

Mini Lesson: Lifting a Line

Serravallo, Jennifer. *The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*, 2015. Print.

[VDOE](#) SOL: 7.5 e,i,j pg 141; 7.7 c,d pg 157 | 8.5 e,f,j;8.7 c,d pg 168

As we read, we are keeping track of so many things in our minds, from what a character says, to predictions about the plot, to pulling apart words we aren't sure of. One way we can deeply engage with our reading is to write about it. Today we will investigate one way to write about your reading called "lifting a line."

One way to do this is...

- 1) Find a powerful line from what you have read, something that has really stuck with you and copy it in your notebook
- 2) Start writing your thoughts about it, why did you pick it?
- 3) Try to keep writing with prompts like "In addition..." or "On the other hand..."

Look at my example here:

"The Thing About Jellyfish" Ali Benjamin pg. 19

"Mrs. Tuton says when something happens that no one can explain, it means you have bumped up against the edge of human knowledge."

When I read this quote, I found it comforting. The older I get the more I find myself asking "why?" There are times I'm frustrated that something did or didn't happen and I feel myself sucked into trying to figure out the why. For example, I remember being in 8th grade and my best friend in the whole world, Courtney, found out she would be moving to England the following year. Her dad got a new job in London and the entire family would join him overseas for an unknown amount of time. I remember being so upset. I couldn't wrap my head around WHY this was happening. Of course I knew the real WHY, it was because her dad got a new job, but I still felt like that wasn't a good enough reason to take my best friend away the month before we started high school.

In this book, I think the main character is trying to make sense of the events going on in her own life. She seems like she is a very rigid thinker. She likes referring to science a lot which makes me think she probably likes explanations for why things happen. In this case it seems she is struggling to find the WHY. Her science teacher Mrs. Tuton is trying to help her understand that there are many things that happen in life that we don't have answers for. There are many questions that can go unanswered. I don't know yet what kind of comfort this will bring to the main character, but for me, I felt a little more at peace knowing that when I don't have a WHY it just means I've bumped up against the edge of human knowledge...and maybe one day that edge will expand.

Now it's your turn to try...

Look back through your book and pull out a quote, a phrase, even a short paragraph that really sticks out to you. Write your book title, author, and page number at the top of your notebook page. Underneath copy your quote so you can look back at it as you work. Write as much and as long as you...remember, keep your pen or pencil moving. Don't worry about perfection, the point here is to get your thoughts on paper, we can always edit later.

Today and every day that you are writing about reading, try "lifting a line" to focus your thoughts on a powerful part of the story.