Pre-Reading Strategy - Open House

**Purpose:**
- To set a purpose for reading
- To make predictions about what might happen and stimulate interest in the novel
- To access prior knowledge or personal experience that relates to a novel
- To introduce students to elements of literature

**Overview of the “Open House” Strategy**
Strong readers automatically make predictions, inferences, and generalizations when they read. Reluctant readers do not come by these skills naturally, but they can be taught the skills by practicing. The “Open House” reading strategy (also known as the “Tea Party”) gives the students an opportunity to talk to each other about segments of a short story, chapter, or poem and predict what will happen next. They will make inferences and generalizations about the characters, setting, mood/tone, plot/action, conflicts, and point of view by discussing the segments. Before starting this activity, discuss the characteristics of an open house, making sure the students understand that people are supposed to mingle, talk, and share information.

**Directions for “Open House” Strategy**
Use this strategy with the first chapter of any novel the class is reading by following these steps:

1. Photocopy the first chapter of the novel (permission is granted to use a chapter for a one-time educational purpose), and cut the chapter into segments, one segment for each class member. If you have a large class, you may wish to have the class members work in pairs in order to keep the segments from being too short.

2. After mixing the segments, distribute the individual segments to the students.

3. Give the students a few minutes to read their segment silently.

4. Distribute the “To Discover” sheets Explain all the terms to students using examples from a previous class reading if possible (see page 3). Students always seem to understand new concepts more easily when you provide examples that are familiar to them.

5. Next, tell the students that they have 10 minutes to “meet and greet” as many “guests” in the room as possible. The idea is to create an open house atmosphere in which the students spend a minute or two with other students and share the information from the chapter as revealed in their given segment. Have the students record on their sheets what they discover from others.
6. After the open house, ask the students to return to their seats and take a few minutes to record additional questions, predictions, inferences, and generalizations related to the chapter. Ask for volunteers to share their discoveries, predictions, and questions. Make sure to ask students what types of clues helped them draw their conclusions. You may wish to compile and display the shared information on a chart, on an overhead transparency, or on the board.

7. Now, hand out the books and ask the students to read Chapter 1.

8. After the students are finished, ask them to write down the differences between their predicted information and the actual information.

9. Follow up with a class discussion.

This activity works well with the first chapter of a book. It is also effective when used at a turning point in the middle or at the conclusion of the novel. This strategy works with nonfiction, such as reports and essays, poetry, and short stories. Customized “To Discover” pages will need to be created to match the objectives of the reading.

Note: This activity is particularly useful in a basic developmental reading course where students have little experience with reading novels.
Open House — To Discover...

1. **Characters**- Who are the characters in the story? How old might they be? What do you know about their personalities? What do they look like? How do they behave? Who might be the hero in the book? The villain? The victim? Why?

2. **Point of View**- Is the story told in first person or third person? Are there flash backs?

3. **Setting**- Where and when does the story takes place? What information helped you figure that out? Can you provide a visual description of what the setting looks like?

4. **Mood/Tone**- What kind of a tone do you notice? anger, excitement, tension, humor, calmness, romance Does the book appear to be fast paced or slow moving?

5. **Plot/Action** What is going on so far?

6. **Conflict(s)** What is the issue or problem the characters are dealing with?

7. **I predict**... What might happen and why do you feel this way? Explain.

*Adapted from www.allameriareads.org/lessonplans/wyw/before/openhouse.htm*