

The following activity, Quotation Café, is adapted from the IRA book *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6–12*. By Jeff Zwiers. It highlights the reading comprehension habit of making inferences and predictions, which can be used across content areas and grade levels.

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Quotation Café

This activity emulates a café setting where intellectuals share thoughts and opinions about the nature of life, literature, and the world. (Some teachers even have little tables and serve soft drinks.) It is an effective and fun pre-reading activity that works well for building students' oral language, prediction, and inference skills.

Procedure

1. Select important headings, quotations, or visuals (clues) from the text that students will read. Put them on small strips of paper or on note cards. If they are not all different clues, you can color code the same ones so that students don't talk to others with the same clue.
2. Tell students the title of the text to be read. You can also show an image, but don't give too much away.
3. Hand out one clue to each student and allow each student time to read and think about his or her particular clue in order to predict how it might fit into the overall meaning and main idea of the text.
4. Have students circulate around the classroom to get other opinions by reading their clues to other students. In pairs, students continue to guess the meaning and main idea of the text by using the clues.
5. Tell students to notice how their predictions improve as they hear more and more clues and pre- dictions from other students.
6. Optional: Ask students to guess the sequence of their pieces in the text. They can line up in physical order according to their clues.
7. Lead a brief discussion on what the students predict the text is about.
8. Have students read the text. Stop them at times and have them check to see if their predictions about the main idea are correct.