Search for the Signals
Literacy Skills / Comprehension

Materials

1. Overhead projector
2. Big Books

Virginia SOLs

K.8, 1.11, 2.8, 3.5

Procedure

1. Select specific sections from a familiar text that include the typographic signals to which you want students to attend (comma, period, question mark, exclamation point, underlined/enlarged/bold print). Consider teaching each signal in a focused mini-lesson before attempting “Search for the Signals.”

2. Using an overhead projector or chart paper, enlarge the passage. You may also use big books that show specific examples.

3. Tell students that you will read the sentence(s) two times. Prepare the students to listen for the better or more enjoyable reading. In a monotone voice, read the sentence(s) to the students. Re-read the sentence, using all typographic signals. Ask students to point out the differences: Which reading interested them more? Did emphasizing different words and pausing at different times give them a better understanding of what the author was trying to convey? Finally, point out the different typographic signals that you used and how these helped you read with meaning.

4. Provide students with meaningful practice and tell them to be “on the lookout” when reading to themselves.

5. When the silent reading period ends, have students read aloud one or more sentences in which they used a typographical signal and state what they believe a good reader should do when they encounter the signal.

6. VARIATION: To introduce the activity, you may post pictures of different typographical signals around the room. Have students search the room and retrieve the signals. Review what each signal informs the reader to do. A complementary read aloud to “Search for the Signals” is Punctuation Takes a Vacation by Robin Pulver. When reading silently, students may mark typographical signals with highlighting tape.