

Close Reading Strategy with: Seven Blind Mice by Ed Young

1st Reading:

Sit on the carpet and read together, looking at the “big book.” Read all the way through the first time. At this point in the year, this is taking the place of the first independent reading.

Discuss senses briefly. Make sure they understand “blind” means can’t use sense of sight. Ask what sense the mice are using in the story (touch).

Read again, this time, giving students a purpose for listening: Now that you know this is an elephant, let’s pay attention to the sequence (define) of the story. What part do the mice feel first? What part second, etc.

Chart as the sequence of elephant parts we read together. This is our “annotating” for now. At this point in the year, this is taking the place of “reading with a pencil” for now. The idea is that after reading the text once, students are learning that good readers go back and read more closely.

10 minutes

1st Discussion: Partner talk. (Model first and go over expectations). Let them turn and talk about the sequence of the story. Ask if they can retell the story.

(Teacher listens in to conversations).

5 minutes

2nd Discussion: Share out. “What were you or your partner talking about?” Observe level of engagement, judge level of students’ understanding of the reading. Are there misconceptions? Can anyone retell? Can they do together—one group say what is first, one group second, etc.?

5 minutes.

2nd Reading: : Read one more time to address anything that came up from the 1st or 2nd discussions.

10 minutes

3rd Discussion: Start with telling students that they will need to answer with text evidence (this is new!). Explain what text evidence is (proving it from the text).

1. **General Understandings** (overall view, sequence of information, story arc, main claim and evidence, gist of passage). Why were the mice feeling parts of

the elephant? Why didn't they just look and see it was an elephant? (the 7 mice were blind).

2. **Key Details** (search for nuances in meaning, determine importance of ideas, find supporting details that support main ideas, answers who, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many). Why did the mice all think the elephant was something different? (Each of the first 6 mice were only feeling a part of the whole).

Turn to any page and ask: What part of the elephant is the mouse feeling here? Why does the mouse think he feels a (pillar, snake, etc.)?

Why was the white mouse able to figure out that the Something was an elephant when the other mice couldn't? (This mouse felt the whole of the elephant instead of just one part).

3. **Vocabulary and Text Structure** (bridges literal and inferential meanings, denotation, connotation, shades of meaning, figurative language, how organization contributes to meaning). On the last page of the story, it says, "Now they saw, too." Did the mice suddenly start to see? What does this mean?
4. **Author's Purpose** (Genre—Entertain/Explain/Inform/Persuade, Point of View—1st person, 3rd person, limited, omniscient, unreliable narrator, Critical Literacy: Who's story is not represented?) What was the lesson the author of this story wanted us to learn? (Wisdom comes from seeing the whole).
5. **Inferences** (probe each argument in persuasive text, each idea in informational text, each key detail in literary text, and observe how these build to a whole). Which mouse was the wisest? How do you know? (The white mouse. She went over the entire elephant before making a judgment). How did what the other 6 mice did, help the last mouse? (She realized that because they all had such different answers that she needed to examine the whole).
6. **Opinions, Arguments, and Intertextual Connections** (author's opinion, claims, evidence, counterclaims, ethos, pathos, logos, rhetoric, link to other texts throughout the grades). Do you think the mice and elephant became friends? Why or why not?

15 minutes

Journal Writing: Ask a question here. Provide a sentence frame for students to copy. My favorite mouse in the story is the _____ mouse. Students can draw a picture and/or write for their answer. The idea is to reinforce students going back to the text for their answer. 15 minutes