Talk About Text: Say Something ⭐

GRADES	DISCIPLINE	COURSE	PACING
3 - 7	**Any**	**Any**	🕐 **20**min

SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
ENHANCING COMPREHENSION: Students will build comprehension and analysis skills by discussing the text they read with peers.	**TALK ABOUT TEXT: SAY SOMETHING** Make a reading plan, read a difficult text, and pause to discuss it at key stopping points. Make sure your discussion demonstrates an understanding of what you read.	Students will: • brainstorm a list of relevant discussion topics to use when reading a difficult text • read a text either independently or with others • partipate in a discussion that reflects comprehension and analytical thinking with a partner or small group at key stopping points throughout the text	**Teacher Notes:** • This is a simple strategy to encourage readers to think about and discuss text independently. Readers can become dependent on discussion starters or sets of questions to answer after reading a text. This mini-lesson sets up the expectation that readers will discuss what they have read in order to make meaning from it, determining the content of this discussion themselves. • This lesson works best when groups students are reading the same challenging text. In addition, it should be used with students already familiar with formal text-based discussion strategies (like making predictions, posing questions, etc.). This lesson will likely be too difficult for students who are new to discussing what they read, or struggle significantly with basic comprehension.

Whole Group Instruction

Explain that what readers want to talk about after reading a text depends on individual areas of confusion, questions, interests, and reasons for reading. Tell them that today they will do an activity called "Say Something" in which they will work together to build understanding of a text through discussion.

Ask students what they might want talk about when they are reading a challenging text. Instruct students to jot down ideas in their journal for a few silent minutes. The quality of this list will largely determine the quality of the discussions in groups, so give students plenty of time to think and write.

List student responses on the board. Coach students to add onto the list. Below are some sample responses relevant to fiction readings.

We want to discuss....

• Difficult vocabulary words
• The setting, especially if it's unfamiliar
• What we think will happen next
• Which characters are which

- Character traits
- The problems in the book
- How we think these problems will be solved

Explain that students will work with a partner on a common reading. First, they will determine together how they will read the material (chorally, trading off by paragraphs, reading silently up to a certain point). *You may want to require students put their name and their partner's name on the board, along with their reading strategy, and planned stopping points. You may also consider assigning stopping points. This will help you hold students accountable during the sizable partner work time.*

When they reach their stopping point, each partner needs to "Say Something" about the reading using one of the examples from the board, or some new idea they have on their own not listed on the board.

If they haven't already, partners should select another stopping point before reading on after discussion.

Partner Work

Students read together and discuss. Circulate the room, observing. You might ask questions like:

- Which part are you discussing now?
- What have you been talking about so far?
- Is it working for you to (read aloud/ read silently/ read chorally)? Why or why not?

Whole Group Reflection

- What was successful about this activity?
- What was a challenge?
- Was "Say Something" useful? Was it better than reading on your own?

Record student responses on the board.

Beyond the Mini-Lesson

Once students are comfortable with everyone discussing without formal prompts from the teacher, try expanding into a group of three or four.

As the size of the group increases, you will want to facilitate groups choosing a method that keeps most students reading most of the time. For example, groups might choose silent reading so faster readers could continue to read past the stopping point.

You might also suggest a structure (or ask students to suggest a structure) to ensure everyone contributes to the discussion. A suggestion from Linda Hoyt (1999) is having students put their pencils in the center of the table after they contribute a thought. They cannot talk again until all the pencils

are on the table.

Additional Teacher Notes

- Conversations and genuine dialogue provide learners with both structure and responsibility to construct their understanding of a text. As teachers, our challenge is to create an environment that keeps conversations focused on the text and also connects what students learn from a text to their prior knowledge.
- This routine is best used when students will need one another's help to understand what they read. Ask yourself: will students deepen their understanding or learn to communicate more clearly as a result of this reflection? Asking these types of questions might help these mini-lessons stay a fresh and interesting part of your instructional toolbox.

Adapted From: Hoyt, L. (1999). Revisit, reflect , retell: Strategies for improving reading comprehension. Portsmouth, NH; Heinemann.

Standards:

CCR.R.10 : Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

CCR.SL.1 : Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCR.SL.6 : Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

by Catherine Miller

Adapted from "Talk About Text: Say Something" by Catherine Miller