

Literature

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The Power of “Coming Attractions” to Increase Engagement & Understanding of ...

How do we get children eager to read? Phyl, Krista and Kathryn discuss how ‘student buy-in’ and interaction plays a big part.

As teachers, we often struggle with how to get our students excited and engaged in language arts. We frequently run out of ideas about how to give students background information and context of a book, or a chapter, in creative and interactive ways. We also need to help our students build essential comprehension that is sometimes lost, when decoding takes the front seat while reading.

We have some strategies to share that could jumpstart your literacy instruction and get students more involved and motivated to read!

We find that when students participate in the creation of their literacy tools, we get more “student buy-in” and the important information from the text that we want to impart to our learners better resonates and sticks in their brain.

This strategy is using **“build-your-own” timelines** for **chapter previews**. It involves building sequence-based information related to events of the chapter, BEFORE the students read the chapter – organized in “BEGINNING, MIDDLE, and END” components.

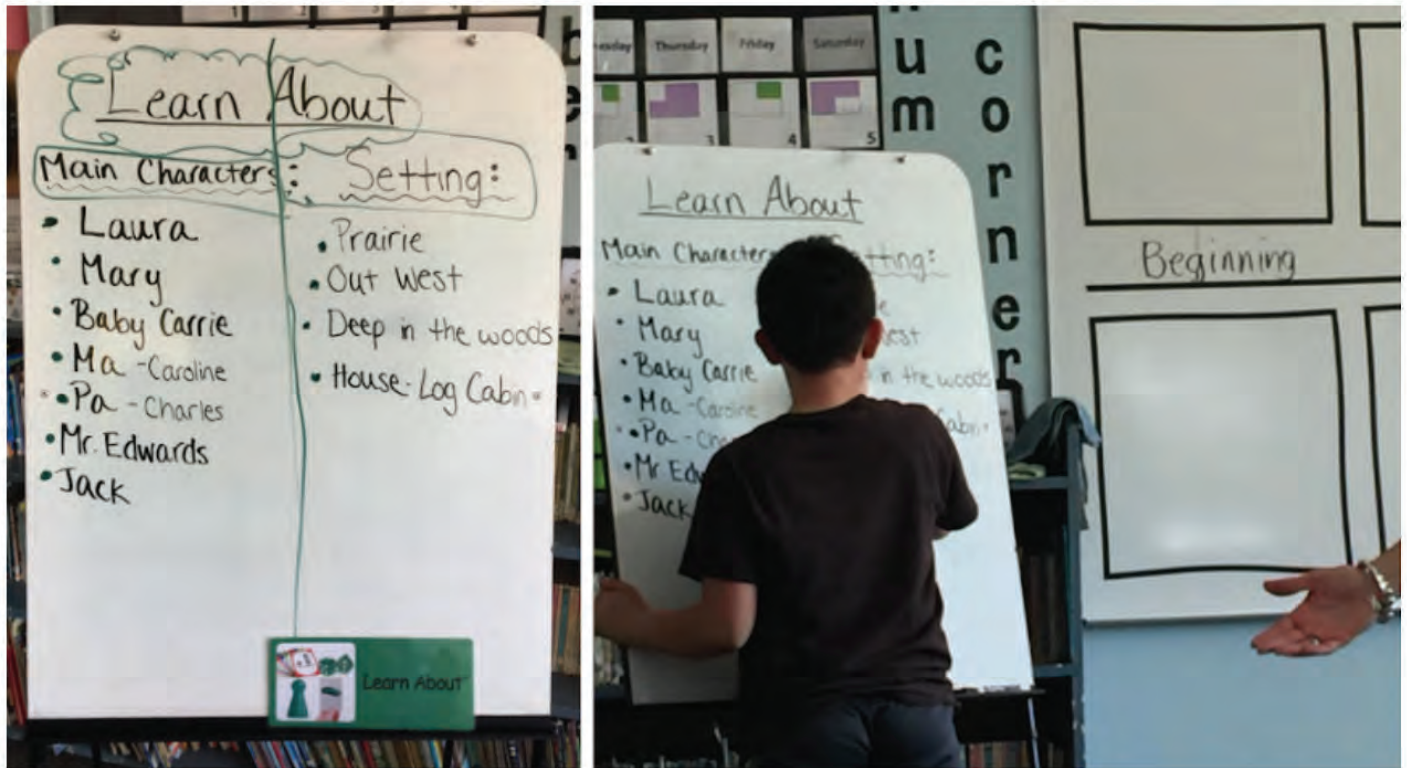
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Chapter previews give all students **“Coming Attractions”** to build an understanding of connections and a linkage of ideas for a chapter. We model how to create a word bank from listening to an oral summary of each part of the timeline and then demonstrate how to rewrite the summary points in your own words – a crucial skill for students in the writing process to become meaningful authors. Illustration and acting out of the “Coming Attractions” also provide a necessary kinesthetic learning approach that meets the needs of all students.

So, here are some ideas to add to your “Language Arts Toolbox!”

Creating a Vocabulary Table

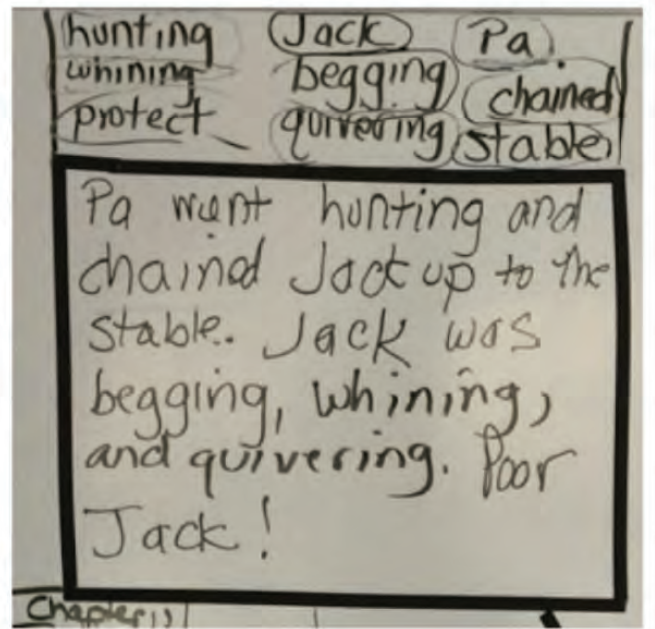
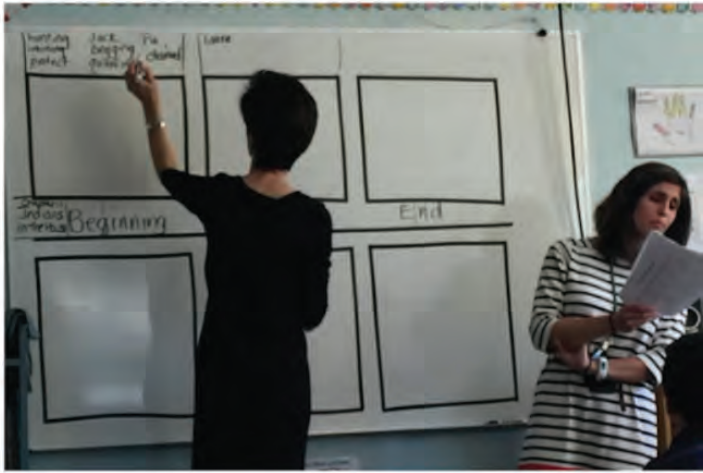


As a first step, create a **Vocabulary Table** with your students to put the story elements in the forefront of your students' minds. This visual support provides an interactive review of key word meanings in the book; along with a preview of terms related to the upcoming chapter they are going to read.

In this example, the students are already thinking about the characters and settings pertaining to the upcoming chapter of the book and are also placing their prior knowledge of the previous chapters at their fingertips to reference throughout the language arts lesson. Most importantly, creating a **Vocabulary Table** at the start of a literacy lesson decreases the cognitive load of the students by providing a visual tool to continually reference, assuring that all students have a better understanding of the key vocabulary terms that are embedded within the text they are about to read.

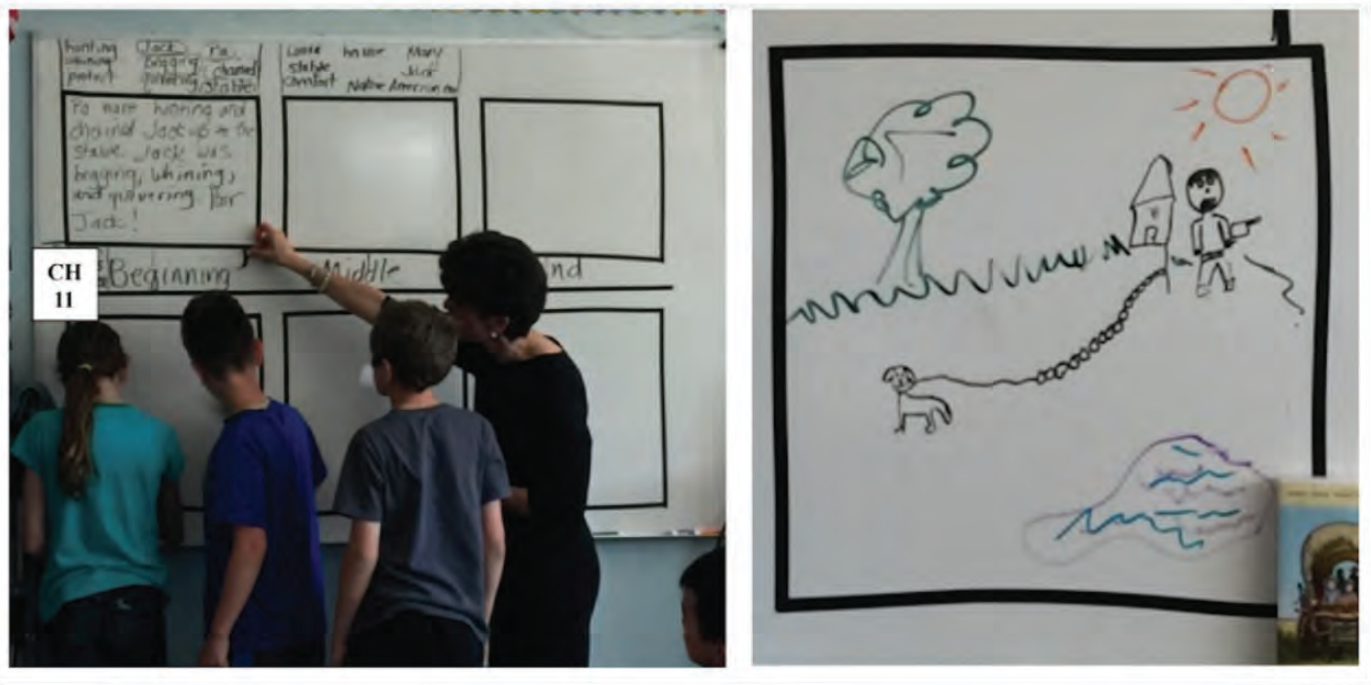
Listen, List, & Summarize:

The Importance of a Chapter Preview Word Bank



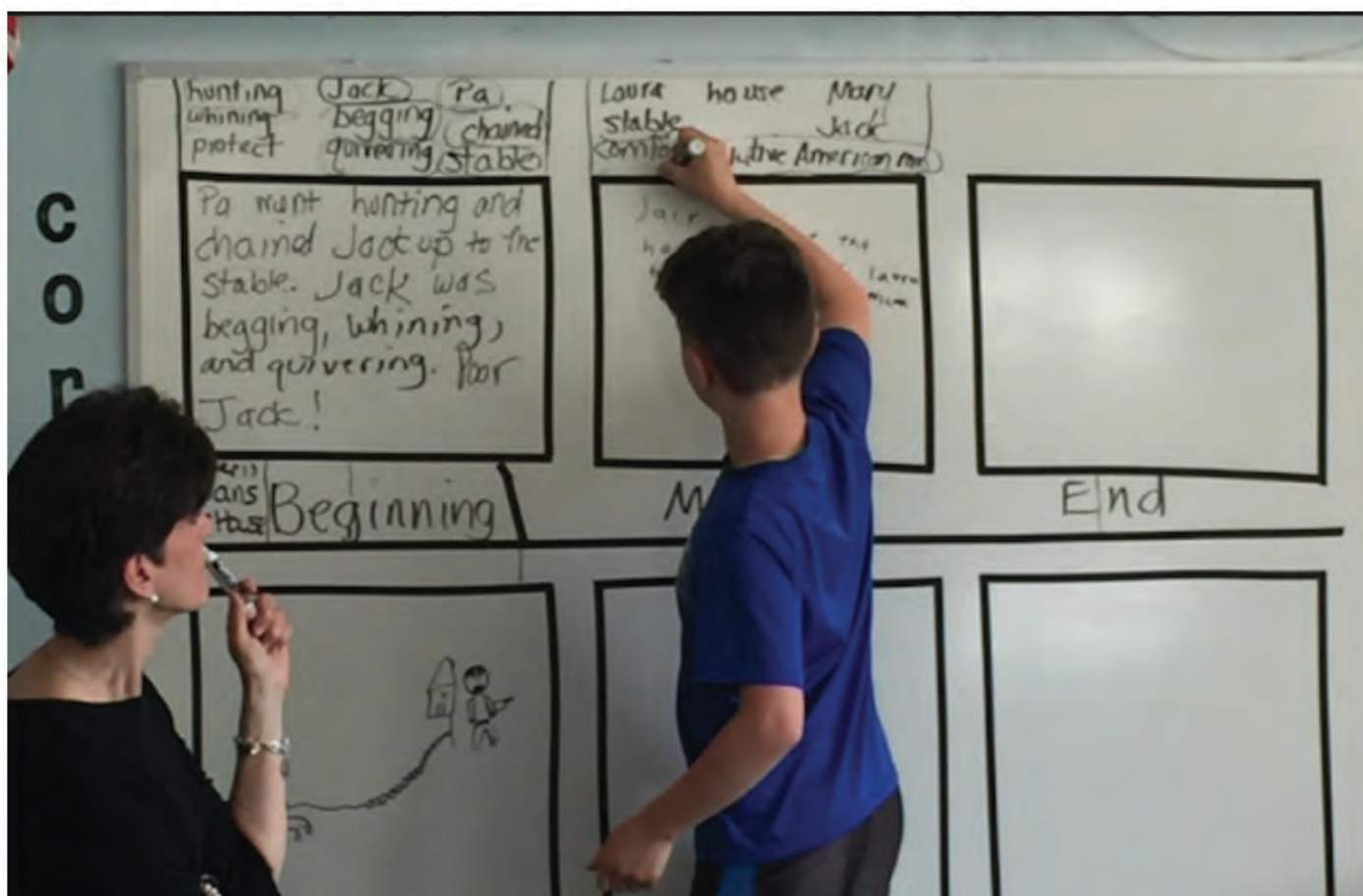
After creating the Vocabulary Table, the teacher then orally summarizes the “beginning” and “middle” of the chapter for the students – leaving the “end” as a cliffhanger for them to find out what happens when they read the chapter. During this time, a **Chapter Preview Word Bank** is created by writing down the key vocabulary words from the teacher’s oral summary on the white board. Pointing out and scribing vocabulary words from the oral summary gives students an opportunity to hear key vocabulary words before trying to read them and instructs students on how to create their own table for note-taking in the future.

This prior exposure to vocabulary words, as well as a discussion of their meanings, allows students to build understanding of the key concepts and improves comprehension once they locate and read these terms in the foundation of the text. Next, a **sentence is written**, using the **Chapter Preview Word Bank** as a guide, **to summarize** the segment of the timeline related of the chapter. The sequence of these steps – listening to an oral summary, noting down key vocabulary to develop a word bank, and composing a summary sentence – is a critical instructional strategy to give students repeated opportunities to preview vocabulary and get “**Coming Attractions**” for the most important events which occur in the chapter.



Next, **illustration teams** of students are formed to expand their understanding of the summary point by drawing a picture to represent the “beginning” and “middle” summary sentences. This gives the students the opportunity to provide their own unique visual expression in the form of an illustration, along with figuring out how they will work together as a team sharing a workspace. This also teaches students how to create a visual with describing details from the **Chapter Preview Word Bank**. Being on an **illustration team** helps learners picture the scene in their mind and connect it to what they will be reading in the upcoming chapter.

Circling Key Concepts in Timeline Summary Points



After that, students identify and circle words from the **Chapter Preview Word Bank**, which are used to write or compose the summary point. This helps students “laser-focus” on the details in the summary point and, in turn, improves their own writing skills.

When students examine a sentence and cross-reference a vocabulary bank that originated from a teacher explanation, it shows them how to compose summary points **in their own words**. This gives learners additional ideas that they themselves may not have thought of to include, related to key details. Also, this strategy shows students how to circle back around to the key vocabulary that the teacher pointed out in the oral summary of the chapter preview. It significantly helps students build a strong understanding of the main ideas of the specific component of timeline related to the chapter of the book they are going to read.

Increasing Engagement & the Love of Reading

The image shows a hand-drawn timeline for Chapter 11, titled "CH 11". The timeline is divided into three sections: Beginning, Middle, and End. Each section contains a text box and an illustration box.

- Beginning:** The text box contains the words "hunting", "whining", "protect", "Jack", "Pa", "begging", "chained", "quivering", and "stable". The text reads: "Pa went hunting and chained Jack up to the stable. Jack was begging, whining, and quivering. Poor Jack!". The illustration shows a man (Pa) standing next to a dog (Jack) who is chained to a post. There is a house and a tree in the background.
- Middle:** The text box contains the words "Laura", "house", "Mary", "Jack", "stable", "comfort", and "Native American men". The text reads: "Jack protect the house and Mary, Laura from the Native American men." The illustration shows a house with a red roof, a tree, and two people (Mary and Jack) standing in front of it.
- End:** The text box contains the words "And then...". The illustration box is empty.

Finally, the students **act out the timeline** so that the chapter preview “comes to life.” **READY, SET, ACTION!**

Creating **chapter previews** with our students of all abilities helps them build meaning and understanding **before they even begin to read**. Reading fluency is also improved by providing students with chapter previews, as this strategy gives our students prior exposure to content, keywords, and main ideas **before** they try to simultaneously decode and comprehend unfamiliar literature.

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So, remember, chapter previews:

- Give students “coming attractions” to better improve cognitive focus
- Engage students in active learning
- Outline key “takeaways” for better retention
- Teach students critical skills for the eventual writing process

- Composing
- Summarizing
- Note-taking
- Revising

For more information on these research-based UDL strategies related to this article, please go to AboutTHEPACT.com.

Best wishes in making a difference,

Phyl Krista Kathryn

About the author



Phyl Macomber, M.S. ATP

Author, Keynote Speaker & Education Specialist

Since completing a fellowship at Johns Hopkins Kennedy-Krieger Institute in 1988, Phyl Macomber has become an award-winning keynote speaker, author, and education specialist. Phyl has consulted with and trained thousands of teaching staff and was featured in the international best seller, the Common Threads Trilogy book series, as one of the top 100 empowering women who is a passionate catalyst for systems change in education.

Phyl has been a guest on numerous radio shows to discuss simplifying instruction for students of all abilities. Phyl serves two ambassadorships - the first for the educational affairs organization, I AM Living Education Everyday and the second at Energime University, based in Manhattan, as the educational co-producer of the University's global youth program, Mission Earth Solutions. Her partnership with South Africa-based Leave No Girl Behind International is training young people in key leadership principles globally.

Phyl has created a 4-step simple system for how to teach anything to anyone, called T.H.E. P.A.C.T., which is outlined in Phyl's first book, The Power of T.H.E. P.A.C.T. Her research-based teaching strategies have been published in numerous articles featured in education publications since 2009 and are being successfully used across North America and in parts of Australia, Italy, Saudi Arabia, and Africa.

About the author



Krista Mock

Elementary School Special Educator

Krista Mock is an elementary school special educator, who serves students with varying abilities and disabilities - including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, and a range of Learning Disabilities. Krista's distinct expertise is in supporting classroom teachers in meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities. She spends a significant amount of time each day in the classroom, delivering differentiated instruction in a co-teaching model for math and language arts. Krista has a passion for helping children and families by striving for collaboration and cooperation amongst general education and special education. She firmly believes in the power of teamwork and improving the lives of the students and families that she works with every day.

Krista's whole-child philosophy of education focuses not only on meeting the academic needs of students, but also on the social-emotional aspects of their education. This is why she began her career in education as a preschool teacher, integrating all aspects of curriculum and developing supports that were customized to meet the needs of each and every child and family she served. This family-centered philosophy is a bedrock practice that she brings to her current position.

About the author



Kathryn Shearer

Classroom Teacher

Kathryn Shearer came home from her first day of kindergarten and announced that she would become an elementary school teacher when she grew up and she is happy she took the advice of her kindergarten self. Since 2012, Kathryn has created magic in her classrooms – mastering the art of how to immediately focus and engage students of all abilities, so her students master the art of loving to learn. In addition to serving as a literacy interventionist, Kathryn is currently a classroom teacher on a 3-4-5 multi-age grade team and is a model for other educators of how to provide UDL lessons and differentiated instruction in a co-teaching model with her special educator.

Prior to that, she worked in higher education in a civic engagement office and was the Program Director of the scholarship and mentoring program. Currently, during the summer months, Kathryn is the Program Director of a sleep-away camp for middle-school and high-school aged girls, which focuses on training leadership skills for children in the area of strength – highlighting strength of character in working together, in addition to physical strength in the various outdoor adventure activities offered.