

# READING in the middle



A MONTHLY UPDATE FROM YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL  
READING INTERVENTIONISTS

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## Fall Into Close Reading

### The Focus on Inner Conversation

#### TAKE A PEEK!

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With the focus on close reading as a goal in all middle schools, we will be supporting this in our sessions. Our first few sessions focused on inner conversations. Inner conversations are thoughts going on in your mind that happen naturally while we read even if we are unaware of the process. The thoughts range from questions, connections, and reactions, to new learning and "Aha" moments. This inner conversation is responsible for constructing meaning when we read. For struggling readers, inner conversation often strays from the text. Perhaps students are thinking about what they are doing after school, or what project and test will be falling on the same day. Straying from text is exactly what we are trying to eliminate! When we use close reading strategies, we are teaching the students to recognize this inner conversation and to catch themselves as they drift from the text.

# Intervention in the Classroom

## What Does it Look Like?

- Students are benefiting from the intervention teacher as an extra resource in the classroom to work with small groups during reading/station activities.
- Lessons in September & October include learning what it means to wear specific “lenses” while reading. We support the 6th grade curriculum by providing students with some close reading strategies through a character lens, setting lens, and a conflict lens.
- Students reviewed short passages and used such strategies as:
  - Numbering the paragraphs
  - Circling important names, places, events
  - Underlining important details
  - Highlighting unfamiliar vocabulary
- Students use active reading strategies, such as previewing the text, and examining the title and pictures to access some prior knowledge and make predictions on what the text might be about.
- Students have begun acquiring a personal vocabulary list as they come across unfamiliar words; they identify the word and how it is used in the sentence; then they infer what the word might mean. Finally, students look up the word and record the actual definition.
- Students are encouraged to use the new words they learn at home, in school, and in their writing. Each child’s list of words looks different because they come to class with different schema.
- The students have been enjoying the challenge of finding new words and checking to see if their inferences are correct



## Making Meaning

As interventionists, we also feel that answering comprehension questions at the end of a text is not always the best way to demonstrate understanding. Often times, students can answer questions without even doing the reading. Our goal is to teach students to focus on their inner conversation to have a deeper understanding of the text. This, in addition to conversations with teachers and peers, will deepen understanding and engagement with text.

**Here is how you can help:** Engage in conversation with your child about any reading he/she is doing. This fosters comprehension and increases his/her confidence when it comes to reading.



## Want to Learn More About the Connection Between Reading & Vocabulary?

Check out [ReadOxford.org](https://www.readoxford.org)

Readoxford says, "Although there is more to reading comprehension than vocabulary, there is good evidence that gains in vocabulary knowledge are associated with gains in reading comprehension (e.g., Clarke et al., 2010). Equally though, successful reading itself provides the essential substrate for learning new vocabulary – hence the rich and complex interactions between vocabulary and reading comprehension."