

The Big Red Box

 READ THINK FIND

THE PASSAGE

Leo sees a big red box on the table. It has a bright yellow bow. He smiles and walks closer.

Leo shakes the box. He hears a soft squeak inside. The box starts to wiggle.

Leo opens the shiny red paper. A little puppy pops its head out. Leo is so happy.

THINK

Main idea

What is this passage mostly about?

FIND

Two details

Detail 1

Detail 2

Main Idea & Details — Facilitator Guide

GRADES 1-2 · ELA · READING COMPREHENSION

Students read a short passage about Leo and a wiggling red box to identify the main idea, key details, and predict what happens next using text and implied picture clues.

Quick Start

WHY THIS MATTERS · Learning target: what students should know or be able to do by the end of this activity.

Time	Grouping	Materials
20-25 min	Pairs, then whole class	

KEY VOCABULARY detail squeak wiggle

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What is the most important thing that happens to Leo in this story?

Which details in the text help us guess what is inside the big red box before Leo opens it?

What clues tell us how Leo feels about the puppy at the end of the story?

Facilitation Sequence

1 Student work · 12 min

Students read the passage independently or with a partner, highlight the details describing the box, and write down the main idea and their prediction for what Leo does next.

Watch for: Watch for students who confuse a single detail (like the yellow bow) with the main idea of the whole story.

WHY THIS MATTERS · A useful prompt here is: "Does the whole story talk only about the yellow bow, or is there a bigger event happening?"

WHY THIS MATTERS · A useful prompt here is: "Look at the last sentence. How does Leo feel, and what does that tell you about what he will do next?"

2 Consolidate & discuss · 8 min

Students share their predictions with a partner and compare how they used the clue about the puppy popping its head out to decide what Leo does next.

Watch for: Listen for students justifying their predictions using the text clues (e.g., 'Leo is so happy' means he will play with it).

WHY THIS MATTERS · A useful prompt here is: "Why is 'Leo plays with his new puppy' a better prediction than 'Leo goes to sleep'?"

WHY THIS MATTERS · A useful prompt here is: "How did the detail about the squeak help you predict what was inside?"

Answer Key & How to Approach

For the teacher

Expected answers for this worksheet, with guidance on evaluating student responses.

Item	Expected Answer	How to Approach / Accept
Main / central idea	A complete sentence stating what the passage SAYS about its topic	The topic-vs-idea test: if the answer fits in two words, it is a topic. Push for the claim.
Details / evidence	Specific details from the text, each connected back to the idea (cited by paragraph at 6-8)	A detail without its connection is just trivia — the how-does-it-support line is the skill.

Likely Student Responses, Misconceptions, and Helpful Teacher Moves

Anticipate these — and the response that moves thinking forward.

Students may...

What that might mean...

A helpful next move...

Write 'The box is red' as the main idea.	They are focusing on the first descriptive detail they read rather than synthesizing the entire narrative arc.	Ask: 'If you had to tell a friend what happens in this whole story in just one sentence, would you only tell them about the color of the box, or would you mention the puppy too?'
Predict that Leo runs away scared.	They missed the emotional clue 'Leo is so happy' at the end of the passage.	Point to the last sentence and ask: 'How does Leo feel when the puppy pops its head out? How do people usually act when they feel that way?'

Equity, SEL, and Trauma-Informed Prompts

Equity

Perspective invitations you can offer students — a second context, a missing voice, a different lived reality.
Invite students to share if they have ever received or given a surprise, and how the packaging or sounds gave away what was inside, validating different family traditions around gifts and surprises.

SEL

The emotional and interpersonal demands of this task — confidence, disagreement, frustration points, collaboration.
Support students' confidence in making predictions by emphasizing that any prediction supported by the text clues (like Leo feeding, naming, or playing with the puppy) is a successful prediction.

Trauma-Informed

Participation safety and predictability — a private response option, lower-stakes sharing, predictable structure.

UDL, Differentiation, and Language Supports

If students need more support

Scaffolds for the same core thinking: oral rehearsal first, sketch or sort before writing, a worked example, chunked steps.

Have students act out 'shaking a box', 'hearing a squeak', and 'wiggling' to physically anchor the vocabulary before writing.

Provide a two-option choice for the main idea: 'Leo gets a puppy' or 'Leo looks at a table'.

If students are ready for more

Extensions that add complexity, not busywork: compare two approaches, justify a choice, transfer to a new context.

Ask students to write one additional detail sentence that could fit right after 'A little puppy pops its head out' to describe what the puppy looks like or does.

Language supports

Name the language function (explain, compare, argue, justify) with sentence frames and oral rehearsal.

Name the language function: Describe and predict.

Provide sentence frames: 'The main idea is _____.', 'I predict Leo will _____ because the text says _____.'