

Mars Rover Celebration

Internal Dialogues

Introduction

Good readers use a number of strategies in order to understand what they are reading. Often, when we read, we talk silently to ourselves about what we are reading and what we think about as we are reading. When we talk to ourselves silently as we read, we are using that is called our “inner voice”. Our inner voice is the silent talking that happens in our minds. Let me show you how this works. Part of the time, I will be reading. Part of the time, I won’t be reading but I will be telling you what I am thinking. I will be sharing my inner voice aloud with you. When I share my inner voice, I will touch my forehead, so you know.

(Read the following paragraph to the students. Internal dialogue is written in italics. When you read the internal dialogue, be sure to touch your head so your students know that you are saying aloud what is happening silently in your mind.)

Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system. *I know that.* Jupiter is so large that all of the other planets in the solar system could fit inside it. *WOW!! I knew it was big, but I did not know Jupiter is that big.* More than 1,000 Earths would fit inside Jupiter. Jupiter is also a gas planet. *Gas planet? What is that? I thought planets were made of rocks and water. Maybe the rest of the passage will tell me something about gas planets.* Its atmosphere is made up of mostly hydrogen gas and helium gas, just like the sun. These gases form the thick red, brown, yellow and white clouds we see on Jupiter’s surface. *Oh, so the surface of Jupiter is actually made of clouds. I guess there would be no way to land a spacecraft on Jupiter!!* One of Jupiter's most famous features is the Great Red Spot. It is a giant spinning storm, resembling a hurricane. *I remember seeing that red spot in pictures of Jupiter but I didn’t know it was a storm.* Jupiter is a very windy planet. Winds range from 192 mph to more than 400 mph. *Wow! That is really strong wind. I know the strong winds in tornados and hurricanes on Earth are closer to 200 miles per hour. I wonder how they measure the winds on Jupiter.*

As I was reading the paragraph, you probably realized that you do exactly the same thing when you read but you may not have ever paid much attention to this inner voice.

Today you will be reading some expository (or non-fiction) text about Mars. As you read, you will be learning some new and interesting information about Mars that you may want to think about or use when you develop the mission for your Mars Rover.

Be aware of your inner voice and pay attention to the things you are thinking about as you read. Write down the things you think will be important to remember or ideas you get about your own Mars Rover mission. Your inner voice can help you realize what parts of the text you are reading are interesting, important or confusing.

In addition, there are several things that you can do when you run into part of a text that you do not understand. These are:

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- Slow down and read more slowly;
- Re-read the part that was confusing, paying closer attention to the words;
- Keep reading to see if the next sentence or two will clarify the part that was confusing (like what I did when I was confused about “gas planet” in the example we just discussed).

Listen to your inner voice to know when your understanding of the material you are reading breaks down. You can then use one of the strategies we talked about to help you understand the text better.