

GRADE 4 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 4

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\Rightarrow) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 4:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a fiction selection, and
- practice test-taking strategies.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 1 and 4 – 2
- Pencils

Following your introductory remarks to students, say:

Today we are going to read a fictional story and then answer some questions about it. We are going to practice being a better reader and a better thinker. Have you ever thought about all the things that require practice?

Pause.

You practiced tying your shoe, riding your bike, writing your name, playing video games, and the list goes on and on. So why not practice being a better reader and a better thinker?

Being a good reader and a good thinker seem to go together. When you read, you think about what you are reading. Today we will practice some strategies or techniques that you can use in any class.

One thing you can do is look at the selection before you begin reading. That trick may seem simple, but there is a reason. Start by looking at the title: the title gives you an idea what the selection is about. Then look at the passage itself. The passage will give you an idea about the length. At this point, you aren't trying to read it; you are only looking. The few seconds you spend looking at the selection give your brain a chance to get ready to receive some new information.

Some students just pick up the story, start reading, and aren't really ready to receive new information. They may read several sentences and not really know what they have read.

You, on the other hand, will be ready to read if you follow this simple strategy: look before you read.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 1.

Then say:

Let's practice our new strategy on this selection. Look at the selection now. Pause very briefly.

Now, turn the paper face down and look at me.

A purpose of this strategy is to train students to be more observant prior to reading. Students may not recall any of this information. Therefore, we practice this strategy several times.

Let's see how good you are! What is the title of this selection? Pause.
(Response: "The Bridge")

Did you see any words in boldface type or in italics? Pause.
(Response: no)

Did you have any pictures or graphics with this selection? Pause.
(Response: no)

Did anybody notice how many paragraphs are in the selection?
Pause. (Response: three)

Last one. What's the first word of the story? Pause.
(Response: Shannon)

Then say:

Now the purpose of that little quiz was so you could see whether you are ready to read! You need to put the other things out of your mind and focus on the task of reading.

Today I will read the selection aloud to you. Follow along on your copy. After we have finished, there will be some questions to answer about the selection.

Read "The Bridge" aloud. Students should follow along on their copies, not just look at you. If necessary, pause and direct their attention back to the printed page.

Then say:

Now, let's spend some time thinking and talking about the story before working with the questions.

Good readers use their imaginations when they read. Let me explain.

In this particular story, you need to think about where Shannon is. The author gives you several clues to what this scene looks like or the setting of the story. If you use the clues, you can “see” it in your mind.

Look back at the first paragraph and read it to yourself.

Pause to allow students time to complete the task.

Say:

Where is Shannon standing?

(Response: on the edge of the cliff)

When she looks down, what does she see?

(Response: the ravine; the stream; the pebble bouncing off the rock)

When she looks straight ahead, what does she see?

(Response: the rickety wooden bridge)

Those clues help you understand the story more fully. If you are an artist, you use those clues to draw a picture to accompany the story.

Another technique that helps is to get a picture in your mind of what Shannon looked like. Now, this story doesn't tell us what color hair she has, or what color her eyes are, or even how old she is; but you don't really need all that information. In your imagination, you can have an idea of what Shannon looks like.

One reason readers do imagine the appearance of the character is to make the character and the setting more real. Try it.

Pause.

Say:

I continue the same process in the second paragraph. I imagine Shannon on that old bridge. Again, I use the clues the author gives me.

It is as if I see the story in my imagination. Read the second paragraph to yourself and try to see in your head a picture of Shannon on the bridge.

Pause to allow time to complete the task.

Look at that last paragraph. Pause. In my mind, I can see that bird swoop at Shannon. I bet it scared her to death! It would have scared me!

This idea of “seeing” the story in your mind will help you to have a better understanding of what you are reading. Seeing the story in your mind is a trick that you can start practicing today.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 2.
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Say:

As we work the questions, we will use some of the same tricks. Start by looking at the questions. Pause.

Turn your question page face down and look at me.

How many questions are there? (Response: five)

How many multiple-choice questions are there? (Response: three)

What kind of question is the first one? (Response: multiple-choice)

Turn your paper back over. Remember you are training yourself to look at the page!

Today I want you to read and answer the first three questions. Circle the key words or phrases in the questions if that trick helps you. Refer back to the story, if necessary. After you have finished number three, sit quietly. We will discuss the answers after everyone has finished.

Pause to allow time to complete the task.

Say:

Check your own paper as we go over numbers one through three.

What was Shannon’s problem in the story?

Ask for a volunteer or call on a student.

(Response: Choice B: she had to cross a rickety bridge to get home on time.)

Why didn’t you choose Choice A: she could not get home because the bridge was unsafe?

(Response: that answer is not completely right; she could have gotten home by walking the long way around.)

What about Choice C: she fell off a bridge and had to be rescued.

(Response: that answer is wrong; it didn’t even happen in the story.)

Why didn’t you select Choice D: she had to overcome her fear of heights?

(Response: she was afraid of being late getting home; the story doesn’t really say she was afraid of heights.)

Great job! I know you are thinking because you have shown me that you can explain why you chose an answer and why you didn’t choose an answer.

Number two is about the story’s mood. Is the answer Choice A: gloomy?

(Response: no)

Why not? (Response: gloomy means dark, sad; there is nothing in the story to support gloomy.)

Is the answer Choice B: mysterious?

(Response: no)

Why didn’t you select mysterious?

(Response: Mysterious is like a puzzle or something that can’t be explained; there is nothing in the story to support *mysterious*.)

Did you choose Choice C: sad? (Response: no)

Why not? (Response: there’s nothing in the story that supports sad.)

So the correct answer must be Choice D: tense. Why did you choose tense?

Somebody needs to explain the answer for me. Pause.

(Response: *Tense* means uptight, nervous; Shannon was both those things.)

By using the process of elimination, some students will select Choice D but not know what the word means. They have used a test-taking strategy.

Some of you figured out which answers were wrong and then you ended up with the right answer! Good thinking!

Say:

Number three is a vocabulary question. You might have had to work a little harder on this one. What does *rickety* mean?

Is the answer Choice A: brown? (Response: no)

No, there's nothing in the story that makes me think the bridge is brown.

How about Choice B: old?

If a student says yes, ask for the detail from the story that indicates old. Although the story refers to the bridge as being old in paragraph 2, *rickety* does not mean old. Some students will assume that *rickety* and old are the same thing and miss this question.

Look at Choice C: shaky. Does *rickety* mean shaky? (Response: yes)

How do you know that *shaky* is the answer?

(Response: creaked and swayed; sickening lurch; a wave from one end to the other.)

The word *rickety* is in the first paragraph but the clues for the meaning are all in the second paragraph. Some students will stop looking too soon!

You are now ready to answer questions four and five. These both require you to write in your best handwriting. You want to be sure that somebody else can read your answer. It is also a good idea to write in complete sentences, so that somebody else will be able to understand what you were thinking!

Say:

Question four. Shannon is scared. How does the reader know that Shannon is scared? Which paragraph has the answer to this question? Pause. (Response: paragraph two)

You might want to put a 2 on your paper as a reminder of where to look for the answer.

Question five. Why didn't Shannon want to walk three miles upstream to wade across? Which paragraph has the answer? Pause. (Response: the first paragraph)

Please answer numbers four and five now. Answer in complete sentences and use your best handwriting.

Pause to allow time to complete the task.

How does the reader know that Shannon is scared?

Ask for volunteers. Be sure that students read from their papers, not just tell you the answer.

(Possible responses: I know Shannon is scared because her mouth was dry, her palms were sweaty, and she gripped the sides of the rope until her knuckles turned white. You can tell Shannon is scared because the passage says she took a deep breath, her mouth was dry, and her palms were sweaty.)

Students should have a minimum of two details for this answer.

Why didn't Shannon want to walk three miles upstream to wade across?

Ask for volunteers.

(Possible responses: Shannon didn't want to walk because the long distance would make her late getting home. She couldn't get home by 5:00 if she walked the three miles.)

Say:

Wow! You have practiced lots of good reading and thinking techniques today. Remember to keep practicing! Try using these same techniques in social studies and in science.

THE BRIDGE

Shannon stood on the edge of the cliff staring at the ravine. She dropped a pebble and watched it bounce off the rock as it fell to the stream below. She looked first at the rickety wooden bridge ahead of her and then at the rushing stream below. She wished there were some other way to get home by 5:00 o'clock. She could walk three miles upstream and wade across at the ford, but that route would take too long. She didn't have enough time.

The old bridge creaked and swayed in the wind as if daring her to cross. Shannon took a deep breath. Her mouth was dry. She wiped her sweaty palms on her jeans. She gripped the side ropes so tightly that her knuckles turned white. Then, holding securely to the side ropes, she stepped onto the bridge. It gave a sickening lurch under her. Shannon stood still until the bridge stopped swaying; then she slowly and carefully began to work her way across. Each step she took sent a wave from one end of the bridge to the other and threatened to tip her into the water below.

About halfway across, a bird flew low over Shannon's head. It startled her and made her lose her balance. One foot slid off the side of the bridge. Shannon hung on with all her strength. Then she slowly pulled herself back up. With her heart pounding, she continued on as slowly and carefully as before. At last she reached the other side. Shannon gave a sigh of relief and started to run.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 2

NAME _____

1. What was Shannon’s problem in this selection?
 - A. She could not get home because the bridge was unsafe.
 - B. She had to cross a rickety bridge to get home on time.
 - C. She fell off a bridge and had to be rescued.
 - D. She had to overcome her fear of heights.

2. This story creates a mood that is
 - A. gloomy.
 - B. mysterious.
 - C. sad.
 - D. tense.

3. Shannon had to cross a *rickety* wooden bridge. What does *rickety* mean?
 - A. brown
 - B. old
 - C. shaky
 - D. sturdy

4. Shannon is scared. How does the reader know that Shannon is scared?

5. Why didn’t Shannon want to walk three miles upstream to wade across?
