

Strategy: Make Connections

Book: D is for Drinking Gourd

Author: Nancy Sanders

Genre: Expository Poem

Grade Level: Intermediate, Middle, High

Strategy Definition: (post in classroom)	This strategy activates the student's personal knowledge and experiences to connect them to the text. They think about something that has happened in their own life that they can relate to in the text. It might be a real life connection, a book they read, a movie they saw or a TV show.
Standard:	The International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English published Standards for the English Language Arts. 3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g. sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
Objective:	Students learn about the remarkable achievements of and contributions from African Americans throughout history. Students choose one "letter" that they make a connection with and expand on their topic.
Materials:	D is for Drinking Gourd, Reader's Toolkit, blue "make connections" sticky notes, pencil, Black History texts, websites, etc...
Connect: Before Reading Establish a Purpose	The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with a wealth of information on African American history. The book is organized by the letters of the alphabet. Each letter represents a piece of African American history. The teacher will read the poem for each letter and allow students to make a connection to the topic. The students will then choose a topic they connect with to expand on this topic. Make an anchor chart with all the letters of the alphabet. Use this chart to write the word that each letter represents. This will allow the students to have a visual to refer to.
Model: During Reading	Read A is for abolitionists (pages 1 and 2). Discuss with students the meaning of abolitionists (people who tried to bring slavery to an end). Model a connection to this concept about people that try to make a difference to make things better. There are many groups of people that rally for a "cause". Choose an appropriate one for your grade level students. Explain to students how connections help you build your background knowledge and connect new information to existing information.

	<p>Invite students to write a connection on their blue “Make Connections” sticky note. Students write and share connections with a partner and/or class.</p> <p>Discuss connections and post a few on the Anchor Chart next to the letter A-Abolitionist connections.</p> <p>NOTE: Continue reading the story. This may take a few days due to the length and depth of this text. Also, it may not be appropriate to make written connections for each letter. The teacher may decide how often to use this strategy.</p>
<p>Check for Understanding:</p> <p>After Reading</p>	<p>Ask the students to choose one letter-topic they “connect” to. Their assignment will be to use their blue “make connection” sticky notes and jot down additional information to help them remember the topic. They may want to use other books or websites to assist with their research. The purpose of using the sticky notes is that it is a great motivator due to the fact it is a smaller piece of paper so the students do not see this as a “research” project, however it serves the same purpose, just not as in depth.</p> <p>After the students gather information on their topics, post their responses on the Alphabet Anchor Chart. Allow the student’s time to share their new information with the class.</p>
Reminder:	<i>Strategy instruction takes time, be consistent and supportive.</i>

Anchor Chart
D is for Drinking Gourd

A – Abolitionists

Make Connections
sticky note response

B – Buffalo Soldiers

Make Connections
sticky note response

(etc...)