**Problematic Solutions:**

This is a pre-reading comprehension activity that taps into students’ natural

curiosity to prepare them for a subsequent reading selection. The process activates

what students already know about a situation and helps them focus their attention

on the key elements of a text as they read.

1. Examine the reading assignment and develop a problematic situation for the

students to consider. Provide students with enough relevant information about the

situation so that they will be able to focus their attention on the key ideas in the

passage as they read. It is especially important that the context of the problem be

clearly defined.

Example from The Most Dangerous Game by Richard Connell:

A man is trapped on a small island covered with jungle vegetation. He has a three-

hour head start on someone who is trying to kill him. The killer is well- armed,

but the man has only a knife. The killer will be pursuing the man with hunting

dogs. What could this man do to try to save himself?

2. Pose the problematic situation to students. In cooperative groups, have them

generate possible results or solutions. Groups should record all responses as they

discuss them. When all ideas have been listed, the group should discuss why each

idea is appropriate and would work.

3. The teacher may choose to have each group decide which of their ideas is

the most promising. As part of their deliberations, each group should develop a

justification for their decision. Each group could then present their solution(s) to

the rest of the class for discussion.

4. Students are now ready to test their solutions by reading the selection.

Encourage students to add to or modify their solutions as they gain more

information from the text.

5. As a final step, have students revisit the original problematic situation and

solicit any revisions, additions, or further comments students may now have. Open

the discussion to consider whether some of the student options might be better

solutions than those presented by the author.