the school year. The form includes the following sections:

Unknown word (include page and paragraph number)	Clues from the text about the unknown word	What I think the word means (or possible synonyms for the word)	Dictionary definition for the unknown word
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Teacher models using chart on overhead while reading aloud Chapter 9.

Review chapters 8 – 9 and have groups come up with possible titles. Vote and add new titles to Table of Contents.

Homework: Read chapter 10. Complete Context Clue King or Queen chart for unknown words in Ch. 10.

#### Day 7 – Check for Understanding (OY Ch. 11-12)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 9-10

Remind students that we are investigating strategies that good readers use. Review list of strategies thus far. Pose this question, “How do you know if you understand what you are reading?” Allow several student responses. Tell students that good readers *check for understanding* as they read. This is another important reading strategy (add to

“Good Readers” class chart). One way readers *check for understanding* is by asking themselves questions as they read. If they do not understand what they are reading, they may need to use a “Fix-It” strategy. Pose the question, **“What can a reader do when he/she does not understand what he/she is reading?”** In other words, what are some “Fix-It” strategies you know? Make a class chart. If desired, share and post the **Strategies Poster for Check for Understanding** (attached) somewhere in the classroom.

Ideas for “Fix-It” Strategies (have students come up with as many as they can before sharing these):

- go back to the last part that made sense
- re-read the sentence, paragraph, or page
- read at a slower pace
- read ahead, then go back
- visualize what you are reading (make a movie in your head)
- look at pictures, graphs, diagrams and other visual aids
- draw a picture or make a chart/diagram/map of what you read
- try re-telling as much of the story as you can in your own words
- write down questions you still have

Teacher reads aloud Chapter 11, using a strategy called “Say Something” (a more formalized version of doing a “think-aloud”). The idea is that after each paragraph or section, the reader will say something – anything – that he or she thinks about the passage. If the reader cannot say something insightful, or if several of the “Say Somethings” are questions that reveal a lack of understanding, it is time for a “Fix-It” strategy. By doing this modeling, the teacher will be showing what it looks like/sounds like to “checking for understanding” by asking questions and to use “Fix-It” strategies when comprehension breaks down.

Ideas:

- draw a picture of what Mama, Travis, Arliss and Jumper looked like as they set out to find Old Yeller (p.84) to help clarify the situation
- ask questions and then re-read certain sections, using language such as, “Oh, now I see that...” “Now it makes sense that...”
- model visualizing
- Ask questions – “Why did Mama tell Arliss that they were just playing like Old Yeller was sick even though he was really hurt?”

Homework: Read Ch. 12 – Students record three “Say Somethings” (predictions, questions, clarifications, comments, connections, etc.) on sticky notes. If they used a fix-it strategy, they should make a note of what strategy they used. When assigning homework, reiterate the idea that if students cannot “say something” of substance (not – that was cool!), then they probably need to re-read.

Day 8 - Review (OY Ch. 13-14)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 11-12

After completing quiz, students should brainstorm chapter titles for Chapters 11-12. When all students are finished, table groups should discuss, class will vote, add titles to Table of Contents.

Review all charts, lists, posters, etc. used throughout the unit. Engage students in conversation about the Essential Questions listed in Stage 2:

- **What skills and strategies do good readers use?**
- **How do reading strategies help students become better readers?**
- **What can I do when I do not understand what I am reading?**

Re-teach concepts if necessary.

While reading Chapter 13, play the “Say Something” game. Teacher will need a koosh ball or other soft ball. Teacher or student beginnings reading Chapter 13 aloud. At random intervals, teacher will throw the ball to a student while calling his or her name, “Say Something, Johnny.” When Johnny catches the ball, he will say something about what has just been read (prediction, question, clarification, comment, connection, etc.). The teacher can decide if Johnny should throw the ball back to the teacher after saying something, or if he should keep the ball to pass to the next student. The teacher can also decide if Johnny should be responsible for calling on the next student, or if the teacher will call on the next student to “say something.”



Homework: Read Ch. 14, One Question/One Comment – During or after reading, student should think of one question and one comment he or she had while reading this chapter. Write question and comment on sticky notes or in reader’s notebooks. (\*NOTE\* – please emphasize that students should not be reading ahead or tomorrow’s activity will not be as effective)

Day 9 (OY CH. 15-16)

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 13-14

After completing quiz, students should brainstorm chapter titles for Chapters 13-14. When all students are finished, table groups should discuss, class will vote, add titles to Table of Contents.

Share One Question/One Comment. Teacher will choose one student to start by either sharing a question or a comment about last night’s reading. The student should then call on another student. The second student may respond to the first student’s question/comment, or he may share his own question or comment. This pattern will continue until every student has had a chance to share.

Continue to review reading strategies

Ch. 15 Word Scramble Prediction

Give each table group the following list of words, and tell them that all of these words/phrases appear in chapter 15 of *Old Yeller*. Table groups will have 5 minutes to “unscramble” these words and predict what might happen in chapter 15. After 5 minutes, ask student groups to share their predictions with the class. Then read chapter 15 to see which prediction is the closest.

<u>Word List</u>					
uneasy	risk	Yeller’s throat	savage roaring	relieved	sickness
squeezed the trigger	loafer wolf	gone mad	nerves on edge	jaws shut tight	dead cow

Time permitting, read Ch. 16 in class as well. Otherwise, finish OY for homework.

Day 10

Warm-Up: Comprehension Check Quiz – Chapters 15-16 (optional)

Final thoughts on *Old Yeller* – Chalk Talk

Write the following questions on large sheets of butcher paper or chart paper and post around the classroom. Ask students to silently write their responses beneath the questions. As they respond to the questions, they can also read each other’s comments and respond to those comments as well.

- Does the novel *Old Yeller* have a suitable ending? What were your final impressions in chapters 15-16?
- Did you care for Fred Gipson’s style of writing in *Old Yeller*? How did his style of writing help accomplish his purpose for writing?
- *Old Yeller* contains words and ideas that might be confusing because it was written in a different time period. As a reader, what did you do when you came to a confusing word or idea?
- What did you learn or how were you changed by reading *Old Yeller*?
- What reading strategy do you use most often as a reader? Which strategy do you think you need to use more?

After all students have had the opportunity to “post” on each question, teacher should read and discuss responses with the group.

Traditional reading assessment (*Savage Sam/The Last of the Old-Time Cowboys Reading Passages*)

Day 11

Students will take the Post-Assessment. After they have completed the post-assessment, teacher may choose to redistribute the pre-assessment and have students compare the differences, talk about what they have learned, etc. (may want to have students write about it in a Then I thought.../Now I think... format).

Assign student groups and allow students to discuss their options for the performance task. Groups begin working on task.

### Day 12-14

Groups continue work on their performance task. As Task #1 groups finish, they can perform their presentations for the teacher as a “run-through” before filming, or teacher can wait and have them perform on Day 15.

### Day 15

**Performance Assessments due.** Groups present projects to the class. Presentations for Task #1 are videotaped (to be viewed by grade level or other fourth grade classes in the day(s) before the Reading TAKS assessment. Books and/or Photo Story presentations for Task #2 are collected by teacher to be used with future 4th classes.

### **Resources Consulted**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Strategies Pre- and Post- Assessment

To the best of your ability, give the **meaning** of each of the following reading strategies and explain **why it is an important strategy** for good readers to use.

Make <u>predictions</u> and <u>inferences</u> based on what you know and what you have read	
Identify the <u>main idea</u> of the passage	
Determine the <u>author's purpose</u>	
Use <u>context clues</u> to understand unknown words	
Do a <u>self-check for understanding</u>	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Strategies Performance Assessment

You have learned reading strategies that make you a better reader, such as:

make predictions	make inferences	identify the main idea
summarize	identify the author's purpose	identify the reader's purpose
use context clues	self-check for understanding	

Now it is your turn to pass these strategies along to other readers. You and your group will choose one of the following options to share your knowledge of what good readers do.

### Task #1

One of your jobs as a fourth grader is to prepare for the TAKS reading assessment. As an "expert" reader, you already have the knowledge and skills to do your best on TAKS day, but are your peers ready?

You and your group are responsible for teaching your classmates about what good readers do. As a group, you will choose one of reading strategies you have been practicing. You will develop a three to five minute **presentation** that teaches the audience *how to use that strategy* and *why good readers use the strategy*. Your group may decide how to present your strategy (through a skit, song, demonstration, etc. – be creative!), and it must include both a spoken piece and a visual aid (poster, diagram, model, etc.).

When your teacher has approved your presentation, it will be videotaped to be used as a resource for other fourth graders as a review for TAKS and a lesson in becoming a better reader.

#### Guidelines

- 3 to 5 minutes long
- All group members must take an active role in the presentation (no "camera-man")
- Must include both *how* to use the strategy and *why* good readers use it
- Must include both *spoken* and *visual* components

### Task #2

Fourth graders do a great deal of reading, and it is important that they know strategies for helping them to understand what they read. Your task is to create a **book** that teaches next year's fourth graders how to be good readers. Each group member should choose a different reading strategy to teach via a page (or pages) in a book. The page(s) should include an explanation of *how to use that strategy* and *why good readers use the strategy*. You should also include some kind of visual representation to help your readers remember your strategy (a cartoon, symbol, etc.). Your book will be most effective if your group plans together. Think of ways to make it interesting, such as creating characters and telling a story from beginning to end. As a group, you will create a cover, title page, and table of contents. The table of contents should list the strategies taught in your book and should include the author's names to show which group member completed each section.

#### Guidelines

- Each page/section must have the name of the strategy written in a prominent place
- Pages should be neat and include color
- Pages can be computer generated or hand-made
- Must include both *how* to use the strategy and *why* good readers use it
- Must include both *written* and *visual* components

## Reading Strategies Performance Task Rubric Task #1 – Videotaped Presentation

	<b>Approaches Expectations 1</b>	<b>Partially Meets Expectations 2</b>	<b>Meets Expectations 3</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations 4</b>
<b>Identifying and Explaining the Reading Strategy</b>	Reading strategy is not named and how it is used is not explained in content of the presentation.	Reading strategy is named but how it is used is not explained in the content of the presentation.	Reading strategy is named and how it is used is explained in the content of the presentation.	Reading strategy is named, explained, and applied in the content of the presentation.
<b>Explaining Why the Reading Strategy is Important to Good Readers</b>	Presentation does not explain why the reading strategy is important to good readers.	Presentation attempts to explain why the reading strategy is important to good readers.	Presentation explains why the reading strategy is important to good readers.	Presentation gives an explanation of why the strategy is important that indicates a deep understanding of the purpose of the reading strategy.
<b>Spoken Presentation</b>	Presentation does not include a hook, a closing, eye contact, or vocal projection. Speakers seem unprepared (i.e. no script has been prepared or speakers do not know lines).	Presentation includes some, but not all of the following: a hook, closing, eye contact, and vocal projection. Speakers seem somewhat prepared (i.e. have not quite memorized lines).	Presentation includes a hook, a closing, eye contact and vocal projection. Speakers are prepared (i.e. have lines memorized).	Presentation includes an entertaining and creative hook and closing, and continual eye contact and vocal projection. Speakers have lines memorized and the presentation “flows”.
<b>Visual Aid</b>	No visual aid is present or visual aid seems to be unconnected to reading strategy.	Visual aid is present but may indicate little effort. May or may not be connected to reading strategy.	Visual aid indicates effort and is connected to reading strategy.	Visual aid indicates creativity and deepens & enhances understanding of the reading strategy.

### Scoring Guide

Total Points _____	Letter Grade _____	16 = A+	13 – 15 = A	10 – 12 = B	7 – 9 = C	5 – 6 = D	4 or below = F
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## Reading Strategies Performance Task Rubric Task #2 – Book for Future 4<sup>th</sup> Graders

	<b>Approaches Expectations 1</b>	<b>Partially Meets Expectations 2</b>	<b>Meets Expectations 3</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations 4</b>
<b>Identifying and Explaining the Reading Strategies</b>	Reading strategies are not named and how they are used is not explained in content of the book.	Reading strategies are named but how they are used is not explained in the content of the book.	Reading strategies are named and how they are used is explained in the content of the book.	Reading strategies are named, explained, and applied in the content of the book.
<b>Explaining Why the Reading Strategies are Important to Good Readers</b>	Book does not explain why the reading strategies are important to good readers.	Book attempts to explain why the reading strategies are important to good readers, but may not include explanations for all strategies.	Book explains why the reading strategies are important to good readers.	Book gives a detailed explanation of why the strategies are important. Explanation indicates a deep understanding of the purpose of each of the strategies.
<b>Text Requirements</b>	Book is missing one or more of the following requirements – cover, title page, table of contents. The written content of the book contains grammatical or spelling errors that interfere with meaning of the text.	Book may be missing <i>one</i> of the following requirements – cover, title page, table of contents. The written content may contain grammatical or spelling errors that do not interfere with meaning of the text.	Book has a cover, title page, and table of contents that indicates who “authored” each section of the book. The book contains minimal grammatical or spelling errors, and errors do not interfere with the meaning of the text.	Book’s cover, title page, and table of contents demonstrate creativity and attention to detail. There are no grammatical or spelling errors.
<b>Visual Requirements</b>	No visual representations of strategies are present or visuals seem unconnected to the reading strategies.	Visual representations are present for each strategy, but may indicate little effort or may not be clearly connected to strategies.	Visual representations indicate effort and are connected to reading strategies.	Visual representations indicate creativity and deepen & enhance understanding of the reading strategies.

### Scoring Guide

Total Points _____	Letter Grade _____	16 = A+	13 – 15 = A	10 – 12 = B	7 – 9 = C	5 – 6 = D	4 or below = F
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

From *Savage Sam* by Fred Gipson

1 This is a tale about a dog we called Savage Sam. It's partly about me, too, and about Papa and Little Arliss and a girl named Lisbeth Searcy and some others. But it's mainly about Sam, on account of without him, there wouldn't have been much of a tale to tell or anybody left to tell it.

2 Sam's papa was Old Yeller, known as the best catch dog and the worst camp robber in all our part of the Texas hill country. His mama was a blue-tick trail hound belonging to Lisbeth's grandpa, Bud Searcy, a blowhard neighbor of ours who lived over in the Salt Licks settlement.

3 Sam was born in a badger hole and given to us by Lisbeth.

4 Papa was the one who named him Savage Sam. He did it as a joke. This was back when Sam was still just an old, clumsy, big-footed, rump-sprung pup, sort of liver-speckled, with flop-hound ears, a stub tail and a pot belly that was all appetite.

5 I remember when Papa did it. Mama had set a panful of table scraps out in the yard for Sam. Greedy as always, Sam was gulping those scraps down like he couldn't wait. Papa stood watching him. Finally, his eyes started twinkling and he went to pulling at one horn of his long black mustache.

6 "It appears to me," he said, speaking extra sober, "that when it comes to tackling a wheat-flour biscuit or a chunk of roast venison, we own about the most savage dog in the State of Texas!"

7 This set us all to laughing; after that, we started calling Sam "Savage Sam."

8 As it turned out, the name wasn't a bad fit. For Sam would fight. Even as a pup, he'd fight. He had that much of Old Yeller in him.

9 You couldn't count all the battles he used to pull off with the passel of house cats that always followed Little Arliss to the cowpen at milking time.

10 Little Arliss was my brother. He was about six then, and just learning to milk. He wasn't doing a bad job of it, either, except that he got so little milk in the bucket. Most of it he squirted into the open mouths of the mewling cats. It tickled him to angle the milk streams so high above their heads that the cats had to rear up on their hind legs and prance around, trying to reach it.

11 Then here would come Sam, wanting his share of the milk. This always made the cats mad. They'd jump on him, clawing and squawling. And while Sam couldn't whip them yet, still, he had the grit to stand his ground and make a fight of it.

12 I'd hear the commotion and come running, yelling at Arliss to quit fooling with them cats and get the milking done. Arliss, he'd yell back, telling me to shut my mouth and let him alone. And when I didn't, he was just as liable as not to pitch his milk bucket into the cowpen dirt and grab up a rock to throw at me.

13 Being about fifteen at the tie and considered too big to fight back, I'd have to skin out for the house, hollering for help. Then here would come Mama, calling for Arliss to behave himself before she took a mesquite sprout to him. Behind her would come Papa, ready to back up her threat, if need be, but always laughing his head off at the general all-round hullabaloo.

14 Well, anyhow, Sam still wasn't much more than a big overgrown pup, maybe eighteen months old, when this bad trouble hit us.

# Savage Sam

- The author organizes this passage by—
  - comparing Savage Sam to Old Yeller
  - introducing the characters who will be important in the book *Savage Sam*
  - describing what Savage Sam looks like
  - explaining why dogs are better than cats
- The author probably wrote paragraphs 5 and 6 to—
  - describe Sam's appetite
  - let the reader know that Sam is greedy
  - convince the reader that Old Yeller was a better dog than Sam
  - explain how Savage Sam got his name
- Which is the best summary of the selection?
  - Savage Sam may have been just a feisty little pup, but when trouble struck he saved the family.
  - Savage Sam was a dog who was just like his papa, Old Yeller.
  - Savage Sam was a puppy who liked to drink milk and fight with cats.
  - Papa called Sam "Savage Sam" because he gulped down his food.
- In this selection, the author focused mainly on which character?
  - the narrator
  - Lisbeth Searcy
  - Savage Sam
  - Little Arliss
- In paragraph 6, the word savage means—
  - ferocious
  - wild or uncivilized
  - hungry
  - well-mannered
- The reader can infer that the narrator—
  - is annoyed by Savage Sam
  - wishes Lisbeth had not given the pup to his family
  - thinks Old Yeller was a better dog than Savage Sam
  - is glad to have Savage Sam
- Which sentence best shows why the family calls the dog Savage Sam?
  - "It appears to me," [Papa] said, speaking extra sober, "that when it comes to tackling a wheat-flour biscuit or a chunk of roast venison, we own about the most savage dog in the State of Texas!"*
  - Sam's papa was Old Yeller, known as the best catch dog and the worst camp robber in all our part of the Texas hill country.*
  - Then here would come Sam, wanting his share of the milk.*
  - Sam was born in a badger hole and given to us by Lisbeth.*



## *The Last of the Old-Time Cowboys*

1 The American cowboy came into his own in Texas during the late 1860s. By the 1890s, the open range roundup and the long trail drive had passed into history, and the cowboy's way of life had changed forever.

2 Homesteaders had been settling down all over the West. To protect their fields and keep their livestock from straying, they began to use the newly invented barbed wire, which made it possible for the first time to fence off large areas cheaply and easily. Soon, cattle ranchers were also putting up barbed-wire fences. Long strands of barbed wire stretched across the western plains, and wherever the new fences appeared, they marked the end of the open range.

3 Meanwhile, a network of railroad tracks was spreading throughout the West. By the early 1890s, railroads reached all the way to central Texas, making long trail drives unnecessary. The last herd was driven north to Kansas in 1896.

4 Barbed wire fencing brought about great changes in the way beef cattle were raised for market. In the past, during severe winters, large numbers of cattle had starved or frozen on snowbound ranges. The winter of 1886, the worst in human memory, was a disaster for the cattle industry. Hundreds of thousands of longhorns died on the open range, and many prosperous ranchers were wiped out. After that terrible winter, the cattle industry was reorganized.

5 Cattle no longer wandered freely across the range. Instead, the animals were confined to large fenced pastures, where they could be fed during the winter. Ranchers began to plant and harvest winter feed, which could be hauled out to the cattle whenever necessary. If there were no creeks or water holes within a fenced pasture, windmills were built to pump water from the ground into big tanks, where the cattle could drink.

6 Inside the newly fenced pastures, ranchers began to develop improved strains of cattle by keeping each breed separate and by controlling what the animals ate. The lean, lanky longhorns with their tough, stringy meat were replaced by Herefords, Durhams, Shorthorns, Brahmans, and other breeds that were easier to raise and yielded higher-quality beef.

7 Roundups, which once had ranged over hundreds of square miles, now were conducted within barbed-wire enclosures. Men on horseback still drove herds of cattle, but only from their fenced pastures to railroad loading pens a few miles away. Cowboys began to spend much of their time fixing fences, repairing windmills, and mowing hay.

8 "The range was changing very fast," one rancher remembered. "The old-time range cattle business began to go out of the picture, while fenced pastures and winter feeding and all those modern methods began to look bigger and bigger. Nothing was like it used to be anymore."

9 The era of the open range cowboy had lasted less than thirty years. Altogether, perhaps twenty-five- or thirty-thousand men and boys had gone up the trail. By the time the last trail was closed, those cowboys had captured the imagination of the world.

## *The Last of the Old-Time Cowboys*

8. Why did ranchers begin using barbed wire in the 1890s?
  - a. to protect their fields
  - b. to keep their livestock from straying
  - c. to fence off large areas easily and inexpensively
  - d. all of the above
9. The author probably wrote this passage to—
  - a. entertain the audience with a story about cowboys
  - b. persuade the audience to use barbed wire as an inexpensive way to protect their cattle
  - c. inform readers about how and why life on the Texas range changed in the late 1800s
  - d. teach the reader how to be a cowboy
10. How did the role of cowboys change after barbed-wire fencing was introduced?
  - a. They spent more time repairing fences and windmills & mowing hay.
  - b. There were not as many cattle in Texas.
  - c. They rode on trains instead of horses.
  - d. They spent more time rounding up cattle and drove them farther distances.
11. In paragraph 5, what does the word confined mean?
  - a. kept inside
  - b. tied to
  - c. bordered by
  - d. outside of
12. According to the passage, the main reason the cowboy's way of life changed was because—
  - a. railroad tracks were spreading into central Texas
  - b. cattle were dying of starvation and lack of water
  - c. barbed wire fencing marked the end of the open range
  - d. ranchers began to develop improved strains of cattle
13. Paragraph 7 is mostly about—
  - a. how cowboys rounded up their cattle
  - b. how roundups changed after the use of barbed wire spread
  - c. how ranchers improved the quality of the cattle breeds they raised for beef
  - d. why the new way of cattle roundups was better than the old way
14. The reader can tell that cowboys began to spend much of their time fixing fences, repairing windmills, and mowing hay because—
  - a. there were not as many cattle to round up, so it did not take as long
  - b. cowboys preferred these jobs over cattle drives
  - c. the cattle were more difficult to round up because of the barbed wire fences, so cowboys got frustrated and did other things instead
  - d. these jobs were important to the new way of cattle ranching and took the place of long cattle drives

# Making Inferences:

Reading Between the Lines

Question: (from the book, our group, or my teacher)

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What I know from the book:

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What I know from my brain:

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**My Inference**

(be sure to use at least one "because")

# Making **Predictions**



Making a **prediction** is using what you know to make a good guess about something that has not happened yet.

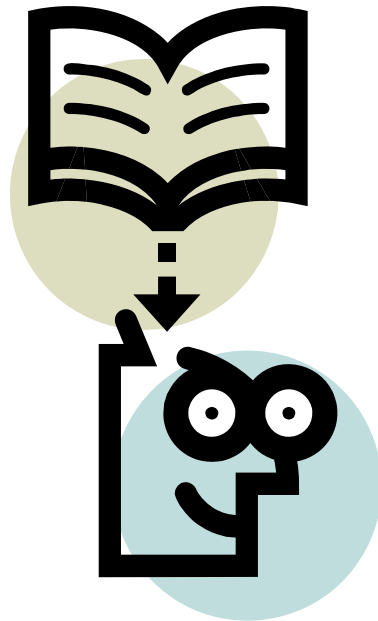
## **Sentence starters for predicting:**

I think \_\_\_\_\_ will happen next because. . .

I predict . . .

\_\_\_\_\_ lead me to believe that...

# Making **Inferences**



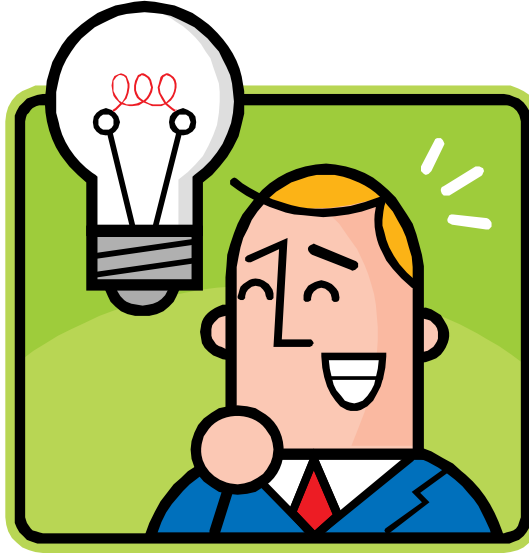
*An inference is  
reading between  
the lines.*

An **inference** is a new idea formed by combining what you already know (your schema) with clues you read in the text.

**Sentence starter for making an inference:**

When I read \_\_\_\_\_ (a section from the text) I thought  
\_\_\_\_\_ (my inference) because of \_\_\_\_\_  
(my prior knowledge/background/schema).

## Identifying the **Main Idea**



The **main idea** is the most important part, or what the text is mostly about. It is the author's main message.

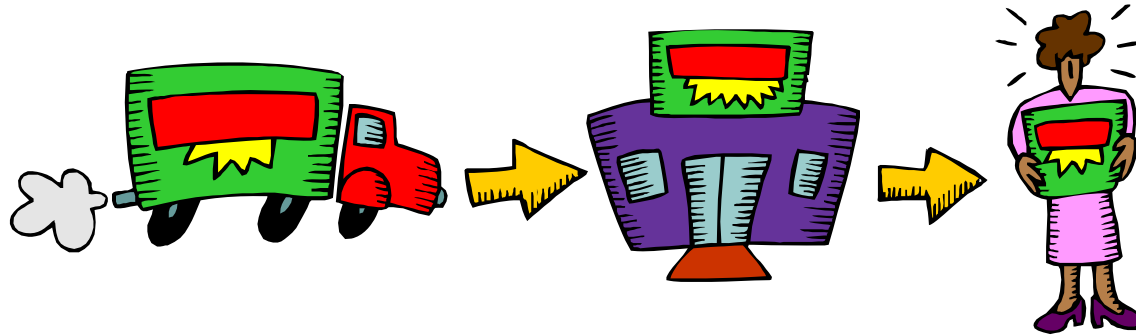
### **Sentence starters for main idea:**

The text was mostly about...

The author is trying to tell us that...

The most important part was...

# Summarizing



A **summary** tells only the key facts or events in a text. To summarize, identify the most important parts of a text.

## Sentence starters for summarizing:

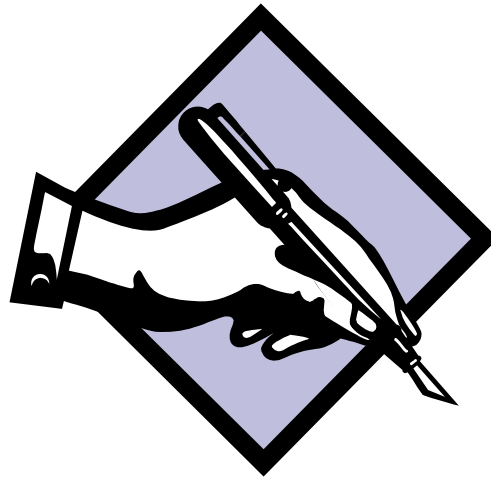
First...

Next...

Then...

Finally...

Uncovering the  
**Author's Purpose**



The **author's purpose** is why the author wrote the text and what he or she wanted to accomplish by writing it.

**Questions to ask about the author's purpose:**

Is the author writing to entertain? inform? teach? persuade? express feelings?

What is the author trying to communicate?

Why did the author choose these specific words?

What is my purpose for reading this author's words?



# Using **Context Clues**



When you come to a word you do not know, sometimes the surrounding text can provide clues about the meaning of the unknown word. These clues are called **context clues**.

# Check for Understanding



**Checking for understanding** means asking yourself questions as you read. If you do not understand, you may need to use a “fix-it” strategy.

## “Fix-It” Strategies



- go back to the last part that made sense
- re-read the sentence, paragraph, or page
- read at a slower pace
- read ahead, then go back
- visualize what you are reading (make a movie in your head)
- look at pictures, graphs, diagrams and other visual aids
- draw a picture or make a chart/diagram/map of what you read
- try re-telling as much of the story as you can in your own words
- write down questions you still have

# What skills and strategies do good readers use?

- make predictions
- make inferences
- identify the main idea
- summarize
- uncover the author's purpose
- set a purpose for their own reading
- use context clues to figure out unknown words
- check for understanding
- use “fix-it” strategies when comprehension breaks down

## **How do reading strategies help us become better readers?**

- help us pay better attention to what we are reading
- help us know if we understand what we are reading
- help us understand what is most important (main idea)