

Comprehension

What is comprehension?

- ✓ An Active Process
- ✓ A Meaning-Getting Process
- ✓ A Thinking Process

Comprehension

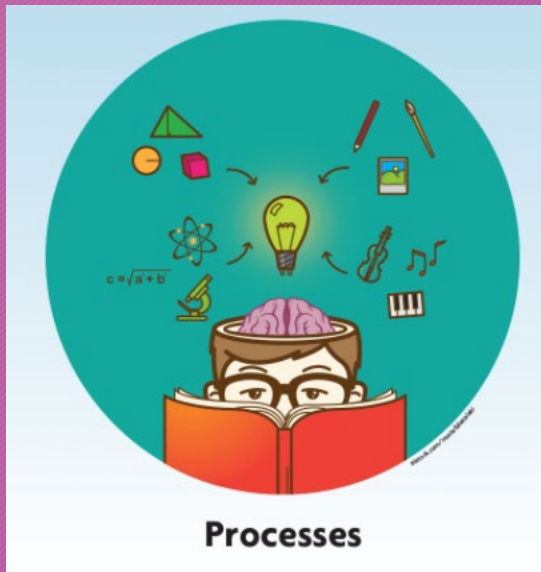
Comprehension occurs when a reader with the necessary knowledge and skill encounters a text with the requisite characteristics.

Both the text *and* the reader matter!



Process vs. products

Processes: Internal, mental activities



Products: The result of comprehension processes; Concrete & tangible, but can only be inferred from what the student reports or produces

Process or Product?	Process	Product
Completing a unit test w/ a cloze format		✓
Arranging sentences in logical order		✓
Connecting a new concept with prior knowledge	✓	
Predicting or anticipating a plot twist	✓	
Answering multiple-choice questions		✓
Spontaneously rereading when a sentence doesn't make sense	✓	
Inferring a main idea from a paragraph	✓	
Making an outline		✓
Generating mental pictures while reading	✓	
Writing answers to questions about characters		✓

Durkin's Study (1978-1979)

- In most classrooms, very little direct teaching of comprehension occurs.
- When comprehension instruction does occur, the emphasis is on testing students' comprehension of text rather than on facilitating their comprehension while they are reading!
- When teaching comprehension, a teacher should lessen the gap of students' interpretation & author's intent in writing the text
 - Provide information to fill in the student's gap of understanding



Comprehension Strategy Instruction

Why teach comprehension strategies?

1. Teach poor readers what good readers use—strategies to help them comprehend the text at deeper levels
2. Encourage readers to have a conversation with the author
3. Helps reader construct a mental model of the text

Comprehension Best Practices

- ❖ Strategy is best for students Grade 4 and up.
- ❖ 6 sessions of practice with a strategy is effective (more sessions are not more effective)
- ❖ Students benefit the most from strategy instruction when they have good decoding skills

Table 7.1: Reading Comprehension Strategies Supported by Research
(Adapted from National Reading Panel, 2000)

Name of Strategy	# of Studies	Definition or Description of the Strategy
Comprehension monitoring	22	Readers learn to become aware of when they do not understand (e.g., by identifying what is causing them difficulty).
Graphic organizers	11	Students learn how to make graphic representations of texts (e.g., story maps).
Question answering	17	After students read a text, the teacher poses questions that emphasize the information students should have obtained from the text.
Question generation	27	Students learn to generate questions that integrate large units of meaning and which are to be posed during reading.
Summarization	18	Students learn techniques for summarizing (e.g., deleting redundant information and choosing a topic sentence for the main idea).
Cooperative learning	10	Students enact comprehension strategies (e.g., prediction, summarization) in small groups, rather than with the teacher.
Story structure	17	Students learn the typical structure of a story and learn how to create a story map.
Multiple-strategy instruction	38	Students learn multiple strategies, often summarization, prediction, question generation, and clarification of confusing words or passages.

Sample Question

A teacher notices that a student reads fluently but struggles to understand the text afterward. Which of the following strategies is best for the teacher to implement to help increase the student's understanding?

- A. Lowering the readability level of text the student is reading
- B. Limiting comprehension questions about the text to literal questions
- C. Encouraging the student to think about connections with the text
- D. Requiring the student to do increased time trials of short passages of text

ANSWER

Correct Answer: C

Option (C) is correct. Metacognition strategies include making connections that help the student increase comprehension of the text.

Sample Question

Ms. Jones introduces visualizing as a comprehension skill to her first-grade students using a short passage of text. Which of the following strategies illustrates how to best introduce the skill?

- A. Allowing the students to read the passage independently and draw an illustration to match it
- B. Assigning partners to illustrate the passage that is read aloud by the teacher
- C. Demonstrating how to summarize the passage using a story map with pictures
- D. Explaining the process in detail and modeling it by thinking aloud while reading the passage

ANSWER

Correct Answer: D

Option (D) is correct. Comprehension skills must be taught explicitly to ensure proper understanding prior to encouraging independent use of the skill.

Mental Model: Interaction between text & reader

Goal of Language Comprehension Instruction: To construct a coherent **MENTAL MODEL** of the text

- Surface code: Refers to literal word and phrase meanings in a sentence
- Text Base: The underlying ideas to which words in a text refer
- Long-Term Memory: Background knowledge employed when a reader conjures up previously learned ideas and information to make inferences about what is read
- Working Memory: Memory that holds words in mind while the meaning of a sentence is assembled and words are linked within and across sentences
- Mental Model: The mental representation of a text's meaning that locates those meanings within a wide context of time, place, and circumstance

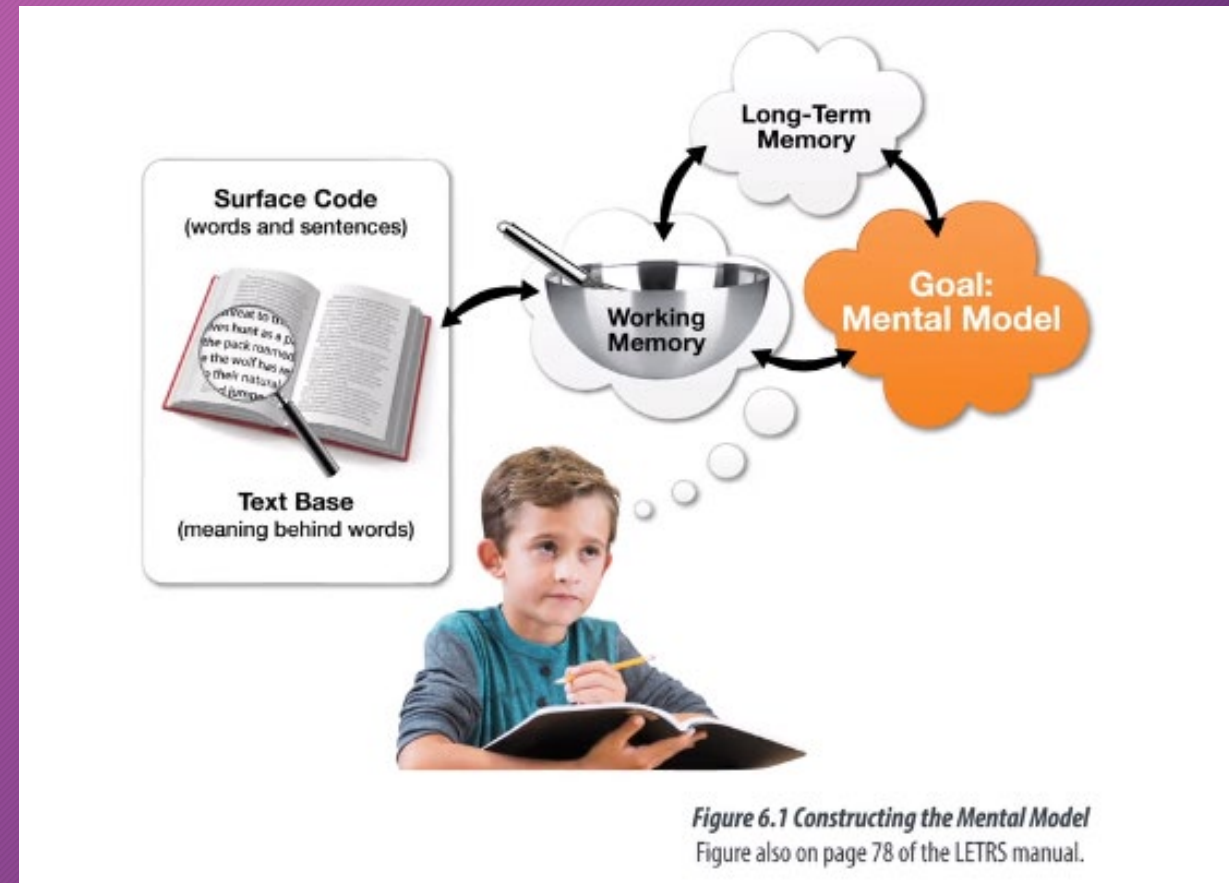


Figure 6.1 Constructing the Mental Model
Figure also on page 78 of the LETRS manual.

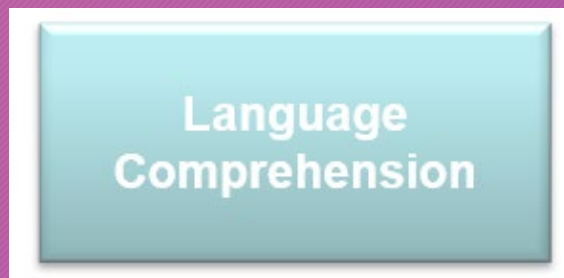
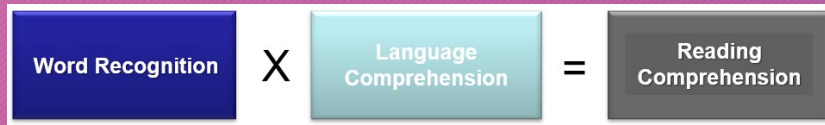
Language Comprehension

Language comprehension is based upon vocabulary as well as knowledge of grammar, inferencing, and background knowledge. Consider the following simple passage:

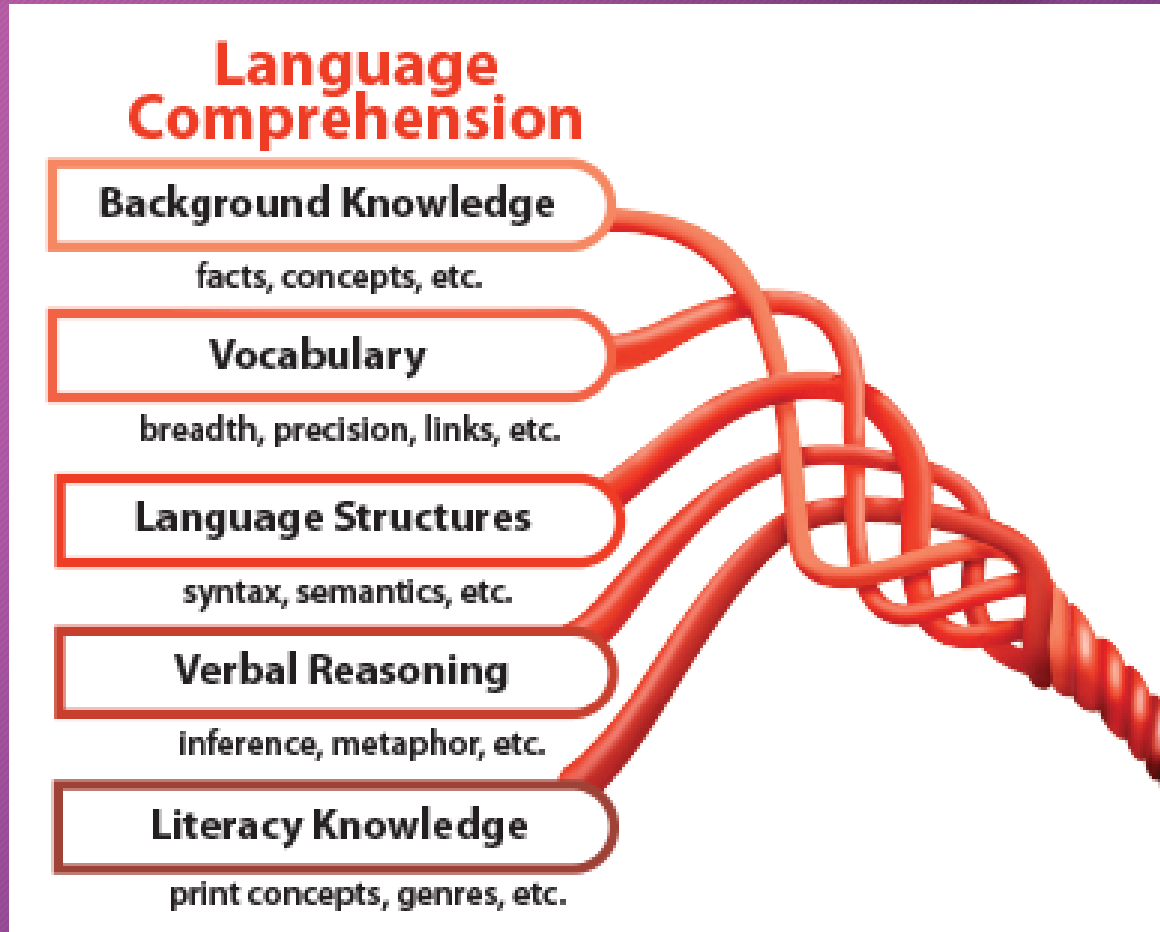
Jane was invited to Jack's birthday. She wondered if he would like a kite. She went to her room and shook her piggy bank. It made no sound.

*Think of all the inferencing you had to do in this simple passage!

Language Comprehension



*Note: The Language Comprehension strands become more important after grade 3



Sample Question

A teacher laminates pictures of book covers for several favorite read-aloud stories and places them in the retelling center. Student A chooses a cover and, without showing it to Student B, describes the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Student B guesses which story Student A is describing. The activity is best suited to reinforce which of the following literacy skills?

- A. Developing oral reading fluency
- B. Conveying a point of view
- C. Visualizing a book's story elements
- D. Interpreting a communicated message

ANSWER

Correct Answer: D

Option (D) is correct. The activity described requires Student B to be an active listener by receiving the message Student A communicates, understanding the words Student A uses, and responding with an appropriate book title.

Sample Question

A team of fifth-grade teachers collaboratively provide explicit instruction to support the development of students' listening skills. The teachers select a series of videos and recorded books to build students' background knowledge, vocabulary, understanding of text structures, and inferencing abilities.

The teachers' actions best indicate an understanding of which of the following research-based findings related to the connection between listening and reading comprehension?

- A. The influence of listening comprehension on reading comprehension increases over time, since both require the application of similar language processes.
- B. Content presented orally is of greater interest to and easier for students to process than reading a text that requires proficient word-recognition skills.
- C. As students develop more advanced literacy skills over the elementary years, the influence of listening comprehension on reading comprehension lessens.
- D. Students who lack basic decoding skills will need effective instruction in listening to learn content and limit the gap between reading and listening comprehension.

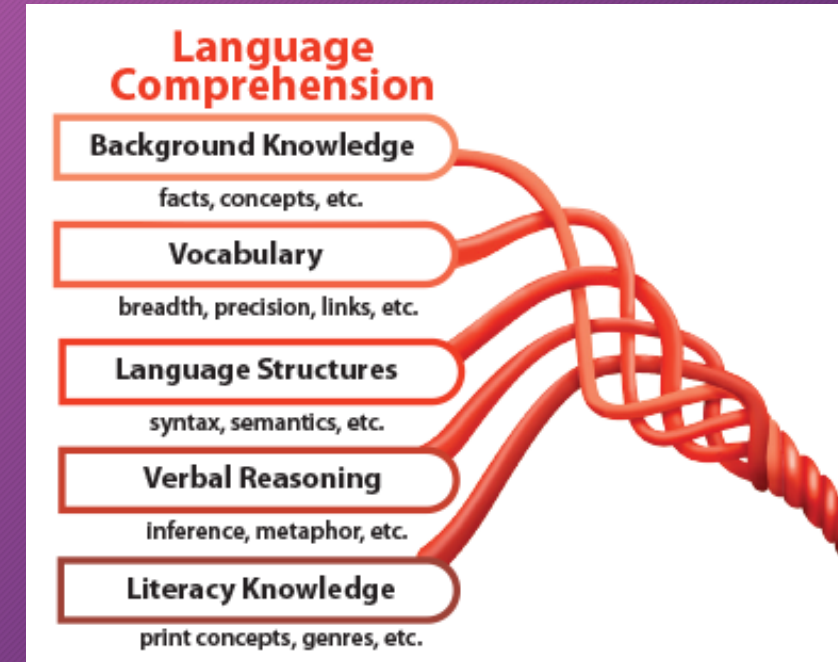
ANSWER

Correct Answer: A

Option (A) is correct. Research has shown that as students move through the elementary grades, the relationship between listening and reading comprehension becomes more positively correlated. Good reading comprehension implies the existence of a mental model that integrates a story's multiple propositions and prior knowledge into a cohesive whole. Listening comprehension draws on the same language processes used to comprehend language via text, but it is free of the cognitive demands of having to decode text.

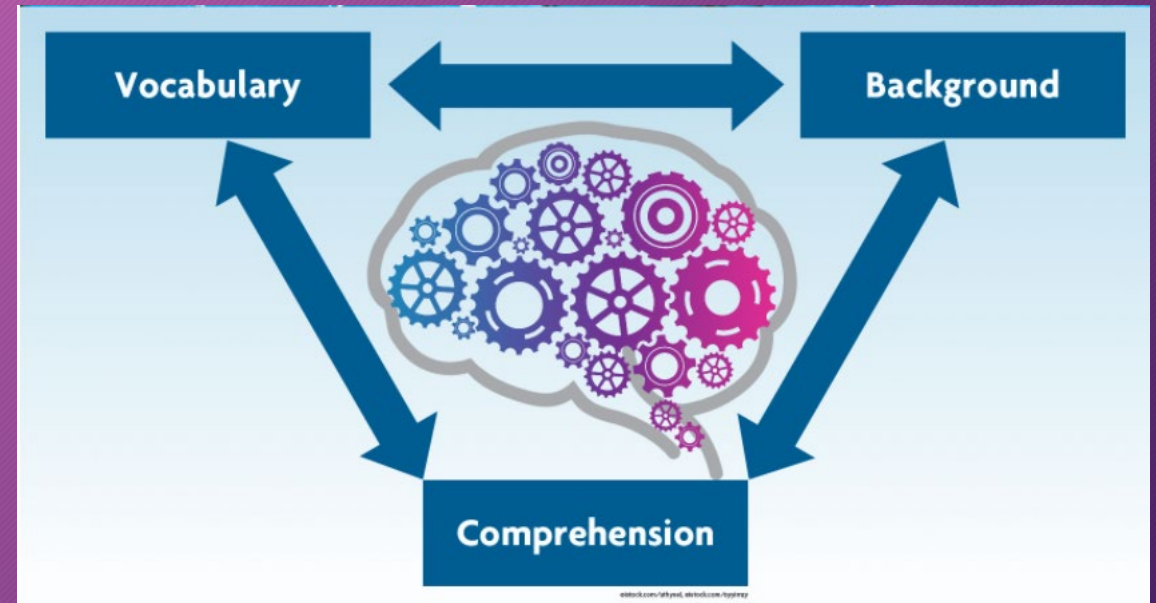
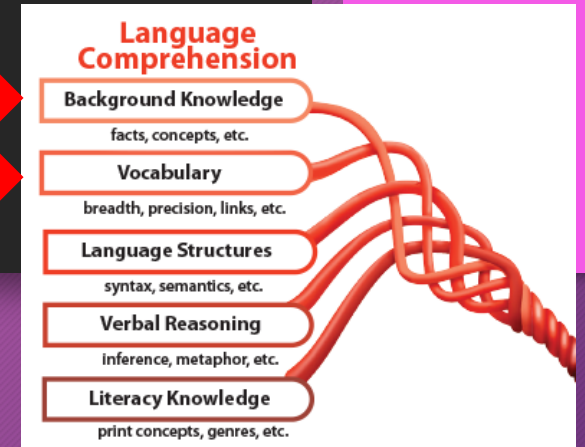
The Language Comprehension Strands

- **Background Knowledge:** Pre-existing knowledge of facts and ideas necessary to make inferences
- **Vocabulary:** Knowledge of, and memory for, word meanings
- **Language Structures:** Processing systems that assemble words, phrases and clauses into meaningful relationships
- **Verbal Reasoning:** The ability to process the underlying meaning of text; Ability to read into the words and to interpret abstract language
- **Literary Knowledge:** Understanding of written text formats and how they vary according to genre



Background Knowledge

- Those who know more about the content of the reading *beforehand*, are more likely to understand and learn during the reading and to remember what they read!
- A symbiotic relationship exists between vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension
 - Those who read a lot → exposed to more words and information
 - Those who have more words in their mental dictionaries and information about their word → tend to read more fluently and learn more from reading when they read



Schema differences

Imagine different individuals anticipating a new baby coming into the world:

- A mother who already has two children
- A new mother (biological or adoptive)
- A new father (biological or adoptive)
- An older sibling
- A grandparent
- A nurse-midwife
- A teen parent



Language Structures & Verbal Reasoning

A reader must be able to decipher the meanings of words in the context of sentences → then integrate these meanings across sentences and make inferences that depend on background knowledge and verbal reasoning skills → construct a mental model that combines prior knowledge with the ideas in the text

**Grammar lessons should be embedded into lessons, rather than taught in isolation

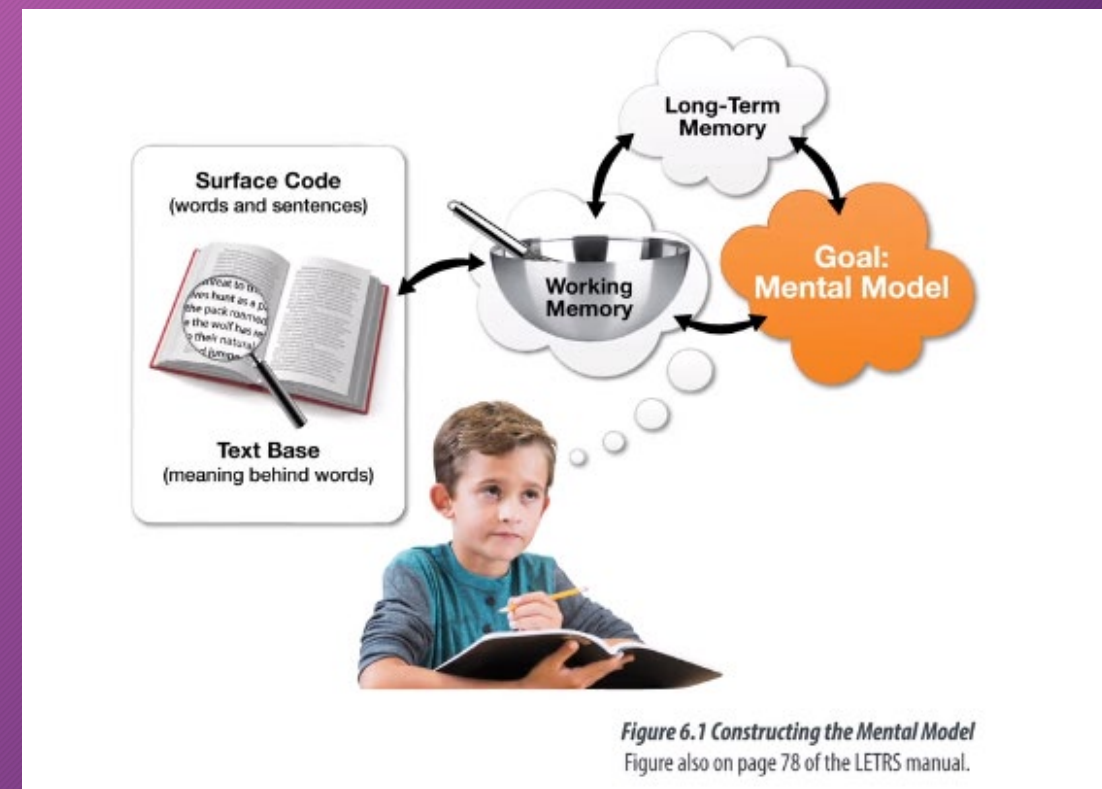
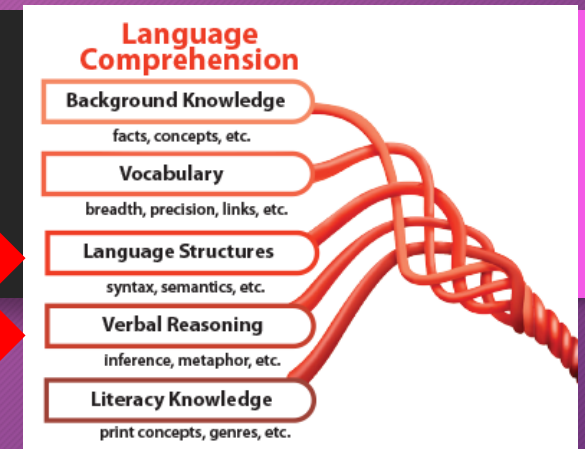


Figure 6.1 Constructing the Mental Model
Figure also on page 78 of the LETRS manual.

Functions of Syntax

Word Order

The boy hit a homerun.
The homerun a boy hit.
The homerun hit a boy.
The boy a homerun hit.

Determines Morphological Forms of the Words

July fourth marks our nation's *independence*. (singular noun)

Independent thinkers are some of the best. (adjective)

Children are their parents' *dependents*. (plural noun)

Communities *depend* on one another. (present tense verb)

We have *depended* on our guides. (past tense verb)



Multiple Uses & Meanings of the Same Word

The chorus sang on *pitch*.

The girl *pitched* the ball.

The salesman gave a strong *pitch* for the product.

The driveway angles down at a steep *pitch*.

Meaning Affected by Punctuation

Slow, children playing

Slow children playing



Parts of speech



Table 6.5: Parts of Speech, Their Functions, and Examples

Part of Speech	Purpose	What Question It Answers	Examples
Noun	Names a person, place, thing, or idea	Who or what?	joy, starlight _____
Verb	Expresses an action or state of being	What action?	enjoy, inspires _____
Adjective	Describes a noun or pronoun	What kind? How many? Which one?	joyful, hazy, final, good _____
Adverb	Describes a verb, adjective, or adverb	In what way? How?	joyfully, fiercely, well _____
Pronoun	Is used in place of a noun	Who? What? Which one(s)?	I, we, you; my, ours, yours _____
Preposition	Is placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase modifying another word in the sentence	Where? When? How?	over, before, by, with, until _____
Conjunction	Joins words, phrases, or clauses, and indicates the relationship between the elements joined. <i>Coordinating conjunctions</i> connect grammatically equal elements. <i>Subordinating conjunctions</i> connect clauses that are not equal.	[In what way are these phrases or clauses related?]	(Coordinating conjunctions) for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (Subordinating conjunctions) although, because _____
Interjection	Is used to express emotion	N/A	Rats! Wow! Phooey! _____

Features of Challenging Sentences

What can teachers do?

- ✓ Anticipate difficult sentences → check if students processed the meanings while reading
- ✓ Orally paraphrase the sentences
- ✓ Use basic questions to identify the function of words within a sentence
- ✓ Use sentence builder charts
- ✓ Create daily sentence anagrams for students to solve
- ✓ Experiment with the effects of end punctuation on how a sentence is read
- ✓ Have students practice identifying sentence types and structures
- ✓ Always combine oral language modeling and input with written language

Table 6.6: Features of Challenging Sentences

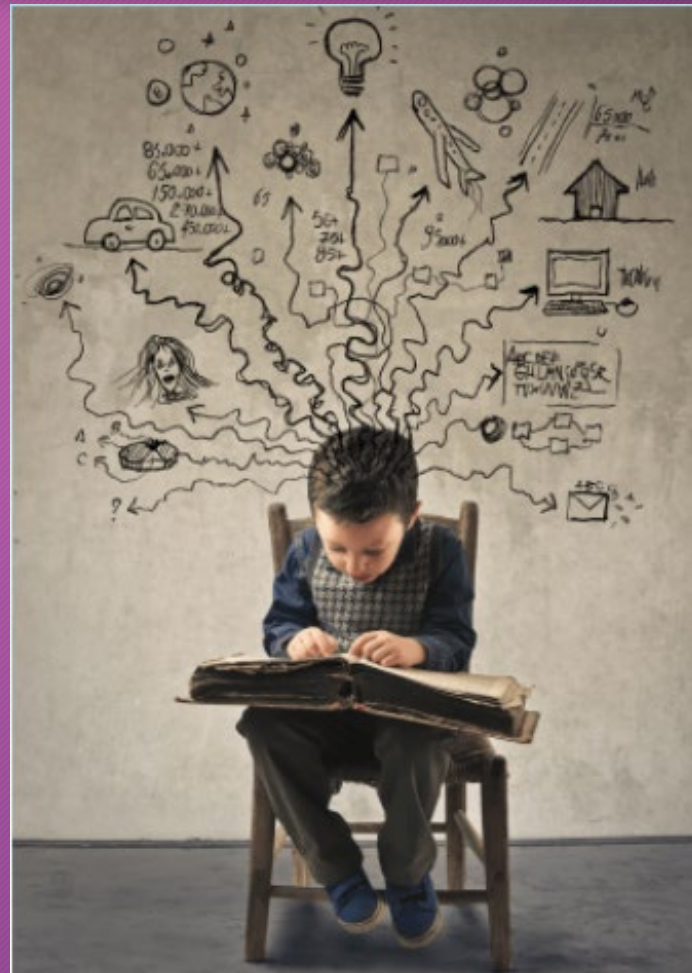
May Have	Function in a Sentence	Example
Passive Voice	A sentence in which the subject receives the action	The boat was rocked by the strong waves.
Double Negatives	A sentence containing two negative elements	I did not advise him to never speak up.
Conditional Verb Forms	A sentence expressing a situation that is hypothetical or highly unlikely	If he had been taller, he might have tried out for the basketball team.
Subjunctive Mood	A sentence expressing a mood for something wished for or imagined	What could he be doing if he were here with me?
Articles <i>the</i> vs. <i>a</i>	A sentence with <i>the</i> is referring to a specific one of something.	This is the major problem.
	A sentence with <i>a</i> is referring to one of a number of things.	This is a major problem.
Unusual Word Order	A sentence that doesn't follow common syntax patterns	Only they will understand this.

Semantics

- **Text Coherence:** consistency, clarity, and unit of the text

coherence: The property of sticking together into a consistent whole; can refer to a quality of text or to the representation of meaning in a person's mind.

- **Mental Coherence:** the sense, after a text has been read or listened to, that it makes sense. Something that can be retold or summarized



Coherence
leads to →
Inferencing!

Activity: Read This!

At these temperatures, waste is broken down into atoms. High-voltage electricity is passed between two electrodes, which creates an arc. Some countries are experimenting with a new type of incineration that uses super-hot plasma. Gas passes through this arc—and is heated to thousands of degrees—before it enters a chamber containing garbage.

— Excerpted and scrambled from *Trash Talk* (Tilmont & Garside, 2011).
Trash Talk is used by permission of Norwood House Press. All Rights Reserved.

Rearrange the sentences in this paragraph to see if you can make sense of it!

Some countries are experimenting with a new type of incineration that uses super-hot plasma. High-voltage electricity is passed between two electrodes, which creates an arc. Gas passes through this arc—and is heated to thousands of degrees—before it enters a chamber containing garbage. At these temperatures, waste is broken down into atoms.

— Excerpted and scrambled from *Trash Talk* (Tilmont & Garside, 2011).
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Did you comprehend this passage?
Why or why not?

Sample Question

A kindergarten teacher is helping students develop concepts about print. The teacher can best achieve the goal by using which of the following approaches?

- A. Helping students understand that a new word is formed when adding certain sounds to the beginning of a familiar word
- B. Having students identify a missing word in a familiar text when only one vowel in the word is provided
- C. Asking students questions about the number of words in a sentence and where a sentence begins and ends in a paragraph
- D. Creating word-family charts so that students can see that words look alike when their endings sound alike

ANSWER

Option (C) is correct.

To become readers, students need to understand how the components of text such as words, spaces, sentences, and paragraphs work together to communicate meaning. To answer the teacher's question, the students must know what a sentence is and where it begins and ends in a paragraph.

Sample Question

Which of the following reading skills is the most important prerequisite to understanding an author's purpose?

- A. Creating mental images while reading
- B. Eliminating unnecessary information
- C. Distinguishing between facts and opinions
- D. Making personal connections to the text

ANSWER

Option (C) is correct.

Distinguishing between facts, which are used to inform, and opinions, which are used to persuade, is the most useful prerequisite skill to possess if one is to identify and understand an author's purpose.

Literacy Knowledge

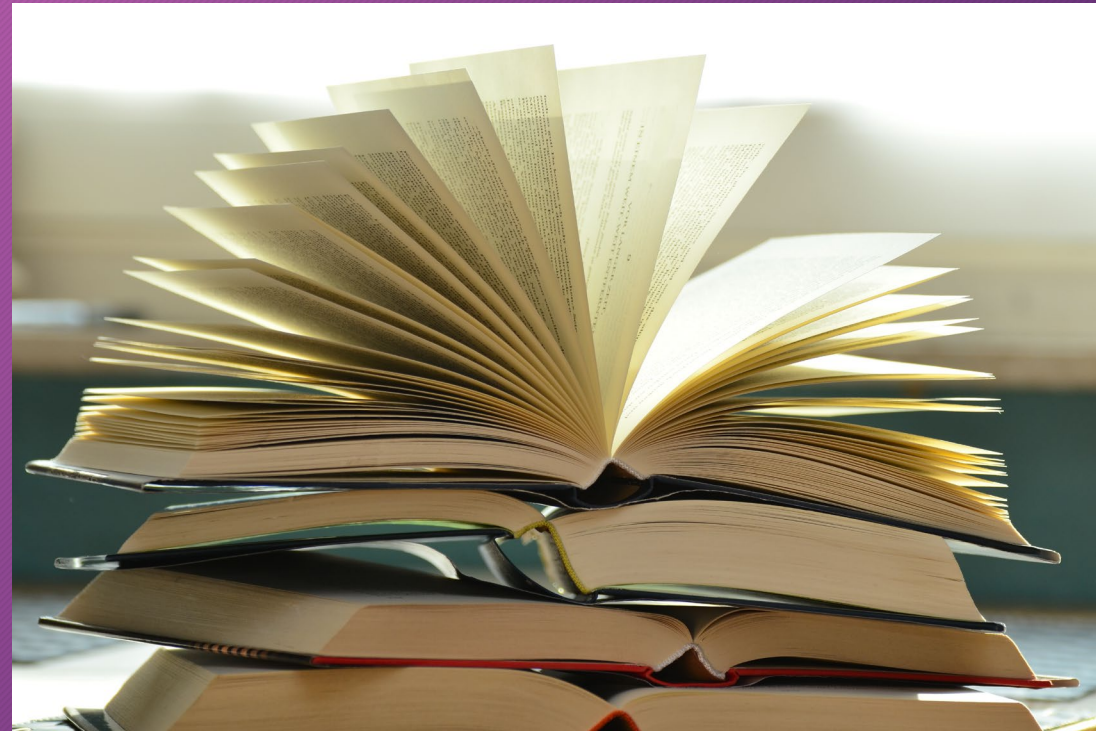
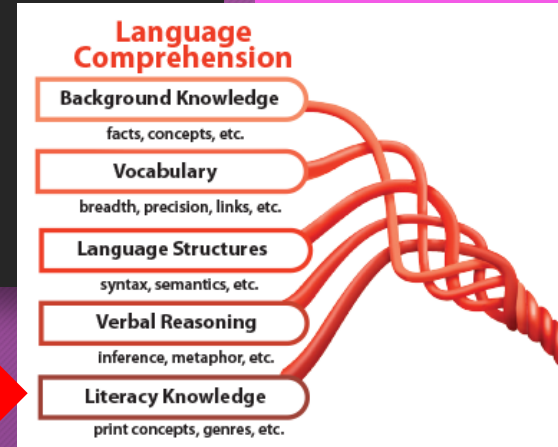
Print Concepts: How print is organized

Genre: A distinct kind or type of literature, characterized by convention of structure and content

▪ **Categories:**

- Narrative (Story) forms
- Informational/Expository Text
- Rhetoric (Opinions or Arguments)
- Poetry
- Drama

**Good readers have established a schema for a topic and can anticipate the form in which new information is going to be presented



Narrative Text

Story Grammar: A set of conventions used in a narrative, including setting, characters, a problem to be solved, climax, and conclusion

Standard Components of Story Grammar

- A setting: Where and when the story occurs
- Characters: Main character and optional secondary characters who help the plot unfold
- A plot with a beginning, middle, and end
 - Beginning or initiating event: A problem the main character is trying to solve
 - Middle: The characters attempt to solve the problem, followed by the climax
 - End: A conclusion, in which loose ends are tied up

Table 6.9: Phases of Narrative Development

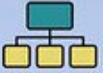
Ages 5–7	Student can understand a story that has forward momentum and a clear sense of past, present, and future. Story has initiating event (problem), internal response of a main character, a plan, attempt to carry out a plan, and an outcome.
Ages 7–11	Student can explain character motives and internal states. Perspective-taking is developing but not mature.
Ages 11–13	Student invents or recognizes subplots in a narrative. Multiple episodes are embedded in a written story. Stories span longer times. Character development is recognized or created.
Ages 13–Adult	Student can reflect on narrative structure; becomes more capable of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of character, theme, and complex plots. Adolescents can understand and are interested in hypothetical events and ideas.


Informational Text

- Background knowledge & logical organization of expository texts are crucial factors for comprehending new information
- Vocabulary in textbooks are technical, abstract, dense, and authoritative in nature
- Long and complex sentences can make reading difficult for all readers; Short, choppy sentences can interfere with understanding
- Structure & organization of text
- **Reading informational text takes more time than reading narrative text
- **Students need to be taught “how” to read informational text

Nonfiction Text Features

Bold Print Colored Text *Italics* Big Text
Small text

Diagrams


Timelines



Highlighted Text

Index
Egypt 2,4,6
King Tut 3,5,7
pyramids 10,11

•Bullets
•Bullets
•Bullets


Table of Contents
Greece.....3
Rome.....5
China.....7



Glossary
amnesty-pardon
barter-trade
capital-cash
decade-ten
years

Graphs


Tables/Charts

# of casualties	Jan	Feb
2011	1	2
2012	3	4

Maps


Pictures and Captions
Caravel   *Egypt's Sphinx*

Created by Tamara Cox, Palmetto Middle

Sample Question

Ms. Dorsey, a second-grade teacher, begins a lesson by reviewing the story grammar of conventional short fiction. She reminds students that most stories have a beginning that includes information about the setting and the main characters. Then an event introducing a goal or problem occurs, followed by a series of events in which the characters attempt to solve the problem. At the end of the story, the goal or problem is finally resolved.

Which of the following best explains the teacher's rationale for instructing students in recognizing story grammar in fictional texts?

- A. To provide a framework that helps students to comprehend and retain story information
- B. To improve skill in noticing how character traits change over the course of a story
- C. To support interest and motivation to engage in wide, independent reading activities
- D. To use the understanding of repetition in fictional plot development to write an original story

ANSWER

Correct Answer: A

Option (A) is correct. When students are given direct instruction in recognizing the underlying structure typically found in fictional genres (story grammar), they are better able to comprehend and remember information from the text due to the repetition and predictability of the story.

Sample Question

A first-grade teacher selects a picture book that retells the well-known fairy tale *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to read aloud to the class. Following the first oral reading of the text, the teacher distributes a graphic organizer with a set of questions for students to answer as the text is read again. During the second reading, the teacher pauses at different parts of the story and asks students to independently answer one of the questions related to that part of the story on the work sheet. A portion of the graphic organizer the teacher uses is shown below.

The teacher's instructional method best engages students in which of the following thinking processes related to successful reading comprehension?

- A. Making decisions about what is going to happen next in a story by connecting existing knowledge to new information an author gives as a text is read
- B. Determining what is important in a story and recording it in the student's own words
- C. Searching a story to reach a conclusion based on clues an author gives and prior knowledge to construct meaning that goes beyond what is literally stated
- D. Creating mental images of the events happening in a story that support recall of main ideas

Question	The Story Says	I Say	And So I Believe...

ANSWER

Correct Answer: C

Option (C) is correct. The graphic organizer the teacher uses while reading the fairy tale to students asks them to draw inferences. Inferential questions are not answered directly in a text. A reader needs to use clues an author gives in the story and his or her background knowledge to go beyond the text to draw an inference.

Sample Question

Fourth-grade students are researching animals using informational texts. They complete the inquiry chart (I-chart) below to record what they find in various texts.

Topic	Question 1: Where do elephants live?	Question 2: What do elephants eat?	Question 3: Do elephants live together?
What do I/we already know?	In Africa	Grass and plants using their trunks	?
Source 1	African elephants live in the savanna. Some elephants live in forests	leaves. twigs. fruit. bark. grass and roots	Female elephants live together and male elephants live together
Source 2	African. Southeast Asia and South Asia	Adult elephants eat about 330 pounds of plants every day	They care for each other and are sad when their family dies
Source 3	Elephants like to live near water	Elephants spend about 18 hours a day eating	Families have between 3 and 25 elephants

Which of the following is the most important pedagogical reason for having students complete an I-chart?

- A. It enables students to evaluate the reliability of expository texts.
- B. It encourages students to build on their prior knowledge of a topic.
- C. It supports students' understanding of content vocabulary.
- D. It promotes students' understanding of expository text features.

ANSWER

Correct Answer: B

Option (B) is correct. I-charts help students take what they already know about a topic and add to it as they examine multiple sources of information.

Sample Question

A teacher has students read the following passage during a science lesson. The teacher then refers to the same passage during the reading block to demonstrate the structure of certain forms of informational text.

Not all stars are the same, and it is important to understand their properties. There are five parameters of stars that we can measure. Luminosity is the measure of how much energy is emitted by the star. Stars also have their own size and temperature. The mass of stars can be measured, and we can also determine their composition.

The passage best demonstrates which of the following text structures?

- A. Generalization
- B. Sequence
- C. Enumeration
- D. Classification

ANSWER

Correct Answer: C

Option (C) is correct. The passage lists or enumerates five details that constitute the measures of stars. The details are facts that can be put in an unordered list numbered one to five.

Trade Books vs. Textbooks—What's the Difference?

Trade Books/Narratives

- Describes a story or concept in greater depth
- Tells what happened first, next, then, etc.
- Main character is going through a sequence of events
- More enjoyable to read
- Typically can figure out meaning of words in context
- Past, present, or future tense

Textbooks/Expository

- Describes a concept in greater breadth
- Organized around idea & text structure (cause & effect, problem/solution, sequence, etc.)
- Has topics and supporting details (Subheadings, etc.)
- Informs the reader about something
- Vocabulary is very dense, specialized, and topic-specific; Hard to determine meanings in context alone
- Comprehension depends on vocabulary
- Present tense

Table 6.1: Aspects of Instruction before, during, and after Reading

Before	During	After
Establish a purpose.	Remind students of the purpose for reading; reorient when off track.	Evaluate whether the purpose was achieved; reread if necessary.
Provide or elicit background knowledge.	Refer to background concepts to make inferences and to form a mental model of text.	Evaluate how prior knowledge or beliefs may or may not have changed from reading/listening.
Preteach essential vocabulary and/or challenging language in text.	Identify how words within sentences and sentences within paragraphs work together to convey ideas.	Use new vocabulary or new forms of language in speaking and/or writing.
Identify genre and text structure.	Use text structure to organize thinking.	Identify, retell, and/or summarize main themes or enduring understandings.
Ask questions prior to reading; make predictions.	Seek answers to questions and predictions; formulate new questions as reading proceeds.	Answer questions with text evidence.

Sample Question

During a whole-class literacy lesson, a third-grade teacher uses an electronic whiteboard to display the paragraph on the right.

The teacher uses the format of the passage to conduct a think-aloud strategy that supports students' comprehension of informational writing within the context of viewing and analyzing an authentic text. The teacher's instruction primarily models for students that comprehension improves when a reader

- A. is familiar with identifying an author's purpose in conveying information in a wide variety of literary genres
- B. analyzes the degree to which transition words and phrases are repeated in a text to achieve coherency
- C. can evaluate the degree to which the vocabulary an author selects communicates new ideas in a clear, concise manner
- D. has knowledge of organizational patterns and cue words found in various fiction and nonfiction text structures

Some studies have shown that it is good practice to not allow students to chew gum in class. While some students may think this is unfair, there are many good reasons why this is a good rule. First of all, some observations of students' behavior show that they may not be considerate of their classmates and leave the gum on the bottom of desks or tables, drop it on the floor, or put it on another classmate's property. Consequently, the student's action can result in a mess that disturbs others and can affect their efforts to learn. Another reason why some researchers recommend that chewing gum in school should not be permitted is because it is a distraction. When students are allowed to chew gum, it has been found that they can be more focused on chewing it and making popping noises and as a result not listen and fully participate in class activities. Therefore, many schools today have adopted a policy of not allowing gum chewing in class.

ANSWER

Option (D) is correct.

The teacher in the scenario uses the think-aloud technique to provide instruction on cause and effect as a text structure in informational writing. The structure of the sentences in the paragraph, the use of specific cue words, and the content of the passage are all components of cause and effect writing structures. By having students participate in the lesson, the teacher shows an understanding of the importance of students' knowledge of various text structures as a support to reading comprehension.

Sample Question

As part of a social studies unit on the American Revolution, a sixth-grade teacher plans to prepare students to read a short historical nonfiction novel about the Boston Tea Party. Which of the following prereading strategies will best assist the teacher in building students' background knowledge and improving their general understanding of the topic?

- A. Providing time for students to skim the text and create a list of new vocabulary words and ideas that the author discusses
- B. Encouraging students to look at the illustrations in the text and discuss with a partner what they see in the images
- C. Presenting a list of statements about the topic and having students indicate whether they agree or disagree with each one
- D. Having students visit approved Web sites before reading the text to view video clips and primary documents related to the topic

ANSWER

Correct Answer: D

Option (D) is correct. By having the students use approved Web sites to engage in virtual experiences related to the Boston Tea Party before they read the novel, the teacher is helping the students to build background knowledge about the subject. The information on carefully chosen Web sites can deepen students' comprehension of any subject.

Sample Question

A teacher focuses on the following skills while working with a group of students.

Clarifying a purpose for reading

Previewing a text before reading

Monitoring understanding by adjusting reading speed

Checking for understanding after reading a text

The teacher is primarily developing students' ability to

A. draw conclusions from information or clues they find in a text

B. use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading

C. activate background knowledge to help them understand what they are reading

D. synthesize information in a text to explain what the text is about

ANSWER

Correct Answer: B

Option (B) is correct. Clarifying the purpose for reading, previewing a text, and monitoring understanding all focus on developing metacognitive strategies.

Sample Passage w/ Questions

A fifth-grade class is reading the narrative nonfiction story *Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?* by Jean Fritz. The story details the life of George III the third who was king of England when the American Revolution was fought. Read the excerpt below and answer the next 3 questions that follow.

(1) Firm, firm, firm. (2) From now on he would be firm. (3) After the Battle of Lexington and the Battle of Bunker Hill, King George said he felt strong as a lion. (4) People would soon see, he said, that Americans would back down, meek as lambs. (5) Instead, on July 4, 1776, Americans declared their independence. (6) Naturally King George was annoyed. (7) But he wasn't worried. (8) How could children, however rebellious, succeed against a firm father? (9) How could a few colonies hold out against a powerful empire? (10) He'd just send a few more regiments over and then watch the Americans come around! (11) It never occurred to George the Third that he might not be right. (12) "I wish nothing but good," he once said, "therefore everyone who does not agree with me is a traitor or a scoundrel."

Sample Question

After reading the excerpt aloud to students, the teacher deduces that the students are struggling with understanding several unfamiliar vocabulary words. The teacher asks students to identify the top three most difficult words that they cannot define. The words are “rebellious,” “regiments,” and “traitor.” Which of the following teaching methods best helps students learn the meaning of the words in the excerpt?

- A. Having students read the sentences aloud and look for context clues
- B. Advising students to look up the words on their electronic devices and create electronic flash cards
- C. Instructing students to refer to a list of common affixes that break the words into parts that they can define
- D. Dividing students into groups to study one assigned word and make a word map for classroom display

ANSWER

Correct Answer: C

Option (C) is correct. All three of the listed words contain affixes (re-, bel-, -ious, regi-, -ments, and -or) that can help a reader who is unfamiliar with a whole word to decipher parts of its meaning. This strategy, in turn, helps the reader to guess accurately at the meaning of a word, even if it contains unfamiliar components.

Sample Question

After reading the passage, the teacher asks students to make an inference about what is shown by King George's description of himself in sentence 3 versus his perception of the American colonists in sentence 4. Which of the following methods initiated by the teacher will best help students make inferences?

- A. Discussing the value of the dialogue for providing information
- B. Examining the use of a simile to create comparisons
- C. Considering the inclusion of many of the capitalized words
- D. Analyzing the presence of hyperbole for dramatic effect

ANSWER

Correct Answer: B

Option (B) is correct. The author uses similes to compare King George to a lion and the American colonists to lambs. The use of simile extends a step further when the readers must consider the difference between “strong and meek” and “lion and lamb. To effectively make inferences about sentences 3 and 4, students need to understand simile and its purpose.

Sample Question

The teacher gives the student an assignment to annotate the text while reading it a second time. One of the students, Logan, annotates a portion of the text as shown.

(9) How could a few colonies hold out against a powerful empire? (10) He'd just send a few more

He is going to send more troops over to fight and kill colonists. This would make the people who are left change their mind about wanting to leave England.

regiments over and then watch the Americans come around!

I think this means he wants good and right things all the time

(11) *It never occurred to George the Third that he might not be right.*

(12) "I wish nothing but good," he once said, "therefore everyone who does not agree with me is either a traitor or a scoundrel." *A traitor is someone who betrays someone else. Someone who betrays a king would be punished, maybe by death. A scoundrel is a bad person and a liar. King George believes he is right and anyone who doesn't agree with him is wrong.*

**The circled sentence is the most important because he was wrong but he was too overconfident to see it.*

The primary purpose for Logan's annotation of the text is to:

- A. make a personal connection to the king as portrayed in the story
- B. help develop mental visual imagery of life during the American Revolution
- C. prepare for an exam with questions about the major story elements
- D. connect reading and writing by considering examples of characterization

ANSWER

Correct Answer: D

Option (D) is correct. The annotation shown delves into the character of King George and his thoughts and feelings about the American Revolution. He was blinded by his own confidence, and this became his undoing.

Balance of Time for ELA: Kindergarten & 1st Grade



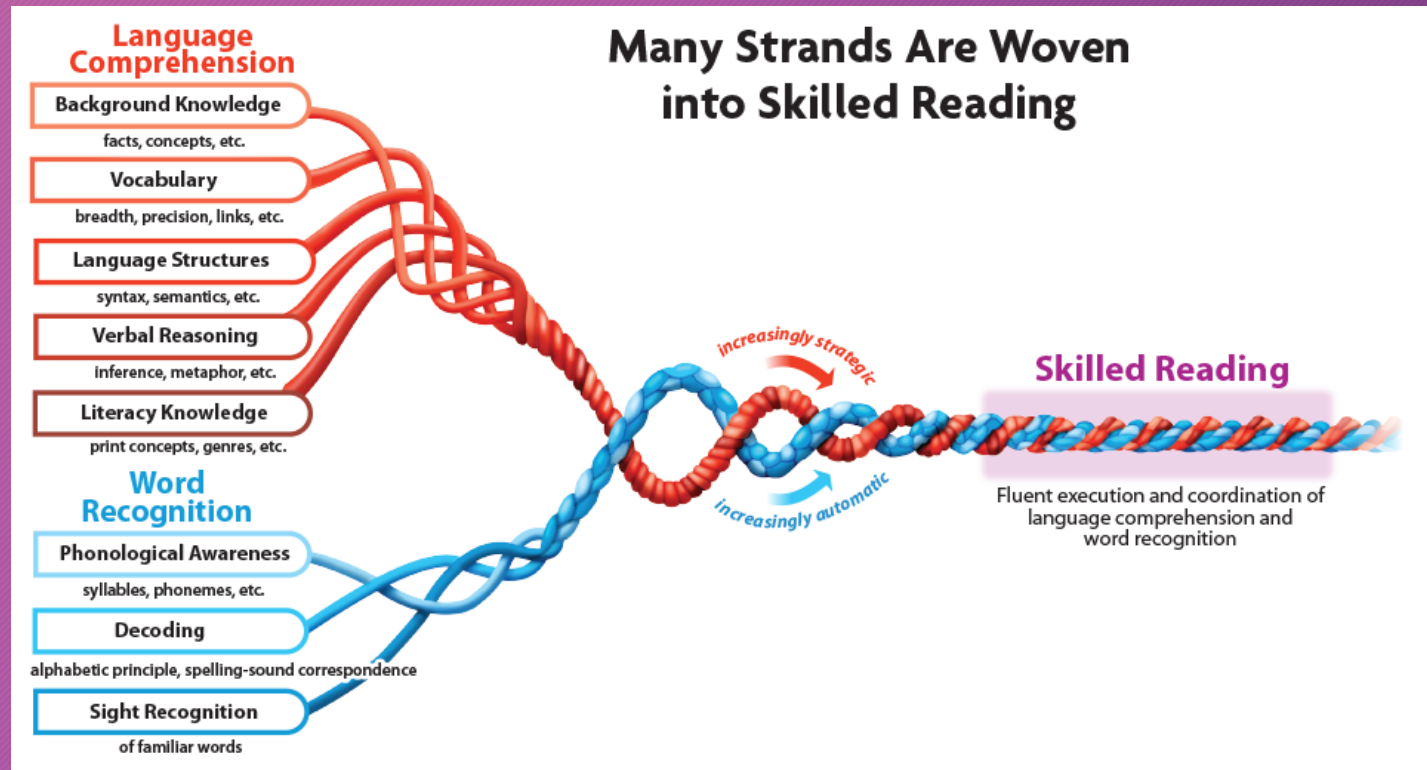
ELA Instructional time should include **two hours or more** in Kindergarten and 1st grade

25%

40-50%

25%

Writing instruction



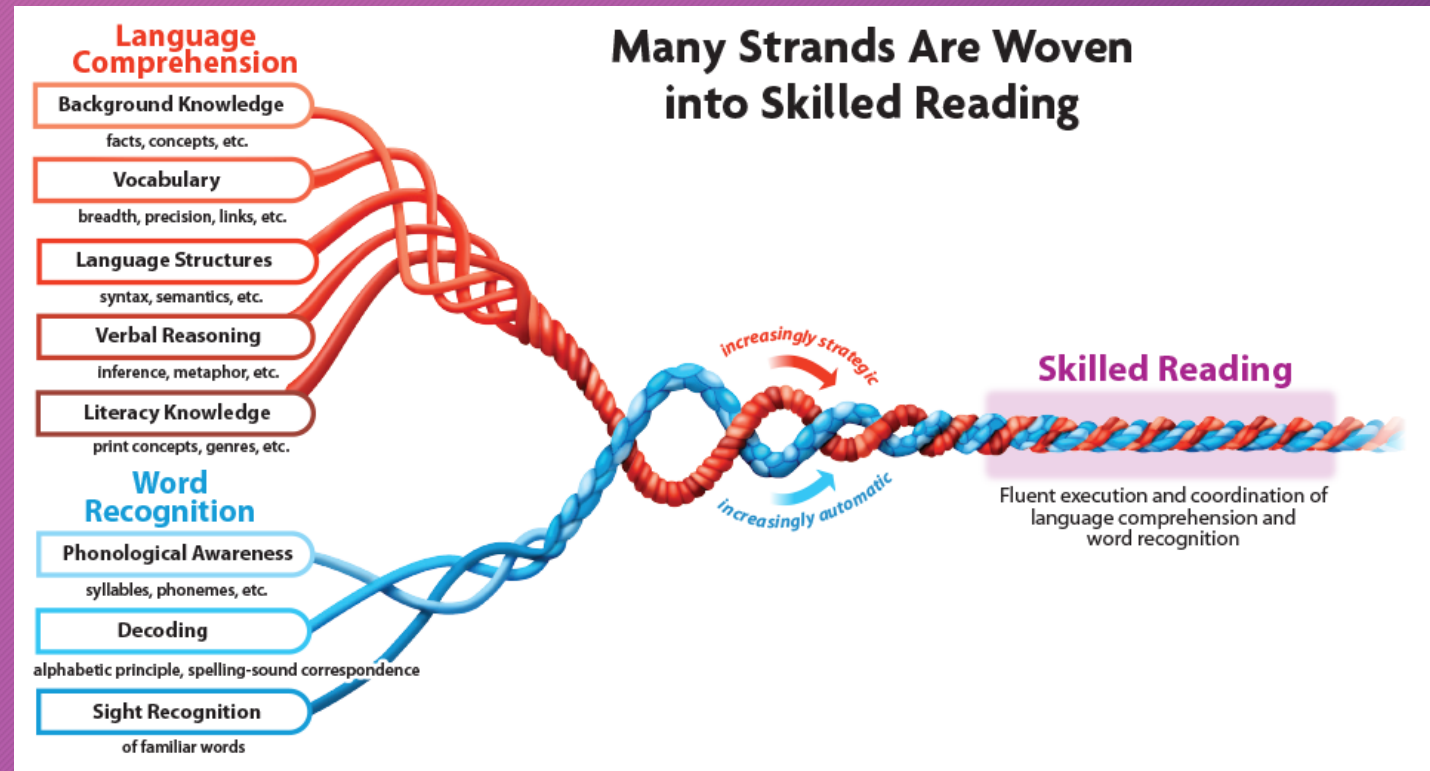
Balance of Time for ELA: 2nd Grade & 3rd Grade

ELA Instructional time should include **90 minutes or more** in 2nd and above for students on track

33%

33%

33%

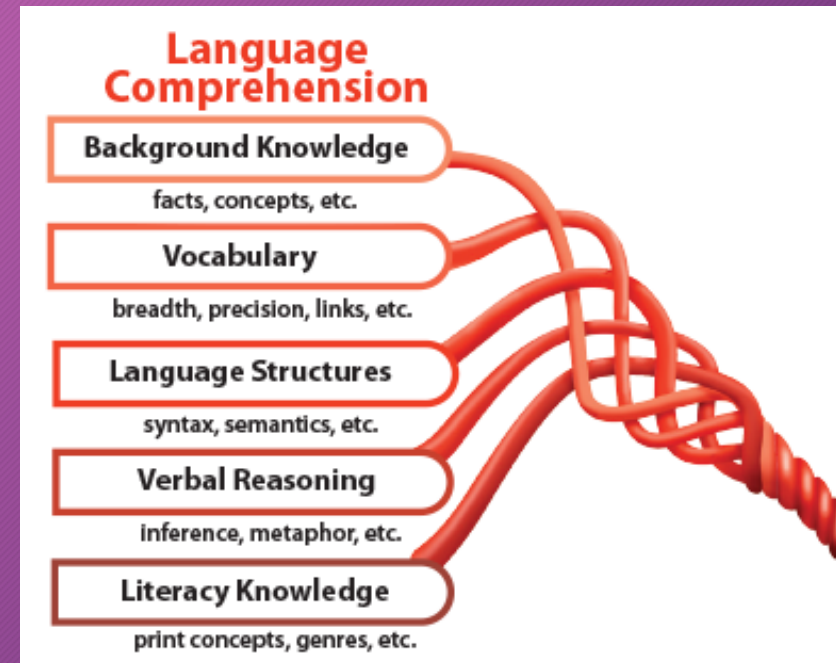


Writing instruction

The Language Comprehension Strand

- Development of academic language comprehension in the primary grades—through oral language interactions, direct teaching, and text reading—lays the foundation for success in higher grades.
- Language facility gained in earlier grades will have a major impact on reading comprehension in the intermediate grades and beyond

*Note: The Language Comprehension strands become more important after grade 3



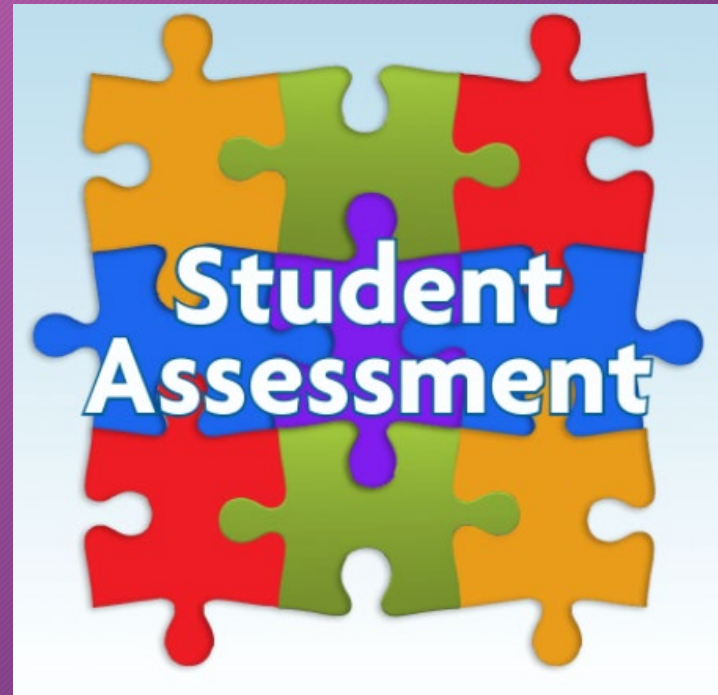
Comprehension Assessment

Because reading comprehension is multidimensional and involves MANY skills, it is difficult to assess

Reading comprehension assessments have a lot of variability:

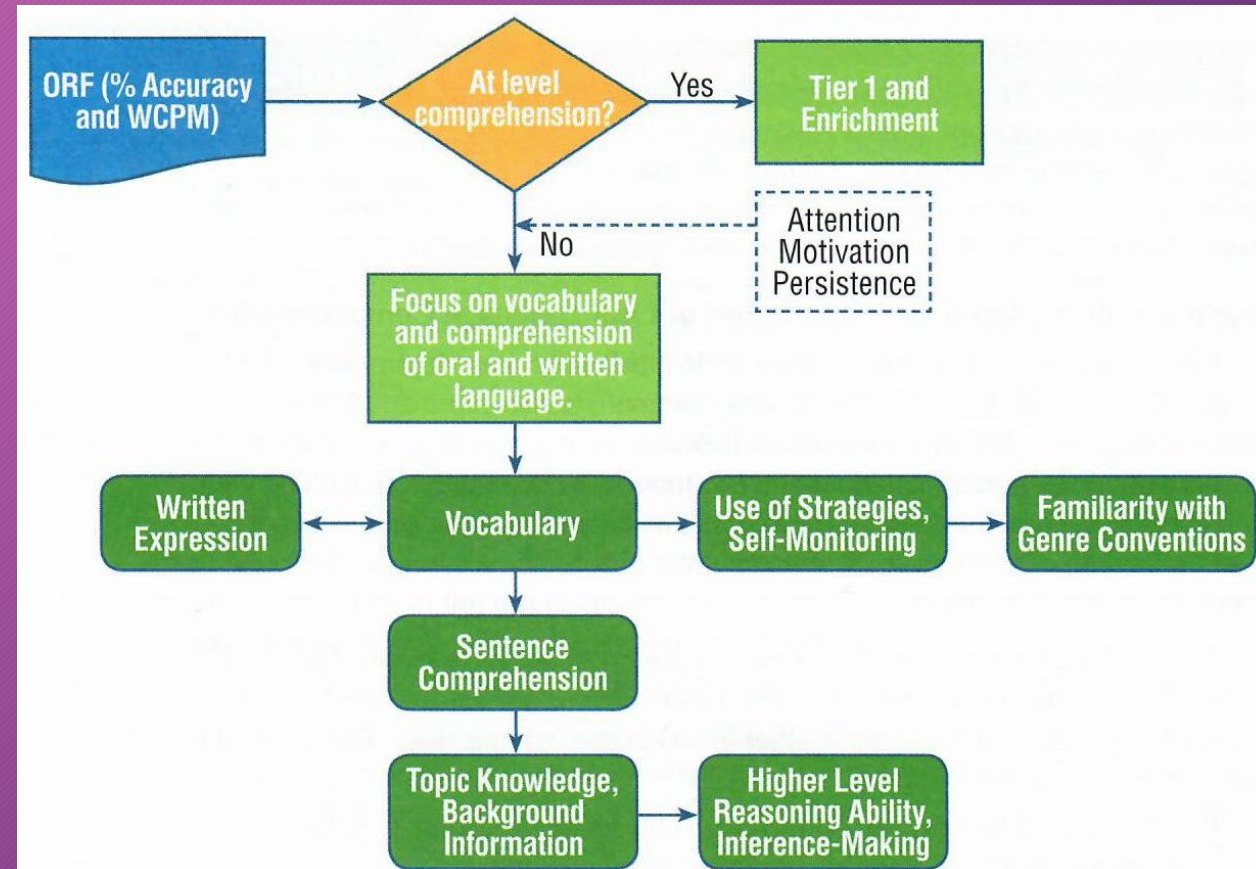
1. **Prior Knowledge:** Does the student have the necessary background knowledge to answer the questions?
2. **Measurement of Decoding and Word Recognition:** Test actually measures word recognition skills, rather than comprehension
3. **Variability in the Aspects of Language Comprehension Measured:** fill in a missing word, summarize, identify a sentence that doesn't belong, read long vs. short passages, etc.

So what should you do? TRIANGULATE ASSESSMENTS!



Informal Strategies for Assessment of Listening (language) comprehension

- Retelling from reading and listening
- Predicting a missing sentence
- Answer inferential questions
- Repeating sentences with varying complexity
- Taking unit quizzes



Sample Question

The data is based on a recent assessment of fourth-grade students reading a short passage. The teacher analyzes the data to identify areas most in need of improvement. Which of the following instructional strategies will best meet the needs of Molly, Marcy, and Don?

Students	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Fluency
Molly	75%	68%	60%
Marcy	73%	65%	60%
Don	72%	70%	55%

- A. Giving the students review activities and games to practice unknown words
- B. Pairing the students to read aloud and provide feedback to each other
- C. Providing the students with graphic organizers to use while reading
- D. Encouraging students to read more books at home for pleasure

ANSWER

Correct Answer: B

Option (B) is correct. Paired partner is an instructional strategy that incorporates peer modeling. Peer modeling is when one partner reads a text that is slightly challenging while the other partner corrects errors and checks for understanding. It is most effective to pair students so that one partner is a slightly more skilled reader than the other. Partners take turns being the reader and listener. The more skilled reader reads first, modeling fluent reading for the listener. While following along, the listener is exposed to any difficult words and essentially rehearses the text before reading it aloud. The partners switch roles, and the new reader reads aloud the same text while the new listener provides feedback and checks for understanding. This strategy is an evidence-based practice that will improve fluency and comprehension for both struggling and fluent readers.

Poor Comprehension

go back to fluency

Poor Fluency

go back to word recognition

Poor Word Recognition

go back to phonics and decoding

Poor Phonics & Decoding

go back to phonemic awareness

Special considerations for EL Students

- Speak slowly and clearly (enunciate)
- Make sure the EL student look at the speaker
- Simplify syntax, if necessary
- Provide visual context for meaning (pictures, objects, and/or actions)
- Express the same idea in several ways
- Vocabulary: Teach Tier I words, cognates, and figurative language
- Give students ample opportunity to develop oral language fluency with opportunities for oral responses
- Provide lots of background knowledge



Accommodation Strategies for Students with Verbal Learning Disability

- Paraphrase or interpret as needed
- Provide hands-on learning experiences
- Provide forced-choice questions
 - Ex: “Do sea creatures glow because they want something to eat? Or, do sea creatures glow because they are afraid of enemies?”
- Use classification or compare and contrast (i.e. graphic organizers)
- Supply sentence frames
 - Ex: Some animals glow in the dark, such as _____.
 - Ex: Glowing in the dark helps sea creatures _____.
- Oral Language Routines (see next week)



Other Comprehension Activities

1. Drama (Reader's Theatre, Pantomime, etc.)
2. Story Frames (Skeleton of Story)
3. Macrocloze Stories (Eliminate parts of the story)
4. Scrambled Stories
5. Active Comprehension
6. Reciprocal Questioning (ReQuest)
7. Questioning the Author (QtA)
8. Reciprocal Teaching
9. Think-Alouds
10. Anticipation Guides
11. Discussion Webs
12. Directed-Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA)
13. Text Connections
14. Idea Sketches
15. Sticky-Note Folders
16. Brainstorming
17. Point of View Guides (POVG)
18. Webquests
19. Internet Inquiries
20. Idea Circles
21. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR)

Sample Question

Mr. Krause's fourth-grade students are having difficulty answering text-dependent comprehension questions. He plans to use the question-answer relationship (QAR) strategy to help students comprehend the types of questions being asked. The QAR strategy supports students in

- A. distinguishing between textually explicit and textually implicit questions
- B. identifying the text structure presented in the questions asked
- C. determining whether the question requires an answer or is hypothetical
- D. using words directly from the question to formulate a complete response

ANSWER

Correct Answer: A

Option (A) is correct. The QAR strategy helps students determine whether the answer to a question can be found directly in the text (explicit) or whether the question is implied in the text (implicit). This knowledge helps the reader distinguish when to search the text for the answer and when to make an inference about the text.

Sample Question

A teacher reviews the following student scores on a standardized reading test with the goal of determining the areas in which the student will require additional instruction.

- 75th percentile in vocabulary knowledge
- 85th percentile in decoding
- 40th percentile in comprehension
- 70th percentile in fluency

Based on the data, which of the following activities best addresses the student's needs?

- A. Reviewing high-frequency words
- B. Identifying context clues in sentences
- C. Listening to an audio version of the text
- D. Using a plot chart to track the events in a story

ANSWER

Correct Answer: D

Option (D) is correct. The test scores show that the student is weak in comprehension. Understanding text structures such as the plot will aid the student's comprehension of texts.

Sample Question

A second-grade teacher reviewed data from the midyear literacy screening and compared them to the data from the beginning-of-the-year literacy screening. The data revealed that the students who were grade-level readers at the beginning of the year showed very little growth in reading comprehension, and two-thirds of the emergent readers were ready to be placed with the grade-level readers. Which of the following strategies will best help accelerate the growth of the grade-level readers?

- A. Playing recordings of interesting stories that are above the students' reading level and discussing character development, plot, and theme
- B. Using guided reading groups to assign students texts at their independent reading level and asking them to complete comprehension questions
- C. Telling students to practice silent reading with texts at their instructional level and requiring them to journal about setting, conflict, and resolution
- D. Using guided reading groups to assign students texts at their frustration level and practicing the use of context clues to define new words

ANSWER

Correct Answer: A

Option (A) is correct. Students typically have a listening vocabulary that is above their reading vocabulary. Listening to books that are at their interest level regardless of reading level, while they either follow along with the text or not, allows them access to much more than just decoding words. Students will be exposed to vocabulary they may not typically hear, which helps their receptive and expressive vocabulary. Additionally, listening to texts allows students to focus on the deeper levels of reading, such as making inferences, exploring character development, and discussing theme. Teachers can also use audiobooks as part of text sets that expose students to different genres and different types of styles.

Sample Question

Which of the following strategies is most likely to be effective in motivating elementary students to read independently in school?

- A. Reminding students that reading is crucial to being successful in the future
- B. Providing extrinsic rewards such as free time when students read more
- C. Allowing students to choose texts about topics that interest them
- D. Engaging students in critical thinking activities during guided reading

ANSWER

Correct Answer: C

Option (C) is correct. Several research studies indicate that allowing elementary students to choose texts related to their interests is a major factor in motivating them to read independently.

Sample Question

Below are various problems students encounter when self-selecting texts. Match each strategy a teacher can use to best solve each student's problem.

1. The student no longer enjoys a book he or she has been reading.
2. The student chooses the same book repeatedly
3. The student is overwhelmed with selecting a text
4. The student selects a text that has too high a reading level

Strategies:

- A. Encourage the student to select a book by a favorite author or topic.
- B. Suggest the student read the book using paired reading with a parent.
- C. Ask the student about his or her interests and explain how the books are organized in the library.
- D. Provide several book choices and encourage the student to determine the readability of a text before making a selection.

ANSWER

Correct Answer: B, A, C, D

Options (B), (A), (C), and (D) are correct. To best encourage and motivate students' reading, the teacher should encourage a student to select a book by a favorite author or topic when they are reading a book repeatedly. A student will reread a book they enjoyed and will most likely enjoy other books by the same author. When a student selects a text that is above his or her reading level, the teacher should suggest the student read the book using paired reading with a parent to effectively encourage and motivate the student to read their selected book. When a student is overwhelmed by all the choices in the library, a teacher should help narrow the student's focus by asking about their interests and helping the student find a book according to how the library is laid out. This will help the student be able to make a similar selection independently in the future. If a student no longer has interest in a book they selected, the teacher should provide a few options for the student to choose from within his or her reading ability to encourage the student to continue to read. Any other order is incorrect because the strategies would not appropriately solve the students' issue when making a selection for independent reading.