Creative Strategy:  
**Abstracting** – Students will use this cognitive tool to identify specific story events, then derive general themes from two or more specific examples.

**Context:**  
Level: Elementary, Grades 3-5  
Teachers who work with gifted students in grades 3-12 will guide students in abstracting during language arts, math, science and social studies instruction.

**Activity:**  
**Activating Strategy:** COMPARING

Whole group: Students describe the attributes of the red crayon and marker and how they are used. Highlight that both are used for the same general purpose: for communicating ideas with others. Explain to students that they will read two different stories with events that are specific to each of them, and will look for and list general ideas between the two stories.

**Lesson Procedure**
1. Read *Mirette on the High Wire* by Emily Arnold McCully.
2. Recall and Discuss with students major events in the story.
3. Read *The Houdini Box* by Brian Selznick. Discuss story events.
4. Divide students into groups (whatever number of groups works in your classroom). Students work together to list the specific events from each story, then create short statements true or general to both stories.
5. Hand out Abstracting Three-Panel Template.
6. Students write titles of two stories in text boxes on “Specific” panel, then work together to list specific events,. Finally generate statements conveying ideas general to both stories.

**Adaptations:**  
**Middle and High School** – Use Abstracting to Compare Lincoln’s *Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction* and Kipling’s “If”

**Materials:**  
One red crayon and one red marker  
**Literature:**  
*Mirette on the High Wire* by Emily Arnold McCully  
*The Houdini Box* by Brian Selznick  
Abstracting Three-Panel Template – This template can be digital, created in Microsoft Word or by students using standard 8 ½” by 11” paper, folded into three panels. (one per student)

**Resources:**  
*Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning and Testing*,  
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/solsearch/sol/math/G/m_ess_g-1.pdf


http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/freedom/docs7.html

http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/175772