

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

predicting: the process of using text clues to make a reasonable guess about what happens next in a story

HERE'S HOW**Step 1: Keep asking yourself: What might happen next?**

Step 2: Find clues in the text. Look for hints of things to come. Weigh the details of plot, character, and setting against your own experiences and your knowledge of literature. Ask yourself questions such as the following:

Plot

- Which events hint at what is to come?
- Based on similar plots or your own experience, what do you expect to happen next?

Character

- What has the author told you about each character?
- What have the characters said about each other?
- What do each character's dialogue, actions, and behavior toward others lead you to expect?
- In your experience, how do real people or other literary characters in similar circumstances usually behave?

Setting

- How does the author describe the setting?
- What mood does the description of the setting create?
- Based on your experience, what possible outcomes are likely in this setting?

Step 3: Predict what you think will happen next. Form an idea of what the most likely outcome is. You may wish to write it down your prediction or share it with a fellow reader.

Step 4: Read on to confirm or revise your prediction. As you continue reading, see if your prediction happens. If it does, then predict the next outcome. If things begin to turn out differently, use that new information to change the prediction. This will help you to keep track of how the story's action develops.

from "The Blue Hotel"
by Stephen Crane

When they were gathered about the stove, the Swede insisted on another game of high-five. Scully gently deprecated¹ the plan at first, but the Swede turned a wolfish glare upon him. The old man subsided, and the Swede canvassed the others. In his tone there was always a great threat. The cowboy and the Easterner both remarked indifferently that they would play. Scully said that he would presently have to go to meet the six fifty-eight train, and so the Swede turned menacingly upon Johnnie. For a moment their glances crossed like blades, and then Johnnie smiled and said, "Yes, I'll play."

They formed a square, with the little board on their knees. The Easterner and the Swede were again partners. As the play went on, it was noticeable that the cowboy was not board-whacking² as usual. Meanwhile Scully, near the lamp, had put on his spectacles, and with an appearance curiously like an old priest, was reading a newspaper. In time he went out to meet the six fifty-eight train, and despite his precautions, a gust of polar wind whirled into the room as he opened the door. Besides scattering the cards, it chilled the players to the marrow. The Swede cursed frightfully. When Scully returned, his entrance disturbed a cosy and friendly scene. The Swede again cursed. But presently they were once more intent, their heads bent forward and their hands moving swiftly. The Swede had adopted the fashion of board-whacking.

Scully took up his paper and for a long time remained immersed in matters which were extraordinarily remote from him. The lamp burned badly, and once he stopped to adjust the wick. The newspaper, as he turned from page to page, rustled with a slow and comfortable sound. Then suddenly he heard three terrible words: "You are cheatin'!"

... Such scenes often prove that there can be little of dramatic import in environment. Any room can present a tragic front; any room can be comic. This little den was now hideous as a torture chamber. The new faces of the men themselves had changed it upon the instant. The Swede held a huge fist in front of Johnnie's face, while the latter looked steadily over it into the blazing orbs of his accuser.

1. **deprecated:** discouraged
2. **board-whacking:** playing aggressively, confidently, and intensely

Directions: Read each boxed passage from “The Gift of the Magi,” a short story by O. Henry. Answer the questions by making predictions. Use the back of this sheet.

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. . . . Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. . . . Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

1. How do you think Della will solve her problem?
2. Which clues helped you make this prediction?

Suddenly, she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim’s gold watch that had been his father’s and his grandfather’s. The other was Della’s hair It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

3. What do you think Della will do next? Why?

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: “Mme. Sophronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.”

4. Was your prediction in question 3 correct? If not, what new prediction can you make now?

Predicting

Directions: Read each boxed passage from “The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton,” a short story by Arthur Conan Doyle. Answer the questions that follow by making predictions.

“Watson, I mean to burgle Milverton’s house tonight.”

I had a catching of the breath, and my skin went cold at the words, which were slowly uttered in a tone of concentrated resolution. As a flash of lightning in the night shows up in an instant every detail of a wide landscape, so at one glance I seemed to see every possible result of such an action—the detection, the capture, the honored career ending in irreparable failure and disgrace, my friend himself lying at the mercy of the odious Milverton.

“For Heaven’s sake, Holmes, think what you are doing,” I cried.

1. How do you predict Sherlock Holmes will respond to his friend Watson’s concern? What makes you think so?
-

“Tomorrow is the last day of grace, and unless we can get the letters tonight this villain will be as good as his word and will bring about her ruin. I must, therefore, abandon my client to her fate or I must play this last card. Between ourselves, Watson, it’s a sporting duel between this fellow Milverton and me. . . .”

“Well, I don’t like it; but I suppose it must be,” said I. “When do we start?”

“You are not coming.”

“Then you are not going,” said I. “I give you my word of honor—and I never broke it in my life—that I will take a cab straight to the police station and give you away unless you let me share this adventure with you.”

2. What do you predict will be the result of the conflict between Holmes and Watson? Why do you think so?
-

Holmes had looked annoyed, but his brow cleared, and he clapped me on the shoulder. . . . “We shall be at work before midnight. Milverton is a heavy sleeper and retires punctually at ten-thirty. With any luck we should be back here by two, with the Lady Eva’s letters in my pocket.”

3. On the back, predict what will happen during the break-in and why you think so.

Review Predicting is the process of using text clues to make reasonable guesses about what happens next in a story.

Directions: First, read each paragraph. Then use the paragraph to answer the questions that follow.

Mei was late. It was a busy time of day and the spacious lobby of the hotel was filled with people passing through the gleaming revolving doors and being whisked away to the upper floors in the elevators. I sank back in the overstuffed armchair and looked at my watch again. I frowned. It was unlike Mei to be fifteen minutes late; she was as reliable and prompt as the sun. As I glanced around the lobby again, a hotel clerk stepped up to me and asked my name. He then told me that he had a message for me.

1. What do you predict has happened?
 - a. Mei has sent a message.
 - b. Mei has stood up the narrator.
2. Which clue helped you predict that outcome?
 - a. The lobby is busy at this hour.
 - b. Mei is reliable and prompt.
 - c. The armchair is comfortable.

As Hallie was about to pick up her overdue library books and put them in her bag, the telephone rang. She found herself talking to one of her mother's clients, having to listen carefully and take detailed notes about an upcoming costume fitting. Leaving the message where her mother would find it, she grabbed her bag, stooped to give the cat, Salamanca, a scratch behind the ears, and left the house.

3. What do you predict will happen?
 - a. Hallie will forget to give her mother the message.
 - b. Hallie will realize too late that she forgot her books.
4. which clue helped you predict that outcome?
 - a. Hallie listened carefully and took detailed notes.
 - b. Hallie said goodbye to the cat.
 - c. Hallie was distracted by a phone call.