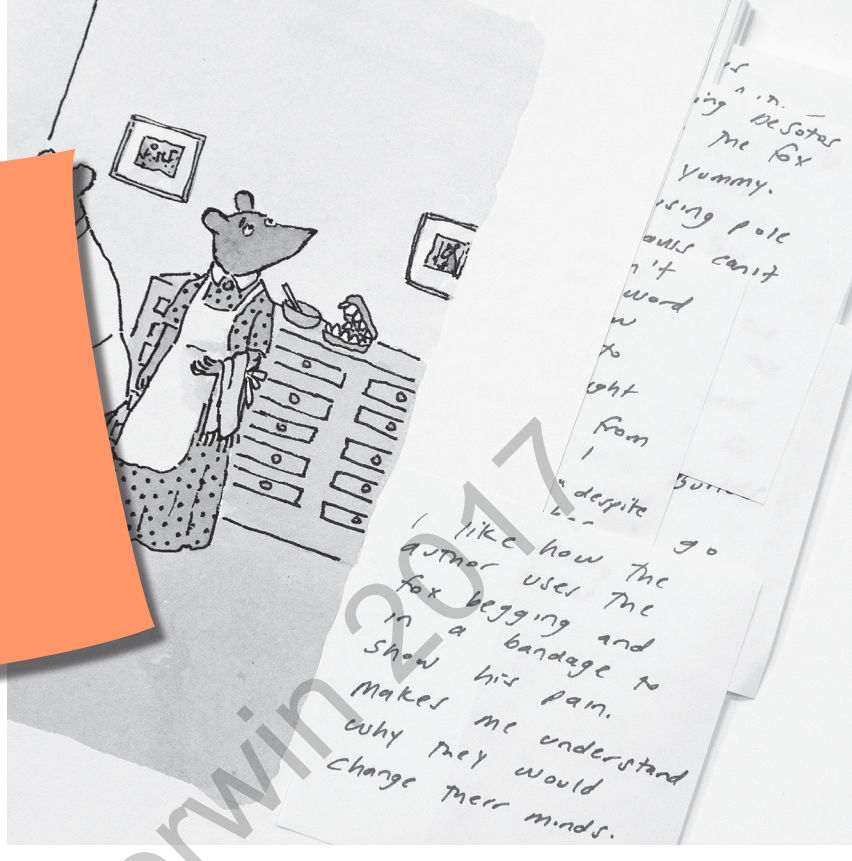
CHAPTER 5

Read Three Times

Writing the Scripts on Sticky Notes



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Scriptwriting, huh? Kind of Hollywood, right? Who knew it was the stuff of a reading teacher? But when you think about it, it makes perfect sense that the most effective think alouds are planned performances. And just like you wouldn't wing a TED Talk or a cameo with Denzel Washington, a well-prepared teacher goes into the think aloud knowing just what to say, when to say it, and why. So, the third reading, Step 3, requires you to draft a first-person "script." As a teacher, you do a version of this all the time—let's face it, good teachers are good stand-up performers—but I know it may sound intimidating. Your work will pay off with huge rewards: significant progress in your readers' comprehension as a result of your think alouds.

I wish I had bought stock in sticky notes—after all, they are a teacher's best friend! As I plan my think alouds, I begin with a stack of sticky notes. Any shape and size will do—I'm particularly partial to the ones that look like word bubbles. In the first reading, I slap down sticky notes wherever I have identified a potential stopping point. In the second reading, I reduce the sticky notes; at the end of this step, I have sticky notes placed exactly in the text where I will stop and think aloud. In the third reading, I use those same sticky notes as a place to write out exactly what I will say.

I want to underscore the importance—in Step 3—of writing out exactly what you will say. It is tempting to scribble down the strategy that you will employ—like "make an inference"—rather than the actual first-person

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Here, I fill out the chart so I will know just what to say during my think aloud lesson.

script. As you begin this process, fight the urge to cut corners! These sticky notes are your crutch—they tell you exactly what to say at the right point. Too many times, I vowed that I would remember what I had intended to say, but in the split-focus nature of the classroom, I would lose my train of thought and had to ad-lib. As a result, my think alouds were not nearly as powerful as I had initially planned. Without the scripts, it really is far too easy to go off the rails, and look up to a sea of perplexed expressions on students' faces. And as I learned from my research study—further explained in Chapter 6—without writing a script, we run the risk of improvising our think alouds.

Another tried-and-true trick of mine: As I conduct the read aloud in front of my students, I often pick the sticky note up and place it on the back cover of the text. This is just a simple system to remind me of the comprehension moves I've made throughout the think aloud. I also find that it is easier to look at my students and deliver the think aloud with gusto if I'm holding the sticky note in my hand, rather than reading it as it's placed on the page. I also number the sticky notes so that I can still follow their order, even if I've moved the sticky note during the read aloud to the back cover.

Let's walk through an example. In my first reading, I identify twenty-three potential stopping points. I've got twenty-three sticky notes. I number each sticky note to match the number of the stopping point. In my second reading, I go through those twenty-three sticky notes and reduce them to a more manageable number, the juicy stopping points that are essential places to think aloud. In this go-around, I reach twelve places to stop and think aloud. I discard the extra sticky notes, and I'm now left with a pile of twelve sticky notes. I simply erase the old numbers, and renumber the remaining notes—hence the importance of a pencil! In my third reading, I use the sticky notes I numbered in Step 2 to write out exactly what I will say.

A Recap of the First Two Steps

Reading Step 1: Slap a sticky note on any possible stopping point in a text. Number each point.

Reading Step 2: Reduce your stopping points, and discard the unused sticky notes. Renumber the sticky notes.

What kind of time commitment is involved? In writing the numerous transcripts I produced for field-testing in K–5 classrooms and including in this book, I found that this process was time-consuming at first, but as with any skill, I got faster at it as I got into the groove of it. And more importantly, the very process of writing built my confidence and skill in delivering the think aloud. I became more fluent in the language of the sentence starters. I could more easily spot the ripe opportunities in text to think aloud. I equate this process of writing the script of a think aloud to teaching a young child to ride a bike with training wheels. Just as training wheels provide stability and confidence in learning a new skill, so does the word-by-word script of a think aloud. I also think back to my early years as a novice teacher, where I spent late nights writing detailed lesson plans. Over time, I gained the confidence and skill to plan lessons without explicitly writing out each step in lengthy detail. The same is true for the think aloud process. As you become more adept at thinking aloud, you will likely get to the point where you can mark where you will stop to think aloud, along with a brief note about which strategy you will apply. In other words, the three-column chart I showcase here (and in Appendix E) is your training wheels. My end goal is for you to be able to think aloud with comfort, ease, and skill, just as one learns to ride a bike independently—and never forgets how.

Signaling for Think Alouds

As I think aloud, I provide an explicit gesture that helps students differentiate between when I am reading from the text and when I am thinking about the text. For some readers, the internal thought process during reading will be unfamiliar, as they may be used to simply reading a book and not thinking beyond the words on the page. Therefore, using a signal is essential. One technique I use is to alert my students that *when I am reading*, the book is open to them so I can show them the illustrations. Many young students are used to sitting on the classroom rug for a read aloud while looking at the pictures, so this may be comfortable for them. *When I am thinking aloud*, the book is flat on the table or flat in my lap. Another signal for when I'm thinking aloud is to point my index finger to my temple or to tap on the side of my head, as shown in the Chapter 4 opening photo on page 59. With this gesture, students readily get that the words I'm saying are not found in the book, but rather are in my head. I tend to use the "finger to my temple"

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Students use Popsicle stick prompts to think aloud with a nonfiction text.

signal more than the other one, as I can more easily see my sticky note scripts on the book's back cover.

I encourage you to try my signals or to develop some of your own (and share them with me at www.drmollyness.com). Regardless of what signal you choose, it is essential to alert readers to the signals and then to continuously remind them of each signal's significance. Feel free to borrow from my explanation below:

> As I read, you're going to hear me telling you exactly what I'm thinking throughout the book. I want you to see all of the things I do to understand the book and to figure out the parts that are tricky for me. I want you to be really clear on when I am reading and when I am thinking, so you will see me use this cue to show the difference. When my finger is pointing to my head, that means I'm thinking. If you don't see my finger on my head, I'm reading the *author's* words, directly from the book.

From time to time over the school year, I might remind my students of the purpose of the signals with a brief explanation like this:

> As I read, pay attention for those times when you see my finger on my head. That signal means those words are not in the book; they are the words I'm thinking in my head—it's kind of like an inside dialogue all readers do as they work to understand. I want you to hear my thinking so you can try this thinking too when you read.

I talk to students about how I use sentence starters to help me think aloud effectively.

Think Aloud Sentence Starters

A key ingredient in the think aloud process is sentence starters. Originally devised to help generate academic language, sentence starters provide a partial frame to begin a sentence. Sentence starters give us the jump start to an idea. I use them as a springboard to my thinking; they remove the difficulty of "What will I say?" As you look at the sentence starters I've provided on pages 84–85 (and in Appendix D), you may notice a range of academic levels among them. For example, a less sophisticated sentence starter for synthesizing might be "I learned . . ." versus a more sophisticated one like "Some important concepts are . . ." The variation among the sentence starters allows for differentiation.

As you use these sentence starters, you will likely rely on a couple of safe favorites. I encourage you to dabble among all the sentence starters so that your students can see all of the different types of academic language to synthesize or make inferences. I also encourage you to use these sentence starters with your students. Post them in your classroom. Provide copies to paste into students' reading notebooks.

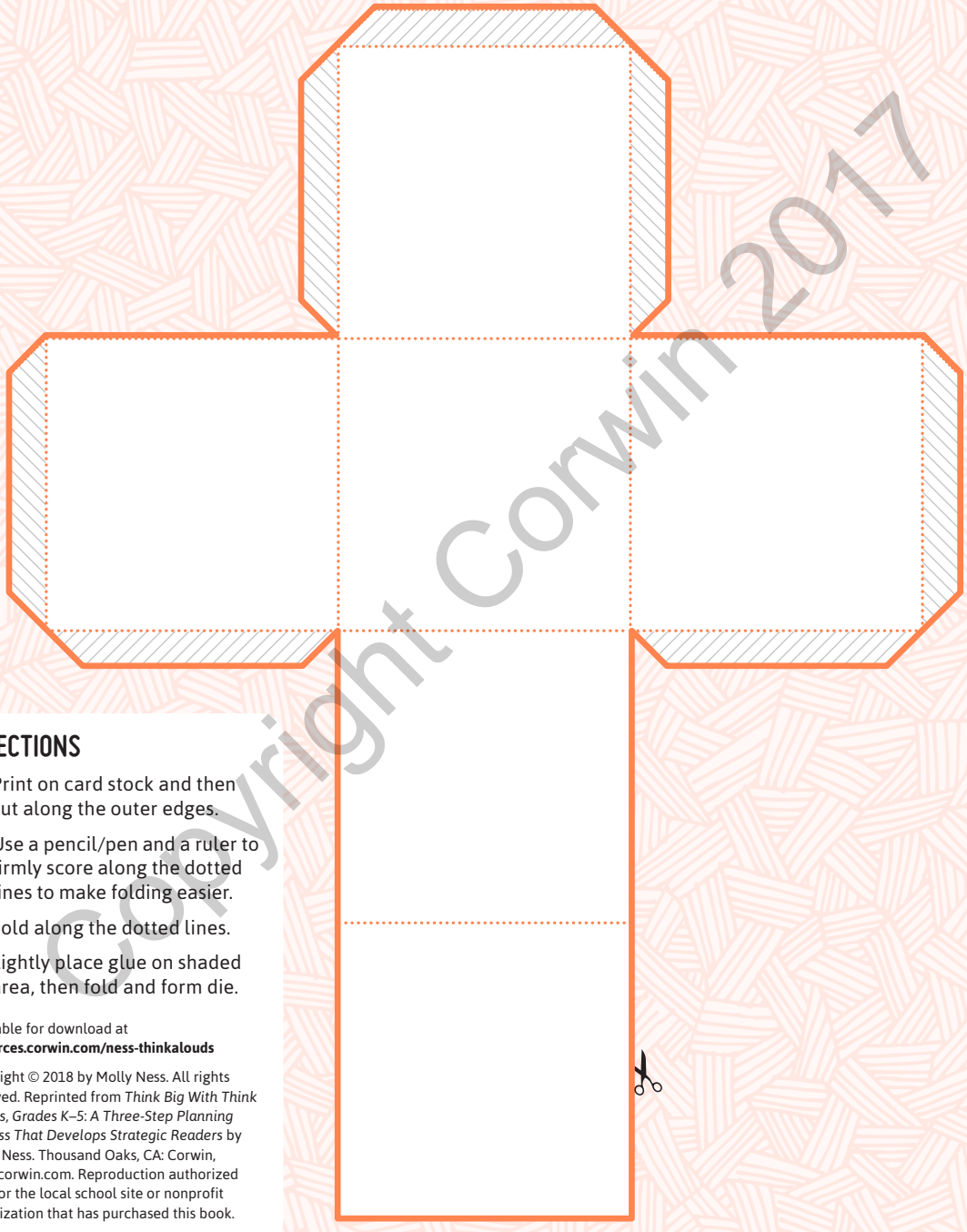
Big Possibilities for Creative Uses of Sentence Starters

BIG IDEAS for BIG BUY IN

- Use the template on page 82 to make a die. Write a different sentence starter on each side. As students roll the die, they must use the face-up sentence starter to generate a think aloud.
- Use the template on page 83 to make a game spinner with a brad or paper clip. Write a different sentence starter on each section of the spinner. Model taking a turn on the wheel, and use the prompt you land on for your think aloud.
- Buy an inflatable beach ball and use a permanent marker to write sentence starters on the colors of the ball. Toss the ball around the room; when students catch the ball, they must use the sentence starter that their right thumb lands on to generate an appropriate think aloud.

Eventually, you may come to a place where the sentence starters feel forced or inauthentic. By all means, push them aside! The sentence starters are meant to be a small step toward building your skills and confidence in thinking aloud. If you are more comfortable independently generating the language behind a think aloud, don't let the frames stunt your progress. I encourage you to make the sentence starters accessible to students, as they are a reliable and predictable safety net. They will be particularly important for students who are English language learners as they build the academic language needed to get to the higher-order thinking skills of reading comprehension.

Die Template for Using Sentence Starters

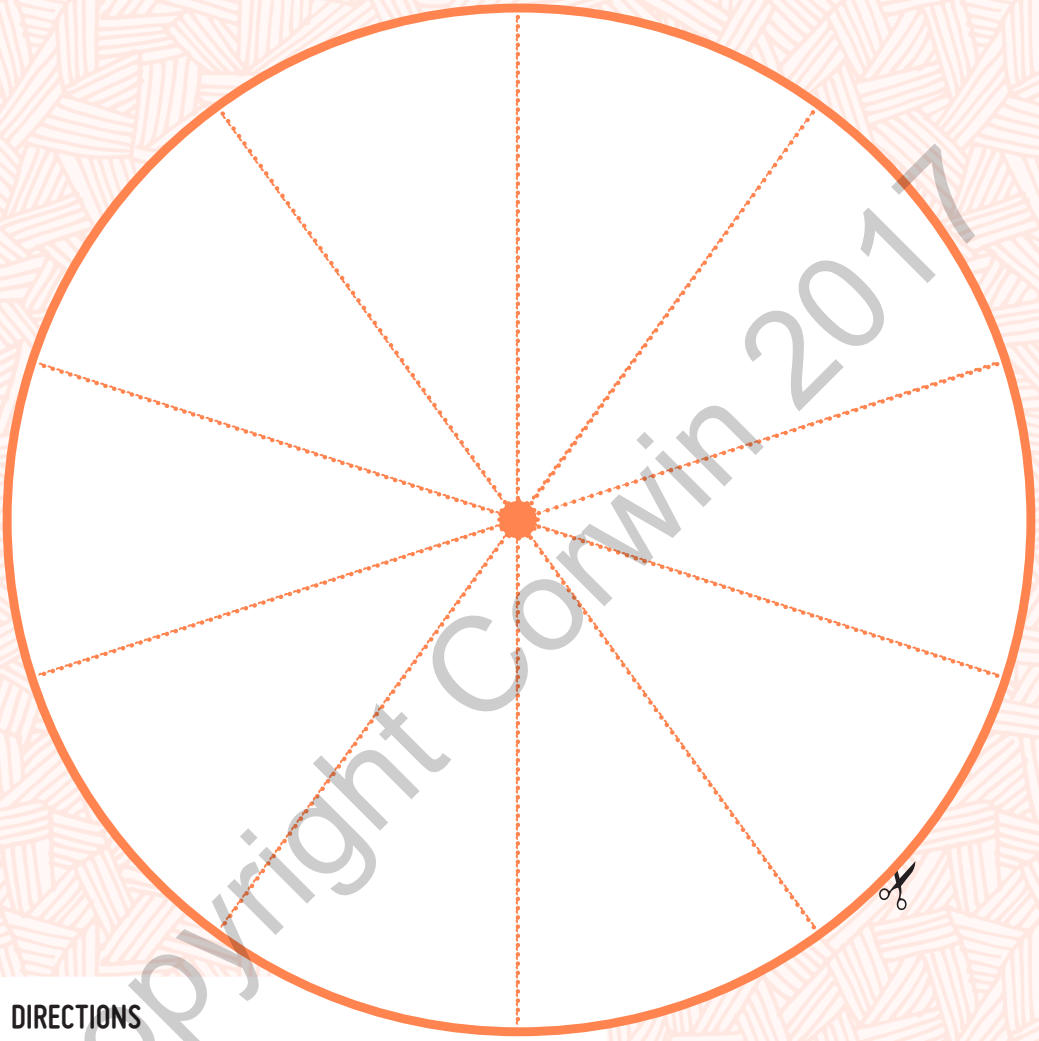


DIRECTIONS

1. Print on card stock and then cut along the outer edges.
2. Use a pencil/pen and a ruler to firmly score along the dotted lines to make folding easier.
3. Fold along the dotted lines.
4. Lightly place glue on shaded area, then fold and form die.

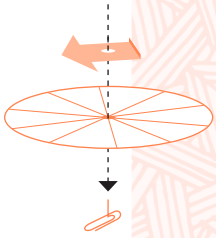
Available for download at
resources.corwin.com/ness-thinkalouds

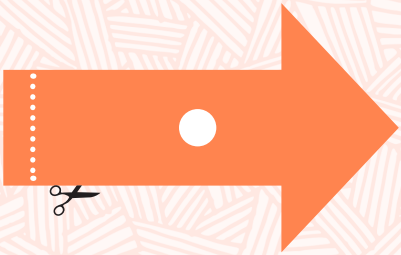
Spinner Template for Using Sentence Starters



DIRECTIONS

1. Print on cardstock and then cut out spinner and arrow along the outer edges.
2. With orange side facing up, fold up back edge of arrow at dotted line.
3. Punch a hole in the center and use a brad, a fastener, or a paper clip to make a spinner.





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Think Aloud Sentence Starters

Comprehension Strategy	Sentence Starters
Asking Questions Purposeful readers are naturally curious. They ask questions about what happens in the text. Sometimes the answers to their questions are found in the text, and sometimes they are not.	• I wonder . . . • I would like to ask the author . . . • Who . . . ? • What . . . ? • When . . . ? • Where . . . ? • Why . . . ? • How . . . ? • This makes me wonder about . . . • How is this different? • How does this part here add to . . . ?
Making Inferences Purposeful readers make inferences. An inference is something that is probably true. The author doesn't tell us exactly, but good readers take clues from the text and combine them with what they already know. An inference is made when a reader says, "This is probably true."	• From the text clues, I can conclude that . . . • Based on what the text says and what I know, I think . . . • This information makes me think . . . • This evidence suggests . . . • That is probably why . . . • Although the author does not come right out and say it, I can figure out that . . . • It could be that . . . • Maybe/perhaps . . . • This could mean . . . • Based on what I know about these characters, I bet he/she is going to . . . • With what just happened, I imagine this character is feeling . . .
Synthesizing Purposeful readers constantly change their minds as they read. They use the unfolding information or events in the book to adapt thoughts, opinions, and conclusions. In fiction, readers often synthesize to refine their understanding of characters and themes; in nonfiction, readers synthesize in order to get the most important points about parts of a text.	• Before I read, I thought . . . , but now I think . . . • My schema before I read was . . . , and now I understand . . . • This part gives me an idea . . . • When I put all these parts together, it seems the author is focusing on this big idea . . . • My synthesis is . . . • Mostly, . . . • I learned . . . • Now I understand . . . • Now I think . . . • The author keeps using these similar terms, so I think this whole section is really about this aspect of . . . • Some of the most important ideas are . . . • The text is mainly about . . . • The text, pictures, and boxes all seem to point at informing me that . . . • The author's most important ideas were . . .

Comprehension Strategy	Sentence Starters
Readers may also synthesize to draw a conclusion about what the author's perspective of a topic is, and what their own perspective is, based on the text.	• The details I need to include are . . . • Some important concepts are . . . • The most important evidence was . . . • The basic gist is . . . • The key information is . . . • In a nutshell, this says that . . . • If I asked the author to just tell me in one sentence what the big idea is, this is what he/she would say . . .
A Understanding the Author's Purpose Purposeful readers try to figure out the reason that the author wrote a text. They want to know the purpose of the text. If a text gives a clear opinion or tries to convince the reader of something, the author's purpose is to persuade. If a text gives facts or tells a reader how to do something, the author's purpose is to inform. If the text is enjoyable, tells a story, or uses a story to teach a lesson, the author's purpose is to entertain.	• The author wants me to learn about . . . [specific to nonfiction] • The author's purpose in writing this story was . . . • I wonder why the author . . . • I think the author's purpose is . . . because . . . • The main character learns . . . in the end, so I wonder if the author wants me to reflect on . . . • This story is set in history during [a famous event], so I think the author's purpose is to . . . • I predict that the author's purpose is to inform/entertain/persuade because . . . • After reading the selection, I believe the author's purpose is . . . because . . . • The author's purpose is . . . based on . . . • I am curious why the author . . . • A golden line for me is . . . • I like how the author uses . . . to show . . . • This word/phrase stands out for me because . . .
⇄ Monitoring and Clarifying Purposeful readers know when they stop understanding what they are reading. Just as when the train is going too fast the conductor applies the brake, a reader slows down and takes steps to get back on track. A reader uses one or more "fix it" strategies for repairing his or her comprehension.	• I had to slow down when . . . • It really surprised me, so I had to go back and reread because . . . • I wonder what . . . means. • Is this a different point in time? • Is this a flashback? • I wonder if this is a different narrator speaking, because . . . • What is the author doing differently with the text here because I keep losing track . . . ? • I need to know more about . . . • This last part is about . . . • I was confused by . . . • I still don't understand . . . • I had difficulty with . . . • I used [name strategy] to help me understand this part. • I can't really understand . . . • I wonder what the author means by . . . • I got lost here because . . . • I need to reread the part where . . .

Introducing the Three-Column Chart

From this point in the book, you will see my think alouds occur in a three-column chart (see the Think Aloud Chart on the next page and in Appendix E). In the first column (*What the Text Says*), I write the text *exactly as it appears*. The last sentence in each row indicates a stopping point. In the second column (*What I Say*), I write a first-person narrative of exactly what I say to students. In the third column (*The Comprehension Strategy I Model*), I identify which comprehension strategy (or strategies!) the think aloud evokes. As you work through the third column when writing your own think alouds, keep in mind that some think alouds use a combination of strategies.

I am including this chart so that I can present my three-step process with as much support and scaffolding as possible. No teachers have the time to type out the words for every text that they will use in their classroom instruction! As you get familiar with the process, you may swap the chart for just sticky notes as a place both to mark your stopping point and to jot down your transcript. If you are just beginning this practice or need additional support, I encourage you to try the charts. You may be able to copy and paste the text from the Internet to save yourself the time of the laborious part of typing out words. Regardless of which route you take, I encourage you to devote the bulk of your time to the work found in the middle column. It is incredibly helpful to practice writing out exactly what you will say, using the sentence starters on pages 84–85. As you will see from my yearlong study with teachers (see Chapter 6), most teachers were surprised to find that quality think alouds needed meaningful preparation and did not come extemporaneously.

The Think Aloud Scripts for Our Model Texts

By now, you are quite familiar with our three model texts: "Sick" (Silverstein, 1974), *Enemy Pie* (Munson, 2000), and *Eyes and Ears* (Simon, 2003). In the previous chapter, I narrowed down many potential stopping points to the ones that I will definitely use. Keep in mind that I am employing multiple comprehension strategies here to showcase how proficient readers rely on a variety of strategies to make meaning from text. With "Sick," I largely rely on asking questions, making inferences, and synthesizing. With *Enemy Pie*, I frequently synthesize and monitor and clarify. As this narrative text has an implied message from the author, I end the think aloud by thinking through the author's purpose. Finally, *Eyes and Ears* is a quintessential informational text that presents a myriad of facts and processes. It is a natural place to synthesize.

The Think Aloud Chart

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model

Thinking Aloud in Kindergarten With "Sick" by Shel Silverstein

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
"Sick" "I cannot go to school today," Said little Peggy Ann McKay.	*Who is Peggy Ann McKay? How old is she? Why can't she go to school?*	 **Asking questions**
"I have the measles and the mumps, A gash, a rash and purple bumps. My mouth is wet, my throat is dry, I'm going blind in my right eye. My tonsils are as big as rocks, I've counted sixteen chicken pox And there's one more—that's seventeen, And don't you think my face looks green?	*What are the measles? What are the mumps? I'm thinking that they are kinds of illnesses that Peggy Ann has that make it so she can't go to school. Can kids get the chicken pox anymore? I thought there was a shot to prevent kids from getting it. Who is the* you *in this poem? Who is Peggy Ann talking to? I'm thinking it is her parent, and she's trying to convince her mom or dad that she's just too sick for school.*	 **Asking questions**  **Making inferences**
My leg is cut—my eyes are blue— It might be instamatic flu. I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke, I'm sure that my left leg is broke— My hip hurts when I move my chin, My belly button's caving in, My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained, My 'pendix pains each time it rains. My nose is cold, my toes are numb. I have a sliver in my thumb.	*I got confused about what the instamatic flu is—I've never heard of that. But I don't think I really need to look it up—I think it's just another way she's saying she's sick, so I will keep reading. As I read all of her ailments, I'm starting to wonder if she's faking these ailments. I'm thinking that there's just no way one little girl can have so much wrong with her! Let's keep reading to see if my thoughts are right.*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**
My neck is stiff, my voice is weak, I hardly whisper when I speak. My tongue is filling up my mouth. I think my hair is falling out. My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight, My temperature is one-o-eight. My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear, There is a hole inside my ear.	*The author is giving us even more ailments, and now I'm thinking that this whole list of what is wrong with her is kind of funny! There's no way she could have a fever of one hundred and eight! And our elbows always are bent! I'm thinking that Peggy Ann is faking all of these things just to get out of school.*	 **Synthesizing**  **Making inferences**
I have a hangnail, and my heart is—what? What's that? What's that you say? You say today is . . . Saturday?	*When Peggy Ann keeps repeating "What?" it makes me think that someone is interrupting her to tell her something important. And a golden line here is that it's Saturday—there's no school on Saturday!*	 **Synthesizing**

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
G'bye, I'm going out to play!"	*The author doesn't come right out and tell me, but I'm getting the sense that this poem is meant to be funny. We hear this huge list of everything that is wrong with Peggy Ann, but when she finds out there is no school, all of a sudden she's cured! I think the author understands that sometimes kids make up excuses to get out of things they don't want to do, like go to school.*	**Making inferences** **Understanding the author's purpose**

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Thinking Aloud in Third Grade With *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson

What The Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
It should have been a perfect summer. My dad helped me build a tree house in our backyard. My sister was at camp for three whole weeks. And I was on the best baseball team in town. It should have been the perfect summer. But it wasn't.	*A golden line for me is "But it wasn't." I can tell I'm about to read a story about why this was not the perfect summer, even with all of the great things—a tree house, being away from a sister, the best baseball team.*	**Synthesizing**
It was all good until Jeremy Ross moved into the neighborhood, right next door to my best friend Stanley. I did not like Jeremy Ross. He laughed at me when he struck me out in a baseball game. He had a party on his trampoline, and I wasn't even invited. But my best friend Stanley was.	*I'm thinking that this character feels left out and bullied by Jeremy Ross.*	**Synthesizing**
Jeremy Ross was the one and only person on my enemy list.	*I'm a bit confused about what an enemy list is. I've never heard of it. Maybe the author will tell me more if I read on.*	**Monitoring and clarifying**
I never even had an enemy list until he moved into the neighborhood. But as soon as he came along, I needed one. I hung it up in my tree house, where Jeremy Ross was not allowed to go. Dad understood stuff like enemies. He told me that when he was my age, he had enemies too. But he knew of a way to get rid of them.	*So now I see that this boy made a list of his enemies—mainly Jeremy Ross—and hung it up in a special place. But what is a way to get rid of enemies?*	**Monitoring and clarifying** **Asking questions**

continued . . .

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What The Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
I asked him to tell me how. "Tell you how? I'll show you how!" he said. He pulled a really old recipe book off the kitchen shelf. Inside, there was a worn-out scrap of paper with faded writing. Dad held it up and squinted at it. "Enemy Pie," he said, satisfied.	*I'm getting the sense that this dad is really supportive and involved. My clues to this are how he builds a tree house and how he offers to show how to get rid of enemies. I'm also thinking that this recipe must be really valuable—my clues here are that it was old and faded and hidden somewhere safe.*	 **Making inferences**
You may be wondering what exactly is in Enemy Pie. I was wondering, too. But Dad said the recipe was so secret, he couldn't even tell me. I decided it must be magic. I begged him to tell me something—anything. "I will tell you this," he said. "Enemy Pie is the fastest known way to get rid of enemies."	*I have so many questions about Enemy Pie. What is it made of? Why is it so secret? What makes it work so fast?*	 **Asking questions**
Now, of course, this got my mind working. What kinds of things—disgusting things—would I put into a pie for an enemy? I brought Dad some weeds from the garden, but he just shook his head. I brought him earthworms and rocks, but he didn't think he'd need those. I gave him the gum I'd been chewing on all morning. He gave it right back to me. I went out to play, alone. I shot baskets until the ball got stuck on the roof. I threw a boomerang that never came back to me. And all the while, I listened to the sounds of my dad chopping and stirring and blending the ingredients of Enemy Pie.	*The key information here is that his dad rejects the gross stuff for Enemy Pie but he is working really hard on making this recipe.*	 **Synthesizing**
This could be a great summer after all. Enemy Pie was going to be awful. I tried to imagine how horrible it must smell, or worse yet, what it would look like. But when I was in the backyard, looking for ladybugs, I smelled something really, really, really good. And as far as I could tell, it was coming from our kitchen. I was a bit confused.	*I'm confused, too! At first, I thought that Enemy Pie was going to taste and smell terrible, but then the author tells me about a really good smell coming from the kitchen. I need to keep reading to see what's behind this Enemy Pie.*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**

What The Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
I went in to ask Dad what was wrong. Enemy Pie shouldn't smell this good. But Dad was smart. "If Enemy Pie smelled bad, your enemy would never eat it," he said. I could tell he'd made Enemy Pie before. The buzzer rang, and Dad put on the oven mitts and pulled the pie out of the oven. It looked like a plain, old pie. It looked good enough to eat! I was catching on.	*A key phrase for me is* catching on. *It makes me think that there is some trick to Enemy Pie. His dad confirms this, because he says that Enemy Pie has to look and smell good to make your enemies want to eat it.*	 **Synthesizing**
But still, I wasn't really sure how this Enemy Pie worked. What exactly did it do to enemies? Maybe it made their hair fall out, or their breath stinky. Maybe it made bullies cry. I asked Dad, but he was no help. He wouldn't tell me a thing. But while the pie cooled, he filled me in on my job. He talked quietly. "There is one part of Enemy Pie that I can't do. In order for it to work, you need to spend a day with your enemy. Even worse, you have to be nice to him. It's not easy. But that's the only way that Enemy Pie can work. Are you sure you want to go through with this?"	*Now I'm really stumped. I don't understand how spending time and being nice to Jeremy can help the problem. Maybe if I keep reading the author will tell me more, and help me see the trick to Enemy Pie.*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**
Of course I was. It sounded horrible. It was scary. But it was worth a try. All I had to do was to spend one day with Jeremy Ross, then he'd be out of my hair for the rest of my life. I rode my bike to his house and knocked on the door. When Jeremy opened the door, he seemed surprised. He stood on the other side of the screen door and looked at me, waiting for me to say something. I was nervous. "Can you play?" I asked. He looked confused. "I'll go ask my mom," he said.	*I'm getting the sense that Jeremy isn't too fond of this boy either—my clues are that he seems surprised and confused by his invitation to play.*	 **Making inferences**
He came back with his shoes in his hand. His mom walked around the corner to say hello. "You boys stay out of trouble," she said, smiling. We rode bikes for a while and played on the trampoline. Then we made some water balloons and threw them at the neighbor girls, but we missed. Jeremy's mom made us lunch. After lunch, we went over to my house. It was strange, but I was kind of having fun with my enemy. He almost seemed kind of nice.	*Before I thought Jeremy and the narrator would always be enemies, but now I'm thinking that they might start getting along. They are enjoying each other's company and have things in common.*	 **Synthesizing**

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What The Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
Jeremy Ross knew how to throw a boomerang. He threw it and it came right back to him. I threw it and it went over my house and into the backyard. When we climbed over the fence to find it, the first thing Jeremy noticed was my tree house. My tree house was *my* tree house. I was the boss. If my sister wanted in, I didn't have to let her in. If my dad wanted in, I didn't have to let him in. And if Jeremy wanted in . . . "Can we go in it?" he asked. I knew he was going to ask me that! But he was the top person, the ONLY person, on my enemy list. And enemies aren't allowed in my tree house. But he did teach me to throw a boomerang. And he did let me play on his trampoline. He wasn't being a very good enemy.	*From the clues, I can tell that the narrator is really torn about what to do. He is the boss of his tree house, and Jeremy is his only enemy. When the author uses the word* but *and tells me about the fun he had with Jeremy, I think he's reconsidering whether Jeremy is his enemy. I wonder what his decision will be. A golden line is "He wasn't being a very good enemy"—it really shows me the conflict he is feeling about Jeremy being in his tree house.*	**Synthesizing** **Making inferences**
"Okay," I said, "but hold on." I climbed up ahead of him and tore the enemy list off the wall.	*Wow. This is a big deal that he took this list down! I'm guessing he did it to try to protect Jeremy's feelings, and to be kind. That makes me think that he doesn't see Jeremy as his enemy anymore.*	**Making inferences**
I had a checkerboard and some cards in the tree house, and we played games until my dad called us down for dinner. We pretended we didn't hear him, and when he came out to get us, we tried to hide from him. But somehow he found us. Dad made us macaroni and cheese for dinner—my favorite. It was Jeremy's favorite too! Maybe Jeremy Ross wasn't so bad after all. I was beginning to think that maybe we should just forget about Enemy Pie. But sure enough, after dinner, Dad brought out the pie. I watched as he cut the pie into eight thick slices. "Dad," I said, "it sure is nice having a new friend in the neighborhood." I was trying to get his attention and trying to tell him that Jeremy Ross was no longer my enemy. But Dad only smiled and nodded.	*The key information is that Jeremy is no longer his enemy. They play together and like the same foods, and the narrator even tries to protect him!*	**Synthesizing**

What The Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
I think he thought I was just pretending. Dad dished up three plates, side by side, with big pieces of pie and giant scoops of ice cream. He passed one to me and one to Jeremy. "Wow!" Jeremy said, looking at the pie. "My dad never makes pies like this." It was at this point that I panicked. I didn't want Jeremy to eat Enemy Pie! He was my friend! I couldn't let him eat it! "Jeremy, don't eat it! It's bad pie! I think it's poisonous or something!" Jeremy's fork stopped before reaching his mouth. He crumpled his eyebrows and looked at me funny.	*I'm having difficulty understanding the line about how Jeremy looked funny. Does that mean funny like he's about to be sick or die from Enemy Pie? Or does it mean funny because Jeremy doesn't understand? I have to keep reading to find my answer!*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**
I felt relieved. I had saved his life. I was a hero. "If it's so bad," Jeremy asked, "then why has your dad already eaten half of it?" I turned to look at my dad. Sure enough, he was eating Enemy Pie! "Good stuff," he mumbled through a mouthful.	*What is going on here? I don't understand why his dad is eating Enemy Pie! Let me keep reading.*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**
And that was all he said. I sat there watching them eating Enemy Pie for a few seconds. Dad was laughing. Jeremy was happily eating. And neither of them was losing any hair! It seemed safe enough, so I took a tiny taste. Enemy Pie was delicious!	*Although the author doesn't come right out and say it, I'm thinking the narrator's father pulled a trick on him! Enemy Pie is really delicious, and I think the trick was that by spending the day with his enemy, the narrator realizes how much fun Jeremy is. There's not really any such thing as Enemy Pie—the real trick is spending time with your enemy so that he is not your enemy anymore.*	 **Making inferences**
After dessert, Jeremy rode his bike home but not before inviting me over to play on his trampoline in the morning. He said he'd teach me how to flip. As for Enemy Pie, I still don't know how to make it. I still wonder if enemies really do hate it or if their hair falls out or their breath turns bad. But I don't know if I'll ever get an answer, because I just lost my best enemy.	*A golden line here is "I just lost my best enemy." I'm getting the idea that the author wrote this book to show me that the best way to get rid of our enemies is to spend time with them and get to know them.*	 **Understanding the author's purpose**

Thinking Aloud in Fifth Grade With *Eyes and Ears* by Seymour Simon

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
Light travels from objects and passes into our eyes. Light comes from many different sources, including the sun and electric bulbs. When light hits an object, light waves bounce off in all directions. Special light-sensitive cells in our eyes sense the light and send signals to our brain.	*Some of the most important ideas here are that light waves bounce off things and that our brain helps our eyes to sense the light. Right away, I can see that there is a lot of information that the author wants me to learn here, so I can guess he wrote this book to inform.*	**Synthesizing** **Understanding the author's purpose**
Sound waves move through the air and enter our ears. Sound is made when objects move back and forth, or vibrate. The vibrations travel through the air in invisible ripples called sound waves. Sound-sensitive cells in our ears sense the vibrations and send signals to our brain. We see and hear when our brain makes sense out of the messages it gets from our eyes and our ears.	*I'm noticing that this paragraph follows the same format as the one above it. I think the author did that on purpose—to show me that seeing and hearing are really similar. Just like our brain helps our eyes to interpret light waves, our brain helps our ears to hear sound waves.*	**Understanding the author's purpose** **Synthesizing**
Your eye is also called an eyeball. It is shaped like a small ball about one inch across. Two eyeballs sit in cuplike sockets in the front of your head. Your eyelids cover the parts of your eyes and make them appear more oval than round. Six tiny muscles hold each eyeball steady in the sockets of your head. The muscles work in teams. One team of muscles swivels the eye toward or away from your nose. Another team of muscles moves the eye upward or downward. Still another team moves the eye at an angle down and outward or up and outward.	*The basic gist here is that muscles are really necessary for our eyes to work.*	**Synthesizing**
Rays of light enter the eyeball through a clear, round layer of cells called the cornea. The cornea acts like a camera lens and bends light into the eye. The colored part of your eye just behind the cornea is called the iris. What color are your eyes? The opening in the central part of the iris is called the pupil. The size of the pupil is controlled by the muscles in the iris. The muscles tighten to make the pupil smaller in bright light and relax to make the pupil larger in dim light.	*I had to slow down when I got all the information about the cornea, the iris, and the pupil. When I reread, I saw how important those muscles were to control how much light comes into the pupil.*	**Monitoring and clarifying** **Synthesizing**

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
Light goes through the pupil and passes into the eye through the aqueous humor and then through the eye lens. The center of the eyeball contains a fluid called the vitreous humor. The vitreous humor fills the eyeball so that it has a rounded shape. The lens focuses light through the vitreous humor onto the back of the eye, the retina. Light-sensitive cells in the retina are connected to the brain by a large optic nerve.	*I want to know more about the job of the retina and the lens. In people who have to wear glasses, is there something wrong with their retina or their lens?*	 **Asking questions**
Here's what happens when you look at something, say a tree. Light reflected from the tree enters your eye through the pupil. The lens forms the light into an image that is a small picture of a tree. The image falls upside down on your retina.	*So the author really wants me to understand that light reflections from the things I see come in through my pupil. The lens takes that light to make an image that is projected by my retina.*	 **Synthesizing**
In people with normal vision, light rays from an object are focused by the eye's lens exactly on the retina. But some people are nearsighted. They can see close objects clearly, but distance objects look blurred. The reason for nearsightedness is that the eyeball in some people is a bit too long, front to back. Light rays from a distant object form an image in the front of the retina. Nearsightedness, also called myopia, is corrected by wearing glasses or contact lenses. The lenses change the focal point so that the image falls exactly on the retina. . . .	*Earlier I was wondering why people had to wear glasses. Here I learn that the glasses help to change the focal point for people who have an irregularly shaped eye.*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**  **Synthesizing**
The retina contains two different kinds of light-sensitive nerve cells: rods and cones. They get their names because of the way they are shaped. Rod cells are sensitive to shades of brightness and are used to see in black and white. There are over one hundred million rod cells. Cone cells work best in bright light and let us see color. There are about seven million cone cells in your retina. A tiny spot in the center of your eye contains only cones. It gives you the sharpest image. Around the edges of the retina are fewer cones and more and more rods. We use the cones more during the day and the rods more at night.	*It's essential that I remember the two kinds of cells in the retina: the rods help me see black and white, and the cones help me see color.*	 **Synthesizing**

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What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
Every rod and cone cell in your retina is connected by its own nerve cell to the brain. When light strikes your retina, the cells respond. They send out tiny electric impulses. All the nerve cells collect at the back of the eye. They form a main cable called the optic nerve. The optic nerve runs back from the eyeball through a tunnel in the skull to a crossover in the brain. The information from the right eye crosses over and goes to the left back of the brain. The information from the left eye crosses over and goes to the right back of the brain.	*It's important to understand here that the optic nerve helps deliver light waves to our brain.*	**Synthesizing**
We still do not know exactly how the brain works. However, we do know that it is in your brain that seeing finally takes place. The brain puts together the nerve impulses from your eyes along with other brain impulses. The image is turned right side up, and you see what's out there.	*I wonder what the author means when he says we don't know how the brain works. What do we not know about the brain? And how can we find out the answers to what we don't know?*	**Asking questions**
There is one spot on the retina that is not sensitive to light. It is called the blind spot. It has no rods and cones because it is just at the point where the optic nerve goes out to the brain. Each of your eyes has its own blind spot. Usually you are not aware of the blind spot in your eyes. Your eyes are always moving around. You can get enough light images about what you are looking at so that you never notice the blind spot. But here's a way of checking the blind spot in your right eye. Close your left eye and look at the X below with your right eye. Keep staring straight at the X while bringing the book closer to your eye. At about six to ten inches from your eye, you will no longer see the black dot to the side of the X. If you bring the book closer, the dot will appear again. At the point where you can't see the dot, the light from it just falls on the blind spot. If you want to check the blind spot in your left eye, turn the book over. Close your right eye and follow the same directions as above.	*This example shows me exactly how the blind spot works—a spot that has no rods or cones and is not sensitive to light. I like how the author gives me a picture to show me exactly how the blind spot works. It really makes me understand it. The author wants me to be as informed as he is.*	**Synthesizing** **Understanding the author's purpose**

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
Sunlight is more than one hundred thousand times brighter than moonlight. That's why you can see colors in the daylight but not in the moonlight. The light of the moon looks silvery because you're seeing it with the color-blind rods in your retina. The color-sensing cones of your retina do not respond to the dim light of the moon.	*Before I thought that things at night looked silvery because of silver light from the moon, but now I realize that it is because I'm using my rods.*	 **Synthesizing**
As with everything else you see, your brain is involved in sensing color. Here's how you can show how your brain is involved in seeing color. Cut out a circle of white cardboard about four inches across. Color half green and the other half red. Push a two-inch nail through the center of the cardboard disk and trim the opening so that the disk spins freely on the nail. Spin it as rapidly as you can. Your brain will combine the colors sensed by your eyes, and you will see a greyish tint instead of the green and red.	*Here I'm learning about how my brain helps sense color, but I've heard that some people are color blind. I wonder what that means. Does it mean that your brain can't sense colors? Does it mean you can only see in black and white?*	 **Asking questions**
The ear is an amazing and important sense organ. We can hear all kinds of sounds, from the loud sound of a door slamming to the soft sound of tree leaves rustling in the wind. We can tell the sound of one friend's voice from that of another friend's voice. We use our ears to listen to radio and television and all of the everyday sounds around us.	*The author doesn't come right out and say it, but I'm getting the sense that it would be really hard to live in this world without hearing—not only hard to hear phones ring, car horns, and all that, but hard emotionally because you can't hear the nice sound of a good friend or family member's voice to make you feel connected.*	 **Making inferences**
An ear has three parts: the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear. The earflaps on each side of your head are called pinnae. The pinnae are made of flexible cartilage and covered by a layer of skin. The bottom part of each pinna is called the earlobe. Some people have long and curved earlobes while others have small and flat earlobes. The pinnae act as a kind of sound catcher. They channel the sound waves down a short tube called the auditory canal to the eardrum.	*This part is about the three parts of the ear. I learned here about the first part—the outer ear—which catches sound waves. Let me keep reading to find out about the other two parts.*	 **Synthesizing**

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What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
The eardrum separates the outer ear from the middle ear. The eardrum is a thin flap of skin that stretches tightly across the end of the auditory canal. Sound waves cause the eardrum to vibrate just like the top of a drum when it is hit by a drumstick. The middle ear is a tiny space behind the eardrum. Inside the middle ear are the three smallest bones in the body, linked together. They are called the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup because of their shapes. These three bones together are called the ossicles. The vibrations of the eardrum cause the ossicles to move. The movements are transmitted to another tight, thin flap of skin called the oval window. The middle ear is linked to the back of your throat by the Eustachian tube. This narrow tube is usually closed. But when you swallow, chew, or yawn, the entrance to the tube opens and air travels in and out of your middle ear. That keeps the air pressure on either side of your eardrum the same. Sometimes your ears "pop" when the tubes suddenly open.	*Okay, so the second part of the ear—the middle ear—has your eardrum and three tiny bones that vibrate with sound.*	**Synthesizing**
Your inner ear lies in a bony hollow within your skull. The inner ear has a maze of spaces called the labyrinth. At the end of the labyrinth is a spiral, coiled tube shaped like a snail shell. It is called the cochlea from the Latin word for snail. Inside the cochlea is a strip of skin covered with tiny hairs. The cochlea is filled with a fluid. When vibrations travel through the ear, they set off waves in the fluid. The waves cause the hairs to ripple like fields of grass in the wind.	*And here I found out about the third part of the ear—the inner ear with the cochlea in it. The first part is the outer ear, which picks up the sound waves, the second part is the middle ear, which has the eardrum, and now this third part, the inner ear, has the cochlea.*	**Synthesizing**
At the bottom of each hair is a nerve cell. Each ear has about twenty thousand nerve cells. The cells send a message through the auditory nerve to the hearing centers of the brain. The brain tells you what the vibrations mean: your teacher talking, a car honking, or a paper rustling. Finally, you hear.	*Here I discovered that the tiny hairs have nerve cells that send messages to the brain. I'm getting the sense that the brain helps so many of our body functions, and that is why it is so important. Maybe that is why we protect our brains by wearing helmets, because we'd really be in trouble if our brains got hurt!*	**Synthesizing** **Making inferences**

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
The ears do another job. Next to the cochlea are three semicircular canals. These help you to keep your balance when you sit still, walk about, or jump and bend. The curved tubes of the semicircular canals point in three directions. Like the cochlea, the canals are filled with a fluid and lined with a hairy skin. When you move your head in any direction, the fluid moves in at least one of the canals. Nerve cells in the canals send signals to the brain: You are moving up or down, to the side or another, backward or forward. The signals let your brain know how you are moving and help keep you steady. Even with your eyes closed, you know the position of your head. However, if you whirl around and around, the fluid in the canals keeps moving for a few seconds even after you stop. Then you may get dizzy and lose your balance.	*At first when I read that the ears do another job, I couldn't think of what else they would do, so I was confused. But as I kept reading, I learned about the fluid in my ear helping me maintain my balance. I used to think I got dizzy because my eyes were spinning around and around, but now I know it is because of the fluid in my ears.*	 **Monitoring and clarifying**  **Synthesizing**
Some people may have difficulty hearing. Sometimes hearing loss is caused by a sticky material made inside the ears called earwax. Earwax can build up and collect dirt and dust. Then the outer ears have to be carefully cleaned to remove the blockage. You should never try to do this yourself because of the danger of hurting your eardrums. As people get older, some will gradually become hard of hearing. They may use a hearing aid that fits inside their outer ear. Hearing aids make sounds louder to help people with this kind of deafness. Some people are born with a severe hearing loss or lose their hearing as a result of an injury. They often use hearing aids as well as other machines to alert them to sounds. For example, special telephones can be made to flash a light instead of ringing a bell. Then the message can be seen on a screen instead of being heard through an earpiece. Many hard-of-hearing people can understand what other people say by lip reading.	*In a nutshell, this part tells me that there are a few ways people can lose their hearing or have a hard time hearing. But, there are ways that people who have a hard time hearing can get help—just like how glasses and contacts help people who have a hard time seeing.*	 **Synthesizing**
We use our senses to learn what is happening in the world around us. Our eyes and ears sense light and sound and send nerve signals to the brain. The brain puts the information together to let us see and hear.	*I really like how the author gives me these final sentences to summarize the most important ideas of the book—that our eyes and ears sense things and our brain helps us interpret this information. It seems like the author wants us to appreciate that our bodies are pretty amazing, and that all the systems work together to help us live in the world.*	 **Understanding the author's purpose**  **Making inferences**

Final Thoughts

So now you've got three complete think aloud transcripts ready to be used right away in your classroom instruction. These transcripts are by no means set in stone; instead, I encourage you to understand the process by which I created these, rather than focus solely on the product. Each transcript can be modified and adapted to the needs of your diverse learners. As you read on in this book, I will coach you on replicating this process across a variety of genres and content areas.

Ready for a Trial Run?

Now, with the same three sample texts provided in Appendix B, work on using the three-column chart (Appendix E) to write a think aloud. Use the sentence starters (Appendix D) to write out the scripts in the first-person narrative exactly as you'd say it to your students. After you've completed the scripts, reflect on the questions below.

- How did this step go for you?
- What did you notice about yourself as a reader while trying out this step?
- Did anything surprise, intrigue, confuse, or stump you in this step?