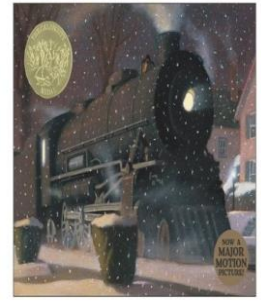


The Polar Express

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THE POLAR EXPRESS



In this classic holiday tale, a little boy, who does not believe in the magic of Christmas, takes a train ride on the Polar Express to the North Pole. After the adventure ride, he arrives in the city of elves and is chosen to receive the first gift of Christmas. He chooses a bell from Santa's sleigh but he can't hear the ring of the bell because he doesn't believe. Will he be able to hear the bell or will the magic of Christmas be gone forever?

Possible strategies for instruction:

Comprehension:

- **Recognize literary elements (genre, plot, character, setting, problem/resolution, theme):**
 - After reading the book, discuss how the little boy changes throughout the story. Also discuss how the setting changes throughout the story, from the boy's home, to the train, to the North Pole, back on the train and then back home.
 - Discuss the boy's problem (not being able to hear the bell and then losing it) and how he solved his problem (heard the ringing of the bell when he found it under the tree on Christmas morning).
 - At the end, identify the theme or the underlying message of the story (to believe).
- **Ask questions throughout the reading process**
 - When reading the text, stop on page 7 to monitor comprehension. Looking at the picture, ask why are there no more lights to be seen? On page 9, ask why the author compares the Polar Express to a roller coaster? On page 24, what caused the ball to lose the bell? On page 27, why can't the boy's parents hear the bell?

Accuracy:

- **Do the pictures and/or words look right? Do they sound right? Do they make sense?**
 - When coming to an unknown word (such as conductor on page 3, wilderness page 7, and factories on page 14) model for the students, "Does the word I am reading match the letters written or the picture? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?" (Review body movements to go with strategy.)

Fluency:

- **Read text as the author would say it, conveying the meaning or feeling**
 - Use the 2004 movie to play the scene on page 3-4 and again on page 18-21. Students can actually see and hear the meaning and feeling of the selected text.

Expand Vocabulary:

- **Use dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries as tools:**
 - While reading page 6, stop at the word nougat. Read the word in the sentence and try to figure out what it means. Explain to the class that using a dictionary will help find out what the word means. Then look up the word in the thesaurus to find out what other words the author could have used instead. Use other examples of words as the book is read (such as barren on page 11, and harness on page 17).

- **Use word parts to determine the meaning of words (prefixes, suffixes, origins, abbreviations, etc.)**
 - Starting with the word breathed on page 1, identify the suffix “ed”. Make a list of words that are used throughout the story that also have –ed, (looked, pulled, filled, flickered, raced, roamed, climbed, turned, asked, slowed, moved, marched, wanted, helped, reached and cupped). Use this to teach students that “ed” after a word makes it past tense.

This text can be used with nearly any strategy on the CAFE menu. The above strategies are a highlighted collection to use as a springboard for further instruction.