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☺ **Probable Passage (a before reading activity)**

This prediction activity “Forces students to think about the characters, setting, conflict, resolution, and vocabulary of the story before they read the story” (Beers 91). Probable passage is the most helpful to students who struggle with reading and so not use many (if any) reading strategies. By using this strategy, students are more apt to read with a purpose and will recognize the words or phrases they worked with before reading. The post-reading part of probable passage makes students go back to the text to summarize, define unknown words, and answer questions they had before reading the story. The goal is making the “invisible act of thinking visible” (Beers 92).

Ohio’s Learning Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 9)

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 2b. Provide an objective summary of the text that includes the theme and relevant story elements.

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Lesson Materials:

- Probable Passage pre-reading handout
- Word List
- “The Dinner Party” Mona Gardner
- Probable Passage post-reading handout

Tips for creating a Probable Passage reading activity:

1. Choose at least one word/phrase from the text to fit into each of the five boxes on the Probable Passage before reading handout.
2. Use as little or as many words/phrases depending on the grade level and topic being covered.
3. Be sure the list of words you created will give the big picture of the text being read by your students.

Procedures in the Classroom:~Note: You may want to model this activity before asking students to do it. I begin with groups of three to four students to introduce Probable Passage. Then, I will have students do it individually.~

Before Reading

1. Tell students the title of the reading selection.
2. All the words in the box below must go into one of the 5 boxes on the Probable Passage handout.
3. You can only use the words once.
4. The gist statement (which is a summary prediction written in sentences of what you think the story will be about based on the title and the word list) must have all of the words in it. *However, don't use any words from the Unknown Words box in your gist statement.* Please underline the words from the word list used in the gist statement. Continue on the back of the paper, if you need more space.
5. The *To discover...* spot should be good and thoughtful questions about the story. You cannot ask questions like the following: Who is a certain character? (This needs to have more details in the question like what a character might do in the story.), or What does a certain word mean? Your questions should be good enough to start a meaningful conversation about the text.
6. On the back of the Probable Passage sheet, write down the unknown words and your group's guess of what you think the definition of the word(s) might be. Leave some space after each word, so that you can write the actual definition of the words after we read them in the story.

~Read the Text~

After Reading

1. Have students get into the same groups that completed the before reading Probable Passage page.
2. Hand out one **Probable Passage-After Reading** to each group. Please ask students to write their names (first and last) on the top of their papers and the class period.
3. Read the first two sections and explain them:
 - How was your gist statement correct? What was incorrect? Explain. Students need to use COMPLETE SENTENCES for this! They should be able to point out what was right in their original prediction gist statement. Next, they need to discuss what was incorrect/off about their original gist statement.
 - Write the word and the dictionary definition of any unknown words. Any words from the Unknown Words box should be defined using the *actual dictionary definition for what would fit the story* (sometimes there are multiple meanings and students don't know which definition to choose).
 - Answer any answerable questions from the "To discover..." section. *These must be answered in complete sentences!* Students need to go in the same order as the questions that they wrote on the Probable Passage- before reading handout.

- ☺ **Marking Time**
- ☺ **Mark my Words**
- ☺ **Definitions**
- ☺ **Somebody Wanted But So**
- ☺ **?Mark**
- ☺ **What are you thinking? Conversation**

References:

Beers, K. *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2003.
"The Dinner Party." *The Language of Literature*. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal Littell, 2001.