**Why Storytelling?**

**Many Classroom Uses!**

**Supports Listening Skills, Imagination, Storytelling, and Reading!**

**Create a Story Listening Center**

* **Students can select from over 70 short folktales.**
* **Have students retell tales in their own words to a partner.**
* **Have students draw illustrations of favorite moments from the stories.**
* **Have students dramatize a tale they've heard, using character voices, detail and elaboration.**
* **Create a group performance based on these mini-tales.**
* **Expand students’ reading comprehension by reading and listening.**
* **Help emergent readers sight-learn new words heard in the story performance.**
* **Help students who are learning English to expand their vocabulary while reading and listening to well-enunciated text.**

Educators have long known that the arts can contribute to student academic success and emotional well being. The ancient art of storytelling is especially well-suited for student exploration. As a folk art, storytelling is accessible to all ages and abilities. No special equipment beyond the imagination and the power of listening and speaking is needed to create artistic images. As a learning tool, storytelling can encourage students to explore their unique expressiveness and can heighten a student's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner. These benefits transcend the art experience to support daily life skills. In our fast-paced, media-driven world, storytelling can be a nurturing way to remind children that their spoken words are powerful, that listening is important, and that clear communication between people is an art. [http://storyarts.org/classroom/index]

[**Retelling Folktales**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/index.html)

[**Storytelling Lesson Plans and Activities**](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/index.html)

[**Using Storytelling To Assess Listening and Speaking Skills**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/usestories/index.html)

[**Story Library**](http://storyarts.org/library/index.html)

* [Stories in a Nutshell...Concise Folktale Plots For Student Retelling](http://storyarts.org/library/nutshell/index.html)
* [Aesop's ABC...Twenty Six Fables](http://storyarts.org/library/aesops/index.html)

[**Exploring Cultural Roots Through Storytelling**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/roots/index.html)

* [Collecting Family Stories](http://storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html)
* [Remembering Your Life Stories](http://storyarts.org/classroom/roots/lifestory.html)
* Celebrating the Stories of Our Ancestors by [Retelling Folktales](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/index.html)

**Why Storytelling? More Reasons...**

**Gaining Verbal Skills**

Becoming verbally proficient can contribute to a student's ability to resolve interpersonal conflict non-violently. Negotiation, discussion, and tact are peacemaking skills. Being able to lucidly express one's thoughts and feelings is important for a child's safety. Clear communication is the first step to being able to ask for help when it is needed.

**Imagination**
Both telling a story and listening to a well-told tale encourages students to use their imaginations. Developing the imagination can empower students to consider new and inventive ideas. Developing the imagination can contribute to self-confidence and personal motivation as students envision themselves competent and able to accomplish their hopes and dreams.

**Passing On Wisdom**
Storytelling based on traditional folktales is a gentle way to guide young people toward constructive personal values by presenting imaginative situations in which the outcome of both wise and unwise actions and decisions can be seen.

**Retelling Folktales**

**About Storytelling**

Storytelling is one of our oldest art forms. Long before modern media entertained us storytelling was a common pastime, and a good storyteller was a valuable attribute to the community. Folktales and fables are one of the oldest educational tools through which cultures have passed down values and lore from one generation to the next.

Listening to stories can be a vivid creative experience. Most of a story told takes place in the imagination of the listener. Through the magic of language and the storyteller's skill, stories can come to life with landscapes and costumes as colourful and complex as the creative listener devises.

**Becoming A Storyteller**

Becoming a storyteller can encourage verbal self-confidence, foster an awareness of one's own unique imagination, and enhance listening skills. Storytelling is interactive community fun!

**A Storyteller's Vocabulary List**

**Plot:**

The sequence of events from which a story, play, song, puppet show, song, etc. can be made

**Retell:**

To restate in one's own words

**Version:**

One of many possible presentations of the same plot

**Character:**

People, animals, or other communicating entities in the tale

**Narrator:**

The presenter of the tale

**Basic Creative Tools**

**Words:**

Spoken text created by memorizing or improvising language of the tale

**Nonverbal Communication:**

Body language, gestures and facial expressions that contribute to the meaning of the communication

**Imagination:**

An interior creativity that generates language and physical expression in the storyteller

**Raw Material**

[**Learn a plot**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/learntheplot.html) **to tell as a story:**

Find a folktale plot to retell in the folktale collections in the library

**Other possibilities:**

* Tell a personal or family story ([Collecting Family Stories](http://storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html))
* Create an original plot ([Devising Plot Structures: Creating New Tales](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/index.html))
* Present a literary tale by memorizing the words of an author

**First Steps to Retelling a Plot**

**Beginning:**Picture the plot as a movie in your imagination. Start off retelling it by "chatting" it in your own words to make sure you remember what happens in the plot. Create your own version by retelling it over and over to different listeners until it starts to feel like a story. (**Story** is the art form; **plot** is the raw material from which it is made.)

**Middle:**Have a strong beginning and end by creating an enticing first and last sentence. Improvise the middle.

[Using descriptive language](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/improvise.html), add detail to your basic "chatting" of the plot. Try to help your listeners see what is in your mind. Pretend to be all the characters by letting some of the characters speak [dialogue](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/improvise.html). When you are the narrator, make sincere eye contact with the audience.

**End:**Stand up and tell the plot as a story. Let your imagination make your body and face respond to the tale as you imagine it. Tell the tale to a partner or a few people. Ask a friend to offer you some [coaching](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/coaching.html) (Ask them to listen to you and then give you some practical comments). Practice helps to reduce [stage fright](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/practice.html). As you gain confidence, try telling the story in front of a larger group.

Have Fun!

**Storytelling and Science**

Since the beginnings of human culture people have explained the mysteries in folktales and myth.

Have students investigate:

* Creation myths from around the world
* Star Lore: The folklore of the night sky
* World myths and legends of the sea and its creatures
* Attributes of animals portrayed in fables: Compare how those same animals behave in nature vs. in folklore
* The folklore of flowers
* World habitats described in folktales (jungles, deserts, mountains, meadows, etc.)
* Folktales about any animal. (bear stories, snake stories, fish stories, etc.)
* Tales can express the interconnectedness, or ecology, of all things. How are cause and effect relationships expressed in folktales?

**The Who, What, Where, and When of Science**

Have students research and present:

* The biographies of important scientists.
* An ancient to modern timeline history of invention.
* The history of one scientific invention that has changed the world.

**Storytelling and Math**

Since math and storytelling both involve abstract thought there are many overlapping territories and patterns of thinking.

Have students investigate math concepts in folktale plots such as:

* Recounting a tale: the concept of a sequence of events
* The architecture of a story: Consider the "shape" of its sequence of events (i.e. circular, linear, story within story, pyramidal, cumulative)
* Problem solving: prediction in story
(Real life keeps going, but folktales have an episodic feel with a beginning, middle, and end. Are there recognizable patterns in the plots of world folktale? Heroes? Quests? Magic Helpers? Why does the number three come up so often in folktales? "Happily Ever After" resolutions? Good vs. Evil?)
* Equations: Notice cause and effect relationships in plots.
* Intersections of characters: How does the story change from different points of view?
* Diagramming or mapping of plotlines: Document the sequence of events as a map.
* Congruence: Identify similarities and differences in several versions of plots. Create a diagram that explains what has been discovered.

**The History of Mathematics:**

Have students investigate and present:

* The history of great mathematician's lives
* The history of the development of advanced math concepts
* The story of the development of Architecture and Engineering
	+ Where and why people built monuments:
		- Investigate the history of ancient architecture such as the pyramids. Did story or religion motivate any of this construction?
		- How is mythology depicted in Roman and Greek temples?
		- Are there decorative elements related to stories on any local architecture in your town? Find and photograph the elements and explain the story theme behind them.

**Storytelling and Social Studies**

*Folktales are shelved in the non-fiction section of the library under "Social Sciences"* [*(398.2)*](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/findingtales.html)*. Studying a folktale offers a window into the culture from which it comes, as well as a mirror of humanity, since universal concerns are reflected in the world tales.*

**Deeply Investigating A Folktale**
Have students research folktales in the 398.2 section of the library. Have each select a folktale and investigate some of the following topics to gain insight into the context in which the tale might have been told.

**Global Reference**
Find the location on a world map of the country or culture from which the story comes. Research the geography and topography of the setting.

**Historical Timeframe**
Place the tale in a timeframe of history. (Pre-industrial, ancient world, modern times, mythical time etc.) Who collected the folktale and when? Is the print version obtained an original source document (told or written by an indigenous member of the culture), or a third person account (anthropologist, folklorist, writer)?

**Geographic/ Historical Transportation**
Has the tale traveled in any type of Diaspora? If so, in which culture can the earliest version be found? Are there interesting variations of plot told in other cultures? Are the variations connected to the source or have the variations on the theme resulted from a universal element addressed by the plot?

**Specific Cultural Context**
To be able to authentically understand or include accurate details in the retelling of the folktale, have students research the following background information:

* What are, or were, the dominant religious or philosophical influences on the story?
* When or why would the story be told? (As entertainment, ritual, sacred observance, education, etc.?)

To better understand the life style of the people who told this tale:

* Research any housing, tools or attire of the culture described or mentioned in the folktale.
* Research any aspects of daily life or customs reflected by the folktale.

**Science**How does the environment of the tale's setting affect the story? If animals or natural elements are included, are the animals accurately or metaphorically depicted? Does the topography determine the action?

**Math**Create a timeline of the plot. Investigate structures in the plot: equations or balancing elements, cause-and-effect situations, sequences, prediction, etc.

**Higher Thinking Skills**Have students analyze the plot for its metaphorical levels. Compare versions of the plot from different cultures. Create an original retelling of the plot using descriptive language, dialogue, and an awareness of underlying metaphor.

**Extensions Into:**

**Visual Arts**

Have students create:

* A painting or drawing of a poignant moment
* A picture book based on a folktale
* A poster advertising a Storytelling Festival
* A story mural

**Art History**

Have students research paintings or sculpture inspired by the elements in the story or by myth, legend, or folklore in general. After learning the artwork's background tale, have students orally present both the artwork and its accompanying story.

**Expressive Arts: Drama/Literature**

Have students create:

* A play based on a folktale
* A radio show based on the plot
* A ballad that retells the plot
* A retelling of the plot as a story with descriptive detail and dialogue

### Using Folktale Themes in the Classroomas the Center of a Unit or Lesson

[**A List of Folktale Themes to Investigate**](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/folkthemes/index.html#list)

Just as a piece of literature can be the springboard for many related areas of study, a folktale or a folktale theme can also be the center of a lesson plan or a unit that can touch several curriculum areas at once. Learning to retell a folktale from a particular geographical area, for example, may offer insights into the topography, climate, customs, attire, and values of the people who told the story and passed it on. In this way, the thorough study of a particular folktale migrates quickly out of simply the language arts area and ventures into social studies, geography, science and philosophy.

A story with a strong metaphorical meaning could symbolically describe an era in history. For example, Aesop's fable "The Sun and the Wind" celebrates the power of gentleness, and could be used as a springboard to discuss pacifism and violence in either history or current events. Or, folktales told by African captives during the time of slavery in the United States can offer poignant insight into American society and its values.

Since folktales are metaphorical by nature, they have been used traditionally as a teaching device by cultures around the globe. Possibilities to integrate stories into the teaching of contemporary subject matter are endless.

Stories to include in thematic folktale units can be found generally by reading folktales in the [398.2](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/findingtales.html) section of the public library.

[**A Storytelling Bookshelf for Teachers**](http://storyarts.org/store/bookshelf/index.html)

### A List of Folktale Themes to Investigate

Since folktales discuss many aspects of life, in metaphor, thematic subjects can be devised to investigate the world of folktales. In some ways folktales celebrate the uniqueness of peoples around the world, but in many ways the commonality of human experience is also revealed.

**Folktale Themes:**

* Fables: Animal Stories From Around the World
* Folktales of the Sea
* Starlore: Tales of the Night Sky
* Story Feast: Folktales About Food
* A Garden of Stories: Folktales About Plants
* Folktale Heroes and Villains
* Tall Tales: Stories of Fantasy and Exaggeration
* Creation Myths From Around the World
* Folktales of Our Feathered Friends (Bird Stories From Around the World)
* Trickster Tales From Around the World
* Cumulative Tales (Stories that include lists to remember)
* Gender and Story (strong women/nurturing men: Confronting Stereotypes Through Story)
* Love Stories (folktale and fairytale romance: Courtship Then and Now)
* Tales of the Supernatural (Ghost Stories from Around the World)
* The Flowing Story (Water in Myth, Legend and Lore: Sea Stories)
* Geographical Studies Through Folktales (India, Arctic, Africa, Asia, the Americas etc.)
* Rites of Passage (Tales of Childhood, Marriage, Parenting, Aging)
* A Multicultural Celebration Through Folktales (Tales of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans etc.)
* The Sky is Falling! Stories About Stories (Rumors, gossip, and exaggeration)
* Tales of Peace & War
* Journeys: Folkloric Travel (Mythic, Magical and Ordinary)
* Tales of Clothing From Around the World (Magical Shoes, Caps and Capes of Invisibility, Changing Clothes/Changing Station in Life)
* Big and Small: Stories About Size (Giant Tales, Miniature Characters)
* Rainbow of Tales: Color in Story
* Topography Tales:
	+ Frost and Fantasy—Stories From Arctic Peoples
	+ Jungle Expedition—Folktales of the Global Tropics
	+ Stories of the Desert

[**Storytelling Lesson Plans and Activities**](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/index.html)

**Storytelling Activities to Support
the New York State Standards for English Language Arts**

New [Learning Standards for English Language Arts](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/nystandard.html) have been developed in New York State that require students at all grade levels to demonstrate skills in speaking and listening as well as in reading and writing. The following activities developed by Heather Forest utilize the art of storytelling to explore speaking and listening skills.

Speaking and Listening:

1. [For Information](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/index.html#info)
2. [For Literary Response and Expression](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/index.html#response)
3. [For Critical Analysis and Evaluation](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/index.html#analysis)
4. [For Social Interaction](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/index.html#social)

**1. Speaking and Listening For Information**

**Practicing Factual Recall***Facts are data. Once data is collected we can interpret, analyze, evaluate, or apply it. Factual recall is somewhat mechanical but it provides the basis for more creative uses of information.*

**Read or Tell a Folktale to the Class.**

Ask students to listen carefully to the tale so that afterwards they can answer simple, factual, non-subjective questions such as inquiries related to **who, what, where, or when**.

**Who**:   Name the main characters.
**What**:   Describe one action that a character in the tale did.
**Where**:   Describe a detail mentioned in the story that refers to the setting of the tale.
**When**:   Make a linear timeline of the sequence of events of the plot.

Keep in mind that since listeners create, in their imagination, much of the subjective detail of a story that is heard, assessing factual recall must be based on information overtly contained in the story. (Thanks to Karen Morgan for this thought) Unlike watching TV, story listeners create the costumes, scenery, and character details in their own imaginations. Factual questions should not be about subjective detail.

**Exploring Comprehension**
Once a folktale plot is understood as a sequence of events, students can use this information to explore further comprehension and creative arts activities.

**Interpretive Activities:**
Have students generally **summarize** the folktale.

Have students generously **retell** the folktale in dramatic style with character dialogue, Have students **differentiate** between the characters by creating distinctive voice qualities and gestures for each character in the tale.

Have students **discuss** their sense of the underlying meanings or messages in the story (moral)? Have students imagine themselves as a character in the tale. Would they have made the same choices? Why or why not?

**Compare** two versions of the story's plot as told by different authors or by two or more cultures. Notice similarities and differences.

See [**Storytelling Skills Rubric**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/usestories/index.html)

**2. Speaking and Listening for Literary Response and Expression**

**Generating New Ideas:**
*Creativity allows us to take information and use it in innovative, unique, and interesting ways.*

**Read Or Retell A Folktale To The Class:**

Ask students to write a sequel to the folktale **predicting** how another episode might evolve.

Ask students to **create** a scene that happens before the plot of the folktale actually begins.

Ask students to **imagine** the folktale set in modern times.

**Invent** a different way to retell the folktale in written form from the point of view of one of the characters as a:
Diary entry (communication to one's self)
Newspaper report (a public communication)
Letter to a friend (a communication to a trusted associate)

**Revise** a classic fable by rehumanizing the animal characters. Give the generic characters names and retell the story featuring humans instead of animals.

Have students plan a storytelling concert celebrating a cultural heritage. Have them investigate the culture by researching the ethnic group in the library or on the Internet. Have each student learn a folktale from the culture. Bring in foods of the ethnicity and have a feast.

Ask student to create the following narrative forms based on a folktale plot:

* a picture book
* a puppet show
* a play
* a ballad
* a narrated pantomime show
* a storytelling presentation

**3. Speaking and Listening For Critical Analysis and Evaluation**

**Evaluating, Judging, Having an Opinion**
Storytelling encourages empathy and a respect for different points of view.

**Personal Taste:**
Ask students to listen to several folktales read out loud or retold from an anthology of folktales found in the 398.2 section of the library. Have students choose, from those read, a story they would enjoy retelling themselves. Some "point of view" discussion topics: What about the folktale chosen attracted the student? With which character did he or she identify most? Would he or she behave differently or the same as the characters in the tale who find themselves in a predicament.

**Understanding Public Opinion:**
Ask students to develop a list of generally accepted standards of communal behavior such as co-operation, honesty, and sharing etc. that encourage people to live together in a peaceful, productive way. Have students find an ancient folktale that expresses a useful societal value that might still be relevant today.

**Relativity Of Standards**
Listen to or read folktales from other times and places. Have students evaluate a folktale from its historical context. Discuss for example: At the time that the tale was told or collected were customs different from today?

Listen to or read folktales from ancient times and places. Decipher and discuss a useful bit of wisdom that the plotline preserved for future generations.

If a folktale in a published anthology offers a printed moral, ask students if they agree with the summation. Could they suggest a different moral for the same story?

**4. Listening and Speaking For Social Interaction**

*Speaking and listening skills are essential to participating in adult culture. The ability to articulate thoughts, feelings, and needs can contribute to academic, interpersonal, and professional success. For safety's sake, children need to be able to express their thoughts and feelings so that they can ask for help and get what they need from adults. Good listeners learn more efficiently.*

**Listening For Social Interaction**Ask students to develop a list of attributes of a good listener. Discuss the list. Listen to each other's comments on the art of listening!

Ask students to offer encouragement to a speaker by showing in non-verbal terms with their eyes, facial expression, and body stance that they are listening. This social courtesy creates an atmosphere where speakers will generously speak. Ask students to assess their own listening skills. Do they always pay complete mental attention to speakers or do they observe their mind straying to other irrelevant thoughts. Only the student can assess his or her own concentration patterns.

[**Listening Skills Rubric**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/usestories/listenrubric.html)

**Speaking For Social Interaction**
[**Public Speaking Activities**](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/index.html#public)
[**Practicing the Art of Conversation**](http://storyarts.org/lessonplans/newstandard/index.html#practice)

**Public Speaking Activities**
Have students orally share stories: by [retelling folktales](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/index.html) or reading a folktale out loud with expression.

Have students give an oral book report.

Have students create and present a first person monologue pretending to be a famous figure out of history or herstory.

Have students design a radio show for the school intercom system that includes: a school news report, live interviews of teachers or students, the reading of poetry, essays, or reports, announcements of world headline news.

[**Practice and Stage Fright**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/practice.html)
[**Coaching Beginner Storytellers**](http://storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/coaching.html)

**Practicing the Art of Conversation**
Have students work with a conversation buddy during class time to discuss, one-on-one, a particular issue raised in class. Have students become aware of their ability to take turns speaking and listening.

Have students gather in small discussion groups to develop a group project such as a short skit based on a folktale.

Have students speak to each other about experiences in their lives that resemble incidents in a folk or fairytale.

Have students become sensitized to whenever a speaker is interrupted by others before a communication has been completed. A long pause during a speaker's statement does not constitute an opportunity for another student to cut in and speak.

Have students interview elders in their family to explore [collecting family stories](http://storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html).

**Telephone Skills:**
Practice using a mock telephone in front of the class:
Would the speaker of the following calls speak differently? How?

* Call and ask to talk to a friend.
* Call a business and ask for information.
* Call an emergency number or police for medical help.

Discuss the social courtesies expected in answering a phone:

* at home.
* as if student worked as a receptionist at a business.

Have two students engage in a mock phone call. Without looking at each other, have students practice listening and speaking, attentively waiting for an appropriate pause to hold up their end of the conversation. Do we listen more attentively to tone of voice, if we cannot see the facial expressions of our conversation partner?

**Taking Turns Talking:**
To prevent anyone from interrupting a speaker, use any object, such as a stick, a ball, a stone etc. and place it in the middle of a small discussion group. Then, take turns reaching for the object. Only the one who is holding the item can speak. When that speaker is finished speaking, the item is placed in the middle of the circle again for another to hold. This forum gives a moment of silence between comments in the discussion.

**Have a Salon:** a conversation party
Arrange a time when an invited group of friends gathers socially to discuss an interesting topic. The first meeting of the salon could be to develop a good list of discussion topics.

TITLE: Reading...Try It, You Might Like It!

AUTHOR: Jana Dabney, Chickasha Intermediate School; Chickasha, OK

GRADE LEVEL: 6th - 7th, Reading

OVERVIEW: After several years of being taught reading skills, students need and enjoy the opportunity to "learn" to enjoy reading through interactive reading activities.

PURPOSE: Students will demonstrate through a choice of assessments, their understanding and enjoyment of material they have selected to read. The books they may choose are from a list of Accelerated Reader Books that they will also take a computer-generated comprehension test over in order to meet general outcomes for the class.

OBJECTIVES: That the student can select, read, comprehend as well as demonstrate relevant information to others using a student-teacher rubric.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS: Only the ability to guide a student or team through creative problem solving steps.

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

The list of activities is only limited by the teacher and students imagination. Some students prefer to begin with a more concrete activity such as presenting a short playlet about the book. some add costumes, others add lighting, sound effects and maybe even popcorn!

I have found that the usual comprehension, basal reading has left an extremely negative feeling concerning reading and has ruled out reading as an elective, enjoyable activity. I, therefore, use many different activities to stimulate fun and excitement for reading. Students also enjoy rewriting fables and folktales into modern day language. Some students enjoy demonstrating a new skill or interest they have because of the book they have read.

Still others have presented series of books!

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER: As each team or student presents their projects, new ideas are generated for other groups to develop. Having enough time for all to demonstrate seems to be the biggest problem. Thank goodness!!

Contact Person: George Stancliffe
Contact Email: georgestancliffe@hotmail.com

Title: EXPANDED READING [rapid reading]
Grade level: 3-10

Double or triple reading speed for 8-16 year old children in just 15 minutes.
Children with ADD and Dyslexia often do quite well at this.

GOAL:
Double or Triple Reading Speed for 8 to 16 year old children in 15 Minutes **OVERVIEW:**
Students will learn to use their Natural Vision while reading books. This will allow them to see up to several words at a glance while reading. They will them learn visualizing techniques to help them to gain increased comprehension at faster reading rates.

**MATERIALS:**

1. 1) Easy reading books for each child. Anything that is at or below their grade level is fine.
2. 2) A watch with a second hand.
3. 3) A pen to tap with.

**OBJECTIVES:**

* --Help children to see that there is more than one way to see all the word on a page of print.
* --Show them how to immediately double their reading speed, while maintaining good comprehension.
* --Help the children to learn visualizing techniques to help them to gain greater comprehension.
* --To give Dyslexic and ADD children an alternative reading skill that often allows them to read with greater comprehension than normal reading does.

**PROCEDURES:**
Step 1. The first thing I do is explain Natural Vision:

NATURAL VISION: Take a minute right now and look out the window at a tree (or imagine you are looking at one). Do you only see one leaf at a time, or do you just look at the tree, as a whole? Most people see the whole tree in one or two glances. This is what we call Natural Vision. When we are seeing almost anything, we are using Natural Vision, except when we are looking at a page of print.

You see, in first grade we were taught how to have tunnel vision. Most people can only see one word at a time. You may as well read through a straw.

Tunnel vision is unnatural and fatiguing to the eyes.

You need to look at a page of print with more Natural Vision so that we are seeing several words at once. In fact, let's pretend that each page of print is just a picture of a tree, with each word being a 'leaf.' With Natural Vision, you use your whole field of view (peripheral vision) to catch SEVERAL words at a glance.

For about one minute, have the children practice seeing all the words on a page of print as fast as they can (they are not to try to understand anything at this point. They are just to SEE the words. If they pretend that they are written in Chinese, or if they turn the book upside down, this sometimes helps them to see the words without trying to understand anything). Some children are able to see all the words on a page in less than 10 seconds, a few in less than 5 seconds.

Step 2. Next I tell them thy have one second to see each line of print. They only get to have two glances, (or three [at most] in some materials), to see the whole line. This requires seeing several words at a glance.

Ready, go.
I tap my pen every second to make sure that they are keeping up with the one line per second rate. I remind them to make two glances per tap, seeing half of the line per glance. (It's normal for understanding to be really poor for the first few minutes. At first the focus is just on SPEED. Comprehension will naturally start to pick up within a few minutes for most kids).
Tap, tap, tap....
After a minute or two, I tell them to go just as fast, but that now I will only tap once per page instead of once per second.. Each tap will be 20 to 30 seconds apart, depending on how many lines of reading material are on each page.

Step 3. I now explain how to Visualize:

VISUALIZE: When you read a good book, can you picture in your mind's eye what the characters look like and what they are doing? Most likely so.
That is what Visualization is.

With speed reading, the Visualization must be developed to a greater degree. This takes effort. For some people this is difficult. But everyone can get better with practice. Following is one exercise that may help:

Open an easy-to-read storybook. Let's say you see the word 'house.' Can you picture a house? [I can] What color is it? [I picture a LOG CABIN, so it is brown]. Does it have a lawn? [Not mine] Do you smell any smells? [Yes, I can smell smoke from the fireplace] Can you hear any sounds? [Yes, the sound of someone chopping wood] The more detail you can imagine in the picture that you build in your mind, the more alive and real the story becomes. Sure you are filling in some gaps in the story, but most people do that anyway. As you add more pictures to the story, the picture becomes a movie in your mind.

Your ability to Visualize well, will determine your reading speed. People who have difficulty Visualizing don't achieve great speeds. Great Visualizers (is that a word?) achieve phenomenal results. Many of my students have told me that it IS like watching a movie in their minds.

Visualization will aid in retention.

Now, let's give it a try.

Ready, go.

Tap.....tap.....tap......

After about 2 or 3 minutes, I stop and ask how well they are understanding. Usually it is quite a bit. But even if they aren't understanding very well yet, comprehension is usually better at the end of the drill than it was at the beginning. This indicates that their brain is beginning to catch on to the faster rate.

Step 4. Now I let them read for 5 or more minutes uninterrupted except for the tap every 20 to 30 seconds. A couple of minutes into the drill, I may quit doing the taps to see if they can maintain the speed without any prodding, only occasionally tapping when I see that someone is starting to slow down to more than 30 seconds per page.

You now have taught most (if not all) of the kids in the class to double or triple their reading speed, with decent comprehension.

**EXTENSIONS:**

1. 1. If you want the children to maintain their ability to read rapidly, here's how to make their new ability become a normal, natural and permanent part of them: Practice Step 3 for 15 minutes each day for 5 days. After that, set aside 15 minutes per day to practice Expanded Reading, on a continuing basis for at least 4 or 5 months, without any taps at all. (Only tap when kids start slowing down to 30 seconds per page or more). This will help the accelerated rate become more internal.
2. 2. Children should be allowed to go faster than the 20 to 30 seconds per page that the taps indicate, if they want to, as long as they are getting enjoyable understanding at it. Some kids get EXTREMELY fast at this.

TITLE: "WHAT YOU SEE ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET!"

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GRADE LEVEL/SUBJECT: (Appropriate for grades 5-8)

Reading comprehension activity

OVERVIEW: When it comes to buying something (particularly something to eat) students seldom wonder about things like "What's it made of?' or "Where did these ingredients come from?" They are far more interested in how it tastes than in whether or not it's good for them. This activity was designed to make them READ carefully for information about products, THEN make judgements on whether or not it's right for them.

OBJECTIVE(s): Students will be able to:

1. Locate and read the ingredient lists and nutrient charts on any cereal box.

2. Explain how reading carefully helps to know what to buy (or not to buy).

3. Explain in what order the ingredients are listed.

4. Identify the UPC (bar code) symbol and explain its use.

5. Discuss the cereal package itself and determine how it helps to sell this product to a particular age group.

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Prepare a question sheet (about 10 questions) using the ingredient and nutritional information from a snack food such as potato chips. Intentionally leave off product names (and other obvious things) so students will have to find other clues in order to identify the product.

2. Using the cereal box they have brought to class, have each student chart the information asked for.

3. When finished, trade worksheets with a partner and check each other's work. Ask them to compare the information on their own box with their partner's. Which product contains less sugar? less sodium? more calories per serving? more cholesterol?

 "WHAT YOU SEE ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET!!"

Use your cereal box to answer the following questions:

1. Name of cereal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Address of company\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Name the grains it is made of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

5. (a) What is the main ingredient? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (b) How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Serving size \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. Servings per package \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Calories per serving: without milk\_\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

9. Carbohydrates: without milk\_\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

10. Cholesterol: without milk\_\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

11. Sodium: without milk\_\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

12. Does this cereal contain sugar? \_\_\_\_\_ How much?\_\_\_\_\_\_

13. What does U.S. RDA mean?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

14. What % of U.S. RDA of:

 (a) Vitamin A: without milk\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

 (b) Vitamin C without milk\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

 (c) Calcium: without milk\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

 (d) Vitamin D without milk\_\_\_\_ with milk\_\_\_\_

15. Is this cereal package designed to appeal to a certain age group? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, circle which one:

 5-10 11-15 general

16. If you know what a cereal contains, what can you better decide? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_