



A Teacher's Strategy for Teaching the Comprehension Questions in Read Naturally Strategy Programs

Each Read Naturally story in the Sequenced, Spanish, American Manners & Customs, and Idioms Series (for levels 2.0 and above) includes five common types of comprehension questions: main idea, literal, vocabulary, inferential, and short answer. It is important for students to understand the different types of questions and have strategies to answer them.

Angela Walker Foster of Anderson County Schools in Lawrenceburg, KY has developed a great instructional strategy for teaching the comprehension questions, and we're pleased to share the strategy with you.

Question 1: Main Idea

Main Idea: It's not just a fact from the story, but what the story is **mostly about**.

1. Provide each of your students with the same five stories.
2. Explain to the students what the term "main idea" means: It's not just a fact from the story, but what the story is mostly about.
3. Display the definition of "main idea" so the students can see it, and highlight the key words in the definition that students need to remember: **mostly about**.
4. Read the first story aloud with the students.
5. Examine the first possible answer for the main idea question. Ask the students the following question about the answer: "Is that what the whole story was mostly about, or is it just one fact we learned from the story?" Discuss why the answer is either what the story is mostly about or only a fact. Repeat this process for each of the remaining possible answers. The purpose of this activity is to help students understand how to identify the main idea. This should be a think-aloud exercise that involves all of the students.
6. As a group, choose the one answer that is what the story is mostly about.
7. Repeat steps 4 through 6 using the second story.
8. Ask students to find the main idea in the third story independently.
9. Review each possible answer to the main idea question for the third story as a group, and ask the question "Is that what the whole story was mostly about, or is it just a fact we learned from the story?" Discuss why the answer is either what the story is mostly about or only a fact.
10. Repeat steps 8 through 9 using the fourth story.
11. Use the fifth story as an assessment to determine whether the students understand how to identify the main idea. If they are still unable to identify the main idea, choose a few more stories to practice as a group. As with any new lesson, some students will need more practice and instruction than other students.



Questions 2 & 7: Literal/Detail

Literal: You can find the answer **right there in the story**.

1. Provide each of your students with the same five stories.
2. Explain to the students what the term “literal” means: You can find the answer right there in the story.
3. Display the definition of “literal” so the students can see it, and highlight the key words in the definition that students need to remember: **right there in the story**.
4. Read the story aloud with the students.
5. Examine each possible answer to the literal question. Go through the story as a group searching for the sentence that contains the answer. Explain to the students that they should be able to underline the answer in the story.
6. As a group, choose the correct option.
7. Repeat steps 4 through 6 using the second story. Make sure everyone understands how you are getting the answer. This is a think-aloud activity.
8. Ask the students to try to find the answer to the literal question on their own for the third story.
9. After each student has selected his/her answer, review each of the possible answer options as a group. Talk about the answer options and the answers everyone selected. Review why they chose their answers.
10. Repeat steps 8 through 9 using the fourth story.
11. Use the fifth story as an assessment to determine whether the students understand how to find the answer to a literal question. If they are still unable to find the answer, choose a few more stories to practice as a group. As with any new lesson, some students will need more practice and instruction than other students.

Questions 3 & 6: Vocabulary

Vocabulary: Look at the sentence before the word, the sentence the word is in, and the sentence after the word.

1. Give each student the same five stories.
2. Display what vocabulary means, and highlight the key words you want the students to remember: "before the word," "the word is in," and "after the word."
3. Read the first story with the class out loud.
4. After the story, examine each possible answer for the vocabulary question. Search for the vocabulary word in the story text, and circle it.
5. Then underline or highlight the sentence before the vocabulary word, the sentence the vocabulary word is in, and the sentence after the vocabulary word.
6. Look for context clues in the highlighted sentences. Then read all three sentences to see what the vocabulary word means in this story.
7. As a group, choose the correct answer.
8. Repeat steps 3-7 for the second story. The object is for the students to understand how you arrive at the answer. This is a think-aloud exercise.
9. Have the students try it themselves for the third story.
10. Talk about the different choices after they pick their answer(s).
11. Go through each step to make sure they use context clues around the vocabulary word to find the meaning.
12. Repeat steps 9-11 for the fourth story.
13. Use the fifth story as an assessment to determine whether the students understand how to find the answer to a vocabulary question. If they are still unable to find the answer, choose a few more stories to practice as a group. As with any new lesson, some students will need more practice and instruction than other students.

Questions 4 & 8: Inferential

Inferential: Look for the clues the author left behind so that you can put them together to find (infer) the answer.

1. Begin this lesson with a guessing game. Pretend you are an animal, and provide the students hints or clues as to which animal. For example: "I am very large. I have big ears. I have a long trunk. What animal am I?"
2. Then talk to the students about how an author leaves clues in their stories. Explain how those clues can be put together to draw additional information from the passage.
3. Now, give each student the same five stories.
4. Display what inference means, and highlight the key words you want the students to remember: "clues the author left behind," "you can find (infer) the answer."
5. Read the first story with the class out loud.
6. After reading the story, examine the inferential question. Search the section of the story related to topic of the question looking for the clues. Circle the clues as you find them.
7. Discuss the clues, and determine what they mean.
8. As a group, choose the correct answer.
9. Repeat steps 4-8 for the second story. The object is for the students to understand how you arrive at the answer. This is a think-aloud exercise.
10. Have the students try it themselves for the third story.
11. Talk about the different choices after they pick their answer(s).
12. Go through each step to make sure they find the clues the author left behind.
13. Repeat steps 10-12 for the fourth story.
14. Use the fifth story as an assessment to determine whether the students understand how to find the answer to an inferential question. If they are still unable to find the answer, choose a few more stories to practice as a group. As with any new lesson, some students will need more practice and instruction than other students.

Question 5: Short Answer

Short answer: A person should be able to understand what question was asked by reading only the answer. Always **restate the question** in your answer.

1. Choose five stories at a readability level that most students in your group can read. Give each student the same five stories. Display what short answer means and then highlight the key words you want the students to remember: restate the question.
2. Spend a moment asking the students some simple questions, and require them to restate the question in their answers. Explain that they will need to do the same thing with the short answer questions. For example: *Question:* What is your brother's name? *Answer:* My brother's name is Billy.
3. Read the first story with them out loud.
4. After the story, examine the short answer question. Pick out the key words from the question that will need to be included in the answer.
5. Help the students cross out words that are not needed in the answer (i.e., question words like what, when, and how). Also, help the students add words that are needed to make the answer sound correct (i.e., words like because and is).
6. Then as a group, write out the answer. Be sure to restate the question within the answer.
7. Repeat steps 3-6 with the second story. The goal is for students to understand how to phrase the answer. This is a think-out-loud exercise.
8. Have the students try it themselves on the third story.
9. Talk about the answers after they restate the question on their own.
10. Repeat steps 8-9 for the fourth story.
11. Use the fifth story as an assessment to determine if the students understand how to correctly restate the question in the answer. If they are still unable to write the answer correctly, choose a few more stories to practice as a group. As with any new lesson, some students will need more practice and instruction than other students.