Comprehensive Comprehension

A Repertoire of Reading Tools for Students Up and Down the Grade Levels and Across the Curriculum

by
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Comprehensive Comprehension

A Repertoire of Reading Tools

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What is Good Reading?
Big ideas

1 **Garbage in, garbage out.** When kids read poorly, they understand poorly. When decoding and fluency are weak, text input to the brain is compromised. We have to make sure kids understand that the quality of what comes out is directly related to the quality of what goes in. Rereading to correct errors is an essential part of improving comprehension.

2 **We have to be as explicit about quality in reading as we are about quality in writing.** Reading is no different than anything else we want kids to master; they need a detailed understanding of what it is. Just as we use explicit criteria in writing, we need to use criteria for reading, too. Ideally, our criteria will cover all phases of the reading process and will apply to reading all types of texts.

3 **We must teach kids to self-assess.** We must express the criteria of good reading in simple language kids can understand and apply to their own work. Most reading takes place silently; only the reader can tell what's going on. The reader is also the only person who can make corrections and improvements. Teaching kids to assess their own reading should be our primary goal.

4 **Kids need lots of practice.** Not only are we asking kids to learn to read, we're asking them to monitor and improve their reading as well. This requires significant practice. The best practice readers can receive is time spent reading in texts they enjoy at their independent reading level. This is the key to help them learn what good reading is and what good readers do.

5 **Kids need read alouds, think alouds, and choral reading.** Kids need to hear what good reading sounds like. But that alone is not enough. When we model reading for kids, we need to connect the things we do with our criteria for reading quality. Kids need to see us thinking while we read. We also need to scaffold kids' oral reading fluency with choral reading.

6 **We have to acknowlege that understanding is the goal, not speed.** Many kids think they've finished reading something when they've run their eyes across the words. We have to refocus their effort on understanding, not speed. We can do this by making sure they're reading for a specific purpose and that they keep reading until the purpose is achieved.

What is Good Reading?
Criteria

1. Speed

__ Read at a comfortable talking speed.

__ Slow down when the text is hard.

__ Maintain a consistent reading rate.

__ Read slow enough to get all the words.

__ Read fast enough to understand what I'm reading.

2. Accuracy

__ Read words easily and automatically.

__ Pronounce words clearly as they are written.

__ Break hard words into easier pieces.

__ Correct words I miss and reread from the beginning of the sentence.

__ Practice hard words until I get them right.

3. Phrasing

__ Split sentences into smaller groups of words.

__ Group words together by grammar.

__ Put a little extra space between groups of words.

__ Tuck the little words into the big words.

__ Keep phrases shorter the harder the text is.

4. Expression

__ Read with feeling; make my voice match the meaning.

__ Change my volume, rhythm, pitch, and timbre in ways that make sense.

__ Follow the punctuation.

__ Make it sound like someone is reading to me.

__ Emphasize important moments.

5. Understanding

__ Know what the words mean in context.

__ Follow events in a story.

__ Follow the writer's ideas.

__ Reread when something doesn't make sense.

__ Summarize what I have read.

6. Thinking

__ Ask questions.

__ Make connections.

__ Make inferences and predictions.

__ Determine what's important.

__ Appreciate the quality of the writing.

What is Good Reading?
Speed

Criteria for Speed

Read at a comfortable talking speed.

Slow down when the text is hard.

Maintain a consistent reading rate.

Read slow enough to get all the words.

Read fast enough to understand what I'm reading.

Problems with Speed

Kids read way too fast.

Kids don't maintain a consistent speed.

Kids don't slow down when the text is hard.

Kids read easy words so fast
they don't have time to deal with hard words.

What is Good Reading?
What's your reading rate?

Eddie had always been able to fly, but it wasn't until his fifth birthday party that he realized that it would turn out to be a bit of a social problem. Until that embarrassing day on the Johnsons' lawn, Eddie's parents had treated his airborne peculiarity as something of a childish whim. "Boy's gotta stretch out, learn what he can do," said his father. "I just worry that he'll hurt himself, you know, bump into the ceiling or get his eye poked out by a bird, I don't know…," said his mother. For the young Eddie, flying was just another discovery about his developing body, like learning that he could reach out his arm and ring the bell on his cradle railing, or finding that he loved the taste of peas. The first time his parents came into the nursery and found Eddie hovering a foot or two off the floor it came as a bit of a shock. But, after all, parents are forever discovering special little things about their children. Eddie's mother thought that perhaps they should take their son to see a specialist, but his father vetoed the idea. "It's not like anything's wrong with him, and I don't want him getting a complex about it." **[209]**

In fact, Eddie's flying soon became an annoyance to his parents. Broken light fixtures, crayon marks on the ceilings, and lost objects that had to be retrieved from the tops of bookcases soon exasperated them. Once when Eddie was three, his rather senile grandmother came for a visit. As she was sitting in her favorite armchair watching TV, Eddie, who had been playing behind the chair, appeared in the air over his grandmother, ready to drop a rubber ball on her graying, addled head. His father shot him a look so full of "No!" that Eddie desisted at once and sulkily spent the rest of the day firmly seated on the carpet. As the months and years passed, Eddie learned to be reticent about his ability in order to avoid parental displeasure; this had the added benefit of not provoking awkward questions from grandparents and visiting relatives. Eddie's mother and father also took certain prudent precautions such as a gentle restraining hand during diaper changing and remembering to close the sun roof of the family car when Eddie was inside. **[389]**

And then, shortly before his fifth birthday, Eddie's mother received a phone call from her neighbor three houses down. Mrs. Johnson was offering to throw a little birthday bash for Eddie's fifth with some of the neighborhood kids. Eddie's mother eagerly accepted, and the two agreed how wonderful it would be for Eddie and the Johnsons' five-year-old, Alex, to make friends. Eddie's mother was secretly pleased at the invitation for another reason: Mr. Johnson was on the community council, and the Johnsons lived in the biggest, nicest house in the cul-de-sac. This might be a great social opportunity for the parents as well as the children. **[495]**

On the big day, Mrs. Johnson met Eddie and his mother at the Johnsons' front door and showed them to the back yard after a brief tour of the house. Eddie and Alex, after some preliminary shyness, got down to the serious business of playing with a set of toy trucks, and eventually seven other youngsters arrived, escorted by various parents and babysitters. Eddie was treated to a large assortment of presents and Mrs. Johnson's cake proved popular with both children and adults. **[578]**

What is Good Reading?
What's your reading rate?

Positing a strong cognitive perspective, bottom-up text processing models are data-driven, emphasize lower-level processes such as letter and word recognition, and most importantly, emphasize textual decoding due to the primary priority placed upon the text as input. In contrast, top-down models place primary emphasis on prior knowledge which the reader brings into the process of reading to render an interpretation. Unlike bottom-up models that start out with letter and word recognition, top-down models are content-driven and hypothesize the "sampling" of text, into which inferences are made via the help of the reader's prior syntactic and semantic knowledge. **[97]**

Instead of positing a sequential processing mode, interactive approaches to reading recognize the simultaneous interaction of both lower-level processing skills (identification and decoding) and higher-level reasoning and comprehension skills (inferencing and interpretation). As Grabe asserts, "reading involves an array of lower-level rapid, automatic identification skills and an array of higher-level comprehension/interpretation skills." The concept of interaction is based on the assumption that there is a complex cognitive psychological relationship between reader and text, and a simultaneous activation of readers' multiple component skills and their background world knowledge as they attempt to (re)construct the information present or implied in the text. **[197]**

Two examples of interactive processing models are those theorized by Stanovich and Swaffar et al. Stanovich claims that the development of reading fluency needs to be viewed as an "interactive-compensatory" model of individual differences wherein readers compensate for deficiencies at the word level (lower level) by relying more on context (higher level). In a similar vein, Swaffar et al assess readers based on their affective factors such as motivation and different learning styles, their background world knowledge, and their linguistic knowledge. Their integrated approach to language learning is founded on the belief that readers engage in reading for meaning. **[296]**

One interactive approach that enjoyed particular popularity was the Constructivist Model advanced by Bernhardt. This model, influenced greatly by K. Goodman's and Coady's psycholinguistic model, includes the following six elements: prior knowledge, word recognition, phonemic/graphemic features, meta-cognition, syntactic feature recognition, and intratextual perceptions (i.e., "how the reader perceives and then reconciles each part of the text with the preceding and succeeding discourse context"). The end result of these interacting factors is comprehension. **[368]**

An important contribution of this model is the notion that reading involves readers, not just the reading text. That the reading process comprises the interaction of reader and text is in fact the central tenet of this approach. Another important contribution of this model is the keen observation that comprehension of a reading passage may be impeded when that passage contains unfamiliar referents. Despite the grounding of this model in empirical studies, however, it does not account for affective factors such as anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation, even though their pertinent role in reading has long been acknowledged to have an effect on meta-cognition and text comprehension. **[474]**

In sum, it can be argued quite convincingly that positing a solely bottom-up or top-down processing model for reading will fail to capture the complex interactive nature of the reading process. Alternatively, an interactive approach to reading appears to offer a better explanation of the cognitive processes believed to be at work here. Yet notwithstanding this model's improved explanatory power, it is unclear how the interactive, or indeed any of these processing models, can be translated into effective, simple-to-use teaching practices with long-lasting results. **[558]**

What is Good Reading?
Accuracy

Criteria for Accuracy

Read words easily and automatically.

Pronounce words clearly as they are written.

Break hard words into easier pieces.

Correct words I miss and reread from the beginning of the sentence.

Practice hard words until I get them right.

Problems with Accuracy

Kids skip over hard words.

Kids stumble on hard words and don't self-correct.

Kids mispronounce words.

Kids substitute words that change the meaning.

What is Good Reading?
Phrasing

Criteria for Phrasing

Split sentences into smaller groups of words.

Group words together by grammar.

Put a little extra space between groups of words.

Tuck the little words into the big words.

Keep phrases shorter the harder the text is.

Problems with Phrasing

Kids read word-by-word.

Kids break phrases at odd boundaries.

Kids read so fast their phrasing isn't audible.

Phrase Breaking™

1. Phrasing is a natural activity all readers understand. Most readers don't think about phrasing. But they know it by heart:

> I pledge allegiance to the flag of
> the United States of America and
> to the Republic for which it
> stands, one Nation under God, in-
> divisible, with liberty and justice
> for all.

> I pledge allegiance
> to the flag
> of the United States of America
> and to the Republic
> for which it stands,
> etc...

2. Phrasing breaks language into meaningful parts. In the phrased version of *The Pledge of Allegiance,* each line makes sense by itself. Language works in phrases. And reading works best when we can see them easily.

3. Phrases follow predictable patterns. In general, phrases:

- Start with little words and end with big ones.

- Are 3-6 words long, occasionally one or two, very rarely 7 or more.

- Follow the grammar of the sentence and are read as a unit.

- Are separated from each other by a tiny "space", but not a pause.

4. Phrasing makes hard texts easier. Phrasing is helpful all the time. But it's especially important to concentrate on when:

- **You're having trouble decoding.** Stumbling on words makes ideas hard to understand.

- **You're faced with long sentences.** Big ideas are easier to understand in small parts.

- **You need more comprehension.** Careful phrasing is a great way to pick up small details.

- **You're having trouble with new vocabulary.** Phrasing helps you discover what a word means in relation to others. It also gives you clues as to how a word functions as a part of speech.

- **You're reading above your level.** When you're struggling, phrasing helps you read more accurately and more fluently.

What is Good Reading?
Expression

Criteria for Expression

Read with feeling; make my voice match the meaning.

Change my volume, rhythm, pitch, and timbre in ways that make sense.

Follow the punctuation.

Make it sound like someone is reading to me.

Emphasize important moments.

Problems with Expression

Kids don't have any; reading is monotone.

Kids read too fast to express.

Kids ignore punctuation.

No change in pitch around sentence boundaries.

Not distinguishing character from narrator,
or multiple speakers from each other, in dialog.

Expressive Reading

1. Make your voice match the meaning. Instead of reading like a robot, change your voice to match the meaning of what you read:

- **Change pitch.** Making your voice go up and down as you follow a sentence or switch characters helps you understand where ideas begin and end.

- **Change volume.** Saying some words louder and longer than others creates emphasis and helps you know what's important.

- **Change rhythm.** Stopping and starting, speeding up and slowing down help readers see how small parts of sentences combine to create complete thoughts.

- **Change tone.** Sometimes, readers use a soft, warm voice; sometimes their voice is cold and hard. Tone communicates feeling.

2. Expressive readers use techniques that match the way we speak. The following strategies will make your reading sound more like talking:

- **Go slow.** To increase expression, decrease speed; extra expression takes extra time.

- **Repeat till it's complete.** If you mess up, repeat the sentence from the beginning.

- **Sentence high and low.** Start high, then lower the pitch slightly as you near the end.

- **Sentence fast and slow.** Start quick, then slow down slightly as you near the end.

- **Up at the end for a question.** The pitch of your voice springs up at the finish.

- **Straight up for an exclamation.** Increase both pitch and volume for an exclamation.

- **Stop at a period, pause at a comma.** Pause at colons, semicolons, and dashes, too.

- **Character high, narrator low.** Higher pitch for spoken words; lower for attributions.

- **Emphasize important words.** Call attention to a word or phrase with pitch, volume, tone, or timbre.

- **Once more with feeling.** Match your emotions to the meaning of the words.

3. Expression works even when you read silently. Listen to the voice inside your head as you read. You can still hear changes in expression. Pay attention to the "sound" of silent reading. It will help you improve.

What is Good Reading?
Expression

Eddie had always been able to fly, but it wasn't until his fifth birthday party that he realized that it would turn out to be a bit of a social problem. Until that embarrassing day on the Johnsons' lawn, Eddie's parents had treated his airborne peculiarity as something of a childish whim. "Boy's gotta stretch out, learn what he can do," said his father. "I just worry that he'll hurt himself, you know, bump into the ceiling or get his eye poked out by a bird, I don't know...," said his mother. For the young Eddie, flying was just another discovery about his developing body, like learning that he could reach out his arm and ring the bell on his cradle railing, or finding that he loved the taste of peas. The first time his parents came into the nursery and found Eddie hovering a foot or two off the floor it came as a bit of a shock. But, after all, parents are forever discovering special little things about their children. Eddie's mother thought that perhaps they should take their son to see a specialist, but his father vetoed the idea. "It's not like anything's wrong with him, and I don't want him getting a complex about it."

What is Good Reading?
Understanding

Criteria for Understanding

Know what the words mean in context.

Follow events in a story.

Follow the writer's ideas.

Reread when something doesn't make sense.

Summarize what I have read.

Problems with Understanding

Kids skip words they don't know.

Kids read faster than they can process the details of the text.

Kids don't connect details to ideas.

Kids don't reread when they need to.

What is Good Reading?
Thinking

Criteria for Thinking

Ask questions.

Make connections.

Make inferences and predictions.

Determine what's important.

Appreciate the quality of the writing.

Problems with Thinking

Kids don't think about what they read.

Every bit of information is important as every other bit of information.

Kids don't make inferences.

Kids confuse connections with what is actually part of the text.

Kids don't notice the quality of the writing.

Questions
The best place to start

It was a pleasure to burn.

It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history. With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought that came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black. He strode in a swarm of fireflies. He wanted above all, like the old joke, to shove a marshmallow on a stick in a furnace, while the flapping pigeon-winged books died on the porch and lawn of the house. While the books went up in sparkling whirls and blew away on a wind turned dark with burning.

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all—I'm not saying that—but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm just not going to tell you my whole autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy.

Connections
Improve memory and build background knowledge

The week before they were ripe, my grandmother would cover them in cheesecloth like some arboreal ghost. And, then, in those final days, she would have me sit sentinel in a yard chair with a broom to keep the birds away. I'll never forget the smell of those leaves in the hot August sun or the giant bees that appeared out of nowhere, circling my charge. I would pretend that the bees were baseballs and hit them against the wall of my grandfather's shop with the broom. Figs. Southern brown turkey figs—summer's last fruit. For my grandmother, they were the fine china and crystal of the southern garden—you didn't just trot them out for anyone. But, alas, they were lost on my 9 year old palate.

By October 19, U-2 flights showed four sites operational. At this time, three options were considered: air strikes, invasion, and blockade. Memories of *The Bay of Pigs* dampened enthusiasm for sending in troops. And when further assessments suggested that air strikes could result in 10-20 thousand casualties, and another U-2 flight discovered bombers and cruise missiles along the northern shore, a decision was made to put a blockade into effect. A strong but limited action that sent a clear message and left options open if escalation was called for, a blockade was technically an act of war, so the term "quarantine" was used.

Inferences
Discover additional information

Hide & Seek

At last he would really show them. He'd picked the very best place to hide. They'd all say he could play the game better than anyone. When they found him, they'd clap their hands.

The dopes. How dumb can they get? They should have looked here first! It's so obvious!

Here in the abandoned refrigerator.

Untitled

Muscles rippled under the blue-green scales as the dragon stretched, then relaxed.

Fascinated, I watched the creature freeze to perfect immobility. I stared until the man noticed me. With a glare, he rolled down his sleeve.

"Nice tattoo," I said, embarrassed.

"What tattoo?" he asked, turning away.

Under his sleeve, I saw something move.

Solitaire

Encased by the laundry room walls, she stuffed load after load into the insatiable washer, begrudging every minute lost. Sodden diaper, mismatched booties, Batman pajamas, pink leotards, grass-stained soccer shirts, knee-socks, pinafores, jeans, sweaters, skirts, trousers.

Now, finally, she washes one small load a week, and wonders why the days are so long.

Fiction vs Non-Fiction
What we need to tell our students

Reading for Pleasure	Reading for Information
1. Choice of text	1. Limited or no choice
2. Choice of subject matter	2. Subject matter already chosen
3. Experience with author/genre/series	3. No experience
4. Choice of reading level	4. Reading level often too high
5. Many texts to choose from	5. Few texts to choose from
6. High interest	6. Often low or no interest
7. High subject matter familiarity	7. Low or no familiarity with subject matter
8. Prior knowledge not a significant factor	8. Prior knowledge most significant factor
9. Required knowledge not highly cumulative	9. Required knowledge highly cumulative
10. Read for emotional experience	10. Read to solve a problem or perform a task
11. Long texts read over many sittings	11. Short texts in single sittings
12. Memory of whole text not essential	12. Memory of whole text often essential
13. Read for the gist	13. Read to find specific information
14. Mulitple interpretations valued	14. Single interpretation required
15. Different texts highly independent	15. Different texts may be totally dependent
16. Everyday vocabulary	16. Specialized and often unfamiliar vocabulary
17. Predictable organization	17. Unpredictable organization
18. Always read from beginning to end	18. Often read out of order
19. Always read in full	19. Often read selectively
20. Based on characters and concrete actions	20. Based on abstract concepts and logic

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a reader, read like a writer

Reading Like a Reader

We might think of this as the "normal" way of reading where we try to figure out what a piece of writing means by understanding the words a writer is using. But even this "normal" way is more complicated than it seems.

1. Question

2. Connect

3. Infer

4. Predict

5. Feel

6. Evaluate

Reading Like a Reader

When we read from the perspective of a writer, we focus less on *what* the writer is trying to say and more on *how* the writer is saying it. Specifically, we look at the techniques the writer is using to get his or her message across and how those techniques affect us as we experience the text.

1. Ideas

2. Organization

3. Voice

4. Word Choice

5. Sentence Fluency

6. Conventions

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a reader

Reading Like a Reader

There's no way to know for sure what goes on in a reader's head. And every reader probably reads a little differently. But here's a list of six things all readers do, things that make them more successful, and make reading more fun. We call this "reading like a reader".

1. Question

Readers ask good questions about the things they read. What kinds of questions do they ask? Just about anything that comes to mind: why something is happening or not happening, why a character feels or acts a certain way, things we wonder about or are confused by, words we may not know the meanings of, and so on. Questions help readers clarify their understanding.

2. Predict

Readers make guesses about what is coming up next. No reader, it seems, can resist thinking about what a writer is going to say next. It's just part of human nature to anticipate things. Predicting helps readers sort out important information from unimportant information, it helps them organize their thinking as they encounter new material.

3. Infer

Readers figure out things about what they read that aren't actually written in the text. There's almost always more to a story than just the words on the page. Often, writers leave "clues" that good readers can use to discover important information.

4. Connect

Readers think about what their reading reminds them of. We can't help but be reminded of our own lives as we read. We're also reminded of similar things we've read in other texts and other parts of the same text we're reading at the time.

5. Feel

Readers experience emotions while they read. Sometimes, it seems like we have a direct connection to what we're reading: sad parts make us sad, happy parts make us happy, scary parts scare us, and so on. But often, the feelings we have are more subtle, we may feel them only slightly, for example, when we read with more expression. Much of the meaning we get from writing comes from what we feel when read it.

6. Evaluate

Readers make judgments while they read. Is this good? If so, what's good about it? Do I like it? Why? Should I keep reading or should I put this down and get something else? Readers are finicky, impatient, judgmental. The evaluations they make help them decide whether or not what they are reading is valuable and, if so, how they might use it.

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a reader: fiction

Eddie had always been able to fly, but it wasn't until his fifth birthday party that he realized that it would turn out to be a bit of a social problem. Until that embarrassing day on the Johnsons' lawn, Eddie's parents had treated his airborne peculiarity as something of a childish whim. "Boy's gotta stretch out, learn what he can do," said his father. "I just worry that he'll hurt himself, you know, bump into the ceiling or get his eye poked out by a bird, I don't know..." said his mother. For the young Eddie, flying was just another discovery about his developing body, like learning that he could reach out his arm and ring the bell on his cradle railing, or finding that he loved the taste of peas. The first time his parents came into the nursery and found Eddie hovering a foot or two off the floor it came as a bit of a shock. But, after all, parents are forever discovering special little things about their children. Eddie's mother thought that perhaps they should take their son to see a specialist, but his father vetoed the idea. "It's not like anything's wrong with him, and I don't want him getting a complex about it."

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1. Question
Is this a fantasy story where people have special powers? Or is the author using the idea of flying to stand for something else? If he can really fly, why aren't his parents a little more freaked out about it?

2. Predict
I think Eddie's flying is going to get him in trouble. In the very first sentence, the author refers to Eddie's flying as "a bit of a social problem" and to me that hints that things can only get worse.

3. Infer
Eddie's parents seem strange. They don't sound like real people, more like characters from a bad TV show. I think the author is trying to tell us that they may not be very smart or very sensitive.

4. Connect
This reminds me of Harry Potter where a boy has special powers. But it also makes me think of other kids I have seen who may be different. Sometimes, kids with unusual abilities aren't accepted by other people.

5. Feel
I feel sorry for Eddie. I get the feeling that he's going to be lonely because people aren't going to understand him.

6. Evaluate
I think the beginning is good. The author has an entertaining and funny style. I especially like the way he describes Eddie's parents though I don't like them at all, especially Eddie's father. This is exactly the kind of story I like: realistic but with a little bit of a twist.

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a writer

Reading Like a Writer

Normally, when we read, we focus on *what* the writer is trying to say. When we read like a writer, however, we focus on *how* the writer is saying it. We pay close attention to the techniques a writer is using and how those techniques contribute to the meaning of the piece and improve its quality. We may even borrow the techniques we learn for our own writing.

1. Ideas

Ideas are the heart of the piece, what the writer is writing about and the information her or she chooses to reveal about it. When we read like a writer, we try to answer questions like these: How does the writer reveal the main idea? What types of details does the writer use? How does the writer achieve his or her purpose?

2. Organization

Organization refers to the order of ideas and the way the writer moves from one idea to the next. When we read like a writer, we try to answer questions like these: What kinds of leads and endings does the writer use? How does the writer handle transitions? What techniques does the writer use for sequencing? How does the writer control pacing?

3. Voice

Voice is how the writing feels to someone when they read it, it's the expression of the writer's individual personality through words. When we read like a writer, we try to answer questions like these: How does the writer demonstrate passion for the topic? How does the writer reveal emotions? How does the writer put personality into the piece?

4. Word Choice

Word Choice refers to writer's selection of particular words and phrases to express ideas. When we read like a writer, we try to answer questions like these: What techniques (simile, metaphor, strong verbs, etc.) does the writer use to make the word choice more specific, more memorable, and more effective?

5. Sentence Fluency

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language as we read it. When we read like a writer, we try to answer questions like these: What kinds of sentence constructions does the writer use? How does the writer vary the length and construction of his or her sentences? How does the writer use "sound" effects like alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm?

6. Conventions

Conventions are the ways we use punctuation, spelling, grammar, and other things that make writing consistent and easy to read. When we read like a writer, we try to answer questions like these: How does the writer use conventions to make the writing easy to read and more meaningful? Does the author use conventions in unusual ways that are successful?

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a writer: fiction

Eddie had always been able to fly, but it wasn't until his fifth birthday party that he realized that it would turn out to be a bit of a social problem. Until that embarrassing day on the Johnsons' lawn, Eddie's parents had treated his airborne peculiarity as something of a childish whim. "Boy's gotta stretch out, learn what he can do," said his father. "I just worry that he'll hurt himself, you know, bump into the ceiling or get his eye poked out by a bird, I don't know..." said his mother. For the young Eddie, flying was just another discovery about his developing body, like learning that he could reach out his arm and ring the bell on his cradle railing, or finding that he loved the taste of peas. The first time his parents came into the nursery and found Eddie hovering a foot or two off the floor it came as a bit of a shock. But, after all, parents are forever discovering special little things about their children. Eddie's mother thought that perhaps they should take their son to see a specialist, but his father vetoed the idea. "It's not like anything's wrong with him, and I don't want him getting a complex about it."

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1. Ideas
A flying baby boy, in the context of what appears to be a realistic setting, is a curious and compelling idea.

2. Organization
The opening line is great. It certainly gets our attention and makes us want to find out more. The author has us wondering about three things: Eddie's flying ability, his parents strange reaction, and the embarrassing incident on his fifth birthday.

3. Voice
The author's voice is light-hearted and playful, just as one might imagine a flying baby boy to be. There's a calmness to the writing that makes it seem like everything is normal even though Eddie is not.

4. Word Choice
The phrase "airborne peculiarity" seems like the perfect way to describe Eddie's unique talent as viewed by his parents. In the last sentence, the strong verb "vetoed" tells us that Eddie's dad is like the "president" of the family; any time he wants he can cancel his wife's ideas.

5. Sentence Fluency
The writer uses many long sentences but punctuates them so they're easy to read an understand.

6. Conventions
Normally, when quoting characters in a story, we start a new paragraph for each new speaker. Here the author quotes the parents inside a paragraph. The use of the ellipsis at the end of the mother's comment makes her seem even more vague than her clichéd words imply.

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a reader: non-fiction

As a student at Jefferson Davis High here, Rosa Arevelo seemed the "Texas miracle" in motion. After years of classroom drills, she passed the high school exam required for graduation on her first try. A program of college prep courses earned her the designation "Texas scholar."

At the University of Houston, though, Ms. Arevelo discovered the distance between what Texas public schools called success and what she needed to know. Trained to write five-paragraph "persuasive essays" for the state exam, she was stumped by her first writing assignment. She failed the college entrance exam in math twice, even with a year of remedial algebra. At 19, she gave up and went to trade school.

"I had good grades in high school, so I thought I could do well in college," Ms. Arevelo said. "I thought I was getting a good education."

In recent years, Texas has trumpeted the academic gains of Ms. Arevelo and millions more students largely on the basis of a state test, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, or TAAS.

As a presidential candidate, Texas's former governor, George W. Bush, contended that Texas's methods of holding schools responsible for student performance had brought huge improvements in passing rates and remarkable strides in eliminating the gap between white and minority children.

The claims catapulted Houston's superintendent, Rod Paige, to Washington as education secretary and made Texas a model for the country. The education law signed by President Bush in January 2002, No Child Left Behind, gives public schools 12 years to match Houston's success and bring virtually all children to academic proficiency.

But an examination of the performance of students in Houston by The New York Times raises serious doubts about the magnitude of those gains. Scores on a national exam that Houston students took alongside the Texas exam from 1999 to 2002 showed much smaller gains and falling scores in high school reading.

---

1. Question
How does the Texas test compare to other state tests in terms of how hard it is? How do states decide how hard to make their tests?

2. Predict
Texas will be shown to have one of the easiest tests in the country.

3. Infer
Many articles are coming out now talking about how states are making their tests easier so more kids will pass.

4. Connect
George Bush and Rod Paige benefited from all the talk about improvements in Texas schools. But those improvements weren't real.

5. Feel
I'm angry. I don't 'think the kids in Texas are getting a fair deal. They think they're getting a good education, but they're not.

6. Evaluate
This is a good article on an important topic. The writer has done a good job of backing up his ideas with examples.

Comprehensive Comprehension
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1. Ideas
Saying that the five-paragraph essay is the problem is a great detail because everyone can relate to it.

2. Organization
Starting with a story about a girl who is an example of the main idea is a good technique because it draws us into her story and makes us care.

3. Voice
The writer mixes the objective voice of a news story with the more s personal voice of feature writing.

4. Word Choice
The phrase "After years of classroom drills" and the writer's choice to put "Texas scholar" and "persuasive essays" in quotation marks tells us these things aren't real.

5. Sentence Fluency
I like the alliteration in phrases like "Texas miracle in motion" and "discovered the distance."

6. Conventions
In the headline, the use of the semicolon in the same phrase with a colon is very unusual.

Comprehensive Comprehension
Read like a reader: fiction

Ola Mae had a death grip on the broom handle as she swept the porch. She pretended it was Rupert's neck and she enjoyed that. If it was really Rupert's neck, she'd feel his throat strainin against the pressure. Her Daddy'd told her that, the time he'd nigh bout strangled her Mama in a drunken rage.

"Thank God yo Uncle Elijah came when he did," her Daddy'd said. "Or yo Mama'd be dead."

Ola Mae sighed, sweepin a bunch'a dead mud daubers from underneath the glider. She hated those things. But not as much as she hated cave crickets. Or at this moment, Rupert.

Damn fool husband went on down to the fish camp with all their money in a coffee can and lost it in four hands. All that money swept away just like the dried leaves and dead bugs and dirt she was sweepin from that porch.

She'd used this old broom so much there were grooves in it; fit her hands only now. She wondered if the grooves of Rupert's throat would feel that way, and squeezed a little harder to imagine. She thought hard bout finishin him off as she swat-ted a wasp's nest from the corner over the glider.

Ola Mae raised the broom to the shutters. Cobwebs and sweat bees. Soon Mr. Richard would be home for his dinner and nap. He'd probably want to set a spell out here before goin back to the courthouse.

Make it nice for Mr. Richard. Maybe then he won't mind she ask him for an advance. A little sumpum to keep food on the table for her young-uns.

She could just kill Rupert but then what would she do, alone with three kids who'd lost their Daddy to her hand; and likely herself, too. She reckoned a jury'a her peers (specially if they let a few married ladies on it) would understand why she wrapped her fingers so hard round his neck till the very life squeezed outta him.

No, she wouldn't kill Rupert. He was a good man; little foolish sometimes. No. She'd strangle this here broomstick instead, sweep away the mess'a other people's lives, then ask Mr. Richard for some help in sweepin up her own.

Read Like a Reader: **1.** Question   **2.** Predict   **3.** Infer   **4.** Connect   **5.** Feel   **6.** Evaluate

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Read like a writer: fiction

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Read Like a Writer: **1.** Ideas **2.** Organization **3.** Voice **4.** Word Choice **5.** Sentence Fluency **6.** Conventions

Close Reading
When every word counts

How can she feel both ways at the same time? Why is she confused?

On what?   *Really sad. Why?*   *Really happy.*

When she saw her score, she became depressed. Or was she elated? After all,

What strategy?   *So why isn't she happy?*   *Better than anyone thought.*

her strategy had been successful. But this was beyond expectations. People

They'd think she did something wrong.   *They wouldn't know for sure.*

would be suspicious. There would only be rumors at first, just speculation. She

Why does she do this? Is she nervous?   *She put something on her arm.*

rubbed the inside of her forearm. Hadn't even bothered to wash it off yet. And

Prize.   *Special object.*   *Solve like a puzzle.*

if she chose to keep it always as a trophy or a talisman, could anyone decipher

She put the answers to a test on her arm.   *It looked like a fancy design or a tattoo.*

the code? A present from her parents, she had told everyone; an easy way to

Hide her secret plan to cheat on the test.   *She got a perfect score on the test.*

obscure her ruse. But now, with perfection staring back at her from the page,

Realized.   *Quickly so no one would notice.*

she surmised that her plan had worked too well. She cast a furtive glance

To see what other people got.

around the room to spy on the scores of others. The difference would be

Her score was way higher than the others.   *Like she was afraid.*   *Pretended she was sick.*

telling. She timidly approached the teacher's desk, feigned illness, and dashed
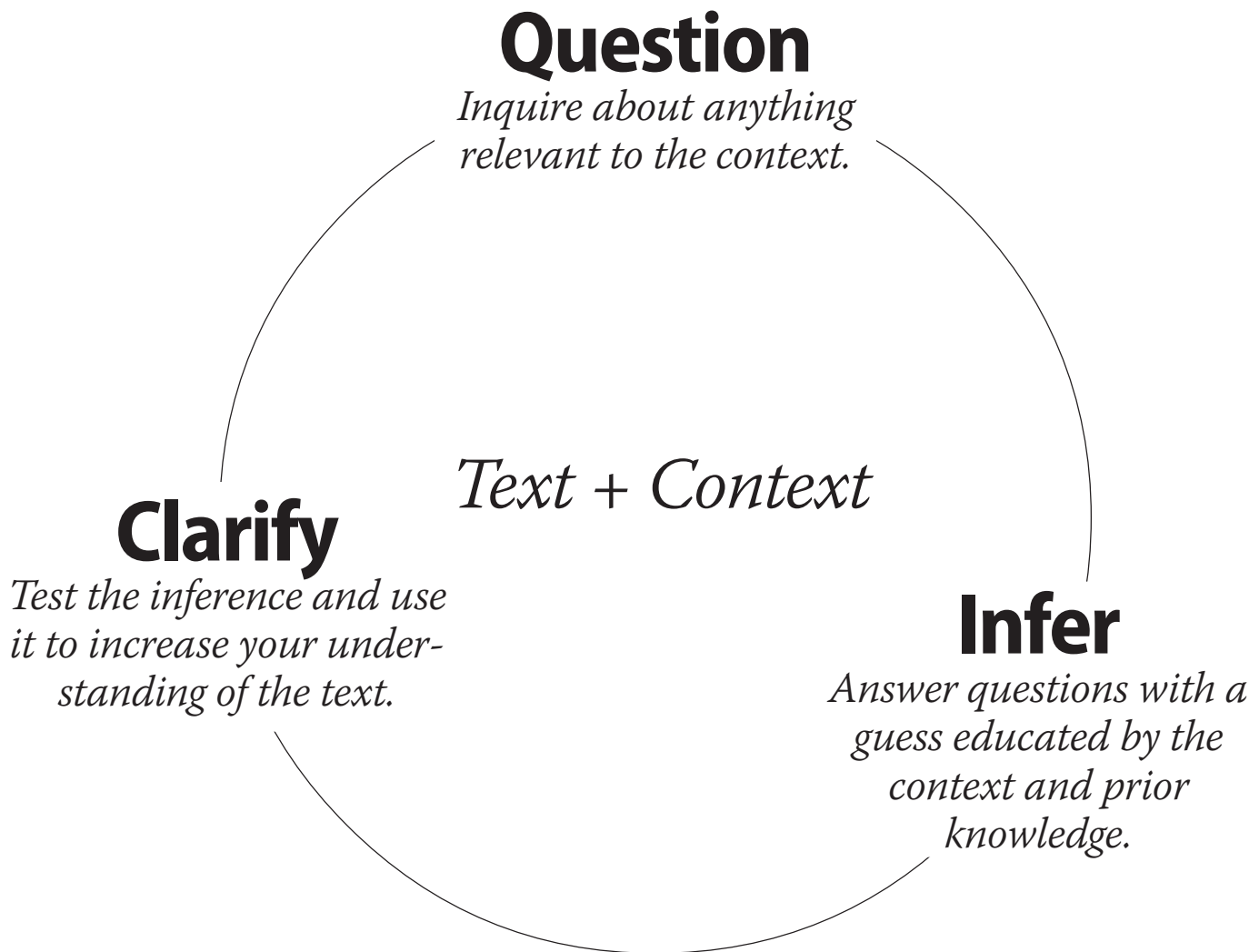
She's not sick so she must be hurrying to wash off the test answers.

to the bathroom.

Question-Infer-Clarify

The comprehension cycle

The cycle starts when the reader experiences an interruption in understanding.

Question

Inquire about anything relevant to the context.

Clarify

Test the inference and use it to increase your understanding of the text.

Text + Context

Infer

Answer questions with a guess educated by the context and prior knowledge.

The cycle ends as soon as the reader understands.

ttms

Question

1. The best way to find answers is to ask questions. To figure out something about a text, pose a question and go looking for the answer.

> On a dark January night, a stout man with a black bag limps down a narrow path into a wrap of fog. Unusual as it is, this nocturnal stroll is anything but unusual for Mr. Bostwick; his work brings him to many locations around this tiny town, and almost always at odd hours. Night is normal for Mr. B; in fact, many in his occupation find daylight distracting—too much human contact.

- **Question:** What is Mr. Bostwick on his way to do?
- **Question:** What's in the bag? Is he a doctor?

- **Question:** Why does he mostly work at night?
- **Question:** Is he doing something that might get him in trouble?

Asking questions helps you find answers as you move further into the text. The trick is to focus on the best questions so you can find the best answers.

2. Fat questions are usually more interesting than skinny ones. Asking questions from different angles inspires interesting insights.

> When the "Big Three" met at Yalta to carve up Europe in the aftermath of World War II, the deck was stacked in Russia's favor. Roosevelt was weak and tired, his health was failing. He would die in two months. Churchill was stubborn and defiant but eventually gave in. In contrast, Stalin was strong and energetic. He knew he could drive a hard bargain and win.

- **Skinny Questions:** Who won World War II? What did the leaders talk about? When did Roosevelt die? Where is Yalta?

- **Fat Questions:** How did the physical and emotional health of the three leaders affect the outcome of the negotiations?

Skinny questions often begin with "who", "what", "when", or "where." Fat questions often begin with "how" and "why."

3. Ask questions that drill down into what matters most. Instead of asking questions randomly, focus on something important (often with a fat question). Then follow up on that one thing (often with skinny questions).

Infer

1. An inference is an educated guess. Certain words, phrases, and ideas help us discover additional information and gain valuable insight.

> Damon enjoyed the long weekend over Labor Day. But when the alarm clock rang on Tuesday morning, he pretended he didn't hear it. When that didn't work, he threw it across the room and pulled the covers up over his head.

- **Inference:** It's the first day of school; Damon doesn't want to go.
- **Inference:** Damon is very angry about the summer being over.

An inference is an educated guess, but it's just a guess. Most inferences have to be confirmed with other clues we encounter in other places.

2. Successful inferences tell us more than what is written. There's often more to a piece than just the words. Our job is to infer what that is.

> As he drifted into an uneasy sleep, he flashed on his father sitting alone in a room. Where was he now? Why couldn't Damon be there, too?

- **Inference:** Damon is angry but it's not about having to start school.
- **Inference:** Damon misses his father.

3. Writers sometimes show us one thing to tell us another thing. What writers show us is an example of what they want us to know.

SHOW	TELL
…long weekend over Labor Day.	It's the first day of school.
…he threw it across the room…	Damon is angry.
Where was he now?	Damon misses his dad.
Why couldn't Damon be there, too?	Damon wants to go and live with him.

4. Inferences work best when we tie them to the text. When you make an inference, keep track of the words and ideas that inspired it.

Clarify

1. Start with what's clear, then work on what isn't. The parts that are clear form the foundation we build on to tackle the parts we're unsure of.

> The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
> The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
> Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
> Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

- **What's clear?** This is a description of a foggy night in a city.

- **What isn't?** Strange phrases that don't sound like a weather report.

2. Identify what's not clear and try to make sense of it. What, specifically, is not clear? How can we explain it so it makes sense?

DIG IT OUT	CLEAR IT UP
...rubs its back..., rubs its muzzle..., licked its tongue...	This what an animal might do. The fog is like an animal.
...corners of the evening...	Cities have corners, evenings don't.
...the pools that stand in drains,	It's damp; it's been raining.

The best ways to clear something up are: (1) Ask a question; (2) Make an inference; (3) Discover the meaning of an important word; (4) Use context.

3. Read ahead to confirm and draw your conclusion. The parts that are clear form the foundation we build on to tackle the parts we're unsure of.

> Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
> Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
> And seeing that it was a soft October night,
> Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

- **Confirm.** "Curled... and fell asleep." It's definitely an animal.

- **Conclude.** It's a metaphor. The fog is a cat!

If you can't confirm or conclude, go back and clarify again. Or move on to the next part and use new information to improve your understanding.

Question-Infer-Clarify™

1. Use Question-Infer-Clarify to improve your understanding of a challenging text. Ask questions first. Then infer the answers. Don't worry if you get them right or wrong, just make good guesses. Then, using both your questions and your answers, clarify your understanding of the passage.

QUESTION

What's a "U-2 flight"?

What's a "blockade"?

What was the "Bay of Pigs"?

How does a blockade "send a clear message"?

What is "escalation"?

They were unsure of what action to take, but convinced that action was called for. By October 19, U-2 flights showed four sites operational. At this time, three options were considered: air strikes, invasion, and blockade. Memories of The Bay of Pigs dampened enthusiasm for sending in troops. And when further assessments suggested that air strikes could result in 10-20 thousand casualties, and another U-2 flight discovered bombers and cruise missiles along the northern shore, a decision was made to put a blockade into effect. A strong but limited action that sent a clear message and left options open if escalation was called for, a blockade was technically an act of war, so the term "quarantine" was used.

INFER

A "U2 flight" tells them about weapons.

A blockade stops people from coming or going.

The Bay of Pigs was a battle that didn't go well.

The message was to stop building missiles.

Escalation means "going up".

CLARIFY

They didn't know what the right thing was to do but they knew they couldn't just let them keep building missiles. The invasion seemed too risky because of what had happened before. And air strikes would have killed too many people. The blockade seemed like a good idea because it would stop them from building more missiles but not risk too many lives. They didn't want to start a war, so they called it a quarantine instead.

2. Improve comprehension by repeating the process. If parts of the passage still don't make sense, question, infer, and clarify again.

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Close Reading
When every word counts

The cacophony on the floor was deafening. No one heard the piercing whine

of the alarms. But they could see the smoke billowing as it began to fill the

room. Panic-stricken, people made a frenzied rush for the exits. Initially, they

could squeeze themselves out like toothpaste from a tube. But soon the

exiting ceased as bodies crammed the tightly constricted doorway. As a

teeming mass of humanity attempted to push itself forward, those in the

back, behind the bar, the stage, and the equipment, had the realization that

this would be their last shift. With a wry smile, a waitress said to her

manager, "Does this mean I can have the night off tomorrow?"

Close Reading
When every word counts

They were so far behind that a different outcome was inconceivable. But

they weren't discouraged. In fact, the huge deficit seemed ironically to buoy

their spirits. Who would blame them if they lost now? Relaxed and brimming

with newfound confidence, their play become more aggressive—almost

reckless—with each incursion into enemy territory. They took unimaginable

shots and made them. They attempted risky steals and won back the ball.

Miraculously, with 30 seconds remaining, they found themselves within

striking distance. But when the realization of this improbable victory washed

over them, they turned back into the team they really were and relinquished

all hope of success.

The Five Facts of Fiction

1. Fiction is all about characters. Characters can be explored many ways but the "character trait" approach is probably the most common:

- **Physical Traits.** Anything relating to physical description.

- **Emotional Traits.** Overall mood, reactions to events, etc.

- **Social Traits.** Interactions with others, relationships, etc.

- **Intellectual Traits.** Thinking style, problem-solving ability, etc.

2. Fiction is all about what characters want. Sometimes characters want things, sometimes they want feelings, and sometimes they want both:

- **Things.** Possessions, money, a job, to be in a different place, etc.

- **Feelings.** Love, freedom, safety, any strong and positive emotion.

3. Fiction is all about how characters get or don't get what they want. The plot of a story unfolds as characters try to get what they want.

- **Does the character get it?** Yes, no, sort of? Explain.

- **How does it happen?** What is the sequence of events?.

4. Fiction is all about how characters change. Some change a lot, some change a little, some don't seem to change at all.

- **Beginning.** Character's state of mind at the start of the story.

- **Ending.** Character's state of mind at the end of the story.

- **Change.** How does the change happen?

- **Lesson.** What lesson do we learn from the character's experience?

5. Fiction is all about a world an author creates. What's in this world? What kind of world is it?

- **People.** Other characters and their relationships.

- **Places.** The many different settings in the story.

- **Things.** Important objects, activities, occurrences, etc.

- **Ideas.** Themes a writers wants to explore.

The Five Big Questions

1. What makes this text good? Think about the language you use to talk about quality in writing.

- **Ideas.** Main idea, details, "showing", purpose, originality, etc.

- **Organization.** Leads, endings, sequencing, pacing, transitions, etc.

- **Voice.** Personality, honesty, individuality, emotions, tone, etc.

- **Word Choice.** Strong verbs, usage, memorable phrases, etc.

- **Sentence Fluency.** Structure, rhythm, expressiveness, etc.

- **Conventions.** Punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.

- **Presentation.** Formatting, layout, graphics, design, etc.

- **Story Elements.** Character, plot, setting, conflict, etc.

2. What would make this text better? Use the same categories from Big Question #1. Be thoughtful, be critical, be fair. But don't rewrite the text.

3. What's the one most important thing the writer wants you to know? This is the main idea. Your response should be something that is:

- **A complete sentence.** It's not the topic, it's what the writer wants you to know about it.

- **A message, a lesson, a moral.** It's what the writer most wants you to understand and benefit from.

- **Important to the writer.** What one thing does the writer seem to care about most?

- **Important to the reader.** What do you care about most in this particular text?

4. Why did the writer write this? This is the writer's purpose. To figure it out, remember "think and/or do."

- **Think.** What does the writer want you to think?

- **Do.** What does the writer want you to do?

5. What does the audience need to know to understand and appreciate this text? Sometimes you can give people important background information that helps them understand the text and your assessment of it.

Transition-Action-Details™

1. Use Transition-Action-Details to describe a process. This example describes how light impulses are transmitted from the eye to the brain.

TRANSITION	ACTION	DETAILS
When light enters the eye,	It hits the cornea first.	It passes the cornea, the aqueous humor, the lens, and the vitreous humor.
Eventually,	The light reaches the retina, the light-sensing part of the eye.	The retina has rods for vision in low light and cones for color and detail.
When light contacts these two types of cells,	A series of complex chemical reactions occurs.	A chemical called Rhodopsin creates electrical impulses in the optic nerve.
In an extremely fast reaction, beginning in a few trillionths of a second,	Rhodopsin breaks down and eventually forms Metarhodopsin.	This sends electrical impulses to the brain which are interpreted as light.

2. Use Transition-Action-Details to summarize historical events. Here's a brief summary of how Israel become a country.

TRANSITION	ACTION	DETAILS
When the Ottoman Empire collapsed at the end of World War I,	Great Britain ended up administering Palestine.	League of Nations' Mandate System. League Covenant Article 22.
In 1917, at the urging of Zionist groups in England,	The British issued the Balfour Declaration.	"The establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."
During the years of the Mandate, 1922-1947,	Many Jews immigrated to Palestine.	Most were from Eastern Europe. Many fleeing Nazi persecution in the 1930s.
In 1947,	The UN proposed splitting Palestine into two states.	One for Jews, the other for Arabs. UN Resolution 181.

Reading with TAD
Reducing and restructuring sequential information

The Birth of Professional Baseball

By the 1850s landowners were regularly maintaining baseball parks to rent to baseball clubs. Baseball teams customarily collected donations from fans to cover costs. The first fully enclosed baseball park, the Union Grounds in Brooklyn, was completed in 1862. This style of park soon became popular because owners could sell food and drink to spectators without competition from street vendors.

The National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP), an organization formed in 1858, prohibited members from taking payment for playing baseball. During the early 1860s ballpark owners earned large profits while the amateur ball players provided free entertainment. Pressure from players eventually forced the NABBP to change its policy in 1868 and allow players to accept money. This ruling marked the birth of professional baseball.

The first professional baseball team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, began play in 1869. They traveled the country that year, playing before thousands of fans and winning 60 games without a loss. Soon baseball's promoters began forming professional baseball clubs in cities across the Northeastern and Midwestern United States. By 1870 professional players outnumbered amateurs in the NABBP and the remaining amateurs withdrew. In 1871 the organization became the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players.

SOURCE: ENCARTA

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Idea-Details™

1. Use the Idea-Details strategy for note taking. Most textbooks are organized into short sections of ideas and supporting details:

Plants, algae, and even some bacteria use a process called photosynthesis to convert sunlight into energy. Photosynthesis occurs in two stages. In the first stage, light-dependent reactions capture the energy of light and use it to make high-energy carrier molecules called ATP that are used in the second stage. During the second stage, the light-independent reactions, sometimes called dark reactions, use the high-energy ATP molecules to capture carbon dioxide and create the beginnings of carbohydrates.

IDEA	DETAILS
Two stages of photosynthesis.	1. Light-dependent reactions use light to make molecules of ATP for the second stage.
	2. Light-independent or dark reactions use ATP molecules to capture carbon dioxide and begin to produce carbohydrates.

2. Use the Idea-Details strategy for constructed responses. Here, the writer is answering the question, "Who won *The Battle of Antietam?*"

IDEA	DETAILS
The Union won the Battle of Antietam even though both armies lost the nearly same number of men.	Kept Lee from invading the North.
	Kept Britain and France from supporting the South.
	Gave Lincoln a chance to introduce the Emancipation Proclamation.

Even though both armies lost nearly the same number of men, the Union gained the most from the battle because it kept Lee from invading the North and kept Britain and France from supporting the South. It also gave Lincoln the chance to introduce the Emancipation Proclamation.

Reading with Idea-Details
Reducing and restructuring generic information

Kalamazoo, a medium-sized post-industrial city in Michigan, shares the problems of countless such others across America. Its population is shrinking and its poverty rate hovers around 30%. But in November 2005 it received good news: in an effort to revitalise the city, anonymous donors would pay the college tuition fees of every graduate from Kalamazoo's public schools.

The so-called "Kalamazoo Promise" made national headlines, a change for a city used to insisting that its name isn't a joke. Some 80 towns and districts have contacted Kalamazoo to learn about the promise—and a few have even copied it.

The program's central premise is that investing in human capital helps to ensure a town's economic future. The offer of free education, Kalamazoo enthusiasts hope, will retain middle-class residents and attract new ones, tighten the housing market and help the city to lure businesses that are keen to take advantage of a new skilled workforce. This attention to the labour supply, says Tim Bartik, an economist at Kalamazoo's Upjohn Institute, is a markedly different approach from the more usual one of tax incentives.

SOURCE: THE ECONOMIST

What-Why-How™

1. Use the What-Why-How strategy to organize information. This example describes the positive and negative aspects of the Greenhouse Effect.

With all the talk about Global Warming, most people think the Greenhouse Effect is something bad that has to be stopped. But it actually has a positive side. Without it, the Earth wouldn't be warm enough for us to live. Because some of the sun's energy is trapped in the atmosphere, the average temperature is a comfortable 60 degrees. Without the Greenhouse Effect, the average temperature would drop to a chilly three degrees below zero. The problem is that human activity puts additional carbon dioxide and other so-called "Greenhouse Gases" into the air. These gases trap additional energy and the temperature goes up. In the 20th century, the Earth's temperature rose more than one degree. That doesn't sound like much, but it's enough to cause extreme weather, rising sea levels, and the melting of the polar ice cap.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?	WHY DO YOU THINK IT?	HOW DO YOU KNOW?
The Greenhouse Effect is both positive and negative.	It keeps the Earth warm.	Avg temperature is 60 degrees. Without the Greenhouse Effect it would be -3.
	Extra carbon dioxide and other gases cause temperatures to rise too high.	One degree in 20th century: bad weather, high sea levels, melting polar ice.

2. Use the What-Why-How strategy to develop a thesis. Here, a writer offers a counter-argument to the idea that Global Warming is a serious threat to our existence.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?	WHY DO YOU THINK IT?	HOW DO YOU KNOW?
Global Warming may not be the serious problem many people think it is.	Temperatures haven't risen any more than they normally might.	The increase in temperature could simply be the result of natural variations.
	Human beings don't have that much influence on the Greenhouse Effect.	Less than 10% of Greenhouse Gas emissions come from humans.

Reading with WWH
Analyzing a persuasive argument

Cancel that gymnastics class, mom and dad. And think twice about those evening karate lessons. Signing your kids up for everything under the sun may seem like a smart move. But chances are, little Johnny and Janey are over-scheduled.

In a recent study, researchers at the University of Minnesota analyzed how kids spend their time and discovered that today's youngsters are significantly busier—as much as 57% busier in some cases—than their parents were at the same age a generation ago.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with getting kids out of the house to burn off energy. It's also great for kids to try new activities and learn new skills. But today's parents tend to overdo it.

Raising an active and engaged child may seem like good parenting. But many parents put too much structure on kids' activities. And kids miss out on unstructured play as a result. "Play is a key element in how children learn about themselves and the world," said Dr. Martin Applebaum, noted child psychologist, in his recent book entitled *The Health of America's Children.*

Play helps children grow intellectually and socially. But kids today are so busy, many have only a few hours a week to partake of this essential activity. More importantly, Applebaum says, "If we don't restore some balance to our children's lives, we may see future increases in mental health issues like depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder."

There's no doubt that children benefit from structured activities. But when we fill every hour of their lives with an endless string of commitments, we may be taking something from them they'll never get back: their childhood.

Read the article all the way through first. Then, identify the main idea or thesis statement for the entire argument. Fill in "why" and "how" details after that. Some statements won't have complete support. Is that OK?

Learning Patterns
Teach Smarter Not Harder

Imagine a structure 13 years tall, 180 days wide, and five subjects deep. This is a K-12 education. Each cell in this structure represents a single class period in a single subject for a total of 11,700 educational opportunities.

By using *Teaching That Makes Sense® Learning Patterns™* we can reduce this academic load for students, simplify planning and instruction for teachers, and help more kids learn more things in less time and with less teacher effort.

Learning Patterns are cross-curricular tools optimized for successful teaching in any subject or grade. They are designed to be used, re-used, and shared across classrooms without requiring extensive training or preparation.

By analyzing standards documents and the methods of effective teachers, *Teaching That Makes Sense* has identified underlying commonalities in learning targets across the curriculum. These commonalities represent dozens of potential assignments that can be taught and learned through a small set of foundational skills.

Consider exposition. Students consume and create expository information in many ways: they read expository texts, write expository essays, create reports, answer test questions, etc. As varied as expository expression is, it has a simple underlying structure that can be explained by a single *Learning Pattern*.

Some *Learning Patterns* cover skills like narration, exposition, and persuasion. Others help teachers and students with things like assessment, reading comprehension, and memorization. The same patterns can be used across grade levels and subject areas as well, so kids take their learning with them as they grow.

For more information about Learning Patterns click here.

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

Agile Transformation
Building Collective Capacity for School-Wide Change

We are discovering better ways of improving schools by doing it and by helping others do it. Through this work, we have come to value:

- **People.** *Individuals and interactions* over policy and politics;

- **Achievement.** *Maximum potential* over minimum competence;

- **Courage.** *Fierce collaboration* over comfortable compromise;

- **Agility.** *Responding to change* over following a plan.

The items on the right are important, but we value the items on the left more.

Agile Transformation is grounded in two principles: **(1)** People are more successful when they enjoy their work; and **(2)** Schools are more successful when they support people in developing the autonomy, competence, and relatedness that makes their work more enjoyable. Features of *Agile Transformation* include:

- **Paired Practice.** Nobody works alone. Everyone has a team and a teammate.

- **Rapid Iteration.** Sprint through big problems one small problem at a time.

- **Making Sense.** What do we do? Why do we do it? How do we know it works?

- **"Stand Up" Sessions.** What did you do yesterday? What are you doing today? What do you need to be successful? Agile leaders remove impediments.

- **Successful Failure.** Fail fast, fail smart. No blame games. Apply what you learn as you move closer to your goal with each iteration.

- **Souls and Roles.** Aligning what we do with who we are.

- **"Just in Time" Solutions.** Handle problems as they arise. Respond as needed.

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

Essential Elements of Agile Schools

The Qualities of Effective Educational Communities

1. **Agile schools work because people choose to make them work.** We believe in freedom of choice, and that making the choice to participate fully in teaching, learning, and leading is the most important choice we can make.

2. **Agile schools love to learn.** We believe that learning is inherently enjoyable and that giving learners a responsible degree of autonomy in their individual pursuit of knowledge and skill makes it even more so. Agile educators are learners, too.

3. **Agile schools take a constructive approach to failure.** We believe failure is a normal part of success. Kids struggle to learn. Teachers struggle to teach. Administrators struggle to lead. We all experience failure on the way to solving new problems. The faster we fail, the more solutions we try. The smarter we fail, the more knowledge we bring to the next iteration. Instead of looking back at problems, Agile schools look forward to solving them.

4. **Agile schools are always getting better.** We believe there's almost always a better way of doing something, and that it's almost always worthwhile trying to figure out what that better way is. Agile schools value progress, and the appropriate measurement thereof, because progress is the true indicator of learning.

5. **Agile schools empower people to empower others.** We believe that individuals—not systems or policies—are the true sources of power in our schools. Our responsibility is to use our power in service of the greater good, and to teach students how to use their power that way, too.

6. **Agile schools achieve extraordinary results.** We believe in transformative learning that goes far beyond incremental improvements in test scores. Adults in Agile schools also strive for extraordinary achievement in their profession as well.

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

Essential Elements
continued...

7. **Agile schools are based on deeply-held beliefs, clearly-articulated values, and a firmly-rooted sense of commitment.** We believe that the most successful schools are those run by people who know what matters most to them and who possess an unshakable determination to get it.

8. **Agile schools are communities where people make a difference and connect with something greater than themselves.** We believe that the drive to contribute is part of human nature. Our role is to guide people in directing their contribution toward its highest and best use.

9. **Agile schools value ownership, positive attitudes, high expectations, and unwavering optimism.** We believe that making a good life is about making good choices, that the pursuit of happiness is an inalienable right, and that self-mastery is the key to its rightful exercise.

10. **Agile schools embrace the risk inherent in the achievement of great things.** We educate for maximum potential not minimum competence. We believe that all learners have within them extraordinary strengths and untapped resources, and that learning is only limited by our willingness to attempt what has never before been attempted. We welcome change, we innovate, and we seek out challenges that organize and measure the best of our energies and skills.

11. **Agile schools affirm self-knowledge as the most valuable knowledge and self-determination as the most basic right.** We believe that introspection, self-disclosure, and intellectual honesty are essential to personal transformation. We seek to support young people in becoming the adults they want to be.

12. **Agile schools are communities where no one is above the rules, everyone has a voice, freedom is sacred, equity and excellence are not mutually exclusive, and the highest goal of education is contributing to the present and future well-being of individuals who can thrive independently in a modern democracy.** Agile schools value college preparation, career fulfillment, and engaged citizenship, but we value something else even more. Collegiate, career, and civic achievement are important, but they are means to ends, not ends in themselves. Human happiness, meaningful contribution, and sustained well-being of self and community are the ultimate ends to which Agile schools aspire on behalf of the children and families we serve.

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."