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ABC Book

Suggested Grade Levels: K to 8

Elements Addressed: Plot/theme, expository text

Meta-Strategies Incorporated: Determining important information, summarizing and synthesizing

Supplies: Narrative or expository text, butcher paper or flipchart, drawing paper, pens or pencils, markers or colored pencils

WHAT IS AN ABC BOOK? ●

An ABC book—or an alphabet book—is a student-created book with one page for each letter of the alphabet. The book is designed to incorporate important ideas from a theme or literature unit being studied in class.

When Do We Use It?

Students create an alphabet book after completing a piece of literature or a unit of study.

Why Do We Use It?

While creating these books, students review topics and content areas. They focus on important information.

How Do We Use ABC Books?

The teacher begins this strategy by showing sample books created by the teacher or former students. The teacher may also present alphabet trade books to show how they sometimes focus on themes. Next, the theme to be used as the focus for the class book is discussed.

On butcher paper or a flipchart, the teacher presents a large grid with twenty-six spaces, each labeled with one letter of the alphabet. As a class, students brainstorm to come up with theme-related words and ideas to list under each letter of the alphabet.

Each student is assigned one letter of the alphabet and asked to create a page for that letter. A sample page is shown, indicating placement of the letter, text, and illustration. The student may choose any word from the class list or come up with another word related to the theme or unit of study. Young students may write simply, "A is for ____." More advanced students may write a few sentences or a full paragraph. Students should have time to edit their work and revise it. They then illustrate the page. After all pages have been completed, the teacher binds them into a book.

Alternatively, students may be divided into small groups of, say, four students each. In this group, each student would be responsible for creating six or seven alphabet pages.

How Else Can We Use This Strategy?

Alphabet Poetry: Students may create a two-line rhyme for the letter or letters they represent.

Individual Project: Older students could create their own books. Such a project would be time-consuming, however, and would be a significant assignment requiring several days (or weeks) of work.

Where Can We Learn More?

Curtis, M. E., & Longo, A. M. (2001). Teaching vocabulary to adolescents to improve comprehension. *Reading Online*. Retrieved February 8, 2004, from http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=curtis/index.html

Fink, L. S. (2004). *Writing ABC books to enhance reading comprehension*. Retrieved March 3, 2005, from <http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons>

Guzzetti, B. J., & Wooten, C. M. (2002). Children creating artists' books: Integrating visual arts and language arts. *Reading Online*. Retrieved February 8, 2004, from http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=guzzetti2/index.html

Henry, L. (2004). *ABC bookmaking builds vocabulary in the content areas*. Retrieved March 3, 2005, from <http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons>

Spann, M. (1999). *Twenty-six interactive alphabet mini-books*. New York: Scholastic.

Tompkins, G. E. (1994). *Teaching writing: Balancing process and product* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Figure 1.1



"Jess thought Leslie was quite adventurous as she clutched the tiny vine and swung across the ravine."

Book used: Paterson, K. (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Contributed by Caryn Barry, San Francisco, CA, Summer 2004.