

Strategy 6: Building Background Information Implementation Guide

Overview

Social studies teachers find the Predicting and Confirming Activity (PACA) very compatible with their content. The purpose of the strategy is to help build background information when students are going to read about something they know very little about so that when they read a selection, they will be more successful and have a context for understand the ideas presented. For students to learn anything new, they must connect it in some way to something they already know.

The Predicting and Confirming Activity uses student predictions to set a purpose for reading. Students make these predictions based on an initial set of information provided by the teacher, even if they have very little knowledge about the topic to be studied. Given additional information, students can revise their predictions (or hypotheses) and pose them as questions to be answered during reading.

The Strategy in Action

Students should complete the following steps to practice the strategy. Be sure to pass out copies of Activity Guide 6 before students begin their work.

Step 1: Provide Some Initial Information and Pose a General Question. A word list and a question is usually enough to assist students in making predications. But, if it is not, you can couple this word list with a short overview of the topic. For this activity the word list and question are provided on the activity guide.

Step 2: Students Write Predictions Based on the Initial Information. You may want to discuss these predications and write them on the board. Or, you may decided to have groups or individual students write their predictions.

Step 3: Provide New Information. Have students look at the map of Boston at the beginning of the Revolution. You can either print it out or have students view it online.

Step 4: Students Review Predictions. In question 2 of the activity guide, students may revise, confirm, or reject their original predictions. They then, in question 3, turn them into questions for reading. Based on the new information, students discuss as a class or in small groups which of their original predictions they want to keep and which they no longer think apply. They may also revise some predictions to be more accurate. They then turn these predictions into questions they want answered during reading.

Step 5: Read the Text. Have students read the text on the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Step 6: Students Revisit Predictions and Answer Questions. Students once again look at their predictions and answer the questions they generated earlier.

Discussion

Once students have finished the activity, you may want to have a brief discussion with them about the assignment. Encourage students to probe which predictions were later confirmed, which were rejected, and which were revised. From here, you may wish to ask students to write about their new learning, formulate study questions and answers, or use some graphic representation of their learning.

Answers to the Student Activity Guide

Part A:

1. Answers will vary, but students may make any of the following predictions:
 - The British retreated at Bunker Hill.
 - Troops battled at Bunker Hill.
 - The colonists surrounded the British.
 - The battle was bloody.
2. After looking at the map of Boston at the start of the Revolution, students may add the following predictions:
 - Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill are together.
 - The Battle of Bunker Hill was fought June 17, 1775.
 - Bunker Hill is in the middle of Boston Harbor.
3. Questions students want answered may include the following:
 - Who won the Battle of Bunker Hill?
 - What did the Minutemen do to help the soldiers?
 - How did the Battle of Bunker Hill influence the Revolution?

Part B:

Students will evaluate their predictions by placing a check mark next to those they believe to be true after reading and drawing a line through those that are no longer correct.

Name: _____ DATE: _____ Class: _____

Strategy 6: Building Background Information Activity Guide

Part A: Answer the following questions BEFORE you read the text.

1. Study the word list and make predictions or guesses about the Battles of Bunker and Breed's Hill during the American Revolution. You may wish to use two or three words in the list to write your predictions.

British	colonists	retreat
Boston	battle	withdrew
Minuteman	troops	surround
colonial	gunpowder	force
siege	retreated	plan
harbor	Breed's Hill	defensive
secured	assaults	gun powder
hills	outnumbered	control
Redcoats	Bunker Hill	firepower

2. Now look at the map of Boston at the start of the Revolution accompanying the text. What changes to your original predictions seem appropriate based on this new information?

3. What questions do you want answered about the reading?

Part B: Read the passage on the Battle of Bunker Hill and complete the activity that follows.

The Battle of Bunker Hill

After the battle of Concord, the British withdrew to Boston, where Minutemen surrounded the city. Once reinforcements arrived, the colonial forces held Boston under **siege**—a military blockade of a city or fort.

In mid-June 1775 the British prepared to secure Charlestown, which overlooks Boston from across its northern harbor. Warned of the plan, colonial forces dug defensive trenches atop nearby Bunker Hill and Breed’s Hill. When the British awoke on the morning of June 17, they were shocked to see that the colonial soldiers had secured the hills. Nevertheless, the Redcoats mounted a frontal assault against the colonists. The colonial commander ordered his troops, who were low on gunpowder, not to fire on the British soldiers “until you see the whites of their eyes.”

Most of the fighting took place on Breed’s Hill. After turning back several assaults, the outnumbered colonists retreated when they ran out of ammunition. Although the British gained control of the hill, they had suffered more than 1,000 casualties compared to some 400 for the colonists. Despite their retreat the **Battle of Bunker Hill** was a moral victory for the colonists. It demonstrated that, despite superior British firepower, they could withstand a frontal assault from the British army.

Look back at the predications you made earlier. Mark the predictions that you now think are correct with a check mark (). Draw a line through any prediction that you now think is incorrect and rewrite any prediction that needs revision.

[add Boston map here]