

Comprehension: Understanding what you are reading

Understanding is the purpose of reading. Whether it's to be entertained, learn something new, or accomplish a task, without comprehension, you are not actually reading.

As they read, good readers are two things:

Purposeful- They understand why they are reading and are aware of this purpose as they read.

Active – They think as they as read. They use a combination of many things to make sense of what they are reading.

Before, during and after reading, they do the following:

Study the text

- Put events in order (sequence)
- Identify story elements
- Use captions, indices, charts
- Identify the author's purpose

Think about the text (thinking strategies)

- Use prior knowledge (schema)
- Create Mental Images (Visualize)
- Determine Importance
- Ask Questions
- Infer and predict
- Synthesize

Comprehension

Checking Comprehension

Good readers choose books that they are able to understand.

Determine whether a student understands what they are reading by asking the following questions:

Fiction	Non-Fiction
What's the problem in the story so far?	What's the most interesting thing you have learned so far?
Tell me about the characters. Who are they? What are they like?	What's your favorite part?
Tell me about the setting. Where does the story take place? Would the story be different in a different setting?	What else would you like to learn about _____?
Tell me about your favorite part so far?	How is the book organized?
What's happening in the story right now?	Tell me about the text features. Tell me what you learned from them.

Comprehension

Prior Knowledge

Anything a reader has done, learned, read about, or experienced will help them understand what they read.
Good readers use or “activate” their prior knowledge or “schema” before, during, and after reading.

Help a reader use their prior knowledge by saying the following:

Text to Self Connections

Have you ever _____?
What do you know about _____?
What does this remind you of?
Tell me about your experience with _____.

Text to Text connections

Have you read other books about _____?
How is this text like _____?
Has this happened or was there a character like this another book?

Text to World

Have you ever heard of this?

Check a student’s progress in using prior knowledge by asking the following:

How does what you already know about _____ help you to predict what will happen next?

What prior knowledge about _____ help you to figure out that word

Comprehension

Creating Mental Images (Visualizing)

Any picture, feeling, taste, sound or smell that a reader imagines will help them understand what they read.
Good readers have a continuous movie of images playing in their head as they read.

Signs a reader is creating mental images

They can tell you details about the story.
They respond to the text with emotion.
They are able to make predictions.
They extend the story beyond what is written on the page (add what ifs,).

Signs a reader might not be creating mental images

There is a lack of interest in reading or being read to
They are unable to describe characters, setting, or what is happening

How to help a reader create mental images:

Read something, stop, then describe what you are picturing.
Have the student read something then tell or draw what they are picturing.
Make a sensory map where the student draws or writes something about the text for each sense.
Act out what is happening in the story.

Comprehension

Questioning

A strategy used before, during and after reading to clarify an idea and deepen understanding.
Good readers use questioning to interact with the author and text.

Opportunities to ask questions	
When arriving at an unknown word	What does this word mean?
When looking at the cover of a new book	What is this about? What are they doing? Why is there a _____ on the cover?
When confused	Why did that happen? Who is saying that? Who are they talking to?
When curious	I wonder why that happened. I am wondering what will happen next.

Activities to help practice questioning:

- Make a list of questions based on seeing the cover then search for their answer.
- Take turns asking "I wonder" questions.
- Set a goal to think of a question for each question word then read to reach the goal.
- Make a list of questions for the author.

*Who What
Why When
Where How*

Comprehension

Inferring and Predicting

Using evidence from the story and prior knowledge to draw conclusions
Good readers rely on inferring to think and make statements beyond what is written on the page

Activities to practice inferring:

- Guess words based on clues
- Make predictions based on the book cover or prior knowledge about the author or genre
- Make a guess about something then list the evidence.
- Point out when someone is inferring during a conversation and what evidence they used.
- Read a book with some words other an English and guess what those words mean

Comprehension

Determining Importance and Synthesizing

Figuring out what's important then determining it's overall meaning and significance

Good readers recognize what is important and connect the information to a single theme or idea.

Determining importance

Synthesizing

Activities to practice determining importance and synthesizing:

Before Reading

Look at text features in a non-fiction piece (headings, captions, labels, table of contents)

Look at the pictures in a picture book. Predict which part of the picture will be important.

Talk about the author's reason for writing the book.

During Reading

Keep track of important events or information on stick notes

Read a page in a book. Write down one important thing and one non-important thing.

After Reading

Retell a story. Talk about why each event was important.

Think about the different things a character did. What does this tell you about the character?

Think back to the way a problem was solved. What important events led to the solution?