

Synthesizing



Get Ready To Read

- ✓ Learn about the book
- ✓ Get your brain ready to read
- ✓ Understand the meaning of important words found in the book

Summary

It's Christmas Eve. A boy is waiting for Santa's sleigh. Instead, he sees a steam engine called the Polar Express. The train takes children on a magical journey to the North Pole where Santa and the elves give the first Christmas gift. The boy asks for one silver bell from Santa's sleigh. He tucks the bell into his pocket then loses it. He is sad. The next morning, there is a small box under the Christmas tree. Inside is the silver sleigh bell. The boy and his sister are delighted by the sound of the bell. Their parents cannot hear it. Only true believers can hear Santa's sleigh bells.

Link to What You Know

- Tell about one of your favorite Christmas gifts. Why is it special to you? Do you still have it?
- What do you do on the night before Christmas? What things do you hear or see?

Important Words to Know and Understand

Barren – An area with very few plants or other living things

Paced – To walk back and forth across the same space again and again



Learn About Comprehension Strategies

- ✓ Think about the text you read
- ✓ Know what to do when you get confused

Why Readers Synthesize While Reading

Readers synthesize in order to deeply understand what they read. As readers learn new information about characters, topics, and events, their understanding of the text gets deeper. This happens because new information gets added to what they already know.

When you read fiction (stories that are not real), the author usually tells you a little bit about the characters, the setting, and the problem at the beginning of the book. As you read further, the author gives you more information. If you pay attention to what the author writes, you'll notice that your thoughts about a character or a problem will change over time.

On the other hand, when you read nonfiction (books about real people, places, things, or events) the author gives you specific information about a topic. You can add the new information to what you already know about a topic to become more of an expert on a specific topic.

Synthesizing



Synthesize While Reading

- ✓ Look for places where your opinion of a character changes
- ✓ Notice when you learn something new about a setting, a problem, or a topic
- ✓ Look for new words that change your understanding of the text

Time to Read

Stop on the following pages. Think about the questions for each page. Then talk with a reading partner or write your thoughts down in your notebook.

Page 6 – Notice the words the author uses to describe the Polar Express. How does this help you understand the setting?

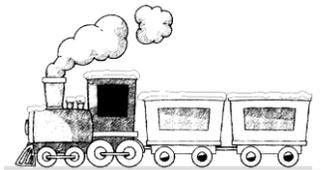
Page 12 – Look at the picture. How does the picture help to tell the story? What do you learn about the North Pole?

Page 16 – Look at the picture. What do you learn about the elves on this page?

Page 22 – What does it mean when the author writes, “the elves roared their approval”?

Page 24 – The little boy is sad. What do you learn about the problem on this page?

Page 29 – What do you learn about believing at the end of the story? How is believing the same or different for the boy and his sister?



Notice the Work You Did While Reading

- ✓ Think
- ✓ Talk
- ✓ Reflect
- ✓ Write

Time to Reflect

Think – How did your thinking change while you read *The Polar Express*? What information helped you to gain a better understanding of the characters or the problem in the book?

Talk – Tell your reading partner about a place where your thinking changed. Explain why your thinking changed.

Reflect – Think about the synthesizing work you did while reading *The Polar Express*. How does paying attention to the way your thinking changes across a text help you to be a better reader? Which reading comprehension strategies were most helpful to you as you read today?

Write – Glue your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Polar Express*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

Your Turn to Practice Synthesizing with The Polar Express

Page 6:

Notice the words the author uses to describe the Polar Express. How does this help you understand the setting?

Page 12:

Look at the picture. How does the picture help to tell the story?

What do you learn about the North Pole?

Page 16:

Look at the picture. What do you learn about the elves on this page?

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Name: _____

Your Turn to Practice Synthesizing with The Polar Express

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The little boy is sad. What do you learn about the problem on this page?

Page 29:

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Answer Key for Synthesizing with The Polar Express

Page 6:

Notice the words the author uses to describe the Polar Express. How does this help you understand the setting?

Answers will vary. Sample answers include: The author uses words like filled, sang, ate, thick and rich cocoa, lights flickered, raced. This helps me understand that the inside of the train is a pleasant place to be and it was moving fast.

Page 12:

Look at the picture. How does the picture help to tell the story?

Answers will vary.

What do you learn about the North Pole?

Answers will vary. Sample answers include: I learn that the setting is dark and you can see lights on the factories at the North Pole. Even though it is night, the factories are open.

Page 16:

Look at the picture. What do you learn about the elves on this page?

Answers will vary. Sample answers include: I learned that there are so many elves! There were hundreds of them. They are wearing red clothes. They are waiting in the streets.

Page 22:

What does it mean when the author writes, "the elves roared their approval"?

Answers will vary. Sample answers include: It means that the elves were very loud and excited. They agreed with what Santa did and said.



Answer Key for Synthesizing with The Polar Express

Page 24:

The little boy is sad. What do you learn about the problem on this page?

Answers will vary. Sample answers include: I learned that believing is different for everyone.

Page 29:

What do you learn about believing at the end of the story?

Answers will vary.

How is believing the same or different for the boy and his sister?

Answers will vary. Sample answers include: The boy believed even when he got older. The girl stopped believing when she got older.



The Polar Express: Synthesizing

The parents cannot hear the bell. How do their actions affect the story? What do you learn when the dad says “the bell is broken”?

I can describe characters in stories and explain how their actions affect the story.

CCSS: RL.3.3

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Title: _____

At first I was thinking... Because...	My new thinking is... Because...	I used to think... But now I think... Because...
My new thinking is... Because...	Now I understand... Because...	After thinking about... I conclude... Because...

Directions:

1. Answer each of the questions.
2. Carefully cut on the dotted line.
3. Glue, tape, or staple into your reader's notebook.

Common Core State Standards Correlation

The Polar Express Lesson Plans, Resources, and Activities

The lesson plans, resources, and activities for use with *The Polar Express* correlate with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards for third grade.

Synthesizing Lesson Plan and Resources

Reading: Literature

RL.3.1 – Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers.

RL.3.2 – Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

RL.3.3 – Describe characters in a story (eg, their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

RL.3.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

RL.3.5 – Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

RL.3.6 – Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

RL.3.7 – Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (eg, create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

RL.3.10 – By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Reading: Foundational Skills

RF.3.3 – Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

RF.3.4 – Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Writing

W.3.8 – Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

Speaking & Listening

SL.3.1c – Ask and answer questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

SL.3.1d – Explain their own ideas and understanding in the light of the discussion.

SL.3.2 – Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SL.3.3 – Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

Language

L.3.6 – Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate conversational, general, academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (eg, *After dinner that night we went looking for them*).