

T3 ~ Number 16  
February 1, 2011

*Strategy:*  
*First Lines*

Before Reading

Beers, K. (2003). *When Kids Can't Read--What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



### Background

First Lines is a strategy in which students read the beginning sentences from assigned readings (textbook, article, etc) and make predictions about the content of what they're about to read. This pre-reading technique helps students focus their attention on what they can tell from the first lines of a story, play, poem, or other text. As students read the text in its entirety they discuss, revisit and/or revise their original prediction

### Benefits

The First Lines strategy is a versatile and simple technique for improving students' reading comprehension. It requires students to 1) anticipate what the text is about before they begin reading, and 2) activate prior knowledge. First Lines helps students become active participants in learning and can include writing as a way of organizing predictions and/or thoughts generated from discussions. Monitoring each student's predictions provides teachers with information about how much the students already know about the topic. This allows teachers to tailor instruction accordingly. First lines can be used as a warm-up or exit activity as well.

### Implement

1. Students read first line (or lines) of text.
2. Students make predictions for the reading based on what they see in the first sentence.
3. Remind students that there is not a "right" or "wrong" way to make predictions about a text, but emphasize that readers should be able to support their predictions from the information in the sentence.
4. Share predictions with partner or whole class.
5. In the "After Reading Reflection," encourage students to return to their original predictions after reading the text, assessing their original predictions and building evidence to support those predictions which are accurate. Students can create questions for future readings as well.

### EXAMPLE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

**Title of Text:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Line(s)**

**My Prediction**

*I think the text will be about...*

**Explanation** (*What from the first lines helped you make your prediction?*)

**After Reading Reflection**