

Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

Elda Garcia and Nancy De La Rosa
Bilingual Strategists



IES PRACTICE GUIDE

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE

Improving Reading Comprehension
in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade

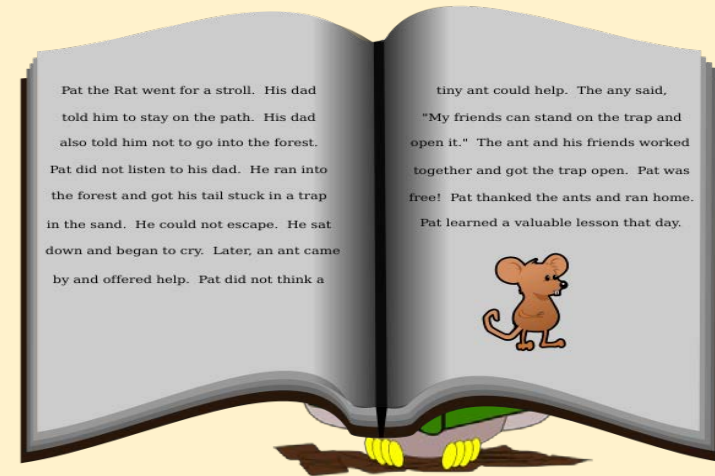


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Effective Reading Comprehension Strategies

- Activating prior knowledge
- Questioning
- Visualization
- Monitoring, clarifying, or fix-up
- Inference
- Retelling



Activating Prior Knowledge/Predicting

Students think about what they already know and use that knowledge in conjunction with other clues to construct meaning from what they read or to hypothesize what will happen next in the text. It is assumed that students will continue to read to see if their predictions are correct.

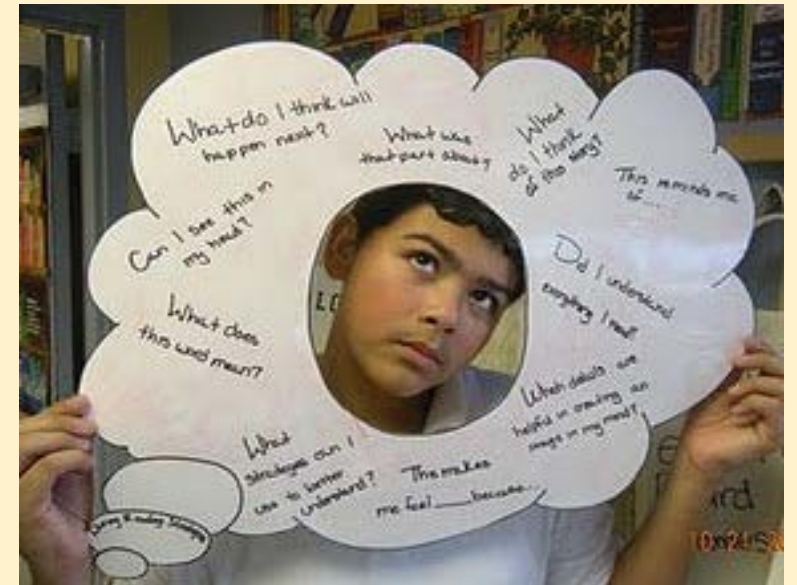


Questioning

- Students develop and attempt to answer questions about the important ideas in the text while reading, using words such as *where*, or *why* to develop their questions.

Teacher may choose to:

- Plan and write out the questions to be used in a lesson.
- Anticipate possible student responses, especially partially correct or incorrect ones



Visualizing

- Students develop a mental image of what is described in the text.



Monitoring, Clarifying, and Fix Up

Students pay attention to whether they understand what they are reading , and when they do not, they reread or use strategies that will help them understand what they have read.



Drawing Inferences

Students generate information that is important to constructing meaning but that is missing from, or not explicitly stated in, the text.

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/making-inferences-and-drawing-conclusions>



Summarizing/ Retelling

Students briefly describe, orally or in writing, the main points of what they read.

Helpful video to explain to students:

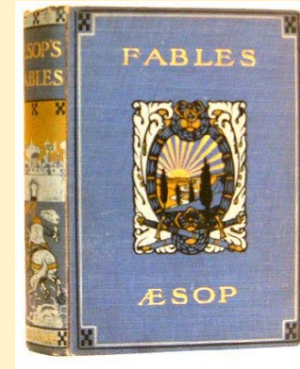
<https://youtu.be/iiUsVFWbnkQ>

Recommendation 2:

Teach Students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content

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Narrative texts: Portray a story or sequence of related fictional or nonfictional events involving individuals fictional characters: can include historical fiction, fables, and autobiographies.

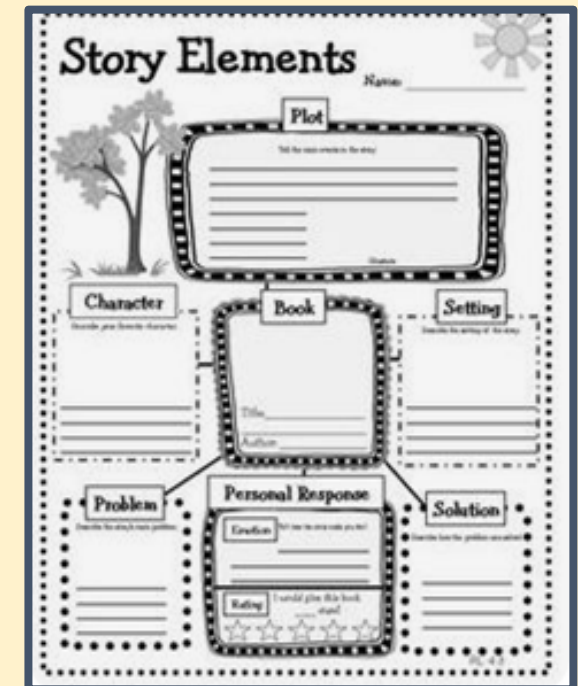


Informational texts: In the elementary grades, informational texts can include news articles, speeches and timelines. Include expository writing, pieces that argue in favor of one position or another, and procedural texts and documents.



Elements of structure in a narrative text



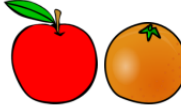


- Characters
- Setting
- Goal
- Problem
- Plot or Action
- Resolution
- Theme



Structures of informational text

- Description
- Sequence
- Problem and Solution
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast

Informational Text Structures

 <p>Description</p> <p>Signal Words: such as, for instance, in addition, also, specifically</p> <p>Tips: Ask yourself: what specific person, place, thing, or idea is being described?</p> <p>Look for a topic word or phrase and for synonyms.</p>	 <p>Problem and Solution</p> <p>Signal Words: problem, issue, since, as a result, solution, idea, so, leads to, causes</p> <p>Tips: Ask yourself: what is the problem and what is the solution?</p> <p>Look for the problem first and then the solution.</p>	 <p>Compare and Contrast</p> <p>Signal Words: similar, same, alike, both, as well as, unlike, as opposed to, on the other hand, in contrast, instead</p> <p>Tips: Ask yourself: what is being compared?</p> <p>How are they the same? How are they different?</p>	 <p>Cause and Effect</p> <p>Signal Words: since, because, if, due to, as a result of, causes, leads to, consequently, then, therefore</p> <p>Tips: Ask yourself: what happened and why did it happen?</p> <p>Remember, you are looking for a cause, not a solution.</p>	 <p>Sequence</p> <p>Signal Words: first, second, third, then, next, before, after, finally, following</p> <p>Tips: Ask yourself: Is this event taking place over time?</p> <p>Look for steps or references to time such as dates.</p>
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Recommendation 3: Discussions

Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of the text.

Locate and Recall

- What does the text mean?
- What is the main idea?
- Which details support the idea?

Teachers should ask *some* questions and moderate the discussion, but students should do most of the talking.

Adapting for Younger Students

- Teacher asks more questions
- Model how to think about the question
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- Check for understanding periodically
- Use higher-level questioning

Integrate and Interpret

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- Activating prior knowledge
 - Questioning
 - Visualization
 - Monitoring, clarifying, or fix-up
 - Inference
 - Retelling

Review the comprehension strategies (Recommendation 1)

Students will read a small portion of the text.

Teacher leads discussion on what the students just read. (Keep doing this throughout the entire text)

These questions should lead the students to summarize what happens in the text and to interpret these events in relation to their own experiences.

Critique and Evaluate

Activity:

1. Assign a text that poses a dilemma about which students might disagree.
Ex. appropriateness of a character's action or whether the story seems realistic.
1. Divide students into teams according to the opinions they express after they read the text.
1. Students will use sticky notes to mark parts of the text that support their opinion or parts they think are confusing. (Hold a class discussion about what information is needed to make the text easier to understand.)

Questions should require students to think deeply about the text

Ask questions that begin with **Why?**


What if?

Do you think?

Plan and prepare questions for *before* the text

during the text

Before Reading:	
Question	Strategy Addressed
<i>At beginning of new book:</i> • What do you think this book will be about? Why do you think that? • What characters do you think might be in this story?	Predicting
• What do you know about the topic of this book? (Have you ever been camping/ seen a ghost/been to a farm, etc) • Does the topic of this book remind you of anything you know or have done?	Connecting
• What questions would you like to ask the author before you read this book? • What are you wondering about as you look at the cover and back of your book?	Questioning
<i>If continuing a book student has been reading:</i> • What has happened so far in this story?	Summarizing



Ask follow-up questions to *encourage and facilitate* discussion

In a [collaborative discussion](#):

- Have students refer to text and justify their answers.
- Help them learn to construct and support opinions with text evidence.

Recommendation 4: Select Text Purposefully

Exposure to different texts builds the capacity to understand a large variety of reading material that students will encounter from grade to grade.

Teach comprehension with multiple genres:
Literary and Informational Texts

Choose high quality texts: Rich content, word
choice

Text should be developmentally appropriate:
Neither too difficult or too simple; challenging texts
require teacher support

Texts should support instruction: scaffold; start
with familiar topics and easily identifiable text structure

Recommendation 5: Engaging and Motivating Context

Students must actively engage with text to construct meaning. They will become better readers if they are taught reading comprehension with engaging text.

Discover the purpose and benefits of reading

Model how the ability to read affects our daily life, provides enjoyment, and helps students learn about the world.

Acting out a scene

Make meaningful connections

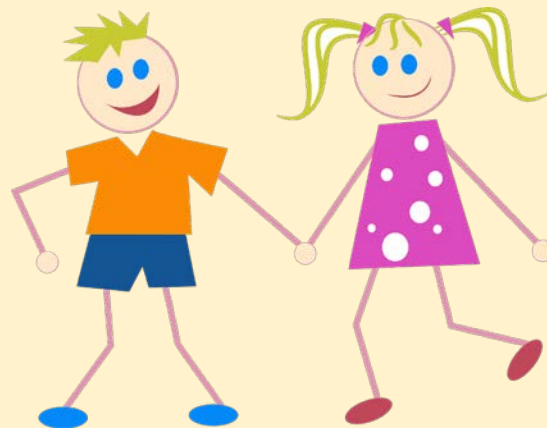
Informational text on plants - plant seeds in a pot

Choose texts relevant to students

For Younger Students:

Pair the text with pictures

Literacy Centers



Students should see themselves as successful readers

Reading Comprehension Activities:

Challenging but attainable with effort

Don't punish mistakes

Recognize and learn from errors

Offer support by using "guiding questions"

Set goals

Praise and offer positive feedback



Collaborating with Peers

Roles should be valuable
motivate students to help each other learn

Talk to a partner

Take turns reading

Take turns retelling a story

Sharing favorite facts from informational texts

Take turns following step-by-step instructions

Create a new story

For Younger Students:

Retell the story

Provide props

cutouts

puppets