

A Reading Resource for Parents

Helping Young Children with Comprehension



READ TO ACHIEVE
K-3 Literacy Division
NC Department of Public Instruction

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A Parent Resource

Research shows that during the summer months, children can lose from 1 to 3 months of learning. (**More Than a Hunch: Kids Lose Learning Skills Over the Summer Months**, *Harris Cooper, Professor, Duke University*) Recently the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation that offers opportunities for reading camps for children most at risk for reading difficulties. These children will get the extra support that is needed to help them build their reading foundational and comprehension skills and be better prepared for the following school year. Hopefully, this will also block some of the summer learning loss for those children who are experiencing the most problems in their reading development.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction created this booklet to assist parents with ideas on how to help young children continue reading over the summer, delve deeper into text, strengthen reading comprehension skills, and avoid summer reading loss. The booklet is intended to be used with any child and offers suggestions on how to extend a child's understanding of what is read.

These recommendations are by no means a complete list of activities that can be used with young children to enrich their reading experiences. In fact, the booklet is limited to ones that would be easy to do with any type of text that is available to children. It is strongly suggested that children read daily with an adult or older sibling. Local public libraries have a variety of fun and exciting reading events and some local school libraries may be open on certain days of the week. Parents are encouraged to try and give their children as much exposure to text as possible during the summer months.

The booklet includes:

- Sample activities to use as follow-up to reading text
- Links to websites with more reading resources
- Visuals and graphics to help children organize thoughts
- Questions that align specifically to the reading standards

Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the **reason for reading**. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading. As they read, good readers are both purposeful and active.

Good readers have a purpose for reading. They may read to find out how to use a food processor, read a guidebook to gather information about national parks, read a textbook to satisfy the requirements of a course, read a magazine for entertainment, or read a classic novel to experience the pleasures of great literature.

Good readers think actively as they read. To make sense of what they read, good readers engage in a complicated process. Using their experiences and knowledge of the world, their knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, and their knowledge of reading strategies (or plans), good readers make sense of the text and know how to get the most out of it. They know when they have problems with understanding and how to resolve these problems as they occur.

Research over 30 years has shown that instruction in comprehension can help students understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about what they read. The scientific research on text comprehension instruction reveals important information about what students should be taught about text comprehension and how it should be taught.

"Text comprehension can be improved by instruction that helps readers use specific comprehension strategies. Comprehension strategies are conscious plans—sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension." (Adler, C.R., 2001, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, National Institute for Literacy)

Question Types

Right There Questions – Questions found right in the text that ask students to find the one right answer located in one place as a word or sentence in the passage.

Example: Who went into the Three Bears' house while they were walking?
Answer: Goldilocks

Think and Search Questions – Questions based on the rxecall of facts that can be found directly in the text. Answers are typically found in more than one place, thus requiring students to "think" and "search" through the passage to find the answer.

Example: What are three things that Goldilocks did while she was in the Three Bears' house?
Answer: Goldilocks ate porridge, broke Little Bear's chair, and went to sleep in the bed.

Author and You Questions – Questions require students to use what they already know, with what they have learned from reading the text. Students must understand the text and relate it to their prior knowledge before answering the question.

Example: How do you think Goldilocks felt when she woke up and saw the bears staring at her?
Answer: I think Goldilocks was scared. She jumped up and screamed and ran away. I would be scared too if I saw bears looking at me because bears can hurt you.

On Your Own Questions – Questions are answered based on a student's prior knowledge and experiences. Reading the text may not be helpful when answering this type of question.

Example: Would you ever walk into a house if you did not know the people who lived there?
Answer: No, that could be very dangerous. Strangers could live there and you are never supposed to talk to strangers.

(taken from Reading Rockets: *Seven Strategies to Teach Students Text Comprehension*)

Questions That Align to the Standards

(possible questions to ask before, during and after reading)

– FIRST GRADE –

LITERARY TEXT (FICTION)

Key Ideas and Details:

- Can you tell me what happened in the story at the beginning? What happened after that? What happened at the end of the story?
- Can you tell me where the story took place?
- Can you tell me the important things that happened in the story?
- Who are the characters in the story? What do you know about them?

Craft and Structure:

- Can you find the feeling words in this poem/story?
- Is this book an informational book or a story book? What in the text leads you to that answer?
- Who is telling the story in this part of the book?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- Can you find an illustration or part that shows the main character?
- Can you find an illustration or part that shows the setting?
- Can you find an illustration or part that shows the problem in the story?
- What is the same about the characters in the two stories? What is different?
- What happened to the characters that is the same? What is different?
- Did the characters solve the problem in different ways? If so, how?

INFORMATIONAL TEXT (NON-FICTION)

Key Ideas and Details:

- Think about what you read and create your own question about an important idea in this text.
- What is the main idea of this text?
- Can you find one of the important ideas in this text? Can you find another important idea?
- Can you tell me how these two events are linked together? (cause/effect, time order)

Craft and Structure:

- What features in the text help you find important information?
- How do the headings help you understand the text?
- What does the table of contents help you to know?
- Can you tell me what is different about what the picture shows and what the words say about…?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- Can you tell how the author uses this chart to help you understand?
- What does this chart add to your thinking about what you read?
- Can you find the reason why the author thinks that…? Can you find the reason why the author believes…?
- Look at these two texts about the same topic. How are they the same? How are they different?

– SECOND GRADE –

LITERARY TEXT (FICTION)

Key Ideas and Details:

- Who are the characters in the story? What are the most important events that happened in the story? What in the text leads you to that answer?
- What lesson is this story teaching you?
- How did the characters solve the problem in this story?

Craft and Structure:

- Describe the parts of a story (beginning and end).
- Which parts of this poem rhyme? Can you find the part that shows the beat? Can you find a part that has alliteration?
- How are the characters thinking/feeling about this event? Are the characters thinking the same way about…?
- Think about this character. How would this character say this part?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- What do the illustrations tell you about the setting?
- Can you find an illustration that tells you how a character is feeling?
- What is the same about the characters in the two stories? What is different?
- What happened to the characters that is the same? What happened that is different?
- Look at these two stories. How did the authors solve the same problem in different ways?

INFORMATIONAL TEXT (NON-FICTION)

Key Ideas and Details:

- Think about what you read and create your own questions (using who, what, when, where, why, and/or how) about an important idea in this text.
- What is the main idea of this text?
- What are the important ideas in this text? What in the text leads you to that answer?
- Which step comes first? After that?
- What happened first? After that?
- Can you tell me how these ideas are the same? Can you tell me how they are different?

Craft and Structure:

- What features in the text help you find important information about what you are reading?
- How do the subheadings help you understand what you are reading?
- How does the glossary help you?
- How does bold print help you?
- Why do you think the author wrote this text?
- What does the author want you to learn from this text?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- How does the diagram/image help you understand what you are reading?
- Can you tell ways the author uses specific information in a text to help you understand?
- Can you find the reason why the author thinks that…?
- Can you find the reason why the author believes…?
- Look at these two texts about the same topic. What is the same about the points presented in these two texts? What is different?

Helpful Hints for Young Children as They Read

Kindergarten

A. Children should have the chance to read and reread stories with parent help. They should point to the words as they read or as adults read to them.

B. Children should have opportunities to read about familiar topics in both fiction and non-fiction texts.

C. Parents should encourage children to self-correct as they read texts.

D. Children will begin to read texts without having to point to each word and begin to recognize different word endings.

First Grade

E. Children should have the chance to read stories with familiar words that they are using in their everyday oral language.

F. Stories and texts should have familiar content but begin to expand outside of the child's surroundings.

G. Children will begin to make the transition to reading for understanding and deeper comprehension using strategies such as rereading and self-correcting.

H. Children will begin to have success with reading and understanding while reading silently. Their oral reading will begin to sound like spoken language.

I. Children can begin to read short chapter books with a single idea or focus.

J. Children are becoming more independent and can read silently for understanding.

Second Grade

K. Children are reading orally using phrasing, punctuation, and changing voices.

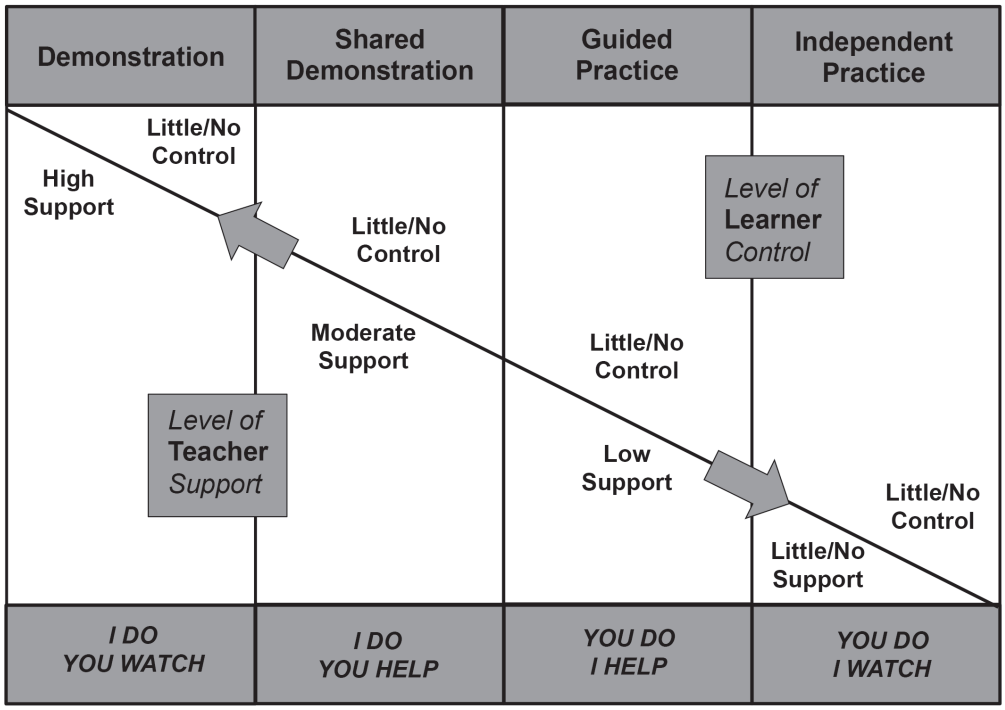
L. Children are reading and understanding multi-syllable words and specific words used in different content areas.

M. Children are reading more chapter books and non-fiction texts of personal interest to them.

Graphic Organizers or Visuals

Visuals, graphic organizers, drawing and writing help children understand text at a higher level. Before any visual or graphic organizer is used, it is suggested that parents work together with children to construct the organizer several times. Children learn best in a gradual release model. Gradual Release is a research-based instructional model that was developed by Pearson and Gallagher in 1983. While using this model with children, the responsibility of learning shifts over time from the teacher or adult to independent student work.

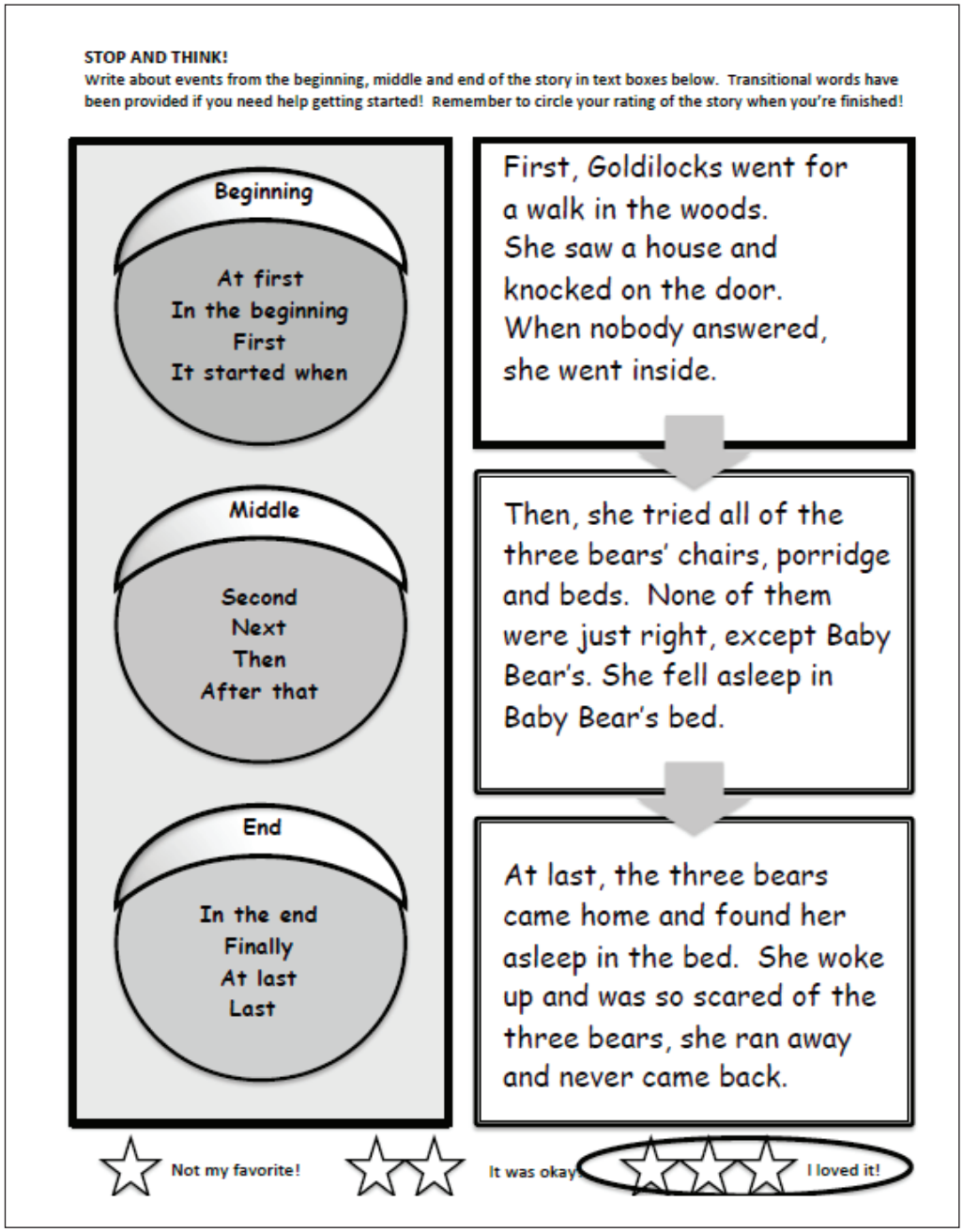
When introducing new strategies or concepts, the parent should model or demonstrate for the child. The next phase involves the parent and child working together to develop a product, beginning with the adult doing most of the work and explanations and moving toward the child taking over with only support from the adult. The ultimate goal is for the child to independently develop a product or show mastery of a strategy or concept.



Story Maps

Story Maps are generally used with literacy or fiction texts. Story Maps are visual representations of major parts of the story and can range from being very basic to more detailed. The visuals help the children understand and organize all components of the story to aid in comprehension. The different forms of Story Maps should be modeled and practiced with children before they are encouraged to complete one independently. Children can use the Story Map while they are reading to fill in basic information and after they complete the story, to go back to review and add details.

Example:



STOP AND THINK!

Write about events from the beginning, middle and end of the story in text boxes below. Transitional words have been provided if you need help getting started! Remember to circle your rating of the story when you're finished!

Beginning

At first
In the beginning
First
It started when

Middle

Second
Next
Then
After that

End

In the end
Finally
At last
Last

 Not my favorite!

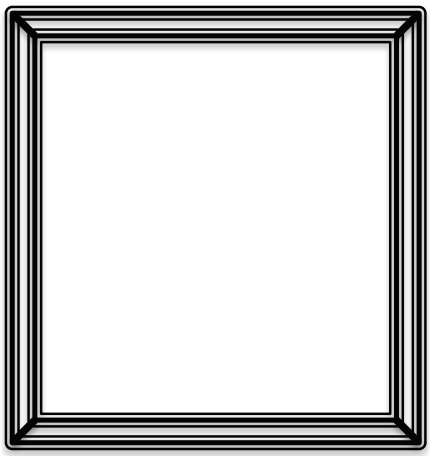
 It was okay!

 I loved it!

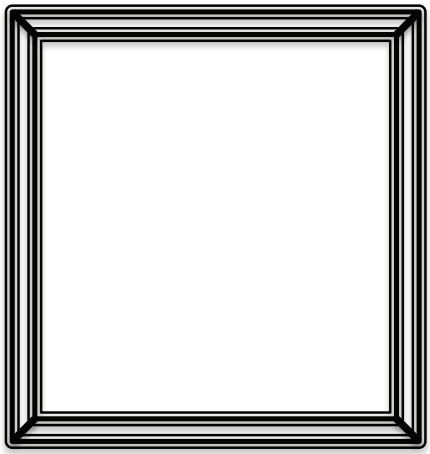
DRAW, THEN WRITE!

Illustrate an event from the beginning, middle and end of the story in each picture frame. Then write about those events in the text box. Transitional words and phrases are provided below if you need help getting started!

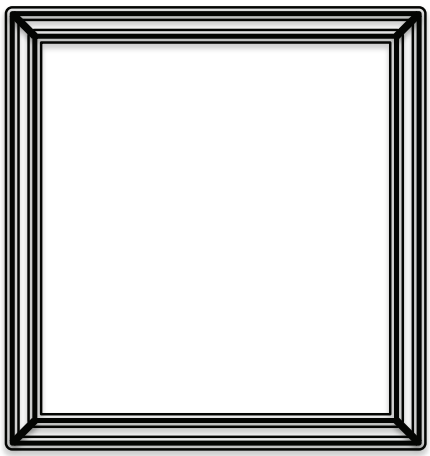
Beginning



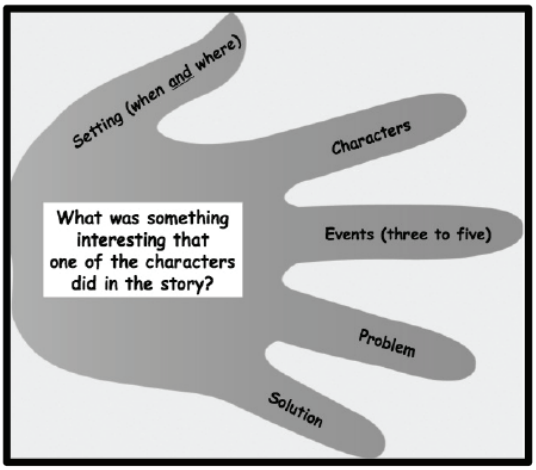
Middle



End



At first In the beginning First It started when	Second Next Then After that	In the end Finally At last Last



ADVANCED FIVE-FINGER RETELL!

Use your fingers to retell the story you just read. After retelling the story orally, write your retell in the boxes provided.

Remember to draw something interesting that one of the characters did when you're finished!

Setting (when and where):

Characters:

Events (three to five):

Problem:

Solution:

Draw something interesting one of the characters did in the story.

Reading Guides

Reading Guides can be created with visuals, sticky notes, or charts. Reading Guides take some advanced preparation on the part of the parent. Before children read the text, the parent develops questions, prompts or a guide for students to use as they navigate through the text. The guide gives the students a sense of purpose as they read the text. The children can respond to the questions and prompts in the guide in a variety of ways. They can use visuals or illustrations, words or phrases, or sticky notes placed throughout the text as answers are discovered. The children become actively engaged with the text. Parents can use questions suggested in the *Questions Aligned to the Standards* portion of this resource guide to create a Reading Guide.

Example:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What do you know about them?
- What important things happened in the story in the beginning, middle, and end?
- Did the characters have to solve a problem? What was the solution to the problem?
- Why do think the author wrote this book?

Visual Imagery

(Painting a picture in your mind)

Comprehension can be improved as children learn to create pictures in their mind as they read the text. However, this is a technique that has to be taught. Parents need to guide students through the process of reading text and connecting the text with prior experiences to help them comprehend and create mental images. This is another strategy that actively involves the reader with the text.

Example: (Using the Gradual Release Model)

1. The parent reads a story aloud and uses a "think aloud" method of modeling. Read a part of the story and then pause and explain the picture that you see in your mind using great detail and explaining why you see it this way. Use words from the text that help you make these mental pictures.

   (I see Goldilocks skipping along, singing songs and not paying much attention to where she is because it's such a beautiful day. Sometimes when I'm walking I try to think about happy things as I walk and my mind begins to wander and before I know it I've walked several miles. I see Goldilocks doing the same thing in the story and all of a sudden she realizes she doesn't know exactly where she is, but she sees a pretty house with flowers in front. She thinks that she can go there and ask for help. These pictures that I create in my mind help me understand the words and what Goldilocks may have been thinking.)

2. The parent would continue with this method while reading the entire text, stopping periodically to think aloud and show the child how they are creating these images and connecting the images with prior experiences. Toward the end of the text during a paused point, the parent would invite the child to create pictures in his/her mind and explain and describe the images. This helps the child understand the process of creating visual images in a non-threatening way and shows the child that his/her opinion and thoughts are valued.

3. After practicing this method together several times, the parent can have the child read the text and lead the think aloud in the same manner.

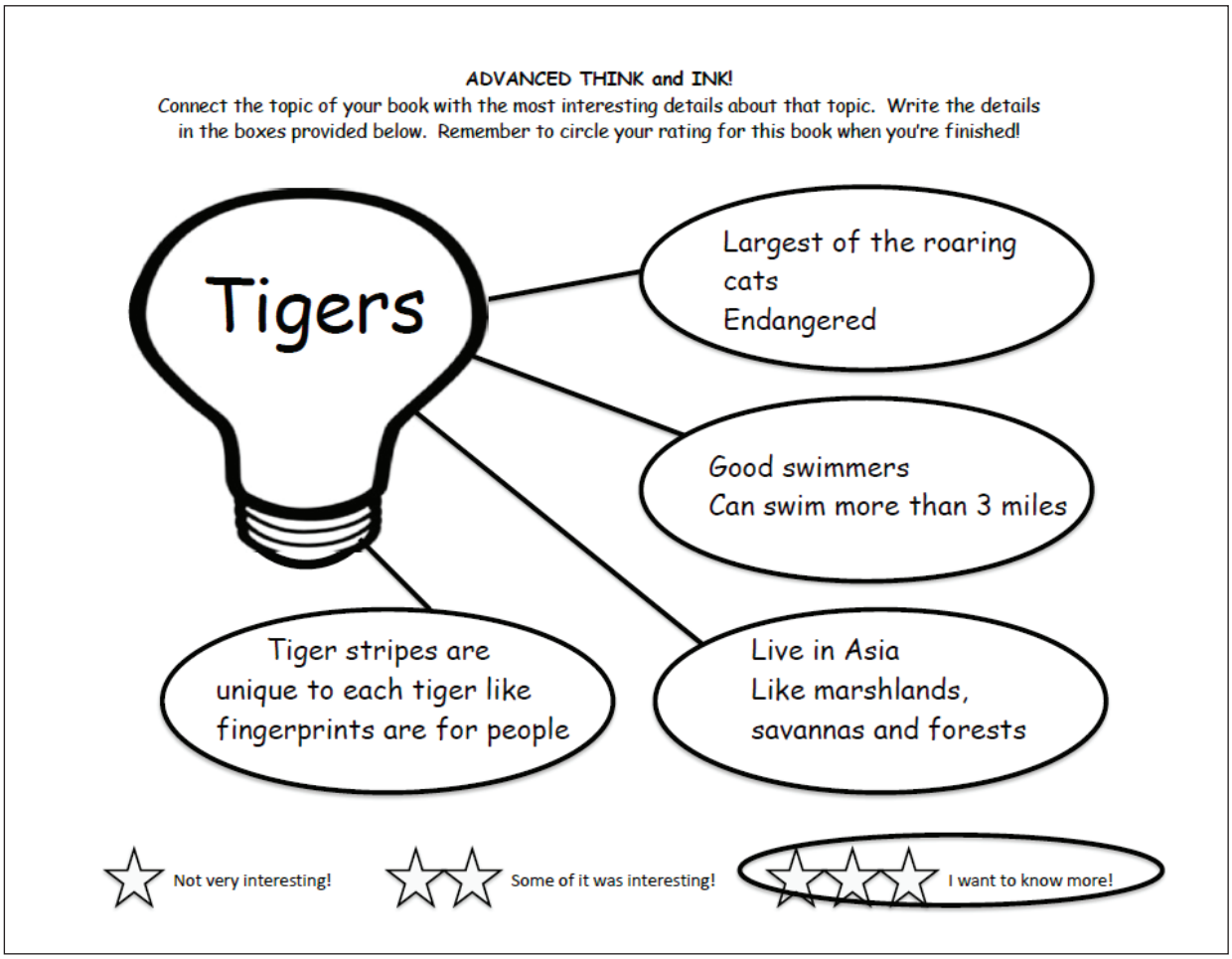
4. Once a child understands the process, the child should be encouraged to always try and create visual images as they read. Visual imagery helps children achieve a better understanding of the text.

5. Children can even be encouraged to illustrate their visual images during parts of the text or at the conclusion of reading an entire text. Putting several illustrations together that have been created during reading also helps with understanding sequencing and builds the retelling skill.

Concepts Maps

Concept maps are used to help children organize their thoughts as they are presented with new information in a text. The maps can be used with different kinds of texts and give a visual representation of how ideas and information in the text are connected. Concept maps assist children in understanding new concepts and help to deepen meaning of text.

Examples:



THINK and INK!

Connect the topic of your book with the most interesting details about that topic. Draw, and then write those details in the boxes provided below. Remember to circle your rating for this book when you're finished!

Draw a detail about the topic.

A detail:



Draw a detail about the topic.

A detail:

Draw a picture of the topic of your book.

Draw a detail about the topic.

A detail:

Draw a detail about the topic.

A detail:

The topic of my book is:

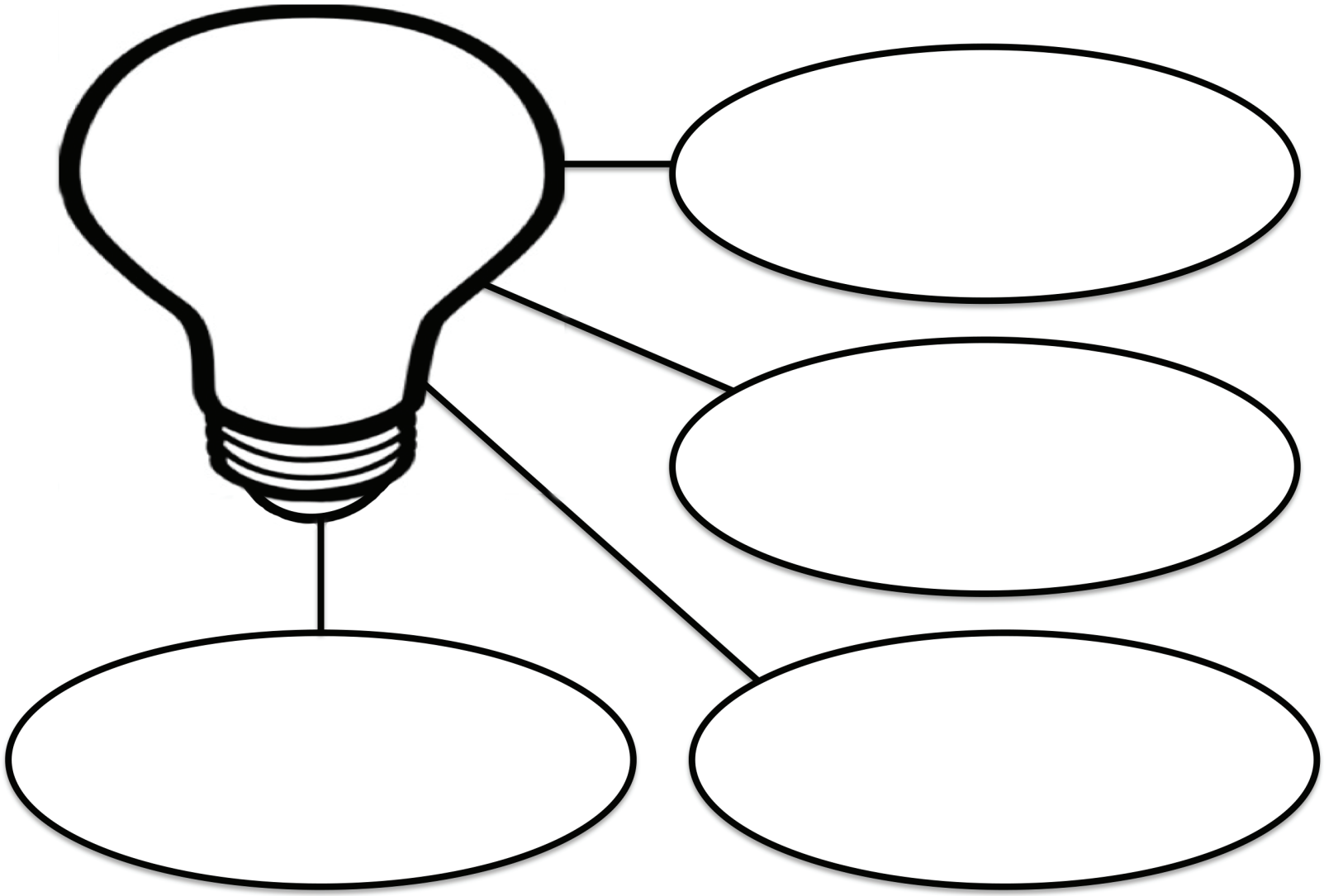
Not very interesting!

Some of it was interesting!

I want to know more!

ADVANCED THINK and INK!

Connect the topic of your book with the most interesting details about that topic. Draw, and then write details in the boxes provided below. Remember to circle your rating for this book when you're finished!



Not very interesting!

Some of it was interesting!

I want to know more!

Links to More Resources for Parents

NC Department of Public Instruction Read to Achieve Livebinder – http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/850102

NC Department of Public Instruction Parent Livebinder – http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1326906

Reading Rockets – http://www.readingrockets.org/

Tumble Books – http://www.tumblebooklibrary.com/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f

Starfall Education – http://starfall.com

Between the Lions – http://pbskids.org/lions/

ABCya! – http://www.abcya.com/

National Geographic Young Explorers – http://ngexplorer.cengage.com/ngyoungexplorer/index.html

Story Online – http://www.storylineonline.net/

Storynory – http://www.storynory.com/

Mighty Book – http://www.mightybook.com/