Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Jim Becker, Danielle Blood, Kathleen Hollenbeck, and Mackie Rhodes

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Edited by Kathleen Hollenbeck
Cover design by Maria Lilja
Interior design by Holly Grundon
Interior illustrations by Teresa Anderko

ISBN-10: 0-439-57294-0

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Printed in the U.S.A.
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Introduction

Welcome to Reading Response for Fiction: Graphic Organizers & Mini-Lessons! Designed for flexible use, these 20 graphic organizers promote reading response, guiding students to think about and analyze what they read and leading them to read with deeper engagement. By completing the organizers in this book, students receive practice in constructing, examining, and extending meaning; reflecting on the content of text; and refining their reading strategies.

Why Use Graphic Organizers for Reading Response?

Graphic organizers provide schemata: a way of structuring information or arranging key concepts into a pattern, enhancing comprehension and imparting useful learning strategies (Bromley et al., 1995). Organizers offer students an efficient way to direct their attention, record key information, display their thinking, and monitor their use of learning strategies.

Research has shown that graphic organizers help students to:

- connect prior knowledge to new information (Guastello, 2000).
- integrate language and thinking in an organized format (Bromley et al, 1995).
- increase comprehension and retention of text (Boyle & Weishaar, 1997; Chang et al., 2002; Moore & Readence, 1984).
- engage in mid- to high-level thinking along Bloom’s Taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, synthesis, and evaluation) (Dodge, 2005).

The reading response graphic organizers in this book focus on comprehension, reading strategies, story elements, and author’s craft. All of the organizers allow students to build upon their prior knowledge, use critical thinking skills, and express what they’ve learned in their own words.

How to Use This Book

The organizers in this book can be used in any order and lend themselves well to many forms of teaching: pre- and post-assessment, preparation for literature circles, and mini-lessons. They are suitable for use with the whole class, small groups, or individual students, and are ideal for homework or guided cooperative learning groups.

Each organizer targets a different skill or combination of skills, which is shown on each lesson page. At the top of the page, a purpose states the uses and benefits of the activity, and the suggestion for introducing the lesson helps set the stage and pique student interest. Step-by-step directions provide a guide for demonstrating how to use and complete the organizer. Also included is a helpful management tip, which recommends one or more specific ways to use the graphic organizer, and an activity that lets you take students a step further by building on the skills and strategies covered in the lesson or by using the organizer for a different purpose. Finally, to help you get started, books and resources that are referred to in the sample lesson—or that might be appropriate for that particular lesson—are listed in the literature link on the page.

““The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live: a live thing, a story.””

—Ursula LeGuin
Using a Graphic Organizer

Select the graphic organizer that best suits your instructional needs. Then follow these suggestions to prepare and use the organizer with students.

- **Test It.** Before using an organizer, give it a “trial run” on your own to experience the process firsthand. This will allow you to see how well the graphic works with the selected text. Make any modifications necessary to best meet the needs of your students (Egan, 1999).

- **Present It.** Determine the best method for presenting the graphic organizer. You might make a photocopy for use as a transparency on the overhead projector, or distribute paper copies to students to complete as you model its use. Keep a supply of frequently used organizers on hand for students to use independently.

- **Model It.** Research has shown that graphic organizers are most effective when the teacher presents and models the organizer first for the whole group (Bowman et al., 1998). To ensure greatest success, model the use of each organizer with the whole class before asking students to complete it independently.

**Helpful Hints for Success**

- You might choose a picture book or familiar fairy tale as your literature selection when introducing a reading response graphic organizer for the first time. With these, you can present an entire story in one lesson, allowing students to focus on the goal and structure of the organizer.

- Introduce the organizer before students read. That way, students will read with a strong sense of purpose and focus.

- Model the use of the organizer so that students will gain a clear understanding of its purpose and how to complete it.

- When analyzing text during a mini-lesson, think out loud. This will allow students to recognize and apply your strategies for greater reading comprehension.

- Provide adhesive note strips for students to mark passages that they will later refer to when completing their organizers.

- Urge students not to feel limited by the design of a graphic organizer. Demonstrate writing outside the lines and adding other shapes and lines when making new connections.

- Provide a rich selection of reading materials *and* a variety of reading response graphic organizers to use with them. This will help keep your reading program fresh and interesting.

As teachers model their own response to literature (through thinking aloud and use of graphic organizers), they make reading strategies explicit. Regular modeling, opportunities to practice and apply the strategies, and consistency in contexts allow students to transfer this knowledge to independent reading and assessment situations (Pardo, 2004).
Assessing Student Performance

Graphic organizers allow you to assess a student’s comprehension at a glance. You can use the organizers in this book to determine what students know, the depth of their understanding, what they need to know, what they retain after reading, and the connections they have made. For example, by examining students’ responses to Comparing Stories (page 10), you can determine their level of engagement, ability to identify literary elements, and breadth of thinking when making comparisons.

Students can also use graphic organizers to assess their own learning. For example, when completing Book Review Interview (page 36), students may realize they lack sufficient information for summarizing the plot of a story. A motivated learner will go back and reread to fill in the gaps.

Graphic organizers are a performance-based model of assessment and are ideal for including in student portfolios, as they require students to demonstrate both their grasp of the concept and their reasoning.

Connections to the Standards

This book is designed to support you in meeting the following reading standards outlined by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), an organization that collects and synthesizes national and state standards.

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

• Previews text (e.g. skims materials, uses pictures, textual clues, and text format).
• Understands level-appropriate reading vocabulary (synonyms, antonyms, homophones, multi-meaning words).
• Monitors own reading strategies and makes modifications as needed (recognizes when he or she is confused by a section of text, questions whether the text makes sense).

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.

• Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of literary passages and texts (fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fables, fantasies, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies, chapter books).
• Understands the basic concept of plot (main problem, conflict, resolution, cause and effect).
• Understands similarities and differences within and among literary works from various genres and cultures (in terms of settings, character types, events, points of view, role of natural phenomena).
• Understands elements of character development in literary works (differences between main and minor characters; stereotypical characters as opposed to fully developed characters; changes that characters undergo; the importance of a character’s actions, motives, and appearance to plot and theme).
• Makes connections between characters in simple events in a literary work and people and events in his or her own life.

References and Additional Resources


That Reminds Me!

**Purpose**
Students increase comprehension by connecting what they read to their own lives.

**Introducing the Activity**
Explain to students that actions or events in a story might remind them of experiences in their own lives. Point out that when readers make personal connections to the text, they understand more fully what they read. Then tell students that they will connect events from a book to their own personal experiences.

**Using the Graphic Organizer**
1. Choose a short story to read aloud to students. Provide copies for students to follow along as you read.
2. As you read, pause when you come to a part of the story that reminds you of an event in your life. Share with students what personal experience came to mind when you read that particular passage.
3. To model how to use the organizer, write a brief description of the story event on the left side of a book. Then write the personal experience that the event reminded you of on the right side.
4. Distribute copies of the organizer for students to complete independently. Have them continue reading the story on their own. Each time they reach a part that reminds them of a personal experience, have them record their connection on a book on the organizer.

**Taking It Further**
Have students compare the circumstances, setting, emotions, reactions, and so on of the event in the text to their own personal experiences. They might also make text-to-text and text-to-world connections by comparing events to those in other stories they’ve read or to current world events.

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**Literature Link**
*Almost Home* by Nora Raleigh Baskin (Little, Brown, 2005).

Twelve-year-old Leah has difficulty adjusting to living with her father and stepmother.
That Reminds Me!

Title: ________________________________

When I read this part: __________________________
I was reminded of: __________________________

When I read this part: __________________________
I was reminded of: __________________________