



## Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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### **It Says...I Say** from When Kids Can't Read by Kyleene Beers

Dependent readers often have difficulty making inferences. This strategy—It Says...I Say—is simply a visual scaffold that helps students to organize their thoughts as they move from considering what's in the text to connecting that to their previous experience.

- **Question:** read the questions
- **It Says:** find information from the text that will help you answer the question.
- **I Say:** think about what you know about the information.
- **And So:** combine what the text says with what you know to come up with the answer.

Students generally respond to inference questions with comments like...

- There's no answer in the book for this question.
- How am I supposed to answer this? The answer isn't here.
- This is a dumb question.
- I'm too stupid to answer this question.

Such students spend so much time just getting through the text—just getting through the literal details—that making an inference as they read is the last thing that happens., if it happens at all. Therefore, when they encounter a question that requires an inference, they don't know where to begin. They need a scaffold, something that helps them internalize the process of how to infer. The **It Says...It Say** chart helps students finally see a structure for making an inference.

Repeated practice is the key to success when using this strategy. You might introduce the strategy using simple materials with which the students are already familiar. Then, ask the

students to make an inference about the text. If someone can do it, great; if not, do it yourself, writing the information on the chart that you've drawn up.

Remember to model the strategy regularly, over an extended period of time. Keep the following ideas in mind as you use the strategy.

1. It is important to quote from the text in the **It Says** section, for this column refers directly to the text; the more direct quotations, the better.
2. The chart can get very lengthy. This means that you need to look ahead to the questions you want the students to answer. If there are six questions and all six require an inference, that's probably too much writing for struggling readers, who are also often struggling writers. If that's the case, have the students work in pairs or small groups to answer some questions. As soon as you can see that students can make inferences and can tell you how they made the inferences, they don't need to complete the chart repeatedly. The chart is a scaffold to be used as needed.
3. With poor readers, you might need to tell them how many items to list in the **It Says** column. Eventually, you want them to be able to do this on their own, but in the beginning you might have to provide that support.
4. Students who have trouble making inferences either don't answer questions, complain about the question by saying that it has no answer or the answer isn't in the book, or give an answer that is unrelated to the text. Those students need the chart.
5. The purpose of the chart is to help students see the connection between information in the text and information in their heads. Once they can do this, you can eliminate the chart.