

COMPREHENSION BUILDER

Your **Comprehensive Toolkit**
for Strengthening Reading
Comprehension



Reading
Comprehension
Strategies



Question-Specific
Comprehension
Lessons



For primary through
intermediate skill levels



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Your Comprehensive Toolkit for Strengthening Reading Comprehension

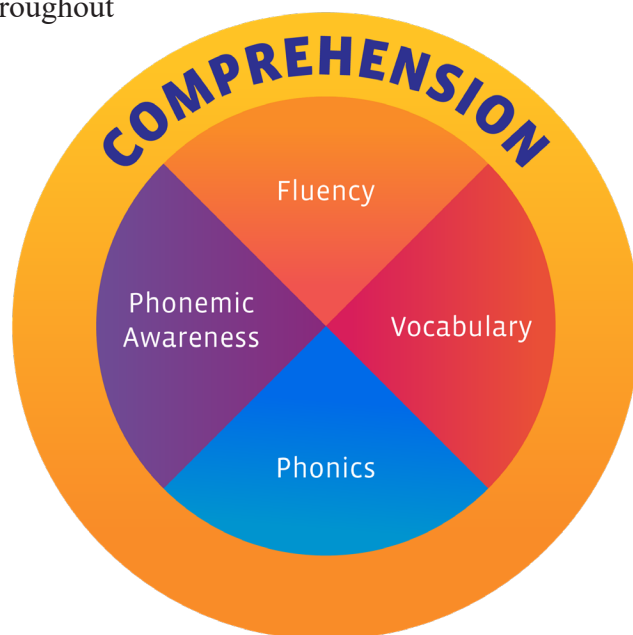
Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading.

The ultimate goal for readers is to be able to understand what they read. In order to make sense of text, readers need both word recognition and language comprehension skills. At first glance, developing comprehension may seem simple. After all, good readers effortlessly extract meaning as they read all the time. Yet getting from basic reading skills to comprehension requires acquiring and integrating many skills. To develop word recognition, we emphasize phonics and fluency instruction. To develop language comprehension, we build background knowledge, vocabulary, syntax, and critical reasoning. As these skills begin to layer, it quickly becomes clear that comprehension is actually very complex.

In addition, true reading comprehension may not occur automatically even when word recognition and language comprehension are strong. Even skilled readers may read words—and understand them—without fully comprehending what they've read. The Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) Practice Guide: Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (Shanahan et al., 2010) defines reading comprehension as **the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language**. Rather than passively taking in meaning, good readers analyze text, internalize it, and make meaning for themselves.

Reading comprehension is not an inherent byproduct of word recognition and language comprehension. It's also not something that should be postponed until students become fluent readers or masters of oral language. In fact, working on the skills needed for comprehension together is not only possible but beneficial, as each supports the other. And actively teaching students how to make sense of text, discussing meaning with them, and making it clear that comprehension is the point of reading must begin early and continue throughout students' development into good readers.

Reading comprehension is complex. It requires active engagement, deliberate effort, and many skills working simultaneously. It's no wonder that many developing readers struggle with reading comprehension. In such cases, it's essential that we, as educators, provide them with timely, targeted support so that they may find success in reading. Quality reading comprehension instruction requires thorough, direct instruction in comprehension strategies and academic language, paired with structured support in meaningful, content-rich, and knowledge-building contexts. Plus, students need abundant opportunities to practice throughout their education and across multiple subject areas.



The purpose of Comprehension Builder is to help teachers with the often daunting task of strengthening students' capacity to understand what they read. It's a practical resource designed to make it easy for teachers to effectively and efficiently develop lasting comprehension skills for readers, regardless of age, instructional setting, time constraints, or areas of need. It provides highly adaptable lessons and resources that can be used consistently and consecutively, or on an as-needed basis. Instruction is approached through explicit teaching, modeling, gradual release of responsibility, collaborative learning, frequent opportunities to respond (OTR), and scaffolded support. Comprehension Builder includes high-interest, knowledge-building text with rich vocabulary, numerous options for adapting and differentiating instruction, and suggestions for extending practice beyond the lessons themselves. Our goal in creating this resource was to provide teachers with essential tools in one comprehensive, easy-to-use toolkit. We hope that it will make a positive impact in your classroom.

Comprehension Builder...



What's Included

Comprehension Builder includes the following:

- This guide, which provides detailed comprehension lessons divided in two sections:
 - **Section 1:** Reading Comprehension Strategy Lessons
 - **Section 2:** Question-Specific Comprehension Lessons
- A USB drive that contains digital files for all of the reproducibles for the lessons
- A poster showing short reminders about strategies students should use before, during, and after reading
- A set of two posters that show short reminders about common types of comprehension questions



Section 1: Reading Comprehension Strategy Lessons

This section includes a set of three lessons focused on research-based strategies identified in the IES Practice Guide: Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (Shanahan et al., 2010) for better comprehension. These lessons teach students how to use the strategies and provide multiple opportunities for practice.

1. Before-Reading Strategies

- Activating Prior Knowledge
- Learning Key Words
- Making a Prediction

2. During-Reading Strategies

- Questioning
- Visualizing
- Making Inferences
- Monitoring, Clarifying, and Fix-up

3. After-Reading Strategies

- Answering Questions
- Retelling and Summarizing

Section 2: Question-Specific Comprehension Lessons

This section includes a set of eleven lessons teaching students about specific types of comprehension questions and provides multiple opportunities to practice answering them. The question types include:

1. Detail (Literal)
2. Short Answer
3. Vocabulary
4. Main Idea
5. Fact and Opinion
6. Cause and Effect
7. Compare and Contrast
8. Author's Purpose
9. Graphical Information
10. Making Inferences
11. Retelling and Summarizing

USB Drive

The USB drive for Comprehension Builder includes the resources (over 250) created for use in the 55 activities. All practice stories are in one folder, and the additional materials for each lesson can be found in its corresponding section and/or lesson folder. Below, you can review an example of the file and folder structure on the USB drive.

 _Read Me

 _USB Drive Overview

Practice Stories

 L1–2 Playing Frisbee

 L1–2 Playing Frisbee Glossary

 L1–2 Stickball to Lacrosse

 L1–2 Stickball to Lacrosse Glossary

 L2–3 A Silly Puppy

 L2–3 A Silly Puppy Glossary

 ...

Practice Stories Versions Vocab Words

 L1–2 Playing Frisbee_version without vocab words

 L1–2 Stickball to Lacrosse_version without vocab words

 L2–3 A Silly Puppy_version without vocab words

 ...

The Practice Stories folder contains all 18 practice stories referenced throughout the Comprehension Builder lessons, along with their corresponding glossaries. There is also a version of each practice story without the vocabulary words identified. These files are listed by their approximate level range.

Section 1 Resources

 Acacia Tree Photo

 Before, During, and After Reading Strategies Poster

 Giraffe Photo

 Quiz Questions answer key

 Quiz Questions L1–2 Stickball to Lacrosse

 Quiz Questions L2–3 The Vampire bat

 Quiz Questions L3–4 The Mystery of the Carroll A Deering

 Reading Strategies Checklist

 Reading Strategies Tracker

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Section 1 contains mostly resources that are used in more than one lesson. Therefore, all resources used for section 1 lessons are found in the Section 1 Resources folder.

Section 2 Resources

 Types of Comprehension Questions Poster

1_Detail Literal Lesson

 Find the Answer answer key

 Find the Answer Worksheet L1–2 Stickball to Lacrosse

 Find the Answer Worksheet L2–3 An American Entertainer

 Find the Answer Worksheet L3–4 Saint Bernards to the Rescue

 ...

2_Short Answer Lesson

 ...

 ...

The Section 2 Resources folder has subfolders for each lesson which contain its corresponding resources.

Instructional Options

Comprehension Builder can be used with individual students, small groups, or a whole class. Based on the needs of the students, teachers may decide to teach the lessons sequentially, separately, concurrently, or as needed.

Comprehension Builder Instructional Options

Sequentially	Lessons/activities taught one after another in the order that they are presented in Comprehension Builder.
Separately	Lessons/activities taught separately over time (e.g., one per week, one per month).
Concurrently with Read Naturally or other reading programs that include comprehension questions	Lessons/activities taught concurrently with the teaching of the steps or parts of another program in which the students will put what they learn from Comprehension Builder lessons into practice. The following examples might work well for users of Read Live and print versions of Read Naturally programs: ▪ Teach the Before-Reading Strategies lesson in Section 1 in conjunction with teaching the Key Words and Prediction steps (possibly when teaching those steps according to the Read Naturally Teacher's Manual or before/after showing Part 1 of the Read Naturally Live video series: A Student's Guide to Read Naturally Live). ▪ Teach Activity 3: Chronological Order of the Detail (Literal) lesson in Section 2 to students shortly before they start working in a Read Naturally level that includes sequencing questions (3.5 or 4.0).
Need-based	Lessons/activities taught as needed based on what students are working on or their scores on comprehension activities in Read Naturally or other programs.

Identification of Students

Because comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, it is important to focus on developing the ability of students to think about and understand what they read. Consequently, many teachers may choose to use some of these lessons with their students regardless of whether they are clearly struggling with comprehension. For example, teachers may want all of their students to work through the section 1 strategy lessons early in the year, or they may want all of their students to work through a section 2 lesson for a particular type of question as that question type becomes common in the students' core curriculum.

Other teachers may choose to use these lessons particularly with students who need help in developing their ability to comprehend text. To identify the students who would particularly benefit from these lessons, first consider whether their comprehension is impacted by their ability to decode words. If not, consider which of the following their comprehension scores indicate:

1. The need to work in a lower level of material.
2. The need to work on comprehension by simply completing the comprehension tasks in the current level of material.
3. The need for comprehension support (as provided in these lessons) while continuing to work in the current level of material.

You can use the guidelines below, along with your knowledge of individual students, to select students to work through these lessons.

If a student's comprehension...			
is impacted by their ability to decode words, consider...	is not impacted by their ability to decode words AND consistently results in scores on comprehension quizzes that are...		
	below 60%, consider...	60-79%, consider...	at least 80%, consider...
focusing on decoding skills.	lowering the level of material in which they're working.	using Comprehension Builder lessons and continuing the level of material.	continuing the level of material.
<i>In this case, the student may need to focus on decoding until those skills are not interfering with processing meaning, or "Until the hard cognitive work of decoding is removed from the equation" (Liben & Liben, 2019).*</i>	<i>In this case, the student's comprehension may improve when reading less complicated material. (If comprehension only improves to 60-79%, consider also using Comprehension Builder lessons.)*</i>	<i>In this case, working through these lessons may provide the comprehension support the student needs to improve their comprehension skills while continuing in their current level.*</i>	<i>In this case, the student's comprehension skills may be adequately challenged and improved by working through the comprehension questions in the current level and correcting any errors.*</i>

** In all these cases, continue to monitor the student's fluency and comprehension to ensure appropriate support. If you recognize a pattern with a student consistently getting the same type(s) of question wrong, use the Question-Specific Comprehension Lessons found in Section 2.*

Selecting Which Stories to Use

Most Comprehension Builder lessons include at least one activity in which students read a short fiction or nonfiction story and then answer questions about the story that focus on the skill they're learning in the lesson. For example, in the Vocabulary lesson, students complete an activity in which they read a short story and then answer questions about the vocabulary in that story.

For these activities, teachers can select different practice stories/questions depending on which one is at a level that is most appropriate for the group of students who will be doing the activity. The approximate reading level of each included practice story is listed in the table below and also in the Lesson Materials section of each lesson. Please note that it is not necessary to provide a story at the exact reading level of your students. Students can use a story below their reading level and still benefit from applying the comprehension skills they're learning. In fact, it may help to read easier material while working on specific aspects of comprehension. Students can also use a story a little above their reading level, because the activities are completed with teacher and group support.

Included Practice Stories in Comprehension Builder

Level*	Story Name
1–2	Playing Frisbee
1–2	Stickball to Lacrosse
2–3	A Silly Puppy
2–3	A Sprained Ankle
2–3	Acacia Thorns Don't Stop Giraffes!
2–3	An American Entertainer
2–3	From Wolves to Pets
2–3	Inventing With Plants
2–3	The Best Pet
3–4	A Stringed Instrument and a Percussion Instrument
3–4	Children Should Learn Piano
3–4	Playing for Grandma
3–4	Saint Bernards to the Rescue
3–4	The Vampire Bat
4–5	Lynne Cox's Antarctic Mile
4–5	The Travels of the Arctic Tern
5–6	The Mystery of the Carroll A. Deering
6–7	Apollo 13 Fails—And Succeeds!

** Level ranges are approximate.*

Comprehension Builder includes a variety of story options to allow the lessons to work well with students reading at a wider range of levels, but providing students with material at their exact reading level is not the goal. Teachers can also adapt many of the activities that require the use of a practice story to other short stories or passages they are using with their students by reading through the activity ahead of time and ensuring that the alternative content has all of the parts required for the activity. For example, in the case of the Vocabulary lesson activities, the content should have identified target/key words and a glossary along with a set of vocabulary questions to answer (or at least sufficient unknown words for students to identify and look up).

Beyond Comprehension Builder: Strengthening Reading Comprehension Every Day

As the previous pages have explained, the lessons in this book provide explicit instruction for comprehension strategies and specific comprehension question types. Additionally, it is important to incorporate reading comprehension instruction and practice throughout the year and across subject areas because reading is a big part of how students access learning and information, both in school and beyond. You can work on comprehension as part of almost any lesson and discussion throughout the school day. With that in mind, the following pages provide simple ways to strengthen students' comprehension in various contexts.

Emphasize Knowledge-Building Activities

As students expand what they know about the world, they are better able to connect new information to prior learning, draw inferences, and deepen understanding. When teachers emphasize knowledge building—both in reading and in other content areas—students gain the background knowledge and context that support strong reading comprehension.

- Incorporate real-life objects (realia) or visual aids like charts, models, and videos to build background knowledge before reading a text or to support connection-building and retention after reading a text.
- Incorporate texts from a wide variety of topics (e.g., history, sports, animals, plants, geography, technology, art, culture, food, weather, etc.).
- Create a checklist or scavenger hunt to encourage students to read about a variety of topics during independent reading time throughout the year.
- After reading a text, prompt students to generate questions they still have about the topic and guide them in doing research to find the answer.
- Create a class knowledge wall to add fun facts to throughout the year.
- Use analogies to link new concepts to ones students are likely to already be familiar with.
- Match fictional texts with relevant nonfiction texts or informational videos.
- Incorporate a brief "Show and Tell" into your weekly or monthly routine. Participate along with the students. Make an effort to share something that many students may not know much about and use rich vocabulary to present it.
- Support students in forming book clubs centered on common themes, encouraging collaboration and deeper learning.

Emphasize the Purpose of Reading

When students understand why they are reading, they approach the text with greater focus. This sense of purpose supports their comprehension and builds the habits of engaged, effective readers.

- Remind students that the purpose of reading is to comprehend.
- Provide students with a variety of reading material and frequent opportunities to choose what they read.
- Offer texts from a variety of topics, reading levels, and formats (e.g., articles, graphics, infographics, comics, transcripts, etc.).
- Model a reading life. Share what you're currently reading, and do frequent read-alouds.
- Guide students to create from what they read (e.g., how-to presentations, mini-podcasts, infographics, demos, or teaching younger students).
- Invite student leadership. Assign hosts for story discussions and invite students to add to a class book-recommendation wall.
- Explain how most subjects (e.g., math, science, social studies, etc.) require the ability to read in order to do well.

Incorporate Meaning Into Foundational Skills Practice

Comprehension development can and should occur alongside foundational skills. While students may need to spend more time on phonics, fluency, and oral language early on, they don't need to reach mastery before working on reading comprehension. In fact, incorporating multiple components simultaneously helps each skill reinforce the other. Students should understand from the beginning that words carry meaning.

- When manipulating letters to practice phonics skills (e.g., wig → big → bid → bad → fad → fed), discuss the meanings of the words—especially any that are uncommon or less likely to be understood by students (e.g., bid, fad).
- When decoding words in passages, pause to discuss words that have homonyms. Point out their similarities (sounds or spellings) and differences (meanings and sounds or spellings).
- When working on fluency with read-alongs or repeated readings, emphasize the importance of expression.
 - Explain that using expression helps the reader communicate and bring out the meaning of the words.
 - Remind students to pause for commas and periods, emphasize important words, adjust their pitch for questions, etc.
 - For students working in Read Naturally programs:
 - After conducting a Cold Timing, remind the student of a specific component of expression for them to focus on during the Read Along and Practice steps.
 - Before conducting a Hot Timing, draw the student's attention to the expression rubric and discuss your expectations.
- After a student reads for you, ask them what they think a particular phrase or sentence means.
- Incorporate read-alouds frequently, and pause periodically for group discussions.
- Allow students to discuss short-answer questions with a partner before writing their responses.
- For students working in Read Naturally programs, scaffold writing steps by allowing students to respond orally until they're ready to type independently.

Develop Writing Skills

Writing gives students a way to process, organize, and express their understanding of text. As they put ideas into their own words—through summaries, responses, and written explanations—students clarify their thinking and strengthen their comprehension.

- Have students practice writing while reading. Require a brief margin note (or sketch) per section of text.
- Use simple checklists for students to self-monitor their written responses (e.g., answered the question, included evidence, used key terms).
- Have students journal or write their reactions to texts they've read, videos they've watched, or discussions they've had in class.
- Incorporate peer-reviewing practice. Guide students to note strengths, ask questions, and give suggestions.
- Use writing activities as exit slips (e.g., gist statements, sample sentences, claim-evidence-reasoning frames).

Expand Word Knowledge and Vocabulary

Knowing more words makes it possible for students to understand more of what they read. Prioritizing vocabulary development—through explicit instruction and exposure in context—ensures students can access more complex texts and engage with a wider range of content.

- Use rich vocabulary with students, explaining the meanings of new words.
- Guide students in maintaining difficult word lists or journals where they record the word, the definition (in their own words) and other connection points that may help them like a sample sentence, a drawing, a synonym/antonym, a common context, or a "source tag" (reminder of where they learned the word).
- Discuss whether words are specific to certain subjects or if they "travel well" through many different contexts.
- Have multilingual students scan the text to see if any words look like or remind them of words from their home/additional language (e.g., run a quick "cognate hunt"). Teach them to confirm whether the words they find are cognates by using context and/or a dictionary. Maintain a "tricky twins" or "false friends" list to keep track of false cognates throughout the year.
- Teach morphology explicitly (common prefixes/suffixes/roots).
- Practice identifying synonyms and antonyms or building semantic gradients.
- Incorporate word games into your daily routine (e.g., crossword puzzles, word searches, etc.).
- Pause to discuss new/difficult words during class read-alouds.
- Develop a class dictionary throughout the year that includes student definitions, drawings, and sample sentences, or design a collaborative word wall. Have students present their contributions to their peers.
- Ask students to tell you about key words in reading passages and how they're used.
 - For students working in Read Naturally programs:
 - Ask them how the key words relate to one another and what inferences they can make about the story based on the key words.
 - Ask them if there are any other words they think could have been identified as key words and explain why.
 - Remind them to use the key words in their predictions and retells.

Develop Academic Language

Academic language gives students the vocabulary and structures they need to understand and communicate complex ideas across subjects. By intentionally using/modeling, teaching, and reinforcing these words and phrases, teachers help students engage with grade-level texts, participate in discussions, and express their understanding with clarity and precision.

- Find an academic word list to reference and make an effort to incorporate those words throughout your instruction.
- Include academic language in lesson objectives.
- Scaffold instruction with sentence frames such as:
 - **According** to "____," ____ . This **fact demonstrates** ____ .
 - The **rate/percentage/pattern** of ____ **indicates** ____ .
 - **Therefore**, it is **reasonable** to **claim** that ____ .
- Encourage precision upgrades: replace vague words (e.g., thing, stuff, good) with domain terms; keep a "better word" list.
- Expose students to rubric language (precision of terms, accurate evidence, effective connectors), and use academic language when giving oral feedback.

Teach and Reinforce Comprehension Strategies

Comprehension strategies help students actively engage with text, therefore deepening their understanding of it. Teaching specific strategies equips students to process text more effectively, monitor their own thinking, and analyze complex ideas. **The Before, During, and After Reading lessons in Section 1 of Comprehension Builder provide explicit instruction and practice to help students learn comprehension strategies.** After completing the lessons, it's important to continue reinforcing students' use of the strategies throughout the year.

- Display the Before, During, and After Reading Strategies poster and reference it while working in other subject areas as you implement the strategies.
- "Catch" your students using the strategies, ask them to identify the strategy they used, and praise them for using it.
- During your read-aloud time, model expression and the use of the different strategies.
- Review and practice the before, during, and after reading strategies:

Strategies		Suggestions
Before	Activating Prior Knowledge	▪ Prior to reading a passage for the first time, ask students if they have ever read about or have any personal experience with the topic. ▪ Complete a quick K–G–W (what we Know, our Gaps, what we Want to learn) on a sticky note and revisit after reading.
	Learning Key Words	▪ Connect the key words to morphology and/or cognates (e.g., geo = earth; evaporation/ evaporación).
	Making a Prediction	▪ Scaffold instruction by first allowing oral predictions, then writing together, and then providing sentence starters or frames (e.g., I think this story will be about...because...). ▪ When checking predictions that students write, ask students how they decided on what they wrote.
During	Questioning	▪ While working on fluency with repeated readings, have students draw out and answer one Teacher Question Card (found in the Section 1 folder of the USB drive) between readings.
	Visualizing	▪ Remind students before reading to consider what they wonder about, what they visualize, etc., while they are reading. After reading, ask them to share with you or with a partner.
	Making Inferences	▪ Discuss connections within the text that could lead to a justified inference. ▪ Teach the equations: ◦ Text Clues + What I Know = Inference ◦ Text Clues + Text Clues = Inference
	Monitoring, Clarifying, and Fix-up	▪ Have students write a prediction before practicing fluency with repeated readings. Then, briefly touch base between practice readings and ask students to remind you what their prediction was. Follow up by asking if their prediction was correct and encourage them to elaborate on their answer. ▪ Teach and model markings to use in the margin, for example: ? (confusing) ★ (new idea) ! (important) ↔ (connection)
After	Answering Questions	▪ See the question types section on page 13.
	Retelling and Summarizing	▪ Scaffold instruction by first allowing oral retells, then writing together, and then providing sentence starters or frames (e.g., "This text is mostly about..."). ▪ Have students turn and talk to their neighbor for one minute (each student taking 30 seconds) to tell the other about what they're reading. Model your expectations of what makes for a quality sharing. When the minute is up, ask students to share what they learned about their partner's reading material.

Teach and Reinforce Text Structures

Understanding common text structures helps readers recognize patterns and see relationships between ideas. Explicit instruction in text structures gives students a framework for organizing information, making it easier to comprehend, and retain, what they read.

- Many schools use a variety of graphic organizers in their core reading instruction. Collaborate with core teachers to identify organizers that the students are accustomed to using and have them available in your setting.
- Model text structure identification during read-alouds. Name the structure and point to the signal words/features.
- Teach, review, and discuss a variety of text structures/elements:

Structures/Elements		Suggestions
Fiction	Characters	▪ Make a list of characters and choose a few to create character profiles for. Include a sketch, 2–3 traits, and a relevant text quote for each.
	Point of View/ Narrator	▪ Identify the narrator (1st/2nd/3rd, limited/omniscient/objective) and underline a line in the text that proves it.
	Setting	▪ Circle or underline words and phrases that define the setting. ▪ Draw or describe the scene and/or fill out a "setting snapshot" with boxes for time, place, environment, and context.
	Goal/Motivation	▪ Complete: "___ needs/wants ___ because ___ ." for important characters/groups.
	Problem/Conflict	▪ Name the conflict type (person/self/nature/society) and find supporting text evidence.
	Plot/Action	▪ Make a 4–6 panel "so/but/then" storyboard of key events; caption each with a page/line reference.
	Turning Point/ Climax	▪ Have students identify the climax and do performative readings of that section of text.
	Resolution	▪ Have students explain the resolution in their own words. List potential costs and benefits of the resolution. Ask students to come up with alternative resolutions.
	Symbols/Themes	▪ Discuss the theme(s) as a group. Have students find a symbol in the text (or come up with their own) that aligns with the theme. Create a mini-presentation with the theme, symbol, and relevant text evidence/quotes.
Nonfiction	Description/ Definition	▪ Fill out a graphic organizer with spaces for the definition, a picture, an example, a non-example, etc.
	Sequence/Process	▪ Identify signal words (e.g., first, next, then, earlier, etc.) while reading. ▪ Have students complete a retell where they recount the events in chronological order. Then, have them identify the differences from the original text.
	Compare-Contrast	▪ Fill out a T-chart or Venn diagram. ▪ Identify signal words (e.g., both, alike, but, unlike) while reading and/or use common signal words to write a summary/retell.
	Cause-Effect	▪ Have students match pictures representing causes and effects. ▪ Create a cause → effect chain, and brainstorm additional possible effects.
	Problem-Solution	▪ Identify the problem and brainstorm possible solutions while reading. After finishing the text, identify which solution was implemented and discuss its costs and benefits.
	Categorization	▪ Encourage two valid ways to group the same items (e.g., by function vs. by parts; by habitat vs. by diet) to build flexible thinking.
	Question-Answer	▪ Name the central question early. Turn the title/heading into a question. After reading, answer that question with references from the text.
	Claim-Evidence	▪ Find three evidence snippets from the text; students use them to write a claim.
	Cycle	▪ Draw a diagram with the stages; note consequences if a stage is disrupted.

Teach and Reinforce a Variety of Question Types

Comprehension grows when students engage with questions that address different levels of understanding. Teaching them how to respond to a variety of question types equips readers to think critically and demonstrate their learning in academic settings. **The Question-Specific Comprehension Lessons in Section 2 of Comprehension Builder provide explicit instruction and practice to help students learn about and explore how to respond to a variety of question types.** After completing the lessons, it's important to continue reinforcing students' understanding of and ability to respond to specific question types throughout the year.

- For students using Read Naturally programs or other programs that report on question types, review students' comprehension graphs with them and set goals together based on gaps.
- Have students practice generating their own questions.
- Incorporate specific question types in other subject areas for additional practice.
- Monitor whether students are struggling with a particular question type and provide targeted support:

Question Type	Tell the student...
Detail (Literal)	▪ A detail question asks for a piece of information or a fact stated in the text of the story. ▪ Skim the text to find words from the question, and then look for the answer in the text: It's right there!
Detail (Literal) (Sequencing)	▪ A sequencing question requires you to put events from the story into chronological order. ▪ Chronological order means the order the events happened, which is not always the order they are talked about in the story. ▪ After you arrange the answer choices in chronological order, reread the events to make sure they happened in that order.
Detail (Literal) (Cloze)	▪ A cloze question requires you to select words from a list to complete a paragraph about the story. ▪ After you select the answers, reread each sentence to check that the paragraph makes sense.
Short Answer	▪ Short-answer questions require you to write one or more sentences to answer the question. ▪ Notice important words in the question that tell you what needs to be in your answer. For example: when/time, why/reason, how/explanation, what/a thing or event, not/an opposite, and number words/how many. ▪ Begin your answer by restating the question. Then, write your answer in complete sentences.
Vocabulary (Context)	▪ This type of vocabulary question requires you to figure out the meaning of a word from the sentences near the word. ▪ Read the sentences surrounding the word and look for clues about the word's meaning. ▪ Try the selected answer choice in place of the word in the sentence.
Vocabulary (Matching)	▪ This type of vocabulary question requires you to match each word to a definition, synonym, or antonym. ▪ Word parts such as a prefixes or suffixes often give clues to the meaning of a word. ▪ Check to see if there is a smaller word you already know in the word.
Main Idea	▪ The main idea is a statement that tells what the story is mostly about. ▪ All the answer choices could be true, but only one is the main idea; the others are often just key details. ▪ Read each answer choice and decide if it's a detail or the main idea.
Fact and Opinion	▪ A fact can be proven true or false; an opinion is a belief or judgment. ▪ Look for clue words that signal fact: proven, documented, scientifically, or words that signal opinion: think, feel, should, best/worst.
Cause and Effect	▪ The cause is why something happened; the effect is what happened. ▪ Look for clue words that signal cause: because, when, if, or words that signal effect: therefore, then, so.

Compare and Contrast	- Think about how things are alike (compare) and different (contrast). - Look for clue words that signal comparison: both, alike, also, or words that signal contrast: differ, but, unlike, less/more than.
Author's Purpose	- Why did the author write this? - Common purposes are to persuade, to inform, or to entertain. - Look for words that signal persuasion: should, best/worst clearly, words that signal information: state, report, is/was/are, or words that signal entertainment: tell, imagine, funny.
Graphical Information	- These questions use charts, graphs, maps, tables, timelines, diagrams, etc. - Carefully examine all the elements of the graphic and try to find connections in the text.
Making Inferences	- An inferential question often requires you to put together pieces of information in the story to find the answer. Sometimes, it may require you to use information you already know from outside the story. - The answer is not directly in the text, so you may need to search for clues in the story. - Draw a conclusion based on facts from the story. - Say, "I think the answer is _____ because the author told me _____." - Begin your answer by restating the question. Then, write your answer in complete sentences.
Retelling and Summarizing	- The summary question requires you to write either: - A short sentence that contains the common idea in each of the three listed facts. - Three facts from the story that support a summary statement. - Reread your answer to be sure you used your own words and only ideas from this story.

Note: Another source to consult for designing effective comprehension instruction is the IES Practice Guide: Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade, (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED512029.pdf>), which explains the following five recommendations in depth):

1. Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies.
2. Teach students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content.
3. Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of text.
4. Select texts purposefully to support comprehension development.
5. Establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension.

See page 1 of the practice guide for a quick-reference sheet regarding the five recommendations.

Reading Comprehension Strategy Lessons

When we teach students how to think when they are reading, we are teaching reading comprehension strategies. Teaching these strategies helps turn readers into learners who actively construct meaning. The Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) Practice Guide: Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (Shanahan et al., 2010) defines a reading comprehension strategy as the intentional application of a cognitive routine before, during, or after reading a text, such as the intentional mental actions while reading that improve reading comprehension and deliberate efforts to better understand or remember what is being read.

Section 1 of Comprehension Builder includes a set of lessons focused on the research-based strategies identified in the IES Practice Guide: Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (Shanahan et al., 2010) for better comprehension, organized into three categories: those used before reading to prepare the mind for meaning-making, those used during reading to deepen understanding, and those used after reading to reflect, consolidate, and extend comprehension.

Teachers may use these lessons to explicitly teach strategies that students can carry into any reading context and to support the development of healthy reading habits that foster deep engagement and meaningful interaction with text.

Lessons in This Section:

- Before-Reading Strategies
- During-Reading Strategies
- After-Reading Strategies



Before, During, and After-Reading Strategies Poster

You can use this poster for orientation during lesson previews and draw attention to it during activities as you see fit. A copy of this poster is available on the USB drive.

Question-Specific Comprehension Lessons

Full comprehension involves understanding vocabulary and syntax, accessing background knowledge, making connections, and applying critical reasoning. To truly understand text, readers must be able to approach it from multiple angles—identifying key details, recognizing relationships, evaluating ideas, and summarizing the content and intent. These layers of comprehension give students different ways to interpret and interact meaningfully with what they read.

Students are frequently assessed on their ability to demonstrate these varied aspects of comprehension. Standardized tests, classroom assignments, and academic discussions often rely on carefully constructed questions that target specific angles of understanding. To respond successfully, students must not only apply the necessary reasoning but also navigate the academic language of the questions themselves. Comprehending will also be important throughout the students' lives, outside of and long after their time in school.

For teachers, comprehension questions serve an important dual purpose. They help students practice their application of many components of comprehension, while also providing insight into where students may be struggling. Section 2 of Comprehension Builder includes lessons that directly teach students how to respond to a variety of comprehension questions, with explicit instruction and ample practice opportunities. Teachers may use these lessons to strengthen students' comprehension skills in preparation for comprehension assessments, or on an as-needed basis to provide targeted support when gaps are identified.

Lessons in This Section:

- Detail (Literal)
- Short Answer
- Vocabulary
- Main Idea
- Fact and Opinion
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast
- Author's Purpose
- Graphical Information
- Making Inferences
- Retelling and Summarizing



Types of Comprehension Questions Poster

You can use this poster for orientation during lesson previews in this section and draw attention to it during activities as you see fit. A copy of this poster is available on the USB drive.

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Comprehension Builder is a **practical resource** that makes it **easy for teachers** to effectively and efficiently develop lasting comprehension skills for readers, regardless of age, instructional setting, time constraints, or areas of need.

LESSONS:

SECTION 1

Comprehension Strategies

- Before-Reading Strategies
- During-Reading Strategies
- After-Reading Strategies

SECTION 2

Question-Specific Lessons

- Detail (Literal)
- Short Answer
- Vocabulary
- Main Idea
- Fact and Opinion
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast
- Author's Purpose
- Graphical Information
- Making Inferences
- Retelling and Summarizing

The lessons in Comprehension Builder are designed to facilitate differentiated instruction and allow for flexible implementation. Teachers may choose to teach the lessons sequentially, separately, concurrently with other programs, or as needed.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Lesson Book
- USB Drive
- Posters
- 18 Practice Stories
- 55 Activities
- 14 Lessons
- 250+ Resources