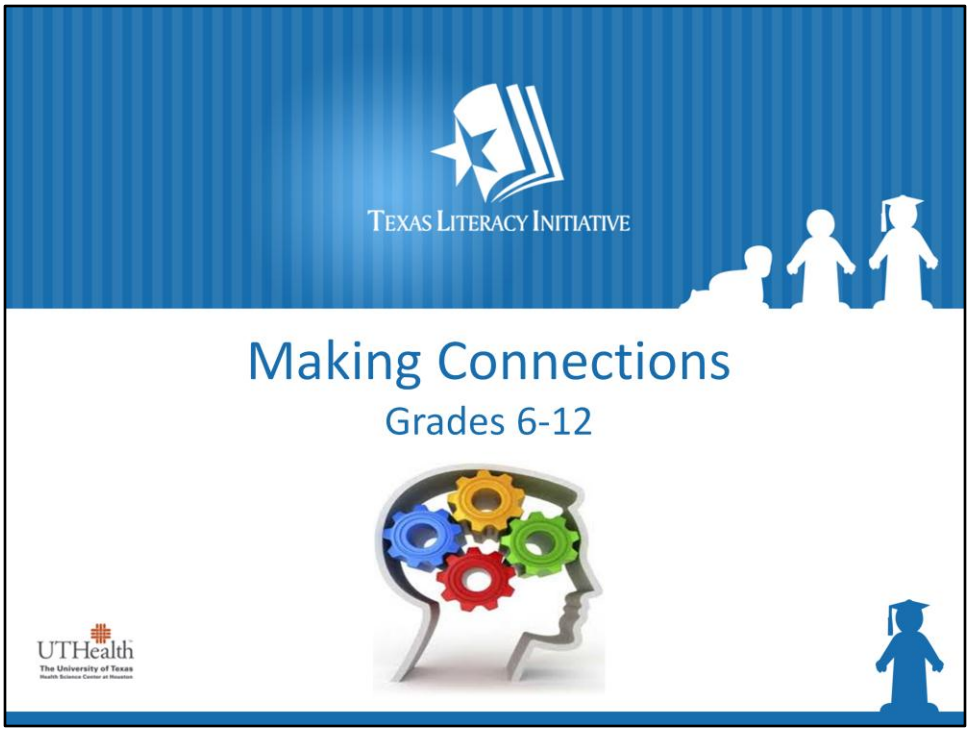
Speaker Notes

TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

Making Connections

A Presentation for Teachers in

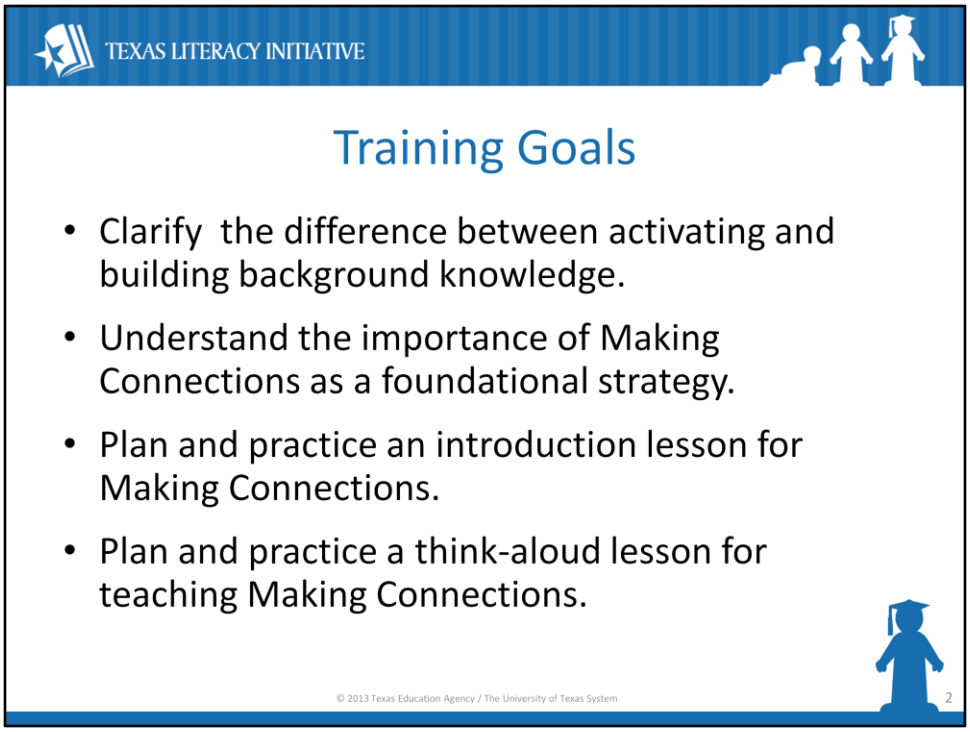
Grades 6-12



Introduce self and welcome participants.

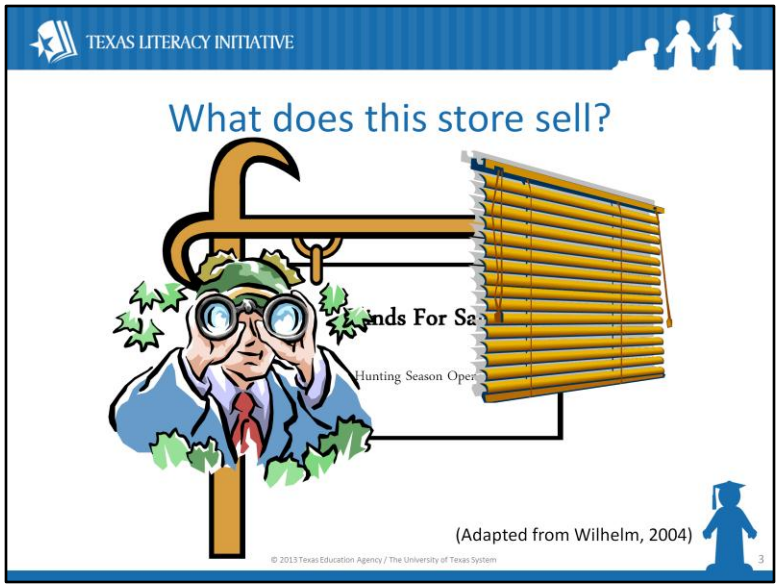
Let's begin by reviewing the materials you need for this training.
(Hold items up as you talk.)

Say: You will have two sets of handouts. You will have a PowerPoint Presentation Handout and Additional Handouts. You will also need the blue and white Cognitive Strategy Routine card, and the orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning card.



Say: Let's review our goals for today.

Read slide.



Say: Let's begin our session by thinking about how we use our background knowledge to make connections and how this impacts our understanding. If you saw this sign, what kind of store do you think it would be? Turn and tell your shoulder partner.

Allow a moment for participants to talk with a partner. Have one or two participants share.

Say: Does this change your understanding?

Click to reveal text: *Goose Hunting Season Opens Soon*.

Say: Now what type of store do you think this might be?

Allow a moment for conversation.

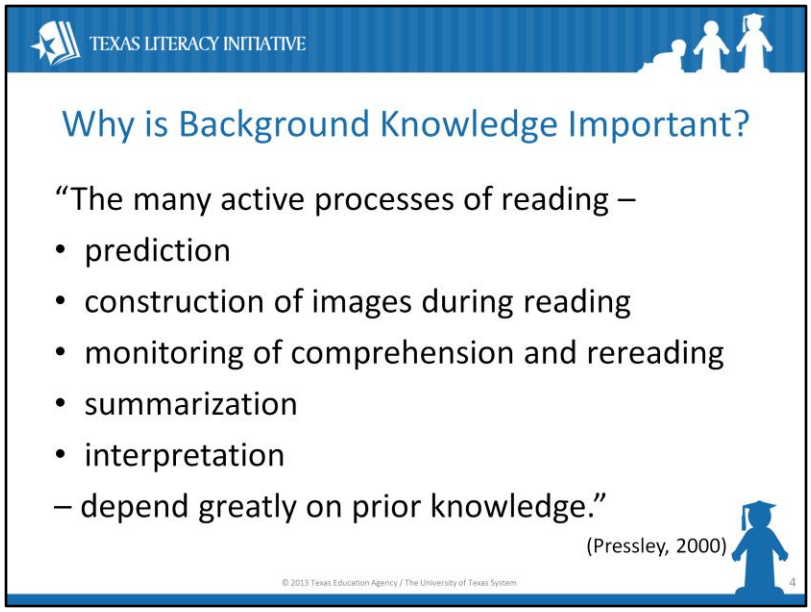
Say: When we first read the sign, we used our background knowledge and made one connection. What did you connect to?

Click to reveal picture of window blinds.

Say: You probably thought of this.

Click to reveal picture of camouflaged man.

Say: As we were provided with more information, however, we made another connection. We thought of another kind of blind – a place to camouflage while hunting. If you don't have ANY background knowledge of a hunting blind, you might have become totally confused. Readers continually make connections to their background knowledge to help them understand text.



Say: Our students must understand that what they already know is important. Therefore, we introduce them to the concept of background knowledge. Our background knowledge provides a basis for our use of most other cognitive strategies.

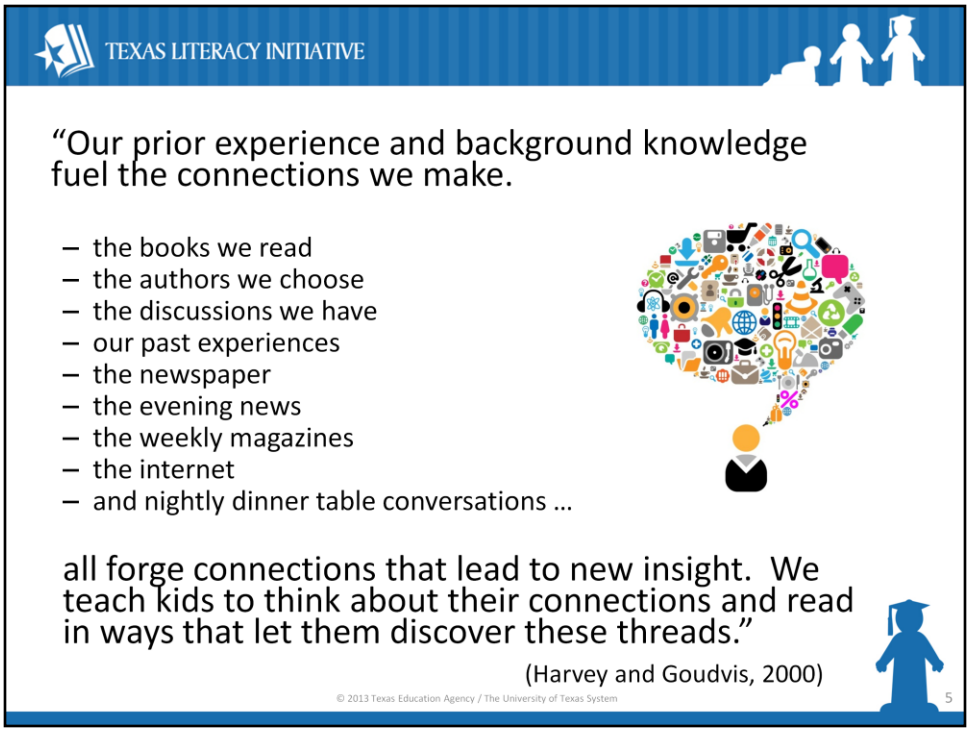
For example, when we create mental images, they are based on things we have seen and experienced – our background knowledge.

When we make inferences, we combine our background knowledge with information from the text. We use not only our background knowledge of "real-world" experiences, but our background knowledge of familiar text structures.

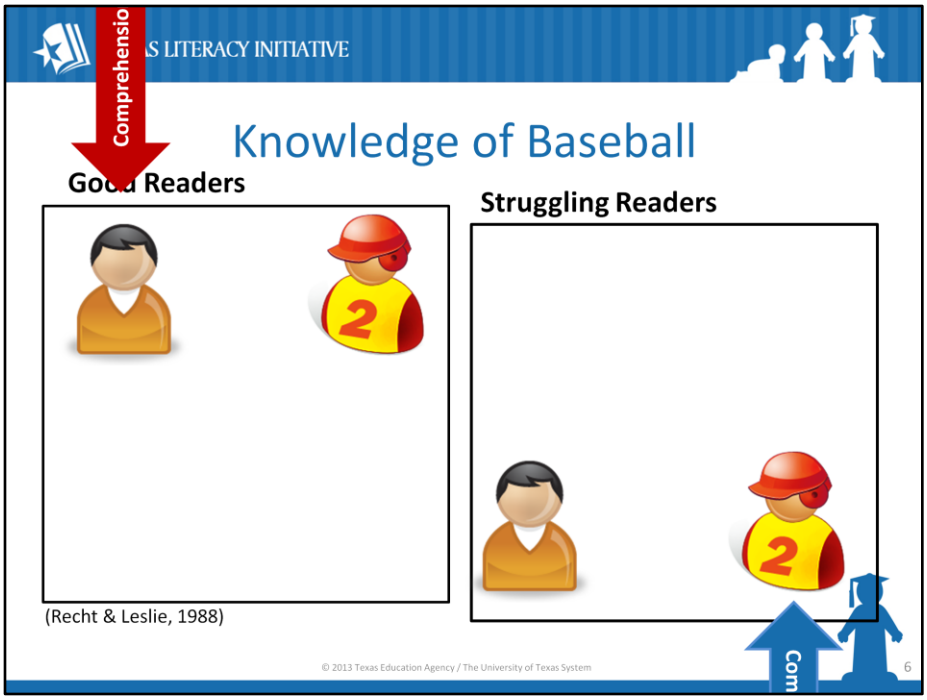
When something we read doesn't fit in with our background knowledge, we ask questions to try to incorporate new learning into what we already know.

Therefore, Making Connections to background knowledge is often the first cognitive strategy we teach. As educational psychologist, Michael Pressley (2000) puts it:

Read slide.



Say: In this quote, authors Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000) describes some of the ways we acquire background knowledge. Take a moment to read this slide and think about all the ways to build your background knowledge.



Let's consider an example of how background knowledge makes a difference in comprehension:

Recht and Leslie (1988) conducted a study to research the effects of background knowledge on reading comprehension. They tested two groups of students – good readers and poor readers. They also tested the students' knowledge of baseball.

Click to animate. There were good readers who had little knowledge of baseball.

Click to animate. There were good readers who knew a lot about baseball.

Click to animate. There were struggling readers who had little knowledge of baseball.

Click to animate. There were struggling readers who knew a lot about baseball.

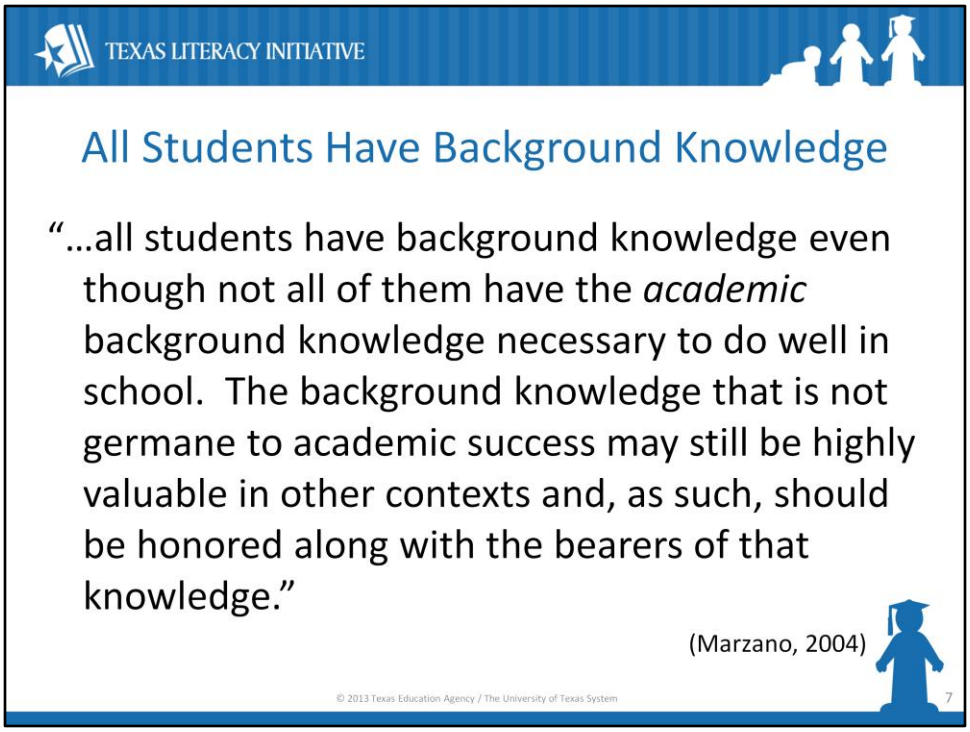
Say: The students' were then asked to read a passage about a baseball game and were tested on comprehension.

Click to animate. Struggling reader with baseball cap will rise to equal good readers.

Say: The researchers found that poor readers who knew more about baseball had comprehension almost equal to good readers who knew about baseball.

Click to animate. Good reader without baseball cap will sink to equal struggling reader. The good readers who didn't know much about baseball struggled to comprehend the passage. Their comprehension wasn't much higher than the struggling readers who didn't know much about baseball.

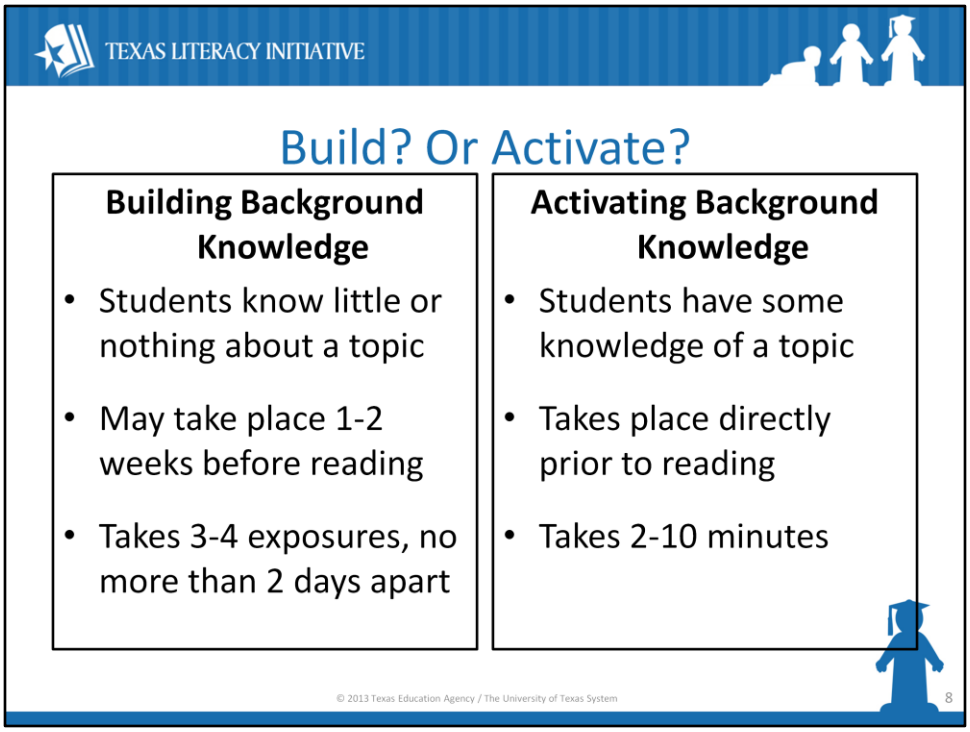
In other words, we can better understand a text that's about something familiar than we can a text that's unfamiliar – even if we're struggling readers.



Say: Occasionally, we may hear a teacher say, "My students don't have background knowledge." ALL students, however, have background knowledge built on their life experiences. Some background knowledge is academic in nature and relates to things they will learn in school. A student who has been allowed to shop at the neighborhood store, for example, will have background knowledge for money and its uses. This knowledge will help the student during math lessons. A student who has never had such experiences may need to build the background knowledge from the ground up, and will find it more difficult.

Some background knowledge relates to non-academic concepts. For example, a student might have well-developed background knowledge about soccer. This may have some usefulness in school, but will be less-generally useful than background knowledge for using money.

We need to get to know our students well so that we can understand what they have developed background knowledge of. Once we have this knowledge, will need to do two things to make our comprehension instruction work: we will need to either build NEW background knowledge or activate EXISTING background knowledge.



Say: What is the difference between building background knowledge and activating existing knowledge?

Click. Say: We build background knowledge when our students have little knowledge of the topic of a story.

Click. Say: When our students have some knowledge of a topic, and we simply want to help them remember, we activate background knowledge.

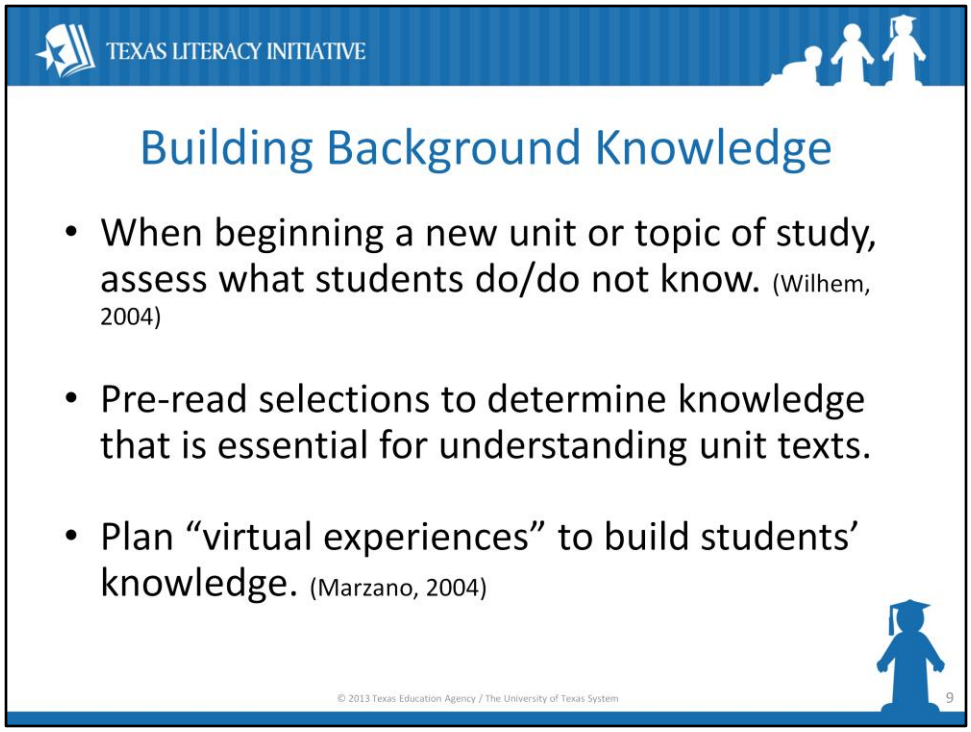
Click. Say: Building new background knowledge takes time. Therefore, we must plan ahead. We will begin one or two weeks before reading the selection.

Click. Say: Activating background knowledge can take place just a few moments before we read.

Click. Say: When building new background knowledge we must remember that a single exposure is not enough. It takes 3-4 exposures to new information, no more than two days apart.

Click. Say: Activating background knowledge should take only 2-10 minutes. We don't want to tell our students everything that will be in the story – we must leave some problem-solving for them. Instead, we want to activate what is crucial to understanding.

Now we will look at each of these techniques separately.

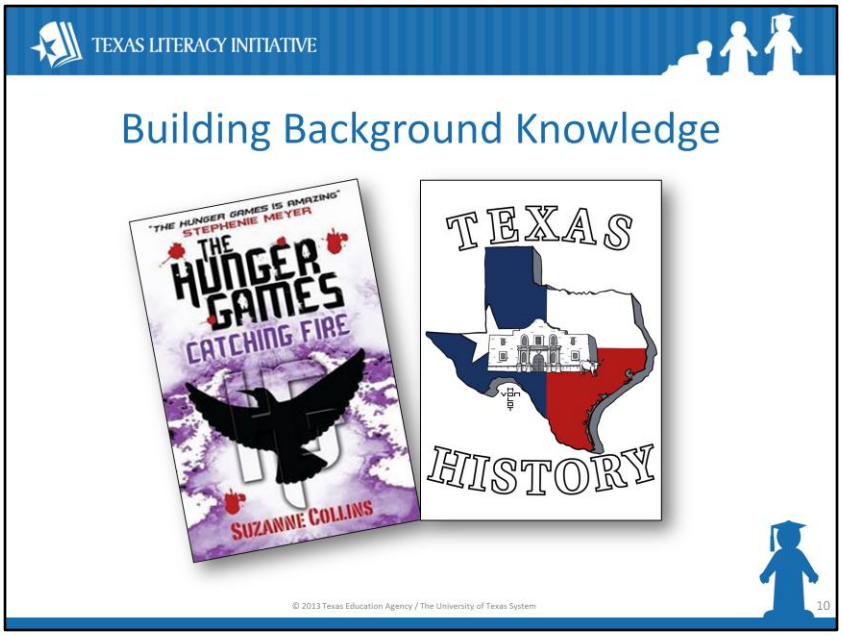


Say: In planning our reading comprehension instruction, we may find that our students have very limited background knowledge of certain concepts. In these cases, we will need to build background knowledge.

Read first bullet. Say: Most texts are organized in a series of units or topics of study. This helps us to build background knowledge on the key concepts. When we begin a new unit, we should look ahead to the selections. We may do a simple assessment of our students' background knowledge, such as asking them to write down everything they know about a certain topic.

Read second bullet. Say: We must read the selections we will be assigning to students well in advance. We will determine what background knowledge is crucial to understanding the text, and which information is merely interesting. Because our instructional time is limited we may have to choose to build background knowledge only when it is truly important to comprehension.

Read third bullet. Say: Ideally, we would be able to plan "real-life" experiences to build background knowledge, however, time, money, and staffing issues, among other things, often make this unrealistic. Luckily, we can build background knowledge with "virtual" experiences. These can take many forms, for example, video clips, visual aids, or a classroom demonstration.



Say: We are going to think about how this might look in the classroom. I will share with you how I might build background knowledge for, *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins. This is book two of the *Hunger Games* series. I like to use literature that is interesting and current, to motivate students to engage in reading. Just in case you don't know the series well, *The Hunger Games* takes place in an alternative world where two teens have been chosen from their district to compete in the annual Hunger Games. The Hunger Games are a reminder to each district that the Capitol is in control and will not tolerate rebellion. Teens from each district fight to the death in order to win a year's worth of additional food for the district in which they live. The people in the districts live in almost unbearable conditions. *Catching Fire*, is about the rebellion that follows the winning of the Hunger Games.

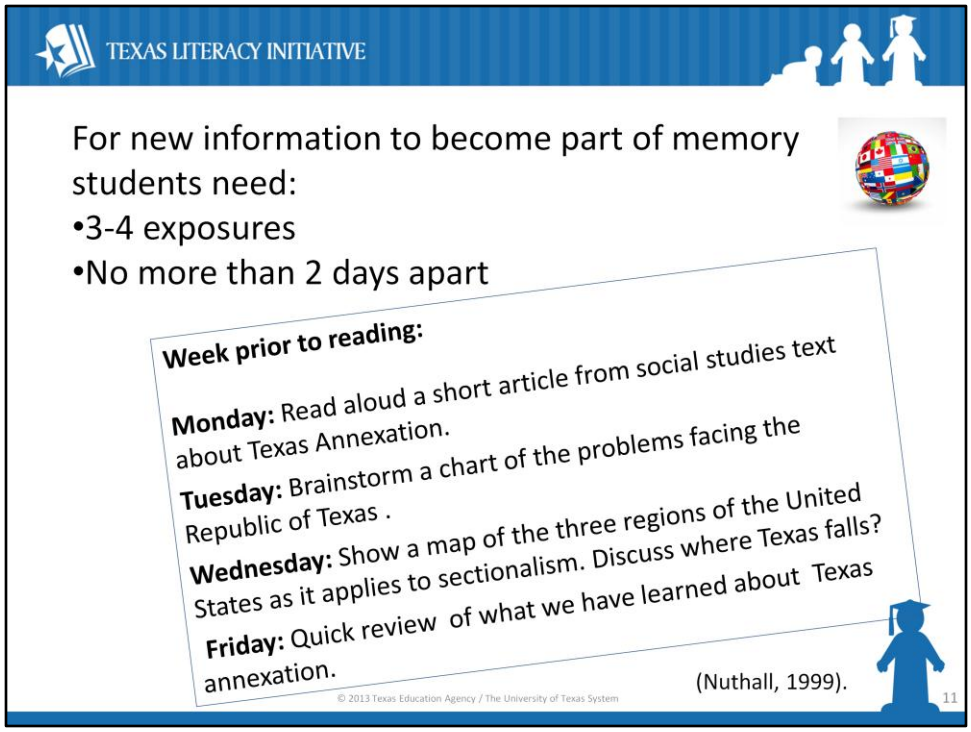
I don't want students to focus on the obvious plot or character relationships. Instead I want to make a connection to the unit they are currently studying in Social Studies and their project on immigration. I want the students to view the story as if it were expository text. The underlying themes in *Catching Fire* revolve around citizens fighting for freedom, rebellion and revolt. In Texas history, the theme is the immigration of Texas settlers due to rebellion, revolt and the fight for freedom.

I first start with less familiar concepts like how rebellions happen. For example, students may not understand why the Capitol is upset and wants to control everything. They may not understand the concept of "districts." They may not understand the miserable conditions under which the citizens live. They may not

know that the fight for freedom occurs in every country and culture.

However, the students are studying about the settling of Anglo American immigrants primarily from the southern United States, and how they began emigrating to Mexican Texas in the early 1820's. They may understand how the settlers were seeking a better life. They may understand how Anglo Americans soon became a majority in Texas and eventually became disillusioned with Mexican rule. They may understand how the settlers found the Mexican rule intolerable. Most crucial to their understanding is that they realize that the story and characters, although fictional in content, engage themes that are not that different from the actual historical events and people in Texas history.

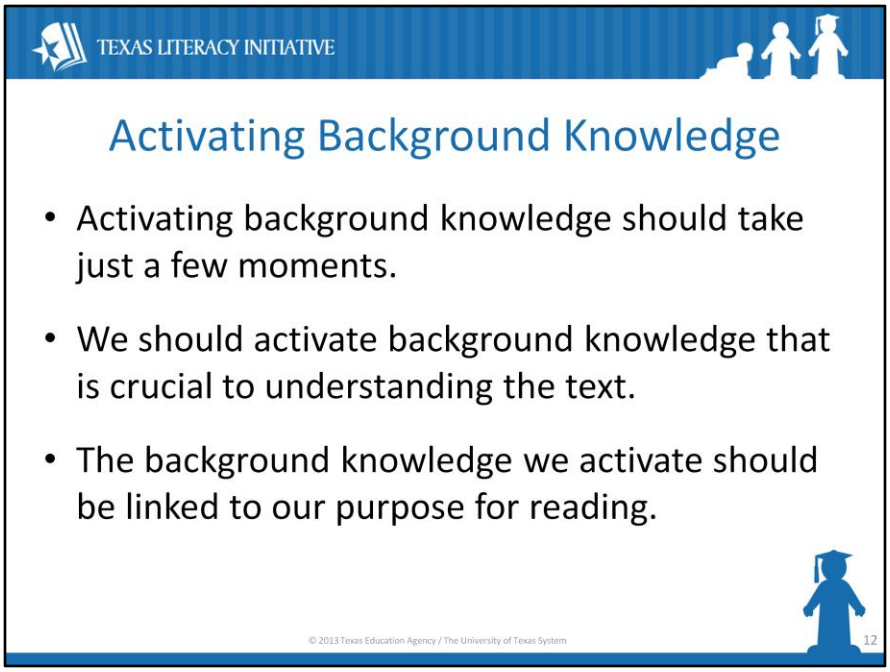
Texas and Texans **Glencoe/McGraw-Hill Grade 7**



Say: In order to build background knowledge successfully, research tells us that our students will need 3-4 exposures to new content, no more than two days apart (Nuthall, 1999). Therefore, I decide that the week prior to reading this book, I'm going to spend a few brief minutes each day building some background knowledge. Here's what I decided to do.

Read box.

Say: Now, this may seem to be difficult to fit into my busy schedule. Remember that we will not need to plan so extensively for every text-- we only need to BUILD background knowledge when the text's topic is very unfamiliar to our students. If I was reading a realistic fiction about children in a familiar setting, I probably wouldn't need to build background knowledge at all. We may decide that we can fit these opportunities to build background knowledge into our science or social studies time, or devote read-alouds to these opportunities. When we understand how crucial background knowledge is to our students' comprehension, finding time to build background knowledge should be a priority.



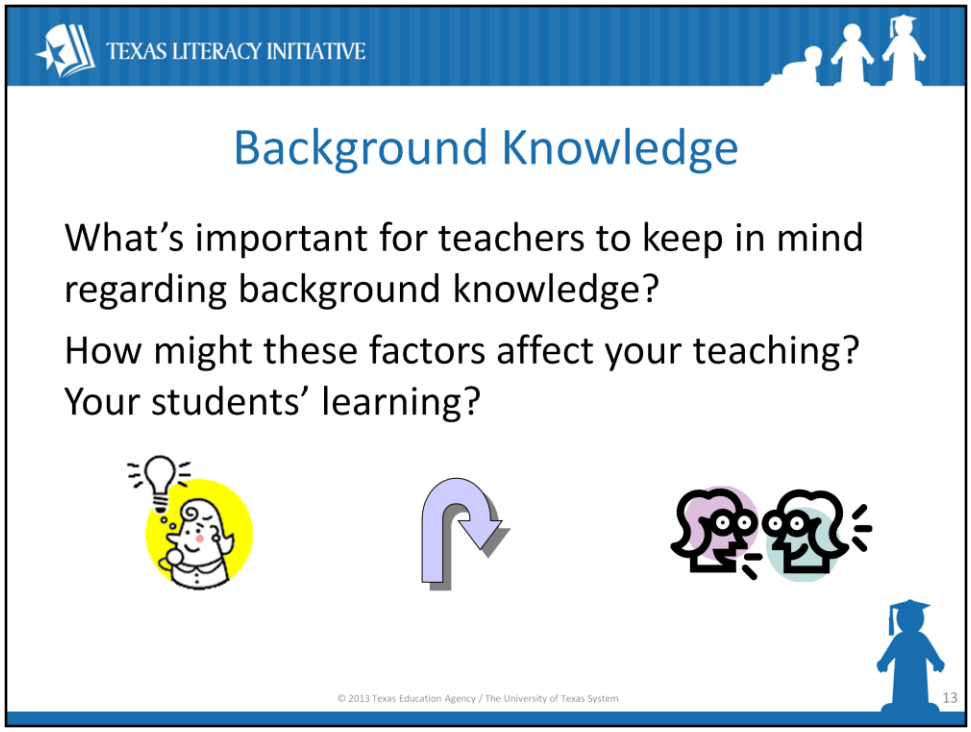
Say: Most of the time, we will not need to build background knowledge. We will simply activate existing knowledge. We do this when students already have some background knowledge of the topic of the text.

After we have helped students to build background knowledge about a concept, we must be sure to activate that background knowledge each time we read. We might go through a routine, such as previewing the text by skimming, looking at photos or pictures, noticing headings and other text features, and we may even pre-teach some vocabulary. These can be useful approaches, but we must think about making our activation of background knowledge as effective as possible.

When teaching reading comprehension, the bulk of our instruction should occur *during reading.* We shouldn't need to spend 5 or more minutes activating background knowledge prior to reading. In previewing text, we must remember that we do not want to take the problem-solving away from our students. For example, if we preview and discuss the entire text, I might give away the plot, taking away my students' abilities to make predictions and inferences.

Instead, we might think carefully about which background knowledge will be most crucial to our students while they read. For example, some vocabulary can be briefly addressed during reading. Other vocabulary is absolutely essential to understanding, so we might choose that word to pre-teach.

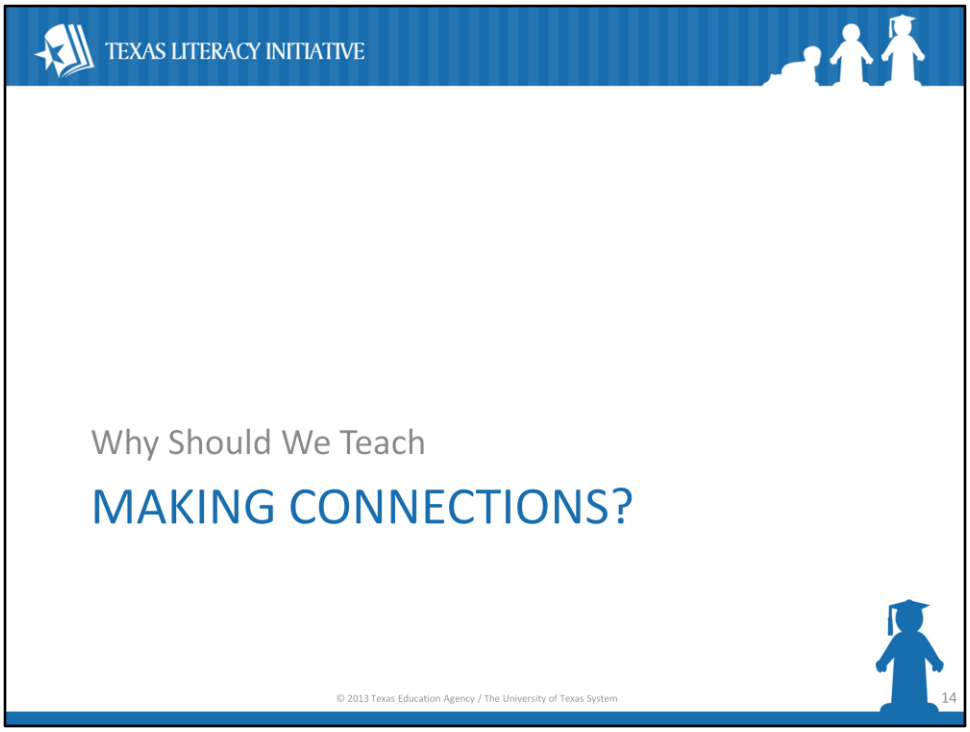
When choosing the most crucial information, we want to consider our purpose for reading and link activating background knowledge to this purpose.



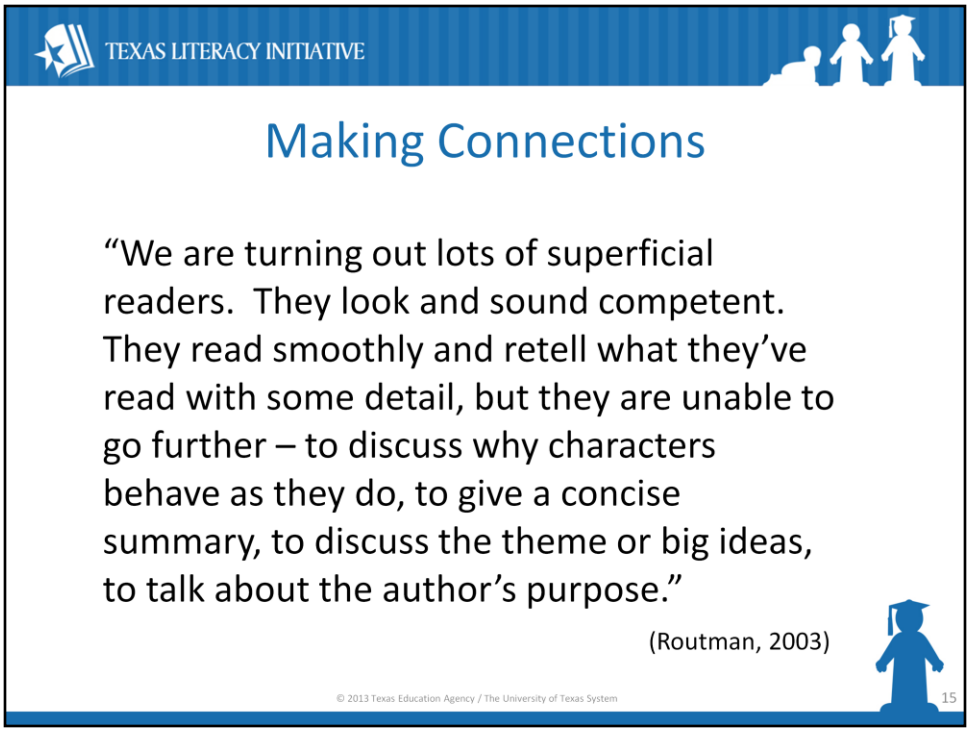
Read slide.

Model the hand signals for Think-Turn-Talk. Click for each icon to animate. Provide time for participants to Think-Turn-Talk to share their thinking.

Say: In the activity we did at the beginning of this training with the hunting blinds and the window blinds, we experienced how connecting to the appropriate background knowledge impacts our understanding and we've discussed in-depth how to build and activate background knowledge prior to reading. Students, however, may not understand how to access this knowledge *during* reading. Let's now turn our attention to teaching the strategy of Making Connections.



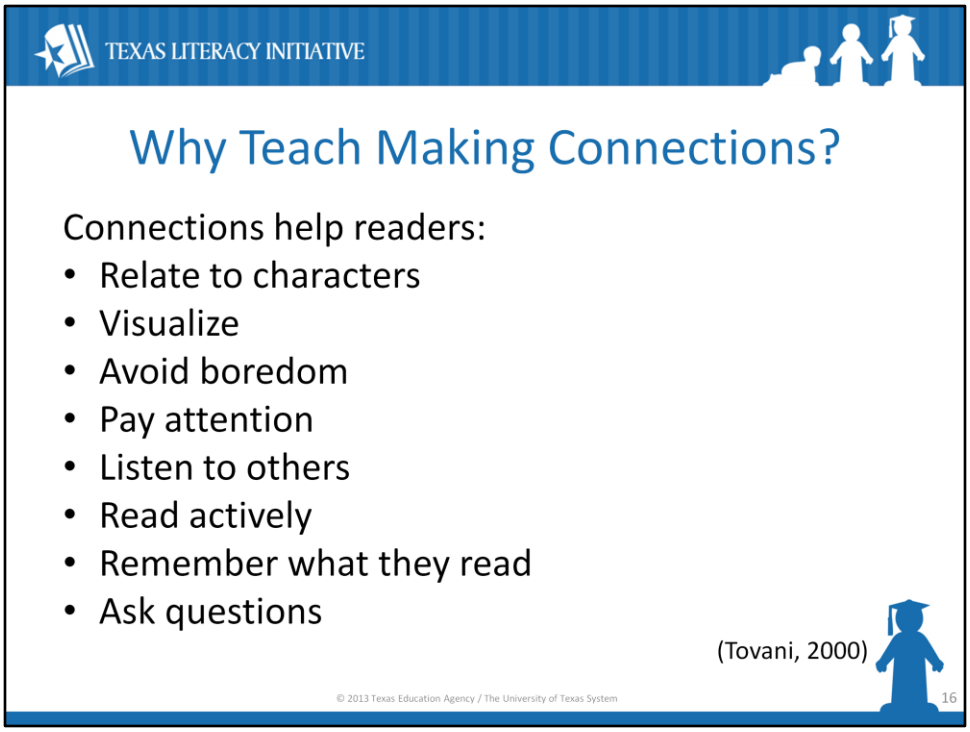
Say: Let's begin by discussing why we should teach this strategy to students.



Say: Can you make a connection to this quote?

Read Slide

Say: How many of you can relate to what Regie Routman says?



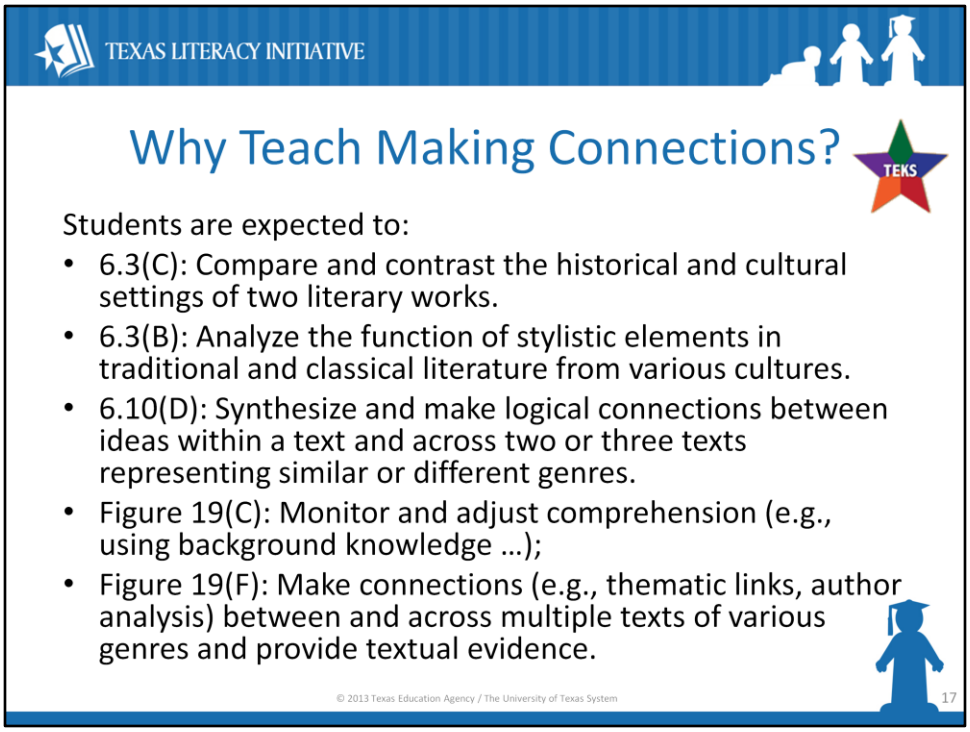
Say: As discussed, accessing background knowledge increases our ability to retain new information (e.g. Recht and Leslie, 1988) and understand challenging text because it provides something for text information to "stick" to. New learning is incorporated into our background knowledge.
Now let's think about how good readers use background knowledge to make connections while reading. Using background knowledge to make connections to the text helps enrich our understanding of the text.

Understanding more deeply impacts us in many ways. It gives us insight into the world and empathy for others, it creates within us a desire to read and re-read, and helps us to see how the world works (Keene, 2008).

We teach Making Connections because it helps us to bring enjoyment to reading.

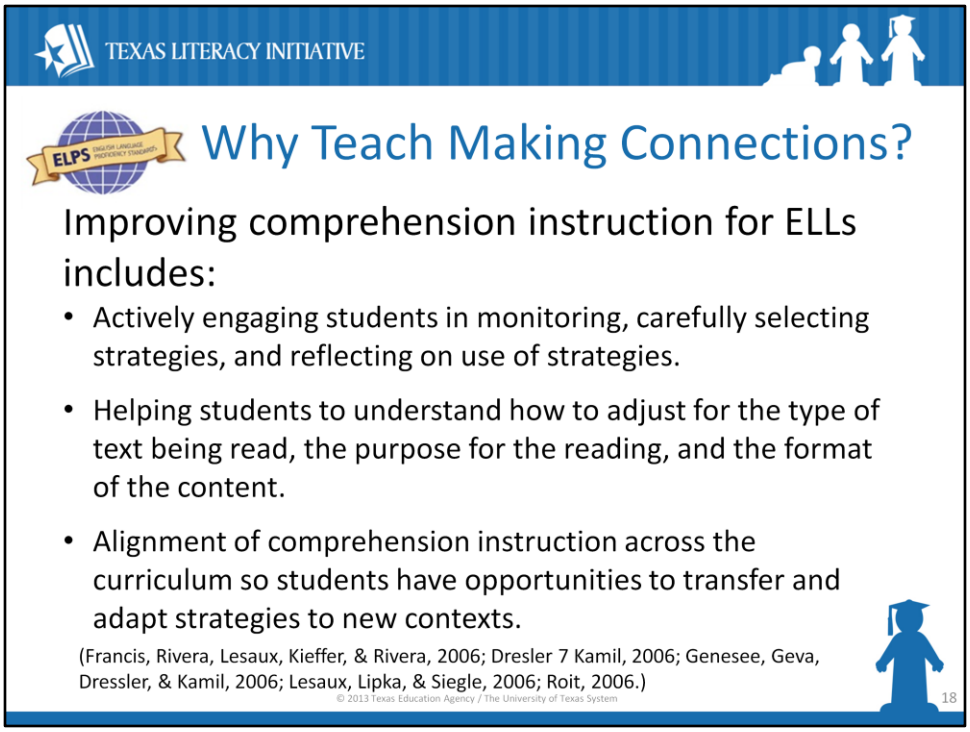
Cris Tovani (2000) lists several ways Making Connections increases our interest and enjoyment in reading.

Read slide.



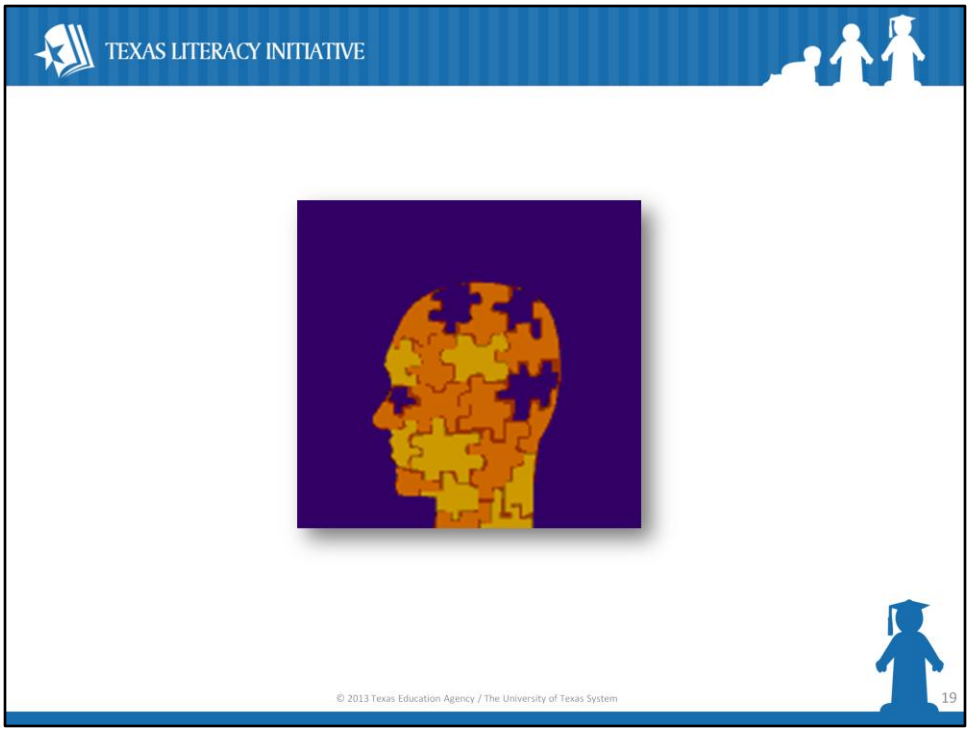
Say: Why should we teach Making Connections? We've already discussed how making connections impacts comprehension, let's think about how making connections is addressed in our state curriculum.

Making Connections is such a foundational strategy that we can find it in several of our TEKS. Here we see a sampling of TEKS which deal directly with Making Connections. Many other TEKS require that students make connections to background knowledge. We also know, because background knowledge is fundamental to acquiring new knowledge, that our students must be able to make connections to meet expectations in content area instruction.

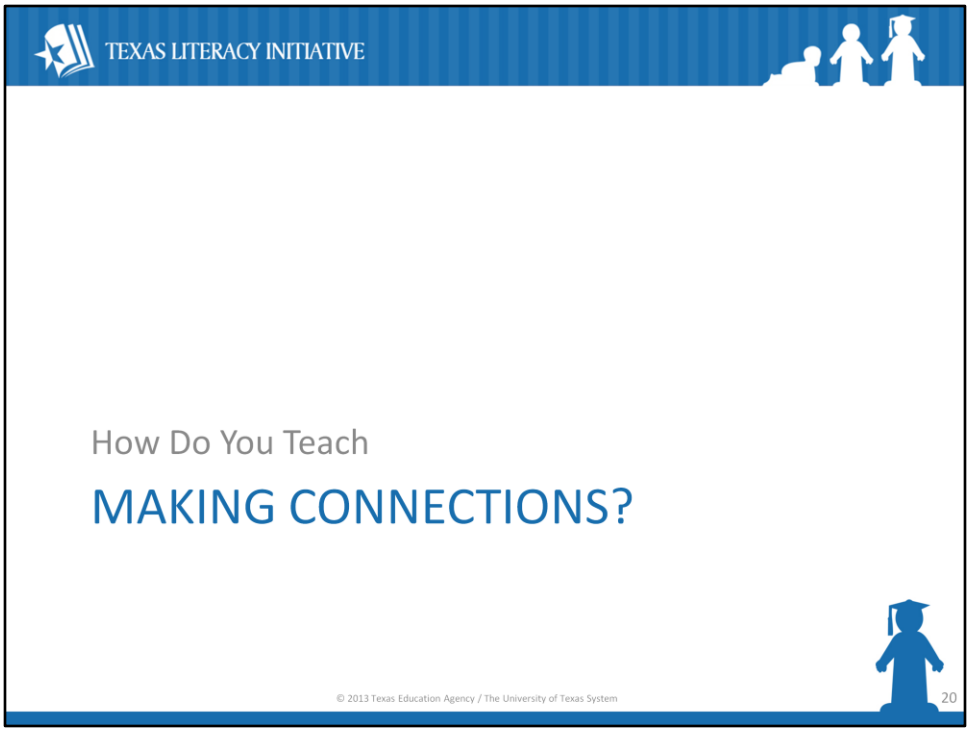


Say: We learned in Cognitive Strategy Routine that reading comprehension is an area of difficulty for English Language Learners. We can help ELLs learn strategies that enable them to comprehend what they read. Teachers can also help ELLs by providing instruction in the following ways.

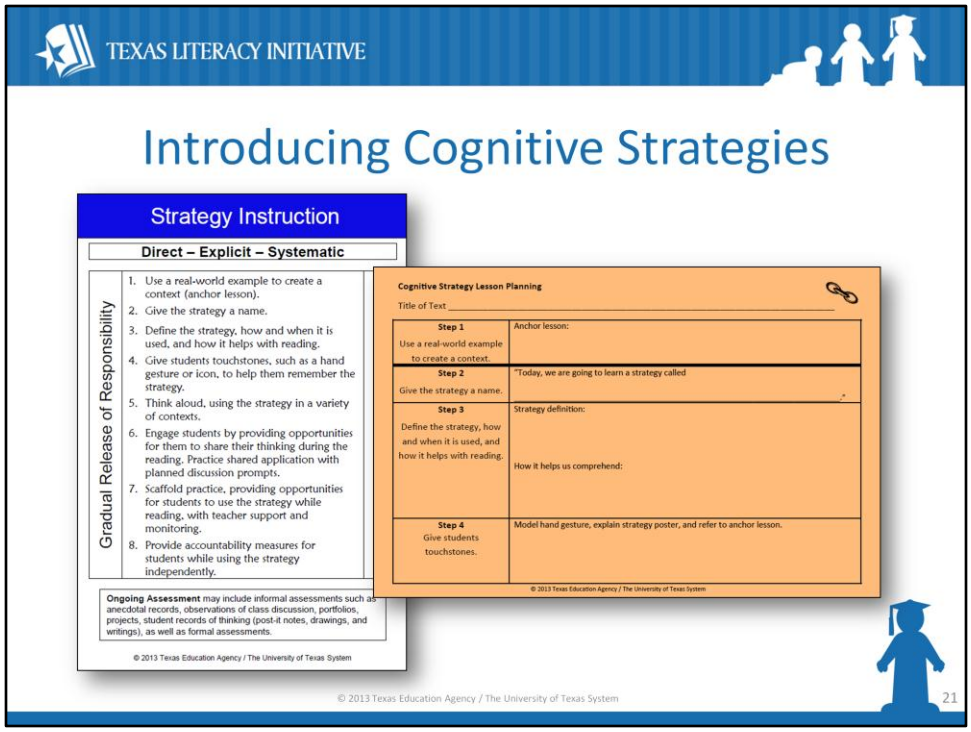
Read slide.



Say: Today we turn our attention to helping our students to think deeply about the texts that they are reading. We will focus on ways to support our students to Make Connections as one more piece of the comprehension puzzle. Remember, although we may highlight or focus on one strategy at a time to help clarify and make the strategy explicit, we need to ensure that our students know that strategies don't happen in isolation. We use them automatically, interchangeably and usually, we use more than one at a time.



Say: We've looked at many reasons why it is important to teach the cognitive strategy Making Connections. Many of you teach this strategy to students, today however, we want to take about ways to make this instruction even more effective.

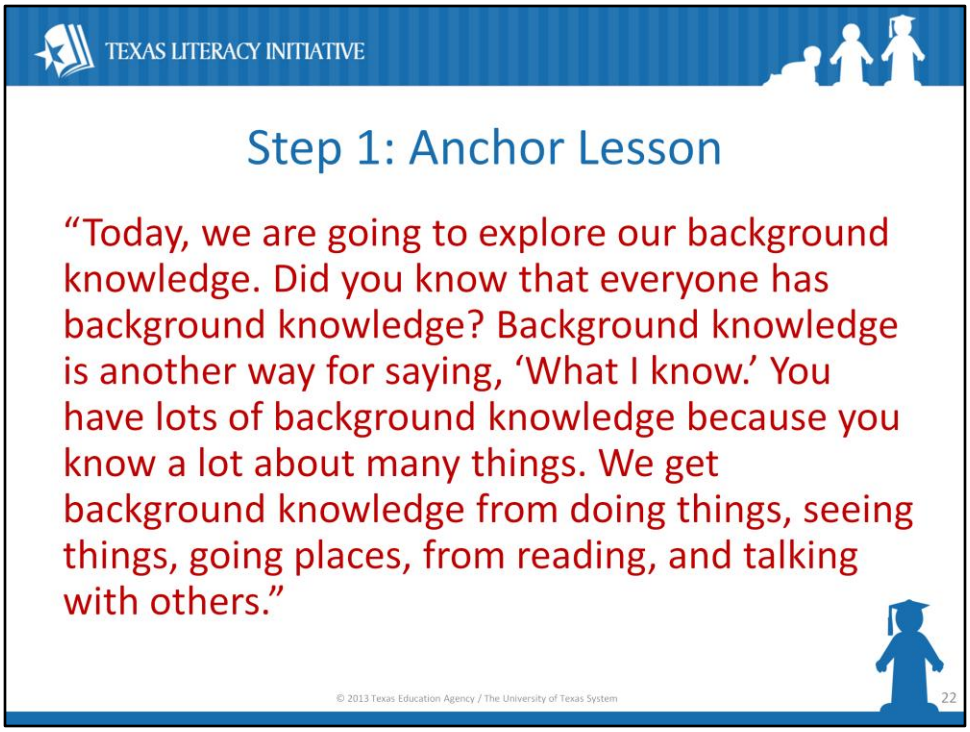


Say: When we introduce a new cognitive strategy to our students, we must do so in a way that is direct, systematic and most of all, explicit. Students should understand what the strategy is and how it helps them understand. "… instruction should use modeling, thinking aloud, questioning, and other techniques to promote active construction of meaning" (Moats, 2005).

We have developed a routine to introduce and practice cognitive strategies. This routine is an 8 step process for directly and explicitly teaching strategies to students. Let's review the steps now. Please take out your blue and white Strategy Instruction card and take a moment to read the 8 steps.

Allow participants one minute to review the steps on the card.

Say: You will also need the orange Cognitive Strategy Routine Lesson Planning Card and a vis-à-vis for this part of the session.



Say: As you recall, step 1 in our cognitive strategy routine is introducing the strategy with an anchor lesson. An anchor lesson is a simple stand-alone lesson that we can refer to when we discuss making connections in future lessons. This lesson should take approximately 20-30 minutes and should be done the day before you want to introduce the strategy with a piece of text. An anchor lesson does not typically involve text, it should be a memorable activity that demonstrates the strategy.

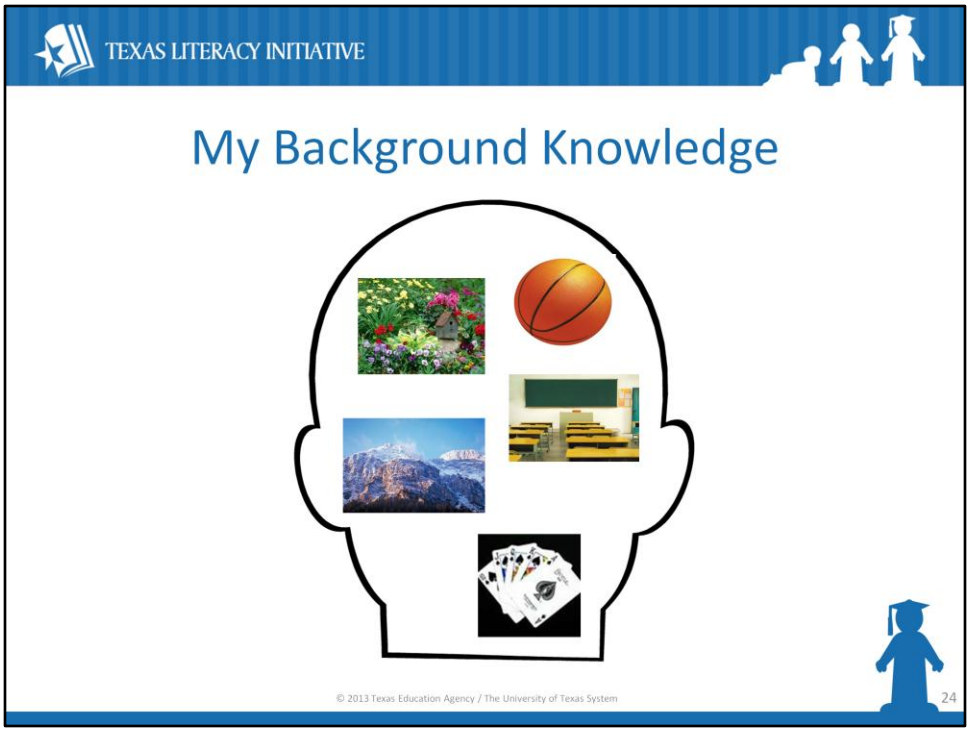
Read slide.

Say: Look at this picture of a car. I think that you all have some background knowledge about cars. What do you know about cars? Think for a moment. Turn and tell your partner everything you know about cars.

Provide time for partners to talk. Select 3-4 people to share what they know about cars. Record the information on a blank piece of chart paper as it is shared. Ask participants to explain why they know what they do about cars. Reinforce that they know what they know because it's part of their background knowledge.

Say: I noticed that some of you have lots of background knowledge about cars perhaps because you're very interested in cars. Some of you might not know about engines and pistons, but you still know about cars. Everyone has his or her *own* background knowledge. We use our background knowledge to make connections to new things we hear, see, or read. When we make connections, it helps us to understand and remember things. Background knowledge is like velcro in our brains. Connecting new information to what we already knows helps the new information stick in our brains.

You might choose to model how a piece of Velcro works as you explain this to students.



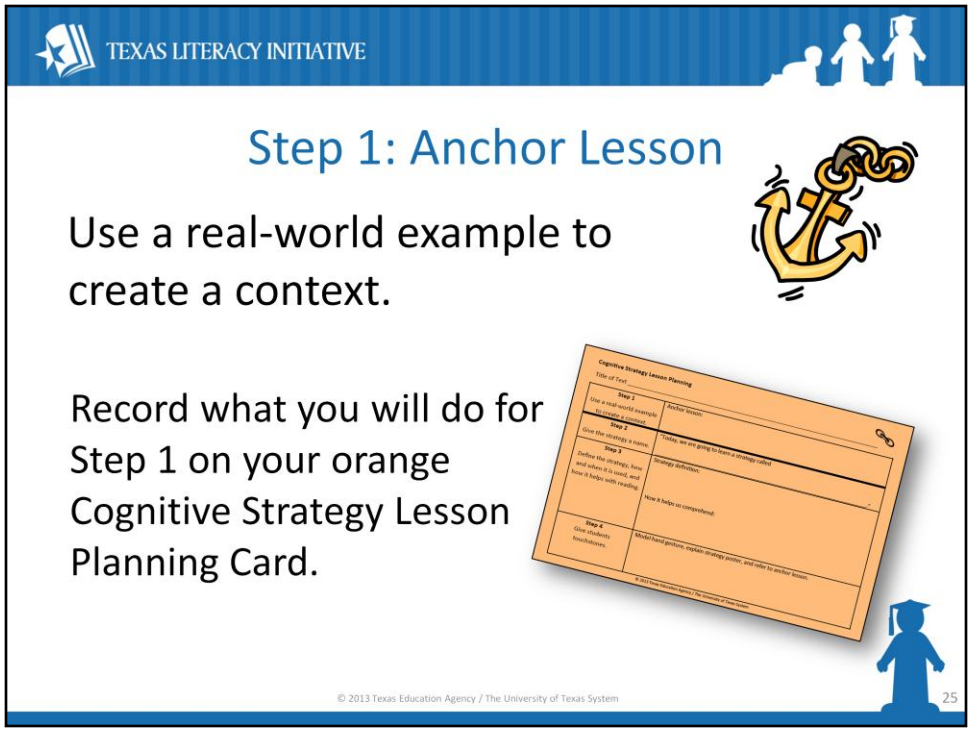
Presenter Note:
On the slide, add pictures of things you know about. Be prepared to explain why/how the things you show are part if your background knowledge.

Say: We all have background knowledge. What do you know a lot about? I know a lot about …

Explain why/how the things you show are part if your background knowledge.

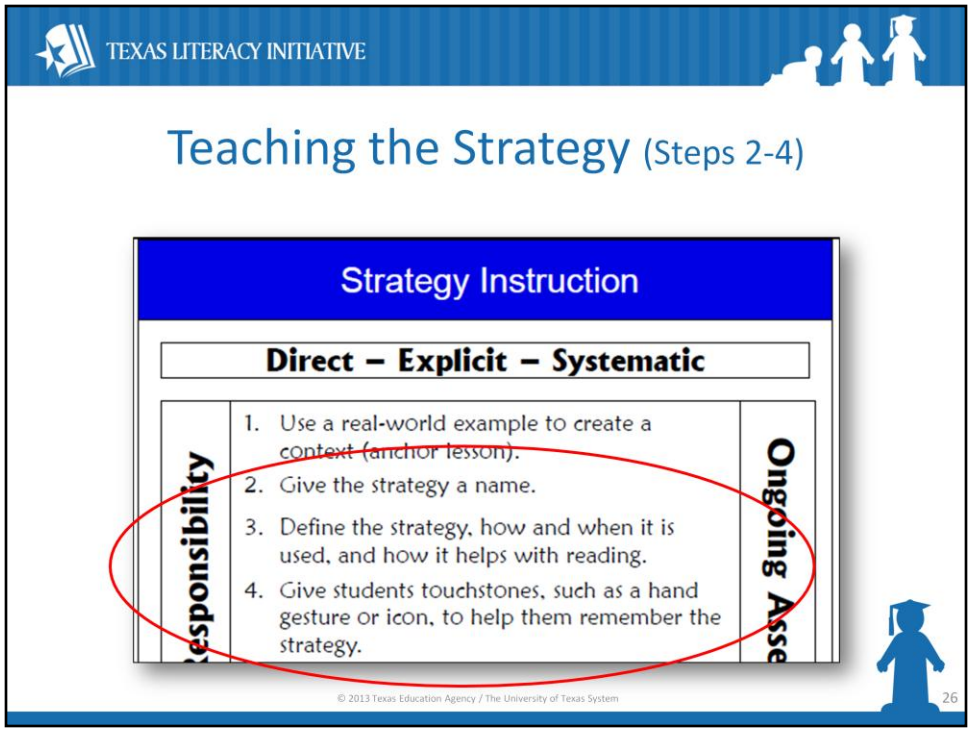
Say: In class, I would invite my students to create their own background knowledge poster or to represent their background knowledge in some other way. For example, I might have students create a head shape (bust) out of clay. I would then have them write about what they know on thought clouds and have them tape the thought clouds to toothpicks so that they can stick them into their clay heads. As students share their work, you can reinforce both the uniqueness of their background knowledge and how their background knowledge connects to other students' background knowledge.

This would be our anchor lesson for Making Connections. In the future, I could remind students, remember when we made our background knowledge posters and you demonstrated some of the things you know a lot about? This activity becomes an anchor.

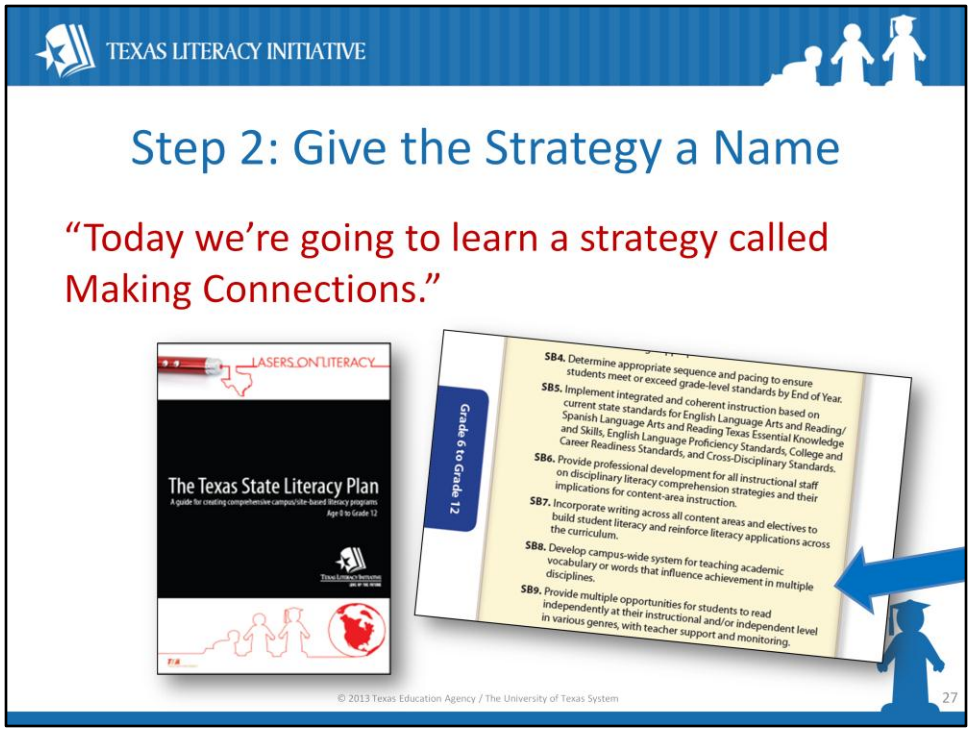


Say: Now it is your turn to think about Step 1. How will you introduce Making Connections to your students? Using a Vis-à-vis marker, please take a moment now to record on your orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning card what you will do for an anchor lesson. You might choose to do the same anchor lesson I modeled, or you might have a different idea of how to provide a real-world example to help your students understand the concept of Making Connections. Regardless, take a moment now to record what you will do for your anchor lesson in the space provided for Step 1.

Provide time for participants to compete Step 1 on their orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson planning card.

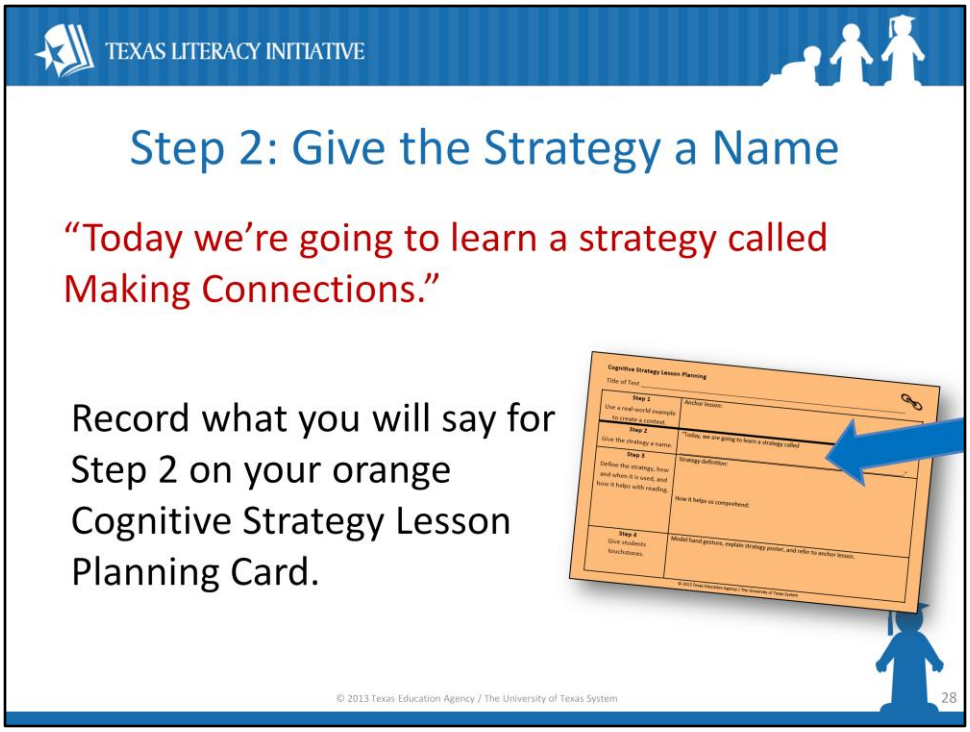


Say: An anchor lesson is our introduction to the strategy. Steps 2-7 are how we teach the strategy. These next three steps do not change. We will repeat what we plan to say and do for the next three steps EVERY time we teach this strategy. We do these three steps before every think-aloud.



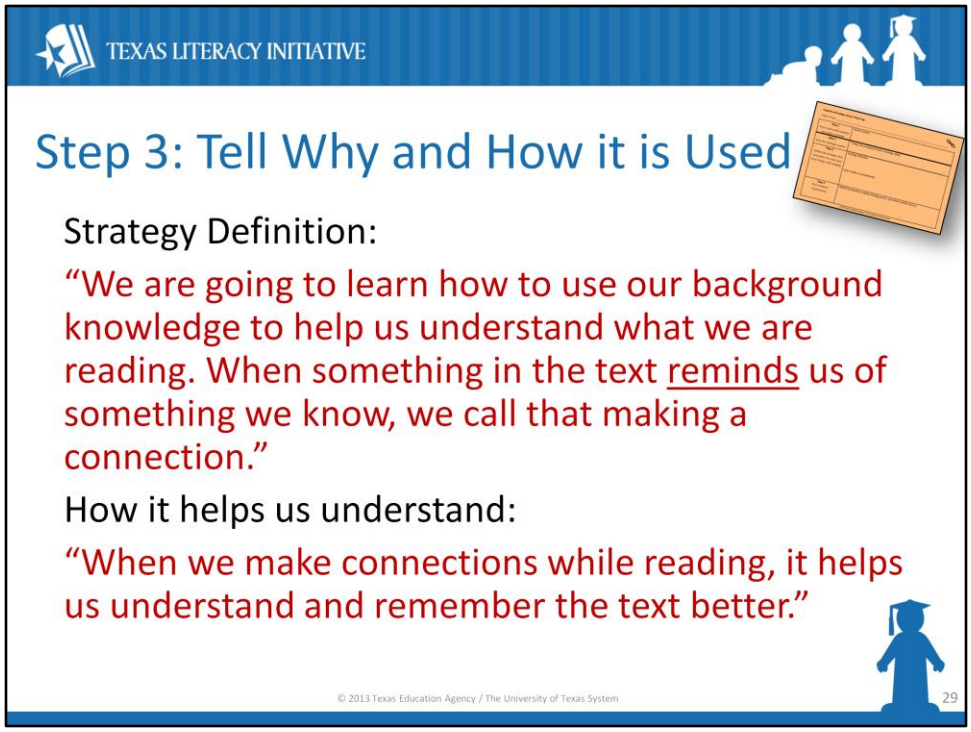
Say: Step 2 is, "Give the strategy a name." We want to use clear and consistent language when referring to the cognitive strategies. Our comprehension strategy instruction is stronger if everyone in the school, from kindergarten to twelfth grade, uses the same vocabulary to refer to the strategies we are teaching. In fact, developing a common academic vocabulary is so important, that it's even listed as an Action Step in Standards-based Instruction in the TSLP.

SB8: Develop a campus-wide system for teaching academic vocabulary or words that influence achievement in multiple disciplines.



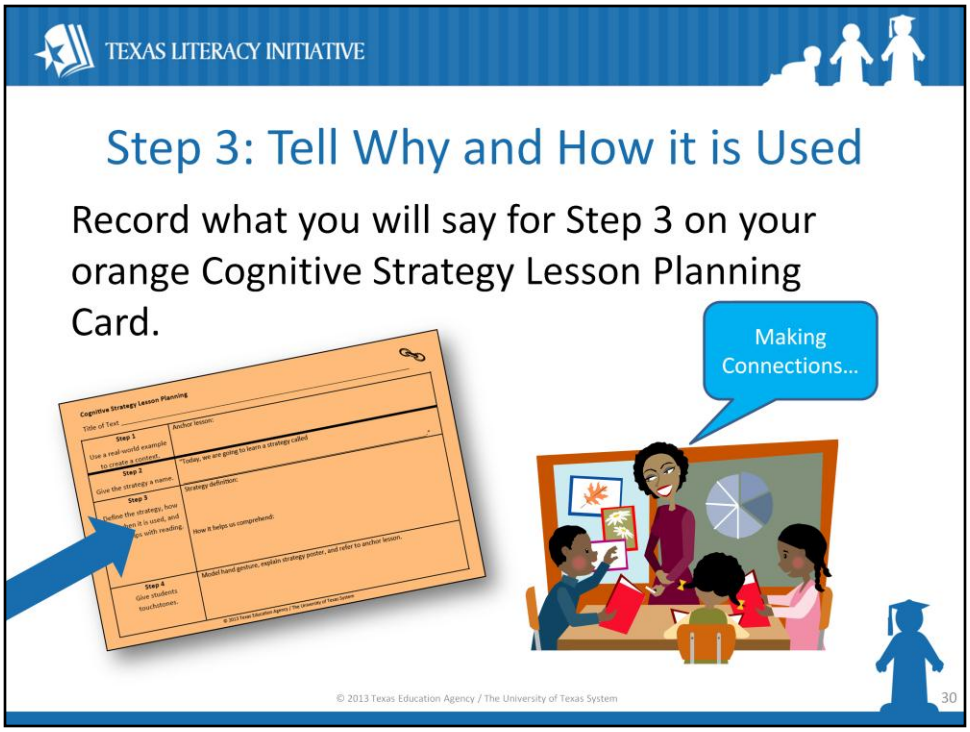
Read red text and the bottom part of the slide.

Provide time for participants to compete Step 2 on their orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson planning card.



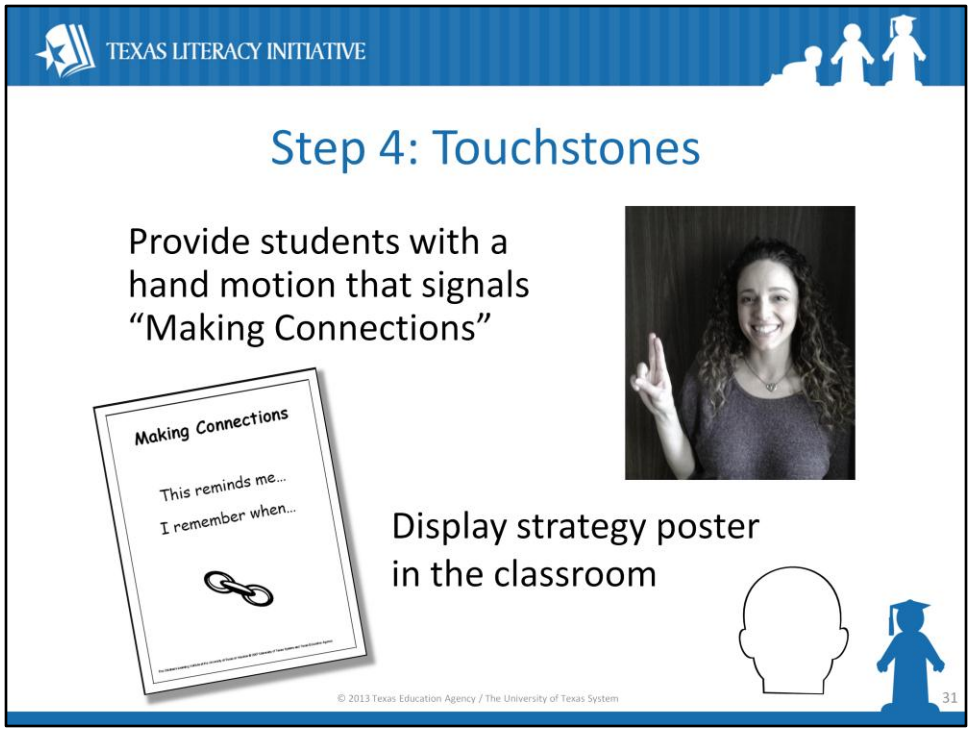
Say: Step 3, is where we tell why and how the strategy is used. This type of explicit instruction is critically important. When teachers explain concepts and skills through concrete, visible examples; provide clear, consistent routines; and maintain high expectations that are communicated to students, levels of both teaching and learning increase (Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts, 2012).

To explicitly explain Making Connections to my students, I might say something like this, "Yesterday we explored background knowledge. We discovered that you each know a lot about many things and have lots of background knowledge. Today, we are going to learn how to use our background knowledge to help us understand what we are reading. When something in the text reminds us of something we know, we call that making connections. When we make connections while reading, it helps us understand and remember the text better."



Read slide.

Provide time for participants to compete Step 3 on their orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson planning card.

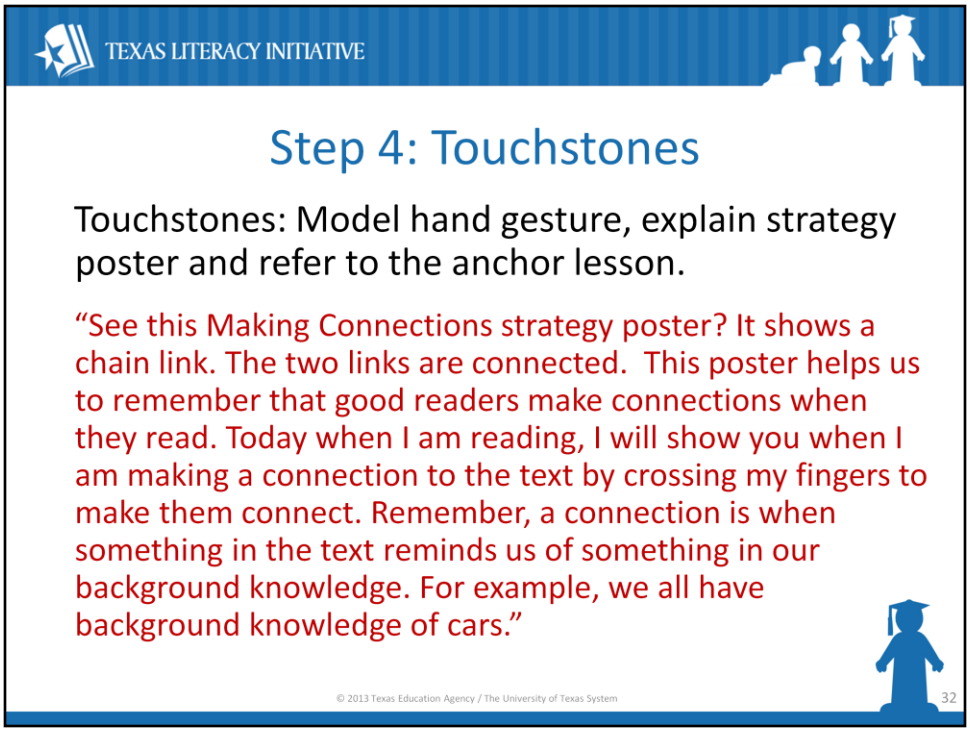


Say: When a new strategy is introduced, we provide a kinesthetic hand motion that helps our students remember the strategy, and provides one way they can signal to us that they are using the strategy as they read.

Model hand motion; cross the fingers on one hand to indicate they are connected.

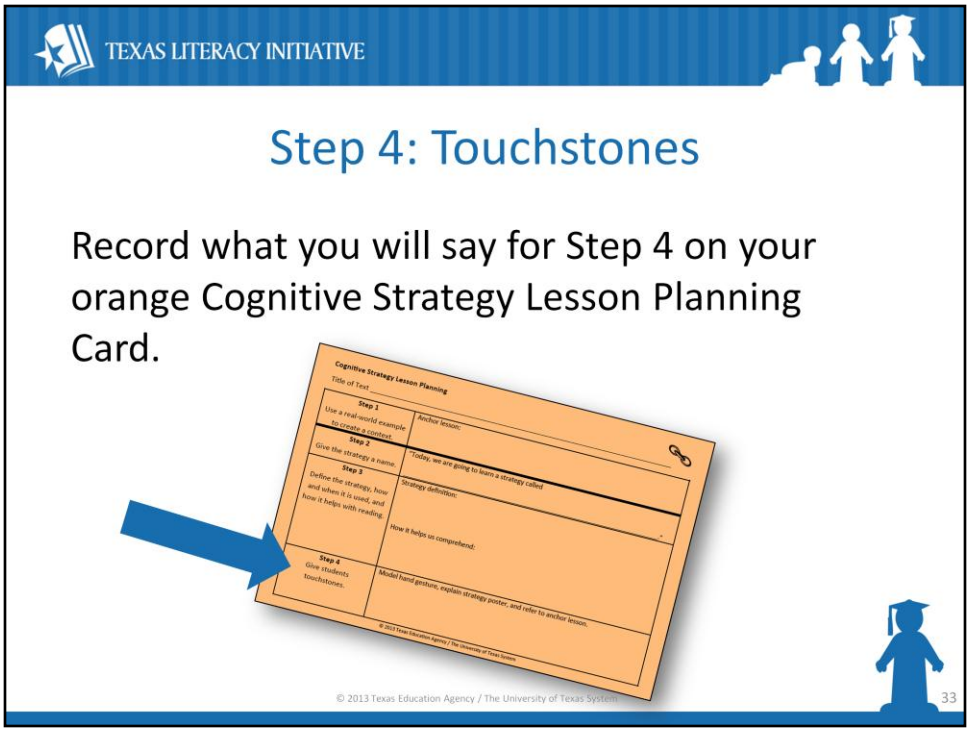
Say: I would explain to my students that this hand signal represents two things (fingers) connecting. When I make connections in a think-aloud, I will use the hand signal so my more visual learners will see the strategy in action. My more kinesthetic children may do the signal along with me. All students may use the signals when they make connections in their own reading.

We also display a poster in the classroom that contains key words students will want to use and an icon of a chain link that represents connections. The hand signal, visual icon, and the anchor lesson remind students what the strategy is and why the it is helpful to use while reading.



Say: I might explain the touchstones to my students like this.

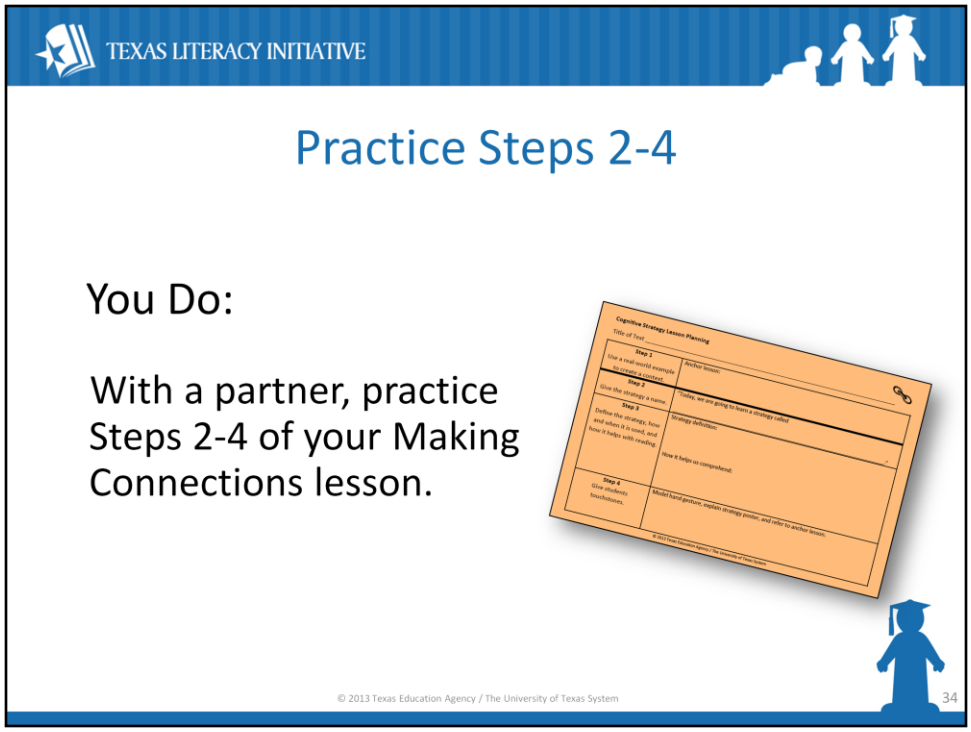
Read slide.
slide.



Say: Work with others at your table. How will you explain the touchstones to your students.

Read slide.

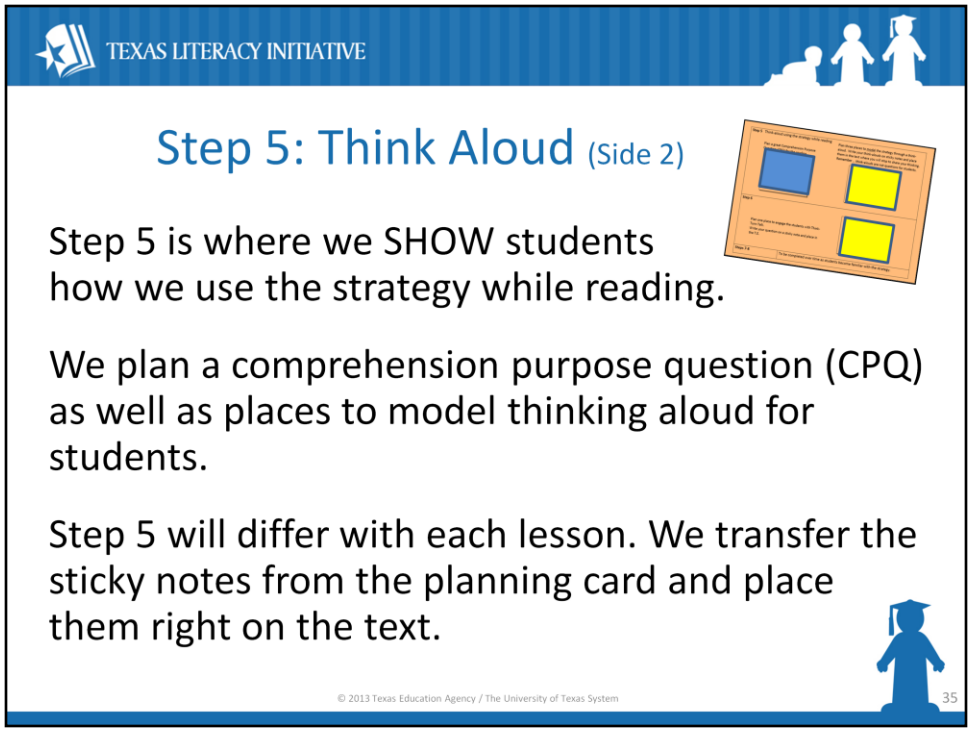
Provide time for participants to compete Step 4 on their orange Cognitive Strategy Lesson planning card.



Say: Remember, Steps 2-4 help make our strategy instruction explicit. We will say these tree steps over and over, every time we teach this strategy. We want how we say these steps to flow naturally, so we need to practice saying them to ensure that they will make sense to our students. Take some time right now to practice your steps with a partner.

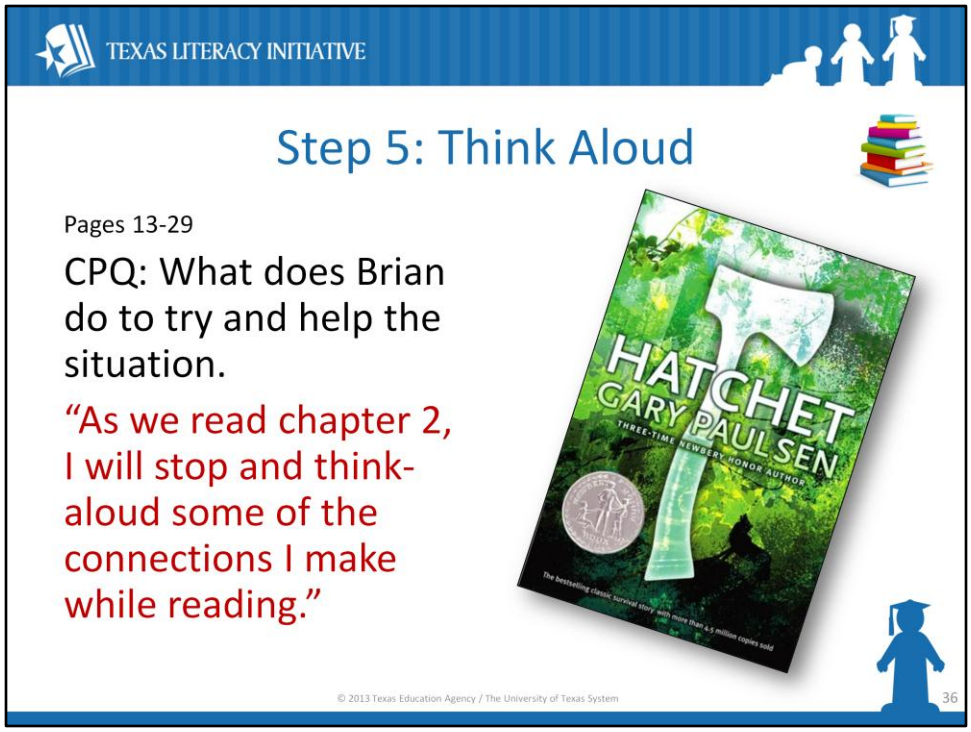
Read slide. Provide time for partners to practice steps 2-4.

Say: Every time we teach a lesson focusing on the *Making Connections* strategy, we will repeat Steps 2-4. We will do this many times across a few days with a variety of reading selections.



Say: After I have introduced the strategy's definition and given my students touchstones to aid memory, I think aloud to model how the strategy helps me comprehend while reading. Think-alouds bring invisible thought processes to students' attention, and increase students' ability to read strategically (Duffy, et. al, 1987).

Read slide.



Say: Eventually, we will model with a variety of genres and text types. When beginning a strategy, however, it is important to choose texts which are well-suited to the particular strategy (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

Hatchet is a commonly used book in fifth and sixth grade classrooms. I might decide to use Chapters 1 and 2 of Hatchet as the place I want to begin modeling Making Connections for my students.

As always, I want to set a CPQ for the reading. Today, I will be reading Chapter 2 with the class. My CPQ is: What does Brian do to try and help the situation? Remember, I try to set a CPQ that relates to the strategy I am focusing on. In this chapter, Brian tries to control the situation by flying the plane. Many students should be able to connect his actions for flying a plane to playing a video game. Brian also gets frustrated when the radio doesn't work. Students should be able to connect to a time when they felt frustrated that something didn't work quite right. Students also might be able to connect to a time when they felt panicked, or hopeless, or a time when they tried to think through various scenarios to make a difficult decision.

Now I will do a brief think-aloud for you as if you were students in my class. Let's pretend that I've been reading chapter 2, and I'll start on page 14. You can follow along with me in your handout. You'll find the excerpt for Hatchet on Handout #2.

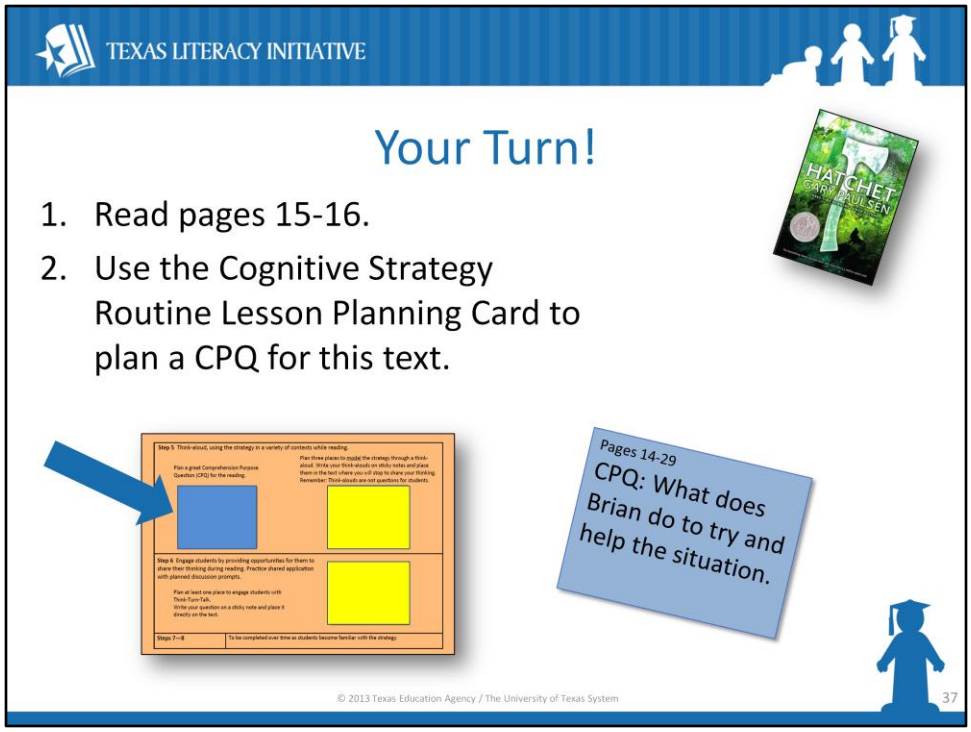
Read aloud from the excerpt stopping to model thinking aloud in at least two places.

Example: Paragraph 1. "… still strapped in with his seatbelt."

I'm making a connection here. I know about CPR but I wouldn't know exactly what to do. I've seen it on T.V. but I haven't actually been trained in what to do. I also would be so scared and panicked that I'd be trembling like he is. My connection helps me to understand how scared Brian must feel. He must have all sorts of things racing through his mind right now.

Continue reading. End of page 14.

"I'm making a connection to a time when I was flying to El Paso. There were a lot of turbulence. That means that the plane was bumping around a lot. All of a sudden the plane started to dive down. I was really scared. I thought we were going to crash! My connection helps me to understand how Brian is feeling. He probably has that sick feeling in his stomach and he probably thinks he's going to crash.

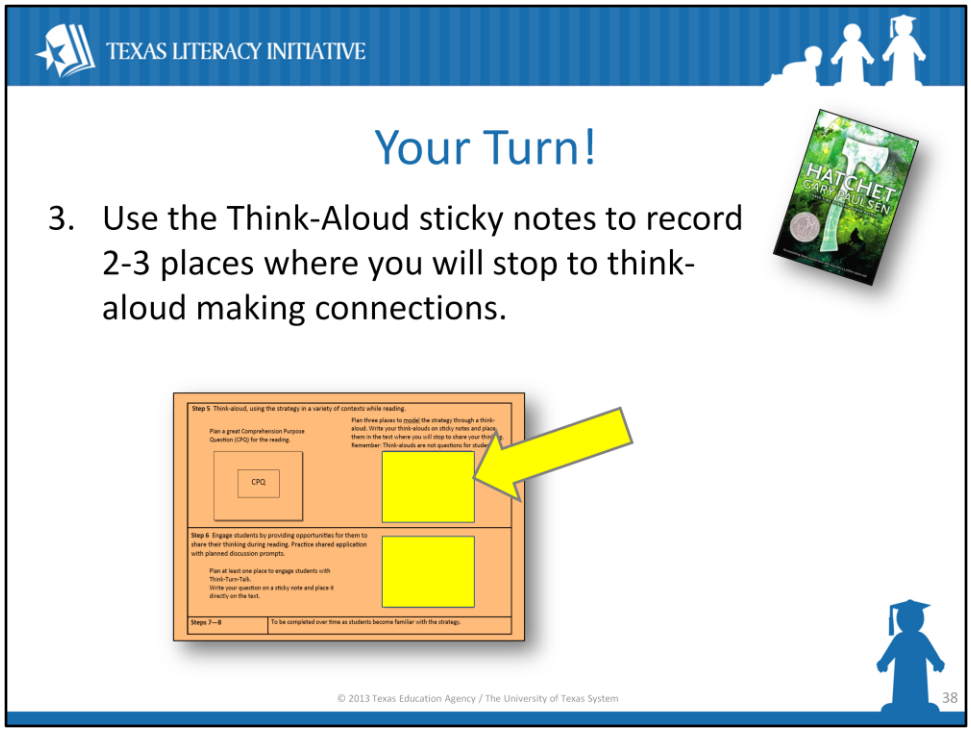


Say: Now it is your turn to plan a think-aloud.

If you haven't done so already, please turn the Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning card over so that you are now looking at the side that begins with Step 5.

Usually when you plan a think-aloud lesson, the first thing you do is read the text and plan a CPQ. In this case, you can continue to use the CPQ that I set. On the sticky note at the top left corner of your Cognitive Strategy Lesson Planning card, write this question down: What does Brian do to try and help the situation?

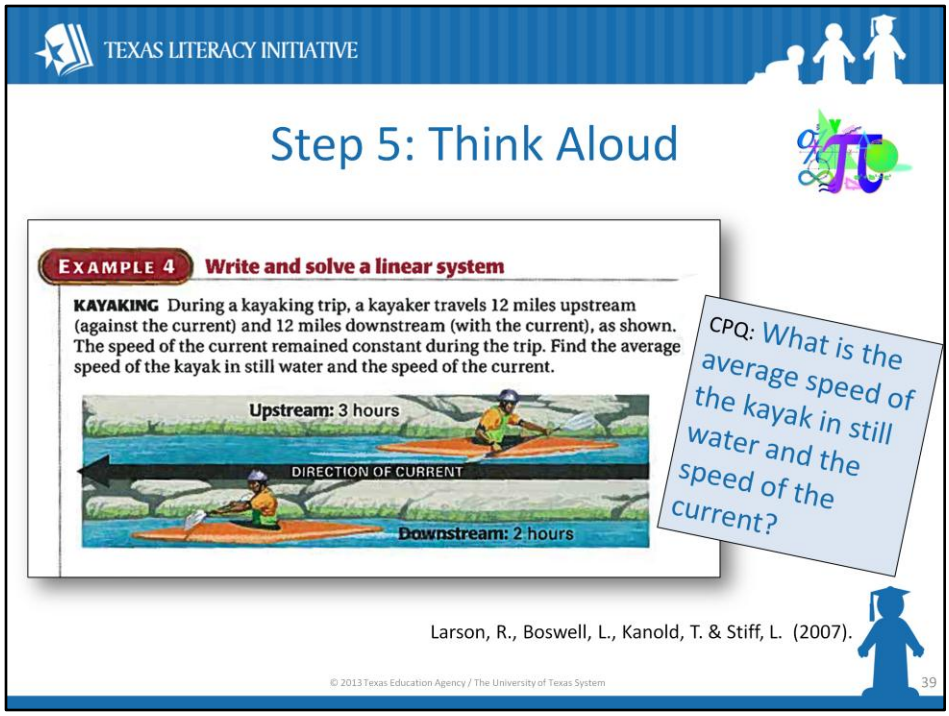
Place your CPQ sticky note on the front of the text in your handout.



Say: Now take a moment to read the rest of the text. Use the Think-Aloud sticky notes to record 2-3 places where you will stop to think-aloud Making Connections.

Provide time for participants to read and record their connections. You may encourage them to work with a partner if they would like.

Say: We've looked at what a think-aloud for Making Connections might look like with literary text, but how might a think-aloud look when teaching math or science? Let's look at a couple of other examples demonstrating Step 5 of the routine.



Say: First, let's consider a math example. My think-aloud might sound something like this.

Today I'm going to show you how I can use the strategy of Making Connections to help me understand a math problem. Remember, when we make a connection, we connect something in the text to what we know in our background knowledge. When we make connections, it helps us to remember and understand new information better.

Before I begin to read the problem, the first thing I notice is the title, Kayaking. A kayak is a type of small boat, kind of like a canoe but for only one or two people. So I know this problem is going to have something to do with kayaking, which is something I don't know a lot about.

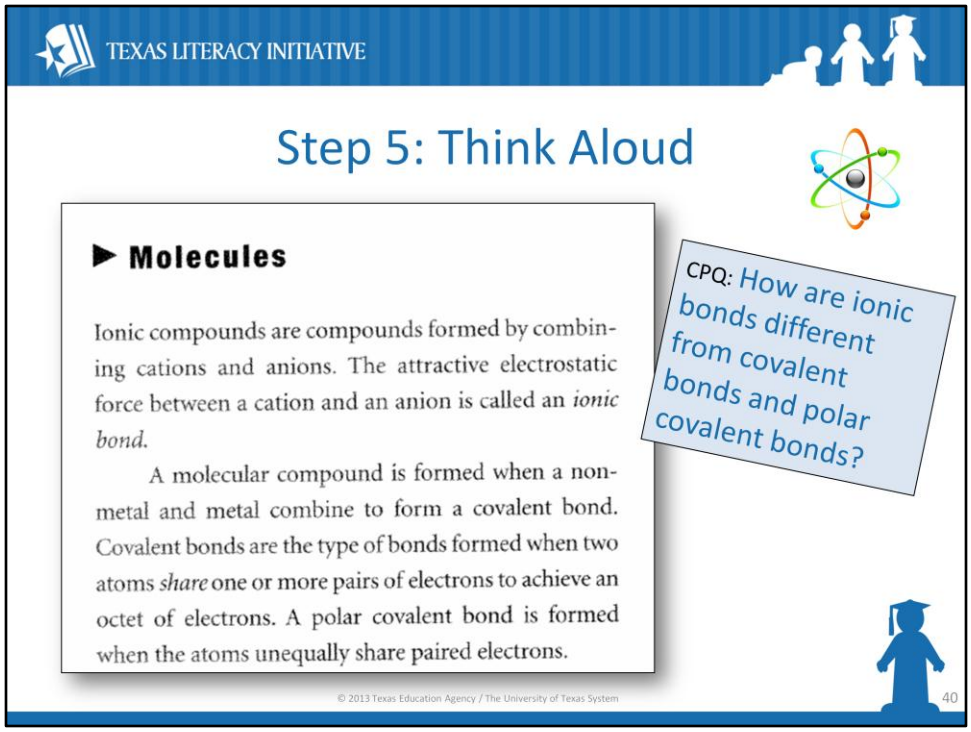
Our CPQ for this chunk of text is: What is the average speed of the kayak in still water and the speed of the current?

Read the problem.

Say: I'm making a connection to what has been taught in science. I know that you have been learning about currents. For example. I know that when you travel upstream against the current, you will be travelling slower than you would if you were in still water. The current acts as a force against the moving object. This helps me to know that when I go to solve this problem, I'll need to subtract when writing my equation for going upstream. The reverse is true for travelling down stream. The current will enable an object to more quickly than it would in still water. I'll need to add when writing my equation for going downstream.

Making a connection to what I've learned from science, helps me to think about how to solve

this problem.



Say: Let's consider a science example think-aloud. It might look something like this.

Today we're going to learn more about molecules. Before we talk about specific chemical bonds, we're going to talk briefly about the general types of molecules and how they are formed.
We're going to use the strategy of Making Connections to help us understand three types of molecules. Remember, when we make a connection, we connect something in the text to what we know in our background knowledge. When we make connections, it helps us to remember and understand new information better.

Our CPQ for this chunk of text is: How are ionic bonds different from covalent bonds and polar covalent bonds?

Read paragraph 1.

Say: The description of ionic compounds reminds me of something familiar. I can relate this information to what I know about magnets. Even though magnets deal with magnetic force, and ions deal with electrostatic force, I can still use my background knowledge of magnets to understand ionic compounds. Magnets have a positive and a negative end, and the opposites attract, pulling them together so that they join. The two magnets come together, side-by-side, just like words in a compound word. Cations are positive, and anions are negative. The opposite charges of the two ions create an electrostatic force which attracts them to each other so that they join side-by-side, to form a compound. We call this an ionic bond.

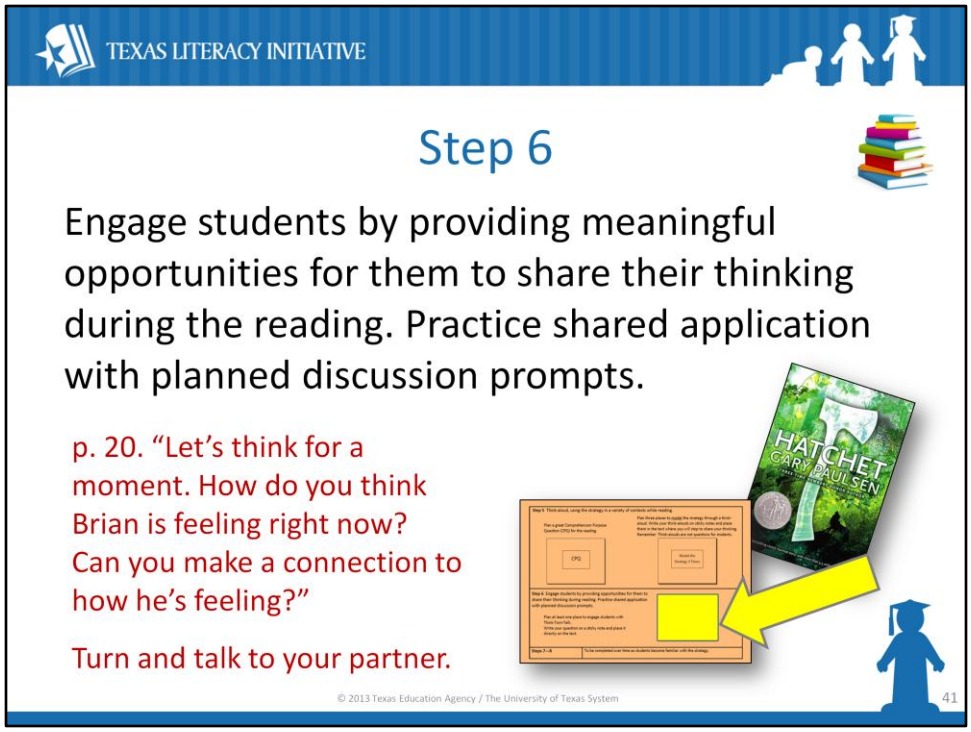
This is different from a molecular compound that forms a covalent bond.

Read paragraph 2

Let's think about covalent bonds first. The atoms that form covalent bonds don't join side-by-side, instead they share electrons. Let's relate this to something we know. Think about the words cooperate or copilot. What does the prefix co- mean? Co- means together or indicates partnership or equality. When two atoms come together, each with a single electron, neither gives up an electron, instead they share both electrons in an equal partnership. When they share in this way, both atoms will be stable as long as they stay together. We call this a covalent bond.

And then of course, we would continue working through the paragraph in a similar manner, helping students to see the connections we can make to help us understand complex text.

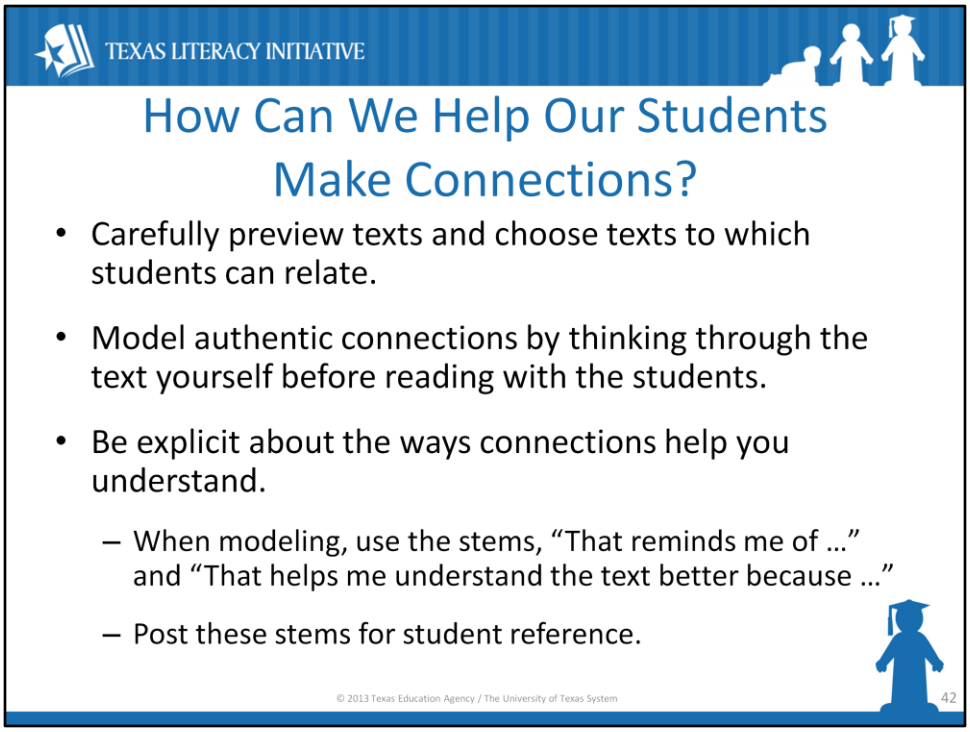
I would end my think-aloud lesson by saying something like this: Making connections to what I know in my background knowledge helped me to understand this text better. It also will help me to remember the differences between the various types of bonds.



Say: In Step 6 of the Cognitive Strategy Routine, students and teacher share responsibility for using the strategy. Though we continue to model some of the connections we have, we also ask students to share their connections with the class. We use the Think-Turn-Talk routine as a way to keep all students engaged and accountable for the learning. For example, as we continue to read chapter 2 of Hatchet, we might stop and use the following prompt so that students have the opportunity to apply the strategy:

Read the text in red on the slide.

We show our students that we value their authentic connections by recording them for the class to see. We might write them on chart paper or on sticky notes that we place in the text.

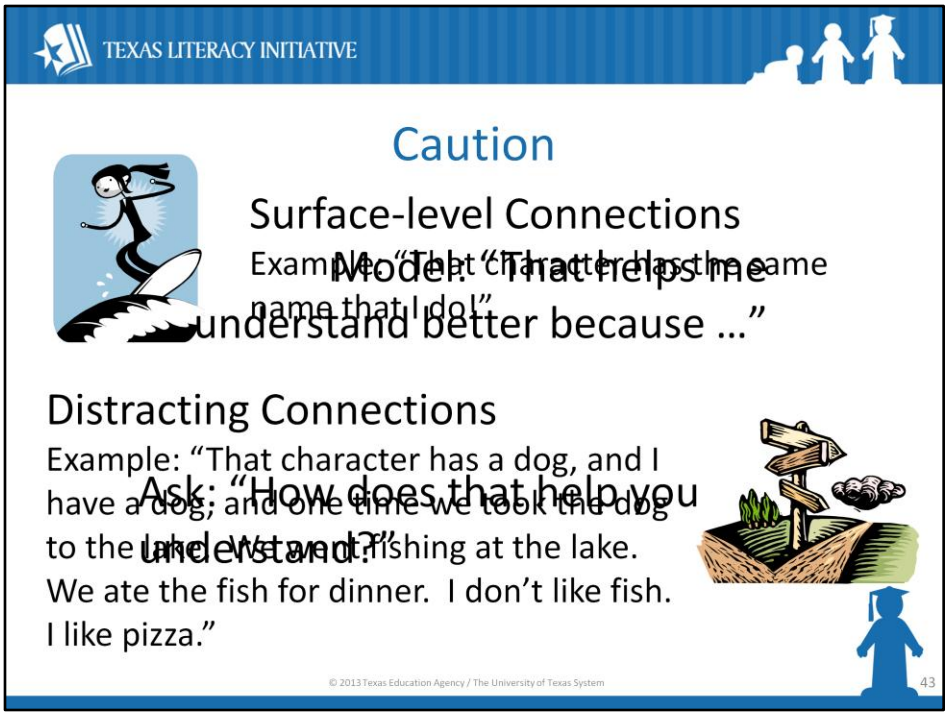


Say: How can we help our students make connections?

Read first bullet.

Say: Although in the future we want our students to be able to relate to many different texts, in the beginning texts "… should be chosen to be particularly well-suited to application of the specific strategy being learned" (Duke & Pearson, 2002). For example, we might choose books in which characters have emotions or experiences that students will find familiar. As they become more proficient at the strategy, we broaden the scope of texts to which they apply the strategy, or in other words, we "… move from close to home to more global issues or cultures and places further removed from most children's lives." (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Read next two bullets.



Say: Sometimes our students bring up connections that do not help us make meaning from text – in fact, they may bring up connections that take us away from understanding.

Click to reveal text box.

Say: When our students begin Making Connections, they often bring up surface-level connections.

Ask a participant to read the example on the slide.

Say: In the beginning, we encourage students to make all kinds of connections – although many teachers find that their students will make connections with no prompting at all! As our students become more proficient, we must steer them toward connections that lead us deeper into the text, rather than just "surfing" along the top of it.

Click to reveal text box.

Say: Another type of connection is a distracting connection.

Ask a participant to read the example on the slide.

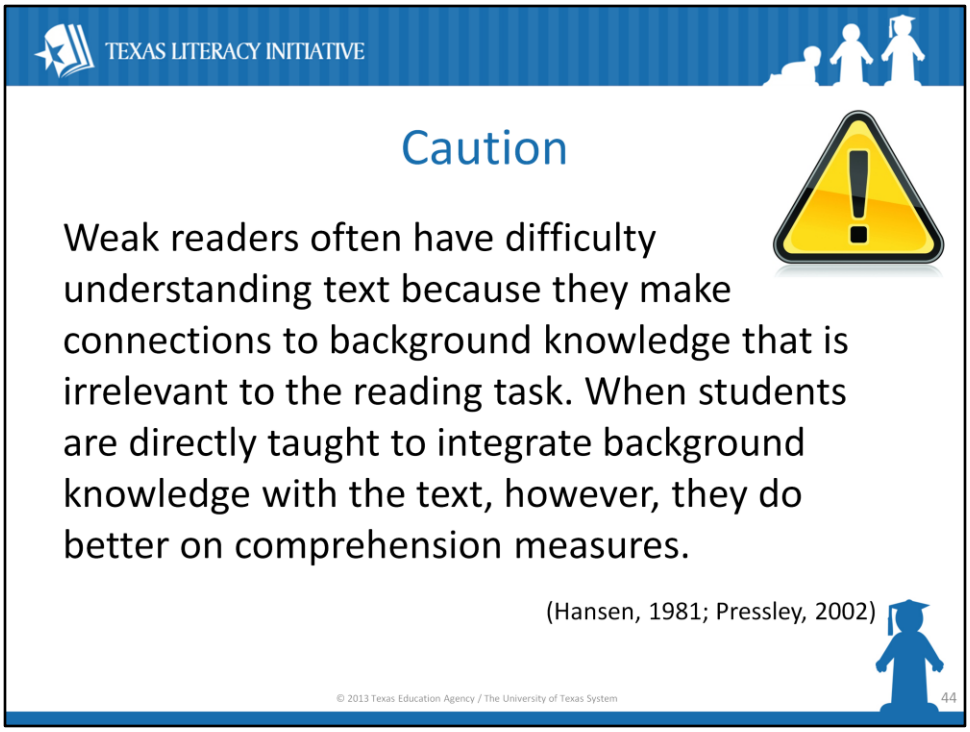
Say: As Harvey & Goudvis (2007) have said, "Distracting connections actually cause our minds to wander from the text and disrupt meaning. … There is nothing wrong with indulging a particular connection for a moment or two. The problem is continuing to read while doing it!"

So, how do we avoid the pitfalls of surface-level and distracting connections?

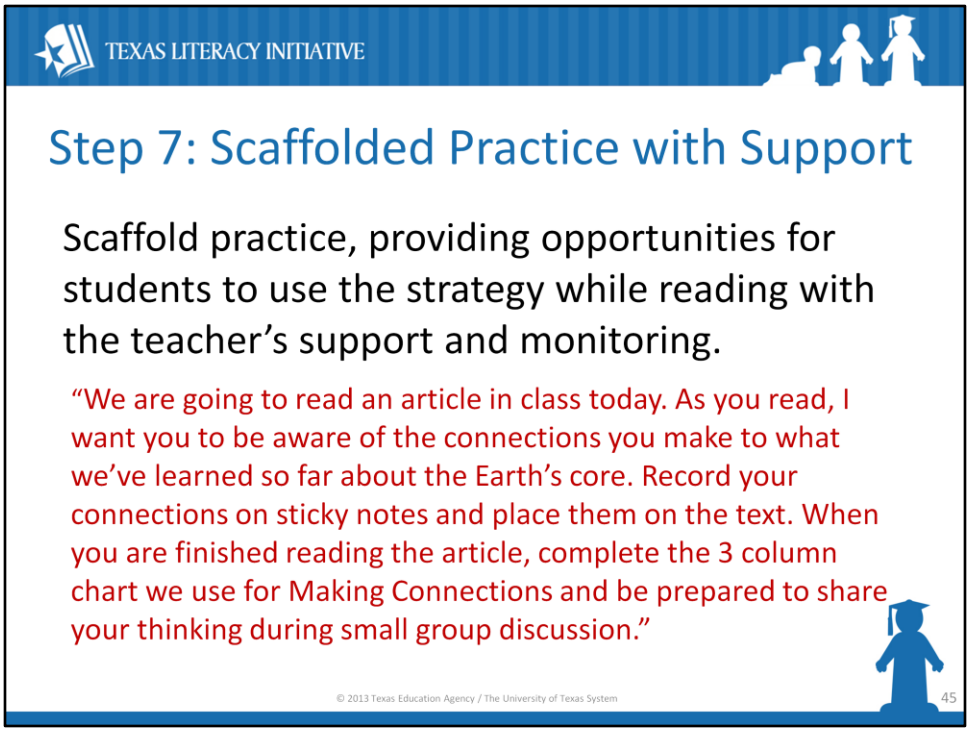
Click to reveal new text box.

Say: We must first model, using the stem "That helps me understand better because …" Once we have modeled many times, we can begin to ask our students to describe how their connections help them understand.

Say: We must remind students to be cautious of the distractors during testing. The distractors may look very much like the correct answer. Tell students to be sure and use the stem when faced with what may be a distractor.



Read slide.



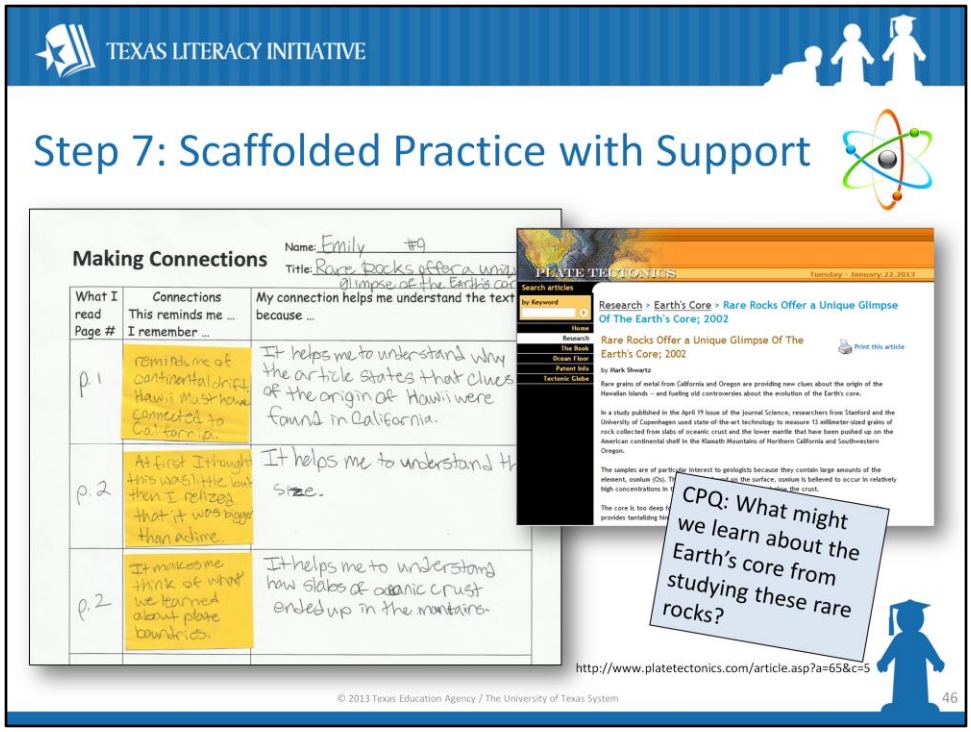
Say: Step 7 of the Cognitive Strategy Routine, is scaffolded practice with support.

Read the black text on the slide.

Say: In ELA, we might choose to model and practice application of the strategy while navigating the class read aloud text. In our example, this would be Hatchet. This type of instruction is not sufficient however. I also would be conducting small group reading instruction during part of the reading block, where I would have students in groups of 6-10 reading a book at an appropriate instructional level for the group, that dealt with a similar topic or theme.

In other content areas, I want to provide opportunities for students to use the strategy during class time so that I could offer support to those who need it. I might assign a short piece of text and have the students track their thinking on sticky notes. As students were reading, I would wander the classroom monitoring student work. I would stop and discuss with individual students, ask questions about their thinking, provide support to those who need it, and offer feedback when appropriate.

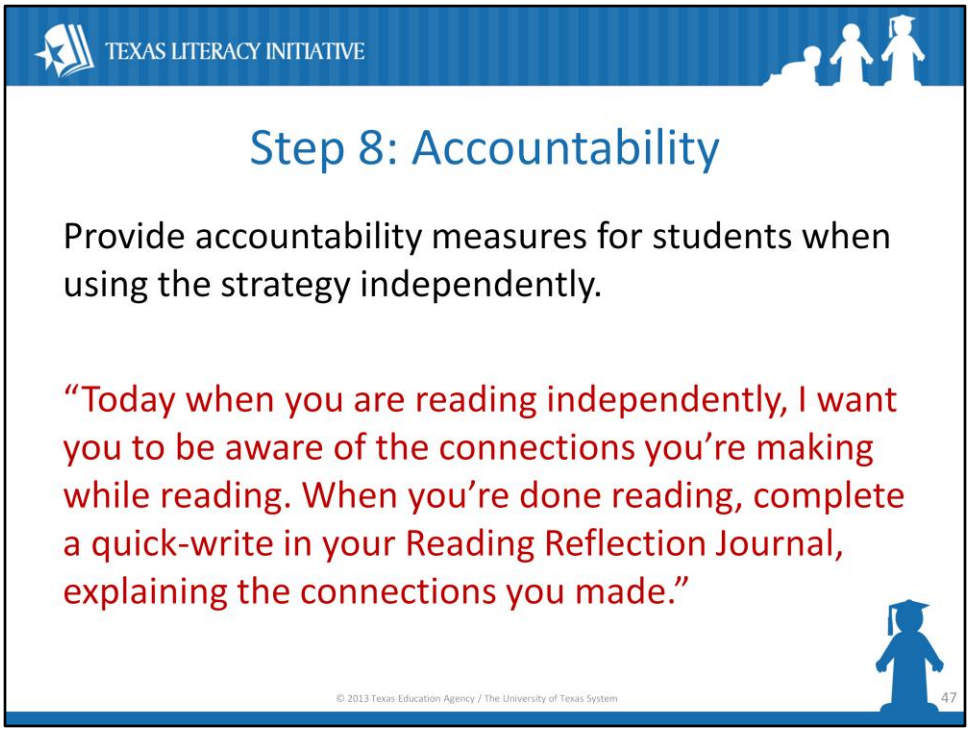
Read the red text on the slide.



Say: This is an example of what a student might record on a 3 column chart. They would take their sticky notes off of their copy of the text and place them on this strategy sheet. Of course, I would have modeled this for students during my think-aloud before I would expect them to complete it independently.

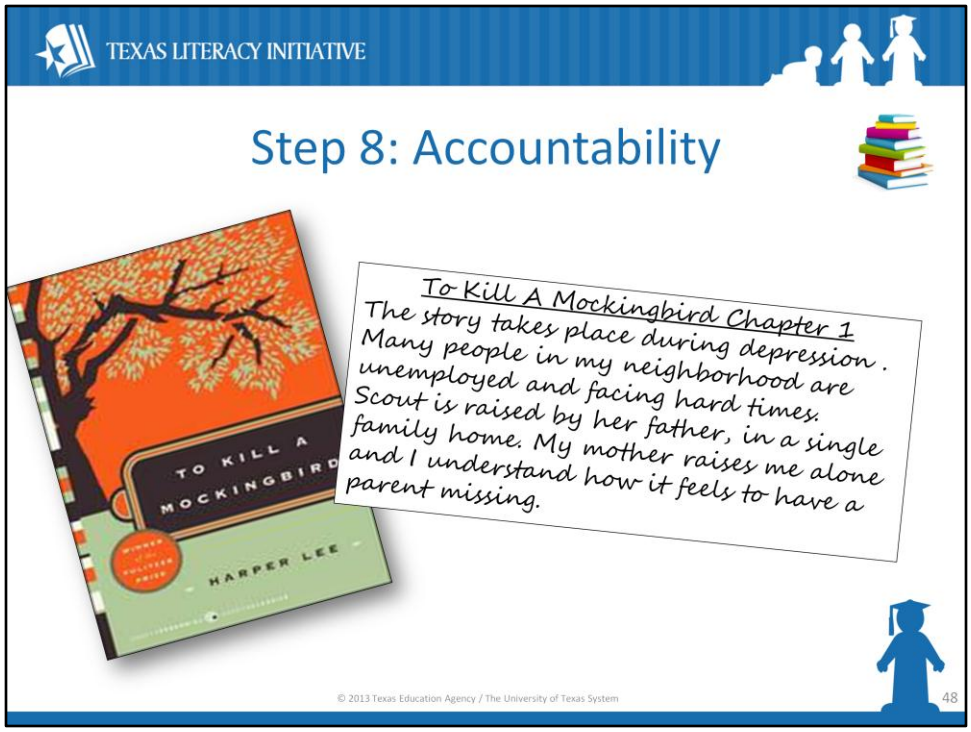
As we gradually release responsibility of the strategy to our students, we provide supports, or scaffolds, which will promote application by helping students to bring the strategy to a conscious level. "Learners can temporarily rely on these hints and suggestions until they create their own internal structures" (Scardamalia & Bereiter 1985) (Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996, p. 205). Once readers have internalized the strategy, they no longer need to rely on these scaffolds.

http://www.platetectonics.com/article.asp?a=65&c=5



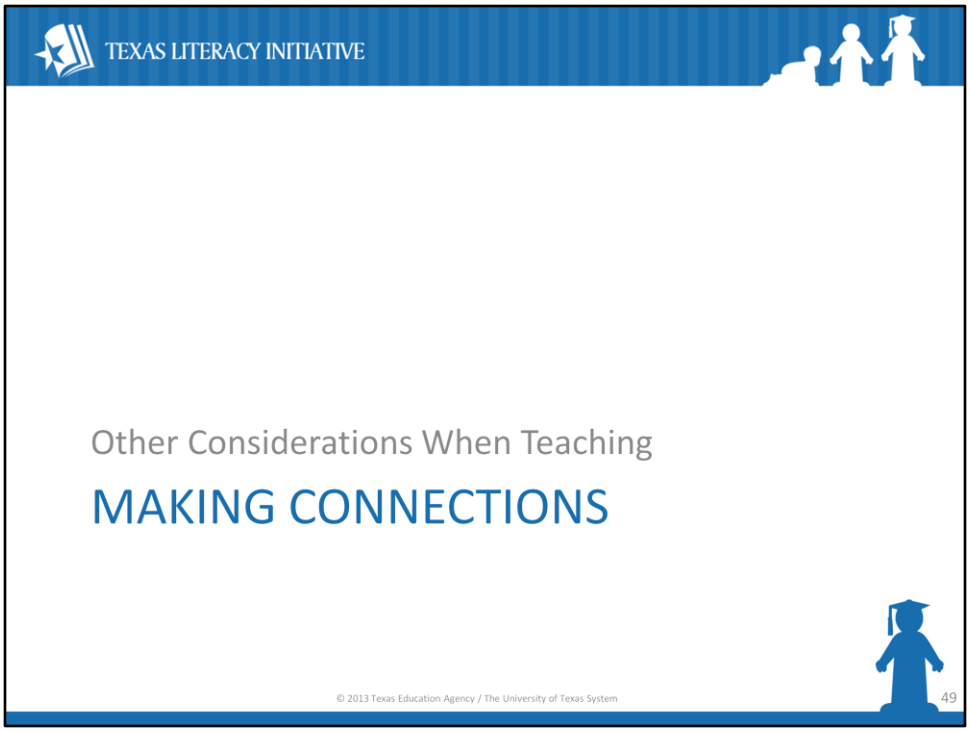
Say: In Step 8 of the Cognitive Strategy Routine, we ask students to continue using the strategy in their independent work. We also assess how they use the strategy and whether we will need to return to earlier stages of the routine.

Read the red text on the slide.

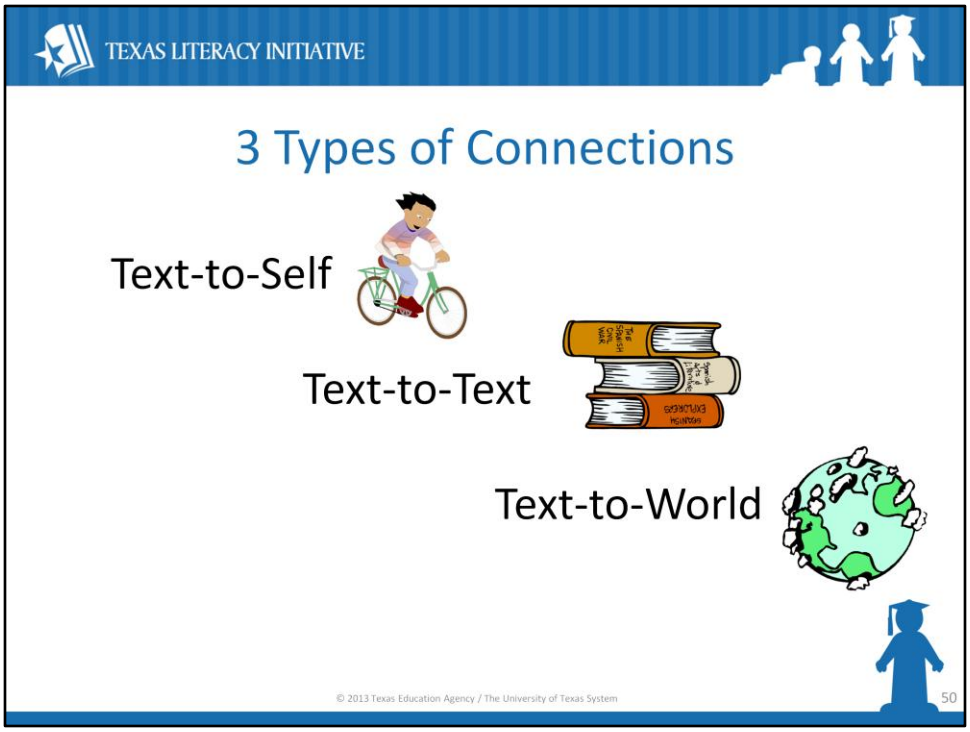


Say: Here is an example of a quick-write a student wrote during independent reading time.

Read example on the slide.



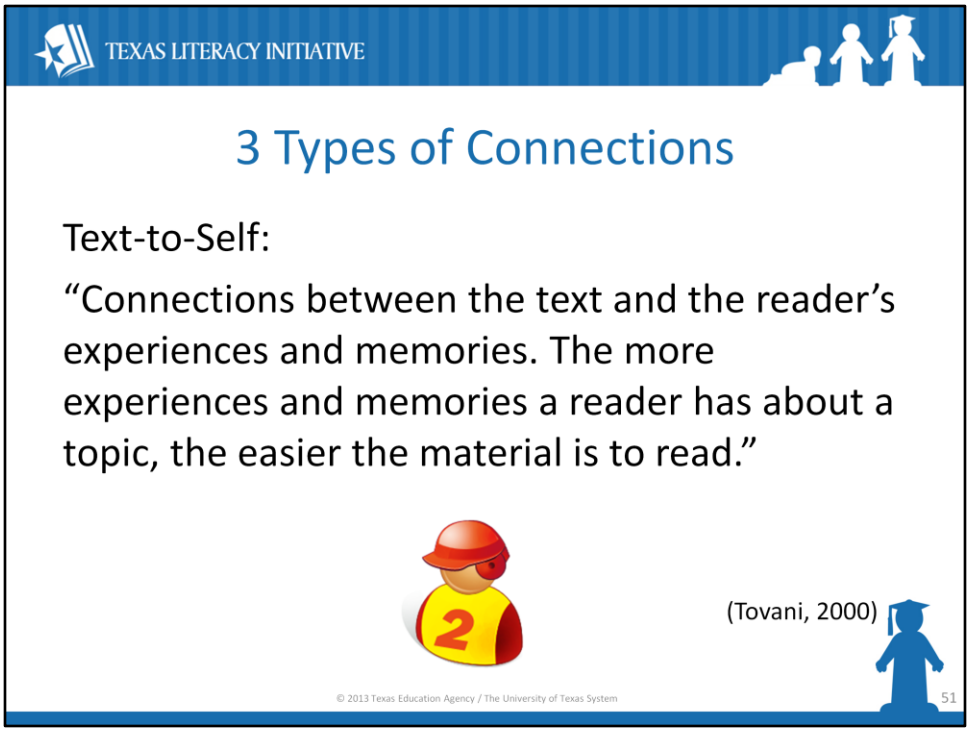
Say: Now that we've experienced how we would teach Making Connections following the Cognitive Strategy Routine, let's think about other aspects of teaching Making Connections that we should be sure to consider.



Say: There are three types of connections that readers make to text.

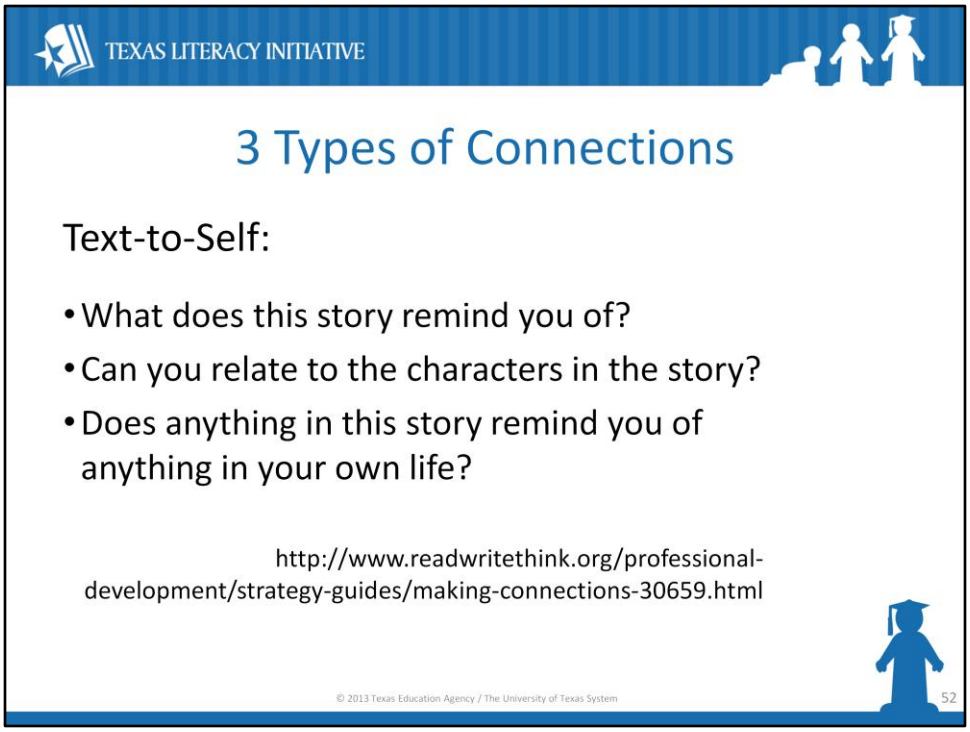
Read slide.

Say: Let's take a brief moment to understand these types of connections and how this understanding might impact our instruction.



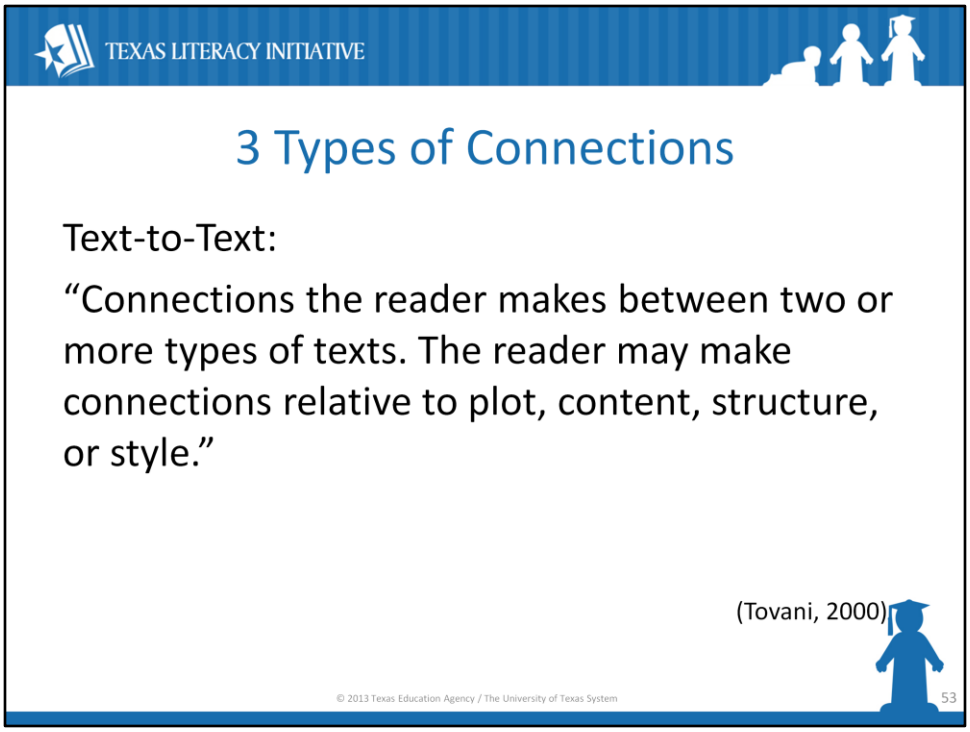
Read slide.

Say: The baseball example at the beginning of the session helped to reinforce how personal connections can impact comprehension.

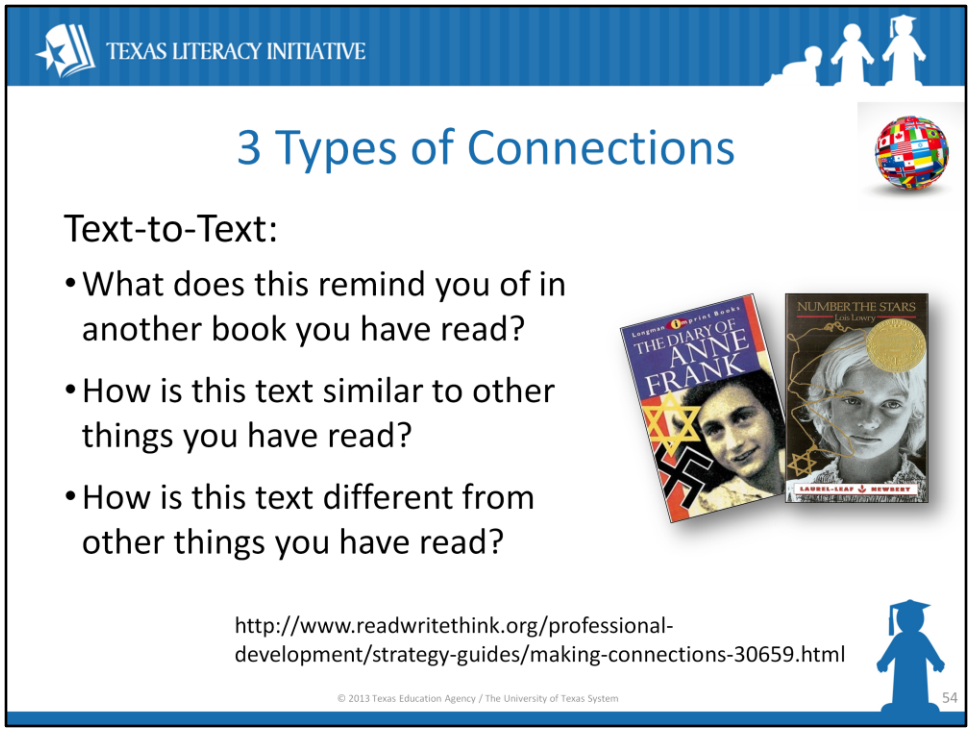


Say: Typically, we begin Making Connections instruction by focusing on text-to-self connections. For example, we ask students to think about the following:

- What does this story remind you of?
- Can you relate to the characters in the story?
- Does anything in this story remind you of anything in your own life?



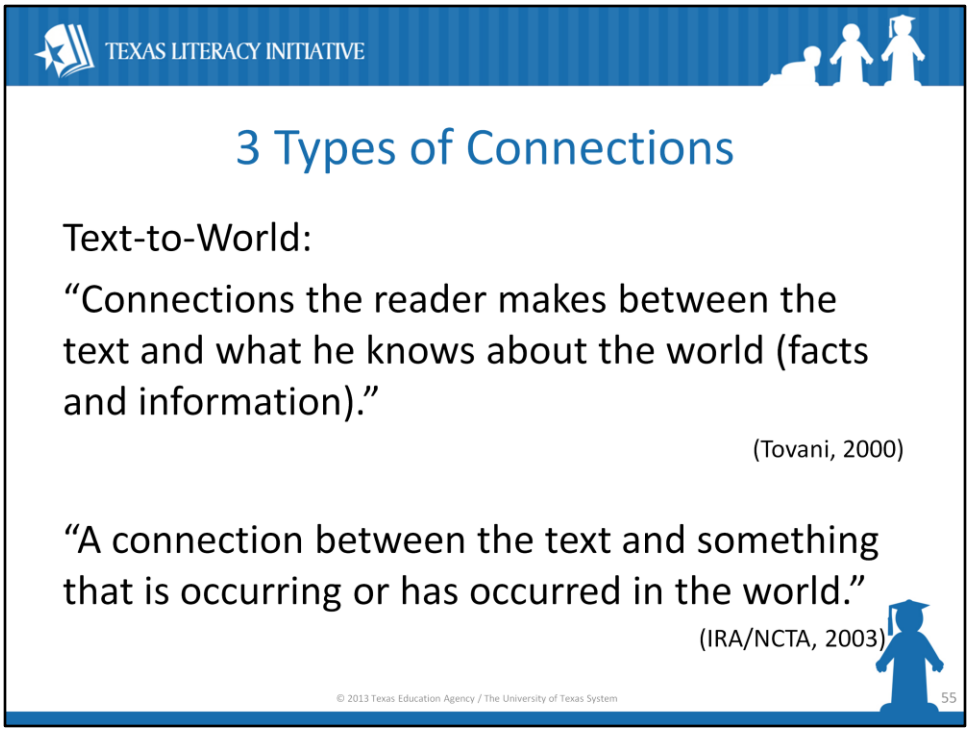
Read slide.



Say: Teachers might prompt students to make text-to-text connections by asking the following questions:

- What does this remind you of in another book you have read?
- How is this text similar to other things you have read?
- How is this text different from other things you have read?

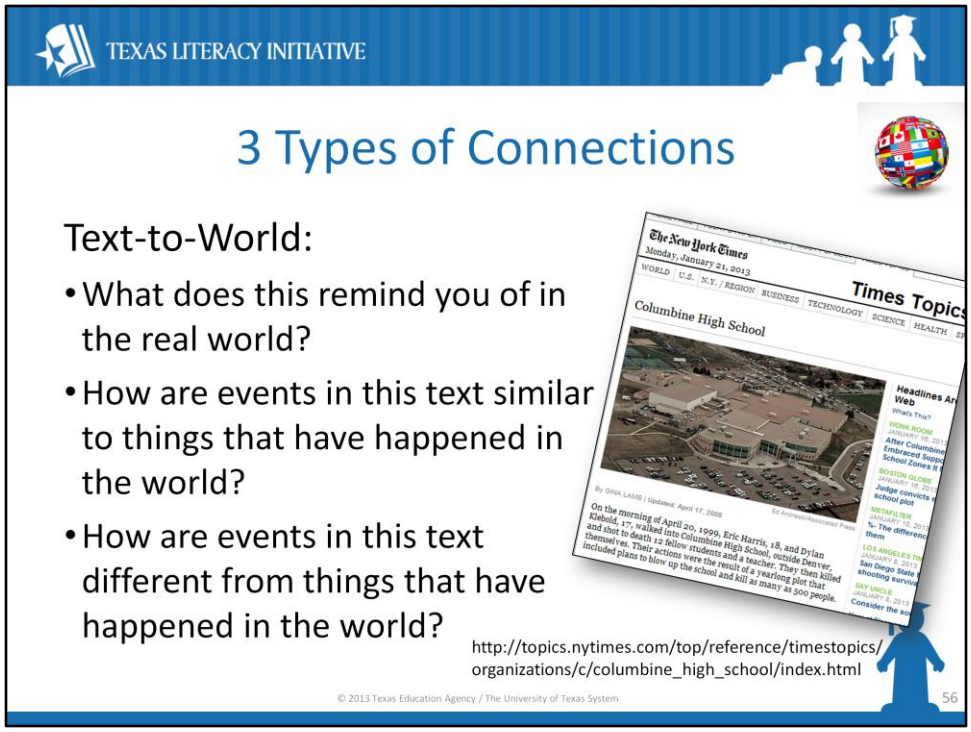
http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/making-connections-30659.html



Say: The third type of connection readers make is Text-to-World.

Read Slide.

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson228/world.pdf

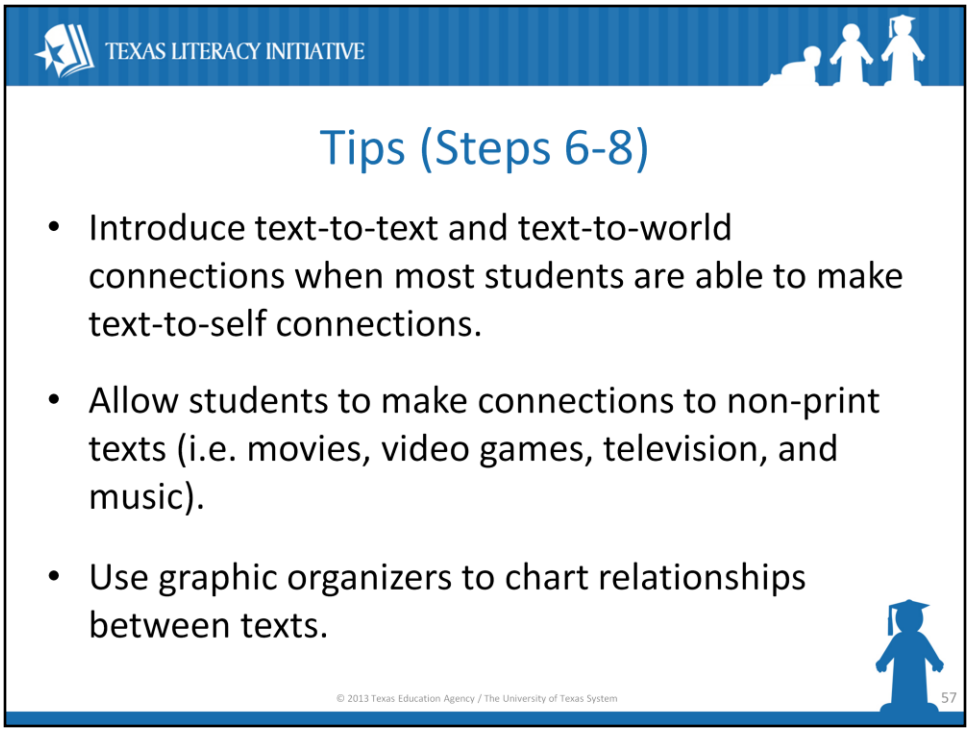


Say: Teachers might prompt students to make Text-to-World connections by asking the following questions:

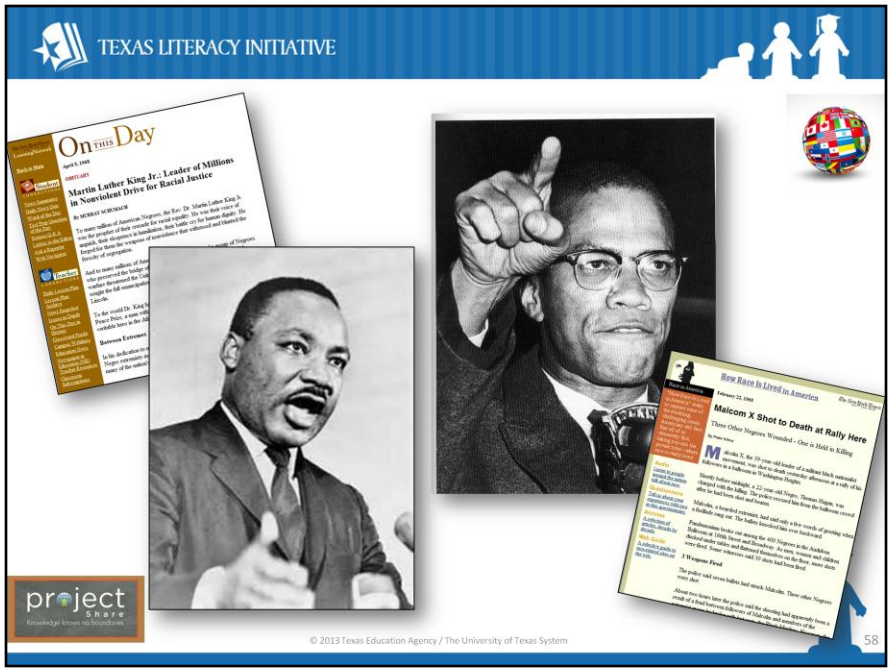
What does this remind you of in the real world?
How are events in this text similar to things that have happened in the world?
How are events in this text different from things that have happened in the world?

Adapted from
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson228/world.pdf

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine_high_school/index.html



Read slide.



Say: Let's look at a brief example of how we might use a graphic organizer to support student learning when making text-to-text connections.

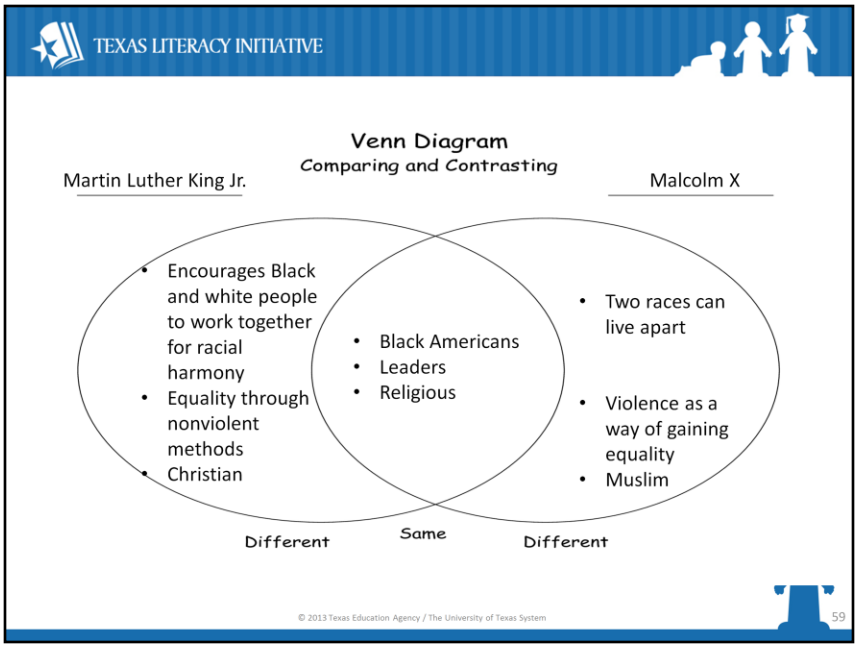
One TEKS from United States History Studies says, "The student understands the impact of the American civil rights movement. The student is expected to: compare and contrast the approach taken by some civil rights groups such as the Black Panthers with the nonviolent approach of Martin Luther King Jr.;

We might ask students to read articles about Martin Luther King Jr. and compare it to an article about Malcolm X.

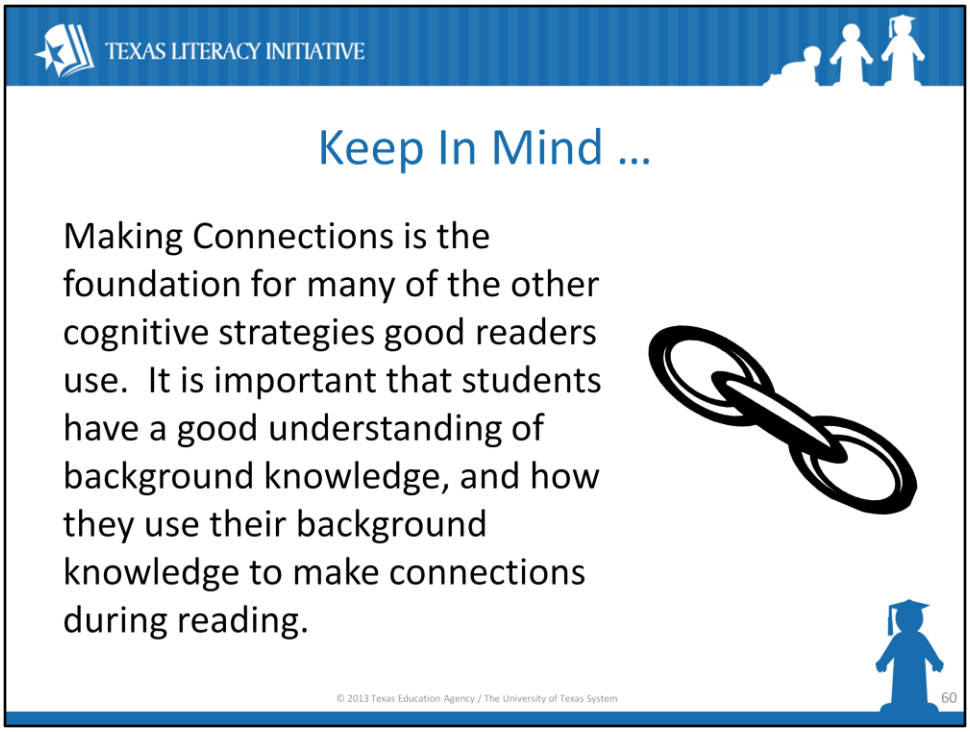
Presenter Notes:
The articles used for this activity can be found in Project Share within the NY Times Repository.

Kihss, P. (1965, February). Malcolm X shot to death at rally here. *The New York Times on the Web*. Retrieved from http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/race/022265race-ra.html

Schumach, M. (1968, April). Martin luther king jr.: Leader of millions in nonviolent drive for racial justice. *The New York Times on the Web.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0115.html

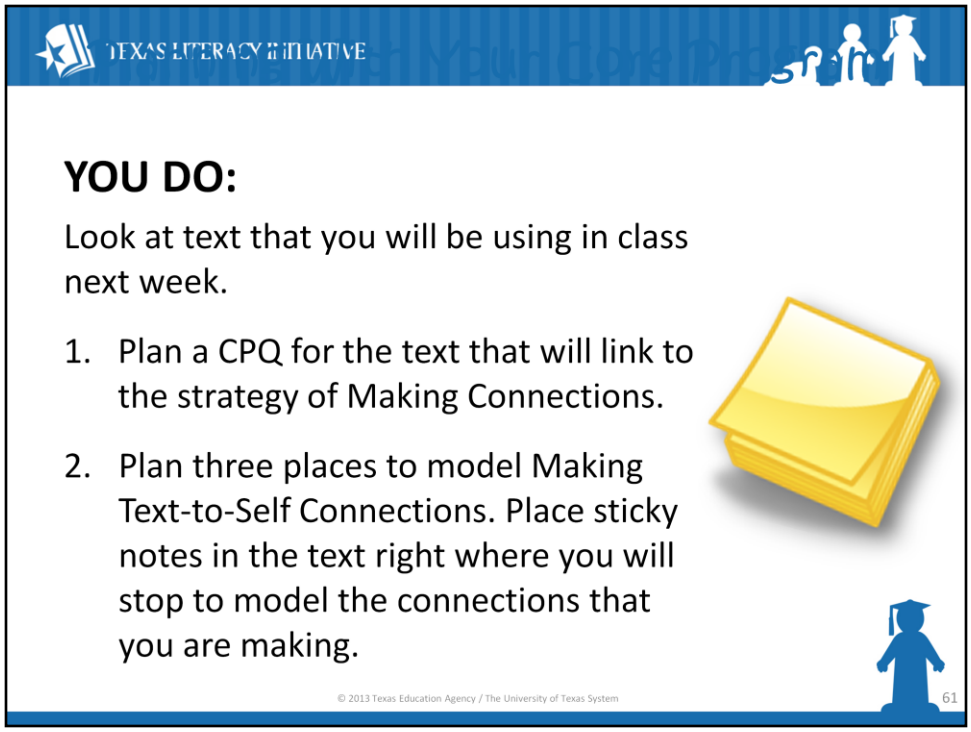


Say: We might track our text-to-text connections by using a Venn diagram graphic organizer like the one shown here. You might prefer to use other types of organizer for comparison as well. Remember that consistency helps students, so try to choose one version of a graphic organizer and stick with it.

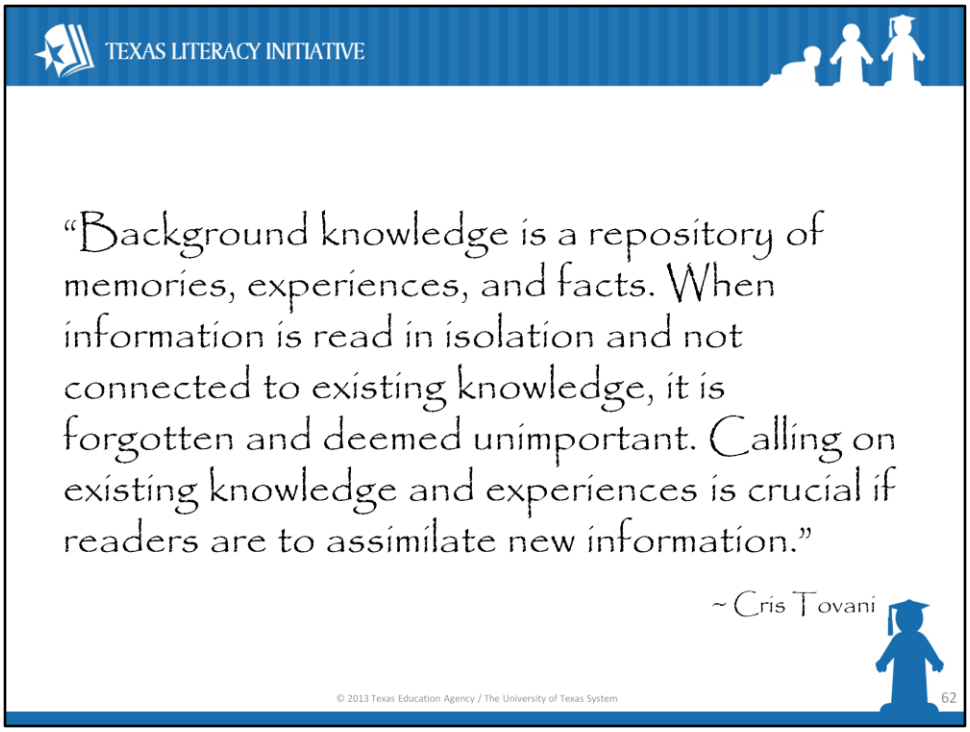


Read slide.

Say: Once students have a strong foundation in Making Connections, we can feel confident in moving on to teaching them to use other strategies in conjunction with Making Connections.



Read slide. Allow participants time to plan. Encourage participants to talk to others at their table and plan together. Provide support by walking to participant tables and engaging in discussion and asking/answering questions.



Say: Thank you for attending this session. Please feel free to ask any questions.

TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

References

Anderson, A. N.,& Maguire, J. (2008). *Texas and texans*. Dallas, Tex: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill Pub. Co.

Collins, Suzanne (2008). *The hunger games*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.

Dressler, C. & Kamil M. (2006). First- and second-language literacy. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), Developing literacy in second-language learners: A Rreport of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate.

Duffy, G., Roehler, L. Sivan, E., Rackliffe, G., Book, C., Meloth, M. (1987). Effects of explaining the reasoning associated with using reading strategies. *Reading Research Quarterly 22(3)*, 347-368.

Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical guidelines for the education of english language learners: Research-based recommendations for instruction in academic interventions*. Available at http://www.center oninstruction.org/files/ELL1-interventions.pdf

Franklin, K. L. (1997). *Lone wolf*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Frank, A. & Martin, C. (1989). *The diary of anne frank.* New York: Gardens Books.

Genesee F., Geva, E., Dressler, D., & Kamil, M. (2006). Synthesis/; Cross-linguistic relationships. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing literacy in second language learners: A report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

References

Hansen, J. (1981). The effects of inference training and practice on young children's reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly* , 391-417.

Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding.* York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

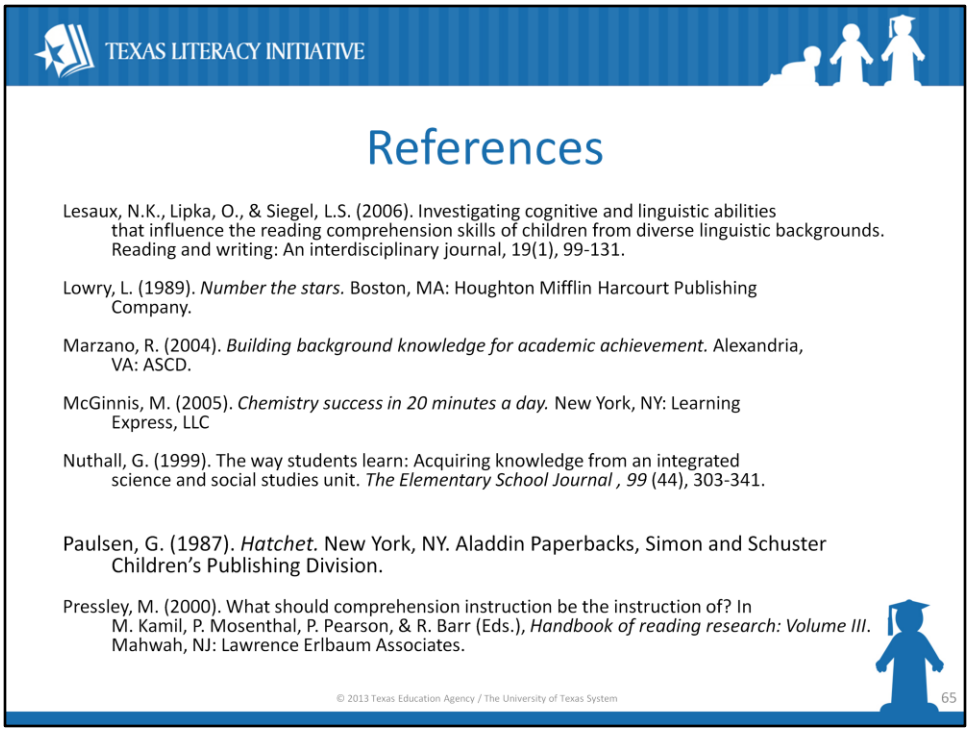
Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2007). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding.* York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Kihss, P. (1965, February). Malcolm X shot to death at rally here. *The New York Times on the Web*. Retrieved from http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/race/022265race-ra.html

Lamb, G. (2008, April). Columbine high school. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20110928111055_949.pdf

Larson, R., Boswell, L., Kanold, T. & Stiff, L. (2007). *Algebra 1: Texas Edition*. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, a Division of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Lee, Harper. (1988). *To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York, NY: Grand Central Publishing.



TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

References

Pressley, M. (2002). Comprehension strategies instruction: A turn-of- the-century status report. In C.C. Block & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices.* New York: Guilford Press.

Recht, D., & Leslie, L. (1988, March). Effect of prior knowledge on good and poor readers' memory of text. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(1), 16-20. Retrieved June 23, 2008, doi:10.1037/0022-0663.80.1.16

Roit, M. L. (2006). Essential comprehension strategies for English learners. In T.A. Young & N.L. Hadaway (Eds.), *Supporting the literacy development of English learners: Increasing success in all classrooms* (pp. 80-95). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Rosenshine, B., Meister, C., & Chapman, S. (1996). Teaching students to generate questions: A review of the intervention studies. *Review of Educational Research, 66*(2), 205.

Routman, R. (2003). *Reading Essentials: The specifics you need to teach reading well.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE

References

Scardamalia, M., &Bereiter, C. (1985). Fostering the development of self-regulation in children's knowledge processing. In S. F. Chipman, J. W. Segal, & R. Glaser (Eds.), *Thinking and learning skills: Research and open questions* (pp. 563-577). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schumach, M. (1968, April). Martin luther king jr.: Leader of millions in nonviolent drive for racial justice. *The New York Times on the Web.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0115.html

Simon, C. (n.d.) *Making Connections.* Retrieved January 17, 2013, from http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/making- connections-30659.html

Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Wilhelm, J. (2004). *Reading is seeing: Learning to visualize scenes, characters, ideas, and text worlds to Improve comprehension and reflective reading.* New York: Scholastic, Inc.