

# COMPREHENSION STRATEGY LESSON PLANS AND PRACTICE PAGES

The following preview shows all of the comprehension strategy resources for *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg

## Determining Importance Lesson Plan

**The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**  
By: Chris Van Allsburg  
Grade Level: 4 / Guided Reading Level: 5

**Determining Importance**

**1**

**Get Ready to Read**

- Learn about the book
- Get your brain ready to read
- Understand the meaning of important words found in the book

**Summary**

*The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg is a collection of mysterious illustrations, each with just a title and a short caption. The book begins with a strange story about a man named Harris Burdick who shared his artwork with a publisher and then disappeared without a trace. Each picture seems to come from a different story, but it's up to the reader to imagine what happens next. Some are spooky, some are magical, and all of them are full of questions.

**Link to What You Know**

- Think of a time when you used your imagination while you read a book. What did you imagine as you read?
- Have you ever seen a piece of art and wondered more about it? Tell about the piece that you saw.

**Important Words to Know and Understand**

**Bizarre** – Very strange or weird in a way that surprises you

**Canal** – A waterway made by people so boats can travel through or to move water where it's needed

**2**

**Learn About Comprehension Strategies**

- Think about the text you read
- Know what to do when you get

**Why Readers Determine Importance While Reading**

Readers determine importance in order to decide which information is most important to remember.

When you read fiction (stories that are not real), it's important to pay attention to the names of characters, settings where important events take place, and clues that help you solve problems.

On the other hand, when you read nonfiction (books about real people, places, things, or events), it's important to pay attention to vocabulary words and the things you learn about big ideas or facts about a topic.

Because no two readers are the same, the things that you determine to be important may not be the same as another reader. To determine importance think about what you already know, the information you've learned, and whether or not you need the information to understand what you read.

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Guided Reading Level

## Determining Importance Lesson Plan

**The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**  
By: Chris Van Allsburg  
Grade Level: 4 / Guided Reading Level: 5

**Determining Importance**

**3**

**Determine Importance While Reading**

- Look for big ideas and supporting details
- Notice when you learn something new
- Look for new words

**Time to Read**

Stop on the following pages. Think about the questions for each page. Then talk with a reading partner or write your thoughts down in your notebook.

**Introduction** – The author tells us that Harris Burdick disappeared, leaving only a title, a caption, and one drawing for each story. Why do you think the author included that information first? What does it tell you about how to read the rest of the book?

**Pages 15 and 16** – The caption says, "The third stone came skipping back." Which detail is most important on this page to help you imagine a story that goes with it—the title, the caption, or the illustration? Why do you think that detail is more important than the others?

**Pages 13 and 14** – This illustration is titled "The Harp." Why do you think the harp is important? What details in the illustration help you with your answer? How does answering this question help you as a reader?

**Pages 17 and 18** – The title of this illustration is "The Seven Chairs." Which chair is the most important? How do you know? What do you think is special about this chair?

**Pages 19 and 20** – Based on the caption, what important event happened in the "The Third-Floor Bedroom"? What important detail do you notice in the illustration? How do these two details work together to make a story?

**Time to Reflect**

**Think** – What information did you learn while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Pick 3 big ideas or facts that you think you should remember about *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Why are these ideas or facts important to you?

**Write** – Tell your reading partner one of the most important facts that you want to remember. Explain why you want to remember your fact or idea. Remember to ask your partner to share their most important fact or idea, too.

**Reflect** – Think about the determining importance work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. How does thinking about the most important fact and ideas make you a better reader?

**Write** – Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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Activate Prior Knowledge

Page by Page Guide and Strategy Questions

Turn, Talk, and Reflect

Key Vocabulary

Explanation of Strategy

**Making Inferences**

**1**

**Get Ready to Read**

- Learn about the book
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- Understand the meaning of important words found in the book

**Summary**

*The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg is a collection of mysterious illustrations, each with just a title and a short caption. The book begins with a strange story about a man named Harris Burdick who shared his artwork with a publisher and then disappeared without a trace. Each picture seems to come from a different story, but it's up to the reader to imagine what happens next. Some are spooky, some are magical, and all of them are full of questions.

**2**

**Learn About Comprehension Strategies**

- Think about the text you read
- Know what to do when you get

**3**

**Make Inferences While Reading**

- Look for clues that tell you how a character might be feeling or what they might be thinking
- Study the pictures. What do you notice about the characters, settings, and events?

**Time to Read**

Stop on the following pages. Think about the questions for each page. Then talk with a reading partner or write your thoughts down in your notebook.

**Pages 1 and 2** – Use the text and illustration to make an inference. Who is the boy? How does making this inference help you prepare to read the rest of the book?

**Pages 17 and 18** – The author chose to use this illustration on the front cover. Infer why he chose this illustration. How does making this inference help you understand his purpose for writing the book?

**Pages 11 and 12** – Use the title, caption, and illustration to make an inference. Why is the man's heart pounding? What is the "mystery" in this illustration?

**Pages 21 and 22** – Make an inference about the woman in this illustration. How does the text help you as a reader?

**Pages 17 and 18** – Make an inference about the house on Maple Street. What is happening to the house? Why do you think the author chose to end the book with this illustration?

**Time to Reflect**

**Think** – What types of inferences did you make while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Did you make inferences to understand new words? Did you infer to understand how a character feels, what a character is thinking, or what a character might do next?

**Talk** – Tell your reading partner one of the most important facts that you want to remember. Explain why you want to remember your fact or idea. Remember to ask your partner to share their most important fact or idea, too.

**Reflect** – Think about the making inferences work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. How does thinking about the most important fact and ideas make you a better reader?

**Write** – Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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**Retelling and Summarizing**

**1**

**Get Ready to Read**

- Learn about the book
- Get your brain ready to read
- Understand the meaning of important words found in the book

**Summary**

*The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg is a collection of mysterious illustrations, each with just a title and a short caption. The book begins with a strange story about a man named Harris Burdick who shared his artwork with a publisher and then disappeared without a trace. Each picture seems to come from a different story, but it's up to the reader to imagine what happens next. Some are spooky, some are magical, and all of them are full of questions.

**2**

**Learn About Comprehension Strategies**

- Think about the text you read
- Know what to do when you get

**3**

**Retell and Summarize While Reading**

- Think about the important events that happened first, next, then, and last
- Notice the names of the characters, settings, and events

**Time to Read**

Stop on the following pages. Think about the questions for each page. Then talk with a reading partner or write your thoughts down in your notebook.

**Introduction** – Summarize what happened to Harris Burdick. Why is it a mystery? How does answering this question help you prepare to read the story?

**Introduction** – Tell about the author, Chris Van Allsburg. Why did he decide to write this book? How does answering this question help you as a reader?

**Introduction** – Burdick left Wenders with more than just 14 illustrations. Tell what important clues were left in Wenders' office. What did you do when you finished the book?

**Time to Reflect**

**Think** – What type of information did you use when you retold and summarized *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Did you stop throughout the story to think about what was happening in the book? Tell about the characters, the settings, the events, the story elements that help you to be a better reader.

**Talk** – Tell your reading partner about your favorite part of the book. Tell about the characters, the settings, the events, the story elements that help you to be a better reader.

**Write** – Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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**Making Predictions**

**1**

**Get Ready to Read**

- Learn about the book
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**Summary**

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**2**

**Learn About Comprehension Strategies**

- Think about the text you read
- Know what to do when you get

**3**

**Make Predictions While Reading**

- Look for clues that tell you what a character might do next
- Look for clues that tell you about big events that might be coming up next

**Time to Read**

Stop on the following pages. Think about the questions for each page. Then talk with a reading partner or write your thoughts down in your notebook.

**Cover and Intro** – The author said that the stories written by Wenders' children and their friends were "bizarre, funny, and weird." Based on the words and the cover of the story, make a prediction about the illustrations. How does making this prediction help you prepare to read the story?

**Pages 1 and 2** – Use the title, caption, and illustration to make a prediction. What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?

**Pages 15 and 16** – The caption says, "The third stone came skipping back." What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?

**Pages 23 and 24** – Look closely at the illustration and use the title and caption to make a prediction. What do you think will happen to the boy? Why do you think that? How does answering this question help you better understand Burdick's illustration style?

**Time to Reflect**

**Think** – What types of predictions did you make while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Did you make predictions about characters, events, problems, or solutions? How did you decide whether or not your predictions made sense?

**Talk** – Tell your reading partner about the best predictions you made while reading the book. Explain why your prediction was so helpful to you as a reader. Remember to ask your partner to share their thoughts about the book too.

**Reflect** – Think about the reasons why some of the predictions you made while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* were correct and why others were incorrect. What was easy about making predictions? What was difficult? How does making predictions help you to be a better reader?

**Write** – Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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**Answer Key for Determining Importance with The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**

**Introduction:** The author tells us that Harris Burdick disappeared, leaving only a title, a caption, and one drawing for each story. Why do you think the author included that information first?

**Pages 1 and 2:** Use the text and illustration to make an inference. Who is the boy?

**Pages 15 and 16:** The caption says, "The third stone came skipping back." Which detail is most important on this page to help you imagine a story that goes with it—the title, the caption, or the illustration? Why do you think that detail is more important than the others?

**Pages 13 and 14:** This illustration is titled "The Harp." Why do you think the harp is important? What details in the illustration help you with your answer? How does answering this question help you as a reader?

**Pages 17 and 18:** The title of this illustration is "The Seven Chairs." Which chair is the most important? How do you know? What do you think is special about this chair?

**Pages 19 and 20:** Based on the caption, what important event happened in the "The Third-Floor Bedroom"? What important detail do you notice in the illustration? How do these two details work together to make a story?

**Time to Reflect:** What information did you learn while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Pick 3 big ideas or facts that you think you should remember about *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Why are these ideas or facts important to you?

**Write:** Tell your reading partner one of the most important facts that you want to remember. Explain why you want to remember your fact or idea. Remember to ask your partner to share their most important fact or idea, too.

**Reflect:** Think about the determining importance work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. How does thinking about the most important fact and ideas make you a better reader?

**Write:** Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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**Answer Key for Retelling and Summarizing with The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**

**Introduction:** Summarize what happened to Harris Burdick. Why is it a mystery? How does answering this question help you prepare to read the story?

**Introduction:** Tell about the author, Chris Van Allsburg. Why did he decide to write this book? How does answering this question help you as a reader?

**Introduction:** Burdick left Wenders with more than just 14 illustrations. Tell what important clues were left in Wenders' office. What did you do when you finished the book?

**Time to Reflect:** What type of information did you use when you retold and summarized *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Did you stop throughout the story to think about what was happening in the book? Tell about the characters, the settings, the events, the story elements that help you to be a better reader.

**Talk:** Tell your reading partner about your favorite part of the book. Tell about the characters, the settings, the events, the story elements that help you to be a better reader.

**Write:** Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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**Answer Key for Making Inferences with The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**

**Pages 1 and 2:** Use the text and illustration to make an inference. Who is the boy?

**Pages 15 and 16:** The caption says, "The third stone came skipping back." Which detail is most important on this page to help you imagine a story that goes with it—the title, the caption, or the illustration? Why do you think that detail is more important than the others?

**Pages 13 and 14:** This illustration is titled "The Harp." Why do you think the harp is important? What details in the illustration help you with your answer? How does answering this question help you as a reader?

**Pages 17 and 18:** The title of this illustration is "The Seven Chairs." Which chair is the most important? How do you know? What do you think is special about this chair?

**Pages 19 and 20:** Based on the caption, what important event happened in the "The Third-Floor Bedroom"? What important detail do you notice in the illustration? How do these two details work together to make a story?

**Time to Reflect:** What information did you learn while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*? Pick 3 big ideas or facts that you think you should remember about *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Why are these ideas or facts important to you?

**Write:** Tell your reading partner one of the most important facts that you want to remember. Explain why you want to remember your fact or idea. Remember to ask your partner to share their most important fact or idea, too.

**Reflect:** Think about the making inferences work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. How does thinking about the most important fact and ideas make you a better reader?

**Write:** Give your Strategy Slip into your reader's notebook. Write about the work you did while reading *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. (Remember to include examples from the book!)

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Practice Pages and Answer Keys

# WRITING ABOUT READING WITH OPTIONAL CCSS ALIGNMENT

**"I Can" Statement**

**Strategy and Text Based Reader's Response Prompt**

**Common Core State Standard**

**Common Core Free Option**

**Reading Response Prompts for Each Comprehension Strategy Lesson Plan**

## 4 COMPREHENSION STRATEGY GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

**Determining Importance**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Think about the book. Write all of the important information in the thought bubble below.

Now determine 3 BIG ideas, events, words, or facts that are important to you. Draw a picture to illustrate the most important parts of your book.

#1 \_\_\_\_\_

#2 \_\_\_\_\_

#3 \_\_\_\_\_

Directions:  
1. Answer each of the questions.  
2. Carefully cut out on the dotted line.  
3. Glue, tape, or staple into your reader's notebook.

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Determining Importance

**Making Inferences**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

| What the Text Says                      | What I Know                       | What I Can Infer                         |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Look for clues in the text or pictures. | What do you know about the story? | Directions: Circle, underline, or write. |
|   |                                   |  |
|   |                                   |  |
|   |                                   |  |
|   |                                   |  |

Directions:  
1. Answer each of the questions.  
2. Carefully cut out on the dotted line.  
3. Glue, tape, or staple into your reader's notebook.

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Making Inferences

**Making Predictions**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

| Predictions at the Beginning | Predictions while Reading    | Check Predictions at the End                           |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Write your prediction below. | Write your prediction below. | If I predicted what really happened, I would be _____. |
|                              |                              |  |
|                              |                              |  |
|                              |                              |  |
|                              |                              |  |

Directions:  
1. Answer each of the questions.  
2. Carefully cut out on the dotted line.  
3. Glue, tape, or staple into your reader's notebook.

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Making Predictions

**Retelling & Summarizing**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

What is this book about?

Is it fiction or nonfiction?

Draw a picture or write a sentence for each box below:

|            |      |      |
|------------|------|------|
| First      | Next | Then |
| After that | Then | Last |

What is the most important thing you read in this book?

Directions:  
1. Answer each of the questions.  
2. Carefully cut out on the dotted line.  
3. Glue, tape, or staple into your reader's notebook.

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Retelling & Summarizing