

11 Ways to Use a Mentor Text

The Relatives Came

By: Cynthia Rylant

Read Aloud:

1. First Read - Demonstrate fluency as you read. Talk about how to use the punctuation by making mistakes and correcting yourself. Think aloud as you go. Wonder aloud about the main characters, the setting and the problem in the story. Retell the story – beginning, middle and end with a partner.
2. Second Read – Good readers create pictures in their heads as they read. Have students practice creating pictures in their heads from the author’s words. Students can draw what is happening in one scene just from the words. Read it aloud as your students draw.
3. Third Read - Read the end of the story again. Using what you know from this gathering and the hints at the end of the story, make predictions about what will happen the next time this family gets together.

Writing:

4. Sequence. Draw and write about the beginning, middle and end.
5. This is a great book for teaching Word Choice and Voice. The vocabulary is rich and so is the imagery created by Cynthia Rylant’s word choices. Change the words on one page. The words must mean the same thing and convey the same message. What happens to the mental imagery?
6. Have students describe the classroom, lunchroom or the playground with words that create mental imagery like the book.
7. Write about a time when your family typically gets together. [For example: Thanksgiving, Easter or even Sunday lunch.]
8. Write the sequel.

Social Studies:

9. Write about the first Thanksgiving using this type of mental imagery.
10. Compare/contrast this story and the first Thanksgiving.

Math:

11. Using clues from the story, estimate how many people you think were together in this house. Be ready with your evidence.