

Brief Focus Lesson

Use Prior Knowledge to Connect with Text for Grade 6

Text: *Mountains* by Seymour Simon

CAFE Goal	Comprehension
CAFE Strategy	Use Prior Knowledge to Connect with Text.
Observe/Relate (1 – 2 min.)	<p>Each of us likes different kinds of books and has favorite authors. As a reader, I enjoy nonfiction. One of my favorite authors is Seymour Simon. You might have read some of his books. He writes about and photographs interesting subjects in nature. I always learn something new when I read his books. Before I begin to read any of his books, I always ask myself, “What do I already know about this topic?” That helps me to focus on my prior knowledge and add the new facts that I learn.</p>
Teach and Reinforce (2 – 3 min.)	<p>Establish purpose—Today we are learning to use prior knowledge to connect with text.</p> <p>Create urgency—We are learning to use prior knowledge to connect with text because it helps us understand better and to remember what we read.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling—Whenever I read a new book, I access my prior knowledge to connect with the text. My connection might be based on something that happened in my life, another text, or even something that is happening in the world. Let me share how I use prior knowledge to connect with <i>Mountains</i>, by Seymour Simon. (<i>Since the pages are unnumbered, you may want to lightly pencil in the page numbers beginning with the title page</i>). You’ll notice that I pause, reflect, and connect as I read.</p> <p>First, I look at the cover of the book. I ask myself questions like, “How does this cover connect with what I already know about the topic?” or “What experiences do I have that might be connected to the cover?” Right away, the picture on this cover reminds me of mountains I saw on a trip to Colorado. I remember how high they were and how beautiful they were. Already, I’ve connected to the text.</p> <p>Next, I read the names of the author and illustrator and ask myself, “<i>What do I already know about them? Or “What kinds of connections do I have with the author or illustrator?” and “Do they usually work on a certain</i></p>

genre?" For example, when I think of Seymour Simon, I think of nonfiction because I've read many of his books and I know they are always filled with amazing photographs and remarkable facts that help me to understand the subject better. There's my connection.

Then, as I read the text, I pause often and reflect on connections that I can make. Doing this helps me to understand the text better. I add my new learning to what I already know. Reading helps me to build my background knowledge. Listen as I read the first few pages of the text. *After reading page 5 say, "Seymour Simon said that mountains change—I know that's true because I've read how erosion affects mountains." Then continue to the end of page 7, and say "I've seen pictures of the Himalayan Mountains and read about people trying to climb them—that's another connection I can make. The author states that the Himalayan Mountains are taller than the world's twenty-six tallest skyscrapers stacked on top of each other; I've seen a few skyscrapers in big cities, but I cannot even imagine that how enormous twenty-six buildings stacked on top of each other would be. Amazing! That's really tall! I used my prior knowledge again to connect to the text.*

When I finish the text, I'll know more about mountains than when I first started reading. I've added what Seymour Simon wrote about mountains to what I already knew. Plus, I'll have used my prior knowledge to connect with the text so I could understand it better." *(You can complete the read-aloud at another time).*

Practice
(2 – 3 min.)

It's your chance to tell how your prior knowledge helped you to make a connection to one of your texts. Please select a book that you are currently reading from your book box. Pause and reflect about one way that you are using your prior knowledge to make a connection with this text. You can choose to describe a connection based on the book cover, the author or illustrator, the genre, or a part of the text. On a sticky note, write a brief description of your connection to the book.

You can use any of these prompts to begin: *(prompts can be displayed on chart paper)*

I use my prior knowledge about _____ to connect with the text.

I can connect with this text because I already know about _____.

My connection with this text is based on the (author/illustrator/genre) because _____.

When we share, you will tell about your connection.

Encourage and Plan

We just learned about the strategy *Use Prior Knowledge to Connect with Text*. This is a very valuable strategy because it helps you to understand the text better. Whenever you read, you add your new learning to your prior knowledge. So, the next time you read about the topic, you will bring

(1 – 2 min.)	even more prior knowledge to your reading. As you already know, you become smarter and smarter by reading. Before long, your prior knowledge will be as vast as the mountains Seymour Simon described in his book.
Common Core Alignment	Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Use Prior Knowledge to Connect with Text aligns with Standards L.6.5 and L.6.6 on our Grade 6 CAFE Menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix .

When readers use prior knowledge to make connections, they understand the text better and can remember it more easily. You can use the steps of **Pause, Reflect, and Connect** as you read the text and use your prior knowledge to make connections.

Name of Reader:	Date:
Title:	
Author:	
Genre:	
PAUSE Why is it a good idea to pause when you are trying to use your prior knowledge to connect with a text?	
REFLECT Reflect on your ways that you use your prior knowledge to connect to the text. Put a checkmark in the circle(s) that describes your connection(s). Add the page number(s) where you made your connection(s).	
<input type="radio"/> A connection to my own life	page number(s): _____
<input type="radio"/> A connection to another book	page number(s): _____
<input type="radio"/> A connection to the world	page number(s): _____
<input type="radio"/> Other: _____	page number(s): _____
CONNECT Describe your connection(s) to the text. Tell how your prior knowledge helped you to connect.	

You can confer with your teacher and classmates about how you have used your prior knowledge to connect with text. Or you can choose to include this paper in your portfolio or reading notebook to show your understanding of **Use Prior Knowledge to Connect with Text**. Remember to use this important strategy every day when you read!