



DAY 1

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN: A CHILD'S STORY ABOUT RACIAL INJUSTICE

by **MARIANNE CELANO, MARIETTA COLLINS, and ANN HAZZARD** illustrated by **JENNIFER ZIVOIN**

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COMPREHENSION FOCUS

Retelling: Stop-Think-Paraphrase (STP)
Using Illustrations to Determine Theme

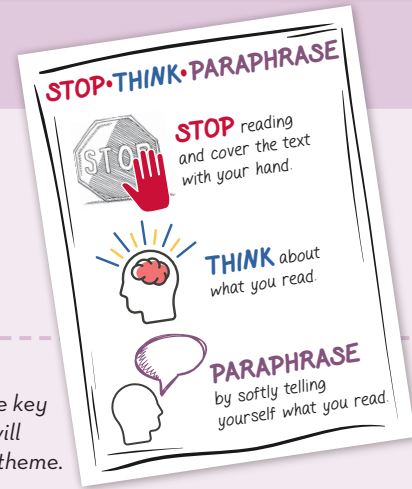


SEL CONNECTION
Acceptance

PREPARE

Starting with the title page as page 1 (which includes the title, author, and publisher), use circle stickers or sticky notes and number each of the book's pages. Place a sticky flag on the following pages: 7, 11, 17, 21, and 29.

Be sure each student has a pencil, and give each student a sticky note.



STEP 1 — **EXPLAIN WHAT THE STRATEGY IS AND WHY READERS USE IT**
Today as I read this story, we will stop and think about what we've read. Then we will paraphrase the key events and illustrations by expressing the author's meaning using our own words. This paraphrase will give us a greater clarity on the author's message, and we can use this information to determine the theme.

STEP 2 — **INTRODUCE THE NEW BOOK**
This story is about a white girl named Emma and a black boy named Josh who discuss with their families a police shooting of a black man. Let's read to see how each family's discussion of the shooting sparks important conversations about racial injustice.

STEP 3 — **READ AND DEMONSTRATE HOW TO USE THE STRATEGY**
Read pages 3-7. *Let's stop reading here and think about what has happened so far. I will paraphrase what we've read: Emma is a girl who is in Ms. Garcia's class. At school she heard about a police officer shooting a black man and asked her family about the shooting. They discussed how black people are treated differently and how some black people were brought from Africa as slaves. Notice how I expressed the key details but used my own words.*

Look at the illustrations on pages 6-7. *Notice that these illustrations are mostly in black and white. Look at the white images in the top portion of the page (a person on a horse, the outline of the United States, and the outline of Europe). Now notice that the images in the middle are black or look like shadows (people working in fields, the outline of Africa, and chains). The illustrator uses shadows for these images to show us that they happened in the past. Now look at Emma's family. They are in full color. This use of color shows us they are in the present time in the story. The illustrator is helping to tell the story (past and present) and create the mood of what is being told through the words.*

Read pages 8-11. *The family discusses how this unfair treatment has sadly become a pattern of how black people are treated, especially black men and boys. Emma's mom explains racial injustice. Racial injustice means treating people unfairly based on their race. Emma relates this to a girl in her class who always gets made fun of because of her name.*

We all need to work on breaking the pattern of injustice. The opposite of injustice is acceptance. Is there something you can do or say to others who are different from you that would help them feel accepted?

Look at the illustration on page 11. *Notice Emma and her mom hugging in one house, and in the other house, we see a young boy. Let's continue reading the story as his family discusses the police shooting of the black man.*

Read pages 12-17. *Turn to a partner and paraphrase what we just read. Listen in and prompt each partnership as they paraphrase this part of the story. Remind students to use their own words as they paraphrase what you read.*

Look at the illustrations on pages 16-17. *Notice again that the illustrator created black-and-white images. Turn to a partner and paraphrase what you notice in the illustrations. (In the top portion of the page, the people are Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela. Discuss these historical figures and their cultural contributions. In the background on the right is the continent of Africa. There is an image of the white policeman and black police car at the bottom left and a full-color image of Josh and his family on the right.) Why do you think the illustrator used these colors?*

Read pages 18-21. *Discuss the illustration on page 21. Have students paraphrase the text and illustration on this page with a partner. Then give each student a sticky note and have them jot the message Josh's family teaches him about how to help to make a change (stick up for others when they aren't being treated fairly). Have them share and compare their completed sticky-note messages. Collect the sticky notes on a piece of chart paper to support students in their writing on Day 2.*

Read pages 22-29. *Have students turn to a partner and paraphrase how Emma and Josh used what they learned from their family discussions to stand up for Omad. Then discuss possible theme statements (work together to make a change, acceptance means including all people, racial injustice is a pattern that must be broken).*

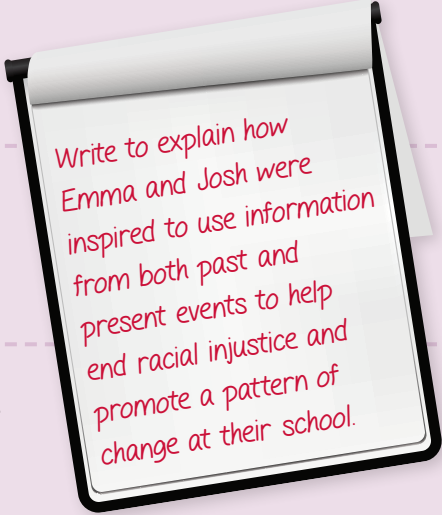




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- STEP 1** • **REVIEW THE BOOK**
Have students retell the story to a partner. If needed, support the retell by determining key words for the beginning, middle, and end of the story, and have them use the key words as they retell what happened. Show the black-and-white illustrations on pages 6-7, 10, 16-17, and 21. Then ask, *How do the colors of the images support your understanding of the story's theme?*
- STEP 2** • **PROMPT**
Write the following prompt on chart paper as you read it aloud: *Write to explain how Emma and Josh were inspired to use information from both past and present events to help end racial injustice and promote a pattern of change at their school.*
- STEP 3** • **PLAN**
Have students use one of the illustrations from pages 6-7, 10, 16-17, or 21 as evidence of how Emma or Josh were inspired to promote change. Have them jot key words from the illustration on their paper. Ask them to use the theme statement from their sticky notes from Day 1 as their opening or closing sentence.
- STEP 4** • **WRITE**
While students are writing, circulate the room and confer with individuals. Have students use their personal word wall as a spelling reference. Assist students with their plan by orally rehearsing their next sentence or addressing their individual writing target.
Have students share their writing with a partner.
- STEP 5** • **EXTEND AND CONNECT THE LEARNING**
When you read other books, stop, think, and paraphrase the key events in your own words. Remember to use the information from illustrations as well as the words. This will help you determine the author's message and will assist you in determining the theme of a story.



Write to explain how Emma and Josh were inspired to use information from both past and present events to help end racial injustice and promote a pattern of change at their school.



LITERACY Footprints

This lesson uses the following edition of this book: *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story about Racial Injustice*; by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard; illustrated by Jennifer Zivojin; published by Magination Press (Washington, DC); copyright 2018; ISBN: 978-1-4338-2854-6 (hardcover)

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