

Predicting

Description

Predicting belongs to a set of strategies called *Reciprocal Teaching* or *Collaborative Teaching*. Predicting asks students to take in information (a headline or title, a picture, a summary, or a chart) and make an informed guess as to the ideas or concepts that might appear in a text. After making a prediction, students read or listen to a text and either confirm or revise their predictions.

Purpose

The predicting strategy activates students' background knowledge and starts engagement with key concepts. It activates background knowledge and shows students that they are smart enough to figure things out even if they have trouble with reading. Students learn to make connections between their own prior knowledge and the ideas in a text. It's helpful for students to see that sometimes their predictions are off and they have to stop and think and possibly revise their predictions. Predicting and revising also assist students in thinking while they listen or read, as they pay attention to see if they were right in their predictions. Having students revise their prediction supports "rereading", an important component of comprehension, especially for struggling readers.

What to Do

1. Introduce the strategy and discuss why it is important. Explain to students that thinking about texts (visual, oral, written) engages the brain and helps greatly in understanding. Stress that students will comprehend more and remember more if they think while they watch, listen or read.
2. Explain to students that daily life is not possible without constant predictions (e.g., you may ask *How do you find things you always buy in a new store? You use your background knowledge. You predict that the milk and the butter will be close to each other or that the eggs will be in the refrigerated section.* This may not be true in other countries where eggs may not be refrigerated and can be sometimes be found next to the flour on a shelf. Use examples like this to lead students toward the need to revise their predictions and start thinking anew.
3. To illustrate how the mind makes predictions and then confirms or revises them, use an activity such as "*Thingamagigs*" to let students experience how their mind tries to make sense out of information that is presented bit by bit.
4. Select a text students might read in class. Choose a reading with titles, pictures, and graphs that make predictions and informed guessing worthwhile. Ask the class to generate ideas that they think they might find in the text using their background knowledge and other clues. Encourage thoughtful predictions (*Amazing Stories* or stories about accidents or natural disasters seem to work well.)

5. Create a few True/False statements to build suspense and ask students to make informed guesses as to which statements about the passage or story are right or wrong (informational texts work best). Include the main points of the text as well as details. Ask students to discuss their predictions in pairs or small groups. Explain that the answers will be found in the text (oral or written), but for now, you just want to see how good the class is at using their prior knowledge of the world to guess the right answer. Keep track on a flip chart.
6. Read the text with the class or ask students to read the text and then ask them to work individually or in small pairs. Ask them to highlight all the words and ideas they predicted and underline all the true statements that they had guessed right. Congratulate them when they are right.
7. Explain that sometimes we predict right and sometimes our guesses are wrong because everyone's brain works differently, and sometimes we don't have enough information to make thoughtful predictions.
8. Ask students to circle the statements that are contrary to their guesses and discuss why there is a mismatch between what they expected to find and the content of the text. Bring the class together and reflect on the strategy (use and importance). Continue using the strategy with different kinds of text.