<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**The Big Picture**  1
- The Reading Deficit  2
- The Brain and Reading  4
- Scientific Approach to Reading Instruction  6
- Essential Components of Reading Instruction  7
- Reading Assessment  10
- Downward Spiral of Reading Failure  13
- Academic Language  14
- Differentiated Instruction  16

**SECTION I: Word Structure**  19

**Chapter 1: Structure of English**  21
what?  
- Phonemes  22
- Consonant Phoneme Classifications  24
- Vowel Phoneme Classifications  26
- Sound/Spellings  28
- Syllables  36
- Onset-Rime  38
- Morphemes  42

**Chapter 2: Structure of Spanish**  49
what?  
- Spanish Letter/Sound System  50
- Spanish Sound/Spelling Sequence  56
- Spanish Syllable Types and Patterns  58
- English/Spanish Language Differences  60
- Spanish/English Cross-Language Transfer  62
- English/Spanish Cognates  64
SECTION II: Early Literacy

Introduction 69

Chapter 3: Print Awareness 71
what? Print Awareness 72
Print Referencing 73
why? Print Awareness 74
when? Print Awareness 76
how? Sample Lesson Model:
Print Referencing in Shared Storybook Reading 78

Chapter 4: Letter Knowledge 83
what? Letter Knowledge 84
Letter-Name Iconicity 84
Letter Characteristics 86
Use of Letter Names to Learn Letter Sounds 88
Handwriting 89
why? Letter Knowledge 92
when? Letter Knowledge 94
how? Sample Lesson Models:
Letter Names and Shapes: Uppercase Letters 96
Handwriting: Uppercase Letter Forms 99
Letter Names and Shapes: Lowercase Letters 103
Handwriting: Lowercase Letter Forms 107
Letter-Sound Strategy 110

Chapter 5: Phonemic Awareness 115
what? Phonemic Awareness 116
Levels of Phonological Awareness 117
Effective Phonemic Awareness Instruction 120
why? Phonemic Awareness 122
when? Phonemic Awareness 124
how? Sample Lesson Models:
The Hungry Thing 128
Phonological Medley 132
SECTION III: Decoding and Word Study 159

Introduction 161
The Road to Reading Words 161
The Adams Model of Skilled Reading 162
Ehri’s Phases of Word Recognition Development 163
Decoding Is Connected with All Aspects of Reading 167

Chapter 6: Phonics 169
what? Phonics 170
Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction 170
Approaches to Phonics Instruction 172
Good Phonics Instruction 174
Effective Instructional Techniques 176
Phonics Scope & Sequence 177
Decoding Regular Words 179
Blending Routines 181
Automatic Word Recognition 183
Decodable Text 183
Phonograms 186
Word Work for Encoding and Decoding 187

why? Phonics 190

when? Phonics 192

how? Sample Lesson Models:
Integrated Picture Mnemonics 196
Introducing Consonant Digraphs 200
Introducing Short Vowels 204
Reading and Writing CVC Words 208
Reading and Writing CCVC Words 214
Reading and Writing CVCe Words 221
Reading and Writing Words with Vowel Combinations 226
Reading and Writing Words with Phonograms 232
Method for Reading Decodable Text 235

Chapter 7: Irregular Word Reading 241
what? Irregular Word Reading 242
High-Frequency Irregular Words in Printed Text 243
Teaching Irregular Word Reading 246
why? Irregular Word Reading 248
when? Irregular Word Reading 250
how? Sample Lesson Models:
Sound-Out Strategy 252
Spell-Out Strategy 255

Chapter 8: Multisyllabic Word Reading 259
what? Multisyllabic Word Reading 260
Syllabication 261
Syllable Types and Division Principles 263
Affixes as Syllables 266
Flexible Syllabication 267
why? Multisyllabic Word Reading 268
when? Multisyllabic Word Reading 270
how? Sample Lesson Models:
Introducing Open and Closed Syllables 272
Syllable Division Strategy: VC/CV 276
Syllable Division Strategy: VCV 283
Syllable Segmentation Strategy 292
Syllasearch Procedure 298
Introducing Affixes 304
Flexible Strategy for Reading Big Words 308
Root Word Transformation Strategy 314
SECTION V: Vocabulary

Introduction 407

Forms of Vocabulary 408
Extent of Word Knowledge 409
Vocabulary Size 410
The Vocabulary Gap 412
Links Between Vocabulary and Comprehension 414
Components of Vocabulary Instruction 415
Instruction for English-Language Learners (ELLs) 418

Chapter 11: Specific Word Instruction 419

what? Specific Word Instruction 420
Selecting Words to Teach 421
Rich and Robust Instruction 427

why? Specific Word Instruction 432

when? Specific Word Instruction 434

how? Sample Lesson Models:
  Text Talk: Read-Aloud Method 436
  Meaning Vocabulary: Direct Explanation Method 443
  Method for Independently Read Text 453
  Introducing Function Words 462
  Concept Picture Sort 467
  Semantic Map 470
  Semantic Feature Analysis 474
  Possible Sentences 478
  Word Map 481
  Keyword Method 484

Chapter 12: Word-Learning Strategies 487

what? Word-Learning Strategies 488
Dictionary Use 488
Morphemic Analysis 490
Cognate Awareness 496
Contextual Analysis 498
Combined Morphemic and Contextual Analysis 501

why?
Word-Learning Strategies 502
when?
Word-Learning Strategies 504
how?
Sample Lesson Models:
Using the Dictionary 506
PAVE Procedure 511
Concept of Definition Map 516
Compound Words 521
Word Families 524

Chapter 13: Word Consciousness 569

what?
Word Consciousness 570
Adept Diction 570
Word Play 575
Word Histories and Origins 576
why?
Word Consciousness 578

how?
Sample Lesson Models:
Animal Idioms 580
Latin and Greek Number Words 584
Antonym Scales 588
Web Word Web 592
Five-Senses Simile Web 595
Poetry as Word Play 598
Vocabulary Hotshot Notebook 601
SECTION VI: Comprehension 607

Introduction 609
Fundamentals of Comprehension 609
What Good Readers Do 613
Comprehension Strategies 614
Explicit Comprehension Strategies Instruction 624
Reader Response 629
Instruction for English-Language Learners (ELLs) 631

Chapter 14: Narrative Reading 633
what? Narrative Reading 634
Story Structure 634
Strategy Application 636
Multiple-Strategy Instruction Program: TSI 642
Reader Response 642
why? Narrative Reading 644
when? Narrative Reading 646
how? Sample Lesson Models:
Dialogic Reading: Picture Book Read-Aloud Method 648
Story Structure 651
TSI (Transactional Strategies Instruction) 659
Book Club: Writing in Response to Literature 677

Chapter 15: Informational Reading 681
what? Informational Reading 682
Informational Text Structure 683
Considerate Texts 686
Strategy Application 687
Multiple-Strategy Instruction Program: CSR 694
Reader Response 694
Motivation and Engagement with Reading 695
Web-Based Text 696
### Comprehensive Reading Model

- Three-Tier Model of Instruction 744
- Tier I: Core Reading Program 747
- Tier II: Strategic Supplemental Intervention 748
- Tier III: Intensive Intervention 749
- Response to Intervention (RtI) 751
- Plan for Implementation 753

### Resources

- Sample Texts 756
- Activity Masters 781
- Teaching Charts 797

- Connect to Theory Answer Key 800
- References 804
- Index 817
The updated and revised second edition of the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* combines the best features of an academic text and a practical hands-on teacher’s guide. It is an indispensable resource for teaching reading and language arts to both beginning and older struggling readers.

**WHAT? • WHY? • WHEN? • HOW?**

- **Letter Knowledge**
  - Letter names supply a springboard for learning and making associations between letters and their names. Knowing letter names allows students to make inferences about letter sounds after they learn letter names and the sounds they make.
  - Letter names are the components of written words. They represent sounds and are the building blocks of reading. Learning letter names is essential for building sight words and combinations of sight words, which are important in reading.

- **Manipulating alphabet letters**
  - Repeatedly asking questions that require students to participate in the process of retrieving letter names and sounds helps students develop the ability to recognize and spell words.

- **Reciting alphabet rhymes**
  - Singing the traditional version of the alphabet song, in which upper-case and lower-case letters are taught before lowercase letters (Hall and Moats, 1999), makes letter knowledge easier to develop.

- **Screening/ Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) Texas Education Agency**
  - The *Texas Primary Reading Inventory* can be used as an entire reading readiness test.

- **Diagnostic Screening AIMSweb: Letter Naming Fluency AIMSweb/Edformation, [http://aimsweb.com](http://aimsweb.com)**
  - When singing the traditional version of the alphabet song, young students need explicit instruction in letter naming in a sequence that begins with letter names, then formation, and finally letter sounds.

- **Phonemic Awareness**
  - The procedure outlined for teaching letter names can be used in one or more of the letters in the early grades. This type of assessment is usually administered in Kindergarten in the fall, winter, and spring, and in the early grades.

- **Informal Experiences**
  - Young students have difficulty mastering the links between letter shapes and their names. In reading, students need to develop the ability to draw on their letter knowledge in a sequence that begins with letter names and ends with letter sounds.

- **Connect to Theory**
  - User-friendly text
  - Plentiful charts and tables
  - Interactive activities for the reader
  - Opportunities to review and interpret content
Word-Learning Strategies

Guidelines for Using the Dictionary

Using the Dictionary

Focus students’ attention to the dictionary to find definitions and related words. They need to practice looking up words, which is a skill that will serve them well throughout their school years and longer. Use this activity to show that dictionaries come in many forms and sizes. You could adapt it and use it to enhance dictionary instruction in your classroom reading program.

Step 2: Determine the Dictionary Entry

1. How do you know how to locate words in the dictionary?

Prerequisite

Grade 2 and above

ability to effectively use the dictionary

LES S ON M O D E L S

Next, print the word "telescope" and instruct students to find "tele" in the dictionary. Explain that the word "tele" relates to the real-life function of television. Ask:

Can anyone think of another word having the word root "tele"? (distant or far away)

Guidelines for Using the Dictionary

Useful background information

Identification of research base

Support for English-language learners

Suggestions for corrective feedback

Lesson Model Features

• Focus and materials sidebar

• Explicit instruction

• Clear explanation

• Teacher modeling

• elementary teachers to enhance reading instruction in core reading programs

• middle and high school teachers to enhance language arts and content-area instruction

• college professors and students as a textbook for pre-service teacher education

• providers of professional development as an educational resource tool

• school or district administrators to support and facilitate effective literacy instruction

• literacy coaches as a resource for implementation

• teachers of English-language learners (ELLs) to support reading acquisition

• teachers of older struggling readers for research-based strategies tailored to individual needs

• new teachers as a comprehensive foundation for reading instruction

The Teaching Reading Sourcebook can be used by ...
SECTION III

Decoding and Word Study

CHAPTER 6
Phonics

CHAPTER 7
Irregular Word Reading

CHAPTER 8
Multisyllabic Word Reading
Learning to read words is fundamental to understanding text. Although proficient readers use multiple strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words, the most reliable strategy is decoding, the ability to convert a word from print to speech (Adams 1990). To ensure the development of proficiency in reading, students must be taught to decode regular words, to identify irregular words, and to use word parts to read multisyllabic words. This requires a strong foundation of print awareness and phonological awareness. The Road to Reading Words illustrates how awareness of spoken language (phonological awareness) merges with written language to contribute to automatic word recognition.

The three chapters in this section are all related to learning to read words. To clarify how these word reading skills contribute to proficient reading, Marilyn Jager Adams (1990) and Linnea Ehri (2002) provide explanations of how the reading process works.
The aim of phonics instruction is to help children acquire alphabetic knowledge and use it to read and spell words.

—EHRI, 2004

**Phonics**

Phonics is a method of instruction that teaches students the systematic relationship between the letters and letter combinations (graphemes) in written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language and how to use these relationships to read and spell words. Phonics instruction—which is intended for beginning readers in the primary grades and for older students who are struggling to read—can help students learn how to convert the printed word into its spoken form (National Reading Panel 2000). This process, called decoding, involves looking at a word and connecting the letters and sounds and then blending those sounds together. Phonics instruction also helps students to understand the alphabetic principle—written letters represent spoken sounds. In other words, letters and sounds work together in systematic ways to allow spoken language to be written down and written language to be read.

**Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction**

From 1997 to 1999, the National Reading Panel conducted a meta-analysis to review and evaluate research on the effectiveness of various approaches for teaching children to read (Ehri et al. 2001; National Reading Panel 2000). According to the panel’s findings, students who received systematic and explicit phonics instruction were better readers at the end of instruction than students who received nonsystematic or no phonics instruction (Ehri 2006; Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn 2001).
Understanding the terms systematic and explicit is important to planning and implementing effective phonics instruction. The hallmark of systematic phonics instruction is teaching a set of useful sound/spelling relationships in a clearly defined, carefully selected, logical instructional sequence (Armbruster et al. 2001). Systematic phonics lessons are organized in such a way that the logic of the alphabetic principle becomes evident, newly introduced skills are built on existing skills, and tasks are arranged from simplest to most complex. According to Marilyn Adams (2001), “the goal of systematic instruction is one of maximizing the likelihood that whenever children are asked to learn something new, they already possess the appropriate prior knowledge and understandings to see its value and to learn it efficiently.” Explicit instruction refers to lessons in which concepts are clearly explained and skills are clearly modeled, without vagueness or ambiguity. According to Carnine et al. (2006), “instruction is explicit when the teacher clearly, overtly, and thoroughly communicates to students how to do something.” Learning phonics through explicit teaching requires less inference and discovery on the part of students and is therefore more within their grasp (Chall and Popp 1996).
Based on numerous studies, it has been confirmed that phonics instruction is the best and most efficient way to teach students the alphabetic principle (National Reading Panel 2000). English is an alphabetic language; thus, knowing how written letters represent spoken sounds gives readers a systematic method of reading unfamiliar words when they are encountered in text. It is important to note that phonics instruction is just a means to an end—fluent reading and writing. Students’ ability to read words accurately and automatically enables them to focus on text comprehension because less mental energy is required to decode words and more mental energy can be devoted to making meaning from text (Freedman and Calfee 1984; LaBerge and Samuels 1974).

Phonics

Systematic phonics instruction helps students learn to read more effectively than nonsystematic phonics or no phonics instruction.

—National Reading Panel, 2000

Systematic phonics instruction is effective in preventing reading difficulties among at-risk students and in helping children overcome reading difficulties.

—Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001

Phonics instruction helps Kindergartners and first graders acquire the alphabetic knowledge they need to begin learning to spell.

—National Reading Panel, 2000

Research Findings . . .
Phonics instruction increases the ability to comprehend text for beginning readers and older students with reading disabilities.

—NATIONAL READING PANEL, 2000

That direct instruction in alphabet coding facilitates early reading acquisition is one of the most well-established conclusions in all of behavioral science.

—STANOVICH, 1994

Suggested Reading . . .


When to Teach

Phonics instruction exerts its greatest impact on beginning readers in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and therefore should be implemented at those grade levels (National Reading Panel 2000). Phonics instruction can begin as soon as students know the sounds of a few letters and should continue until students develop the ability to decode multisyllabic words with confidence and automaticity. The nature of instruction changes as students’ skills develop, shifting from sound-by-sound decoding to automatic recognition of letter patterns.

In a study of phonics instruction, Torgesen et al. (2001) found that students who did not master or become fluent in phonics skills by the end of first grade continued to struggle in the future in other areas of reading. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), phonics helped to prevent reading difficulties in beginners at risk for developing reading problems. In fact, effects were significantly greater in first graders at risk for future reading difficulties than in older students who had already become poor readers. Using phonics instruction to remediate reading problems may be harder than using phonics initially to prevent reading difficulties. According to Linnea Ehri (2004), “when phonics instruction is introduced after students have already acquired some reading skill, it may be more difficult to step in and influence how they read because doing so requires changing students’ habits.” For example, students may need to learn to suppress the habit of figuring out a word by using context, illustrations, and the first letter of the word.
Pacing
Research suggests that approximately two years of phonics instruction is typically sufficient for most students (National Reading Panel 2000). Because students differ in how quickly they develop phonics skills, there is no exact formula for how many sound/spellings to introduce per day or week. The pacing of phonics instruction is contingent upon student mastery. Thus, it is critical to adjust pacing to ensure student mastery. According to Carnine et al. (2006), introducing one new letter each second or third day may be an optimal pace for students with little beginning alphabet knowledge. For students who have more background knowledge, letters may be introduced at a quicker pace.

When to Assess and Intervene
Assessment and intervention for beginning readers should focus on understanding the alphabetic principle. Intervention for struggling beginning readers in Kindergarten and first grade should occur as soon as a reading problem is identified through assessment. For beginning readers, initial assessment should also include knowledge of sound/spelling correspondences and move gradually to decoding, including a student’s ability to read simple CVC words. Researchers suggest that the best way to assess a student’s ability to apply knowledge of sound/spelling correspondences in decoding words is to use measures of nonsense-word reading (Carver 2003; Share and Stanovich 1995). This is a good measure of decoding because when a student attempts to read a nonsense word, he or she must rely on phonemic decoding rather than memorization to pronounce the word.

Once beginning readers are able to use the decoding process to read unfamiliar words in print, they should begin developing automatic word recognition skill. Thus, in addition to measuring students’ ability to decode words and nonsense words, it is...
important to measure students’ level of decoding automaticity, which is defined by Berninger et al. (2006) as “effortless, context-free retrieval assessed by the rate of single word reading.” According to Berninger et al. (2003), those students who have not developed automaticity by the beginning of second grade are at risk for reading failure. Moreover, Hudson et al. (2006) suggest that when students are unable to use the decoding process fluently, their accuracy in reading connected text suffers. Failing to achieve automaticity in decoding skill can have long-term detrimental effects on all aspects of a student’s reading.

Older Struggling Readers
Although intervention should begin early for students who struggle to acquire reading skills, some students will not learn to read in the primary grades. For older readers who are not yet reading fluently, who struggle to recognize individual words, and who consequently have weak fluency and comprehension, intensive intervention is critical. Some of these students, non-readers and very weak readers, will need basic phonics instruction coupled with phonemic awareness development; others will need instruction in word attack skills. For these students, assessment data are crucial to guide teachers in filling in the skill gaps. Like beginning readers, assessment and instruction for older readers who are struggling should include phonemic awareness, sound/spelling correspondences, and decoding.

In addition to remediating phonemic decoding skills for older readers, as students advance into upper elementary and beyond, texts become more complex and require knowledge for decoding multisyllabic words. Thus, for older readers, assessment and instruction should go beyond simple phonics to include more advanced morphological and orthographic knowledge (Henry 2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Phonics Assessment</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) Subtest: Phonetic Decoding Efficiency (PDE)</td>
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<td>AIMSweb® Test of Early Literacy (TEL)</td>
<td>Harcourt Assessment</td>
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<td>Sopris West</td>
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<td>Texas Education Agency</td>
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<td>• Second Grade Kit: Word Reading</td>
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<td>Riverside Publishing</td>
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<td>• Word Recognition</td>
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<td>Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA)</td>
<td>Harcourt Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Pseudoword Decoding subtest</td>
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<td>Fox in a Box</td>
<td>CTB/McGraw-Hill</td>
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<td>Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised-Normative Update (WRMT-R/NU)</td>
<td>Pearson Education</td>
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<td>• Word Attack</td>
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**III. DECODING AND WORD STUDY**

**6. PHONICS**

**7. IRREGULAR WORD READING**

**8. MULTISYLLABIC WORD READING**
Explicit instruction in blending CVC words should begin after students know from four to six sound/spellings (Carnine et al. 2006). This sample lesson model targets reading and writing CVC words with the short vowel /a/. The same model can be adapted and used to introduce CVC words with other short vowels and to enhance phonics instruction in any commercial reading program.

**Phonemic Awareness with Letters**

Give each student letter cards /a/, /m/, /p/, /s/, /t/. Say: *I'm going to name some pictures and I want you to tell me the first sound you hear in each picture name. Then I want you to hold up the letter that makes that sound. Let's try one.* Show the picture card of the seal. Say: *This is a seal.* Ask: *What's the name of this picture?* (seal) Say: *Yes, seal.* Ask: *What is the first sound in seal?* (/s/) Say: *Yes, /s/.* Ask: *Can you hold up the letter that makes the /s/ sound?* Monitor students as they hold up the letter s. Follow the same procedure with picture cards of the ant, monkey, paper, and number 10.
Model—Sound-by-Sound Blending

Say: Today I am going to show you how to blend words sound by sound. Watch me blend the first word.

1. Print the first letter in the word mat on the board. Say: Sound? Simultaneously point to the letter m and say: /mmm/.

2. Print the letter a after the letter m on the board. Say: Sound? Simultaneously point to the letter a and say: /aaa/.

3. Point just to the left of ma and say: Blend. Then scoop your finger under the m and a as you blend the sounds together without a break: /mmmaaa/.

4. Print the letter t after the letter a on the board. Say: Sound? Simultaneously point to the letter t and say: /t/.

5. Point just to the left of mat and say: Blend. Then scoop your finger from left to right under the whole word as you slowly blend the sounds together without a break: /mmmaaat/.

6. Finally, point just to the left of mat and say: Now watch as I read the whole word. Then quickly sweep your finger under the whole word and say mat. Say: A mat is like a rug. It covers a floor and people can wipe their feet on it. Mat.

Repeat the same routine with the word pat.
**Lead—Sound-by-Sound Blending**

Say: *Now I am going to lead you in sounding out words. You're going to sound out some words along with me.*

1. Print the first letter in the word *tap* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Point to the letter *t* and have students respond along with you: */t/.*

2. Print the letter *a* after the letter *t* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Point to the letter *a* and have students respond along with you: */aaa/.*

3. Point just to the left of *ta*. Say: *Blend.* Then scoop your finger under the *t* and *a* as you lead students in blending the sounds together without a break: */taaa/.*

4. Print the letter *p* after the letter *a* on the board. Say: *Sound?* Point to the letter *p* and have students respond along with you: */p/.*

5. Point to the left of *tap* and say: *Blend.* Then scoop your finger from left to right under the whole word as you lead students in slowly blending the sounds together without a break: *tap.*

6. Finally, point just to the left of *tap* and say: *Let's read the whole word.* Then quickly sweep your finger under the word as you lead students in saying the whole word: *tap.* Say: *I heard a light tap on the door, tap.*

Repeat the same routine with the words *Sam* and *Pat.*
**Check—Sound-by-Sound Blending**

Say: *Now it's your turn to sound out words. Remember, when I point to a letter, say the sound for that letter. When I scoop my finger under the letters, blend the sounds together. When I sweep my finger under the word, say the whole word.*

1. Print the first letter in the word *map* on the board. Ask: *Sound?* Point to the letter *m* to signal students to respond. (/mmm/)

2. Print the letter *a* after the letter *m* on the board. Ask: *Sound?* Point to the letter *a* to signal students to respond. (/aaa/)

3. Point just to the left of *ma* and say: *Blend the sounds.* Then scoop your finger under the letters from left to right to signal students to respond. (/mmmaaa/)

4. Print the letter *p* after the letter *a* on the board. Ask: *Sound?* Point to the letter *p* to signal students to respond. (/p/)

5. Point just to the left of *map* and say: *Blend the sounds.* Scoop your finger from left to right under the word as students blend the sounds together without a break. (map)

6. Finally, point just to the left of *map.* Quickly sweep your finger under the word to signal students to respond by saying the whole word. (map)

Repeat the same routine with the words *at, am, sat, mat, Sam, pat, Pam, sap,* and *tap.* When you are finished, develop students’ vocabulary by going back and clarifying the meaning of any unfamiliar words. To build word reading automaticity, have students read the list of words again, this time at a faster pace and only with nonverbal signals.
CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK  If a student or students respond incorrectly, stop immediately and model the correct response for the entire group and then ask the entire group to respond. For blending errors, first model blending the word and then lead students in blending it again. For sound/spelling errors, immediately say the correct sound, for example, /mmm/. Then point to the letter m and ask: Sound? (/mmm/) Say: Yes, the sound is /mmm/.

Apply to Decodable Text
To ensure ample practice in sound/spelling correspondences, provide students with connected reading materials. Choose books or passages in which most of the words are wholly decodable and the majority of the remaining words are previously taught irregular words.

Word Work: Elkonin Boxes with Letters
Explain to students that they are going to spell some words. Say: I am going to say a word and then together we will count how many sounds we hear in the word. The first word is map, /mmmaap/. I hear three sounds in map. With your palm toward you, so students can see the progression from left to right, hold up your first finger as you say /mmm/, then hold up your second finger as you say /aaa/, and finally hold up your third finger as you say /p/. Then ask: How many sounds in map? (three) Say: Now let’s count the sounds again. Have students hold up their fingers as they count along with you. Say: Now I am going to draw three boxes. Each box will stand for a sound in map.

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On a dry-erase board, draw a three-box grid as shown. Point to the first box in the grid and say /mmm/, point to the middle box and say /aaa/, and then point to the last box and say /p/. Say: *Now I will lead you in saying each sound in map as I print the spelling that stands for that sound. Say: The first sound in map is /mmm/. Print the letter m into the first box as the students say /mmm/ along with you. Say: The middle sound in map is /aaa/. Print the letter a in the middle box as students say /aaa/ along with you. Say: The last sound in map is /p/. Print the letter p into the last box as students say /p/ along with you.*

Say: *Now let's read the whole word.* Slide your finger under the grid from left to right as you lead students in saying the whole word: *map*. Say: *Now let's spell the word.* Point to each letter from left to right as you lead students in saying each letter name along with you. (m-a-p) Repeat the same procedure using the word *mat*. Then, following the same procedure with words such as *sap* and *sat*, ask volunteers to draw the grid and print the letters in the boxes.

### Questions for Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for Observation</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Point to the word map.)</em> Can you sound out this word?</td>
<td>Student can blend CVC words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The word is <em>map</em>. Can you spell this word? (m-a-p)</td>
<td>Student can spell CVC words.</td>
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SECTION VI

Comprehension

CHAPTER 14
Narrative Reading

CHAPTER 15
Informational Reading
Comprehension is often viewed as “the essence of reading” (Durkin 1993). It involves interacting with text, using intentional thinking to construct meaning. The RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG 2002) defines reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.” Harris and Hodges (1995) refer to it as “the construction of the meaning of a written text through a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text.” Perfetti (1985) simply calls it “thinking guided by print.”

Fundamentals of Comprehension

Reading comprehension consists of three key elements—the reader, the text, and the activity—all set within a context (RRSG 2002). Comprehension instruction requires showing students how these elements affect their understanding when reading.

The Reader

Comprehension does not exist in a vacuum; each reader brings a unique set of competencies that affect comprehension. These competencies vary not only from reader to reader, but also within an individual, depending on the text and the activity (RRSG 2002). Reader competencies include speed and accuracy of decoding, reading fluency, vocabulary size, general world knowledge, and knowledge of specific comprehension strategies. Since fluent readers are able to identify words accurately and automatically, they can focus most of their attention on comprehension (LaBerge and Samuels 1974). They also can make connections among ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge.

Elements of Reading Comprehension

Based on RRSG 2002.

SEE ALSO . . .

Section III: Decoding and Word Study
Section IV: Reading Fluency
Section V: Vocabulary

Comprehension builds upon . . .

- Speed and Accuracy of Decoding
- Reading Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Word Knowledge
- Comprehension Strategies
CHAPTER 14

Narrative Reading

what?
why?
when?
how?
Narratives tell a story, expressing event-based experiences. The story could be the invention of an author, the reporting of factual events, or the retelling of a tale from oral tradition. According to Williams (2005), “children develop sensitivity to narrative structure early and use it to comprehend simple stories before they enter school.” By the time most children enter school, they already have had stories read aloud to them and have watched stories on TV and in movies. They connect with narrative texts because events in life often include the same elements—they sometimes have a beginning, a middle, and an ending; they occur in a particular time and place; there are key players, sometimes in conflict; issues are resolved for better or for worse; and sometimes there is a lesson learned. For these reasons, comprehension instruction typically begins with narrative text.

Story Structure

Story structure pertains to how stories and their plots are systematically organized into a predictable format. Knowing about story structure provides a framework that helps students to discover what is most relevant for understanding a story (Williams 2002). Most narrative texts are organized around a set of story elements, sometimes referred to as *story grammar* (Mandler 1987). Story elements include setting, characters, plot, and theme. Stories often begin by describing the setting and characters, then indicating a particular problem faced by one of the characters. Then the story explains how the problem is solved, concluding by showing how the characters were affected by the events.
Setting
The setting of a story tells when and where the story takes place. Some stories have specific settings, while others take place at some indefinite time (e.g., the future) or in some indefinite place (e.g., an unnamed country). The setting also can change within a narrative—moving back (flashback) or jumping ahead (flash-forward) before returning to the main time frame of the story.

Characters
Characters are the people, animals, or creatures in a story. The main character, also known as the protagonist, moves the action forward, sometimes by acting against a villain or rival, the antagonist. To understand a character, readers must be able to tap into characterization techniques: what the author states directly about the character; what the character says, does, and thinks; and how other story characters react and respond to the character. The main character’s motivation—sometimes explicit, sometimes implied—drives the plot.

Plot
The plot of a story tells what happened and gives the story a beginning, a middle, and an ending. It is the sum of a series of events. In general, the components of a narrative plot include
• the problem a character faces—the conflict;
• the sequence of events that happens as the character attempts to solve the problem;
• the outcome, or resolution, of the attempts to solve the problem.

Theme
The theme is the big idea that the author wants the reader to take away from reading the story. Williams (2002) explains that a theme “expresses a relationship among story elements and comments on that relationship in some way.” The theme can be expressed as a lesson or an observation that is generalized beyond the specifics of the story plot.
Teaching students to identify and represent story structure improves their comprehension of narrative text (RRSG 2002). It also enhances students’ memory and recall of text and helps them organize and write stories (Short and Ryan 1984; Fitzgerald and Teasley 1986). One reason that students’ understanding of text structure supports reading comprehension is that narrative structures are common across texts (Coyne et al. 2007). Being aware of the “samenesses” across texts allows students to consider authors’ messages in a broader context of literature and the world (Carnine and Kinder 1985). Knowing the structure of narratives gives students a frame of reference for processing and remembering story information (Dickson, Simmons, and Kame’enui 1998). Thus, story elements provide the framework for applying comprehension strategies to narrative text (Pearson and Fielding 1991; Graesser, Golding, and Long 1991).

One way to help students understand what they read is to help them see the underlying structure of the text they are reading.

Instruction of the content and organization of stories improves story comprehension, measured by the ability of the reader to answer questions and recall what was read.
Helping students to recognize the structure inherent in text—and match it to their own cognitive structures—will help them understand and produce not only text but also spoken discourse.

—WILLIAMS, 2005

Story structure instruction shows positive effects for a wide range of students, from kindergarten to the intermediate grades to high school to special populations, and to students identified as struggling readers.

—DUKE & PEARSON, 2002

Suggested Reading . . .


Explicit comprehension strategies instruction should begin in the primary grades and continue through high school. —RRSG, 2002

Story Complexity Factors

- Number of characters
- Number of plots, goals, and subgoals
- Number of attempts by the characters to achieve the goals
- Explicitness of story elements
- Amount of background knowledge required
- Length of story
- Readability of story

Carnine et al. 2006.

When to Teach

Comprehension instruction should begin as soon as students start to interact with text and should continue through high school (Duke and Pearson 2002; Pressley and Block 2002; RRSG 2002). Effective teaching balances explicit comprehension strategies instruction with the literary experience of a story. For students as young as preschoolers, storybook read-alouds provide opportunities for modeling and practicing strategies applications (Lane and Wright 2007). When students begin to read stories on their own, they learn to apply comprehension strategies in tandem with decoding and word-level strategies. As they progress through the grades, students apply strategies to increasingly complex stories (Carnine et al. 2006). Thus, many adolescent literacy researchers advocate explicit comprehension strategies instruction, particularly for struggling readers (Brown 2002; Alvermann and Eakle 2003; Fisher and Frey 2004; Raphael et al. 2001).

When to Assess and Intervene

Comprehension instruction should be accompanied by reliable assessment aligned with instruction (Lehr and Osborn 2005). Yet, according to researchers (RRSG 2002; Spear-Swerling 2006; Klingner et al. 2007), most traditional assessments are inadequate in several ways in that they: (1) often confuse comprehension with vocabulary, background knowledge, word reading ability, and other reading skills, (2) fail to represent the complexity of comprehension, based on current understandings,
Comprehension should be assessed frequently as a way to track students’ growth and provide useful information that can guide instructional and diagnostic decisionmaking.

—Klingner et al., 2007

### When to Apply Comprehension Strategies in Narrative Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Before Reading: To orient students to the story and task</th>
<th>During Reading: To build an understanding of the story</th>
<th>After Reading: To check whether students understood the story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Story Structure</td>
<td>Use story elements as a framework for reading.</td>
<td>Identify story elements as they appear in the text.</td>
<td>Use story elements to check understanding of the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Generate predictions about the story.</td>
<td>Verify, adapt, and add predictions about the story.</td>
<td>Review accuracy of predictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Comprehension</td>
<td>Keep in mind that the goal of reading is to understand the story.</td>
<td>Note if the story is making sense, and use fix-up strategies as needed.</td>
<td>Reflect on what the story was about and whether it made sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to World Knowledge</td>
<td>Preview text to connect it with prior knowledge.</td>
<td>Use knowledge/experiences to make sense of the story.</td>
<td>Connect the story to life experiences and other reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Questions</td>
<td>Generate questions about what will happen.</td>
<td>Ask questions to clarify confusing story elements.</td>
<td>Ask higher-order questions to extend story understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering Questions</td>
<td>Answer questions about the title and illustrations.</td>
<td>Answer questions about the plot and other story elements.</td>
<td>Answer higher-order questions to extend learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing Mental Images</td>
<td>Create a mental picture based on the story title.</td>
<td>Visualize ongoing story events.</td>
<td>Visualize the overall story (a &quot;mental movie&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing/Retelling</td>
<td>Plan to be able to retell or summarize the story.</td>
<td>Build partial retellings as the story progresses.</td>
<td>Retell or summarize the story, orally or in writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This sample lesson model offers a snapshot of Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI), a multiple-strategy instruction approach developed by Michael Pressley and colleagues (Pressley, El-Dinary et al. 1992). Through teacher–student dialogue while reading, TSI emphasizes coordinated use of strategies to help students to build and monitor comprehension. Strategies are first introduced individually, following the model for explicit instruction. Over time, responsibility for strategy choices shifts from the teacher to the students. TSI has proven effective for a range of struggling readers, from primary-grade students to adolescents (Gaskins and Elliot 1991; Brown et al. 1996).

This lesson model differs somewhat from the original TSI; it is, however, consistent with TSI’s emphasis on knowing where and when to use particular strategies. In this lesson model, sample text is used to represent a story at students’ independent reading level. The same model can be adapted and used to enhance comprehension instruction linked to narrative text in any commercial reading or language arts program—as long as the text is at the appropriate level.

**Review: Comprehension Strategies**

Display a copy of the Comprehension Strategies and Questions teaching chart, such as the example shown on the following page. Remind students that using comprehension strategies can help them understand and remember what they read. Point out that they have used each of these strategies individually, and they have had some practice in choosing which strategy to use. Review the chart with students. For each strategy, review the description and then call on students to read aloud the questions they can ask to help them in applying the strategy.
## Comprehension Strategies and Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Questions I Can Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Comprehension</td>
<td>• Does this make sense?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What fix-up strategy can I use to figure it out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect to World Knowledge</td>
<td>• Connect: What do I already know about this? Have I had a similar experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify: Is what I know really related to the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide: Is what I know helping me to understand the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>• Predict: What do I think will happen next? What makes me think so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify: Does the text support my prediction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide: Was my prediction accurate? Do I need to change it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct Mental Images</td>
<td>• Visualize: What does this (person, place, thing) look like? What makes me think so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify: Does the text support my image?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide: Was my image accurate? Do I need to change it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Questions</td>
<td>• What am I curious about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do I want to know more about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>• Where and when does the story take place? (setting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who is the story about? (characters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the problem the character faces? (problem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What happens as the character tries to solve the problem? (sequence of events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does the story turn out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the character solve the problem? (outcome)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What lesson did you learn from the story? (theme)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fix-Up Strategies**
- Reread
- Look back
- Read on
- Guess (using context clues)
- Ask someone
- Check a reference
Direct Explanation

Explain to students that good readers use a variety of strategies to help them make sense of the text and get the most out of what they read. Tell them that you are going to show them how strategies can work together smoothly, in coordination, and how to choose the one that works the best in each situation.

Using an overhead projector, display a transparency of the Predictions Worksheet. Say: Good readers make predictions about what they are reading. Predictions are based on evidence in the text and what you already know. The Predictions Worksheet can help you to keep track of your predictions as you read. Pointing to the corresponding headings on the Predictions Worksheet, say: The Worksheet has two big divisions: Predict and Verify/Decide. To predict, you make a prediction and then give evidence about what makes you think so. Verifying and deciding work together. As you read, you verify a prediction by looking for evidence in the text. When you find some possible evidence in the text, you can decide if you need to keep looking for more conclusive evidence, to reject a former prediction if it was wrong, or to confirm a former prediction if it was right. It's a cycle—predict, verify, decide.
Teach/Model: Preview the Story

Continue displaying the Comprehension Strategies chart and the Predictions Worksheet. Distribute copies of “The Case of the Blue Carbuncle” to the group. Say: *I’m going to think aloud to show you how to use the strategies in coordination. Each time I use a strategy, I will point to it on the Comprehension Strategies chart. As I read, I will record information on the Predictions Worksheet.*

**THINK ALOUD** Good readers make connections between what they already know and what they are reading. The first thing I see on the page is a picture. Using my world knowledge, I think this man is a detective. I remember an old movie in which a detective wore a hat like that. It looks like he’s studying something pretty closely, which is something detectives do. So, I’m going to predict that this is a mystery or detective story. On the Predictions Worksheet, I’m going to print my first prediction and what makes me think so.

**Connect to World Knowledge, Predict**
THINK ALOUD  Now I’m going to read the title of the story. The title is “The Case of the Blue Carbuncle.” The word case in the title typically relates to a mystery, or to a crime. I think that’s good enough evidence to confirm my prediction about this being a mystery. On the Predictions Worksheet, I am going to print my evidence under Confirm.

THINK ALOUD  Good readers constantly monitor, or check, their comprehension. There is a word in the title that is new to me. I have no idea what a carbuncle is. I don’t even know enough to make a good guess. I only know that this one is blue. I believe I’ll read on to see if I can find story clues to help me figure out what this word means. Reading on, or reading ahead for more information, is a fix-up strategy. As I read, I’m also going to ask myself, “What’s a carbuncle?” Right now, I’m applying a variety of strategies. ♦ Monitor Comprehension, Ask Questions

Teachable Moment: Mystery Genre

THINK ALOUD  Since I’m pretty sure this is a mystery, I’m going to stop and connect to what I know about mysteries. The setting for a mystery is often the scene of a crime or a detective’s office. The characters typically include detectives and suspects. The problem is a mysterious event—a crime to be solved or an unexplained occurrence. The sequence of events involves a series of clues that give hints about motives (or reasons) and opportunities for various characters to commit the crime. Some clues are helpful, and some are not. Misleading clues are called red herrings—they are meant to throw the reader offtrack and give the mystery more exciting twists and turns. The outcome of the story is typically the solution to the mystery. I’m going to use what I know about mysteries to help me make sense of this story. I know a mystery is confusing at the beginning, revealing information little by little as the plot progresses. ♦ Connect to World Knowledge, Summarize
Narrative Reading

Teach/Model: Read the Story Aloud

Read the story aloud to students as they follow along in their texts. Stop to model strategy use as indicated. As you apply each strategy, refer to it on the Comprehension Strategies chart. Continue recording information on the Prediction Worksheet.

“What are you investigating today?” I asked my friend Sherlock Holmes as I walked into his apartment. He did not reply, so I moved in to see what he was holding under his magnifying glass.

**THINK ALOUD**  Sherlock Holmes—that’s a famous name. My world knowledge is that he is a fictional character, so I know for sure this mystery is fiction. I also know that Sherlock Holmes has a sidekick named Dr. Watson. Since the first quote here says, “I asked my friend Sherlock Holmes,” I predict that the narrator is Watson. On the Predictions Worksheet, I’m going to print my second prediction and what makes me think so. ✤ Connect to World Knowledge, Predict
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