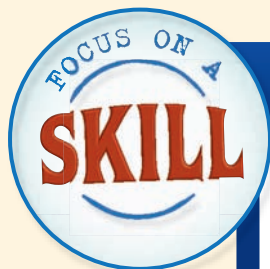


“La la la la, it’s Elmo’s World!” is a familiar tune to the countless children who have grown up watching the furry red monster on *Sesame Street*. As the person behind the popular character, it’s Kevin Clash’s world, too. Clash, a six-foot-tall African American puppeteer with a deep voice, is the unlikely voice and movement for the squeaky-voiced three-year-old Elmo.



Predicting

Predicting the content of the text can help you focus your reading. One way to prepare to read is to preview the text, predict what you think you will learn, and then record your predictions.

For example, after reading the introduction to this lesson, you can probably predict that you will be learning about the man who is the puppeteer for Elmo. What do you think you will learn about him? Before you read, make a list of all your predictions. Then read to confirm them.

What I Predict I Will Learn	What I Learned
How Kevin Clash got started as a puppeteer	

As you read, remember that you can revise your predictions or make new ones as you gather information.



Read the following sentences. Note the underlined words.

1. Puppeteers try to make their puppets distinctive by giving them trademark voices that make them stand out from the others.
2. Some puppets are part of the cast of a television show, such as *Sesame Street*.
3. One episode of *Sesame Street* featured ten puppets.
4. Producers of a television show help decide which characters will be "regulars."
5. Residents of the town loved the weekly puppet shows at the community center.
6. The puppeteer wrote an autobiography about his many years of experience with puppets.

Read each of these definitions. Write the best word for the definition in the blank space. Use the underlined words from the sentences above.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <i>n.</i> the actors in a play, movie, or television show |
| | <i>n.</i> a book about a person's life written by that person |
| | <i>n.</i> people who supervise the creation and presentation of programs |
| | <i>adj.</i> having a special quality or style |
| | <i>n.</i> one show in a series |
| | <i>n.</i> people who live in a particular place |
| | <i>n.</i> a unique characteristic of one person or thing |

The Man Pulling the Strings

On *Sesame Street*, Elmo is a three-year-old red, furry monster with a big orange nose. His trademark voice and high-pitched laugh make him instantly recognizable. In real life, puppeteer Kevin Clash brings Elmo to life. Thanks to the distinctive voice and warm personality Clash brings to his character, Elmo has become one of the most popular residents of *Sesame Street*.



Kevin Clash with Elmo

Starting Out

Kevin Clash was born on September 17, 1960, in Baltimore, Maryland. As a child, he was a big fan of *Sesame Street*. He dreamed of one day joining the cast. He built his first puppet at the age of ten using materials from his mother's sewing kit. However, his talent really began to take off in junior high school. For a history project about Russia, he made a group of puppets. He had a classmate interview the characters about their country. His performance was so good that he was invited to perform for the entire school.

It wasn't long before word got out about Clash's talent. A newspaper ran an article about him. By the time he was in tenth grade, Clash was performing on a local children's television show. After high school, Clash joined the cast of *Captain Kangaroo*. Appearances on *The Great Space Coaster* soon followed.

Elmo's World

In 1985, Clash fulfilled his childhood dream and joined the cast of *Sesame Street* full time. The Elmo character already existed, but he didn't stand out. Other puppeteers had tried to make him popular, but it didn't work. Then Elmo came to life when Clash gave him a **falsetto** voice. His performance brought energy and life to the red puppet. From that day forward, the writers wrote parts for Elmo. Today, Clash closes each episode of *Sesame Street* with *Elmo's World*.

falsetto

n. an artificially high voice

STRATEGY: Prediction Table

Predicting will help you read actively and purposefully. As you come to each new section of text, pause to make a prediction about what you think you will learn. Then record your prediction in a table like the one below.

Title of Section	Prediction	What I Learned
Starting Out	I will learn how Kevin Clash became a puppeteer.	Kevin Clash became a puppeteer while he was still in school. He got started by doing a puppet show for a history project.

Complete the table below with predictions you made as you read each section of text. Then use your completed prediction table to summarize the article. Write your summary on the lines below the chart.

Title of Section	Prediction	What I Learned
Starting Out	I will learn how Kevin Clash became a puppeteer.	Kevin Clash became a puppeteer while he was still in school. He got started by doing a puppet show for a history project.
Elmo's World		
Enjoying Success		

Summary: _____

Think about what you learned from the article about Kevin Clash. Then circle the letter of the correct answer.

Recalling
Details

1. As a child, Kevin Clash was a big fan of the show _____.
- A *Elmo's World*
 - B *Sesame Street*
 - C *Captain Kangaroo*
 - D *The Great Space Coaster*

Using
Context Clues

2. Which word from the article means "met a want or need"?
- A pitched
 - B fulfilled
 - C invited
 - D joined

Determining
the Sequence
of Events

3. What did Kevin Clash do right after finishing high school?
- A attended puppeteer school
 - B joined *Captain Kangaroo*
 - C joined *Sesame Street*
 - D starred in a movie

Identifying
Cause-and-Effect
Relationships

4. Why do Elmo and Clash rarely appear on screen together?
- A Elmo and Clash have different schedules.
 - B Clash wants Elmo to seem as real as possible.
 - C Clash can't move Elmo in front of a television camera.
 - D Other puppeteers do the voice of Elmo when he appears on television.

Making Inferences
and Drawing
Conclusions

5. You can decide from the article that _____.
- A it's necessary to start young to be a puppeteer
 - B puppets only appear on television shows
 - C Kevin Clash's talent makes Elmo special
 - D anyone can be a puppeteer

Writing a
Response



6. Write a brief biography of Kevin Clash, based on the facts in the article. Conclude your biography by making a prediction about what he might do next.

WORD STUDY: Suffixes

A **suffix** is a word part added to the end of a word to change its meaning and its part of speech. Using your knowledge of the meaning of the root word and the suffix can help you determine the meaning of longer or unfamiliar words.

Some suffixes identify "a person who performs a task."

-eer as in *puppeteer*

-er or -or as in *actor*

-ian or -cian as in *musician*

-ist as in *artist*

Write the title used for the person who does each of these jobs or tasks. You may want to use a dictionary to check your spelling.

1. One who teaches a class _____
2. One who performs _____
3. One who runs an auction _____
4. One who plays the piano _____
5. One who does magic _____
6. One who invents something _____
7. One who works in a library _____
8. One who examines teeth _____

Write the root word for each of these job titles. Then write a definition of the job.

1. politician _____
2. lyricist _____
3. engineer _____
4. scientist _____