

USING THINK ALOUDS TO EMPOWER OUR READERS

In alignment with our Strategic Directions, JPPS is committed to developing practices to ensure our students are appropriately challenged and supported in reading and numeracy, within a culture of high expectations; enabling them to connect, apply and transfer deep understandings across key learning areas and achieve academic excellence.

In term 2 our staff began a journey of exploring an invaluable strategy known as 'think alouds'. This is a strategy teachers use to deepen students' understanding of text. The strategy is a powerful strategy that is used across the school, from Kindy through to Year 6.

It involves the teacher reading a short section of text to the students, stopping every now and then to explain what he/she is thinking. This allows students to listen to an "expert's" thinking so they can see the thought processes and problem-solving that goes on while reading. Think Alouds make the invisible process of reading, visible! Think Alouds can help students understand how to think through a text in an interactive way, in order to find deeper meaning.

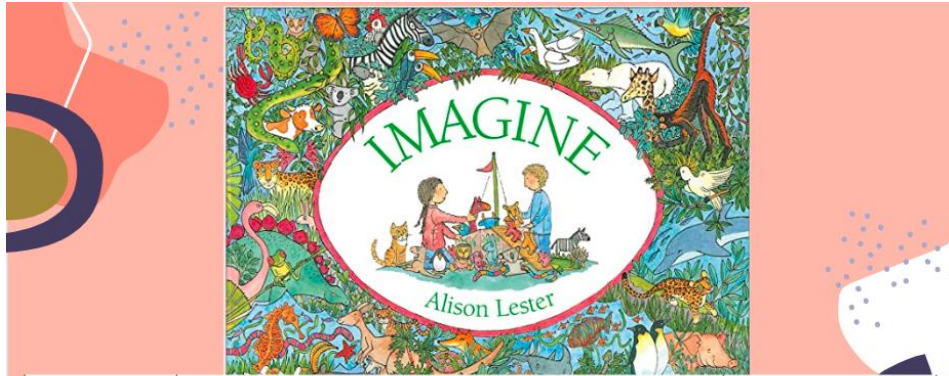
An important skill that typically takes many experiences and examples over a number of years to develop, is the ability to work out the meaning of unknown words, using the context of a story or other text.

To give students insight into how we learn and how we work out what a difficult word may mean within the text, the think aloud strategy can be useful. It helps them see how we think through the process of figuring out the meaning of a word.

The strategy looks differently across the grades.

In the younger grades it was about teachers explicitly modeling.

Here is an example of a think aloud planned by the Stage 1 Team as part of their Term 3 Reading Trajectory.

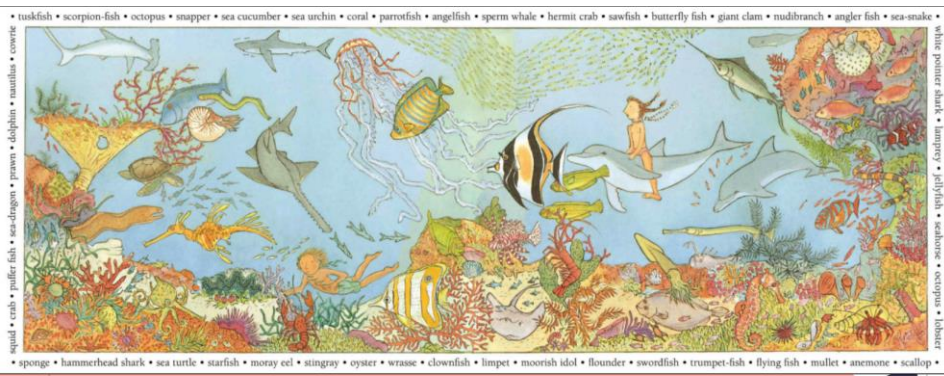


What the text says	Teacher think aloud script	Comprehension Strategy
Imagine	Hmm, looking at the cover I can see the word imagine. This word looks like the word image which I know means picture. <u>So</u> if I was to use my imagination it would be putting pictures in my brain. I wonder if these two characters, the boy and girl will be using their imagination.	Vocabulary - Looking for smaller words in a bigger word Prediction.



Imagine
if we were
deep in the jungle
where butterflies drift
and jaguars prowl
where parakeets squawk
and wild monkeys howl...

Picture of the jungle	I thought they were in the treehouse. But when I turn the <u>page</u> they are in the jungle. I know they are using their imagination. WOW!	Monitoring - Confirming their prediction.
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Page that shows them underwater.	Look, there is some writing around the outside. These words look like they are the animals in the picture. I can see hermit crab and I know that that animal lives in the sea because I used to have a pet hermit crab. Hmm Trumpet fish, I have never seen a trumpet fish <u>before</u> but I know that trumpet is a type of instrument which has a long section that you blow into. If I <u>look into</u> the illustration I can see a fish with a long nose. I think that is the trumpet fish.	Using text clues to make meaning of unknown vocabulary.
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Whereas in the higher grades our students have been experimenting with writing and using their own think alouds to explain their thinking behind inferences.

For example this is a lesson from 5/6M:

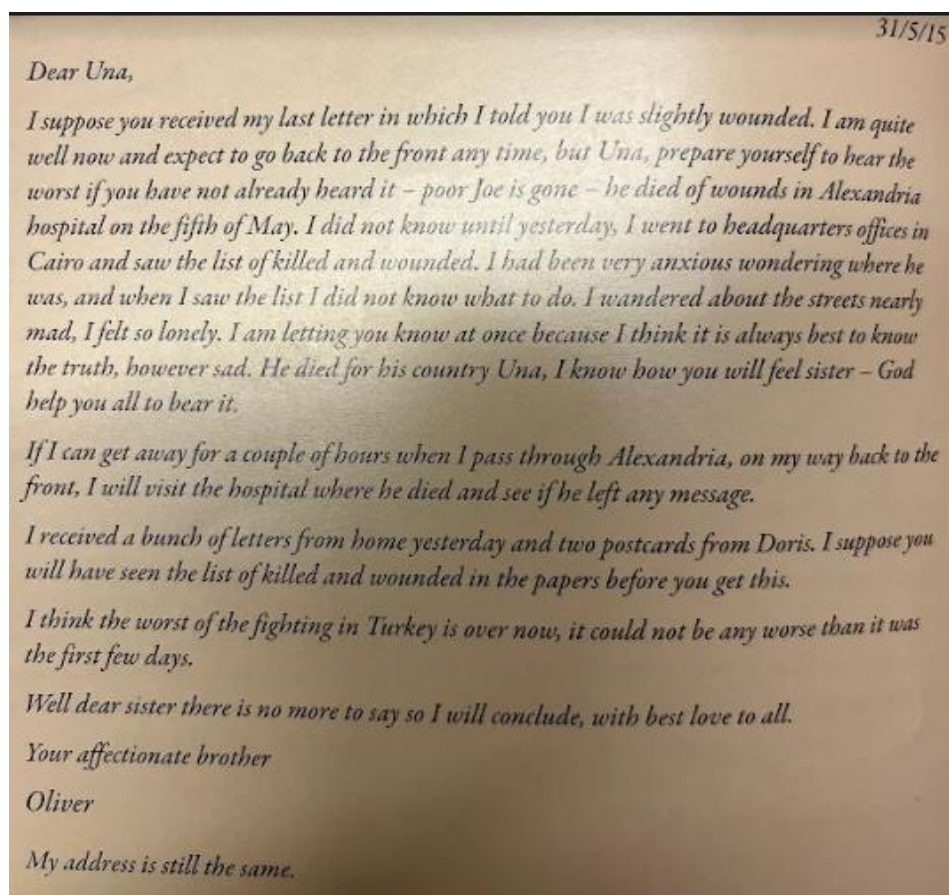
WALT: understand the process behind making inferences

Success criteria: I can:

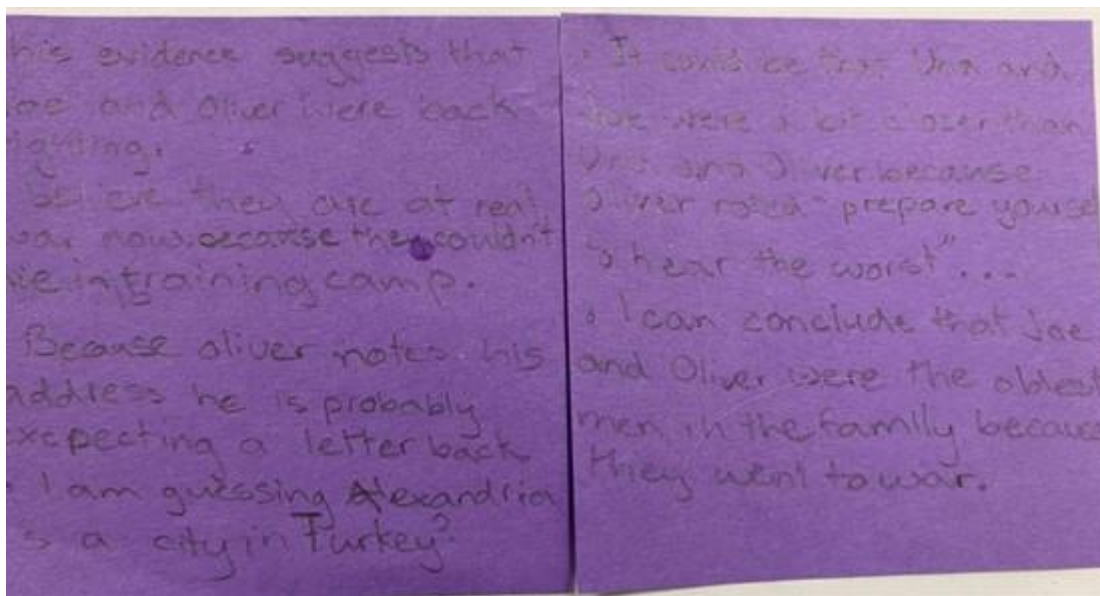
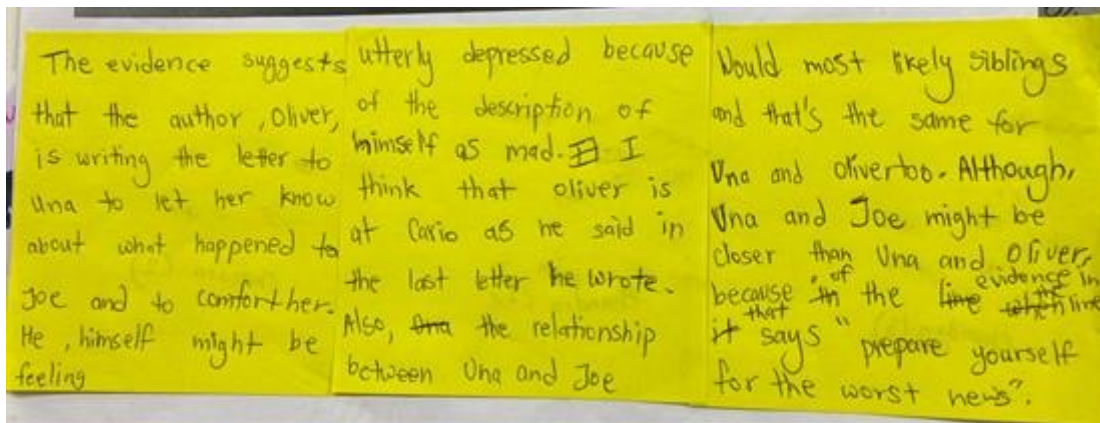
- define what an inference is
- use sentence starters to think aloud and make inferences about texts

Think aloud prompts given to students

- From the text clues, I can conclude that...
- Based on what the text says and what I know, I think...
- This information makes me think...
- This evidence suggests...
- That is probably why...
- Although the author does not come right out and say it, I can figure out that...
- It could be that...



Student think alouds:



"This evidence suggests that Joe and Oliver were back fighting. I believe they are at real war now, because they couldn't be in training camp.

Because Oliver notes his address he is probably expecting a letter back.

I am guessing Alexandria is a city in Turkey?

It could be that Una and Joe were a lot closer than Una and Oliver because Oliver noted "prepare yourself to hear the worst"...

I can conclude that Joe and Oliver were the oldest men in the family because they went to war."

3/4B have been harnessing their comprehension skills too. The photos below, are a snapshot of the deep engagement in learning, demonstrated by 3/4B students, as they presented a variety of texts using the Think Aloud strategy, to their peers.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16a-u4PLJ1E5E7UrhgOHQqeiMluPG-Zbp/view?usp=sharing>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ygVKoFAIGGv1m_KneMxVHTWNQbIYjkqC/view?usp=sharing

Our journey will continue over the next year as we continue to explore how to develop student agency through think alouds.