



GRADES K-3

LITERACY

ACHIEVEMENT ACADEMIES

GRADE 2

Comprehension

Section Objectives



This session will enhance your knowledge of explicit and effective instructional practices for

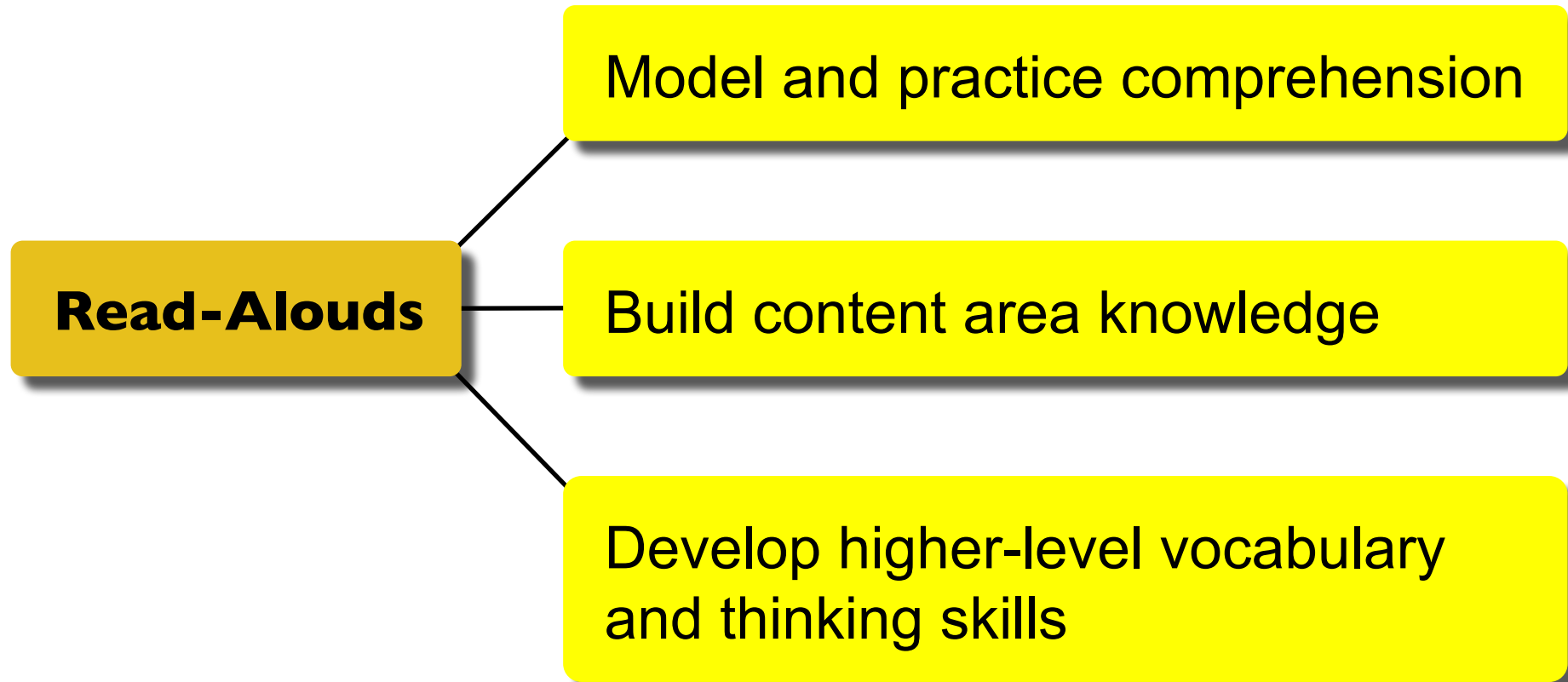
- building students' background knowledge,
- developing students' ability to make inferences,
- applying comprehension strategies, and
- creating an engaging and motivating environment for practicing reading comprehension.

The Importance of Comprehension

“Reading is a complex process that develops over time ... Emphasize text comprehension from the beginning, rather than waiting until students have mastered ‘the basics’ of reading ... Beginning readers, as well as more advanced readers, must understand that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension.”

— National Institute for Literacy, 2001, p. 55

What We Know From Research: Use Read-Alouds



Using Effective Questioning and Thinking Aloud: Example



- Which **Level 2 vocabulary words** would you explicitly teach?
- What **background knowledge** would students need to understand this passage?
- What **specific thinking processes** could you teach with this text (e.g., comprehension strategies, inference making, character analysis)?
- **Where would you stop to ask questions** to get students thinking deeply about what's happening in the text?
- **What questions** would you ask in these places?

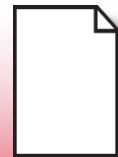
Include High-Quality Discussions



“Such discussions...go beyond simply asking and answering surface-level questions to a more thoughtful exploration of the text. Through this type of exploration, students learn how to argue for or against points raised in the discussion, resolve ambiguities in the text, and draw conclusions or inferences about the text.”

— Shanahan et al., 2010, p. 23

High-Quality Discussions



- Select a text that allows for compelling discussions. Be sure to consider your instructional purpose and specific student needs.
- Develop questions that go beyond the text's surface level.
- Have follow-up questions prepared to help students delve deeper into a text's meaning.
- Have students work in structured small groups to think more critically and independently about a text.

Planning Effective Read-Alouds to Support Diverse Learners



Read-Aloud Daily Cycle

Preparation for Each Text

Choose a narrative or informational text, “chunk” it into sections of 200 to 250 words, and for each chunk, select three or four vocabulary concepts that students do not already know. Use a culturally responsive lens when selecting texts.

Before Reading

Repeat the routine daily until the text is complete.

STEP 1: Preview the selection and introduce the three to four vocabulary words for today's chunk of text. Use nonlinguistic representations and contextualized examples to teach the words. Activate students' prior knowledge and make predictions.

During Reading

STEP 2: Read the selection aloud to students without stopping, using appropriate prosody and expression.

STEP 3: Have students retell the text and make one inference, scaffolding their use of target vocabulary when possible. Ensure that all students have opportunities to use and practice language through pair interactions.

STEP 4: Reread the text, directing students to listen for target vocabulary and discuss meaning. Guide students in creating their own sentences using the vocabulary word.

After Reading

STEP 5: Extend comprehension through deep processing of vocabulary knowledge and text content. Have students turn and talk about the text in relation to their lives. Together with students write a gist statement that gives the main idea for that chunk of text. Extend comprehension by having students write in a reader's response journal. Use prompts such as, “What do you think will happen next in the story? Write a prediction in your journal.”

Last Day for Each Text

Choose four to five vocabulary words from previous days that were particularly challenging and in need of further study. Reread or retell the entire story.

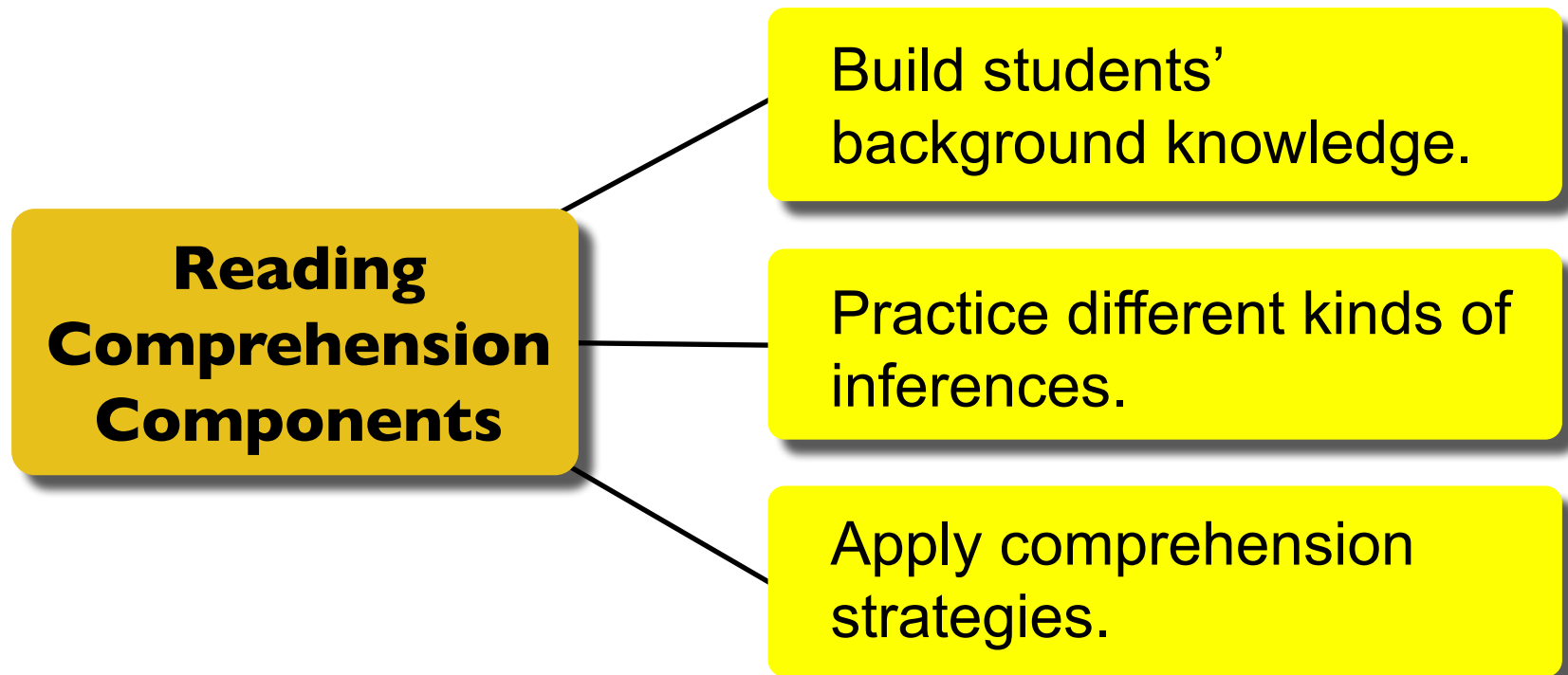
Adapted from Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004. Adapted with permission from Project ELITE, The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2016. Original document available at XXXXX.

What We Know From Research: Comprehension Processes

“The teacher needs to consider not only which comprehension skills a child will benefit from most, but also how those might fruitfully be combined with other skills to develop that child’s comprehension overall...The teacher needs to know about the component processes of reading comprehension to teach them when they are relevant, not in a fixed order.”

— Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015, p. 110

Reading Comprehension: Components



English Language Arts and Reading TEKS



Oral and Written Conventions Strand

Conventions
K-12

Handwriting,
Capitalization,
and Punctuation
K-12

Spelling
K-12



Reading Strand

Beginning
Reading Skills
K-3

Fluency
1-8

Vocabulary
Development
K-12

Comprehension of
Literary Text
K-12

Media Literacy
K-12

Print Awareness
K-2

Comprehension of Text/
Independent Reading
1-5

Phonological
Awareness
K-1

Comprehension of
Informational Text
K-12

Phonics
K-3

Comprehension
Skills (Fig. 19)
K-12

Strategies
K-3

Building Students' Background Knowledge

“All aspects of a skill grow and develop as subject-matter familiarity grows. So we kill several birds with one stone when we teach skills by teaching stuff. Moreover, there is evidence that by teaching solid content in reading classes we increase students' reading comprehension more effectively than by any other method.”

— Hirsch, 2003, p. 28

Importance of Background Knowledge: Example

The procedure is quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to a lack of facilities, that is the next step. Otherwise, you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well. At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life.

— Bransford & Johnson, 1972, p. 722

Importance of Background Knowledge: Example

Doing Laundry

The procedure is quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to a lack of facilities, that is the next step. Otherwise, you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well. At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life.

— Bransford & Johnson, 1972, p. 722

Building Background Knowledge

- To build background knowledge, use content-rich texts to teach reading.
- Additionally, select and read texts within a theme.
 - Use texts from various genres.
 - Explicitly make connections across texts.
 - Use graphic organizers to model connections.

Building Background Knowledge: Use Texts Across Genres

Literary Texts

- Folktales, fables, fairy tales, myths, legends
- Poetry
- Fiction
- Literary nonfiction
- Drama

Nonfiction Texts

- Expository essays
- Procedural texts
- Persuasive pieces

Media

- Advertisements
- Newspapers
- Websites

Building Background Knowledge: Content-Rich Texts Within a Theme



- What themes and topics can you plan?
 - Science topics
 - Themes related to historical events or figures, current events, etc.
 - Themes related to social or emotional issues, relationships, community, or family
- What texts can you use within each?
 - Literary texts (fiction, poetry, etc.)
 - Informational texts (expository essays, persuasive essays, etc.)

Making Inferences

“Inference-making involves making connections and/or seeing elements of meaning that are not directly stated.”

— Carlisle & Rice, 2002, p. 27

Practicing Different Kinds of Inferences

- For effective readers, inferences usually occur automatically.
- Inferences can occur both within a text and across texts.
- Text structure can be used to build meaning.
- Readers must fill in gaps within a text by using background knowledge.

Examining Text Structures to Support Making Inferences



- For narratives:
 - Discuss relationships among characters, setting, and events.
 - If possible, link relationships to a broader theme.
- For informational texts:
 - Look for specific structures, like sequence or compare and contrast.
 - Use key words to identify text structure.
- Graphic organizers to analyze text structures:
 - Story maps
 - Character analysis charts
 - Webs, flow charts, Venn diagrams, etc.

Using Comprehension Purpose Questions to Support Making Inferences

Comprehension purpose questions help students...

...set a purpose for reading.

...examine relationships among ideas.

...think actively as they read.

...monitor comprehension.

...review content for understanding.

Using Comprehension Purpose Questions



- Read the description of comprehension purpose questions.
- Underline words and phrases that help you answer this comprehension purpose question:
What is important to remember when setting a comprehension purpose question?
- Apply what you learned.

Teaching Inference: Using Effective Questioning and Thinking Aloud



- Plan a read-aloud with a specific purpose or theme in mind.
- Find places in the text to ask questions or think aloud about ideas related to the purpose or theme.
- Plan questions or think-alouds for each place.
- Allow students to discuss their thinking.
- After reading the text, tie ideas together in a discussion of the purpose or theme.

Activating Background Knowledge

- Done at a brisk pace before reading a text
- Can be taught by having students skim a text to determine the topic and then brainstorm what they already know about the topic

Teaching How to Fill the Gaps



- Think aloud to model making inferences when reading.
- Ask yourself questions as you read and have students help you answer those questions.
- Have students practice connecting what they read to what they already know by using an inference chart.

Comprehension Strategies



- Creating sensory images
- Making predictions
- Monitoring comprehension
- Identifying important information
- Summarizing
- Asking and answering questions

Comprehension Strategies (cont.)

What a Strategy Is

- Intentional mental actions during reading that improve reading comprehension
- Deliberate efforts by a reader to better understand or remember what is being read

What a Strategy Is Not

- Instructional activities such as worksheets, which rarely include instruction on what students should do to improve comprehension
- Practice of skills such as sequencing or drawing conclusions that lacks explicit instruction on how to think in these ways during reading

Application Is Key

“Teachers should explain to students how to use several strategies that have been shown to improve reading comprehension because different strategies cultivate different kinds of thinking...Teachers should explain how the strategies can help the students learn from text—as opposed to having them memorize the strategies—and how to use the strategies effectively.”

— Shanahan et al., 2010, p. 12

Applying Comprehension Strategies: Creating Sensory Images



Creating a mental image of what is described in the text

- Helps poor readers, especially those with memory difficulties
- Can be used with both literary and nonfiction texts, but works best with literary texts
- Should be combined with other strategies like identifying important information and generating questions

Applying Comprehension Strategies: Making Predictions



Connecting textual information with prior knowledge to anticipate what will happen or what will be learned next in a text

- Can be used both before reading to activate background knowledge and during reading to make elaborative inferences
- Should be combined with other strategies like identifying important information and generating questions

Applying Comprehension Strategies: Monitoring Comprehension



Attending to a breakdown in comprehension and doing something about it

- Requires reader to actively build a mental model based on text information
- Requires a need for coherence—a reader must care that comprehension has broken down to do something about it
- Uses “fix-up” strategies, including creating sensory images and questioning

Applying Comprehension Strategies: Identifying Important Information



Putting together details and ideas in text to figure out what is most important to focus on and learn

- Begin by teaching retelling and paraphrasing.
- As students master these strategies, teach them how to distinguish main ideas from details.
- Teach students a specific strategy for identifying main ideas. One example is get the gist.

Applying Comprehension Strategies: Summarizing



Putting together the most important pieces of information from across a text and saying or writing them succinctly

- Make an explicit connection between the main idea strategy and writing a summary.
- Explicitly teach summary writing to improve both reading comprehension and writing.

Applying Comprehension Strategies: Asking and Answering Questions



Developing and answering questions about information in a text

- Have students practice this strategy both during and after reading.
- Explicitly teach students how to ask questions at different levels.
 - “Right there” questions
 - “Think and search” questions
 - “Author and me” questions

What Have We Learned So Far?



Snowball Fight

1. Think about one thing you have learned related to comprehension instruction.
2. Write it on a sheet of notebook paper.
3. Crumple it into a ball.
4. Stand up and form a circle with your fellow participants.
5. Throw your ball into the middle of the circle.
6. Pick up a snowball and be ready to read it to the group.

Explicit Comprehension Strategy Instruction

- Start with simpler texts and then move to more complex texts.
- Model how to use the strategy through think-alouds (“I do”).
 - Identify places in the text to stop and think aloud.
 - Tell students that you will stop occasionally to talk about what you are thinking.
 - As you read, stop in the places you have marked to ask questions and share your thinking.

Explicit Comprehension Strategy Instruction (cont.)



- During or after reading, fill out a graphic organizer to summarize your thinking.
- After you model a strategy and have students practice it with you many times, have them practice it in partners or small groups (“We do”).
- Have students practice a strategy by itself, but eventually put it together with other strategies for students to use together (“We do” and “You do”).

Create a Motivating Context for Teaching Reading Comprehension



- Help students understand the purpose and benefits of reading.
- Create opportunities for students to see themselves as successful readers.
- Provide students reading choices.
- Provide students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers.

Systematic Comprehension Instruction



- Use read-alouds with effective questioning, thinking aloud, and student discussions.
- Build students' background knowledge.
- Explicitly teach and have students practice using comprehension strategies.
- Create an engaging and motivating environment for teaching and practicing reading comprehension.

Consider Diversity: English Language Learners



- English language learners can learn to derive meaning from texts and practice using language to discuss texts.
- Scaffold instruction to promote language comprehension and use.
 - Take into account students' different levels of English proficiency.
 - Consider prior knowledge and explain unfamiliar terms and topics.
 - Explicitly teach and model comprehension strategies.
 - Monitor understanding frequently.

Assessing Comprehension



- Use formal assessments, such as the following:
 - Retelling what is remembered from a text that's been read
 - Completing cloze or maze assessments
 - Answering multiple-choice questions
 - Responding to open-ended response questions orally or in writing
- Also use informal assessments, such as the following:
 - Listening to student discussions
 - Examining student responses on graphic organizers

Taking a Closer Look



- Examine the comprehension lesson in Handout 20.
- Work with your tablemates to complete Handout 21.

Remember

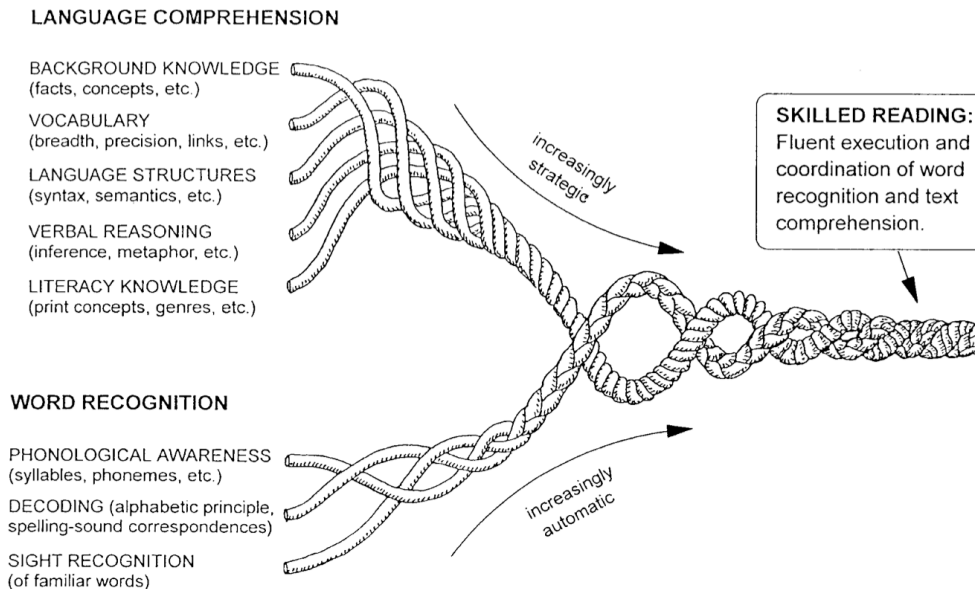
“It is a mistake to assume that having learned about various procedures or strategies to aid comprehension and learning, the teacher’s job is done. A comprehensive plan is needed. A teacher needs to map out the curricular goals for a course, and then plans for units and specific lessons can be made.”

— Carlisle & Rice, 2002, p. 6

The Reading Rope



How do these instructional practices benefit English language learners, struggling students, and gifted students?



Scarborough, 2001

My Synthesis and Summary



Three to four **example activities and lessons** you want to use

Three to four **workstation ideas**

Comprehension

Two to three ideas you want to use with **struggling learners**

At least one scaffold you will provide to **English language learners** who need it