

Brief Focus Lesson

Check for Understanding Text for Grade 3

Text: *Thunder Cake* by Patricia Polacco

CAFE Goal	Comprehension
CAFE Strategy	Check for Understanding
Observe/Relate (1 – 2 min.)	<p>What do you know about recipes? Last week, I found a great recipe for a lemon meringue pie. I read it very carefully to find out how to make the crust, the filling, and a white, fluffy topping called meringue. To be honest, lemon meringue pie sounded like it would be a hard recipe to make. But I wanted a challenge, so I decided to try it. After I got all of the ingredients together, I started making the crust. I checked the recipe several times to be sure that I was doing exactly what I was supposed to do. Then I went on to the filling and did the same thing—I checked that I understood how to mix the lemon, the egg yolks, the flour, the sugar, and all of the other yummy ingredients. The hardest part was to make the meringue. I had to beat the egg whites, along with sugar, and a powdery ingredient called cream of tartar. I knew that the meringue is not easy to make so I read the steps and checked the recipe over and over. Do you know what happened? Since I followed the recipe and checked for understanding often, I ended up with a delicious lemon meringue pie!</p>
Teach and Reinforce (2 – 3 min.)	<p>Establish purpose – Today we are learning to check for understanding.</p> <p>Create urgency – We are learning to use check for understanding because we need to be sure that we comprehend what we read. It’s fun to check that we understand!</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling – Today I’d like to share part of a book called <i>Thunder Cake</i> by Patricia Polacco. I have lots of recipes, but I never heard of one for Thunder Cake. I want to find out what it is! <i>(Since the pages are unnumbered, you may want to lightly pencil in the page numbers before sharing.) Begin reading, and pause at the end of page 3. Say “Wow! What a fun book—I want</i></p>

	<p>to be sure that I understand what the author is telling me...Let me think...WHO is the writer talking about? —well, that’s clear. It’s her grandmother! WHAT is she telling readers about—Oh, I get it, the story will be about how her grandmother helped her to be brave when she heard thunder.” <i>Continue reading pages 4-7 and remark “WHO is important in this part of the text? That’s easy—it’s Grandma and Patricia. WHAT is happening here? Let me check my understanding—Grandma sees a storm coming. When she goes to look for Patricia, she sees her hiding under the bed. Patricia must be afraid of the thunder. My understanding is good, so I can go on.” After reading page 9 aloud, say “I can identify the WHO—Grandma and Patricia--but I’m confused about the WHAT. What does Grandmother want Patricia to do? I’m going to read that part about counting again.” Read the final paragraph again, and then say, “Now I understand—if Patricia begins counting when she sees lightning and stops when she hears thunder, it will tell her how many miles away the storm is.” (You can complete the read-aloud at another time if you wish. Note that the final page of the text has a recipe for Thunder Cake if you want to bake it, or share the recipe with your students’ families).</i></p>
<p>Practice (2 – 3 min.)</p>	<p>Now it’s your turn to check for understanding. Listen as I read the next page (<i>you might want to display the text on a document camera to make it easier for students to see</i>). Find an elbow partner and sit elbow to elbow, knee to knee. The partner on the right will tell about WHO this page is about; the partner on the left will tell WHAT it is about. After you share, we’ll check for understanding one more time. When I read the next part, you will switch jobs when you tell about WHO and WHAT.</p>
<p>Encourage and Plan (1 – 2 min.)</p>	<p>Whenever you read, remember to <i>Check for Understanding</i>. It’s such an important strategy that we need to use it every single day! Whether you are reading a story book like <i>Thunder Cake</i>, a recipe like mine for lemon meringue pie, or anything else, check for understanding. It will give you the information you need to keep on going in the text with good comprehension. After all, readers can only enjoy books if they understand what they read.</p>
<p>Common Core Alignment</p>	<p>Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. <i>Check for Understanding</i> aligns with Standard RF.3.4 on our Grade 3 CAFÉ Menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix.</p>