

Best Practices

Best Practices

Introducing the Bellringer Activity

Use a Bellringer Activity to get students practicing language arts skills at the beginning of class, while you are getting ready to start the day's lesson.

1. Write the Bellringer Activity on the board.
2. As students enter the classroom, ask them to begin working on the Bellringer Activity.
3. To monitor students, walk around the class, helping those who are having difficulty.
4. After 4 minutes, give students a one-minute warning before discussing the activity.
5. After 5 minutes, encourage volunteers to share their answers with the class.

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Introducing the Big Question or Essential Question

Use the Big Question to guide thinking and exploration of thematic questions.

1. Spend time on the Introducing the Big Question pages in the Student Edition.
2. Ask volunteers to share their ideas about the Big Question with the class.
3. Use materials in the Unit Resources to introduce and reinforce vocabulary.
4. Have students play the Big Question tunes on PHLitOnline.com and listen closely for the Big Question vocabulary words.
5. As you teach the unit, continue to revisit the Big Question to help students develop their ideas.

For more information, read the essay by Grant Wiggins in the Teacher's Edition of Prentice Hall Literature.

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Exploring the Big Question or Essential Question

Use each selection to make a unique connection to the Big Question.

1. Use the Writing About the Big Question feature in the Student Edition.
2. Encourage students to keep the Big Question in mind as they read.
3. Use the Big Question follow-up in Critical Thinking to further explore the idea.
4. At the end of the unit, use the Applying the Big Question pages in the Student Edition as a closure activity.
5. Encourage students to identify the follow-up issues they might like to pursue. As appropriate, revisit these questions with later units.

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Using the Paired Reading Selections

Use the leveled selections to teach the standards to all of your students. The selections are presented in sets of two—one is more accessible and one is more challenging.

1. Use the Accessibility at a Glance chart in the Time and Resource Manager to choose a selection for your students.
2. Use the Before You Read page to introduce the Reading Skill and the Literary Analysis skill.
3. Use the Making Connections page to reinforce the Big/Essential Question and the selection vocabulary.
4. Use the selection students did not read to reteach, reinforce, enrich, or to differentiate instruction. You may also use that selection as a homework or review assignment.

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Actively Engaging Students

Look for opportunities to keep your students involved in learning with the following activities.

1. **Think-Pair-Share** Choose a topic based on a selection. Ask students to think about the topic, discuss it with a partner, and share their ideas with the class.
2. **Sentence Starters** Use a sentence starter such as, “I like the main character . . .” to jumpstart a classroom discussion.
3. **Vote** Ask a question about a selection. Have students vote on an answer and explain their choices
4. **Idea Wave** Ask a question such as, “What do you think will happen in the selection?” Go around the class in a fast-paced manner, asking students to share their answers in 15 seconds or less.

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Leading a Classroom Discussion

Use a classroom discussion to encourage interaction and require that students speak, listen, and think critically.

1. **Prepare Students** Identify a subject for discussion. Ask students to write something relevant to the classroom discussion.
2. **Plan the Questions** Pose questions that require thought and do not have predetermined answers. For example, ask, “What arguments can you think of—pro and con—for calling this character a villain?”
3. **Set the Stage** Have students sit in a circle or horseshoe to facilitate easy discussion.
4. **Wrap-Up** Call on a volunteer to tell three things he or she heard during the discussion.

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Setting Up a Literature Circle

Literature circles are student-led book groups that develop student reading and critical thinking.

1. Present the class with a choice of books to read. Group students according to their choices.
2. Assign students roles to play in their groups. Roles may include summarizer, vocabulary finder, question writer, and story-mapper.
3. Encourage students to discuss those things in the literature that interest them, or events or details that they did not understand.
4. Alternate days for “reading” and “meeting.” On reading days, have students sit in their circles to read and take notes. On meeting days, have students discuss what they have read. Visit each group to facilitate and observe.
5. Plan days for large group sharing.

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Using Culturally Responsive Instruction

Culturally responsive instruction helps all students connect their lives to literature.

1. When you are teaching with themes of heritage or tradition, prepare to engage your students by inviting them to connect to their own experiences. Review the selection and identify a point of connection.
2. Share the connection with students and ask them to interview an adult family member or close family friend about a related experience from his or her own life.
3. After students have read the selections, ask volunteers to share what they learned from their interviews.
4. Encourage students to discuss the ways the selection reflects the experiences of their family members and their own experiences.

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Monitoring Progress

To ensure that students are mastering the class objectives, monitor progress using materials in the teaching resources.

1. For informal monitoring, use the questions in the text and the worksheets to monitor how well your students are learning the new vocabulary words, the literary analysis skills, and the reading strategies taught with the selections.
2. Once a week, give students a brief quiz, using worksheets from the Unit Resources or the Reading Kit.
3. Compare the results week to week to see how students are progressing.
4. Based on results, you might spend more time teaching vocabulary, literary analysis skills, or reading strategies.

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Formally Assessing Students

Use the print and online tests to assess your students' mastery.

1. Select a test from the Student Edition, the Unit Resources, or the Test Bank.
2. Tell students about the test ahead of time. Discuss ways they can prepare for it and review appropriate student strategies.
3. Administer the test.
4. Mark the test by circling wrong answers and writing a brief redirection.
5. Grade the tests according to how many answers were correct out of the total.
6. You may decide to allow students to correct their own errors and resubmit the test to you.

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Informally Assessing Students

Beyond exams, alternative assessments such as research and technology activities or listening and speaking assessments can help you track student mastery.

1. Use the Alternative Assessment worksheets in the *Professional Development Guidebook* to plan a project.
2. Give students a specific list of requirements for the project. Also, give them a due date and suggestions for ways to approach the project.
3. When the projects are completed, display them in the classroom.
4. Use an appropriate rubric in the *Professional Development Guidebook* to assess how well a student has carried out the assignment. Spend five minutes with each student to discuss how well he or she did.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary

Introducing Selection Vocabulary

Use this routine to introduce students to selection vocabulary.

1. **Introduce each Word** Read the word aloud. Provide students with a student-friendly definition.
2. **Demonstrate the Word** Provide several familiar examples to demonstrate meaning.
3. **Apply the Word** Have students demonstrate understanding of the word with a simple activity, such as using the word in a sentence or describing what the word is and isn't.
4. **Display the Word** Distribute a Word Web from the Graphic Organizer Transparencies Booklet. Ask students to fill in the word and examples of the word.
5. **Use the Word Often** Encourage students to use the word often in their writing and speaking.

Vocabulary

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Using Oral Cloze

Use Oral Cloze to engage students in vocabulary learning.

1. Select a reading passage to read aloud to the class.
2. Tell students they should follow along as you read.
3. Explain that you will sometimes not say a word aloud, in order to allow students to read it aloud.
4. Skip no more than one word per sentence as you read. Choose words that are significant to the understanding of the passage. Students should read these words aloud, gaining practice in using the word correctly.

Vocabulary

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Using Context Clues

Look for opportunities for students to use context clues to understand unfamiliar words.

1. Explain that good readers look to the surrounding words to see if they can figure out the meaning.
2. Have students read a selection that contains several words that are likely to be unfamiliar but are located within a context that provides a key to its meaning.
3. Read key paragraphs aloud, displaying them on an overhead or using an LCD projector. Call on students to give you a definition of the unfamiliar words.
4. For every correct response, ask, "How do you know? What context clues did you use to figure it out?"
5. Elaborate on the student's answer, modeling for the rest of the class.

Vocabulary

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Using the Frayer Model

Use the Frayer Model as a strategy for learning new words from many angles.

1. Write a selection vocabulary word on the board, such as the word *challenge*.
2. Create a column on the board under the heading "WHAT IT IS." Ask students: What is an example of something that is a challenge? Write responses, such as "a new test" and "something hard to do."
3. Create a column on the board under the heading "WHAT IT ISN'T." Ask students: What is an example of something that is not a challenge? Write responses, such as "a habit" and "something easy."
4. Ask a volunteer to use the examples on the board to define the vocabulary word. Students can then use the word correctly in a sentence.

Vocabulary

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Using Music to Teach Vocabulary

Use the Big Question Tunes to engage students and introduce them to the Big Question Vocabulary. Lyrics are available at PHLitOnline.com, in the Unit Resources, or in the students' All-in-One Workbooks.

1. Instruct students to listen to the Big Question Tune and to record unfamiliar words in their notebooks.
2. Ask students to share the words they listed and write them on the board.
3. Direct students to the Big Question Tune lyrics at PHLitOnline.com, in their Unit Resources book or in the All-in-One Workbook.
4. Instruct students to infer definitions for the unfamiliar words, and ask volunteers to share the meanings they have inferred.
5. Replay the Big Question Tune and instruct students to read along.

Vocabulary

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Using the Personal Thesaurus

The Personal Thesaurus provides students with a tool for making connection between words they are learning and words they already know.

1. After students have read a selection or completed an activity, have them turn to the personal thesaurus in the Reader's Notebook.
2. Encourage students to add new entries. For example, under *good* or a word in students' vernacular that means "good," students can write *appropriate, suitable, strong, award-winning, and stellar*.
3. Help them to understand the connection between their personal language, which might include some slang, and the mainstream language of their reading and writing.
4. Call on volunteers to read a few entries aloud. Point out that writers have many choices of words when they write. Help students see that audience often determines word choice.

Vocabulary

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Using Multidraft Reading Strategy

The Multidraft Reading strategy allows students to dig deeper into meaning by reading a selection several times with deliberately layered purposes.

1. Tell students that good readers often read a text more than once. Explain that you are going to ask them to read a story three times.
2. Ask students to read the selection for the first time. Tell students to focus mostly on basic comprehension.
3. Ask students to read the selection a second time. This time students should focus their reading on applying the skills they have learned.
4. Ask students to read the story a third time. This time students should focus on interpreting the selection and answering the end-of-selection questions.

Comprehension

Comprehension

Using an Anticipation Guide

Use an Anticipation Guide to help students become active, motivated readers.

1. Choose a selection for your students to read.
2. Give students copies of the Anticipation Guide in the *Professional Development Guidebook*. Together complete the major column of the guide with statements in the Teacher's Edition. These sentences are related to essential ideas in the selection.
3. Have students complete the Anticipation Guide before reading by identifying their response to each statement. Review their answers in class, allowing for discussion and debate.
4. As students read, encourage them to look for statements that support or cause them to rethink their answers.
5. After students have read, revisit the Anticipation Guides to see whether students' responses have grown or changed. Facilitate a follow-up discussion.

Comprehension Comprehension

Comprehension

Comprehension

Facilitating a Think Aloud

Model the strategies that good readers use to unlock meaning from a selection.

1. List the flowing comprehension strategies on the board: applying prior knowledge, making predictions, summarizing, visualizing, identifying purpose, recognizing confusion.
2. Choose a short selection to read aloud with students.
3. Read the selection aloud, stopping at intervals to tell what strategies you are using to unlock meaning. Identify important words in the text. Use languages such as “I think . . . Because . . . but I’m not sure . . . So . . .” to show that arriving at meaning is not a simple, single answer; but a developing process.
4. Read another selection aloud. This time, when you stop, call on students to say what they are thinking. Ask students to support their ideas with evidence in the text.

Comprehension Comprehension

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Using a Graphic Organizer

Use a graphic organizer to help students organize their ideas about a selection.

1. Make copies of an appropriate graphic organizer from the Graphic Organizer Transparency Booklet and hand it out to the class, or use one from PHLitOnline.com that you can display.
2. Use an overhead or LCD projector to show the blank or partially filled in graphic organizer. Explain to students the kind of information they should find in the selection to complete the graphic organizer.
3. Have students fill out the graphic organizer as they read the selection.
4. Ask volunteers to share their graphic organizers with the class.
5. Use the information students have gathered to discuss the Literary Analysis skill or Reading Strategy it demonstrates.

Comprehension Comprehension

Fluency

Fluency

Facilitating a Class Read Aloud

Use choral reading to model and practice fluent reading with students.

1. Tell students that fluent reading comes only with practice. Say you are going to read a selection aloud together.
2. Encourage students not to worry about how they sound to others—just to work at smoothing out how their reading sounds to their own ears.
3. Begin reading the passage, setting the pace and demonstrating expression.
4. To monitor individual student fluency, walk around the room as students perform a choral read of the selection.

Fluency Fluency Fluency

Facilitating a Small Group/Partner Read Aloud

Give students frequent opportunities to read aloud in pairs or small groups.

1. Group students in pairs or small groups, joining strong readers with weaker readers.
2. Give students a selection to read aloud.
3. Ask students to take turns reading paragraphs aloud to each other. Suggest that students read slowly and with expression. In addition, ask students to read each passage several times—this will improve their ability to read with appropriate pacing and expression.
4. Walk around the room listening in, praising students whenever possible, and providing personalized feedback as necessary.

Using the Reading Warm-Ups for Fluency Monitoring

Use the Reading Warm-Ups to chart students' fluency progress throughout the school year.

1. Encourage struggling students to read the Reading Warm-Ups in the Unit Resources at a comfortable pace that allows them to understand what they are reading.
2. Time students as they read the passage. Once students have finished reading, ask them to answer the questions.
3. Establish a words per minute reading rate for each student. Chart each students' reading rate throughout the year. Make sure that students are, at a minimum, answering 75% of the comprehension questions correctly.

*For more on fluency, see "About the Program" in the **Unit One Resources**.*

Administering a Timed-Writing Assignment

You can use timed-writing assignments to prepare your students for standardized tests.

1. Write a writing prompt on the board and present it orally as well. Indicate how much time students will have.
2. Allow for questions on process, but do not provide coaching about content.
3. Tell students to begin, advising them of the time they will have to stop. Announce a two-minute warning before the end of the exercise.
4. Say “stop” and collect the papers. If you wish, hold an informal discussion of the writing assignment so that students can share their ideas. At this time, review the prompt, pointing out the key terms and directions.
5. Grade and return papers.

Facilitating a Write Around

Use the write around activity to get students thinking, writing about, and interacting with a selection.

1. Have students get into their reading circles.
2. Tell them that they will be writing letters to each other as a way of discussing the story.
3. Pose a question about the reading. For example, ask, “What was the turning point in this story?”
4. Select one student to start the writing. Have that student write his or her thoughts and then pass the letter to the next student. That student responds to the first student and adds his or her own ideas and passes the letter.
5. To increase opportunity, start several letters at once. If this is the case, each letter should focus on a unique question.

Writing from a Sentence Model

Use model sentences to reinforce grammar principles while students write their own sentences.

1. Select a sentence from the week's reading.
2. Have students analyze the sentence by zooming in on the parts of the sentence. Is it a compound sentence? Does it include phrases? Are there adjectives, adverbs, active verbs?
3. Have students talk about why the sentence is effective.
4. Invite students to write a similar sentence, using the same structure but different words.
5. Call on volunteers to read their sentences aloud.

Writing from a Sentence Starter

Use sentence starters to help students write about a selection. Sentence starters help focus writing while providing students the chance to use formal academic discourse. The best sentence starters are open-ended, with more than one successful completion.

1. Have students read a selection. As they read, write sentence starters that support your instructional goals on the board:

The main character has to decide between _____
and _____.

This author wants to show readers _____.

If I were the main character, I would _____.

2. Have volunteers read their sentences in pairs or as a part of a full-class activity.
3. After discussion, you may ask students to use their sentences as the topic sentence of a paragraph.

Differentiating Instruction

Differentiating Instruction

Using 30-Minute English Learners Intervention

Use the Reader's Notebook: English Learner's Version to help English learners get the most out of the literature selections.

1. Introduce the *Prentice Hall Literature* selection to the whole class by giving background information and reviewing the Before Your Read material in the Student Edition.
2. Direct English learners to the *Reader's Notebook: English Learner's Version*, and ask students to complete the Before You Read and Making Connections pages.
3. Have English learners read the abridged selection in the *Reader's Notebook*, using the side column vocabulary notes to aid comprehension.
4. Ask English learners to complete the After You Read and Vocabulary Skill Review pages.
5. Review the *Prentice Hall Literature* selection as the whole class.

Differentiating Instruction

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Using Audio to Differentiate Instruction

To reach struggling readers and English learners, promote fluency and comprehension through the use of audio recordings of all selections at PHLitOnline.com.

1. Ask students to independently read a section of the selection in the Student Edition or the appropriate Reader's Notebook.
2. Direct students to the unabridged or abridged selection at PHLitOnline.com.
3. Students should play the audio recording and follow along in their text.
4. Direct students to pay special attention to unfamiliar words and the reader's pacing and expression.
5. Remind students to pause and replay the audio as needed.
6. Ask students to read the section of the selection again silently now that they have listened to it.

Differentiating Instruction

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Using Contrastive Analysis

Use contrastive analysis to pinpoint common trouble spots specific to English learners.

1. Read the Introduction to Linguistics in the *Professional Development Guidebook*.
2. Carefully review the Common First Languages section, paying special attention to the sections that apply to your students.
3. Review the Linguistic Contrastive Analysis chart columns that apply to your students.
4. Monitor specific students as they work with trouble consonants and vowels. Use what you have learned from the Linguistic Contrastive Analysis chart to explain to students that there are reasons they have trouble making specific sounds and/or pronouncing specific words.

Differentiating Instruction

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Facilitating a Tea Party

Use the Tea Party activity to give students a chance to preview and discuss authentic literature.

1. Write lines of dialogue or short passages from one or more selections on slips of paper or index cards. Put the papers or cards in a basket and let each student pick one out.
2. Have students pair off. Have them take turns reading their passages to each other from the paper or card and discussing what they have read.
3. Allow two minutes for each pair to read their lines to each other. Then, have students switch partners. Students will keep switching until time runs out.
4. To complete the activity, ask students to describe their reactions to the passages. Ask, "What do you notice about this text?" or devise other questions that probe students' previewing skills.

Differentiating Instruction

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Facilitating a Shout Out

Use the Shout Out activity as an engaging way to brainstorm ideas about a selection.

1. Explain that the practice of raising hands and being called on will be suspended during this activity. Students should call out their answers building on the responses of their classmates. They should not raise their hands or wait to be called on.
2. Ask questions that can be answered in a word or two. “What are some words that come to mind when you think of where the story takes place?” or “How would you describe the main character in the story?”
3. Record all of the responses on the board.
4. To conclude the activity, review the words, asking selected students what details from the story made them choose these words.

Differentiating Instruction

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Facilitating “Jump In” Reading

Use “Jump In” reading as an engaging alternative to choral reading.

1. Tell students that you will be reading a selection aloud. Explain that you want them to “jump in” and take over the reading whenever they would like to do so.
2. Explain that the guiding rule of “Jump In Reading” is that readers can jump in only at the end of a sentence.
3. Start reading the selection. Wait for a student to jump in. For the first time you do this activity, you may want to select some volunteers privately and tell them in advance where to jump in to get the reading started.
4. Keep the action lively by jumping in yourself at times or by privately inviting a reluctant reader to read a passage you pre-select.

Differentiating Instruction

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Facilitating “Back It Up”

Use the Back It Up activity to promote discussion and encourage students to support their ideas about a selection.

1. Write a statement about a selection that students have just finished reading.
2. Tell students to think about whether or not they agree with the statement.
3. Have students raise their hands. You might have them raise their right hand if they agree with the statement and their left hand if they disagree with the statement.
4. Call on volunteers to “back it up” by finding evidence in the selection to support their position.

Differentiating Instruction

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Facilitating Language Detectives

By asking students to become “language detectives,” you can encourage them to become active, engaged readers.

1. Use this routine when the class is reading a selection that features dialect or slang.
2. Before reading the selection, ask students to be language detectives. Have them skim for examples of non-standard English and write a list of what they find.
3. Ask students to write examples of dialect on the board. Call on students to give you standard-English restatements of the non-standard language.
4. After this analysis, discuss why the author would use non-standard English.

Differentiating Instruction