

## **Why Does a Gobstopper Have Layers? Relating Candy to Synthesis Andrew Roberts**

### **Comprehension Strategy**

Synthesis helps students elaborate on smaller ideas when new information presents itself about what they are currently thinking. For example, they could be thinking about what life was like during Westward Expansion and read about the trails used to navigate towards the West. Students will take this idea of trails used and expand on the large idea of Westward Expansion. Synthesis is critical to building on ideas students encounter every day.

### **Objectives**

1. Students will compare and contrast a Gobstopper and a graphic novel to demonstrate their understanding of synthesis.
2. Students will complete the synthesis spiral and explain why they wrote down a specific idea to recognize the use of synthesis in graphic novels.

### **Introduction**

Gobstoppers are a candy every student has seen. However, what do gobstoppers have? They contain layers upon layers of flavor, which is similar to synthesis at its core. Students will be given a gobstopper to eat and as a group discuss the box of Gobstoppers mentioning the layers they have while incorporating this piece of candy to synthesis. Each layer is an idea that will tie to another larger idea finally getting to the outer shell, which is the largest idea.

### **Resources**

Doeden, M. (2006). *Thomas Jefferson: Great American*. Mankato, MN: Capstone Press.

McGregor, T. (2007). *Comprehension connections*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pyle, K.C. (2007). *Blindspot*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

### **Materials**

Box of Gobstoppers  
Large pieces of construction/writing paper  
Markers

### **Procedure**

1. I will first hand out Gobstoppers to the students.
2. From there, the students will enjoy them and I will draw their attention to the box
3. "What makes Gobstoppers different than any other candy?"
4. The students will raise their hands and I will call on someone to answer.
5. When done answering, we will take a look at the description on the box.
6. Then I will ask, "So what would this have to do with literacy?"
7. The students will raise their hands and I will call on someone to answer.
8. I will explain to them the idea of synthesis and why it is a valuable tool for literacy.
9. I will pull out two graphic novels and make sure the students understand what the characteristics of a graphic novel are.
10. From there, I will read the graphic novel on Thomas Jefferson and prompt the students for unfamiliar words and key ideas within the text.

11. "While I am reading this graphic novel, think about the Gobstopper and the synthesis of this story."
12. After finishing the graphic novel, I will ask the students, "Did anything stand out or was there one idea you could take away from this?"
13. The students will raise their hands and I will call on someone to answer.
14. From there, I will talk about the synthesis spiral and how it works.
15. I will model how to start the synthesis spiral and have the students fill in the "missing pieces" to get a better grasp of this idea.
16. When finished, I will ask the students to share what ideas they used in the spiral and how that tied to the graphic novel read.
17. I will talk about how graphic novels have many layers like Gobstoppers and to not forget that graphic novels are just as powerful as many other pieces of literacy.

### **Integrated Component**

This will integrate social studies because students will take a different view on Thomas Jefferson from the perspective of a graphic novel. Students will get to dig into the synthesis of ideas they have from previous social studies lessons along with personal experiences relating to it. The students will also engage in writing because they are shaping their ideas with the synthesis spiral activity. This will help the students formulate complete statements and sentences that will only help their writing.

### **Differentiation**

I have one student who struggles a bit with writing, so prompting him sometimes will be key or to encourage him to write as much as he can. I may also have a student who needs to use the computer, so helping him get started with the main idea and going from there typing will need to be addressed.

### **Closure:**

I will close the lesson out by having the students share their ideas from the synthesis spiral and if it was enjoyable or frustrating to do an activity like this. The students will get another Gobstopper as a reminder that synthesis has many layers like this candy and that even

### **Evaluation:**

The students will be evaluated on the ideas formulated for the synthesis spiral. I will carefully observe while we are completing the activity. The other part of the evaluation will be their explanation of the ideas they wrote down for the synthesis. I will keep the synthesis spiral for the evaluation.