Text Talks
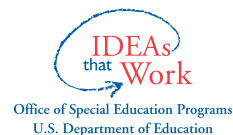
A Strategic Book Club Routine
for Building Vocabulary
and Comprehension Skills
in Third Through Fifth Grades

The Meadows Center
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK

elite²
English Learner Institute for
Teaching and Excellence²

IDEAs
that Work
Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

Acknowledgments

Materials Needed

Text Talks Workbook

Bookmark

Collaborative Discussion Checklist
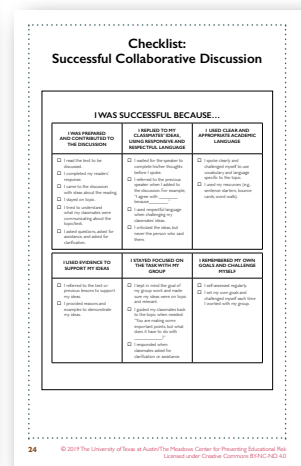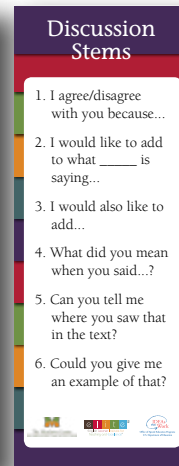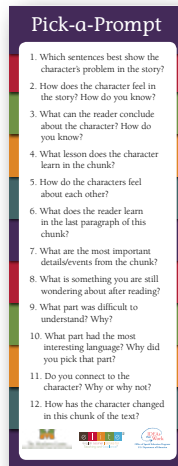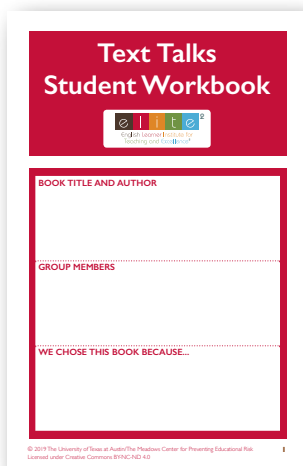
Preparation for Small-Group Text Talks

1. Analyze students' reading and language proficiency data and form reading groups based on the data and students' interests and experiences.

2. Identify two to three culturally and linguistically responsive texts per group based on students' interests and reading levels and allow students to choose which text to read.

3. Preview and chunk the text.

4. Select four to six vocabulary words that are essential to understanding the events or characters. When possible, choose words that build background knowledge for events or topics explored in the story.

5. Make copies of the *Text Talks Student Workbook* for each student.

6. Prepare and lead book introductions to get students excited (see below).

7. Lead a mini-lesson with the whole class.

   • Target one skill or strategy students can use to help comprehend their text or participate in group work, such as inferencing, summarizing, or the characteristics of a good book discussion or strong reader's response.

   • Provide practice opportunities for students.

   • Create an anchor chart students can use to support their application of the skill. Revisit the chart throughout the cycle.

IDEAS FOR BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Teacher Generated
• Show the cover of the book and read the synopsis on the back cover.
• Show the group a short video trailer for the book.

Student Generated
• Have students who have read the book provide a review or synopsis that gives just enough detail to spark interest.
• Have students who have read the book create a mini-commercial or trailer for the book.

Text Talks Cycle

Before Reading

Step 1. Preview and activate background knowledge.

Step 2. Introduce target vocabulary.

Step 3. Set a purpose for implicit vocabulary learning.

During Reading

Step 4. Provide a prompt that sets a purpose for reading.

Step 5. Students read independently.

Step 6. Students respond to the reading.

Repeat until the text is completed.

After Reading

Step 7. Students engage in collaborative discussion.

Before Reading

Step 1: Preview and activate background knowledge.

- Show and read the front and back covers of the text.

- Activate students' knowledge by making connections between what they know and what they need to know to understand the text.

- Ask students to predict what the text is about and briefly discuss concepts related to the topic.

Step 2: Introduce the target vocabulary words.

- Explicitly teach the vocabulary words.

- Provide a student-friendly definition and share the nonlinguistic representation (e.g., picture, object, gesture).

- Provide students with opportunities to discuss and practice new words.

Step 3: Set a purpose for implicit vocabulary learning.

- Direct students to record new words encountered in the book that they are curious about.

- Teach word-learning strategies for students to construct meaning from the words they select.

Sample Book
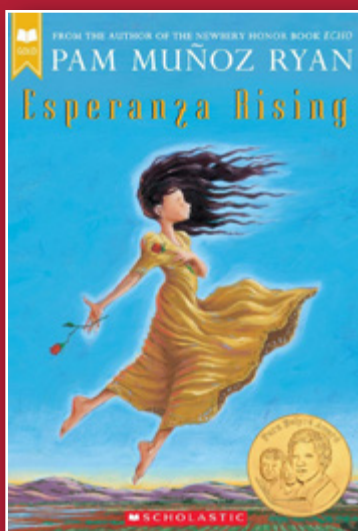
Sample Vocabulary Word

strike
To stop work to force a boss to change something or do what you want

Turn and Talk
Do you agree that workers should strike to make changes happen in their workplaces?
Why or why not?

During Reading

Step 4: Provide a prompt that sets a purpose for reading.

Encourage students to consider the prompt as they read. The prompt also should extend comprehension and promote higher-order thinking.

Step 5: Students read independently.

- Teach students to signal when they encounter a target vocabulary word.

- Have students use their vocabulary organizer to record new words and use word-learning strategies.

Step 6: Students respond to the reading.

- Direct students to complete the vocabulary charts in their workbook.

- Have students complete a reader's response that summarizes what they read, answers the purpose prompt, or responds to their pick-a-prompt.

- Remind students to create one or two questions about the reading that they would like their group to discuss.

Text Talks Workbook

NEW VOCABULARY

WORD	PAGE #
SENTENCE IN TEXT	
MEANING	COGNATE?
VISUAL	

WORD	PAGE #
SENTENCE IN TEXT	
MEANING	COGNATE?
VISUAL	

READING

PAGES READ:

MY SUMMARY
Write 3 or 4 sentences that provide a summary of your reading.

MY PICK-A-PROMPT RESPONSE

QUESTIONS I HAVE
Write 1 to 2 more questions you still have about the reading.

4   17

Pick-a-Prompt Bookmarks

Pick-a-Prompt

1. Which sentences best show the character's problem in the story?
2. How does the character feel in the story? How do you know?
3. What can the reader conclude about the character? How do you know?
4. What lesson does the character learn in the chunk?
5. How do the characters feel about each other?
6. What does the reader learn in the last paragraph of this chunk?
7. What are the most important details/events from the chunk?
8. What is something you are still wondering about after reading?
9. What part was difficult to understand? Why?
10. What part had the most interesting language? Why did you pick that part?
11. Do you connect to the character? Why or why not?
12. How has the character changed in this chunk of the text?

Discussion Stems

1. I agree/disagree with you because...
2. I would like to add to what _____ is saying...
3. I would also like to add...
4. What did you mean when you said...?
5. Can you tell me where you saw that in the text?
6. Could you give me an example of that?

After Reading

Step 7: Students engage in a collaborative discussion.

- To deepen their comprehension, have students discuss what they read.

- Remind students to use their workbooks and the text to support their ideas.

- Provide conversation stems or guiding questions if needed.

Have students repeat steps 4–7 of the cycle until the text has been completed.

Students Discuss the Story

Students Refer to Text to Support Discussion

Extend Language and Comprehension

Final Reflection

Students reflect on key events or connections from the text and decide whether they would recommend it to someone.

Periodic Self-Assessment

Students use the Successful Discussion Checklist to rate the quality of their participation and evaluate progress toward their goals.

Vocabulary Extension

Students engage in deep practice with the target vocabulary words and new vocabulary concepts they recorded during their independent reading.

Example: Probable Passages (independent or group)

- Students create a probable passage, using and underlining all the vocabulary words recorded in their workbook.
- Groups share their written passages.

Comprehension Extension

Students engage in activities to deepen their comprehension of the text's characters, events, themes, or language features and to make connections between the text and their experiences.

Examples:
- Write a short story that uses the same scenarios but a different setting and characters.
- Write the "backstory" of one of the characters.
- Write a journal entry from the point of view of one of the characters.
- Write a script and create a movie trailer for the book.
- Write an alternate ending to the book.
- Create a book jacket, including important information about the book.
- Write a news article about an important event from the book.
- Create a comic strip that summarizes the book.
- Describe a couple of characters from the book and explain why you would or would not want to get to know them.
- Will this book be read 100 years from now? Explain and support your opinion.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Texts

When selecting texts, taking students' culture, interests, and experiences into consideration increases engagement throughout the cycle. Below are some example texts to use.

English

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams Garcia

The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi

Ruby and the Booker Boys by Derrick Barnes

My Name is Yoon by Helen Recorvits

Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes

How Tía Lola Came to ~~Visit~~ Stay by Julia Alvarez

The Birchbark House by Louise Erdrich

The Magnificent Mya Tibbs: Spirit Week Showdown by Crystal Allen

Wonder by R.J. Palacio

The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

Spanish

Los cien vestidos by Eleanor Estes

Esperanza renace by Pam Muñoz Ryan

El único e incomparable Iván by Katherine Applegate

Me llamo María Isabel by Alma Flor Ada