

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic Page Count: 24 Word Count: 3,008

Book Summary

The School Versus James Holt tells the story of a fifth-grade classroom learning about the process of a jury trial. Students are assigned roles as they try a real case in which the main character must prove that her friend James is innocent so he doesn't receive a week's worth of detention for a crime he says he didn't commit. Illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions
- Make inferences/Draw conclusions
- Identify quotation and punctuation marks in text
- Identify time and order words

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The School Versus James Holt* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Colored pencils—two colors for each student
- Make, revise, and confirm predictions; make inferences/draw conclusions; quotation marks; time and order words worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:

Story critical: *defendant* (n.), *evidence* (n.), *prosecution* (n.), *testify* (v.), *verdict* (n.), *witness* (n.)

Enrichment: *defense* (n.), *due process* (n.), *overruled* (v.), *reasonable doubt* (adj.), *sustained* (v.), *trial* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students if they have ever seen a jury trial in person or on television, or read about one in a book. Invite volunteers to share what they remember about the process of a jury trial.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Make, revise, and confirm predictions**

- Tell students that a way to read that will help them understand a story is to use the information they read to guess, or predict, what will happen next in the book. This strategy helps readers understand and remember what they read.
- Model how to make a prediction as you preview the book.
Think-aloud: Let's look at the illustration on the back cover of the book. I see a lot of different faces, along with names such as Eva, James, Principal Jeffries, and Mr. Dawson. Since the title of the book is The School Versus James Holt, I think this might be a story about a boy named James who is in trouble for doing something bad in school. I think the names on the back cover are the names of the main characters in the story. I wonder if Jasmine and Eva are friends of James. I'll have to read the book to find out.
- Have students make predictions (or guess) what they think will happen to the characters as they read the book.
- Introduce and explain the **make, revise, and confirm predictions worksheet**. Tell students that they will fill out the worksheet throughout the reading process as they make their predictions. Have them fill in the first row, *What I predict will happen*, before they begin reading.
- Point to the word *Revise* on their worksheet. Explain that to *revise* means to make changes to their original guess. Tell students that good readers often revise their predictions as they read. Point to the word *Confirm* on their worksheet. Explain that to *confirm* means to note that they were correct in their guess. This section also has space for students to write what actually happened in the book, regardless of whether their predictions were correct. Explain to students that they will be filling in these two rows (Revise and Confirm) later in the lesson.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Make inferences/Draw conclusions**

- Explain that not all the information in a book is directly stated. Sometimes readers have to connect details in the story to information already known to understand something that the author does not directly tell the reader. When readers make these kinds of connections, they are *making inferences*, or *drawing conclusions*.
- Ask students to turn to page 3. Read the page aloud as they follow along. Discuss with students what can be inferred about this trial regarding Eva and James (it's really important to Eva that she prove James innocent). Have volunteers give examples from the text that support this inference (*Eva was nervous; this time it was real; she believed him; it was her job to get everyone else to believe him*). Point out how the illustration supports the inference (she's sitting by his side, supporting him).
- *Think-aloud: As I read, I will look for other opportunities to make inferences on the basis of the text. I know that good readers do this and that it helps them understand what they read.*

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following story-critical vocabulary words from the text on large pieces of paper: *defendant*, *evidence*, and *witness*. Read each word aloud with students.
- Place students in three groups and assign a word to each group. Have them discuss what they know about the meaning of their word and write it on the paper. Rotate the papers until each group has written a definition for each word.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The School Versus James Holt

- Show students the illustration on page 4. Invite them to describe what they see. Ask students if they know a word that means “something that supports a theory or claim” (*evidence*). Point to the word on the board and practice saying it aloud with students. Ask them to identify what might be the *evidence* in the illustration on page 4. Have a volunteer read the definition in the glossary and invite students to compare the meaning of the word with their prior knowledge definition.
- Read the following sentence from page 5 aloud: *Because I might have to testify as a witness, I won’t be acting as the judge in this case.* Ask students to compare their prior-knowledge definition of *witness* with what they can gather from the context clues in the sentence. Have a volunteer read the definition for *witness* in the glossary, and have them compare that definition with the one they created from prior knowledge.
- Show students the illustration on page 3. Point out the boy in the illustration and say that readers can infer that this is James, the *defendant* in the case. Ask students if they know a word that means “a person or group that is accused of wrongdoing in a court of law” (*defendant*). Point to the word on the board and practice saying it aloud with students. Have a volunteer read the definition from the glossary. Invite students to compare the meaning of the word with the definition they came up with together, using their prior knowledge.

Set the Purpose

- As students read, have them make predictions about what will happen, on the basis of what the characters say, do, and think. Remind them to *revise* (make changes to) or *confirm* their predictions and note whether they were correct in their prediction as they learn more about the story’s plot and characters.

During Reading

Student Reading




Guide the reading: Have students read from page 4 to the end of page 9. Tell them to underline any words, phrases, or clues that help them predict what will happen next. If they finish before everyone else, they can go back and reread.

- When they have finished reading, ask students to tell what they have learned so far about the characters and the rumor that has been spread. Ask them to tell whether their predictions about the characters’ words and actions have been correct so far. Ask if they have revised or confirmed those predictions.
- **Think-aloud:** *I predicted that James was in trouble for doing something bad in school, and that the names on the back cover are names of the main characters in the story. As I read, I learned that James was in trouble for stealing Larry’s hat, but that he said he didn’t do it. The main characters are indeed the ones depicted on the back cover of the book, and they are instrumental in the jury trial that their class is holding. I also wondered if Jasmine and Eva were friends with James. I read that Eva is a good friend of James’s but that Jasmine was testifying against James in the trial. It seems that Eva really understands the process of a jury trial. I inferred this information because I read that Principal Jeffries told Eva, “You’re right. It’s not allowed. Your objection is sustained.” I’m revising my prediction to: Eva works hard to prove James’ innocence and wins the trial. I will write this prediction in the Revise column of my chart next to my original prediction.*
- Encourage students to continue to make, revise, and confirm their predictions as they continue reading the story. Have them fill out the middle row of their worksheet, *Changes in my prediction*. If they have a new prediction, they may add it to the top row, *What I predict will happen*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 13. When they have finished reading, have them share their predictions and reflect on what really happened in the story as they learn more information about the characters. Have them fill out the middle row of their worksheet, *Changes in my prediction*. If they have a new prediction, remind them that they may add it to the top row, *What I predict will happen*.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The School Versus James Holt

- On the basis of the information in the book, ask students to show how readers could infer that Eva is timid in the beginning of the trial. Have students share the story clues and prior knowledge they used to make that inference. (Page 3 clue: *Eva was nervous for the trial to begin.* Page 7 clue: *She took a deep breath to prepare herself for her opening statement.* Page 9 clue: *The word shot out of Eva's mouth before she really thought about it. Her mind raced as Principal Jeffries looked at her.* Page 10 clue: *Eva only had one question for Jasmine, but being in front of her and the whole class made Eva so anxious that she could hardly speak.*)
- Introduce and explain the [make inferences/draw conclusions worksheet](#). Have students record this information on their worksheet.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to make, revise, and confirm their predictions as they read the rest of the story.
-  Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *I predicted that Eva works hard to prove James's innocence and wins the trial. This part of my prediction was confirmed because I read that she did work hard, even through the recess when everyone else was taking a break from the trial. I read that she found a new witness and convinced the principal to allow his testimony to help prove James's case. My prediction was correct also, in that she was successful in winning the trial and proving James's innocence.*
- Ask students to share predictions they thought of while reading. Reinforce how making predictions, and revising and confirming them as they read, keeps them involved in the reading process. This strategy also helps them understand and remember what they read.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the prediction worksheet by continuing to revise or confirm their predictions. Have them fill in the last row of their worksheet, *What actually happened*. Discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Ask students what can be inferred/concluded about Eva's interest in jury trials and lawyers. Have students share the story clues and prior knowledge they used to make that inference/conclusion. Record the information on the board as story clues are shared. Encourage volunteers to share prior-knowledge clues, and add them to the board. Have them record this information on their make inferences/draw conclusions worksheet.
- Ask students what can be inferred/concluded about Jasmine throughout the story. Write their inferences/conclusions on the board. Have students share the story clues and prior knowledge they used to make that inference/conclusion. Record the information on the board as story clues are shared. Encourage volunteers to share prior-knowledge clues, and add them to the board. Have them record this information on their worksheet.
- **Independent practice:** Ask students what can be inferred/concluded about Darnell and why he became less sure about his case after Mr. Billings testified. Have students complete the make inferences/draw conclusions worksheet by recording their answers on their worksheet. When they have finished, discuss their answers as a group.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you read about a boy who had to prove his innocence in a jury trial when the evidence was stacked against him. Eva didn't give up and eventually found a way to prove her friend innocent. Now that you know this information, do you think jury trials are an important part of our legal system? Why or why not?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Quotation marks

- Explain that quotation marks are most often used as the punctuation marks (", ") around dialogue in the text. Write the following sentence on the board: *"Thank you, Bailiff," Principal Jeffries said.* Discuss the difference between what is being said aloud by the speaker (*Thank you, Bailiff*) and what is not (*Principal Jeffries said*). Explain that showing dialogue is one use for quotation marks.
- Have students find the last paragraph on page 7. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Ask students to tell who is speaking and what he is saying. Review or explain that quotation marks are placed before and after the exact words a speaker says. Point out the comma and explain that the comma is placed before the quotation marks to separate the speaker's words from the rest of the sentence.
- Have students find the first two paragraphs on page 9. Ask a volunteer to read them aloud. Point out that the quotation marks are placed at the beginning of the speaker's words and again at the end. Point out that a question mark is placed at the end of the first sentence because the group of words expresses a question instead of a statement. Ask students to tell who is speaking. Point out that, in the second paragraph, Jasmine is the speaker in both sets of quotation marks.



Check for understanding: Have students read page 10 again. Have them underline the characters' spoken words using a colored pencil. Have them use a different colored pencil to circle the quotation marks. Ask students to take turns reading the quotations from page 10. Discuss the punctuation marks that students underlined and circled.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [quotation marks worksheet](#).

Word Work: Time-order words

- Review or explain that writers present the events of a story in a particular order. Signal words are often provided to help readers identify the order of the events. Ask students to identify examples of time and order words (*today, first, then, while, dates, times of the day, and so on*). Point out that in jury trials, these words are particularly important—the time and order of events are scrutinized and can mean the difference between a guilty and a not-guilty verdict.
- **Think-aloud:** *I know that a process, like a story, also has a sequence of events. For example, when I brush my teeth, first I take the lid off the toothpaste. Next, I put the toothpaste on the toothbrush. Then, I put the toothbrush head in my mouth and begin wiggling the bristles against my teeth. After that, I spit out the foamy toothpaste. Last, I rinse my mouth with clean water.*
- Have volunteers explain the order of a simple process, such as making a sandwich or getting ready for school. Use time and order words (*first, next, and so on*) to record the steps on the board.
- Have students turn to page 5 and find the third paragraph. Read the paragraph aloud as students listen for time and order words. Ask students which were used (*First, Then*). Continue reading the next paragraph and ask students which time and order words were used (*Next*).
- Brainstorm with students and write more examples of sequencing words and phrases on the board (*next, suddenly, after that, after a few minutes, finally, eventually, yesterday, during recess, and so on*). Ask students how the time and order of events ended up being a crucial part of proving James's innocence.



Check for understanding: Have students review the book, circling all of the time and order words and phrases used. Remind them to look carefully: some time and order words, such as *then* and *once*, are used more than one time in the text.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [time-and-order-words worksheet](#). When they are finished writing, have them work with a partner to read each other's work. Have students circle all of the time-order words they see within their partner's writing.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them share their predictions with someone at home when they read the book.

Extend the Reading

Realistic Fiction Writing Connection

Have students write a fictional piece in which the setting is school, and writing dialogue is the main focus. Remind them to use quotation marks and punctuation when depicting conversation between characters. Remind students to keep the characters and events believable since they are writing a realistic fiction piece. When students have finished their stories, host a reader's theater in which students act out their writing for an audience.

Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Take a field trip to a local courtroom, attorney's office, or judge's chambers. Talk with students about the critical vocabulary words needed to understand the proceedings of law and a courtroom trial, such as *defendant*, *evidence*, *prosecution*, *testify*, *verdict*, and *witness*. Have students take note of these key words as they listen to the proceedings.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- make predictions on the basis of illustrations and text; revise and/or confirm predictions as they preview and read the book and on a worksheet
- use story clues and prior knowledge to make inferences while reading and on a worksheet
- identify and use quotation and punctuation marks during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify time and order words during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**