

Brief Focus Lesson

Check for Understanding for Grade 5

Text: *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* by Chris Van Allsburg

CAFE Goal	Comprehension
CAFE Strategy	Check for Understanding
Observe/Relate (1 – 2 min.)	Have you ever taken care of a pet that wasn't your own? A few weeks ago, my friend asked me to watch her bird, Lucky. She was fixing up her house, and she didn't want Lucky to be around all the dust and noise. Of course I said "yes" because I like Lucky. She brought Lucky over along with his cage, bird food, treats, and cover for the cage. Hurriedly, she gave me a list of directions before she drove off to the paint store. After I read the list, I needed to check for understanding. I asked myself, "What time do I give Lucky his birdseed? What time do I cover his cage so he can go to sleep?" and "How many treats can he have each day?" Once I checked for understanding, I knew exactly how to care for Lucky!
Teach and Reinforce (2 – 3 min.)	<p>Establish purpose – Today we are learning to check for understanding when we read.</p> <p>Create urgency – It's important to understand and remember what we read. So, after we read a section of text, we need to stop and check for understanding. If we are not able to answer questions about what we read, we need to reread.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling – Today I want to share part of <i>The Garden of Abdul Gasazi</i> by Chris Van Allsburg with you. It's about a boy who is watching a dog for one of his neighbors. Listen as I read about the beginning of their adventure. (<i>Since pages are unnumbered, you may want to pencil in the page numbers before reading</i>). After reading page 4, say "I'm going to check for understanding. I'll ask myself WHO? and WHAT? about this part of the text. WHO is this about? The writer is telling about a boy named Alan Mintz, his neighbor, Miss Hester, and her dog, Fritz. WHAT is happening? Well, I've learned here that the dog has a history of biting people. That's why his owner cannot take him to visit cousin Eunice. I can keep going since I understand.</p> <p>Let's see how I do with the next page." <i>Read it aloud, and then comment,</i> "Okay, I can pick out the WHO-- this part is about how Alan and Fritz. But I don't think I understand exactly what's happening here. Should I just keep on going? No, that probably won't help my comprehension. I should go back</p>

	<p>and reread the page to try to it out.” <i>Reread the page and say:</i> “Now I understand. Alan has prevented Fritz from eating the furniture and a favorite hat. Now they are both sleeping because they are so exhausted.</p> <p>Later, I will finish reading the story, and you’ll find out that something very, very mysterious happens to Fritz. Or does it?</p>
<p>Practice (2 – 3 min.)</p>	<p>You can check for understanding whenever you read. For our practice, you’ll use your whiteboard. Listen carefully as I read the next page. When I finish, jot down the WHO and the WHAT. Afterward, I’ll invite you to share your answers. (<i>Please note: students will identify Alan and Fritz as the WHO and perhaps mention that the dog woke Alan up by biting him on the nose; they will describe the WHAT as a white bridge that Fritz leads Alan across. Offer another practice opportunity on the next page if time permits).</i>)</p>
<p>Encourage and Plan (1 – 2 min.)</p>	<p>The strategy of <i>Check for Understanding</i> helps all of us as readers. We can use it with all different kinds of books. It helps us make sure that we understand what the author is telling us. Remember to stop, check, and go on if you can identify WHO and WHAT; back up and reread if you need more information to answer the questions. I want to see you use this strategy when you read today!</p>
<p>Common Core Alignment</p>	<p>Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. <i>Check for Understanding</i> aligns with Standard RL.5.10 on our Grade 5 CAFÉ menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix.</p>

The *Who* and the *What*

When you are reading, stop occasionally and check for understanding. Write down the page number where you stop. If you can answer *Who?* and *What?* about your reading, jot down your ideas and go on. If you cannot, go back and reread.

Stopping Point	Questions	
Page	Who?	What?
REFLECT	Checking for Understanding helps me as a reader because:	