I want to teach you to assess your own knowledge that you have about something you read. Let's do this by taking an example that you already know. Suppose you wanted to assess your own knowledge about the story Little Red Riding Hood. If I want to be able to understand stories, I need four types of knowledge. These are facts, strategies, procedures and rationales. Fact are concepts you have that describe objects or elements. For example, in reading, facts can be characters or elements of the setting such as location or time period. Strategies are the general plot sequences of events that authors use to make the points or express the themes or conflicts they write about. Procedures are the specific events in the story that are part of the overall strategy or plot. Finally, I need to know rationales which are the reasons behind the plot elements or events. Rationales could include things like author's purpose, the character's goals (why the characters act the way they do) and how elements of the story reinforce the points the author is trying to make. You can think of facts as telling you "what", strategies and procedures as telling you "how" and rationales as telling you "why".

With this in mind, this is how I might assess my own knowledge of the story Little Red Riding Hood. For facts, I need to know the characters, setting and time period. The main characters are Little Red Riding Hood (protagonist), the wolf (antagonist), the mother, the grandmother and the woodsman. The story is set long ago and in a forest and near the forest for Little Red Riding Hood's home and the Grandmother's home.

For the general plot, a little girl is asked by her mother to give a basket of goodies to er sick grandmother. Even though she's told not to talk to strangers, she does and is almost killed because of it.

For specific events, a mother tells Little Red Riding Hood that her grandmother is sick and to bring the grandmother a basket of goodies. The mother warns Little Red Riding Hood not to talk to strangers. While walking through the woods to get to the grandmother's house, Little Red Riding Hood meets a wolf who asks where she's going. Little Red Riding Hood tells the wolf, who then takes a shortcut to the grandmother's house and impersonates the grandmother. When Little Red Riding Hood arrives, she notices something odd about the grandmother and after a series of questions, the wolf reveals himself and says he'll eat Little Red Riding Hood. Fortunately, a nearby woodsman hears Little Red Riding Hood's screams for help and saves Little Red Riding Hood.

For rationales, I believe the author wrote the story to warn children about the dangers of talking to strangers. The protagonist is a little girl because the story is aimed at children. The wolf has to attack Little Red Riding Hood because the story needs to show the danger of talking to strangers. Little Red Riding Hood has to be saved in the end because it may be too scary for children to read stories about a little girl who gets eaten by a wolf.

When I look over what I wrote, I see that I am good with my facts. I know who the characters are, and I know that the story is set long ago and in and near a forest. On my story plot and events, I forget whether the wolf ate the grandmother or just locked her in a closet because Little Red Riding Hood was coming. Also, I'm not sure what happened to the wolf at the end. For rationales, I'm not sure why the setting had to be in a forest or why the antagonist was a wolf as opposed to a person or other animal. I don't think I left anything out.