



All About Adolescent Literacy

Possible Sentences

What it is...

Possible Sentences is a prereading vocabulary strategy that activates students' prior knowledge about content area vocabulary and concepts.

Before reading, students are provided a short list of vocabulary words from their reading, which they group and eventually use to create meaningful sentences. After reading, students check to see if their "possible sentences" were accurate or need revising.

Why it's so great...

Possible sentences are great because they spark students' curiosity about their content area words and reading. By asking your students to guess how the words may be used in the text, you are hoping they are as equally enticed to read the selection and determine if their sentences were accurate.

How to create it...

1. Before students read the text, visually display the chosen vocabulary.
2. Ask students to define the words and pair related words together.
3. Ask individual or pairs of students to write sentences using their word pairs. Remind students that their sentences should be ones they expect to see in the text as they read.
4. Have students read the text and compare their possible sentences with the actual sentences within the text.
5. If your students' possible sentences are inaccurate, ask them to rewrite their sentences to be accurate.
6. Invite students to share their sentences with the class.

How to use it...

- If students have never completed possible sentences you will need to model the process for your students.
- Students can either share their sentences before or after they have read the text. Done as a post reading game, students share their sentences without disclosing which are accurate or inaccurate. Teams of students can try to decipher, based on their reading, which sentences are accurate.

What it looks like...

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Possible Sentences

Topic: _____

Look at the vocabulary words your teacher provided. As a group, define the words, and then select pairs of related words from the list. Write your word pairs on the lines below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Write a sentence that might appear in the text you're about to read for each of the word pairs given what you know about the subject area and the title.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Moore, D.W., & Moore, S.A (1986). "Possible sentences." In *Reading in the content areas: Improving classroom instruction*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Stahl, S.A. & Kapinus, B.A. (1991). Possible sentences: Predicting word meaning to teach content area vocabulary. *The Reading Teacher*, 45, 36-45.