

Project CRISS and Literacy Groups



By Mary Jane Barton

Gilmer Elementary in Gilmer, Texas, places tremendous focus on small group reading instruction, instruction that can easily last 90 minutes each day. My most formidable challenge in implementing such instruction in my 2nd grade class was creating in-depth assignments for the 15 or 16 students working independently in pairs at Literacy Workplaces while I worked with four to six students at the reading table. I struggled with this problem until, as always, my CRISS manual came to the rescue!

Strategy Introduction

I began the process by introducing a strategy to the whole class. As students understood the purpose of the strategy, I gradually turned over ownership. For example, if I used Content Frames in a whole group science or social studies lesson, I also used Content Frames in reading groups that week. The following week Content Frames were used in the Literacy Workplaces.

Literacy Workplaces

For 90 minutes each day, my class was divided into four groups based on their reading abilities. While I worked with group 1 (the lowest readers), their “partner” group (group 3) sat at their desks preparing for their small group reading instruction. Group 3’s activities ranged from re-reading the selection to finishing a strategy we had begun the previous day. I was left with half of the class (groups 2 and 4) in need of an activity and that’s where Workplaces came in.

Literacy Workplaces in my room consisted of three activities daily. One activity was completed by the students individually at their desks while their partner group worked on small group reading instruction with me (see above). The other students worked with their assigned partners using activities that were labeled and placed in plastic tubs. Students had a list of their rotation and knew where they needed to be at all times. We rotated four times—three times to a Workplace activity and once to the Reading Table for small group reading instruction. These rotations occurred roughly every 15-20 minutes.

Literacy Workplace activities varied and were a time for

my students to practice previously learned strategies. One of my students’ favorite Workplaces was “magazines.” My students created Venn Diagrams comparing animals featured in different issues of My Big Backyard or on topics they were interested in with help from magazines at the table. Students became comfortable creating Main Idea-Detail Notes and writing One-Sentence Summaries about articles they enjoyed. During “Buddy Reading,” in which partners would take turns reading to each other from a book and then talking about it, they often used Read-and-Say-Something. I would follow up a whole class lesson by reinforcing strategies such as Pattern Puzzles, Vocabulary Maps, and Picture Notes. (A sample CSLP is on the next page.)

Reading Table

While the other three groups worked independently using Literacy Workplaces, I was able to provide 20 minutes of uninterrupted small group instruction. I regularly used Read-and-Say-Something and Sticky-Note Discussions at the Reading Table. Frequently, groups started a graphic organizer or informal writing with me and finished the assignment later at their desks. As work was finished, students brought their work back to the Reading Table to share with the group.

Sitting with my small group, I could glance around the room and see kids on task. With three-fourths of the class working on thought-provoking assignments, I was able to focus on the four to six kids who were in need of my full attention. This made my job much easier.



About the Author: Mary Jane Barton is a CRISS National Trainer from Gilmer, Texas. Previously she was the 2nd grade Instructional Specialist at Gilmer Elementary School, but now teaches 11th grade American History at Gilmer High School. She describes American History as her “true love.”

Mack Made Movies

Grade 2

Content area: Language Arts

Enduring Understandings:

Process: The students will make connections and transform information before, during, and after reading a new text.

Content: The students will explore the history of early movies; how movies as we know them come about.

Assessment: One-Sentence Summary

Content: *Mack Made Movies* by Don Brown

Preparing for Understanding:

- **Anticipation Guide***—students work individually to complete
- **You Ought to be in Pictures***—Students look at the **cartoon*** and answer the question, “Pretend that you are the man hanging from the pole or the woman in the window. How did you get there and what will you do next?”

Engaging Students with Content and Transforming Information:

Whole Group

- **Read**—the whole class reads *Mack Made Movies* by Don Brown
- **3-Minute Pause**—Students work at table groups and follow these prompts:
 - One person summarizes
 - Everyone tells an interesting part
 - Anyone can ask the group questions about the story
- **Main Idea/Detail Two-Column Notes**

Whole Group, Literacy Workplaces, or Small Group

- **Opinion-Proof Poster***
- **Pattern Puzzle***
- **Vocabulary Maps***
- **Venn Diagram***

* Included at the end of this article.

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Anticipation Guide

Name _____

Mack Made Movies

Answer YES or NO to the following questions.

1. Your Grandparents went to the movie theater when they were little kids. _____
2. Early movies had color pictures. _____
3. The very first movies had actors that talked. _____
4. The first movie theaters were called "Nickelodeons."

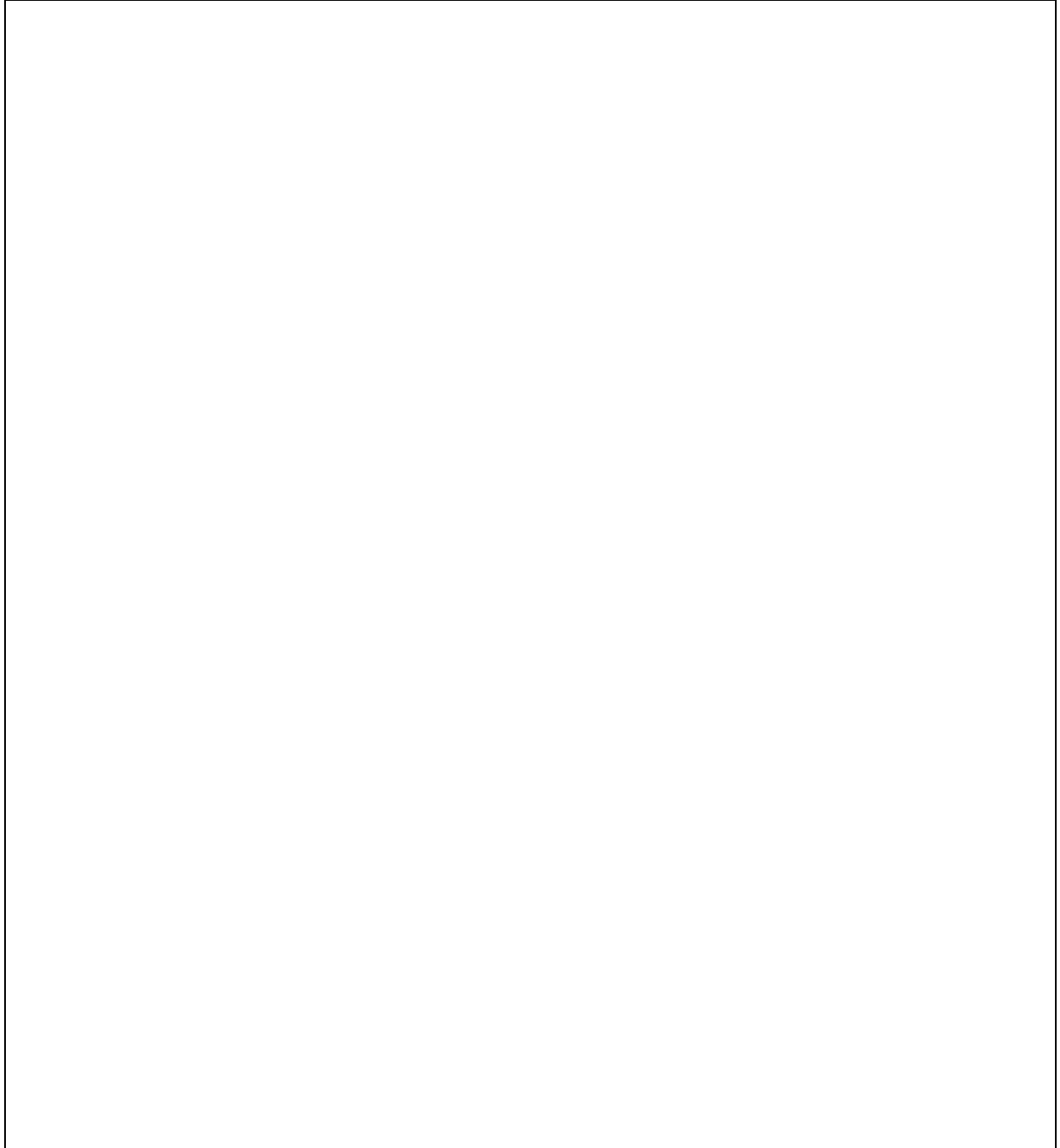
5. Almost 100 years ago, it cost one nickel for kids to see a movie. _____

Write anything you know about movies.

You Ought To Be in Pictures

Mack Made Movies

Pretend that you are the man hanging from the pole or the woman in the window. How did you get there and what will you do next?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their response to the prompt above.



Opinion	Proof
<p>Example:</p> <p>Mack enjoyed working hard to meet his goals.</p>	<p><i>Despite the disappointments, Mack did not quit. He made 140 movies his first year in California...It looked dangerous, but Mack and his actors were careful and bad injuries were rare.</i></p>

Mack Made Movies

Parts of the story are missing. Read what is provided and fill in the boxes with events in order.

Mack dreamed of being a show business star.

Despite disappointments, Mack did not quit. He learned a physical type of humor called slapstick.

In 1896 films were first projected onto screens.

Mack started his own movie company.

Vocabulary Map

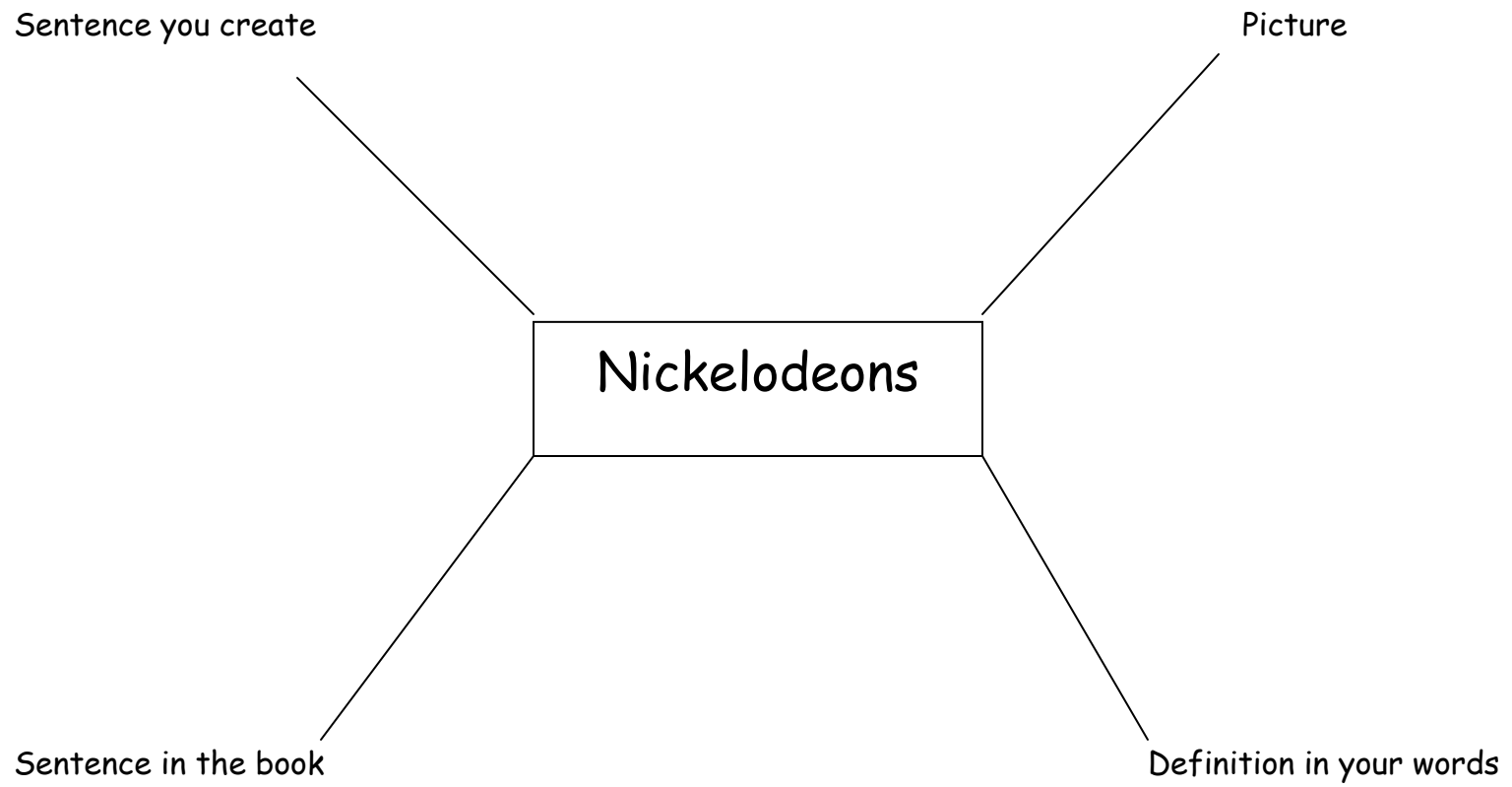
Sentence you create

Picture

Nickelodeons

Sentence in the book

Definition in your words



Venn Diagram

Mack Made Movies

Think of what you have learned about really old movies. With your partner, create a Venn Diagram that will show how movies today and movies from long ago are the same and different. Try to think of at LEAST 3 similarities and 3 differences!