



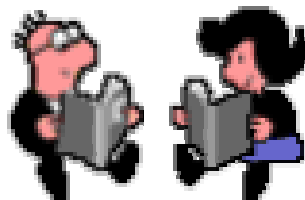
Reading Comprehension Strategies



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Recommended books for reading comprehension strategies:
Mosaic of Thought, by Ellin Oliver Keen and Susan Zimmermann
Strategies that Work, by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis



Why Teach Reading Comprehension Strategies?

More than twenty years ago, Dolores Durkin's (1978-1979) study of reading instruction found that teachers taught comprehension less than one percent of the time. Reading comprehension instruction was a "mentioning" of the strategies than actual direct instruction. This resulted in an increase in research and development in reading comprehension. The National Reading Panel reviewed over 200 studies on reading comprehension and concluded that students in the elementary, middle school, and high school benefit from direct instruction of reading comprehension. Teachers of all levels must teach reading comprehension strategies.

Students learn in different ways. In order to meet these needs, teachers must teach a variety of strategies to give students the opportunity to increase their reading comprehension. Different readers rely on different strategies to help them gain better understanding. Teachers must encourage their students to think about which strategies they are using and to choose strategies that best enable them to gain meaning from reading.

Strategies for Decoding Words

Decoding words is the process of determining what a word is. The following are strategies that help children decode words.

- ❖ Use phonics skills to sound out words.
- ❖ Look for smaller words within the word.
- ❖ Look for "chunks" or "word families" within the word.
- ❖ Think about words that rhyme with the unknown word.
- ❖ Look at pictures for clues.
- ❖ When pictures are unavailable, think about what is happening in the story.
- ❖ Use the meanings of other words to help figure out unknown words.
- ❖ Skip the word, read to the end of the sentence and go back to the unknown word to determine what word would make sense.

Making Predictions

Making Predictions is a reading comprehension strategy that is used before text is read. It actively engages students by allowing them to share their thoughts about events, actions or outcomes that are confirmed or contradicted within a story. Students make predictions before and during reading. Their predictions may be based on titles, picture clues, written text, and/or by activating prior knowledge. Activating prior knowledge is one of the most effective ways of improving reading comprehension and should be used in every reading comprehension strategy.

When using the Prediction Strategy with your child, begin by looking at the pictures on the cover of the story. Have your child discuss what he/she thinks the story is about by looking at the pictures and describing what is happening. Questions to discuss may include, "Tell me what you think is happening on the front cover." "Who are the characters in the story?" "How do you think the characters are feeling?" "Why do you think they are feeling this way?" "Where do you think the story takes place?" "Describe the setting." "When do you think the story takes place?" These are just a few of many questions that can be discussed.

You can also activate prior knowledge by asking the children to use what they already know to make predictions. For example, if a child sees a story cover where there is a picture of a bare tree with dead leaves on the ground, the child will activate prior knowledge by predicting that the story takes place in the fall because the child knows what trees look like in the fall. This really gets the children thinking.

Once you have discussed the cover of the book, begin reading to see if the predictions are accurate or need to be changed. Read a few pages, then stop and reflect on the

predictions and continue to make new predictions based on the pictures, text, and prior knowledge. Continue this process until the end of the story. Story predictions may be verbally discussed or written down. Post-it notes, index cards, or any paper can be used to write down predictions.

Included is an organizer that you may choose to use when using the Prediction reading comprehension strategy with your child.

Making Predictions

<u>Page</u>	<u>Prediction</u>	<u>Outcome was different</u>

Making Connections

Children love to share stories about their own life experiences. Reading comprehension improves when children are able to make connections from unfamiliar text to their personal experiences and/or background knowledge. When children understand how to connect what they have read to their own lives, they make connections between what they have read and the world around them. These connections are in three forms:

Text to self- (t-s) Students relate what they have read to their own lives, thoughts, or experiences. For example, during the story *The Button* with Frog and Toad, Toad lost a button. Does this remind you of a time when you lost something? This is the connection that young children find the easiest to relate to. Can you make a connection?

Text to text-(t-t) Students relate what they have read to text that they have previously read. While reading a story, do certain events remind you of something similar that happened in another story? For example, while reading about a child who is deaf, does this remind you of the story you read about Helen Keller? Can you make a connection?

Text to world-(t-w) Students relate what they have read to issues, events or concerns of the world. While reading the text, do certain events remind you of something in the world from the past or present? For example, while reading a story about a boy and girl who participate in a marathon, you can relate this to the marathon in Chicago. Can you make a connection?

While reading, practice this strategy by pausing every few pages (or more depending on how long the text is) and identify and write down connections. Post-it notes, index cards, or any paper can be used. Included is an organizer that may be used.

Making Connections

The text I can connect to is.....	Circle the Connection T-T T-S T-W	My connection is.....
	Circle the Connection T-T T-S T-W	
	Circle the Connection T-T T-S T-W	
	Circle the Connection T-T T-S T-W	
	Circle the Connection T-T T-S T-W	
	Circle the Connection T-T T-S T-W	

Asking Questions

Asking questions is a reading comprehension strategy that encourages children to become interactive with their reading. An inference is a thought that is produced when prior knowledge (schema) is applied to what a child has read or seen in pictures in the story. When a reader infers, they create a meaning or idea that is not stated in the text. Inferring involves drawing conclusions from the text, making connections, interpreting what has been read in the text or seen in pictures, and making critical or analytical judgments. When readers infer, they are better able to remember and learn from what they have read.

Asking Questions Activity

1. Hand the children some index cards, post it notes, or the graphic organizer included.
2. Have the children read a few pages (2-4 depending on the amount of text).
3. Ask them to write down some questions that they are thinking about as they read. These questions may include those that begin with: Why, I wonder, When, Where, How come, Does, etc. The questions may be related to the text or the pictures. For example: "I wonder if Frog will find his lost button?"
4. Have the child read a few more pages and write down more questions.
5. Reflect on previous questions to see if any can be answered in the following ways:

The answers are found:

- In the text
- By using inference skills (taking what we already know and applying it to what we have read to come up with the answer).
- Not found at all (sometimes we ask questions that we will not find or be able to infer the answers).

6. Continue this process until the story is read.

The following organizer can also be used. While reading, the student writes down the question in the question area. When and if the answer is found, write down the answer. In the final column, circle either "Text" if the answer was found in the text, "Inference" if the answer was determined through inferencing, or circle "Not Found" if the answer cannot be determined.

"Asking Questions" Organizer

<u>Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Answer was found</u> In the Text Through Inference Not Found
		<u>Answer was found</u> In Text Through Inference Not Found
		<u>Answer was found</u> In Text Through Inference Not Found
		<u>Answer was found</u> In Text Through Inference Not Found
		<u>Answer was found</u> In Text Through Inference Not Found
		<u>Answer was found</u> In Text Through Inference Not Found

Story Elements

Another reading comprehension strategy is "Story Elements." It is very important that children be aware of certain components of a story in order to understand what they are reading. Included in the discussion of "Story Elements" are: the title, author and illustrator, setting, characters, plot, problem, solution, a critique of the story, and questions that begin with, "If you."

One way to use this strategy is to create "Story Element" folders. Take a manila folder and four large envelopes. Seal the envelopes then cut them in half to create pockets. On each envelope, write one of the following: Title, Author and Illustrator, Setting, Characters, Problem, Solution, If You....., and Critique. Glue each pocket to the inside of the folder. There will be four going across with two rows. Then, cut up paper so that one piece fits into each pocket or index cards may be used.

After the children have read the story, they are to write complete sentences to answer the topic of each pocket on the cut up paper or index cards. For example: The setting took place..... The main characters in the story are.... When they have completed a sentence or two for each pocket, they slip that information into the correct pocket. The "If You..." Question is to promote higher level thinking questions. For example: If you were Johnny, would you have helped his sister? Why?

Next, share the answers and "What if" question.

You can create your own folders and have the children decorate the front.

Another way to use this strategy is by completing the organizer included in place of the Story Element folder.

Story Element Organizer



<p><u><i>Title</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><u><i>Author/Illustrator</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><u><i>Setting</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><u><i>Main Characters</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><u><i>Problem</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><u><i>Solution</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><u><i>Critique</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><u><i>Write a question -What If.....</i></u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Sequencing and Summarizing

Sequencing and Summarizing are a part of comprehension used after a story has been read. Reading comprehension improves when children are able to discuss events that happened in a story and retell important parts of a story. The sequencing part helps with oral comprehension and the summarizing part helps improve written comprehension. After reading a story with your child talk about what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Pay attention to your child's answers. Are they giving every single detail of the story or are they focusing on the main events of the story? When children understand what specific events happened in the beginning, middle, and end of a story you will know that true comprehension is taking place. Below are some questions to help you work with your child on Sequencing and Summarizing a story.

I. Sequencing

A. Questions to guide understanding of the beginning of a story:

1. Who are the main characters of the story?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What is the problem at the beginning of the story?

B. Questions to guide understanding of the middle of a story:

1. What important things happened in the middle of the story?
2. What two important things happened in the middle of the story that lead the character to find a solution to his/her problem?

C. Question to guide understanding of the end of a story?

1. How was the problem, mentioned at the beginning of the story, solved at the end of the story?

II. Summarizing

Sequencing a story's events will help your child write a summary of a story. Once you have finished discussing the beginning, middle, and end of a story your child will be able to use the sequencing information to help him/her write a summary. When you are working with your child on writing a summary, he/she first needs to complete the story map on the Summarizer Worksheet. Once the story map is completed your child can take the information he/she wrote in the story map and create a summary of the story by describing what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Determining Importance in Text

Reading nonfiction at the second grade level requires instruction. Students often have difficulty determining important ideas and information in nonfiction text. Readers must decide and remember what is important in the text in order to learn. Students must be taught how to do this.

To begin with, students must be taught the important components of nonfiction text. The following are the components that students must be made aware of during instruction:

- Nonfiction provides factual information, key concepts, and important ideas and/or tells about events that have happened.
- Students must understand the purpose of headings and subheadings. They define what the reader will be reading. Often these are skipped over during reading.
- Students must be taught how to use a table of contents, index and a glossary.
- Students must be able to identify and learn important vocabulary words in order to gain meaning. At the early elementary level, these words are highlighted in the science text.
- The first and last lines of each paragraph often contain important information. Students should pay close attention to these sentences.
- Students must be taught, through modeling, how to determine which information is relevant in learning about the topic.
- Pictures, captions, maps, tables, and graphs often contain important information about the text.

- Understanding various text structures is relevant to increasing reading comprehension. These include: cause and effect, problem and solution, question and answer, comparison and contrast, and description and sequence.

Determining Importance in Text Lesson

1. Students are given a topic and asked to activate prior knowledge. What do they know about the topic? This knowledge is written down independently then shared as a class as the teacher writes down this information for the class to see.
2. Students then are asked to generate questions about the topic. What would you like to learn about the topic that will help you better understand it? Students may be given a sticky note or index card to write down questions and eventually answers. Students must keep in mind that questions must be relevant to students learning, or teaching, about the topic.
3. Students then begin to read the text. It is important to teach the importance of headings, subheadings, vocabulary words, pictures, captions and the first and last sentences within a paragraph. As the students find answers to their questions, they write them down. Students are also encouraged to write down information that is important that they may not have written a question for.
4. Additional research is recommended for questions that were reasonable but the answers were not found within the text.

Once the children have gathered information about the topic, they may write a report, create a poster, or write a book to "teach" about their topic by providing factual information to their readers.

Included is an organizer that may be used during reading. At this level, students often choose to read fiction rather than nonfiction. It is highly recommended that children be encouraged to read nonfiction and practice reading comprehension strategies to develop these skills at an early age.

Reading For Importance in Text



This is what I already know about the topic.

In order for me to better understand the topic; I would like to learn the answers to the following questions. These questions would help me re-teach the topic to someone else.

Question ?????? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Fact <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Question ?????? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Fact <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Question ?????? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Fact <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Question ?????? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Fact <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Question ?????? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Fact <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Other important information _____
