



**Session 6:
Building Reading
Comprehension through
Writing Summaries**

*MS/HS Literacy Teacher Professional
Development Series*

Recap

In our last session, we spent time...

- defining reading comprehension and why it is a complex process.
- describing the skills that make up reading comprehension and what is required to be an effective comprehender of text.

Today's Objective

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ★ apply the process of writing summaries in the classroom to support reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

- Text comprehension is a dynamic and interactive process involving several sources of information and knowledge.
- “Successful comprehension of written text enables the reader to acquire and apply new knowledge, to experience other (fictional) worlds, to communicate successfully, and to attain academic success.”

Source: Cain, 2007



SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE (2001)

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

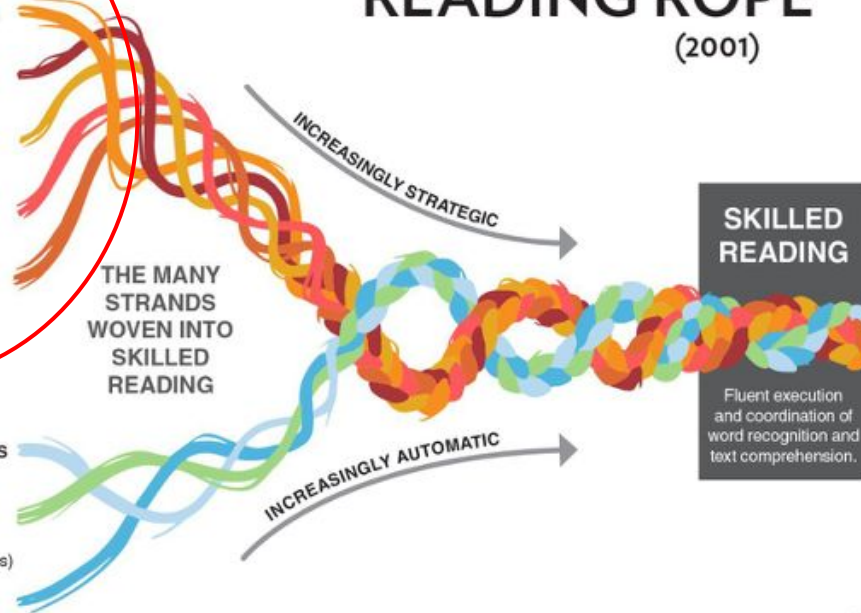
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)



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STRANDS
WOVEN INTO
SKILLED
READING

**SKILLED
READING**

Fluent execution
and coordination of
word recognition and
text comprehension.



Characteristics of Good Reading Comprehenders



- Good comprehenders are able to perform:
 - integration and inference
 - comprehension monitoring
 - knowledge and use of text structure
 - memory

SOURCE: Cain, 2007

Building Strong Comprehenders

- Summarizing what has been read
- Generating questions to monitor comprehension (done by students)
- Using context clues to make inferences
- Combination of lexical inference and question generation
- Offering several opportunities to communicate to build background knowledge or oral comprehension
- There is no one “magical” strategy



SOURCE: Cain, 2009

Steps in Supporting Reading Comprehension

1. Select carefully the text to use when first beginning to teach a given strategy.
2. Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts, not just to one text.
3. Ensure that the text is appropriate for the reading level of students.
4. Use direct and explicit instruction for teaching students how to use comprehension strategies.
5. Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that the students are learning.
6. When teaching comprehension strategies, make sure students understand that the goal is to understand the content of the text.

SOURCE: [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#)

Direct and Explicit Instruction of the Strategy

- inform students of what strategy they will learn
- explain why it is important to learn
- model use of strategy with think-aloud while interacting with the text
- provide guided practice with feedback
- provide independent practice with different types of text

SOURCE: [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#)

Summary Writing Strategies

- **SWBST:** Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then
- **5 Ws, 1 H:** What, When, Where, Why, Who, and How
- **First, Then, Finally:** helps determine a sequence of events by what happened and who was involved first, in the middle, and at the end
- **The Gist:** can be done where you allot the students a certain amount of words (12) or a certain amount of time to get the most important ideas expressed
- **12 Word Trick:** pull 12 of the most essential words from the passage, categorize them and use them to write a 2-3 sentence summary

12 Word Trick

First determine if you are writing a summary for a literary text or a non-fiction text and provide students with the key details in both types of text:

Literary Text Look For:	Non-Fiction Text Look For:
character names	topic
setting details	defined terms
descriptive words	important ideas
words that describe the problem	process steps
words about important events	facts and numbers
theme or meaning	repeated terms/ideas

SOURCE: Plain Talk: *Writing: Responding to Text to Improve Reading Comprehension*, Austin, 2022

12 Word Trick

1. Read the passage.
2. Select 12 words based on the clues in the table for the type of text you are summarizing. (It is essential to model why you chose the words you did when doing the think-aloud for your students.)
3. Sort the 12 words by category. The purpose of the categories is to help group words by idea bands when constructing sentences.
4. Construct 2-3 sentences using the 12 words that summarizes the text.

SOURCE: Plain Talk: *Writing: Responding to Text to Improve Reading Comprehension*, Austin, 2022

Let's Practice...

- Model how to implement the strategy. Include your think-aloud and why you chose the words you did. Start with one paragraph at a time or a smaller piece of text.
- Use a gradual release model so that students can have the opportunity to do it as a group with feedback before releasing them. Monitor the proficiency of the class as you do this. If the majority of the class is proficient, you can move to an independent level. If not, consider modeling again or giving another opportunity for whole-group.

Practice Continued

A rich and meaningful curriculum, in which students are exposed to a variety of texts as they learn concepts in science, literature, social studies, history, the arts, and culture, should provide the context for developing reading and writing skills. Comprehension strategies should not be taught in isolation but used as necessary to enhance understanding of text assigned for content learning. Useful comprehension strategies to embed in content reading include prediction of outcomes, summarizing, clarification, questioning, and visualization; these can be modeled explicitly by the teacher and practiced overtly if students are not comprehending well or if they approach reading comprehension passively. Vocabulary is best taught with a variety of complementary methods, both direct and incidental, designed to explore the relationships among words and the relationships among word structure, origin, and meaning. Of course, children also benefit from access to full libraries and incentives to read independently.

Source: [Teaching Reading is Rocket Science](#)

 Believes

Practice Continued

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Practice Continued

12 Words

curriculum variety texts developing reading	writing skills comprehension strategies embed modeled explicitly	vocabulary relationships read independently
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12 Words by Category

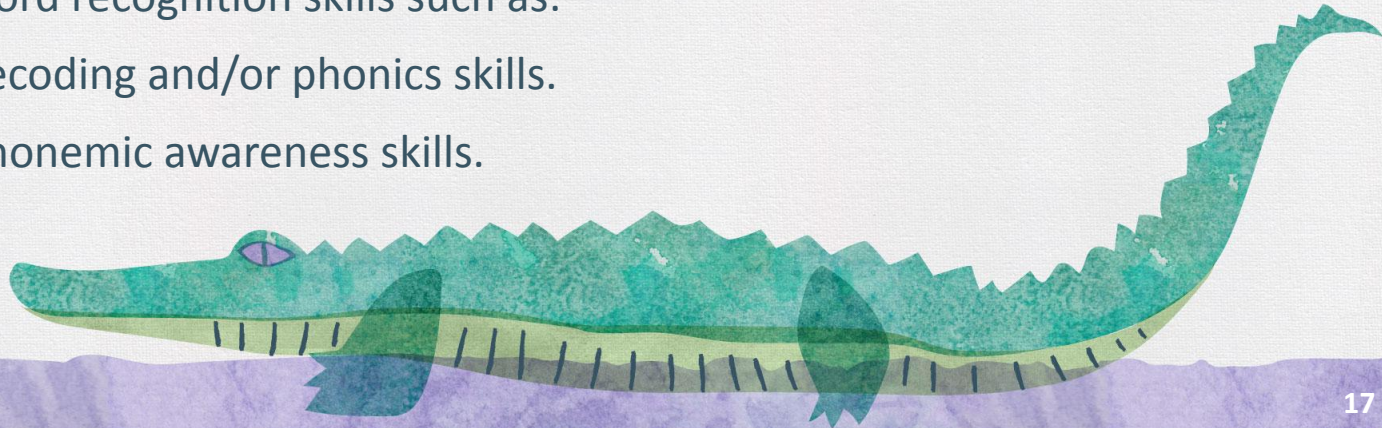
curriculum variety texts embed	comprehension strategies vocabulary relationships read independently	modeled explicitly develop reading writing skills
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2-3 Sentence Summary

A curriculum with a variety of texts, and embedded strategies are needed to support and develop strategic readers. Comprehension strategies, vocabulary development that focuses on relationships between words and independent reading are used to support reading development. The strategies need to be modeled explicitly in order to develop reading and writing skills.

Next Steps if Not Progressing

- If students are still not progressing with the small group instruction for reading comprehension, then they may need to be referred to the school's administration or SBLC team for next steps.
- Very little or no progress could indicate that student needs help with word recognition skills such as:
 - decoding and/or phonics skills.
 - phonemic awareness skills.



Final Thoughts

- Summarizing is a key strategy to improving reading comprehension.
- Summarizing can be taught whole-class as well as through small groups for those students who need more support.



Engage



- Think about an upcoming lesson. What text will you use to teach students how to summarize?
- How will this strategy lead to gains outside of just reading comprehension in your classroom?

Question or Suggestions?

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