

December 4, 2009

Dear Mr. C.,

This afternoon I read the book Saving Sweetness by Diane Stanley. In this book, the protagonist Sweetness is an orphan. The orphanage that Sweetness lives in is an awful place so Sweetness runs away. The sheriff (who is the person telling the story) goes to find Sweetness in the desert. There are some problem situations that happen and Sweetness ends up saving the sheriff's life several times. It's funny because the sheriff keeps saying that he saves Sweetness. Sweetness doesn't want to return to the orphanage. She wants a mom and dad. The sheriff agrees to adopt Sweetness. At the end or denouement, Sweetness convinces the sheriff to also adopt the other seven orphans. I thought this book was clever and interesting and would recommend it to my friends.

While reading this book I used several reading strategies: "spell and chunk", "back up and reread", and "tune into interesting words". I will tell you about "tune into interesting words". Saving Sweetness uses a lot of new, interesting words. In fact, I needed to use a dictionary to identify the meaning of some words. For example, I used the dictionary to look up words like: banshee, desperado, mosey, provoke and commence. I learned that desperado means "outlaw" and that a banshee is a female ghost or spirit. I added these new words to my word list. Looking up the meaning of new words helped me understand the story better and increase my vocabulary.

My reading goal this week was to slow down and make sure I understood what I was reading. In the past I have found that I read too fast and don't really understand what is going on. I realized I skip over words I don't know and this does not help! This week, I made sure I "tuned into interesting words" and it really helped me slow down and understand more.

My next step will be to add all my new words into my word collector in my Reading Notebook. My goal for next week to continue working on slowing down as a reader. First, I will stop after every two pages to "check for understanding". If I don't understand, I will go back and reread. Second, at the end of each reading time I will spend 5 minutes writing a quick summary of what I just read.

Sincerely,  
Bobby Student