

LITERACY TIP
by Barbara Alpert

A “PREVIEW” OF COMING ATTRACTIONS

One of the best reading comprehension strategies begins before your student reads a word of the text. It’s called **Pre-Reading**, or **Previewing**, and it prepares the brain to make room for new knowledge.

With a young reader, you may decide to do a “picture walk” and discuss the cover and illustrations of a chosen book. The goal is to use visual clues to set the scene (Where does the story take place? How do you know?); to figure out which genre a story belongs in (Is it a mystery? Is it realistic fiction, like my real life? I see a rocket ship—probably science fiction!); learn about the characters (he has a dog; she likes to take pictures) and even predict the plot—what the characters will do.

With older readers, the biggest challenge is making sense of science and social studies texts. Pre-reading is more important than ever when it comes to challenging nonfiction. What can you do to help? Teach your tutees how to be THIEVES! This is a previewing technique created by Suzanne Manz that can be described in an acronym:

T—Look at the chapter **title** and ask, What do I already know about this subject?

H—Check out the **headings**—what major topics are going to be covered in this chapter?

I—Read the **Introduction**—where the author usually tells you what’s coming.

E—Check out **every first sentence** in a paragraph for a quick skim of the entire chapter.

This is good for a review or when you don’t have a lot of time to read.

V—**Visuals and vocabulary**—Preview the maps, graphs, charts, photos and captions, and any boldfaced words; if there’s a glossary, skim it.

E—**End-of-chapter questions** remind you what you’re reading for, so take a look *before* you read.

S—Most chapters end with a **summary** of what you were supposed to have learned. By reading it first, you’ll know the chapter’s contents in broad outline and can fill in when you read the entire text.

This technique is especially good when your student has an assignment to do after reading the text. It’s great to know what the answer is when you read the question.

Remember: What you do *before* you read is just as important as what you do when you read!