

Teacher Guide to Student Video: *Synthesizing*

Program Synopsis

Mrs. Pingel's students enjoy learning to synthesize while reading the back of a candy bar wrapper. During independent reading, the new strategy pulls Kamilah into the poem *Casey at the Bat*, where she develops a new perspective on the poem that she later demonstrates in a puppet show. She is also able to synthesize her knowledge of baseball and her town into a winning mascot for her local team.

Featured text:

Casey at the Bat, by Ernest L. Thayer. San Francisco Examiner, 1888.

Other texts mentioned:

The Gorilla, on Endangered Species chocolate bar wrapper.

The World According to Humphrey, by Betty G. Birney. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004.

Teaching Suggestions:

Think about how you want to use this program. How does it fit into your teaching plan?

1. Use it to introduce synthesizing.
2. As a follow-up or review.
3. As an intervention to encourage students who seem to be reading fluently but not reading for meaning.

Before viewing:

Set a purpose for watching the video. Explain that students will be trying the strategy themselves after they watch the video.

- Ask students to watch for something specific in the program, for example: (You may wish to write a question on the board in order to refer to it.)
 1. How does synthesizing help Kamilah, in class and in the contest?
 2. Watch the special effects; see if you can explain what is going on inside the students' heads when they are synthesizing.
 3. We say that synthesizing means "putting the pieces together." What are the pieces?

During viewing:

Pause the video during teachable moments. For example:

1. *After Mrs. Pingel writes 'Gorillas' on the chart.*
Ask your students to think about what they already know about gorillas, and record their prior knowledge on your own chart or the blackboard.
2. *When Mrs. Pingel asks "Who can explain synthesizing to us in your own words?"*
Ask students for their explanation, or examples, of synthesizing.
3. *After Kamilah's puppet show.*
Ask students how Kamilah's thinking about the poem, or about baseball, changed.

After viewing:

- Discuss students' answers to questions you posed before viewing.
- Have students do the Synthesizing online activity in the student area of the website.
- Choose a non-fiction topic and one or more texts, and use the Synthesizing Graphic Organizer (see below) to do a similar activity with your students.
- Using a fiction text students have read, give them an assignment that requires them to synthesize (such as writing a segment from a different point of view, making a comic strip based on the characters, "interviewing" the characters and inventing what they would say, putting themselves in the book and explaining how they would handle a situation, and so forth.)
- Model synthesizing during your read-aloud time. Talk about how your thinking is changing based on what you are reading.
- Try some of the lesson plans on the Into the Book website.

