

Brief Focus Lesson

Check for Understanding for Grade 6

Text: *Music for Alice* by Allen Say

CAFE Goal	Comprehension
CAFE Strategy	Check for Understanding
Observe/Relate (1 – 2 min.)	<p>Have you ever assembled a piece of furniture? Yesterday I put a bookcase together with my friend. We took all of the pieces out of the box and lined them up neatly on the floor. Then my friend grabbed the directions.</p> <p>“I’ll read the directions to you,” she volunteered, “and you can put the pieces together.”</p> <p>My friend started to read the directions to me step by step. Everything went smoothly until she read a step that was confusing.</p> <p>Then I asked, “What should I do? That step just doesn’t make sense.”</p> <p>“Here, look at the directions. Why don’t you read that part again?” she said as she handed me the directions.</p> <p>Carefully, I read it again so that I could check my understanding. I had to stop and check the directions because if I hadn’t, I could not have assembled the bookcase. Checking for understanding helped me to understand the directions, follow the steps, and finish the project.</p> <p>When I look at that nice bookcase in my living room, I’m thankful that I checked for understanding! Now I can fill my bookcase with beautiful stories like the one I will share with you today—<i>Music for Alice</i> by Allen Say.</p>
Teach and Reinforce (2 – 3 min.)	<p>Establish purpose – Today we are learning to use check for understanding when we read.</p> <p>Create urgency – We are learning to use check for understanding so that we can insure that we comprehend what we are reading. If we discover that we don’t know what we are reading about, we need to stop, go back, and read again.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling – Whenever I read a text, I check for understanding. It doesn’t matter if I am reading a novel, an article, a list of directions, or even the newspaper. It’s a strategy that I can use with every text. After I finish a sentence, a paragraph, a page, or even a longer section of text, I can ask myself WHO is this about? And WHAT is happening? If I can easily answer those questions, then I can go on. But, if I cannot answer the questions, I need to stop. Then I reread the text to find the answers.</p>

	<p>Introduce the text <i>Music for Alice</i> by Allen Say. Use the document camera to display page 5. Since this is such an amazing book, I want to be sure that I understand what the author is saying. There’s a lot going on here, so I will look at the text in chunks. So, I’ll begin with paragraph one by asking myself the important question WHO. I can answer that one—the story tells about a woman named Alice from California. Now it’s time for WHAT. Hmm...there’s a lot of information on this page, so let me sort it out. I’ll go back and reread...now I understand. Alice grew up on a farm; she went to college and loved to dance.</p> <p>I’ll ask myself the same questions about paragraph two. WHO is this paragraph about—that’s easy to answer. The WHO is about Alice and Mark, who became her husband. So, I’ll ask myself “WHAT is this happening in this part of the text?” This paragraph tells about Mark’s seed business in Seattle, Washington. Since I know the WHO and the WHAT, I can go on.</p> <p>Let me try again as I read the first part of page 6. Read it aloud and explain, This is a very dramatic part of this powerful story. I can identify the WHO—this part of the text is about Alice and her husband and the Japanese Americans who were their neighbors during World War II. Let’s see if I can explain the WHAT. I think that the WHAT is about a place called an assembly center. In this part, I learned that Alice, her husband, and other Japanese Americans from their area were sent to this assembly center in Portland, Oregon. If I can explain my answers to WHO and WHAT questions and grasp what the author is saying, I can continue reading; otherwise, I should reread.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Practice (2 – 3 min.)</p>	<p>Now you can see firsthand how checking for understanding helps you as a reader. You will work with a partner. I’ll read the remainder of page 6, and you will talk with a partner about this part of the text. Be sure to talk about the WHO and WHAT in your conversation. Remember that if you cannot answer those important WHO and WHAT questions, you’ll have to reread to find the answers. When I signal, please finish up your conversations. Then you’ll be able to share your ideas with the class.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Encourage and Plan (1 – 2 min.)</p>	<p>We just learned about the strategy <i>Check for Understanding</i>. By using this strategy, you can track how well you are comprehending a text. If you do not understand the text, you certainly do not want to go on. You will just get frustrated if you do. But if you can answer those important WHO and WHAT questions, you are ready to go on and continue enjoying your good fit book!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Common Core Alignment</p>	<p>Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. <i>Check for Understanding</i> aligns with Standards RL.6.10 on our Grade 6 CAFÉ Menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix.</p>