

# EMPOWERING TEACHERS

## Listening/Reading Comprehension Instructional Routine:

### Answering Higher Level Questions

Prerequisites: Kindergarten Comprehension Instructional Routine: Identify Story Grammar

Preparation/Materials: "The Three Little Pigs" <http://mediainformatics.biz/kidsbook/pigs.html>



- *Italicized type is what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say

- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slid finger under the underlined word(s)



**NOTE:** The ability to answer higher level questions (questions that begin with why, how, or what if) is dependent on the content of the text and the student's ability to gain meaning from the text. Answering higher level, inferential questions requires the student to understand relationships between people and/or events. These relationships may or may not be stated in a story or text. When these relationships are not stated explicitly, students must infer what has been written in the text. To infer meaning, students must think about and integrate the information in the text.

For some readers, it may be more helpful to discuss the story by first answering literal questions that include who, what, where, and when. After a discussion of literal questions, include higher level questions such as why, how, and what if. Questions beginning with 'how' vary in their difficulty. For instance, questions such as how much and how many, may be easier to answer. More complex, inferential questions might include the following: how did that happen, how did they do that, how are they alike or different, or how do you know. Higher level questions offer the opportunity for extended response and discussions that can help promote student understanding.

#### TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to answer questions about a story to help us understand what we read.

#### TEACHER MODELS TASK

Display the story, "The Three Little Pigs." Read the story aloud. Throughout the routine, point to the pictures when mentioning each character or event.

In this story, there are four characters. The characters are the first little pig, the second little pig, the third little pig, and the wolf. The first little pig builds a straw house. The wolf is able to blow that house down. The second little pig builds a stick house. The wolf is also able to blow that house down. The third little pig builds a brick house. The wolf is not able to blow that house down.

How do we know that the third little pig's house was the strongest house?

The wolf did not blow the house down. One reason I think the wolf could not blow down this house and could blow down the other two houses is that it's the strongest house.

The third little pig had the strongest house because it was made of bricks. Bricks are heavy and hard. Bricks would be very difficult to blow down.

#### TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

Now let's answer some questions together.

In this story, each pig builds a house. The first little pig builds a house of straw. The second little pig builds a house of sticks. The third little pig builds a house of bricks. The wolf blows down the house of the first little pig and the second little pig. The wolf was not able to blow down the brick house of the third little pig.

The three little pigs are alike. They each build a house.

How are the pigs alike?

- Each pig builds a house.

That's correct. Each pig does build a house in the story.

The third little pig is different. The wolf was not able to blow his brick house down.

How is the third little pig different?

- The wolf was not able to blow his brick house down.

That's right. The wolf was not able to blow the brick house down because it was strong.

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## TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

The first little pig's house was made of straw and the second little pig's house was made of sticks. Straw and sticks are not strong materials for a house.

**Why do you think the wolf was able to blow down the house of the first little pig and the second little pig?** *Accept all responses that give evidence from the story. For this question, encourage a discussion that would lead to the sample responses below. Prompt students with phrases such as, "That is correct." "Can you tell me more?"*

*Sample responses:*

*Straw and sticks aren't strong.*

*Brick is stronger than straw and sticks.*

*Bricks are heavy.*

*Straw and sticks are light.*

*Wind can blow straw and sticks away.*

**Yes, I agree with you. The wolf was able to blow down the houses made of straw and sticks because they were not as strong as bricks.**

## STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

Now it is your turn to answer questions about the story.

Remember, the third little pig built a brick house. The wolf could not blow that house down. The wolf really wants to eat the third little pig. So the wolf tells the third little pig to meet him to pick turnips and then apples. The third little pig goes to the apple tree an hour earlier than the wolf to pick apples. The wolf shows up at the apple tree and the pig is already done picking apples but he is still in the tree. The third little pig throws an apple down to the wolf, but he throws the apple as far as he can. Then, the third little pig races down the tree and runs to his brick house. The third little pig gets back into his house safely without being eaten by the wolf. The wolf was very angry. He climbed on top of the pig's roof and said he would eat up the pig once he got down the chimney.

**So, why does the wolf really want the third little pig to meet him to pick apples?** *Accept all responses that give evidence from the story. Sample responses:*

*The wolf wants to catch the pig and eat him.*

*He wants to get the pig outside of the house so he can catch the pig.*

**Why does the third little pig throw the apple really far from the apple tree when he throws an apple to the wolf?**

*Accept all responses that give evidence from the story. Sample responses:*

*The third little pig is tricking the wolf.*

*The third little pig needed time to get down the tree and run back to his brick house.*

**How do you know the wolf wants to eat the third little pig?**

*Accept all responses that give evidence from the story. Sample responses:*

*The wolf ate the first and second little pigs.*

*The wolf keeps trying to find ways to get the third little pig, such as meeting to pick turnips and apples. Students may also remember from the story that the wolf wanted to meet the pig at the fair.*

*When the wolf climbed on top of the third little pig's roof, he said he would eat up the pig and go down his chimney after him.*

**Yes, you've got it! The third little pig was a smart little pig. He was wiser than the other little pigs because he built a strong house. He also tricked the wolf several times. Finally, he found a way to catch the wolf so he would never bother him again.**

**You really did a great job answering questions about the story, "The Three Little Pigs!"**

## INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

*When students consistently answer these higher level questions, provide individual turns using other passages or stories.*

## SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

*Students are often more successful with answers when they are given extra time to respond. Provide 3-4 seconds of wait time when asking students questions. If students are unable to respond to a question during the TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER, provide the answer and ask students to echo the response. If difficulties persist, reread the story. Have students sequence the events of the story. Ask literal (who, what, when, where) questions. Then, ask the higher level questions again. If necessary, go back into the text and point out the areas that contain the answers.*

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## **Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:**

- Divide this instructional routine into two days. Read the story the first day. Provide a brief summary of the story and do the routine on the second day.
- Discuss an alternative ending to the story with a 'what if' question. What if the third little pig was lazy and liked to sleep all day? How would this change the story's ending?
- Have students take turns asking questions about the story. Students can work in pairs. Each pair comes up with one how, why, or what if question that pertains to the story. Have each pair present their question to the group. Other students may answer the questions.
- Model asking and answering why, how, and what if questions during story read aloud. Stop at key points in the story to ask questions. This prepares students for stopping to ask themselves questions when they read on their own.
- Ask students to explain their answers in order to have more extended discussions. If students offer a short response for a higher level question, ask them to explain their answer. This may encourage students to give more information. Model this process first so students understand what you are asking them to do.

**For further independent practice, refer to the following Kindergarten and First Grade FCRR Student Center Activities at [http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/GK-1/C\\_Final.pdf](http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/GK-1/C_Final.pdf)**

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