

Tea Party
A Snappy Strategy
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Tea Party is a before-reading strategy that helps students practice speaking, listening, predicting, and writing. This is just one of the many helpful strategies in Cris Tovani's book, *I Read It but I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Here's how the strategy works:

- You, the teacher, preview text that your students are going to read.
- Pick out several thought-provoking quotes from the text, quotes that will lend themselves to discussion and provide telling clues or main ideas your students will encounter in the text.
- For example, here are some of the clues that I use when I'm reading Sandra Cisneros' short story "Eleven" with a class:
 - It's an ugly sweater.
 - I'm eleven but I wish I was one hundred and two.
 - All of a sudden I'm crying in front of everybody.
 - Because she older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.
- Prepare the quotes – you can cut them into sentence strips or maybe just put them on index cards.
- In class, distribute the clues – one for each student. Some clues may be repeated.
- Instruct students to mingle at the "tea party". They should walk around, sharing the quotes on the index cards with four goals in mind:
 - First, Share their cards with as many classmates as possible.
 - Secondly, Listen to others as they read their cards.
 - Then, Discuss how these cards might be related.
 - Finally, they should speculate on what these cards, collectively, might mean. Just like a real tea party – people have bits of gossip to share, and if they work together, they can often construct something very close to the truth.
- Remember: the first time you do this activity, you will probably need to model this "mingling" with one or two students in the classroom. And when you set your class free to have their own tea party, you'll need to monitor students as they discuss their cards.
- When it appears that most students have had the opportunity to discuss cards, put them into pairs or small groups.
- Each Group/Pair will then construct a written "We think" statement (a paragraph or so) that briefly predicts what the text will be about.
- Finally, have some or all of the groups to share their predictions out loud, and be sure to ask groups to share specific pieces of information that helped them arrived at their predictions.
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