Grade: 4th
Strategy: Inferring
Technique: Story Inference Wall
Text Type: Science

The Secrets of Tara: An Archaeological Reading Journey

Aims of the Lesson:

- Help students infer key elements of the story using the Story Inference Wall.
- Identify and discuss characters, setting, theme, problem, and solution.
- Encourage critical thinking, discussion, and text analysis.

Text: The Secrets of Tara: An Archaeological Reading Journey

In the middle of a vast, sandy desert, Dr. Anna Smith, an experienced archaeologist, led a team of scientists to uncover a buried city. After studying old maps and legends for years, they were finally ready to discover its secrets.

The digging started slowly. Using small tools like spoons, knives, and brushes, the team carefully removed the sand and uncovered stone tools and colorful pottery. These objects showed that a great civilization once lived there.

One hot afternoon, a young archaeologist named Ben found a mysterious box covered in strange symbols. The symbols seemed to hint at hidden treasure! This exciting discovery led the team to a grand palace with beautiful murals that told the story of the city's past. In one room, Anna found a stone tablet with the city's name written on it: Tara.

As they continued digging, they discovered jewellery, weapons, and ancient scrolls. These objects told the story of Tara—how it rose to power, became a wealthy and influential city, and then mysteriously disappeared. Every new discovery helped piece together its history.

When the dig was complete, Anna felt proud of everything they had uncovered. As the sun set over the desert, she smiled, knowing that there were still more lost cities waiting to be found. She was excited for her next big adventure, ready to uncover more secrets from the past.

Process Phase 1: Planning (Teacher's Perspective)

During this stage, the teacher prepares the **Story Inference Wall** strategy, ensuring students focus on identifying **characters, setting, theme, problem, and solution**.

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Materials: Picture and four labelled charts on the wall (**Characters, Setting, Theme, Problem & Solution**), and sticky notes for students.

The teacher then **shows the picture** and asks:

- What do you see in the picture?
- Why do people dig up old objects?
- What do you think archaeologists learn from ancient things?
- How do you think people lived in ancient cities?

Teacher introduces **key vocabulary:**

- **Archaeologist:** A person who studies the past by digging up old objects.
- **Tablet:** A flat piece of stone or clay that people wrote on long ago.
- **Mural:** A big painting on a wall, usually telling a story or showing important events.

Teacher explains **Characters, Setting, Theme, Problem & Solution** chart.

Characters	
Setting	
Theme	

Cognitive Stage 1: Pre-Reading (Student's Perspective)
Teacher **shows the pictures and introduces key vocabulary:**

The students answer guiding questions to **make inferences** by using phrases such as:

- *I think...*
- *Maybe...*
- *My guess is...*
- *It looks like...*

Process Phase 2: Teaching (Teacher's Perspective)

- The teacher guides students to **read the story aloud** in small groups.

Cognitive Stage 2: During Reading (Student's Perspective)

- Students read assigned parts of the text.
- **They highlight key details** related to characters, setting, theme, problem, and solution.

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- Students work in pairs to discuss and **write their answers on sticky notes**, placing them under the correct category on the **Story Inference Wall**.

Process Phase 3: Feedback (Teacher's Perspective)

- The teacher **reviews students' notes** and helps correct misunderstandings.
- The teacher asks discussion questions.
  - *Why do archaeologists study ancient cities?*
  - *What does the lost city of Tara teach us?*
  - *What would you like to discover if you were an archaeologist?*

Cognitive Stage 3: Post-Reading (Student's Perspective)

- Students answer the discussion question addressed by the teacher.

Answers:

- **Characters:** Dr. Anna Smith, Ben, the archaeologists.
- **Setting:** The desert, the lost city of Tara.
- **Theme:** Exploration, discovery, learning from history.
- **Problem:** The city of Tara was buried under sand and forgotten.
- **Solution:** The archaeologists worked together to uncover its secrets

Modes of Communication (Skills):

- **Interpretive (Receptive):** Students listen to the teacher's explanation of key words (**archaeologist, tablet, mural**) and read the text. After reading, they listen to their peers and review their Story Inference Wall to make modifications or additions.
- **Interpersonal (Mixed):** Students collaborate in groups to categorize information into characters, setting, theme, problem, and solution. They discuss and negotiate their inferences, ensuring logical reasoning.
- **Presentational (Productive):** Students present their completed Story Inference Wall to the class, explaining the discoveries in the lost city of Tara. They summarize key details, discuss the importance of archaeology, and reflect on what they would like to uncover if they were archaeologists.

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