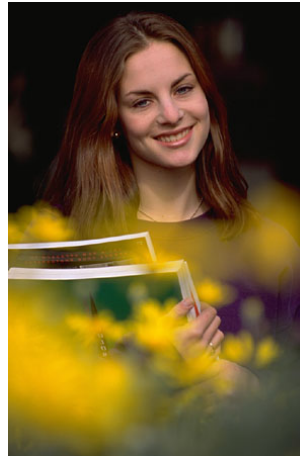


Comprehension

Just Read, Florida!
Professional Development
Transparencies

Florida K-12 Reading Endorsement
REESOL Bundle Inservice Training
Comprehension



FLaRE is a Project of Just Read, Florida!

Comprehension

Outcomes

Knowledge

Participants will be able to:

- Define comprehension.
- Identify benefits of explicit and systematic morphemic instruction (affixes, base words, word origins) on vocabulary development in relation to comprehension.
- Identify principles of syntactic function as they relate to language acquisition and reading development.
- Describe the impact of text variations on the construction of meaning.
- Identify cognitive task levels and the role of cognitive development in constructing meaning using a variety of texts. (e.g. knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation).
- Identify fundamental comprehension strategies and instructional practices that scaffold development of these strategies.
- Describe making text connections in the construction of meaning.
- Investigate conditions for learning across academic content areas.

Skills

Participants will be able to:

- Utilize instructional practices that promote the use of comprehension strategies with narrative and expository text.
- Plan for explicit, systematic instruction for scaffolding development of comprehension skills and cognition (e.g., reciprocal teaching, questioning the author, etc.).

Attitudes

Participants will:

- Adopt the perspective that instruction for comprehension plays a significant role in the developing processes of a skilled reader.

Comprehension

Richmond was in dire straits against St. Kilda. The opening pair who had been stroking the ball with beautiful fluency on past occasions were both out for ducks. Once again the new ball pair had broken through. Then Smith turned on surprising pace and, moving the ball off the seam, beat Mazaz twice in one over. Inverarity viciously pulled Brown into the gully but was sent retiring to the pavilion by a shooter from Cox.

Jones in slips and Chappell at silly mid on were superb, and Daniel bowled a maiden over in his first spell. Yallop took his toll with three towering sixes but Thompson had little to do in the covers.

Grant was dismissed with a beautiful yorker and Jones went from a brute of a ball. Wood was disappointing. The way he hung his bat out to the lean-gutted Croft was a nasty shock. The rout ended when McArdle dived at silly leg and the cry of “How’s that!” echoed across the pitch.

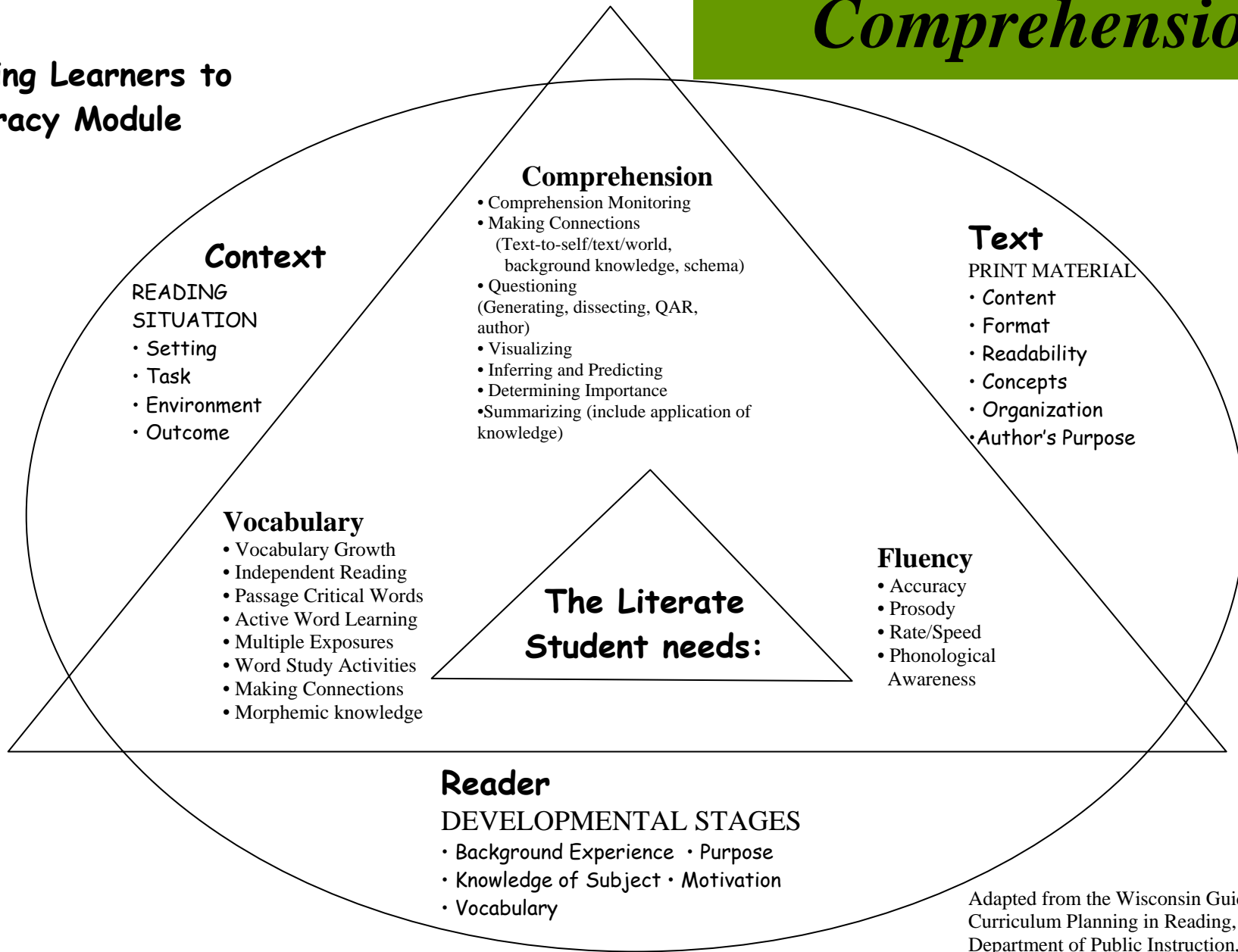
T3.8 Passage to Read *Creating Support for Effective Literacy Education* by C. Weaver, L. Gillmeister-Krause, & G. Vento-Zogby, @ 1996.

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. May be copied for transparency use only.

From Brian Cambourne, *The whole story: Natural learning and the acquisition of literacy in the classroom*. Auckland, New Zealand: Scholastic, 1988, p. 161. Reprinted with permission

Comprehension

Linking Learners to Literacy Module



Adapted from the Wisconsin Guide to Curriculum Planning in Reading, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1986.

Comprehension

Reflections Log

New things I've learned	How do I plan to use this information?	Questions I still have	How can I learn more?

Comprehension

Definitions of Comprehension

- Comprehension is constructing meaning from text or making meaning from print.
- Helping students increase comprehension of content area text involves teaching them how to connect new information to what is already known, read between the lines, and apply learning to new situations. “Teaching reading in the content areas, therefore, is not so much about teaching students basic reading skills as it is about teaching students how to use reading as a tool for thinking and learning” (*Billmeyer & Barton, 1998*).
- “The click of comprehension occurs only when the reader evolves a schema that explains the whole message” (*Harris & Hodges, 1995*).
- “Comprehension is the process in which the reader constructs meaning (in) interacting with text...through a combination of prior knowledge and previous experience; information available in text; the stance (taken) in relationship to the text; and immediate, remembered or anticipated social interactions and communications” (*Ruddell et al., 1994*).

Comprehension

Steps of Explicit Instruction

Direct Explanation – Teacher describes the strategy, explains how it aides comprehension, and suggests when to apply the strategy.

Modeling – Teacher demonstrates how to apply the strategy while reading aloud the text and thinking aloud to model thought processes used in strategy application.

Guided Practice – Teacher guides and assists students as they learn how to apply the strategy. Students may practice in pairs using the same process as teacher modeled of reading and thinking aloud.

Application – Students practice the strategy with teacher’s help until they can apply it independently. As students gain independence with strategy, students’ reflection on and discussion of how the strategy is increasing comprehension can strengthen their understanding of its application.

Adapted from Armbruster & Osborn, 2001

Comprehension

Features of Explicit Instruction

Relevance – Students learn the purpose of the strategy—the why, when, how, and where of the strategy.

Definition – Students are told how to apply the strategy. The teacher defines the strategy, models its use, shows what it is not and facilitates students’ discussion of its range of use.

Guided Practice – Students are given feedback on their own use of the strategy.

Self-regulation – students are given opportunities to practice the strategy and develop ways to monitor their own use of it.

Gradual release of responsibility – The teacher initially models and directs the students’ learning; as the lesson/unit progresses, the teacher gradually gives more responsibility to the student.

Application – Students are given the opportunity to try their strategies independently and in various learning situations (in school across the content and out of school).

Adapted from Tierney & Readence, 2000

Strategic Teaching and Learning

“Strategic reading refers to thinking about reading in ways that enhance learning and understanding. Researchers who explicitly taught students strategies for determining important ideas (Gallagher 1986), drawing inferences, (Hansen 1981), and asking questions (Gavelek and Raphael 1985) found that teaching these thinking/reading strategies improved students’ overall comprehension of text.”

Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, p. 16

Role of the Teacher

- Teach a few strategies through modeling and guided practice.
- Teach them in depth.
- Teach them over a long period of time.
- Teach using a variety of text—genre and difficulty.
- Use effective prompting and questioning.
- Monitor student understanding to adjust instruction accordingly, providing additional modeling/support to scaffold student learning.
- Teach for independence.
- Set up conditions for learning (immersion, demonstration, approximation, expectation, engagement, response, use, responsibility).

Role of the Student

What does a good reader do? According to Pearson, Roehler, Dole and Duffy (1992) a good reader:

- Uses existing knowledge to make sense of new information.
- Asks questions about the text before, during, and after reading.
- Draws inferences from text.
- Monitors his or her comprehension.
- Uses fix-up strategies when meaning breaks down.
- Determines what is important.
- Synthesizes information to create sensory images.

Direct Explanation and Transactional Strategy Instruction

Both approaches include:

- Teaching students to learn what strategies to use, why they are important, and how to use them.
- Use of systematic practice of new skills.
- Scaffolded support (Teacher gradually withdraws amount of assistance offered to students).

Comprehension

Direct Explanation (DE) approach was developed by Duffy, Roehler, and colleagues in 1986. They argued that direct instruction was insufficient because it did not attempt to provide students with an understanding of the reasoning and mental processes involved in reading strategically.

In this approach, teachers focus on helping students:

- View reading as a problem-solving task that requires strategic thinking.
- Learn to think strategically about solving reading comprehension problems.

Points to consider:

- Implementation of DE approach requires specific and intensive teacher professional development of understanding effective comprehension strategies and how to teach them.
- Implementation also requires teacher professional development analyzing skills prescribed in text and/or basal readers and to recast these skills as problem-solving strategies.

Comprehension

Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI) approach includes the same key elements as Direct Explanation, but views the teacher's role in a slightly different light.

The teacher not only provides explicit explanations of strategies, but also facilitates discussions in which students:

- Collaborate to form common interpretations of text.
- Explicitly talk about the mental processes and cognitive strategies used to make meaning.

Points to consider:

- Implementation of TSI approach also requires intensive teacher professional development on how to teach effective comprehension strategies, but it also helps teachers learn how to create classrooms where more active reading is fostered.
- The emphasis is on the interactive exchange among students (transactional), and learning occurs primarily through the interactive discussions among students.

Adapted from Langenberg et al., 2000

Comprehension

“Becoming an independent, self-regulated, thinking reader is a goal that can be achieved through instruction of text comprehension.”

Langenberg et al., 2000, p. 4-47



Comprehension

Comprehension Strategies Used by Proficient Readers

“Reading has come to be characterized as a range of flexible, adaptable strategies rather than a scope and sequence of skills...The term *strategies* refers to conscious and flexible plans that readers apply and adapt to particular tasks and texts.”

American College Testing, 1996) (Hinson, 2000, p. 10



- Comprehension Monitoring
- Questioning
- Visualizing
- Making Connections
- Inferring and Predicting
- Determining Importance
- Summarizing

The National Reading Panel suggests that “when readers are given cognitive strategy instruction, they make significant gains on measures of reading comprehension over students trained with conventional instruction procedures.

Pressley et al., 1989; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994, Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996).” (Langenberg et al., 2000, p. 4-40

Comprehension

Say Something

Read each quote below. Select one that relates to your students. Say something to the person next to you about the quote and its implications for your students.

“Good readers use monitoring and problem-solving strategies such as skipping unknown words, rereading, reading ahead, or using an outside source” (*New Directions in Reading Instruction, (IRA) p. 6*).

“They rarely stopped while reading a piece to try to repair their confusion. They kept doggedly on until they finished the ‘assignment,’ even though they had no idea what they were reading” (*Tovani, 2000, p. 37*).

“Ineffective readers often are not aware of their thinking or their level of comprehension as they read....Novice readers are often surprised to learn what goes on in a practiced reader’s mind while she reads” (*Billmeyer & Barton, 1998, p. 45*).

“If confusion disrupts meaning, nonfiction readers need to stop and take stock of why and what they don’t understand. Asking questions is at the heart of nonfiction inquiry and often leads to further research” (*Harvey, 1998, p. 72*).

“Proficient readers, like surgeons, have a tray of instruments (fix-ups) they can use to operate on comprehension problems. They can use these tools flexibly and interchangeably... Like a surgeon, proficient readers are adaptive” (*Keene & Zimmermann, 1997, p. 198*).

Metacognition

An awareness of one's own learning process



1. Knowing if I understand
2. Knowing what to do if I don't

Comprehension

Four Levels of Metacognitive Knowledge

Perkins and Swartz (Perkins 1992) define four levels of metacognitive knowledge that are helpful for understanding how learners read and adapt strategies to their reading purposes.

Tacit learners/readers – These are readers who lack awareness of how they think when they read.

Aware learners/readers – These are readers who realize when meaning has broken down or confusion has set in but who may not have sufficient strategies for fixing the problem.

Strategic learners/readers – These are readers who use effective thinking and comprehension strategies to enhance understanding and acquire knowledge. They are able to monitor and repair meaning when it is disrupted.

Reflective learners/readers – These are the readers who are strategic about their thinking and are able to apply strategies flexibly depending on their goals or purposes for reading. According to Perkins and Swartz, they also “reflect on their thinking and ponder and revise their use of strategies” (*Perkins, 1992*).

Taken from Harvey & Goudvis, 2000

Comprehension

Living with Bears in Caves

One day last week my cousin, Kendra, invited me to eat dinner with her later that same evening. Her boyfriend of 2 years had broken up with her, and she needed to talk about it. After hanging up, I suddenly realized that Kendra didn't sound too sad or upset as one might expect. In fact, she almost seemed happy.

Assuming that she was in denial about the breakup, I began to dread the dinner plans we made. I suspected that Kendra would find more pain in not having a boyfriend rather than the fact that a long-lasting relationship had ended. I had no trouble imagining Kendra's tearful retelling of the events, and my regret in listening to it. Kendra and I had never been close, and besides, I'm not much on listening to the problems concerning relationships that other people seem to go through all the time. One sob story is as good as the next. I'd heard them all, and couldn't stomach another woeful version of "What Went Wrong."

I arrived at the restaurant before Kendra, and when the waitress led her my table, Kendra joyfully hugged me and loudly proclaimed that she was finally "free." Surprised, I sat and listened as she confided in me that she didn't think this last boyfriend, Tom was actually human. He was, in fact, a bear. He practically lived in a cave with a dirt floor, broken furniture, and bare walls. Food lived, yes lived, on the furniture. The frost in the freezer was so thick that she couldn't shut the door . . . the apartment door. The final straw that broke their relationship's back came when she had visited him that very morning at his apartment, I mean cave, to discover that for some reason, the brakes for his car were in the kitchen sink. Looking around the kitchen, she noticed that his roommates, the 100 or so cockroaches with whom he shared his cave had stopped eating. They were full.

Tammy Johnson

Comprehension

CLINK	CLUNK

Fix-Up Strategies

“A reader’s ultimate purpose is to gain meaning. In order to do this, readers must monitor their comprehension, and when meaning breaks down, they need to repair it.”

Cris Tovani, 2000

- **Make a connection between the text and:**
 - Your life.**
 - Your knowledge of the world.**
 - Another text.**
- **Adjust your reading rate: slow down or speed up.**
- **Visualize.**
- **Reread.**
- **Make a prediction.**
- **Stop and think about what you have already read.**
- **Ask yourself a question and try to answer it.**
- **Reflect in writing on what you have read.**
- **Use print conventions.**
- **Retell what you’ve read.**
- **Notice patterns in text structure.**

Taken from Tovani, 2000

Comprehension

Comprehension Constructor

I am confused by (Copy the text that is confusing for you.) _____

_____ Page _____.

I am confused because (Try to diagnose why you are confused.) _____

_____.

I will try (Record different fix-up strategies you try.) _____

_____.

I understand (Explain how your understanding is deeper as a result of the fix-up strategies you've used.) _____

_____.

Taken from Tovani, 2000, p. 59-60

Comprehension

Listening to the Inner Voice

Cris Tovani helps her students listen to their inner voice to monitor comprehension. She describes four different types of voices that readers hear.

- **Reciting Voice** – The reader hears this voice when he is only reciting words and not drawing meaning from the text.
- **Conversation Voice** – This voice has a conversation with the text. It represents the reader's thinking as she talks back to the text in an interactive way and can take two forms:
- **Interacting Voice** – This voice inside the reader's head makes connections, ask questions, identifies confusions, and agrees and disagrees with ideas. This voice deepens the reader's understanding of the text.
- **Distracting Voice** – This voice inside the reader's head pulls him away from the meaning of the text. It begins a conversation with the reading but gets distracted by a connection, a question, or an idea. Soon the reader begins to think about something unrelated to the text.

Taken from Tovani, 2000, p. 45.

Comprehension

Behaviors That Impede Comprehension

The inner voice inside the reader's head stops its conversation with the text, and the reader only hears his voice pronouncing the words.

The camera inside the reader's head shuts off, and the reader can no longer visualize what is happening as she reads.

The reader's mind begins to wander, and he catches himself thinking about something far removed from the text.

The reader cannot remember or retell what she has read.

The reader is not getting his clarifying questions answered.

Characters are reappearing in the text and the reader doesn't recall who they are. (The same applies to reoccurring ideas and concepts in nonfiction.)

Taken from Tovani, 2000

Text Coding

Coding text helps students interact with text as they read and think about what is known, what is new, and what is confusing. It's important that the symbols match the purpose for reading, be easy to draw, and make sense to the students. Students may even create their own symbols. When introducing text coding, begin with two-three codes, model the process, and support students for guided practice. Encourage reflection and discussion about how text coding helps them enhance their reading.

Suggestions for nonfiction text:

- ? I have a question about this part.
- ! I knew this before I read it here.
- + I didn't know this, but now I do. It's new information.

Suggestions for fiction text:

- ☺ I liked this part because...
- ☹ I think this part is sad because...
- ? I have a question about this part.
- * This is an important part because...
- ↔ This connects/relates to me because...
- !! This part is interesting to me because...

Question Generating

“The goal of reading strategy instruction, in general, is to teach readers to become independent, active readers who use strategies that enhance their comprehension. One strategy that achieves this goal is question generation in which the reader learns to pose and answer questions about what is being read.”

Langenberg et al., 2000

Referring to an Annual Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading (IRA), Ellen Keene shares this not too surprising find, “The research shows that children who struggle as readers tend not to ask questions at any time as they read—before, during, or after. It confirms what I’ve seen so many times in classrooms, particularly with upper-elementary and middle-school kids. They’re inert as they read.”

Keene & Zimmermann, 1997

Why Teach Questioning

Readers who ask questions when they read assume responsibility for their learning and improve their comprehension in four ways.

- By interacting with text—before, during & after reading.
- By motivating themselves to read.
- By clarifying information in the text.
- By inferring beyond the literal meaning.

Tovani, 2000

Comprehension

Questioning propels readers forward through the reading process. It is one of the most powerful cognitive tools for reading comprehension. Good readers ask questions to:

- Construct meaning and monitor comprehension.
- Clarify confusion and deepen their understanding.
- Connect to text and enhance understanding.
- Find answers and solve problems.
- Locate specific information and discover new information.
- Propel research efforts.
- Question the author (purpose and style).
- Infer (including predicting).

Good readers understand that some questions will be answered by the text, some will be answered by inference, and still others might linger long after the reading.

Comprehension

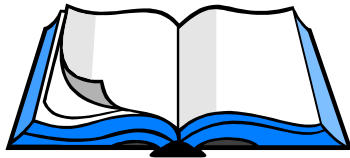
Questioning Before, During, and After Reading

Questions I Have Before Reading	Questions I Have During Reading	Questions That Linger After Reading

Comprehension

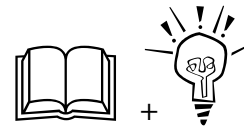
Question-Answer Relationships

Right There



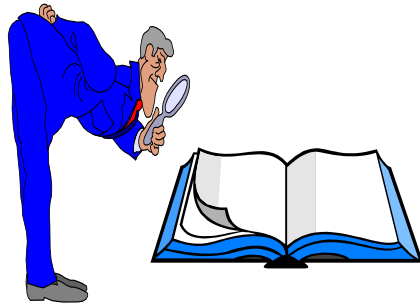
The answer is right in the text. Usually the answer is easy to find and words from the question will be used in the text where the answer is.

The Author and You



The answer is **NOT** right in the text. You need to think about what the author has told you and what you already know. Put both of these things together to answer the question.

Think and Search



The answer **IS** in the story, but in several places. Search the text for all the pieces or clues and combine them to answer the question.

On Your Own



The answer is **NOT** in the text, it's in your head. You don't even have to read the text to answer the question! These questions are answered from your own experience.

Comprehension

Recording Before, During, and After Reading Questions

	Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Questions with answers in the text			
Questions with answers I must find by thinking about the book and my own experience			
Questions with no certain answers			
Questions to clarify meaning			
Questions about what's coming next in the book			
Questions about the author's intent			
Questions about the author's style			
Questions about the author's format			

Keene & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 113

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is a process developed by cognitive researchers Annemarie Palinscar and Ann Brown (1984) that helps students monitor and improve their comprehension by practicing and internalizing four cognitive strategies most used by proficient readers. The teacher and student take turns acting as group leader, facilitating authentic discussion and use of these four strategies:

**Questioning
Summarizing
Predicting
Clarifying**

Comprehension

Features of Reciprocal Teaching

- **Reading is understood as a problem-solving activity requiring the reader's mental engagement and awareness of his/her own reading process.**
- **The invisible becomes visible by explicitly teaching students how to use critical cognitive strategies.**
- **Students practice the strategies with the goal of internalizing them over time.**
- **Students have access to the help of their peers and teacher.**
- **Students learn and practice cognitive strategies in the context of purposeful reading rather than in isolation.**

Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko & Hurwitz, 1999

Comprehension

QulP Research Grid

Topic:

Questions	Answers	
	Source:	Source:
1.		
2.		
3.		

From McLaughlin & Allen, 2002, p. 161. (May be copied for classroom use.)

The Collision

High Street was relatively busy on this dark and cool winter's night. There were a few pedestrians out and a steady stream of cars. Suddenly, every pedestrian's attention turned to the road. A Ford slammed on his brakes—its bright lights shining suddenly as the driver of the next car (a Chevy) hit its brakes. At first, nobody noticed that the brake lights of the Chevy did not shine. Instead they watched as an old BMW went slamming into the back of the Chevy which then slid into the Ford.

Taken from Harvey, 2000, p.100-101.

Visualizing Activity

A man put down \$10.00 at the window. The woman behind the window gave back \$4.00. The person next to him gave him \$3.00 but he gave it back to her. So when they went inside, she bought him a large bag of popcorn.

Ask students to tell what they see happening in this scenario. You may ask questions such as these to facilitate visualization and discussion of their images:

1. How many people are in the scene?
2. Where might they be?
3. Who could they be?
4. How old are they?
5. Why did the woman give the man \$3.00?
6. Why did he give it back?
7. What time of day did this happen?
8. What do you think each person was wearing?

Taken from a demonstration by Dr. Kyleen Beers in Palm Beach County.

Comprehension

Using Visual Information to Improve Comprehension of Content Text

- Step 1: Preview the text, noting all visual information presented.
- Step 2: Ask how the visual information relates to the text or why the author included this information.
- Step 3: Generate questions raised by the visual aids.
- Step 4: Read the text.
- Step 5: Go back and review visual aids in the text, evaluating their importance.

Taken from Reading Strategies for the Social Studies Classroom by Judith Irvin.

Connecting to Text

“If we connect to a book, we usually can’t put it down. Good readers make connections between the text they read and their own lives.”

Harvey, 1998

In *Mosaic of Thought*, Keene and Zimmerman list 3 types of connections:

- Text-to-self: Relating events, ideas or information from text to the reader’s life experiences.
- Text-to-text: Relating events, ideas or information from text to other text read.
- Text-to-world: Relating events, ideas or information from text to those things in the world.

Comprehension

Class Connections

Student	Text	Type of Connection

Adapted from Keene & Zimmerman, 1997

Comprehension

Connecting with Double-Entry Diaries

Direct quote and page number

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

This reminds me of...

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Tovani, 2000

Comprehension

How Connecting Helps Comprehension

Text (Summary)	Reminds me of...	Helps me understand...	Type of Connection

Adapted from Harvey & Goudvis, 2000

Comprehension

“Background knowledge is a major,
if not THE major,
determinant of text comprehension.”

Pearson, 1982



Comprehension

Getting Started with Connecting

These examples of connecting statements and questions may be used to help students begin making connections and to start discussions of connections.

Examples of connecting statements:

- This part reminds me of ...
- I felt like _____ (character) when I ...
- If that happened to me I would...
- This books reminds me of _____ (another text) because...
- I can relate to _____ (part of text) because one time...
- Something similar happened to me when...

Connecting questions to ask:

- How did you relate to this text?
- Has something like this ever happened to you? How was that time similar to/different from this?
- Where have you seen/heard/done something like this?
- What were you thinking about while you were reading?
- How does this relate to your life?
- How did that part relate to the world around you?
- What were you feeling while you read this?
- Have you read about something like this before? How is this similar/different?

Comprehension

Key Points on Inferring

- **Inference is difficult to explain and is a complicated strategy to teach.**
- **Inference is a logical conclusion not directly confirmed by the author and is based on clues from the text and personal connections made by the reader (Tovani, 2000).**
- **Infer means to arrive at a decision or opinion by reasoning from known facts or evidence. Readers need to go beyond the literal meaning of a text to derive what is not there but is implied (*Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3-6*, Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 317).**
- **An inference can be a conclusion drawn and can be a critical analysis of a text (Keene and Zimmerman, 1997, p. 153).**
- **Inferential and reasoning skills develop gradually and systematically as children become older and gain experience. (Siegler, 1995, Thompson & Myers, 1985; van den Broek, 1989).**
- **Inferring helps students remember and apply information read, building new schema.**
- **Predicting is related to inferring (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Predictions are based on textual information and assumptions the reader makes about what will come next.**
- **Inferences (including predictions) are confirmed or revised as new knowledge is gained from reading on and discussions with others.**
- **“There are ten types of inferences that compose the bulk of students’ reading (Johnson and Johnson, 1986)” (Johns, 1997, p. 237-238).**
 1. **Location (Setting)**
 2. **Agent (Occupation or Pastime)**
 3. **Time**
 4. **Action**
 5. **Instrument (Tool or Device)**
 6. **Cause-effect**
 7. **Object**
 8. **Category**
 9. **Problem-solution**
 10. **Feeling-attitude**

Comprehension

Two-Column Notes for Inferring

Facts

(Something we can see
and observe)

Inferences

(Interpretation)

Adapted from Harvey and Goudvis, 2000

Comprehension

Three-Column Notes for Inferring

Textual Evidence

Prior Knowledge

Inference

Adapted from Tovani, 2000

Comprehension

Reading

“Inferring is the bedrock of comprehension, not only in reading. We infer in many realms. Our life clicks along more smoothly if we can read the world as well as text.”

Harvey and Goudvis, 2000



Comprehension

Why Teach Determining Importance?

“...how critical it is to help children make decisions about important themes and ideas in what they read based on evidence in the text, as well as their experience, knowledge and beliefs.

...if we want children to be deeply engaged in conversations about issues of great significance in books, we must not only teach them how to read, but show them how to reason.”

Keene and Zimmermann, 1997



Comprehension

Anticipation Guide for Determining Importance

Read the statements below. Check the appropriate column to mark your opinion.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
1. Determining importance is a life skill we use often in our daily lives.		
2. Students make decisions about what is most important based on their interests and emotions.		
3. Students find it easier to determine important ideas in text if they think about what the teacher thinks is important.		
4. As with inferring, readers make decisions about important ideas and themes in text drawing on their prior knowledge as well as textual evidence.		
5. It's easier to decide what is essential when text is well written.		
6. Having little knowledge about a topic makes it easier to sort out the important ideas.		
7. Considering the author's purpose can hinder the reader in determining importance.		
8. Students often rely on the text structure of nonfiction to help them identify important ideas and concepts.		
9. Noting what isn't important (non-examples) helps students distinguish essential ideas.		
10. Determining importance in text is closely related to and is a precursor of summarizing.		

Now read an excerpt from Chapter 5, The Essence of Text in Mosaic of Thought, p. 83-88. After reading, discuss the statements above with a partner or in small groups and share your opinions and thoughts.

Comprehension

Anticipation Guide Discussion Points

The purpose for anticipation guides is to help readers access prior knowledge, set a purpose for reading, and motivate them to search for specific information. Often there are correct answers about the statements on an anticipation guide. For this guide, most statements were selected from various professional resources and are either based on research or experience. Some statements were changed to create a “false” statement, though participants might feel there are no definitive answers to some of these statements. For each statement taken from a resource the reference is given. The other statements were included to facilitate reflection on this strategy.

1. Determining importance is a life skill we use often in our daily lives.
2. Students make decisions about what is most important based on their interests and emotions. (“Ironically, identifying important information in exciting, well-written expository text can be troublesome, because compelling details may grab the imagination and lead the readers astray... Distinguishing what’s important from what’s interesting can mean walking a pretty thin line” *Nonfiction Matters*, p. 83).
3. Students find it easier to determine important ideas in text if they think about what the teacher thinks is important.
4. As with inferring, readers make decisions about important ideas and themes in text drawing on their prior knowledge as well as textual evidence (Keene and Zimmerman state this in *Mosaic of Thought*, p. 80.).
5. It’s easier to decide what is essential when text is well written. (“Ironically, when text is well written, I have a more difficult time deciding what is most important or essential. Elegant diction and a tight compression of ideas combine to persuade me that everything is equally important” *Mosaic of Thought*, p. 77).
6. Having little knowledge about a topic makes it easier to sort out important ideas. (“The amount of background knowledge we have on a topic has a lot to do with what we deem important. If we already know the information, we are less likely to consider it important when we read it again” *Strategies That Work*, p. 130).
7. Considering the author’s purpose can hinder the reader in determining importance.
8. Students often rely on the text structure of nonfiction to help them identify important ideas and concepts. (Harvey recommends this in *Nonfiction Matters*. The question is, “Do students often rely on this strategy?”).
9. Noting what isn’t important (non-examples) helps students distinguish essential ideas. (This is advised in *Mosaic of Thought*, p. 9.)
10. Determining importance in text is closely related to and is a precursor of summarizing. (Taken from Report of the National Reading Panel)

Comprehension

Text Structure

“Understanding expository text structures gives readers a better shot at determining important information when reading nonfiction.”

Harvey, 1998

Fiction has a single structure, with a beginning, middle and end. Most teachers and students are familiar with story maps and plot diagrams. Expository text structures vary widely, sometimes within the same chapter. Examples of expository text structures are:

sequence/directions

listing/description

compare/contrast

cause/effect

definition/explanation

problem/solution

persuasion/argument

question/answer

Comprehension

Text Cues

Some common signal words and their corresponding text structures are:

Cause/Effect

since
because
this led to
on account of
due to
may be due to
for this reason
consequently
then, so
therefore
thus

Comparison/Contrast

in like manner
likewise
similarly
the difference between
as opposed to
after all
however
and yet
but
nevertheless

Comprehension

Text Cues

Some common signal words and their corresponding text structures are:

Question/Answer

how

when

what

where

why

who

how many

the best estimate

it could be that

one may conclude

Sequence

until

before

after

next

finally

lastly

first/last

then

on (date)

at (time)

Problem/Solution

one reason for that

a solution

a problem

possible answer

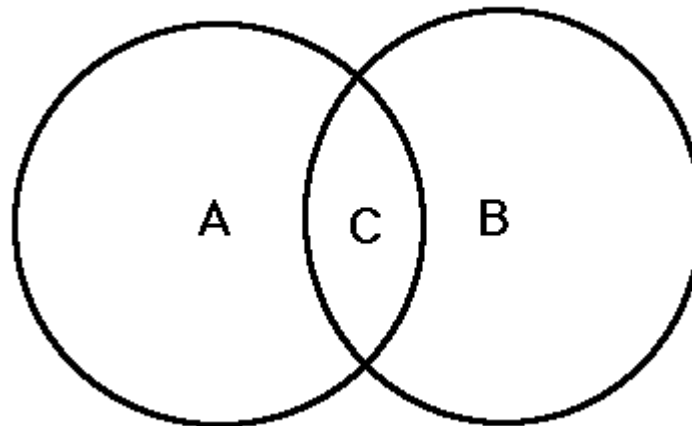
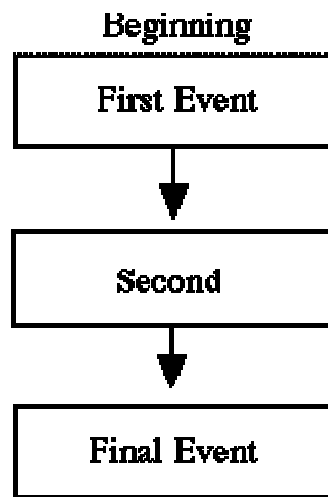
(Dole 1997) Taken from Harvey, 1998, p. 211

Comprehension

Graphic Organizers for Informational Text

Graphic organizers provide tools for organizing important information and are particularly appropriate for expository text. Teaching students to use graphic organizers develops students' ability "to remember what they read and may transfer in general to better comprehension and achievement in social studies and science content areas." *Langenberg et al., 2000, p. 4-75*

For graphic organizer examples refer to p. 152 of *Supporting Struggling Reader*; Strickland, Ganske & Monroe, 2002.



Comprehension

Interesting or Important?

What's Interesting?

What's Important?

Harvey, 1998, p. 83

Comprehension

Hints for Highlighting Important Information

- Look carefully at the first and last line of each paragraph. Important information is often contained there.
- Highlight only necessary words and phrases, not entire sentences.
- Don't get thrown off by interesting details.
- Note cue words. They are almost always followed by important information.
- Pay attention to nonfiction features that signal importance such as illustrations, text cues, graphics and special font effects.
- Pay attention to surprising information. It might mean you are learning something new. Decide if it's important as well as surprising.
- Make notes in the margin to emphasize a pertinent highlighted word or phrase.
- When finished, check to see that only one-third (at most one-half) of the paragraph is highlighted.

Adapted from Harvey, 1998 and Harvey & Goudvis, 2000

Comprehension

Key Ideas About Determining Importance in Text

Taken from *Mosaic of Thought*, Keene & Zimmerman, p. 94-95.

Proficient readers make instantaneous decisions about what is important in text at the following levels:

Word Level: Words that carry the meaning are contentives. Words that connect are functors. Contentives tend to be more important to the overall meaning of passage than functors.

Sentence Level: There are usually key sentences that carry the weight of meaning for a passage or section. Often, especially in nonfiction, they contain bold print, begin or end the passage or refer to a table or graph.

Text Level: There are key ideas, concepts, and themes in the text. Our opinions about which ideas are most important change as we read the passage. Final conclusions about the most important themes are typically made after reading the passage, perhaps several times and/or after conversing or writing about the passage.

Comprehension

Key Ideas About Determining Importance in Text

Taken from *Mosaic of Thought*, Keene & Zimmerman, p. 94-95.

Decisions about importance in text are made based on the following:

- the reader's purpose;
- the reader's schema for the text content (ideas most closely connected to the reader's prior knowledge will be considered most important);
- the reader's beliefs, opinions, and experiences related to the text;
- the reader's schema for text format (text that stands out visually and/or ideas that are repeated are often considered important);
- concepts another reader mentions prior to, during, or after reading.

Comprehension

“... it’s the purpose for the reading,
along with personal beliefs,
experiences,
prior knowledge, and
knowledge of the audience
that govern our decisions about
what is important in any given text.”

Keene & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 92

Comprehension

Brainstorming about Summarizing



As a group, please discuss the following items:

1. Define summarizing. Record your definitions on the chart paper.
2. Think about and discuss a time when text was difficult for you or your students to summarize. Why was it challenging?
3. Discuss how we use the strategy of summarizing in our daily lives.
4. Summarize the gist of your discussions and be ready to share this in 1-2 sentences. You may record your summary on the chart paper.

Comprehension

Key Points About Summarizing

Readers must be able to:

- identify the main ideas of a paragraph or text passage.
- condense information down to the main idea and compose the essence of the text.
- paraphrase the author's information
- disregard irrelevant information.
- use prior knowledge of text content.
- pay more attention to what is read and how ideas are related.
- generalize from examples or repeated ideas.
- make inferences that go across sentences and beyond the text.

Other Key Points

- Narrative text tends to be easier for students to summarize, so is a good place to start.
- Begin instruction and guided practice with short, familiar text and allow students to use text when composing their summaries.
- Encourage students to summarize orally before writing summaries.
- Learning to summarize is difficult to master and therefore requires much modeling and scaffolded support from the teacher.
- Model, Model, Model!

Key points compiled from Langenberg et al., 2000, Strickland, Ganske & Monroe, 2002 and Irvin, 1998.

Comprehension

SQ3R

SQ3R is a well-known strategy that involves skills such as summarizing, self-questioning, and text review. This strategy works well with content area text. It includes these five steps:

- **Survey:** Skim chapter before reading to get an idea of the central theme/concept.
- **Question:** Create questions using boldface headings.
- **Read:** Read the text to locate answers to your questions.
- **Recite:** Paraphrase main ideas and give supporting details. Check back in the text to confirm your ideas.
- **Review:** Look back over subheadings and recall main points and as many supporting details as possible

Comprehension

Word Splash on Comprehension Strategies



Visualizing

Comprehension Monitoring

Making Connections

Summarizing

Determining Importance

Inferring

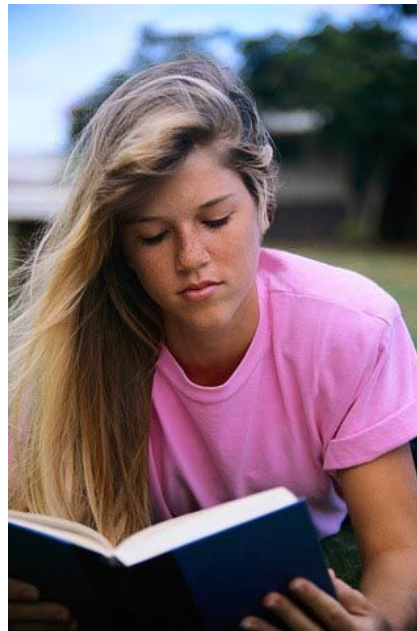
**Q
u
e
s
t
i
o
n
i
n
g**

Comprehension

And a child shall lead them...

“Real-world questions are things you really wonder about. They affect a lot of people. School questions are easy to answer and just affect people who don’t understand what’s going on.” *Amanda, grade 12*

Tovani, 2000



Comprehension

Text-to-Student Connections

In the space below, copy a sentence or two from the text (or indicate page/ paragraph where found). Then write down the connections you made between the text and your own school or implications for your school.

1. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

2. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

3. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

4. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

Adapted from Tovani, 2000

Comprehension

Text-to-Self Connections

In the space below, copy a sentence or two from the text (or indicate page/ paragraph where found). Then write down the connections you made between the text and your own life. Be as specific as possible.

1. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

2. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

3. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

4. Text Quote:

This reminds me of...

Adapted from Tovani, 2000