



Thinking Nation

Rainbow Highlighting

The Rainbow Highlighting strategy is a powerful tool for encouraging students to engage deeply with reading materials by using a color-coded system to highlight text-based evidence. Here's how the strategy works in practice:

1. Students are provided with a reading passage related to a specific topic or concept.

2. Each student is given a set of crayons, markers, or highlighters in different colors to use during the activity.

3. Before writing down their answers to comprehension questions, students are required to return to the text to "prove it." This means identifying and marking the specific evidence or clues in the passage that guided them to their answer.

4. To distinguish between questions and their respective evidence, students use a different color for each question. This creates a visually organized and systematic way of showing how they derived their responses.

The benefits of this strategy are multifaceted. First, it promotes accountability, as students cannot rely on guesswork. They must instead identify and reference concrete evidence from the text, reinforcing critical reading and analytical skills. This practice ensures that their answers are rooted in the material and helps to minimize surface-level engagement.

Second, the color-coded responses offer valuable insights into student thinking. If an answer is incorrect, you can quickly locate the section of text they used and assess how their interpretation may have been flawed or incomplete. This provides an opportunity for constructive feedback and targeted teaching moments.

Finally, the strategy encourages students to engage more deeply with the text. Searching for specific evidence requires them to read closely and think critically, particularly when addressing higher-level questions. This process not only builds comprehension skills but also fosters independence and confidence in their problem-solving abilities.