

SECTION ONE



EVERYDAY TASKS

for Reading,
Writing, and
Thinking

Getting students to do the doing each and every day is part of us practicing what Anne Lamott (see Introduction, page 1) encouraged us to do: release. When we release to students independent work sooner, with us there to coach, they learn more in the end. Remember that Anne Lamott said that with, our “over active helping,” we can fall into a pattern of doing just the happy side of control (Lamott, 2017a). We don’t need to control our students. We need to control the setup for the work, the development of the skill, and the scaffolds we provide.

The tasks in this section are designed for daily use. You obviously don’t need to use all of them every day! You pick and choose based on your student needs, your current unit of study, or the topic in your reading program. In the tasks that follow, you will see a variety of tasks that build different skills. You can choose which task to engage in with your students based on the skill the task builds. The task inventory, pages 8–9, gives the title of the task on the left and describes the skill on the right. So you can choose which task to engage in with your students based on the skill you are working on currently with them or by looking at the task and thinking about what type of practice they need right now. You can also choose by the genre of text you are working with.

The Everyday Tasks help develop stamina in thinking, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The task inventory will show you which tasks develop which skills and how the tasks transfer to independence, so you can easily choose tasks that align to your objectives.

The Everyday Tasks are tasks that require less time commitment than the tasks in the Weekly Tasks section or the Sometimes Tasks section. The Everyday Tasks can easily fit into your daily plans, if you are using a published reading curriculum, or can enhance your units of study, if you are working in reading and writing workshops. If you are implementing Balanced Literacy, the tasks can provide structure for the shared reading, independent reading, shared and guided writing, and independent writing.

Section I • Everyday Tasks for Reading, Writing, and Thinking

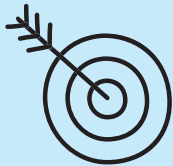
	Task	Genre	Skill	Transfer to Independence! Learners can:
1	A New Spin on Who, What, Why, When, and Where	Fiction (chapter books), literary nonfiction	Identify important information in text	Reflect on how arrived at answers and why answers are supportable.
2	Making Predictions to Help Comprehension	Fiction	Make predictions	Confirm prediction through reflection.
3	Journal Writing After Reading	Fiction, literary nonfiction, nonfiction, informational text	Write about reading	Self-select topic after independent reading.
4	Make a Connection to the World When Reading a Text Independently	Nonfiction	Make text-to-world connections	Make perceptive and well-developed connections with challenging topics.
5	Quoting an Important Idea in a Nonfiction Text.	Nonfiction	Identifying main idea or major points	Make statement on main idea/major point and back up thinking by quoting the text.
6	Name Character Motives and Actions	Fiction	Name character motives	State character's actions that portray the motives.
7	Name Rising Plot	Fiction	Identify plot	State plot and how the actions move the plot forward.
8	Name Plot Resolution	Fiction	Identify plot	Discuss resolution of the problem.
9	Tell the Text	Fiction	Retell	Sketch chronological order and use the graphics for oral retell.
10	Dig Deeper Into the Text	Fiction, literary nonfiction, nonfiction	Make inferences	Ask and answer questions about text that requires more than recalling of facts or information.
11	Guided Comprehension Talks	Fiction	Ask questions of text	Ask and answer deep questions about text that focus on wonderings.
12	Elaborate and Clarify Meaning	Fiction, literary nonfiction	Conversing at length on a topic	Make statements about a text, providing details or elaboration to clarify meaning.
13	Setting Routines for Independent Reading	Fiction, nonfiction, literary nonfiction, informational text	Sustain reading and writing for long periods of time.	Develop self-selected work routines.
14	Fixing Up When Attention Wanders	Fiction, nonfiction, literary nonfiction, informational text	Use fix-up strategies	Use self-monitoring strategies when reading challenging texts requiring students to stretch beyond their current range for accuracy and fluency.
15	Communicating Your Heads-Up Ball Approach	Fiction, nonfiction, literary nonfiction, informational texts, nonfiction	Manage sustained reading	Manage reading time and read across range of complexity and genres.
16	Answering a Text-Dependent Question	Fiction, nonfiction, literary fiction, informational text	Answer text-dependent question	Refer to or quote text to support response.
17	Tell Why (You Think, Believe, Remember, Know) With Why Messages	Fiction, nonfiction, literary fiction, informational text	Answer text-dependent question	Extend ability to discuss text with accountability by referring to or quoting text.
18	Make a Bold Statement About a Text	Fiction, nonfiction, literary fiction, informational text	Make statement about a text	Restate own ideas with clarity using information that is accurate and relevant.

	Task	Genre	Skill	Transfer to Independence! Learners can:
19	Extend Thinking When Discussing a Text	Fiction, nonfiction, literary fiction, informational text	Make a statement about text-extending ideas from discussion. Ask questions of others ideas about text	Discuss text using comparisons and analogies, referring to knowledge built during discussion. Ask others questions requiring them to support their claims.
20	One-Liners for Nonfiction Texts	Nonfiction	Use relevant information from text to summarize	Write one short thought-provoking sentence summarizing a point in the text.
21	Crystal Ball Predictions	Fiction, literary nonfiction, nonfiction	Make predictions	Use context clues and known facts from text to make predictions.
22	Yesterday's News	Longer fiction and nonfiction	Summarize important points	Capture meaning from text and restate it succinctly and in an engaging manner.
23	Annotate Text	Literary nonfiction, informational texts	Annotate text	Write margin notes to aide comprehension or text.
24	Sentence Strip Statements	Informational text, nonfiction	Identify main idea	Identify possible main ideas and discuss with other students, providing evidence to back up statements.
25	Write Questions About Reading	Fiction, nonfiction	Ask questions	Question in order to understand using concepts from the text in nonfiction or plot, setting, or character motivation in fiction.
26	Super Cool Three Steps to Describe an Experience	Personal narrative	Writes narrative on self-chosen topic	Generate own topics and spend time to refine writing.
27	Getting Kids to Write: Wonderfully Concentrating Minds Generating Ideas	Personal narrative	Writes for extended amount of time on one chosen topic	Routinely choose topics, rework, revise and edit writing.
28	Sketch to Write	Personal narrative	Plan writing with beginning, middle, end	Share an event with a sequence of events that is in a logical order.
29	Getting Help From Another Writer: Write Dialogue in Narratives and Quotes in Reports	Personal narrative, report writing	Use dialogue or quotes text	Effectively use dialogue in narratives and quotes in reports when reporting on interviews.
30	Getting Help From Another Writer: Write a Hook	Personal narrative, report writing, response to literature	Write beginning that engages the reader	Include a hook at the beginning of a piece that moves into the thesis and is more than a question.
31	The Right Amount of Details, The Right Amount of Clarity	Personal narrative, report writing, response to literature, functional writing	Write with details and clarity	Create believable world in fiction or includes relevant information for nonfiction. Avoids use of extraneous detail.
32	Thinking Small to Write Well	Personal narrative	Write with detail, engages the reader and has a beginning, middle and end	Write on one topic with control and focus.
33	Writing a Jot About What Was Read	Nonfiction, informational text, literary nonfiction	Write one fact/point at a time	Write a short, succinct text about information read.
34	Works Too Long and Never Gets Any Writing Done	Personal narrative, fantasy, report writing	Writes without repeating the same concept over and over	Routinely generate writing and routinely rework, revise, edit, and proofread work.
35	Dialogue Journals	Communication	Write thoughts and message to the teacher, and respond to teacher's comments.	Communicate ideas and thoughts to an appropriate audience conveying meaning and reflection.



WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

You might offer this task when younger readers are ready to dig into nonfiction text or students are beginning to read fiction texts with longer chapters or sections. You might offer it when older readers are reading more complex pieces of text or longer chapter books or nonfiction books with multiple sections.



TARGET

Students will identify important information, including who, what, why, when, or where, after reading a text independently and reflect on how they arrive at their answers and why they are supportable.

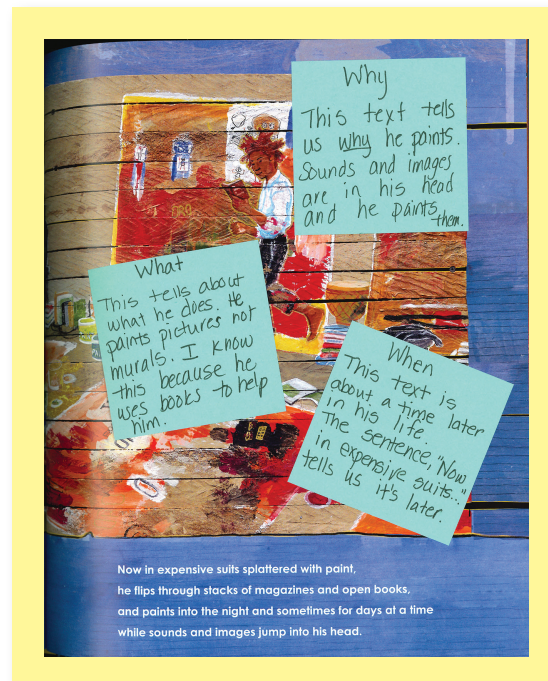
The other day, I was in a classroom and students were working, independently, to answer questions at the end of the text in their anthology. I leaned over a student's shoulder to take a peek, and they were the typical who, what, why, when, and where questions. *How boring!* I thought, and indeed, I began hearing a rhythm band of tapping pencils, sighing, shifting chairs. Don't get me wrong—these recall questions have a place, but the flaw was that students were merely working to prove they had read. Here is a task that puts a livelier, more metacognitive spin on identifying *who, what, why, when, and where* of any text.

Your Instructional Playbook

Name It: In this task, you will read with a partner and then use the different colored highlighters or markers to mark up your text and identify the five points you have been discussing (the five W's). Most importantly, you will state why you made your decision to label a section with one of the Ws.

What You Might Say Next: "When reading, it is important to think about who is doing what, when is it happening, and where it might be taking place. When we think about the five Ws (who, when, what, why, and where), we are checking that we understand what the text is about. Today we are going to practice finding these five parts of a text together and then justifying our thinking by pointing out what part of the books helps us know we are correct!"

Typical Successes



A page from *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Stephoe, 2016)

Now in expensive suits splattered with paint, he flips through stacks of magazines and open books, and paints into the night and sometimes for days at a time while sounds and images jump into his head.

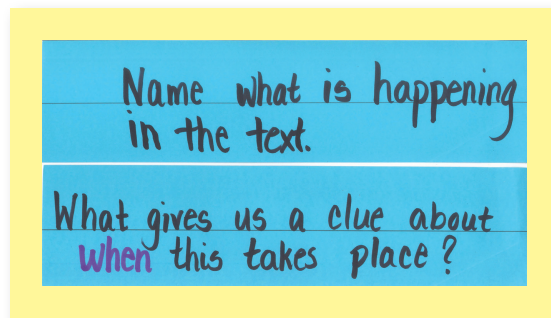
Model/Do Together: Give students two or three different colored highlighters and a copy of the text. Or when working with younger readers, have a few different colored sticky notes handy. Facilitate reading the text and deciding on which parts of the text to highlight with a marker or by placing a sticky note. As you read the text together out loud, highlight the parts of the text that tell who, what, when, why, or where. It is best if you read the text the first time uninterrupted and look for the sections of text to highlight on the second or third read. Elicit a lot of discussion from students. Encourage them to decide one or more of the five Ws for themselves, and discuss their thinking about their choice by using the text to justify the answer. Older students can add a sticky note or write the justification in the margins. Younger students can add it to their sticky note or write it in a reading journal. Don't just show them the answers (because then you would be doing the "doing," and we want the students to do the thinking).

Release: Using a *new* piece of text (it could be the next section from the book you took the first excerpt from) remind students to recheck their text as they decided what is what in the text they are reading. Have a couple of groups of students share out what they were thinking. If they are younger readers, have them come up to the shared read-aloud text and highlight the part of the text they think shows a point they worked on (highlight by putting a sticky note under the sentence). Then, encourage them to write out what they discussed with their partners in journals or on additional sticky notes.

Watch Fors and Work Arouns

Students don't highlight anything or don't offer their ideas about the five Ws. Make sure they know it is OK to not get the answer "right" and that it can be helpful to share their thinking with a partner or in a small group, to get the others' take. Have kids talk and negotiate what they think the five Ws are in a given text. Or have them tackle just one of the five Ws, for example "What is this text about?"

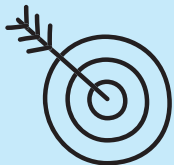
Students highlight everything with marker lines or sticky notes all over the text. Help students make decisions for themselves by displaying the following prompts on a chart or on sentence strips: What is in the text that tells us what might be important? Let's find the sentence. How do we know this is *who* this text (or what) is about? Can you find the sentence and circle it?





WHEN YOU MIGHT OFFER IT

You might offer it when students need practice with making predictions. With younger readers, model the task with a shared book before having students practice predicting on their own, doing more modeling as needed. For older readers, use when the text level increases or any time you want to check on the accuracy of their predictions.



TARGET

Students will comprehend and add new information to memory by making predictions about what a text will be about and then confirming through reflection.

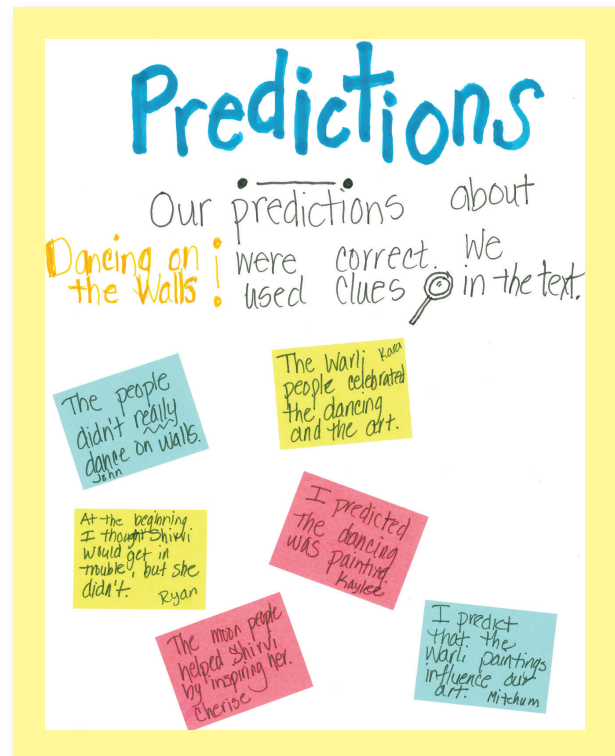
I have seen many lessons where the teacher sets up the students to predict, the kids do, and then they power on through the story. I dubbed these lessons “predict and run.” Don’t do it! Slow down and savor the hypothesis and keep reflecting on it as you read on. Ask, Was I right or wrong? And why? How do I know? The comprehension boosting isn’t in the guess but in stopping after reading to check the prediction. It is really important that you set this task up with your students as an inquiry. Make them excited to predict, then read and check.

Your Instructional Playbook

Name It: When we make a prediction about a text before reading it, we are waking up our brains and getting them ready to figure out what is happening in the book. The graphics, heading, and words in a text give clues to what the text will be about. In this task, we are going to make a prediction by waking up our brains and predicting what we will read and then stopping after we read to see whether our prediction was correct or incorrect.

What You Might Say Next: “You know when you are reading a good story or watching a suspenseful movie, maybe a mystery, and a character does something or acts odd all of a sudden, you say to yourself, ‘Ooh, I bet something is about to happen! I bet that other guy is about to cause trouble!’ When you do that, you are making a prediction. You are guessing what is going to happen next, based on clues. Good readers make predictions all the time, whether they are reading a story or a science book. Readers scan a cover and opening pages to predict what kind of book it is and if they will like it. And then as they read, they pause whenever the author seems to be inviting them to slow down and think and make an inference. An inference is a prediction, a guess based on what you know. We are going to start by flagging some stopping points for ourselves.”

Owns It! Notice how the students are correctly making predictions about the text that they had read.



Model/Do Together: Take a bunch of sticky notes and talk with the students about where would be good places to stop and make predictions. Place them on the text and let the students know that the little sticky notes are going to be little stop signs for you as you read. The sticky notes will remind you and the class to stop and make a prediction. For younger readers, use a big book or enlarged text; for older readers, use text under a document camera. As they are choosing good stopping places in the book, invite students to come up and place the sticky notes on the text for stopping points. Then, read the text together and stop where there is a sticky note. Ask something like, “Based on what we read (or see in the pictures or the headings), what is a prediction we could make right now? What do you think will happen next? Or what else is going to happen now that _____ happened? How can we be sure our prediction is plausible or could really happen? Should we reread what happened already in the text to make sure our prediction makes sense?”

Release: Once students have practiced this a few times with you, have them try it for themselves. Stop at a stopping point and make a prediction about what will happen next, how the text will end, what the character is going to do, and how the information you are learning is going to change or develop.

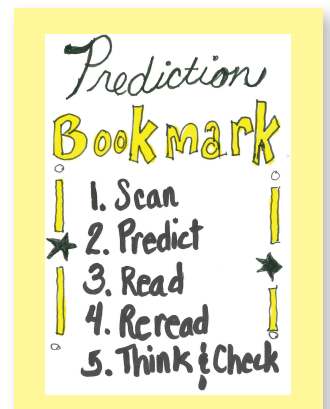
Have students share their predictions. Ask, did their predictions come to pass? How do they know? These reflective questions will take students back to the text to think about what they read and how it gives them clues about what might be next.

Watch Fors and Work Arouds

Students’ connections don’t have anything to do with the text. Guide students to go back to the text to point to the text sections that back up their prediction. If and when they cannot find a text section that supports their thinking, invite them to reread the section, think about it, and make a new connection.

Students cheer when their prediction is confirmed and get down when their prediction is not. Remind the class that predicting isn’t about winning or losing and that authors sometimes throw curve balls, so it’s not useful to think of a prediction as wrong. The important thing is to keep helping one another learn to recognize strong supporting details that back up their hunches.

Students cannot make a prediction; they are stuck. Have students work in groups. To get them started, they can scan and make a prediction before they even read any of the text. Do a brief think-aloud if needed and then, for nonfiction, guide them to use the illustrations and headings to help them consider what the text might be about. For fiction, think aloud your process for rereading the final paragraph of a previous chapter, section, or sentence, for hints about the important parts and what it might mean for upcoming events and interactions. Use a prediction bookmark to prompt thinking.



I like to get kids thinking with Prediction Bookmarks they can put right in their books.