

TWENTY WAYS TO USE STICKY NOTE JOT SPOTS

What's a "jot spot"? It's a point in a text that interests, intrigues, confuses, enlightens, or otherwise captures a reader's attention. Jot spots reflect the ongoing internal dialogue that most independent readers engage in as they read. Most struggling readers, however, need to be explicitly taught the self-talk that is part of the reading process. Instead of mental notes or scribbles in the margin of a book, readers use sticky notes to flag places of interest or discussion points. A few words on the sticky note remind readers why they flagged this passage, when they return to it later.

Your students may grumble, but using sticky notes to track thinking during reading really does help them interact with and make meaning from a text. It forces readers to self-monitor their comprehension – to pay attention to whether the text makes sense - and take action if it doesn't. Most importantly, sticky note reading builds readers who are active participants, not passive recipients, in the reading process.

Some tips for teaching students to track jot spots in their reading:

- Teach the process. Model and think aloud as you show students how you tab jot spots and your reasons for them.
- Introduce a few different jot spots at a time, gradually increasing your students' repertoire of ways to notate their reading.
- Provide opportunities for guided practice with read-alouds or shared reading. Pause regularly to invite students to share their thinking with a partner.
- Set parameters for how many jot spots students should tab – one or two per page will encourage reflective reading without interfering with the gist of the text.
- After reading, allow time for students to discuss their jot spots with partners.
- If you need some kind of product for evaluation/assessment, have students select 4 or 5 of their sticky notes, record the page on which they were tabbed and affix them to a sheet of paper, along with an explanation for the readers' thinking.

The possibilities for using *jot spots* during reading are myriad. On the following page are twenty suggestions of points at which readers might flag the text.



TWENTY PLACES TO MARK A JOT SPOT

1. A point where you paused reading
2. A place you want/need to reread for a particular reason
3. A connection to your own personal experience
4. A connection to something else you've read
5. Something you disagree (or agree) with
6. Something you don't like
7. Something you don't understand
8. A key idea: Something important!
9. A place where you had to use clues in the text to draw an inference
10. An interesting word or turn of phrase
11. A place you wondered something
12. A clue or other explanation of a difficult word or idea
13. Aha! A point at which your thinking changed
14. A point at which you made a prediction
15. A point at which your prediction was confirmed or changed
16. A point at which you learned something important about a character
17. A point at which you got a visual or other sensory image
18. Some dull writing or unnecessary description
19. Some particularly vivid descriptions
20. Can we talk? A point you'd like to discuss with others later

Be prepared to discuss your jot spots after reading and explain to others why you marked a passage as you did.

