

THINK ALONG

A **Think Along** is a strategy used to understand a piece of text. It is exactly what it sounds like; you think along with the text and write out what you are thinking. It is very similar to annotation in that students will write their thoughts next to the lines of text they are reading/interpreting. It differs in that it is meant to capture all thoughts the students have, rather than only the thoughts students think are significant. A Think Along utilizes all of the strategies that adult readers use to access a text: questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting.

To utilize this strategy, post a copy of the text on an overhead or have it already written on the chalkboard. An overhead is easiest because you will be writing in the spaces next to the text. Read the title out loud. Say what you think of the title, then next to the title, write out what you thought when you read it. (e.g., Sounds a bit sarcastic. I wonder if the mood of the poem will be sarcastic.) Read the first two lines. Again, tell the students what you thought and write it next to the lines. (See **Think Along Example** below to get some ideas for thoughts and how this works. But try to do this cold with your first thoughts as you read something new, as that will be what you are asking students to do and it will help them to see you really do it.) Then open it up to the class. Tell students you are going to read the rest of the text out loud and when it makes them think of something, they should raise their hand. Most readers are thinking all the time they are reading, they just do not know that they are thinking about what they are reading. It is the students' job to capture their thoughts. Go through the entire text (if possible), allowing students to stop you so that you can write their thoughts. Add your thoughts, too, as you go. Students may have different ideas about what the same line or words mean. That's a good thing! It means they are thinking. Remember, there is no right or wrong interpretation, as long as students can back up their thoughts and opinions with solid evidence from the text.

The example below is only meant as an example for the teacher. Do not show it to your class, as students have a tendency to think there are right and wrong answers and often will simply copy what you have down instead of thinking for themselves which defeats the whole purpose of a THINK along.

THINK ALONG EXAMPLE

Text	Think Along – my thoughts
<p>Romeo and Juliet Act II, Scene 3</p> <p>Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set On the fair daughter of rich Capulet: As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine; And all combined, save what thou must combine By holy marriage: when and where and how We met, we woo'd and made exchange of vow, I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray, That thou consent to marry us to-day.</p>	<p>He's talking about his heart, as symbolic for himself— Romeo is a real romantic!</p> <p>Wow, he mentions Juliet's dad. How interesting to bring up his enemy.</p> <p>And then he mentions Juliet's love for him. He's so sure of her. It reminds me of some friends I have who are in love.</p> <p>Look at this rhyme scheme—is this a sonnet? “Exchange of vow” tells me how serious he is about her.</p> <p>It seems like a sonnet but it's not long enough. It's like the second half of a sonnet. Can you have a partial sonnet? I wonder what that would be called.</p> <p>He's begging the Friar to marry them—I'll bet the Friar will do it, but something will go wrong.</p>