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The updated and revised second edition of the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* combines the best features of an academic text and a practical hands-on teacher’s guide. It is an indispensable resource for teaching reading and language arts to both beginning and older struggling readers.

**WHAT? • WHY? • WHEN? • HOW?**

**Letter Knowledge**

- Letters are explicitly taught in a systematic and organized way, and as an important part of a child's emerging language of literacy.
- Letters are recognized easily.
- Letters are used in the composition of many words. They represent sounds consistently to the child. Learning letters systemically helps children recognize and categorize new words.
- In English, the relationship between the shape and the letter name is unique. The letters help students recognize the letters in the words they read.
- Most early literacy activities include the letter names.

**Research Findings . . .**

For educators at every level, the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* provides:

- **User-friendly text**
- **Plentiful charts and tables**
- **Interactive activities for the reader**
- **Opportunities to review and interpret content**

**Letter Knowledge**

- Children appear to use letter shapes over letter names.
- Letter knowledge is important if a child is to understand the letter names.
- Research indicates that students have more trouble learning letter names that are not iconic.
- Certain properties of a letter's name affect students' ability to recognize the letter name, recognize, and write the letters.
- Students who recognize most letters with confidence will have an easier time giving all their attention to other emergent literacy tasks.
- Handwriting: Uppercase Letter Recognition Instruction
- How much do you know about the iconicity of letter names? In the letter name c / k/, g /g/, y /y/ the sounds of the letters are not the same as the sounds of the letters. For example, letter name //k/ is not a phonologically correct pronunciation of the letter name /k/.

**Plentiful charts and tables**

- **Suggested Reading . . .**
- **Diagnostic . . .**
- **Screening Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) Texas Education Agency**
- **Benchmark**
- **Letter Naming Fluency**
- **Letter Recognition**
- **Letter Execution**
- **Assessment of handwriting should incorporate observations of handwriting**
- **Handwriting: Uppercase Letter Recognition Instruction**
- **How much do you know about the iconicity of letter names? In the letter name c / k/, g /g/, y /y/ the sounds of the letters are not the same as the sounds of the letters. For example, letter name //k/ is not a phonologically correct pronunciation of the letter name /k/.

**Interactive activities for the reader**

- **Interactive activities for the reader**
- **Opportunities to review and interpret content**

**Opportunities to review and interpret content**

- **Interactive activities for the reader**
- **Opportunities to review and interpret content**

**About the Teaching Reading Sourcebook**

For educators at every level, the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* is a comprehensive reference about reading instruction. Organized according to the elements of explicit instruction (what? why? when? and how?), the Sourcebook includes both a research-informed knowledge base and practical sample lesson models.
Word-Learning Strategies

Lesson Model Features

• Focus and materials sidebar
• Explicit instruction
• Clear explanation
• Teacher modeling

GUIDELINES FOR USING THE DICTIONARY

1. Look for Context Clues
2. Look for Word-Part Clues
3. Guess the Word’s Meaning

DIRECT EXPLANATION

Television is equipment that is used to talk to someone in another, usually faraway, place. A television set is a box-shaped unit that can be used to watch programs that have been sent from a studio or broadcast station. Television programs are often called television shows or television series.

DICTIONARY USE

Word-Learning Strategies

Lesson Model Features

• Focus and materials sidebar
• Explicit instruction
• Clear explanation
• Teacher modeling

Guidelines for Using the Dictionary

The first entry that you find for a word is not the one you are looking for. The next word may not be the one you want, either. Keep on looking for other entries for the word until you find the one you need. The entries are ordered so that the meanings that are most important first are listed first, and the meanings that are least important are listed last.

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SECTION III

Decoding and Word Study

CHAPTER 6
Phonics

CHAPTER 7
Irregular Word Reading

CHAPTER 8
Multisyllabic Word Reading
Learning to read words is fundamental to understanding text. Although proficient readers use multiple strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words, the most reliable strategy is decoding, the ability to convert a word from print to speech (Adams 1990). To ensure the development of proficiency in reading, students must be taught to decode regular words, to identify irregular words, and to use word parts to read multisyllabic words. This requires a strong foundation of print awareness and phonological awareness. The Road to Reading Words illustrates how awareness of spoken language (phonological awareness) merges with written language to contribute to automatic word recognition.

The three chapters in this section are all related to learning to read words. To clarify how these word reading skills contribute to proficient reading, Marilyn Jager Adams (1990) and Linnea Ehri (2002) provide explanations of how the reading process works.
Phonics
Phonics is a method of instruction that teaches students the systematic relationship between the letters and letter combinations (graphemes) in written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language and how to use these relationships to read and spell words. Phonics instruction—which is intended for beginning readers in the primary grades and for older students who are struggling to read—can help students learn how to convert the printed word into its spoken form (National Reading Panel 2000). This process, called decoding, involves looking at a word and connecting the letters and sounds and then blending those sounds together. Phonics instruction also helps students to understand the alphabetic principle—written letters represent spoken sounds. In other words, letters and sounds work together in systematic ways to allow spoken language to be written down and written language to be read.

Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction

From 1997 to 1999, the National Reading Panel conducted a meta-analysis to review and evaluate research on the effectiveness of various approaches for teaching children to read (Ehri et al. 2001; National Reading Panel 2000). According to the panel’s findings, students who received systematic and explicit phonics instruction were better readers at the end of instruction than students who received nonsystematic or no phonics instruction (Ehri 2006; Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn 2001).
Just because a program has a scope and sequence doesn’t mean it’s systematic. The instruction must be cumulative.

—BLEVINS, 2006

Understanding the terms *systematic* and *explicit* is important to planning and implementing effective phonics instruction. The hallmark of *systematic* phonics instruction is teaching a set of useful sound/spelling relationships in a clearly defined, carefully selected, logical instructional sequence (Armbruster et al. 2001). Systematic phonics lessons are organized in such a way that the logic of the alphabetic principle becomes evident, newly introduced skills are built on existing skills, and tasks are arranged from simplest to most complex. According to Marilyn Adams (2001), “the goal of systematic instruction is one of maximizing the likelihood that whenever children are asked to learn something new, they already possess the appropriate prior knowledge and understandings to see its value and to learn it efficiently.” *Explicit* instruction refers to lessons in which concepts are clearly explained and skills are clearly modeled, without vagueness or ambiguity. According to Carnine et al. (2006), “instruction is explicit when the teacher clearly, overtly, and thoroughly communicates to students how to do something.” Learning phonics through explicit teaching requires less inference and discovery on the part of students and is therefore more within their grasp (Chall and Popp 1996).

### Findings of the National Reading Panel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction:</strong></th>
<th>• significantly improves students’ reading and spelling in Kindergarten and Grade 1.</th>
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<td>• significantly improves students’ ability to comprehend what they read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is beneficial for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is effective in helping to prevent reading difficulties among students who are at risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is beneficial in helping students who are having difficulty learning to read.</td>
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</table>
Based on numerous studies, it has been confirmed that phonics instruction is the best and most efficient way to teach students the alphabetic principle (National Reading Panel 2000). English is an alphabetic language; thus, knowing how written letters represent spoken sounds gives readers a systematic method of reading unfamiliar words when they are encountered in text. It is important to note that phonics instruction is just a means to an end—fluent reading and writing. Students’ ability to read words accurately and automatically enables them to focus on text comprehension because less mental energy is required to decode words and more mental energy can be devoted to making meaning from text (Freedman and Calfee 1984; LaBerge and Samuels 1974).

Systematic phonics instruction helps students learn to read more effectively than nonsystematic phonics or no phonics instruction.

—National Reading Panel, 2000

Systematic phonics instruction is effective in preventing reading difficulties among at-risk students and in helping children overcome reading difficulties.

—Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001

Phonics instruction helps Kindergartners and first graders acquire the alphabetic knowledge they need to begin learning to spell.

—National Reading Panel, 2000
Phonics instruction increases the ability to comprehend text for beginning readers and older students with reading disabilities.

—NATIONAL READING PANEL, 2000

That direct instruction in alphabet coding facilitates early reading acquisition is one of the most well-established conclusions in all of behavioral science.

—STANOVICH, 1994

Suggested Reading...


When to Teach

Phonics instruction exerts its greatest impact on beginning readers in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and therefore should be implemented at those grade levels (National Reading Panel 2000). Phonics instruction can begin as soon as students know the sounds of a few letters and should continue until students develop the ability to decode multisyllabic words with confidence and automaticity. The nature of instruction changes as students’ skills develop, shifting from sound-by-sound decoding to automatic recognition of letter patterns.

In a study of phonics instruction, Torgesen et al. (2001) found that students who did not master or become fluent in phonics skills by the end of first grade continued to struggle in the future in other areas of reading. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), phonics helped to prevent reading difficulties in beginners at risk for developing reading problems. In fact, effects were significantly greater in first graders at risk for future reading difficulties than in older students who had already become poor readers. Using phonics instruction to remediate reading problems may be harder than using phonics initially to prevent reading difficulties. According to Linnea Ehri (2004), “when phonics instruction is introduced after students have already acquired some reading skill, it may be more difficult to step in and influence how they read because doing so requires changing students’ habits.” For example, students may need to learn to suppress the habit of figuring out a word by using context, illustrations, and the first letter of the word.
Pacing
Research suggests that approximately two years of phonics instruction is typically sufficient for most students (National Reading Panel 2000). Because students differ in how quickly they develop phonics skills, there is no exact formula for how many sound/spellings to introduce per day or week. The pacing of phonics instruction is contingent upon student mastery. Thus, it is critical to adjust pacing to ensure student mastery. According to Carnine et al. (2006), introducing one new letter each second or third day may be an optimal pace for students with little beginning alphabet knowledge. For students who have more background knowledge, letters may be introduced at a quicker pace.

When to Assess and Intervene
Assessment and intervention for beginning readers should focus on understanding the alphabetic principle. Intervention for struggling beginning readers in Kindergarten and first grade should occur as soon as a reading problem is identified through assessment. For beginning readers, initial assessment should also include knowledge of sound/spelling correspondences and move gradually to decoding, including a student’s ability to read simple CVC words. Researchers suggest that the best way to assess a student’s ability to apply knowledge of sound/spelling correspondences in decoding words is to use measures of nonsense-word reading (Carver 2003; Share and Stanovich 1995). This is a good measure of decoding because when a student attempts to read a nonsense word, he or she must rely on phonemic decoding rather than memorization to pronounce the word.

Once beginning readers are able to use the decoding process to read unfamiliar words in print, they should begin developing automatic word recognition skill. Thus, in addition to measuring students’ ability to decode words and nonsense words, it is
important to measure students’ level of decoding automaticity, which is defined by Berninger et al. (2006) as “effortless, context-free retrieval assessed by the rate of single word reading.” According to Berninger et al. (2003), those students who have not developed automaticity by the beginning of second grade are at risk for reading failure. Moreover, Hudson et al. (2006) suggest that when students are unable to use the decoding process fluently, their accuracy in reading connected text suffers. Failing to achieve automaticity in decoding skill can have long-term detrimental effects on all aspects of a student’s reading.

Older Struggling Readers

Although intervention should begin early for students who struggle to acquire reading skills, some students will not learn to read in the primary grades. For older readers who are not yet reading fluently, who struggle to recognize individual words, and who consequently have weak fluency and comprehension, intensive intervention is critical. Some of these students, non-readers and very weak readers, will need basic phonics instruction coupled with phonemic awareness development; others will need instruction in word attack skills. For these students, assessment data are crucial to guide teachers in filling in the skill gaps. Like beginning readers, assessment and instruction for older readers who are struggling should include phonemic awareness, sound/spelling correspondences, and decoding.

In addition to remediating phonemic decoding skills for older readers, as students advance into upper elementary and beyond, texts become more complex and require knowledge for decoding multisyllabic words. Thus, for older readers, assessment and instruction should go beyond simple phonics to include more advanced morphological and orthographic knowledge (Henry 2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Phonics Assessment</th>
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<td>CORE Phonics Survey</td>
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<td>AIMSweb® Test of Early Literacy (TEL) ▶ Letter Sound Fluency ▶ Nonsense Word Fluency</td>
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<td>DIBELS®, 6th Edition ▶ Nonsense Word Fluency</td>
<td>Sopris West</td>
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<td>Screening Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) ▶ Kindergarten Kit: Graphophonemic Knowledge ▶ First Grade Kit: Graphophonemic Knowledge, Word Reading ▶ Second Grade Kit: Word Reading</td>
<td>Texas Education Agency <a href="http://www.tpri.org">http://www.tpri.org</a></td>
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<td>CTB/McGraw-Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised-Normative Update (WRMT-R/NU) ▶ Word Attack</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
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</table>
Explicit instruction in blending CVC words should begin after students know from four to six sound/spellings (Carnine et al. 2006). This sample lesson model targets reading and writing CVC words with the short vowel \(a\). The same model can be adapted and used to introduce CVC words with other short vowels and to enhance phonics instruction in any commercial reading program.

**Phonemic Awareness with Letters**

Give each student letter cards \(a, m, p, s, \) and \(t\). Say: *I’m going to name some pictures and I want you to tell me the first sound you hear in each picture name. Then I want you to hold up the letter that makes that sound. Let’s try one.* Show the picture card of the seal. Say: *This is a seal.* Ask: *What’s the name of this picture?* (seal) Say: *Yes, seal.* Ask: *What is the first sound in seal?* (/s/) Say: *Yes, /s./* Ask: *Can you hold up the letter that makes the /s/ sound?* Monitor students as they hold up the letter \(s\). Follow the same procedure with picture cards of the ant, monkey, paper, and number 10.
Model—Sound-by-Sound Blending

Say: *Today I am going to show you how to blend words sound by sound. Watch me blend the first word.*

1. Print the first letter in the word *mat* on the board. Say: 
   *Sound?* Simultaneously point to the letter *m* and say: */mmm/.

2. Print the letter *a* after the letter *m* on the board. Say: 
   *Sound?* Simultaneously point to the letter *a* and say: */aaa/.

3. Point just to the left of *ma* and say: *Blend.* Then scoop your finger under the *m* and *a* as you blend the sounds together without a break: */mmmaaa/.

4. Print the letter *t* after the letter *a* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Simultaneously point to the letter *t* and say: */t/.

5. Point just to the left of *mat* and say: *Blend.* Then scoop your finger from left to right under the whole word as you slowly blend the sounds together without a break: */mmmaat/.

6. Finally, point just to the left of *mat* and say: *Now watch as I read the whole word.* Then quickly sweep your finger under the whole word and say *mat.* Say: *A mat is like a rug. It covers a floor and people can wipe their feet on it. Mat.*

Repeat the same routine with the word *pat.*
Lead—Sound-by-Sound Blending

Say: *Now I am going to lead you in sounding out words. You’re going to sound out some words along with me.*

1. Print the first letter in the word *tap* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Point to the letter *t* and have students respond along with you: /t/.

2. Print the letter *a* after the letter *t* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Point to the letter *a* and have students respond along with you: /aaa/.

3. Point just to the left of *ta*. Say: *Blend.* Then scoop your finger under the *t* and *a* as you lead students in blending the sounds together without a break: /taaa/.

4. Print the letter *p* after the letter *a* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Point to the letter *p* and have students respond along with you: /p/.

5. Point to the left of *tap* and say: *Blend.* Then scoop your finger from left to right under the whole word as you lead students in slowly blending the sounds together without a break: *tap*.

6. Finally, point just to the left of *tap* and say: *Let’s read the whole word.* Then quickly sweep your finger under the word as you lead students in saying the whole word: *tap.* Say: *I heard a light tap on the door; tap.*

Repeat the same routine with the words *Sam* and *Pat.*
Check—Sound-by-Sound Blending

Say: Now it’s your turn to sound out words. Remember, when I point to a letter, say the sound for that letter. When I scoop my finger under the letters, blend the sounds together. When I sweep my finger under the word, say the whole word.

1. Print the first letter in the word map on the board. Ask: Sound? Point to the letter m to signal students to respond. (/mmm/)

2. Print the letter a after the letter m on the board. Ask: Sound? Point to the letter a to signal students to respond. (/aaa/)

3. Point just to the left of ma and say: Blend the sounds. Then scoop your finger under the letters from left to right to signal students to respond. (/mmmaaaa/)

4. Print the letter p after the letter a on the board. Ask: Sound? Point to the letter p to signal students to respond. (/p/)

5. Point just to the left of map and say: Blend the sounds. Scoop your finger from left to right under the word as students blend the sounds together without a break. (map)

6. Finally, point just to the left of map. Quickly sweep your finger under the word to signal students to respond by saying the whole word. (map)

Repeat the same routine with the words at, am, sat, mat, Sam, pat, Pam, sap, and tap. When you are finished, develop students’ vocabulary by going back and clarifying the meaning of any unfamiliar words. To build word reading automaticity, have students read the list of words again, this time at a faster pace and only with nonverbal signals.
**CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK**  If a student or students respond incorrectly, stop immediately and model the correct response for the entire group and then ask the entire group to respond. For blending errors, first model blending the word and then lead students in blending it again. For sound/spelling errors, immediately say the correct sound, for example, /mmm/. Then point to the letter m and ask: Sound? (/mmm/) Say: Yes, the sound is /mmm/.

**Apply to Decodable Text**
To ensure ample practice in sound/spelling correspondences, provide students with connected reading materials. Choose books or passages in which most of the words are wholly decodable and the majority of the remaining words are previously taught irregular words.

**Word Work: Elkonin Boxes with Letters**
Explain to students that they are going to spell some words. Say: *I am going to say a word and then together we will count how many sounds we hear in the word. The first word is map, /mmmaap/. I hear three sounds in map. With your palm toward you, so students can see the progression from left to right, hold up your first finger as you say /mmm/, then hold up your second finger as you say /aaa/, and finally hold up your third finger as you say /p/. Then ask: How many sounds in map? (three) Say: Now let's count the sounds again. Have students hold up their fingers as they count along with you. Say: Now I am going to draw three boxes. Each box will stand for a sound in map.*
On a dry-erase board, draw a three-box grid as shown. Point to the first box in the grid and say /mmm/, point to the middle box and say /aaa/, and then point to the last box and say /p/. Say: Now I will lead you in saying each sound in map as I print the spelling that stands for that sound. Say: The first sound in map is /mmm/. Print the letter m into the first box as the students say /mmm/ along with you. Say: The middle sound in map is /aaa/. Print the letter a in the middle box as students say /aaa/ along with you. Say: The last sound in map is /p/. Print the letter p into the last box as students say /p/ along with you.

Say: Now let’s read the whole word. Slide your finger under the grid from left to right as you lead students in saying the whole word: map. Say: Now let’s spell the word. Point to each letter from left to right as you lead students in saying each letter name along with you. (m-a-p) Repeat the same procedure using the word mat. Then, following the same procedure with words such as sap and sat, ask volunteers to draw the grid and print the letters in the boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for Observation</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Point to the word map,) Can you sound out this word?</td>
<td>Student can blend CVC words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The word is map. Can you spell this word? (m-a-p)</td>
<td>Student can spell CVC words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comprehension is often viewed as “the essence of reading” (Durkin 1993). It involves interacting with text, using intentional thinking to construct meaning. The RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG 2002) defines reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.” Harris and Hodges (1995) refer to it as “the construction of the meaning of a written text through a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text.” Perfetti (1985) simply calls it “thinking guided by print.”

Fundamentals of Comprehension

Reading comprehension consists of three key elements—the reader, the text, and the activity—all set within a context (RRSG 2002). Comprehension instruction requires showing students how these elements affect their understanding when reading.

The Reader

Comprehension does not exist in a vacuum; each reader brings a unique set of competencies that affect comprehension. These competencies vary not only from reader to reader, but also within an individual, depending on the text and the activity (RRSG 2002). Reader competencies include speed and accuracy of decoding, reading fluency, vocabulary size, general world knowledge, and knowledge of specific comprehension strategies. Since fluent readers are able to identify words accurately and automatically, they can focus most of their attention on comprehension (LaBerge and Samuels 1974). They also can make connections among ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge.
Narrative Reading
Narratives tell a story, expressing event-based experiences. The story could be the invention of an author, the reporting of factual events, or the retelling of a tale from oral tradition. According to Williams (2005), “children develop sensitivity to narrative structure early and use it to comprehend simple stories before they enter school.” By the time most children enter school, they already have had stories read aloud to them and have watched stories on TV and in movies. They connect with narrative texts because events in life often include the same elements—they sometimes have a beginning, a middle, and an ending; they occur in a particular time and place; there are key players, sometimes in conflict; issues are resolved for better or for worse; and sometimes there is a lesson learned. For these reasons, comprehension instruction typically begins with narrative text.

**Story Structure**

Story structure pertains to how stories and their plots are systematically organized into a predictable format. Knowing about story structure provides a framework that helps students to discover what is most relevant for understanding a story (Williams 2002). Most narrative texts are organized around a set of story elements, sometimes referred to as *story grammar* (Mandler 1987). Story elements include setting, characters, plot, and theme. Stories often begin by describing the setting and characters, then indicating a particular problem faced by one of the characters. Then the story explains how the problem is solved, concluding by showing how the characters were affected by the events.
The storytelling styles of diverse cultural groups emphasize and value different parts of a story.

—Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007

### Setting
The setting of a story tells when and where the story takes place. Some stories have specific settings, while others take place at some indefinite time (e.g., the future) or in some indefinite place (e.g., an unnamed country). The setting also can change within a narrative—moving back (flashback) or jumping ahead (flash-forward) before returning to the main time frame of the story.

### Characters
Characters are the people, animals, or creatures in a story. The main character, also known as the protagonist, moves the action forward, sometimes by acting against a villain or rival, the antagonist. To understand a character, readers must be able to tap into characterization techniques: what the author states directly about the character; what the character says, does, and thinks; and how other story characters react and respond to the character. The main character’s motivation—sometimes explicit, sometimes implied—drives the plot.

### Plot
The plot of a story tells what happened and gives the story a beginning, a middle, and an ending. It is the sum of a series of events. In general, the components of a narrative plot include
- the problem a character faces—the conflict;
- the sequence of events that happens as the character attempts to solve the problem;
- the outcome, or resolution, of the attempts to solve the problem.

### Theme
The theme is the big idea that the author wants the reader to take away from reading the story. Williams (2002) explains that a theme “expresses a relationship among story elements and comments on that relationship in some way.” The theme can be expressed as a lesson or an observation that is generalized beyond the specifics of the story plot.
Strong evidence links readers’ awareness of text structure to successful reading comprehension.

—COYNE ET AL., 2007

Teaching students to identify and represent story structure improves their comprehension of narrative text (RRSG 2002). It also enhances students’ memory and recall of text and helps them organize and write stories (Short and Ryan 1984; Fitzgerald and Teasley 1986). One reason that students’ understanding of text structure supports reading comprehension is that narrative structures are common across texts (Coyne et al. 2007). Being aware of the “samenesses” across texts allows students to consider authors’ messages in a broader context of literature and the world (Carnine and Kinder 1985). Knowing the structure of narratives gives students a frame of reference for processing and remembering story information (Dickson, Simmons, and Kame’enui 1998). Thus, story elements provide the framework for applying comprehension strategies to narrative text (Pearson and Fielding 1991; Graesser, Golding, and Long 1991).

Research Findings . . .

One way to help students understand what they read is to help them see the underlying structure of the text they are reading.

—COYNE ET AL., 2007

Instruction of the content and organization of stories improves story comprehension, measured by the ability of the reader to answer questions and recall what was read.

—NATIONAL READING PANEL, 2000
Helping students to recognize the structure inherent in text—and match it to their own cognitive structures—will help them understand and produce not only text but also spoken discourse.

—WILLIAMS, 2005

Story structure instruction shows positive effects for a wide range of students, from kindergarten to the intermediate grades to high school to special populations, and to students identified as struggling readers.

—DUKE & PEARSON, 2002

**Suggested Reading . . .**


Explicit comprehension strategies instruction should begin in the primary grades and continue through high school.

—RRSG, 2002

Story Complexity Factors

- Number of characters
- Number of plots, goals, and subgoals
- Number of attempts by the characters to achieve the goals
- Explicitness of story elements
- Amount of background knowledge required
- Length of story
- Readability of story

Carnine et al. 2006.

When to Teach

Comprehension instruction should begin as soon as students start to interact with text and should continue through high school (Duke and Pearson 2002; Pressley and Block 2002; RRSG 2002). Effective teaching balances explicit comprehension strategies instruction with the literary experience of a story. For students as young as preschoolers, storybook read-alouds provide opportunities for modeling and practicing strategies applications (Lane and Wright 2007). When students begin to read stories on their own, they learn to apply comprehension strategies in tandem with decoding and word-level strategies. As they progress through the grades, students apply strategies to increasingly complex stories (Carnine et al. 2006). Thus, many adolescent literacy researchers advocate explicit comprehension strategies instruction, particularly for struggling readers (Brown 2002; Alvermann and Eakle 2003; Fisher and Frey 2004; Raphael et al. 2001).

When to Assess and Intervene

Comprehension instruction should be accompanied by reliable assessment aligned with instruction (Lehr and Osborn 2005). Yet, according to researchers (RRSG 2002; Spear-Swerling 2006; Klingner et al. 2007), most traditional assessments are inadequate in several ways in that they: (1) often confuse comprehension with vocabulary, background knowledge, word reading ability, and other reading skills, (2) fail to represent the complexity of comprehension, based on current understandings,
Comprehension should be assessed frequently as a way to track students’ growth and provide useful information that can guide instructional and diagnostic decisionmaking.

Therefore, traditional assessments should be combined with teachers’ ongoing informal assessment of students’ comprehension and strategy use. Retellings, student think-alouds, and other process-focused measures may serve as useful tools for diagnosing and remediating comprehension problems. Think-aloud protocols, in particular, are among the most significant advances in comprehension assessment tools, making comprehension processes more visible (Pearson and Hamm 2005; Pressley and Hilden 2005).

—KLINGNER ET AL., 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Before Reading: To orient students to the story and task</th>
<th>During Reading: To build an understanding of the story</th>
<th>After Reading: To check whether students understood the story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Story Structure</td>
<td>Use story elements as a framework for reading.</td>
<td>Identify story elements as they appear in the text.</td>
<td>Use story elements to check understanding of the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Generate predictions about the story.</td>
<td>Verify, adapt, and add predictions about the story.</td>
<td>Review accuracy of predictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Comprehension</td>
<td>Keep in mind that the goal of reading is to understand the story.</td>
<td>Note if the story is making sense, and use fix-up strategies as needed.</td>
<td>Reflect on what the story was about and whether it made sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to World Knowledge</td>
<td>Preview text to connect it with prior knowledge.</td>
<td>Use knowledge/experiences to make sense of the story.</td>
<td>Connect the story to life experiences and other reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Questions</td>
<td>Generate questions about what will happen.</td>
<td>Ask questions to clarify confusing story elements.</td>
<td>Ask higher-order questions to extend story understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering Questions</td>
<td>Answer questions about the title and illustrations.</td>
<td>Answer questions about the plot and other story elements.</td>
<td>Answer higher-order questions to extend learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing Mental Images</td>
<td>Create a mental picture based on the story title.</td>
<td>Visualize ongoing story events.</td>
<td>Visualize the overall story (a “mental movie”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing/Retelling</td>
<td>Plan to be able to retell or summarize the story.</td>
<td>Build partial retellings as the story progresses.</td>
<td>Retell or summarize the story, orally or in writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This sample lesson model offers a snapshot of Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI), a multiple-strategy instruction approach developed by Michael Pressley and colleagues (Pressley, El-Dinary et al. 1992). Through teacher–student dialogue while reading, TSI emphasizes coordinated use of strategies to help students to build and monitor comprehension. Strategies are first introduced individually, following the model for explicit instruction. Over time, responsibility for strategy choices shifts from the teacher to the students. TSI has proven effective for a range of struggling readers, from primary-grade students to adolescents (Gaskins and Elliot 1991; Brown et al. 1996).

This lesson model differs somewhat from the original TSI; it is, however, consistent with TSI’s emphasis on knowing where and when to use particular strategies. In this lesson model, sample text is used to represent a story at students’ independent reading level. The same model can be adapted and used to enhance comprehension instruction linked to narrative text in any commercial reading or language arts program—as long as the text is at the appropriate level.

**Review: Comprehension Strategies**

Display a copy of the Comprehension Strategies and Questions teaching chart, such as the example shown on the following page. Remind students that using comprehension strategies can help them understand and remember what they read. Point out that they have used each of these strategies individually, and they have had some practice in choosing which strategy to use. Review the chart with students. For each strategy, review the description and then call on students to read aloud the questions they can ask to help them in applying the strategy.
## Comprehension Strategies and Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Questions I Can Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>• Does this make sense?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What fix-up strategy can I use to figure it out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stop periodically and check to make sure that you understand the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connect to World Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>• Connect: What do I already know about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I had a similar experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify: Is what I know really related to the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide: Is what I know helping me to understand the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draw on your background knowledge and experience to help you understand the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predict</strong></td>
<td>• Predict: What do I think will happen next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What makes me think so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify: Does the text support my prediction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide: Was my prediction accurate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do I need to change it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make informed guesses about what you think will happen in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construct Mental Images</strong></td>
<td>• Visualize: What does this (person, place, thing) look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What makes me think so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify: Does the text support my image?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide: Was my image accurate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do I need to change it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make pictures of the text in your mind as you read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask Questions</strong></td>
<td>• What am I curious about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do I want to know more about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask yourself questions about the text to keep involved in your reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summarize</strong></td>
<td>• Where and when does the story take place? (setting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who is the story about? (characters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the problem the character faces? (problem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What happens as the character tries to solve the problem? (sequence of events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does the story turn out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the character solve the problem? (outcome)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What lesson did you learn from the story? (theme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use what you know about story structure to identify important story information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then shrink this information and put it into your own words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Direct Explanation**

Explain to students that good readers use a variety of strategies to help them make sense of the text and get the most out of what they read. Tell them that you are going to show them how strategies can work together smoothly, in coordination, and how to choose the one that works the best in each situation.

Using an overhead projector, display a transparency of the Predictions Worksheet. Say: *Good readers make predictions about what they are reading. Predictions are based on evidence in the text and what you already know. The Predictions Worksheet can help you to keep track of your predictions as you read.*

Pointing to the corresponding headings on the Predictions Worksheet, say: *The Worksheet has two big divisions: Predict and Verify/Decide. To predict, you make a prediction and then give evidence about what makes you think so. Verifying and deciding work together. As you read, you verify a prediction by looking for evidence in the text. When you find some possible evidence in the text, you can decide if you need to keep looking for more conclusive evidence, to reject a former prediction if it was wrong, or to confirm a former prediction if it was right. It’s a cycle—predict, verify, decide.*

**Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictions Worksheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teach /Model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Explanation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scaffolded Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Case of the Blue Carbuncle**

**Teach /Model**

“Watson! Have you finished your experiments?” asked Holmes in his Rue Morgue voice.

“I have them all at hand, Mr. Holmes,” I replied. “But I have yet to explain them.”

“Humph!” Holmes exclaimed. “Let us see what you have to show me.”

**Guided Practice**

Holmes took a pencil and paper and wrote: “Found on Goodge Street: 1 pipe, 1 goose. Sold to Breckinridge. Where did you get them?”

“Peterson, put this ad in all the papers and bring me a new goose!”

**Direct Explanation**

Holmes took a pencil and paper and wrote: “Found on Goodge Street: 1 pipe, 1 goose. Sold to Breckinridge. Where did you get them?”

**Scaffolded Practice**

Holmes took a pencil and paper and wrote: “Found on Goodge Street: 1 pipe, 1 goose. Sold to Breckinridge. Where did you get them?”

**Narrative Reading**

**how?**
Teach/Model: Preview the Story

Continue displaying the Comprehension Strategies chart and the Predictions Worksheet. Distribute copies of “The Case of the Blue Carbuncle” to the group. Say: *I'm going to think aloud to show you how to use the strategies in coordination. Each time I use a strategy, I will point to it on the Comprehension Strategies chart. As I read, I will record information on the Predictions Worksheet.*

*T H I N K A L O U D*  Good readers make connections between what they already know and what they are reading. The first thing I see on the page is a picture. Using my world knowledge, I think this man is a detective. I remember an old movie in which a detective wore a hat like that. It looks like he's studying something pretty closely, which is something detectives do. So, I'm going to predict that this is a mystery or detective story. *On the Predictions Worksheet, I'm going to print my first prediction and what makes me think so.*

*Connect to World Knowledge, Predict*
THINK ALOUD  Now I'm going to read the title of the story. The title is “The Case of the Blue Carbuncle.” The word case in the title typically relates to a mystery, or to a crime. I think that's good enough evidence to confirm my prediction about this being a mystery. On the Predictions Worksheet, I am going to print my evidence under Confirm. ✴ Predict

THINK ALOUD  Good readers constantly monitor, or check, their comprehension. There is a word in the title that is new to me. I have no idea what a carbuncle is. I don't even know enough to make a good guess. I only know that this one is blue. I believe I’ll read on to see if I can find story clues to help me figure out what this word means. Reading on, or reading ahead for more information, is a fix-up strategy. As I read, I’m also going to ask myself, “What's a carbuncle?” Right now, I’m applying a variety of strategies. ✴ Monitor Comprehension, Ask Questions

Teachable Moment: Mystery Genre

THINK ALOUD  Since I’m pretty sure this is a mystery, I’m going to stop and connect to what I know about mysteries. The setting for a mystery is often the scene of a crime or a detective’s office. The characters typically include detectives and suspects. The problem is a mysterious event—a crime to be solved or an unexplained occurrence. The sequence of events involves a series of clues that give hints about motives (or reasons) and opportunities for various characters to commit the crime. Some clues are helpful, and some are not. Misleading clues are called red herrings—they are meant to throw the reader offtrack and give the mystery more exciting twists and turns. The outcome of the story is typically the solution to the mystery. I’m going to use what I know about mysteries to help me make sense of this story. I know a mystery is confusing at the beginning, revealing information little by little as the plot progresses. ✴ Connect to World Knowledge, Summarize
Teach/Model: Read the Story Aloud

Read the story aloud to students as they follow along in their texts. Stop to model strategy use as indicated. As you apply each strategy, refer to it on the Comprehension Strategies chart. Continue recording information on the Prediction Worksheet.

“How are you investigating today?” I asked my friend Sherlock Holmes as I walked into his apartment. He did not reply, so I moved in to see what he was holding under his magnifying glass.

Think Aloud

Sherlock Holmes—that’s a famous name. My world knowledge is that he is a fictional character, so I know for sure this mystery is fiction. I also know that Sherlock Holmes has a sidekick named Dr. Watson. Since the first quote here says, “I asked my friend Sherlock Holmes,” I predict that the narrator is Watson. On the Predictions Worksheet, I’m going to print my second prediction and what makes me think so. ♦ Connect to World Knowledge, Predict
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