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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Think Big with Think Alouds, Grades K-5*, by Molly Ness. Use these think aloud sentence starters to guide students to deeper understanding and comprehension by thinking aloud.

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Think Aloud Sentence Starters

Comprehension Strategy	Sentence Starters
<p>? Asking Questions</p> <p>Purposeful readers are naturally curious. They ask questions about what happens in the text. Sometimes the answers to their questions are found in the text, and sometimes they are not.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wonder ... • I would like to ask the author ... • Who ... ? • What ... ? • When ... ? • Where ... ? • Why ... ? • How ... ? • This makes me wonder about ... • How is this different? • How does this part here add to ... ?
<p> Making Inferences</p> <p>Purposeful readers make inferences. An inference is something that is probably true. The author doesn't tell us exactly, but good readers take clues from the text and combine them with what they already know. An inference is made when a reader says, "This is probably true."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the text clues, I can conclude that ... • Based on what the text says and what I know, I think ... • This information makes me think ... • This evidence suggests ... • That is probably why ... • Although the author does not come right out and say it, I can figure out that ... • It could be that ... • Maybe/perhaps ... • This could mean ... • Based on what I know about these characters, I bet he/she is going to ... • With what just happened, I imagine this character is feeling ...
<p>🌀 Synthesizing</p> <p>Purposeful readers constantly change their minds as they read. They use the unfolding information or events in the book to adapt thoughts, opinions, and conclusions. In fiction, readers often synthesize to refine their understanding of characters and themes; in nonfiction, readers synthesize in order to get the most important points about parts of a text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before I read, I thought ..., but now I think ... • My schema before I read was ..., and now I understand ... • This part gives me an idea ... • When I put all these parts together, it seems the author is focusing on this big idea ... • My synthesis is ... • Mostly, ... • I learned ... • Now I understand ... • Now I think ... • The author keeps using these similar terms, so I think this whole section is really about this aspect of ... • Some of the most important ideas are ... • The text is mainly about ... • The text, pictures, and boxes all seem to point at informing me that ... • The author's most important ideas were ...

Comprehension Strategy	Sentence Starters
<p>Readers may also synthesize to draw a conclusion about what the author’s perspective of a topic is, and what their own perspective is, based on the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The details I need to include are ... • Some important concepts are ... • The most important evidence was ... • The basic gist is ... • The key information is ... • In a nutshell, this says that ... • If I asked the author to just tell me in one sentence what the big idea is, this is what he/she would say ...
<p>A Understanding the Author’s Purpose</p> <p>Purposeful readers try to figure out the reason that the author wrote a text. They want to know the purpose of the text. If a text gives a clear opinion or tries to convince the reader of something, the author’s purpose is to persuade. If a text gives facts or tells a reader how to do something, the author’s purpose is to inform. If the text is enjoyable, tells a story, or uses a story to teach a lesson, the author’s purpose is to entertain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The author wants me to learn about ... [specific to nonfiction] • The author’s purpose in writing this story was ... • I wonder why the author ... • I think the author’s purpose is ... because ... • The main character learns ... in the end, so I wonder if the author wants me to reflect on ... • This story is set in history during [a famous event], so I think the author’s purpose is to ... • I predict that the author’s purpose is to inform/entertain/persuade because ... • After reading the selection, I believe the author’s purpose is ... because ... • The author’s purpose is ... based on ... • I am curious why the author ... • A golden line for me is ... • I like how the author uses ... to show ... • This word/phrase stands out for me because ...
<p>↔ Monitoring and Clarifying</p> <p>Purposeful readers know when they stop understanding what they are reading. Just as when the train is going too fast the conductor applies the brake, a reader slows down and takes steps to get back on track. A reader uses one or more “fix it” strategies for repairing his or her comprehension.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had to slow down when ... • It really surprised me, so I had to go back and reread because ... • I wonder what ... means. • Is this a different point in time? • Is this a flashback? • I wonder if this is a different narrator speaking, because ... • What is the author doing differently with the text here because I keep losing track ... ? • I need to know more about ... • This last part is about ... • I was confused by ... • I still don’t understand ... • I had difficulty with ... • I used [name strategy] to help me understand this part. • I can’t really understand ... • I wonder what the author means by ... • I got lost here because ... • I need to reread the part where ...