

# Expert panel

## Teaching strategies for reading comprehension



### Best for:

- Year level: 4–9
- Phase of learning: deep

### Overview

<b>Description</b>	Groups of students read one or more texts related to a significant learning area topic and, through their reading, become 'experts' in that topic. Students form an expert panel and answer questions from other members of the class, including fellow panel members.
<b>Learning focus</b> (based on National Literacy Learning Progression)	<b>Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify main idea or argument by synthesising information across a predictable text (UnT6)</li><li>• draw inferences and explains using background knowledge or text features (UnT6)</li><li>• distinguish between fact and opinion (UnT7)</li><li>• identify main idea and related or supporting ideas in moderately complex texts (UnT8)</li><li>• draw inferences, synthesising clues and evidence across a text (UnT9)</li><li>• draw inferences using evidence from the text and discounting possible inferences that are not supported by the text (UnT10)</li><li>• evaluate the reasoning and evidence in a persuasive text (UnT10)</li><li>• explain assumptions, beliefs and implicit values in texts (UnT11)</li><li>• evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions taken in texts (UnT11)</li></ul>
<b>Teacher preparation</b>	Select a text to read on a topic within the current unit of work. Use with informational texts especially, but with modifications the strategy could be applied to any type of text. Ensure students understand the difference between literal and inferential questions before undertaking the activity. Model how to write relevant questions. Prepare students adequately for their roles as audience, panel member and moderator.

### Suggested implementation

1. Decide on 3–4 students who will work collaboratively in a small group to become experts on a topic in a text. Expert roles will vary according to the context but could include a scientist (for a scientific explanation), an author or character (for a novel), a historian or historical figures (for a historical account). When using this activity initially, students adopt a similar role, e.g. everyone is a scientist.
2. Ask the chosen students to read the text and become experts on the topic.

3. Ask the other students to read the same text and compose questions to ask the experts. While some literal questions can be used to set the scene, questions should draw out inferences about the text.
4. Form the expert panel when students have finished reading.
5. Ask the experts to begin by summarising the text from their perspective.
6. Encourage students not on the panel to ask their questions. The experts will respond and justify their answers from within the text.
7. Conduct a whole class debrief when the panel ends to summarise new learnings and discuss the benefits of adopting an expert role.

## Variations

- A If students are unfamiliar with the roles, undertake a briefing and familiarisation activities, e.g. view short videos about the expert. In addition, to help students get inside the head of the expert, they could put together a playlist of songs to which the experts might listen or create a shopping list or appointment calendar for one week.
- B As confidence with the activity grows, students can adopt roles of experts who might have different perspectives on the same topic, e.g. for a text about bushrangers, the panel could include a bushranger, police officer, victim, historian. Alternatively, students in the audience can challenge answers, providing justification.
- C Have students work in pairs. Ask students to write statements that are either facts or opinions about the text. Set a reasonable time limit to complete the task. Have partners exchange their work and categorise the statements as fact or opinion (see Table 1).



Table 1: Fact or opinion

Statement	Fact	Opinion



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