

## THINK ALONG

A Think Along is a strategy used to understand a piece of text. A **Think Along** 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><b>Sure You Can Ask Me A Personal Question</b> Diane Burns</p>	<p><i>Sounds a bit sarcastic. I wonder if the rest of the text will be like this.</i></p>
<p>How do you do? No, I am not Chinese.</p>	<p><i>Yes, it is a bit sarcastic. These must be the comments she gets from people all of the time. The stereotypes others hold of Native Americans.</i></p>
<p>No, not Spanish. No, I am American Indi—uh, Native American.</p>	<p><i>I wonder why she changes American Indian to Native American. Does she think of herself as American Indian, but she does not want others to because that term holds so many misconceptions???</i></p>
<p>No, not from India. No, not Apache</p>	<p><i>All of the most well known tribes that we think all Native Americans come from. How well she knows what the world thinks.</i></p>
<p>No, not Navajo. No, not Sioux.</p>	<p><i>But she comes back to referring to herself as Indian. Looks like because that is what this person (who is just the world at large maybe) knows and understands.</i></p>
<p>No, we are not extinct. Yes, Indian.</p>	<p><i>Is this her speaking or is it the person she is talking to here? Hmm...it must be.</i></p>
<p>Oh? So that's where you got those high cheekbones.</p>	<p><i>I see. The person must be saying they have Native American blood in them.</i></p>
<p>Your great grandmother, huh? An Indian Princess, huh?</p>	<p><i>She's making fun of the fact that this person thinks they know and understand all Native Americans because they've had an Indian friend, lover, servant. Typical of most people.</i></p>
<p>Hair down to there? Let me guess. Cherokee?</p>	<p><i>Must be a white person who is speaking to her. Why does this person apologize? And then why this mockery of the apology?</i></p>
<p>Oh, so you've had an Indian friend? That close?</p>	<p><i>It is like she is using the stereotypes that have been said about Native Americans to stereotype the speaker, using her sarcasm to make her point.</i></p>
<p>Oh, so you've had an Indian lover? That tight?</p>	<p><i>This part about spirituality..wow! Must be like the straw that broke the camels back. Spirituality is so personal, but here she makes it so impersonal, almost trivial, even though it is something important. To throw it back in this person's face, to reclaim it for herself and her tribe?</i></p>
<p>Oh, so you've had an Indian servant? That much?</p>	<p><i>I love this line. Taking the drinking too much and making it not enough. It is the sum of all of her fed up-ness.</i></p>
<p>Yeah, it was awful what you guys did to us. It's real decent of you to apologize.</p>	<p><i>And this is such a great ending. Reclaiming her face, her looks as individual, beyond the stereotype, the label. I love this poem!</i></p>
<p>No, I don't know where you can get peyote. No, I don't know where you can get Navajo rugs real cheap.</p>	
<p>No, I didn't make this. I bought it at Bloomingdales. Thank you. I like your hair too.</p>	
<p>I don't know if anyone knows whether or not Cher is really Indian. No, I didn't make it rain tonight.</p>	
<p>Yeah. Uh-huh. Spirituality. Uh-huh. Yeah. Spirituality. Uh-huh. Mother Earth. Yeah. Uh'huh. Uh-huh. Spirituality.</p>	
<p>No, I didn't major in archery. Yeah, a lot of us drink too much.</p>	
<p>Some of us can't drink enough. This ain't no stoic look.</p>	
<p>This is my face.</p>	