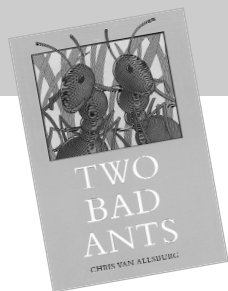


ACTIVATE AND APPLY PRIOR KNOWLEDGE



Two Bad Ants

Chris Van Allsburg

FOCUS THE LEARNING

Introduction: As readers, we are constantly applying "prior" knowledge to assist our comprehension. The key is to do it consciously . . . to wonder with our inner voice, "What do I know that can help me understand this?" As we read *Two Bad Ants* by Chris Van Allsburg, you are going to be challenged to use your prior knowledge of ants and of common substances to see things through the perspective of an ant.



Think together. What do you know about ants?

INTERACTIVE READ-ALoud

Model and Guide Practice

READ PAGES 4 AND 5. I am activating my prior knowledge. I know that ants are hard workers and that they go fairly long distances looking for food and bringing it back to the nest. I also know that the queen is central to their survival, as she lays all of the eggs for the colony. They have every reason to keep her happy. I am wondering what the crystal might be. Knowing ants are small, it must be something very tiny.

READ PAGES 6–11.



Think together. Use your prior knowledge and the illustrations. Where are they? What did they come through, and what are they climbing?

READ TO PAGE 15.



Think together. Combine your prior knowledge with the clues in the book. What do you know?

CONTINUE TO THE END. Pause frequently to give partners time to consider their prior knowledge and to consciously use it to assist comprehension.

END OF STORY REFLECTION

Wasn't that fun! We were able to use our prior knowledge to unravel so many things that remained a mystery to the ants.



Share with your partner. At which points in the story did you feel that your prior knowledge was most helpful?



SHARE THE LEARNING

Focus on Activating and Applying Prior Knowledge

Tip for Share the Thinking



Place the page about bats on the overhead, covering the chart. Ask students to begin by activating their prior knowledge about bats. Then uncover one section of the chart at a time and ask them to decide if the information is new or was in their prior knowledge bank. At the end, ask them to summarize their knowledge of bats and consider the role played by their prior knowledge.

What do you know about bats?

Information	Prior Knowledge	New Information
Bats look like mice with wings. They look like birds, too, but they are not.		
They give birth to live babies and nurture them with milk. Bats are the only mammals that can fly.		
Bats' wings have no feathers—they are covered with skin like a human arm. The skeletal system of the wing is much like the human arm and hand. The "fingers" support the wing, and the thumb is like a little claw at the top of the wing.		
People have many strange ideas about bats. Bats do not attack people. They do not get stuck in people's hair. In fact, most bats can be helpful to us because they eat insect pests such as mosquitoes.		

What do you know about bats now?

Tip for Readers Theater Script



Have partners read "Grandpa" and use the descriptive language to create sensory images. Should this script be read quickly or slowly? Have students consider strategies for their presentation. For example, in a team of four students, each person could take four parts. Present "Grandpa" for other teams. Remind students that prior knowledge isn't just about what we learn from books. Our life experiences shape prior knowledge.

Grandpa
by Linda Ward Beech

Voice 1: Grandpa was grizzled and old with gray hair that tangled like seaweed.

Voice 2: and the deep crinkly wrinkles that come from living a life outdoors.

Voice 3: His chin was stubbled with pokey whiskers.

Voice 4: and a withered old scar ran from the corner of his mouth toward his ear.

Voice 5: When he smiled, his eyes crinkled up and his whole face got into the action.

Voice 6: Grandpa's smile wasn't just about his mouth.

Voice 7: When he smiled, the wrinkles in his weathered face scrunched up into this huge, glowing beacon that made you want to smile right back.

Voice 8: His smile was like a huge hug that was powerful enough to make you feel good even on days when life wasn't so great.

Voice 9: and you felt like a crumpled up paper lunch bag.

EXTEND THE LEARNING

- ☆ Take time in science, social studies, and math to have students activate prior knowledge before instruction.
- ☆ Have students pause before independent reading to activate prior knowledge. Later, have them compare what they knew before and after reading.
- ☆ Use modified KWL (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned) experiences to support conscious activation of prior knowledge.
- ☆ Have students write summaries before and after reading, and then compare their knowledge.
- ☆ Engage students in reading cartoons and comic books to use prior knowledge to infer meaning.
- ☆ Have students meet with partners in a younger grade and do a think-aloud with a picture book to help the younger child activate and apply prior knowledge.
- ☆ Encourage students to share special memories of relatives, places they liked to play when they were very young, or feelings they had at a special time.

ASSESS THE LEARNING

- During small group instruction, observe to see if students can consciously activate and apply prior knowledge and explain how it impacted their learning.
- Confer with readers during independent reading to assess their ability to integrate prior knowledge with new information.
- Assess prereading and postreading summaries to check for ability to integrate new information with prior knowledge.

INFUSION OF FORMAL LANGUAGE

Test-style language

Prior knowledge is the set of understandings you have	The illustrations in this book reflected the perspective of
A. already stored in your brain.	A. the reader.
B. after a learning experience.	B. the ants.
C. during reading.	C. the author.
D. when you talk to someone else.	D. the man in the story.



What do you know about bats?

Information	Prior Knowledge	New Information
<p>Bats look like mice with wings. They look like birds, too, but they are not.</p>		
<p>They give birth to live babies and nurture them with milk. Bats are the only mammals that can fly.</p>		
<p>Bats' wings have no feathers—they are covered with skin like a human arm. The skeletal system of the wing is much like the human arm and hand. The "fingers" support the wing, and the thumb is like a little claw at the top of the wing.</p>		
<p>People have many strange ideas about bats. Bats do not attack people. They do not get stuck in people's hair. In fact, most bats can be helpful to us because they eat insect pests such as mosquitoes.</p>		

What do you know about bats now?



Grandpa

by Linda Hoyt

Voice 1: Grandpa was grizzled and old with gray hair that tangled like seaweed

Voice 2: and the deep crinkly wrinkles that come from living a life outdoors.

Voice 3: His chin was stubbled with pokey whiskers,

Voice 4: and a withered old scar ran from the corner of his mouth toward his ear.

Voice 5: When he smiled, his eyes crinkled up and his whole face got into the action.

Voice 6: Grandpa's smile wasn't just about his mouth.

Voice 7: When he smiled, the wrinkles in his weathered face scrunched up into this huge, glowing beacon that made you want to smile right back.

Voice 8: His smile was like a huge hug that was powerful enough to make you feel good even on days when life wasn't so great

Voice 9: and you felt like a crumpled up paper lunch bag.