

## Small Group Strategy Lessons?

Strategy lessons are times for students to practice new strategies or review strategies they've learned before, or you can preteach strategies to students who need a jump-start before the strategy is introduced to the class. The goal is to bring the students step-by step to independence.

### What can be Taught in a Strategy Lesson?

Strategy lessons are versatile-you can use them to teach comprehension, fluency, word work, or any other skill or strategy.

### How Much Time Should I Plan for a Strategy Lesson?

12-20 Minutes depending on student progress and performance.

### How Are Groups Formed:

Groups are formed based on need. Groups may be comprised of students who have different reading levels. Reading levels are not the guiding factor for groups-specific skill or strategy deficiencies are what determine the make-up of the group.

**How Many Students:** Bring 3-4 students to the table who need work with the same reading skill or strategy. Students bring their own self-selected texts. Alternatively, teachers may provide a text. This is especially the case when teaching a strategy that students have chronically demonstrated failure when attempting to apply the strategy.

### How Often Should I Pulled Students To The Table?:

Gather the neediest student every day for small group work. More experienced students should be meet in small group 2-3 time each week.

### Are The Same Students Always Together?:

No! When students have progressed to independence they exit the group.

## Strategy Lesson Progression

- **Launching the Lesson:** Begin the lesson by establishing a clear purpose and a connection to the ongoing work or the goal established for the student. If a goal has not been established do so now. Tell the children why they've been pulled together for the lesson. It is helpful to provide an orientation to the students to let them know what they have been doing well and why they've been gathered. Whenever possible, try to offer a compliment to reinforce a strength that the student has shown you. It's important that the compliment is not general, like, "Great

job reading!” but instead gives a specific reasons as to what they’ve been doing and why those reading behaviors will not work well. Also specifically identify what work needs to be done in order for the student to become independent when apply the strategy to their reading. For example, you might say something like, “ When we have been reading, you seem to not notice certain actions by the character that will help you understand the character’s traits. When we read about Poppleton’s actions you didn’t realized he liked to have time alone. Which explains why he got so frustrated with Cherry Sue who kept inviting him over. Noticing that behavior would have helped you understand why he behaved inappropriately when he soak her with the hose.

- **Teach:** State the teaching point. Depending on the strategy you are teaching, consider on the level of up-front support. For example, if the strategy has been recently been introduced to the learners you can provide a brief demonstration to model again your thinking process. If students have worked with the strategy previously provide concrete examples, or explanations.
- If the student’s self-selected book does not provide sufficient opportunities to teach and practice the strategy provide a text for the students. The teacher determines how the **teach** part will go . It depends on how much support students need. If, for example, the mini-lesson addressed the strategy, perhaps all that will be needed is a brief example or explanation. If using a demonstration keep it focused and short.
- **Actively Engage:** This is the part of the strategy lesson where the teacher coaches each students in their own self-selected independent reading books, or, when you’re not sure their book will provide an opportunity to practice the strategy, prepare a text for them. The teacher moves from student to student providing differentiated support scaffolded to meet the needs of each student. Spend 1-2 minutes with each student. The time can be split into two or more brief sections with each students depending on the student needs. Sometimes it is best to offer a coaching tip and move on to another student returning again to the previous student to offer additional support. Move around coaching as the group practices and offer feedback.
- **Link:** Before students return to work independently to apply the strategy, deliver the message that you expect them to continue working to apply the strategy independently until you meet again. Tell the students what you expect them to do and provide a tangible reminder such as the target strategy written on a sticky note.  
The key is to invite students to continue working independently, applying and reapplying the strategy practiced in new contexts.

## How much Support is Given Prior to the Practice and Coaching?

- **Lean** when the strategy has been practiced before or following a mini-lesson. State the strategy only.
- **Medium** when students need a quick reminder, or you want to allow more time for practice and coaching. If you know those students only require a reminder.
- **Heavy** when teaching a new strategy, or when the application of the strategy in a new text looks different from the ones the students are reading. If you decide that students need and could benefit from seeing another think-aloud.

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