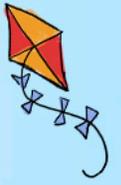




# THE READING HOUSE



## Order Up Some Story

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*Practicing language skills in cooperative student groups makes it a much more enjoyable and meaningful activity.*

Supplies: Chapter Book or Storybook; Sentence Strips or Lined Paper

Preparation: None

Practicing and rehashing story events in the correct order helps solidify a child's comprehension. Using cooperative learning as an instructional technique will involve even the most restless learners. Although a classroom of students lends itself best to cooperative learning activities, tutors and homeschoolers can usually adapt cooperative learning experiences to small groups or even an individual student.

Cooperative learning is pairing specific learning objectives to carefully crafted student groups. The assignment - coupled with the requirement of working together as a group to finish it - engages students in a hands-on way and increases the depth of their learning. Not only do they have to effectively communicate their ideas to others, but they also need to listen to differing perspectives, and then synthesize them with their own thoughts. I utilized cooperative learning as a strategy for most subject areas when teaching in the classroom and always had the full involvement of my entire class. Yes, even those learners who typically wanted to be anywhere else in the world other than school!

To use cooperative learning when practicing story order, read a full story (or chapter) out loud to your class. At the end of every page, have them decide on a sentence that best restates the idea of what you just read. One member of the group can write the sentence on the sentence strip. Have them faintly write the number "1" on the back of the first sentence strip, a number "2" on the second, and so on. When the book or chapter is done, tell them to mix up the sentences and put them back in the correct order as a group. They can check if they were correct by looking at the numbers on the back.

Then, have groups mix up their sentences again and switch with other groups so they are challenged to order other interpretations of story events. Have them discuss the similarities and differences of their sentences as compared to the other groups. Switch as many times as you feel is effective.

† Have each student rewrite their group's sentences on a piece of paper with the title on top as a summarizing activity.



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♠ During independent reading, have students create their own individual sentence ordering activity.

⌘ Order the sentence strips in timeline fashion on the floor, the playground, or hang in the school halls. Create a book cover poster and place at the beginning of the timeline. End the timeline with a blank piece of paper where students can sign their name if they've read the book and rate how much they liked it with a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down".