

Thinking Aloud With Poetry in Grades K–2






“The Dentist and the Crocodile” by Roald Dahl





Overview

This poem’s plot centers on a crocodile’s visit to the dentist due to a toothache. With humor and delight, the text portrays the dentist’s fear of the crocodile while humanizing dentists in the eyes of children. The crocodile sits in the dentist’s chair and tries to trick the dentist into putting his head into his mouth by asking him to check his back teeth. Young learners will enjoy the rhymes and humoristic language used in this poem. Roald Dahl is a world-renowned poet and novelist who has sold over 250 million copies of his books.

Lexile Framework: 410L

Guided Reading Level: N

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy I Model
He said, “Right here and everywhere my teeth require repair.” (line 2)	<i>Hmm, I’m getting some clues, like the word cunning, that make me think this crocodile is up to no good. And if his teeth need so much repair, or fixing, why is he smiling so much?</i>	 Making inferences
He muttered, “I suppose I’m going to have to take a look.” (line 5)	<i>Now I understand how nervous this dentist feels! His face is pale, he’s shaking, and he’s trying to convince himself that he has to look at this crocodile’s teeth! I know I’d be scared!</i>	 Synthesizing
At least three hundred pointed teeth, all sharp and shining white. (line 9)	<i>I like how the author is painting a scary picture here—the words massive, fearsome, and three hundred pointed teeth really show me exactly why the dentist might feel afraid.</i>	A Understanding the author’s purpose
“You’re much too far away, dear sir, to see what you’re about.” (line 14)	<i>This makes me wonder what the crocodile is planning. Does he want the dentist to start with the molars so he can bite down and eat him?</i>	 Asking questions
He cried, “No no! I see them all extremely well from here!” (line 16)	<i>Why isn’t the dentist running away? The author is really showing me how tense this situation is—the crocodile is trying to convince the dentist to put his head way inside of his mouth, and the dentist is crying because he’s so afraid!</i>	 Asking questions A Understanding the author’s purpose
“Oh Croc, you naughty boy, you’re playing tricks again!” (line 18)	<i>Aha! The dentist might be rescued—the words in burst a lady make me think that she’s there to save the dentist—she even scolds the crocodile for playing tricks!</i>	 Making inferences A Understanding the author’s purpose

What the Text Says	What I Say	The Comprehension Strategy Model
<p>"He's after me! He's after you! He's going to eat us all!" (line 20)</p>	<p><i>I wonder who this lady is. Where did she come from?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  Asking questions </p>
<p>"... He's my little pet, my lovely crocodile." (line 24)</p>	<p><i>What? When I first read this, I thought that the lady was going to rescue the dentist. But when I reread it, I thought that the lady was not a part of the solution—but a part of the problem! Did she send the crocodile in to trick the dentist? Who keeps a crocodile for a pet? In a nutshell, maybe this dentist should be afraid of the lady and the crocodile!</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  Monitoring and clarifying </p> <p style="text-align: center;">  Synthesizing </p> <p style="text-align: center;">  Asking questions </p>

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