

## Clarifying Substrategies

As students read, they often come across information that breaks down their comprehension. Something confuses them and prevents them from understanding what they are reading. When this happens, good readers try to clear up the confusing information to restore comprehension. The Reading Edge 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition teaches students to call this process and the strategy they use clarifying.

As in levels 4–8 of the Reading Edge 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Unit 1 of Level 2-3 introduces the clarifying process to students. Through the use of video and teacher modeling, students learn a variety of strategies they can use to clarify difficult words, phrases, sentences, and passages. Then, the following units each focus on specific clarifying substrategies at the word/phrase level and the sentence/passage level. Modeling for the unit specific substrategy is provided during Interactive Read Aloud, however students may use whichever strategy is most helpful to them during Team Talk. The clarifying substrategies covered are:

- **Sound blending and chunking:** students learn to break words down into individual letter sounds and word parts to help them pronounce and recognize difficult words.

"It was a peaceful..." Hmm, this next word is giving me some trouble. When I think about the clarifying strategies we're using in this unit, I think blending the sounds will work best here since it's such a short word. I'll break the word down into its individual letter sounds, and then put them together. (Model saying *s-p-r-i-n-g*, emphasizing each letter sound. Then say it twice more with increasing speed.) The word is *spring*, I recognize that now. It's the season between winter and summer. This is usually a season with nice weather.

- **Reread, ask for help, and read on:** students recognize when they have not understood something they read and return to the difficult section of the text. They may just need to reread the sentence, or read on for more information that explains the difficult section. They also learn to mark the text and turn to their partners and team for help.

"On the lowest deck you can see the squash court and the swimming pool." I'm uncertain of the word *squash*. When I think about it, I know that a squash is a type of vegetable. But I don't think that the word *squash* has that meaning in this context, so I'll use the clarifying strategies that we are focusing on in this unit.

First, I'll reread the paragraph to see if there are any clues to the meaning of the word *squash* that I may not have picked up on the first time I read this page (reread page 7 aloud).

OK, now I realize that the paragraph directs me to look at the illustration of the inside of the ship on pages 6 and 7. As I look at the illustration, I can see that the lowest deck shows two people with racquets in a room hitting a ball. It looks like they are playing a sport like tennis to me. Maybe in 1912, squash was a really popular sport. That makes sense.

So, in this case, rereading the text and paying close attention to the illustration on this page helped me to clarify the word *squash*.

## Clarifying Substrategies, cont.

- **Use context clues:** students learn to use clues and information from surrounding text and text features to figure out the meaning of difficult words or passages.

I really am not sure what the word *carpenter* means. I think I've heard the word before, but I am really drawing a blank on what it means. I'm going to read ahead and see if the text gives me any clues about what this word means. (Read the rest of page 11 aloud.)

Okay, in this last sentence, the father says that he can build fine wood houses. I think that maybe the word *carpenter* means someone who builds with wood. That makes sense because the father says earlier that holes in the ground are for rabbits and snakes. I'm glad I found some clues in the text that helped me clarify the word I had trouble with.

- **Use other resources and background knowledge:** students learn to make use of dictionaries, thesauruses and their own knowledge to figure out the meaning of difficult sections of text.

OK, I'm a little confused by the phrase "banks of a river." I know that a bank is a place where people have their money, but this meaning doesn't work for this context. To clarify the meaning of the word *banks* in this context, I will use a dictionary to help me. (Model finding banks in the dictionary.)

I see that the word *banks* has several different meanings. The one that I think works best in this context is "the higher ground that is along the edge of a river, stream, etc." That makes sense here, because the text is talking about the family living on the banks of a river, and I see that the teepees are very close to the river. So this means that the family lives on the higher ground along the edge of the river.

- **Literary text structures:** students learn how they can use story elements, such as characters, setting and plot events to help clarify difficult sections of text.

Hmm, there is a word I don't quite understand from this passage in the text. The word is *sultan*. What is a sultan? I think I read some clues about the setting that might help me figure this out. On page 7, there is some narration that tells me that there is a palace in the land of Al Kal'as. I know that the word *palace* is another word for *castle*. Kings usually live in castles, so a sultan must be a kind of king. I can check my understanding by rereading some other clues. It says the sultan was a powerful ruler. A king rules over a country, so it makes sense that Sultan Shadid is the king of Al Kal'as.

- **Informational text structures:** students learn how they can use the way authors organize information in texts (compare and contrast, causes and effects, main ideas and supporting details) to help clarify difficult sections of text.

Okay, after reading this section, I'm not sure I understand the word *charmer*, but I can use the main idea text structure to help me clarify this word. I know the topic is snakes. The main idea from these pages is the relationship between snakes and people. I read that the snake charmer seems to make a cobra sway to music. The text also says that snakes can't hear music and that the snake moves when the man moves. To the crowd watching the man make the snake dance, it seems like the snake is under a spell and seems hypnotized. The snake charmer makes the snake seem as though it likes the movement and music. So a charmer must be a person who is able to please or attract snakes.