Making Inferences

It Says - I Say - And So

Question	It Says	I Say	And So
1. Read the question.	2. Find information from the text that will help you answer the question.	3. Think about what you know about the information.	4. Combine what the text says with what you know to come up with the answer.

Example:

Question	It Says	I Say	And So
Why did she break Baby Bear's Chair?	Story says she sits Down in the baby chair but she's no baby.	Baby chairs aren't very big because they're for babies and she is bigger and so she weighs more.	And so she it too heavy for it and it breaks.

Example:

Question	It Says	I Say	And So
Was Johnson right to refuse the money?	The story says that He was "sure the money had come to Peterson from bad Ways."	I think that bad ways must mean that Peterson got money illegally And if Johnson took illegal money then he could get in trouble.	And so I think he was right to refuse the money.
	And it says that Johnson "always knew right from wrong and never wanted to be the one doing wrong even though wrong followed him around like a little puppy."	I think that since Johnson doesn't want to do wrong and since he knows this money is wrong then he would feel bad if he took the money.	

Taken From <u>When Kids Can't Read</u> by Kylene Beers

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Putting the Strategy to Work

You won't be surprised when I say that repeated practice is the key to success when using It Says—I Say. In the previous classroom example, Mr. Arlin had to go over the strategy with students again, even though he had obviously talked with them before about how to use it. He also had hung the It Says—I Say chart in the classroom so that students could refer to it.

1. *Introduce the strategy to students using a short, familiar story such as "The Three Bears" or "The Three Little Pigs."* Ask a few literal-level questions, questions that Taffy Raphael call Right There Questions (Raphael, 1982). Then, ask a question that requires students to make inference. If a student answers it correctly, great—now ask that student to explain how the inference was created. Pull out the It Says—I Say chart that you'll have already made (that's the chart in Figure 8.8) and ask that student to fit the answer into the chart. Or, if no one can answer the question, you answer it, putting your answer into the chart.

2. *Model the strategy regularly.* As with everything we teach, modeling is the key. Remember that struggling readers often need multiple models over an extended period of time. But you don't always have to be the model. In Mr. Arlin's classroom, Marcus did the modeling. The next day, Karen and Faith shared their answers to inference questions. That sharing became another form of modeling. As Faith saw how Karen worked through the answer, she came to understand not only how Karen reached her conclusion but also why she couldn't "see" the answer.

   Struggling readers often say things about not being able to visualize what is happening in the text—and that might include not being able to visualize the connections between what is happening in the text and what is already in their minds. Those connections are what form inferences. The It Says—I Say chart is the visual form of those connections. Eventually, you want students to do that visualizing in their heads; until then, when asked to make inferences, they may need the extra support of this strategy. With it, you'll be able to *see* their thinking, and they'll be able to *see* the connections they need to form.

Debriefing the Strategy

Seeing how to think. I like this phrase, and I believe it is an accurate description of what It Says—I Say chart does for students. Mr. Arlin's students, like many struggling readers, generally responded to inference questions with comments like, "There's no answer in this story for this question," or "How am I supposed to answer this? The answer isn't here," or "This is a dumb question," or even "I'm too stupid to answer this question." These students spend so much effort just getting through the text, just keeping up with the literal details—characters, events, setting—that making an inference as they read is the last thing that happens, if it happens at all. Therefore, when they encounter a questions that requires an inference, they don't know where to begin. They need a scaffold, something that helps them internalize the process of how to infer. The It Says—I Say chart helps students finally see a structure for making an inference.

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