# Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons

## Margo Southall

**■ SCHOLASTIC**

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This book is dedicated to my mother, Barbara Lea Taylor, who has continuously encouraged me to put my ideas in writing.

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To my editor, Joanna Davis-Swing, your insight into differentiated instruction and ability to transform an author's thinking into a visual teaching tool are valued and appreciated.

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# Contents

# Introduction

## The Purpose of This Book

The process of planning and teaching lessons for diverse groups of students can be an overwhelming task, even for the most experienced teacher. The purpose of this book is to increase the effectiveness of your small-group reading instruction with lesson formats that are designed to meet the needs of specific profiles of readers.

In the following chapters, I share a menu of classroom-tested lessons for word solving, fluency, and comprehension that target typical challenges and difficulties students experience during the process of learning to read. Each skill and strategy-based lesson is designed to increase the rate of student progress by closely aligning instruction with demonstrated student need.

## How to Use This Book

The lessons in Chapters 4 through 6 will complement your whole-class teaching, or core program, by providing students with the opportunity to review and extend their understanding of skills and strategies in a small-group setting. In each lesson, you will find practical suggestions for scaffolding instruction to support students who do not demonstrate adequate progress in a specific skill or strategy. For each skill area, I provide guidelines for monitoring student progress along with the recommended responsive instruction, enabling you to adjust the frequency, intensity, and pace of instruction to ensure success for every student.

A differentiated reading program requires planning and teaching skill-focused lessons for multiple reading groups, adjusting instruction to meet changes in student need, and selecting supporting reading materials. Let's examine how to put this all together in a workable framework.

**Chapter 1** describes how to structure your reading group program to more effectively differentiate instruction and increase the rate of student achievement. Here you will find the criteria for grouping students and guidelines for varying the lesson content, structure, and reading material.

**Chapter 2** provides a four-step process for linking the information from your assessment data to the formation of differentiated reading groups and the selection of lessons that target their reading goals. When/Then charts are provided, which list student profiles of need (When) aligned with the corresponding lesson(s) in word solving, fluency, and comprehension (Then) found in Chapters 4 through 6. This information is recorded on the Student Reading Goals and Observations Form, Planning for Group Instruction Form, and Tracking Class Reading Goals Form so that the status of individual students and of class is easily accessible.

"According to grouping research, increasing small-group differentiated instruction leads to an increase in reading achievement."

(Gibson & Hasbrouck, p. xiv, 2007)

**Lesson Format/Sequence**

The lesson format provides a cycle of support (Pearson & Gallagher, 1989). The cycle consists of four steps, plus practice at the literacy center and writing activities. Explain each of these steps and their purpose to students during the initial lessons.

**Tell Me** Teacher introduces the strategy with a statement from the picture-cued strategy chart, explains the skill/strategy and how it will help the students grow as readers.

**Show Me** Teacher demonstrates how and when to use the skill/strategy, using consistent teaching language.

**Guide Me** Students practice the skill/strategy with teacher support in a highly interactive format.

**Coach Me** Students apply the skill to the reading of connected text while the teacher provides corrective feedback, observing and documenting the students' level of understanding as a guide for future lessons. Students verbalize their strategy use with partners and with the group, using the sentence starters on the bookmark to support discussion. Teacher restates the teaching point and provides additional support for students who experience difficulty. The Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty chart outlines suggestions for responding with appropriate additional modeling, corrective feedback, and instruction. This four-step cycle is bolstered by the following.

**Reading-Writing Connection** Students complete an independent writing activity that reinforces the skill/strategy in their reading response journal or on a graphic organizer.

**Practice at the Literacy Center** Students link the comprehension, fluency, or word-solving skill or strategy to independent and collaborative tasks at the literacy centers.

Aligning Student Need and Reading Lessons:
Word-Solving When/Then Chart

| WHEN the student requires instruction in: | THEN provide these reading lessons: | Page Number |
|---|---|---|
| • Accurate and fluent blending | I Can Sound and Say: • Build and Blend • Blending Words in a List and Connected Text | 43 49 51 |
| • Blending words in isolation and in context | | |
| • Recognition of common vowel patterns | I Can Chunk the Word: • Sound and Say the Chunk • I Can Use What I Know | 54 60 63 |
| • Using vowel patterns in familiar words to read new single and multisyllabic words • Flexibility with vowel pronunciations | • I Can Switch the Vowel | 67 |

Aligning Student Need and Reading Lessons:
Fluency When/Then Chart

| WHEN the student requires instruction in: | THEN provide these reading lessons: | Page Number |
|---|---|---|
| • Increasing accuracy in reading irregular high-frequency words | I Can See Words I Know: • Train Your Reading Brain • X-Ray Eyes • Countdown Game | 73 79 81 83 |
| • Increasing rate of reading irregular high-frequency words | | |
| • Reading with intonation and expression | I Can Use My Voice: • I Can Read Groups of Words • I Can Look at the Marks | 85 87 91 |
| • Reading with meaningful phrasing • Attending to punctuation cues in the text | | |

**SEE PAGE 20**

Student Reading Goals and Observations Form

Student:
Text Levels:
Word Solving:        Fluency:        Comprehension:
Reading Goal(s):
Observation/Assessment:
Instruction:

**SEE PAGE 22**

Planning for Group Instruction Form

Group: _____   Date: _____
Students:
Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:
Text/Materials:
Notes:

Group: _____   Date: _____
Students:
Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:
Text/Materials:
Notes:

Group: _____   Date: _____
Students:
Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:
Text/Materials:
Notes:

**SEE PAGE 23**

**Chapter 3** answers common questions that arise regarding the daily management of small-group instruction in the classroom, including scheduling issues. A discussion of how to design and stock your small-group teaching space includes suggestions for organizing your planning notebook, using strategy charts, student bookmarks, and other interactive learning tools to ensure that students are engaged and that every-pupil responses (EPR) are incorporated throughout the lesson.

Reading Strategy Chart

I can read the words
I sound and say
I chunk the word
I use what I know
I switch the vowel

I can read smoothly
I see words I know
I read groups of words together
I look at the marks
I use my voice

I can understand what I read
I connect
I predict
I figure it out
I wonder
I stop and fix
I retell
I sum it up

**SEE PAGE 35**

READING STRATEGY Bookmark

I can read the words
I sound and say
I chunk the word
I use what I know
I switch the vowel

I can read smoothly
I see words I know
I read groups of words together
I look at the marks
I use my voice

I can understand what I read
I connect
I predict
I figure it out
I wonder
I stop and fix
I retell
I sum it up

**SEE PAGE 38**

Classroom Bulletin Board

| WORD SOLVING | FLUENCY | COMPREHENSION |
|---|---|---|
| I can read the words | I can read smoothly | I can understand what I read |
| I can sound and say | I can see words I know | I can connect |
| I can chunk the word = cake | I can read groups of words together | I can predict |
| I can use what I know | I can look at the marks | I can figure it out |
| I can switch the vowel | I can use my voice | I can wonder |
| | | I can stop and fix |
| | | I can retell |
| | | I can sum it up |

**SEE PAGE 33**

**Chapters 4 through 6** provide ready-to-go, research-based lessons in word solving, fluency, and comprehension. These lessons are designed to be used with any reading series. Each lesson can be used over a series of multiple small-group sessions by varying the text, while keeping the format consistent. This will enable you to implement a unit of study on a specific skill or strategy to achieve student reading goals.

**SEE PAGE 103**

**SEE PAGE 104**

# Differentiating Our Small-Group Reading Instruction

### SWIMMING IN A SEA OF GROUPS, SKILLS, AND BOOKS: A GUIDED READING SCENARIO

It's time for Kaylie's group to come to the teacher table for guided reading. I have selected the book *Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble* by Cynthia Rylant (1990) based on the rate of accuracy students have achieved with this level of text and the supports the series offers. After the book introduction and modeling of a useful strategy, the group members read at their own pace while I listen to individual students read, reinforcing their use of effective strategies and coaching for strategies they neglect to apply.



Small-group lessons are the heart of a differentiated reading program.

Ben is having difficulty recognizing familiar chunks in words. He tries to decode the word *glory* by analyzing the word phoneme by phoneme. I prompt him to find a part of the word he knows (such as *gl_* and *_or_*), a part he can say, then blend the parts together. He hesitates. I use masking cards from my reading toolbox to isolate *_or_* and model blending the parts to pronounce the whole word. Together we repeat the process and read the word in context, discussing how it is used to name a type of flower in the story.

Mikhela hesitates at the same sight word, *would*, on two successive pages. It's on our word wall, and the class has practiced reading and spelling this word over multiple multisensory practice sessions, but it is evident that she does not have a complete picture of this word in her visual memory. I write the word on an index card and ask her to read it, say the letters in sequence, say the word again, then reread the word in the text, as I place the card under it in the book to support this transfer process.

Will is reading as fast as he can in a monotone voice, skipping over commas and periods in an effort to beat the clock (or be finished first!), it seems. I point to a section of dialogue and ask him to think about how the character might say that part. I ask him to make an inference using what he already knows about dogs together with clues the author has provided in the dialogue (such as *shouted*, words in italics, and punctuation marks). I prompt Will to read that part again, as if he were Henry, so that he can gain insight into how the character responded to a problem in the story.

Kaylie runs her eyes across the pages, skimming the text. She looks at me blankly when I ask her to generate a "teacher" question about what she has just read to ask the rest of the group. I point to a place in the text and ask her to reread and retell what has happened in that part of the story. I model how to turn that information into a question.

Time is up and the next group is on its way. Phew! These students are able to read this text at instructional level, but each one demonstrates a very different profile of strengths and needs. I feel scattered, and I know each student requires a different instructional focus at this point in their reading development. There has to be a more efficient way to address this range of needs before me; at this rate, I am going to be coaching each student for the same neglected strategy for many more guided reading sessions. How, I wonder, can I find more time to give them the targeted instruction that they require to develop an understanding of reading strategies and a mastery of foundational skills? Not in our whole-class reading mini-lessons; we have already gone beyond some of these skills and strategies in our core reading program. Not during guided reading, either. I have used the guided reading format for over a decade and work hard to protect this small-group time in my schedule. But I know that to effectively meet the needs of these readers, I will need more flexibility in lesson structure, scheduling, and materials than our current "traditional" guided reading format allows.

# How Does Differentiation Work With Small-Group Reading Instruction?

**B**uilding upon my experience as a reading specialist and special education resource teacher, and drawing on the principles of differentiated instruction, I set out to rethink and restructure my small-group reading program. The culmination of this process was the insight to differentiate small-group instruction based on student need. I would form reading groups strategically by common need for instruction in a skill or strategy, and I would teach each group a series of lessons that targeted the specific skill or strategy intensively over consecutive lessons. These changes to my program were made in response to two key questions:

**1.** *What are the alternatives to grouping students by reading levels?*
**2.** *How can I make my small-group instruction more responsive to the differing needs and reading goals of my students?*

We can group students by their demonstrated needs, and we can tailor the lessons we offer to those needs. I explore each of these questions further in the following pages.

## Comparing Guided Reading and Differentiated Reading Groups

The following chart summarizes the similarities and differences between guided reading lessons and differentiated reading lessons.

| Guided Reading Group Lessons | Both | Differentiated Reading Group Lessons |
|---|---|---|
| • Focus on integrated strategy use<br><br>• Instructional level text is selected for each group. Students progress through a leveled set of materials<br><br>• Students in the group are all at the same reading level<br><br>• Same lesson structure is used for each session:<br>  ∗ Teacher introduces the text and any important or challenging vocabulary<br>  ∗ Students read the text while teacher coaches for integrated strategy use<br>  ∗ Teacher and students discuss the text<br>  ∗ Teacher may extend the lesson with a strategy mini-lesson using examples from the book | • Teacher-directed<br><br>• Practice of skills/strategies with connected text<br><br>• Teacher prompting for strategy use during reading<br><br>• Informal assessment and documentation of student progress during each session<br><br>• Interactive format<br><br>• Student-student dialogue structures (partner activities sometimes incorporated in guided reading) | • Focus on one to two skills/strategies<br><br>• Level of text varies according to skill/strategy focus. Both instructional and independent level text is used<br><br>• Students may represent a range of two or more reading levels<br><br>• Lesson structure varies according to the teaching point and student need; always includes the components of explicit teaching:<br>  ∗ Tell Me—Teacher explains the skill/strategy<br>  ∗ Show Me–Teacher demonstrates skill/strategy<br>  ∗ Guide Me–Teacher and students engage in interactive practice<br>  ∗ Coach Me–Students apply the skill/strategy; teacher provides corrective feedback<br>In addition to:<br>  ∗ Reading-Writing Connection—Students write in their Reading Response Journal<br>  ∗ Practice at the Literacy Center—Students practice the same skill/strategy at the center (Word Study, Fluency, or Comprehension) |

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To provide highly effective differentiated reading instruction, we vary the following:

1. **Content**
   skills and strategies

2. **Lesson structure**
   teaching sequence/format

3. **Reading material**
   level, genre, and text structure

In addition, we can vary the
- **Frequency of instruction**
  number of times we meet with each group
- **Intensity**
  number of students in the group
- **Pace of instruction**
  number of lessons in each skill or strategy

(GIBSON & HASBROUCK, 2007)

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"*Guided reading* may not always be the appropriate lesson structure to implement with all small groups of students, especially struggling readers … during a *guided reading* lesson it is difficult to build in the systematic review of critical knowledge and skills that struggling readers need."

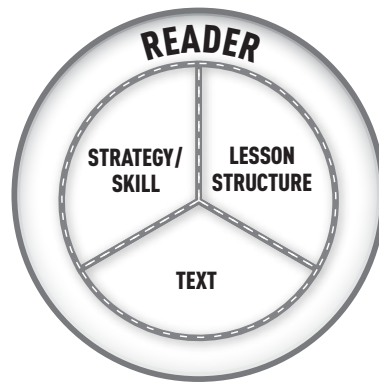(KOSANOVICH, LADINSKY, NELSON, & TORGESEN, P.3, 2006)

**Figure 1.1** To meet the needs of all students, we differentiate the strategy or skill, lesson structure, and text.

# The Students: Forming Differentiated Reading Groups

## What information drives the grouping of our students?

At the heart of the problem in the guided reading scenario were the criteria for student grouping. Students were organized into groups based on the level of accuracy they achieved with our leveled series, rather than on a common instructional goal. In this approach to grouping, you have three to six students sitting in front of you who achieve similar accuracy scores on the same passage, yet each one operates with a differing set of skills, strategy use, and reading behaviors.

In comparison, a differentiated small-group reading program requires more than determining students' reading accuracy rate. This first level of analysis provides a narrow picture of the student as a reader. The teaching response is then guided only by decoding skills. Without integrating sources of information on students' fluency skills and comprehension strategy use, the instructional response is limited. Differentiated reading instruction requires that student grouping be guided by a deeper analysis of assessment data in which student performance in each reading area informs instructional goals (see Ongoing Informal Assessment in Chapter 2, page 15). In this way, we use our data to establish clear instructional goals and to plan supporting lessons that build understanding and mastery.

Teachers form a differentiated reading group when three to six students demonstrate the need for support in the same skill or strategy area, or share the same reading goal (see Student Reading Goals and Observations Form, Chapter 2, page 22). The lesson focus within these differentiated groups is strategically aligned with the current needs of its members. Membership in these differentiated reading groups will shift during the year because students move through stages of reading development at different rates, and their instructional goals therefore continue to change. It is not only the struggling readers who require such targeted instruction. Even on-grade and advanced students do not maintain a constant rate of growth; rather, they experience peaks and plateaus on their path to independence. The small-group reading lessons in this book are designed to support all students within a responsive reading program in which sets of leveled books are used as a vehicle to teaching skills and strategies.

"Because students learn to use reading strategies ... at different rates during the year, flexible grouping allows us to shift students to different groups as they absorb a reading strategy or show that they need additional practice applying a strategy. By having a flexible approach to grouping, you can continually regroup students as their needs change."

(Robb, p. 145, 2008)



This group shares a common need in a specific fluency skill.

# The Lessons: Content, Structure, and Text

How can I make my small-group instruction more responsive to the differing needs/reading goals of my students?

Increasing the rate of student progress requires that we focus time and resources on specific areas of need. To achieve this, we will need to examine what (skills and strategies) and how (lesson format or sequence) we teach, along with the selection of materials (reading level, genre, text structure) that will support the instructional focus.

## Lesson Content

How will I determine the teaching point for each group lesson?

What if we are at Lesson 13 in the core reading program on "identifying the main idea" and some students are still struggling with retelling? This is where the implementation of differentiated small-group reading lessons is critical. The skills and strategies in the *scope* and *sequence* of your core reading series or curriculum document provide a source of possible teaching points for different groups of students. By reviewing these guides and your students' assessment data you will be able to determine the next lesson focus or reading goal for groups of students. When there is more than one possible teaching point you will need to decide: Which teaching point is most important for these students now in their development as readers?

A common temptation is to try and teach too much in one lesson. Typically, the guidebooks that accompany any reading series present more than one teaching point in each lesson. Integrated strategy use during reading is an essential part of learning to read, but many of our younger readers have not yet developed sufficient understanding of each strategy to orchestrate multiple strategies simultaneously. These students require systematic instruction on a specific skill or strategy (their current reading goal) over a series of small-group lessons, cumulatively learning to integrate previously learned strategies in a step-by-step approach.

To assist you in this process of determining the appropriate teaching points, examine the When/Then charts on pages 20 to 21 in Chapter 2. These will provide you with a list of skills and strategies aligned with the lessons in Chapters 4 through 6.

### *Pacing Your Instruction*

How many lessons will I need to teach on the same skill or strategy?

For instruction to be aligned with assessment data, it is essential that we monitor student progress carefully and adjust the pace of instruction accordingly. This attention helps us avoid moving students through a sequence of skills and strategies at a pace that is faster than their rate of learning. Two factors need to be taken into consideration: the students and the skill/strategy.

Firstly, when students are struggling with a concept or skill, they will require additional teaching time. This means scheduling more instructional minutes and allowing more time for students to apply the skill to the reading of connected text. They will also require varied modes of highly interactive instruction to consolidate their understanding and to ensure that we reach each and every

student. To close the gap for low progress readers, we will need to implement explicit instruction that directly addresses their current deficits in skills and strategies over multiple small-group reading lessons.

Secondly, skills and strategies are not equally complex, and some require less or more instructional time. Unfortunately, not all reading programs vary the number of lessons or time spent on each one accordingly (Beck, 2006). The lessons in this book will enable you to provide supplementary lessons on more complex skills and to offer additional support when students experience difficulty.

A "touch and go" pace of instruction does not support the mastery and understanding that transfers to independent reading. Instruction remains responsive when teachers monitor and adjust lesson content continuously so that the *pace of teaching is correlated to the pace of student learning*. The result of too much, too fast is a slow rate of student progress. Suggestions for ongoing monitoring and responses to student progress are included in each lesson plan.
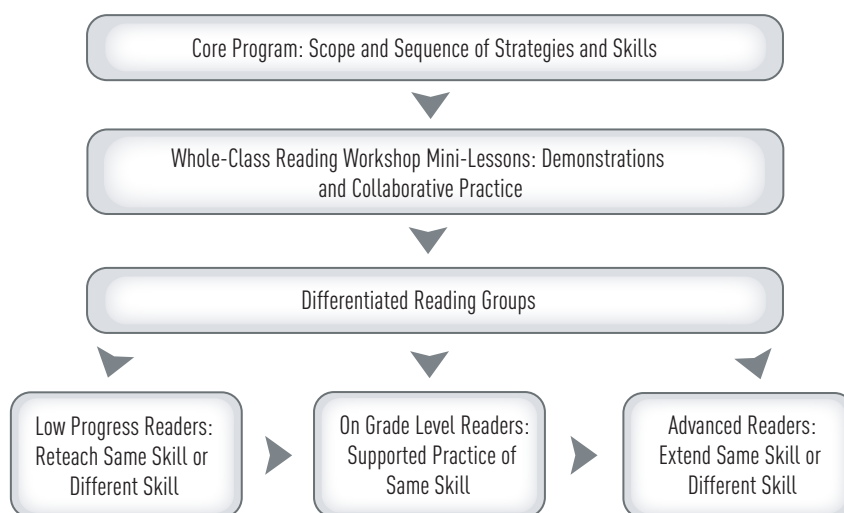
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Core Program: Scope and Sequence of Strategies and Skills  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Whole-Class Reading Workshop Mini-Lessons: Demonstrations  │
│                   and Collaborative Practice                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Differentiated Reading Groups               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        ▼                     ▼                      ▼
┌───────────────┐     ┌───────────────┐     ┌───────────────┐
│ Low Progress  │     │ On Grade Level│     │   Advanced    │
│ Readers:      │  ▶  │ Readers:      │  ▶  │   Readers:    │
│ Reteach Same  │     │ Supported     │     │ Extend Same   │
│ Skill or      │     │ Practice of   │     │ Skill or      │
│ Different Skill│    │ Same Skill    │     │ Different Skill│
└───────────────┘     └───────────────┘     └───────────────┘
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**Figure 1.2** Linking differentiated reading group lessons to whole-class instruction

## Lesson Structure

### What is the teaching format or sequence?

To reach all students, we need flexibility in the design or structure of our lessons. This is especially true for low progress readers, who often require that we present the same skill in multiple ways to achieve mastery.

Kosanovich et al. (2006) identify the need for two types of small-group lesson structures in a differentiated reading program. The first type is guided reading, which is implemented with groups of students who have achieved grade-level expectations. The focus in these lessons is on integrated strategy use and the introduction of new genre and text structures. The second type is skill-focused lessons, which are designed for groups of students who are not achieving grade-level expectations, with the focus on specific skills in phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (NICHD, 2000). Building on these two frameworks and my experience teaching strategy-based groups,

"Grouping creates opportunities for teachers to teach differently, but changes must also occur in the instructional content and types of *lesson structures or activities* used in small groups. Classroom reading instruction in small groups is not differentiated when all students receive the same instruction or use the same lessons and materials."

(Gibson & Hasbrouck, p. 3, 2007)

where the focus is on neglected cues (visual, meaning, and self-monitoring strategies) identified in student running records (Morrison, 1994), I set about restructuring the design of my small-group lessons.

In common with guided reading, each lesson in Chapters 4 through 6 includes teacher-supported practice of a target skill/strategy while reading connected text. From my work with struggling readers, I know only too well the lack of transfer to independent reading if this component is not included and skills are left in isolation. In contrast to guided reading, and like the skill-focused lessons described above, these differentiated lessons include more flexibility in both the presentation and practice of the teaching point. For example, in a lesson with a decoding focus, students may engage in segmenting and blending words using tactile materials, and both fluency and comprehension lessons incorporate varied teaching techniques within shared and independent reading formats, as well as the use of a wide range of tactile learning aids (see Tools for Interactive Learning in Chapter 3).

It is important to note that the differentiated lessons in this book are not just for low progress readers. On-grade and advanced students also require challenging and extending lessons to continue to grow as readers (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). At times, the instructional goal with these students may be integrated strategy use, as in guided reading, but at other times during the year they will need a series of focused lessons on a specific teaching point, such as those provided in Chapters 4 through 6.

### What will the lessons look and sound like?

In differentiated, responsive teaching, lessons will not look and sound the same for every group of students. Scan the lesson plans in Chapters 4 through 6 and you will see a range of teaching techniques and student responses designed to support specific areas of difficulty. Select the lesson that best supports your students' reading goals by examining the When/Then charts in Chapter 2, which align the lessons with common profiles of student need. Lessons are organized in an easy-to-follow, step-by-step lesson format based on the components of explicit instruction as cited in numerous studies on best practices. These lessons are characterized by a high level of interaction. If students are not engaged, they are not learning! Each step in the lesson plans is explained below, under Lesson Format/Sequence (page 12).

### How are reading and writing integrated within the lesson structure?

If our goal is for struggling readers to see themselves as both readers and writers, then the reading response journal provides a powerful and integral part of our lessons. Students will write in their journals either during and/or after the lesson. Numerous research studies support the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing (Allington, 2005). By linking the focus skill to a writing application, we incorporate a critical step in long-term retention of taught skills. The type of writing incorporated in each lesson varies according to the instructional focus. In the word-solving lessons, there is a focus on using words representing the same phonics elements in shared or independent writing activities. In the comprehension lessons, scaffolds are provided so that students can write a personal response to the reading using strategy-based supports such as picture-cued sentence starters for generating questions and connections to support their opinions and insights. Further extensions may

*"Skill-Focused Lessons* are teacher-planned lessons that provide the opportunity for more systematic and focused practice on a relatively small number of critical elements at a time …."
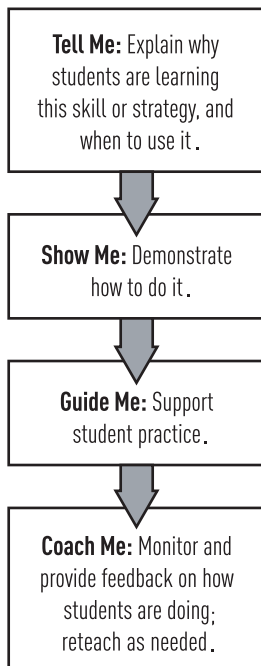(KOSANOVICH, LADINSKY, NELSON, & TORGESEN, P. 3, 2006)

include using the same text structure to write a version of the story or informational text. For example, if the group is reading a descriptive text about an animal, students can follow the same text structure to write about an animal of their choice.

## How do the lessons correlate with my literacy center program?

Each of the lesson plans includes suggested literacy center activities to practice the skill or strategy. These include activities for word study, fluency, and comprehension centers from my book *Differentiated Literacy Centers*.

### Lesson Format/Sequence

The lesson format provides a cycle of support (Pearson & Gallagher, 1989). The cycle consists of four steps, plus practice at the literacy center and writing activities. Explain each of these steps and their purpose to students during the initial lessons.

**Tell Me** Teacher introduces the strategy with a statement from the picture-cued strategy chart, explains the skill/strategy and how it will help the students grow as readers.

**Show Me** Teacher demonstrates how and when to use the skill/strategy, using consistent teaching language.

**Guide Me** Students practice the skill/strategy with teacher support in a highly interactive format.

**Coach Me** Students apply the skill to the reading of connected text while the teacher provides corrective feedback, observing and documenting the students' level of understanding as a guide for future lessons. Students verbalize their strategy use with partners and with the group, using the sentence starters on the bookmark to support discussion. Teacher restates the teaching point and provides additional support for students who experience difficulty. The Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty chart outlines suggestions for responding with appropriate additional modeling, corrective feedback, and instruction. This four-step cycle is bolstered by the following.

**Reading-Writing Connection** Students complete an independent writing activity that reinforces the skill/strategy in their reading response journal or on a graphic organizer.

**Practice at the Literacy Center** Students link the comprehension, fluency, or word-solving skill or strategy to independent and collaborative tasks at the literacy centers.

### Four-Step Cycle of Support

**Tell Me:** Explain why students are learning this skill or strategy, and when to use it.

↓

**Show Me:** Demonstrate how to do it.

↓

**Guide Me:** Support student practice.

↓

**Coach Me:** Monitor and provide feedback on how students are doing; reteach as needed.

## Lesson Text

### What reading materials do I use to support differentiated small-group instruction?

Leveled texts are essential tools for differentiated instruction. The problem occurs when individual texts become the driving force for instruction and students are labeled by reading levels rather than their reading goals. Students in our differentiated reading program are described as reading text from a range of reading levels that varies depending on the demands that are placed upon the reader—whether the teaching point is word solving, fluency, or comprehension.

When selecting the text for the lesson consider the following:

**1. The Teaching Point:** The level of text students read during small-group instruction *will vary depending on the instructional focus*. For example, one of our students, Bella, is reading texts in her small-group lessons that range from levels J to H (Fountas & Pinnell, 2005). The passages, articles, and books the teacher selected for her small-group word-solving lessons are level J, which she can read with 90–94% accuracy. This provides her with the opportunity to practice applying word-solving strategies to 6–10% of the words in the text. In contrast, the text for comprehension lessons are selected so that she can read them with 95–100% accuracy (98%+ for more complex expository text structures). Easy level text enables Bella to focus on meaning-making strategies, and higher-level thinking text enables Bella to focus on meaning-making strategies and higher-level (metacognitive) thinking processes rather than decoding. When Bella (a speed demon) is working on her current fluency goal, adjusting the rate or pace at which she reads, her teacher selects a text she can read with 98–100% accuracy. Such a high degree of accuracy allows Bella to work on adjusting the rate of reading according to different sources of information in the text (e.g., dialogue, lists of facts) to ensure that she is also self-monitoring for comprehension. (See Figure 1.3, Selecting Text Based on the Teaching Point and Student Reading Levels.)

**2. The Range of Student Reading Levels in the Group:** When the focus is on word solving, you will be forming groups of students who decode text with a similar level of accuracy. The text selected for the lesson will need to be at the instructional level for every student in the group. This means that groups formed for word solving instruction are homogeneous in their level of decoding.

In contrast, groups that are formed for fluency and comprehension can be more heterogeneous; students do not all have to read the same text with the same accuracy rate in these groups. Their assessments reveal a range of reading levels and a common need in a fluency or comprehension skill. A fluency or comprehension focus requires that the text be at the independent level for every student in the group. This means that the guiding principle is to select text that is easy for the group member at the earliest stage in decoding. In this way every student will be able to decode at least 98% of the text with ease for fluency lessons, and 95% or more for comprehension lessons. This allows students to develop fluency and comprehension strategies without using precious mental energy and time figuring out the words. The fact that the text is easy is a good thing when you consider the difficulty so many students have reading with expression or engaging in

"Simply teaching students in smaller groups is not necessarily differentiating instruction. Grouping is a procedural change for how we teach. In order to differentiate, changes in what we teach are also needed. That means data-informed teaching using leveled materials that match text difficulty to student reading levels and leading skills-focused lessons that include more student engagement, and guided practice with constructive feedback from a teacher or peer."

(Gibson & Hasbrouck, p. 3, 2007)

higher-level thinking, such as making an inference. If the text is not easy, we are back to coaching students for word recognition during a comprehension lesson, or spending a disproportionate amount of time in a fluency lesson teaching words that cause hesitations.

## Selecting Text Based on the Teaching Point and Student Reading Levels

| Lesson Focus | Level of Accuracy | Guiding Principle for Selecting Group Text |
|---|---|---|
| Word Solving | 90–94% | Instructional level for all students |
| Fluency | 98–100% | Independent level text for all students |
| Comprehension | 95–100% Narrative Text  98–100% Expository Text | Independent level for all students |

**Figure 1.3**

### Selecting Text to Support the Teaching of Specific Skills and Strategies

At the beginning of each chapter, I offer suggestions for selecting texts that specifically support the skills and strategies in the lessons. If you have difficulty locating an appropriately leveled text that directly supports a strategy, you can make a more challenging text accessible by adopting a shared reading format. When you have students who have a common comprehension strategy need, yet are reading at quite a range of levels, each student may practice with a different text and then share how they used the strategy with that title (see Chapter 6).

Whatever their functioning reading levels, all students benefit from reading authentic text that provides practice of the target skill or strategy. This is essential if they are to extend their understanding to new reading materials and internalize the thinking processes. By viewing leveled text as a means toward a goal and not the goal itself, our emphasis shifts from "doing the book" to closer examination of our students' development as readers.

In Chapter 2, you will be able to determine the appropriate teaching points for the demonstrated needs in your classroom. Together with the corresponding lessons from the following chapters, these points will enable you to successfully implement a differentiated small-group reading program where every student is both challenged and supported.

**Summary of Key Principles:**

- Students are organized in flexible small groups based upon current instructional goals, rather than placement along a continuum of text levels.

- Curriculum-based skills and strategies provide the scope and sequence for both whole class reading workshop mini-lessons and differentiated small-group reading instruction.

- Lesson content, teaching sequence, and learning materials are responsive to the needs of the learners.

# Planning Differentiated Small-Group Reading Instruction

Responsive instruction requires that we assess, teach, monitor progress, and reteach our students within small groups. This chapter describes how to determine the lessons that will be most effective for students at different points along the reading continuum. It is here we ask the crucial questions:

1. What information do I need to guide the formation of differentiated reading groups?

2. Which lessons support the reading goals identified in the assessment data?

3. How do I plan a sequence of reading instruction for groups of students with a common goal?

## Ongoing Informal Assessment: The Information That Drives Differentiated Reading Instruction

What information do I need to guide the formation of differentiated reading groups?

Identifying the small-group reading lessons that will be most appropriate for our students requires ongoing assessment of their needs. Ongoing assessment ensures careful monitoring of student progress in the skills and strategies they require to continue to grow as readers. (See Figure 2.1.)

Frequent informal assessment during reading is essential to monitor transfer of skills and strategies to independent reading.
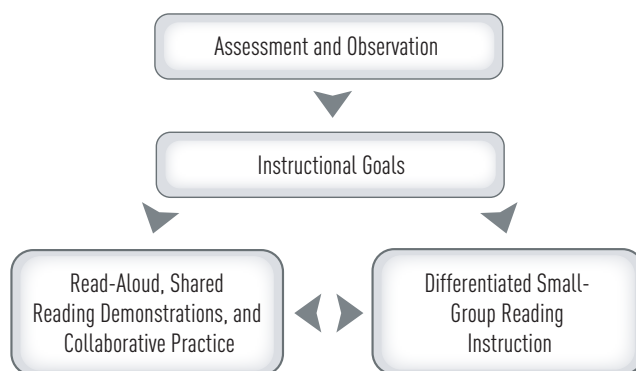
¨Knowing where they are and where they need to go and also knowing some strategies for getting them there on time is the real heart of a differentiated instructional plan.¨

(Walpole & McKenna p. 7, 2007)

Assessment and Observation

▼

Instructional Goals

◀ ▶

Read-Aloud, Shared Reading Demonstrations, and Collaborative Practice

Differentiated Small-Group Reading Instruction

**Figure 2.1** Assessment drives whole-class and small-group differentiated instruction.

## Informal Assessment Tools

Walpole and McKenna (2006) recommend a set of informal assessments. These include a test of all levels of phonological awareness, including phoneme segmentation, a letter-name and letter-sound inventory, a phonics inventory, a pseudo-word decoding test, and a developmental spelling inventory, in addition to assessments of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

A "teaching toolkit" of informal assessment tools guides the selection of lessons for small-group instruction. These assessments are correlated with the areas of instruction addressed in Chapters 4 through 6 in the following chart.

## Types of Informal Assessment

| Differentiated Reading Lessons | Informal Assessments |
|---|---|
| Word Solving<br><br>*Phonemic Awareness*<br><br>*Phonics* | • All levels of phonological awareness, including phonemic blending and segmentation<br>• Letter-name and letter-sound inventory<br>• Phonics inventory<br>• Pseudo-word decoding test<br>• Graded word lists |
| Fluency<br><br>*Oral Reading* | • Graded passages to assess accuracy and rate<br>• Rubric for evaluating prosody<br>• High-frequency word reading test |
| Comprehension<br><br>*Strategy Use* | • Questions (literal, inferential, and evaluative) on narrative and expository text<br>• Reading response journal (follow-up to small-group reading)<br>• Collaborative discussion (what are students saying during whole-class and partner discussions that indicates strategy use?)<br>• Teacher scripting of student dialogue |
| All Lessons<br><br>*Word Solving, Fluency, and Comprehension*<br><br>*Self-Monitoring Strategies and Reading Behaviors* | • Running records<br>• Informal reading inventories<br>• Reading conferences<br>• History as a reader<br>Observation for evidence of:<br>∗ Clarifying strategies (e.g., read on, reread, substitute a word, etc.)<br>∗ Hesitations, persistence, passiveness, level of confidence, body language |

## Reading Strategy Conferences

Regularly scheduled reading strategy conferences provide another source of information to guide your instruction (Robb, 2008). During these conferences, we listen as students read for two to three minutes, ask questions to assess their understanding, record observational notes, and offer feedback on their progress as a reader (see Student Reading Goals and Observations Form, page 22). If you meet with two students each day, over a two-week period you will have provided all students with the constructive feedback they need to remain an engaged reader. During this time, the rest of the class participates in independent literacy centers (see Southall, 2007), partner reading, or independent reading or writing in their reading response journals. In a reading conference conversation, be sure to use consistent terminology for strategy use (making connections, summarizing, etc.), which empowers students to verbalize their reading goals.



**Step 2:** While the student reads a short section of the text, the teacher uses an informal assessment tool to document her progress.

### Steps in a Reading Conference

**1. Prepare for the conference. Examine the assessment data** on the student, including information you have recorded on the student observations form and their current goal set in the previous conference. This will help you to identify which skills and strategies will be the focus for this conference. Based on their progress with this goal, a new goal may be determined during the conference.

**2. Review the current reading goal with the student and explain the purpose for the reading conference. Ask the student to read aloud** a short excerpt from a familiar or an unfamiliar text (both are useful) to determine if the student can now apply previously taught skills independently and transfer their understanding of the concept to connected text. Note their progress on the current goal. Based on your observations, establish the next step in achieving the goal, or, if the student demonstrates readiness, identify a new goal.

**3. Prompt students to verbalize** how they applied the strategy in their current reading goal during reading (see prompt cards in Chapters 4 through 6). For example, ask them how they solved a tricky word or inferred the meaning of the passage. Refer to the classroom display of strategy statements (see Common Strategy Statements in Chapter 3, page 31), or the strategy charts or bookmarks in Chapters 4 through 6 to assist them to use the language of strategy use (see Interactive Tools for Responding to Text in Chapter 3, page 34).



**Step 3:** The teacher prompts the student to explain how he applied the strategy during reading to determine his level of understanding.
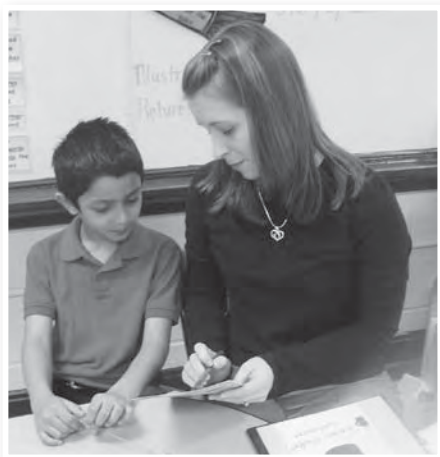
**Step 4:** Student motivation is enhanced by positive feedback on the current reading goal. Teachers may place "happy face" stickers alongside the strategy statement on student bookmarks (see Chapter 3) when this reading goal has been achieved.

"Well-timed and well-executed lessons from teaching professionals who are themselves thoughtful readers is often all it takes to begin the process of altering the fundamental view of reading that children hold. When we can match the reading profiles of our students with the instruction they need, we can put our children firmly on the road to effective, rewarding, and engaged reading throughout their entire lives."

(Applegate, Quinn & Applegate, p. 56, 2006)

**4. Share your observations** with students so they develop a greater self-awareness and ownership of their own progress as a reader. You may begin by asking them to reflect on their own progress by asking, "What did you learn about yourself as a reader today?" Share the strengths you noted, the strategies you observed the student apply successfully. Next, using your observations, explain an appropriate next step for the current reading goal, or set a new goal and discuss it. This becomes the teaching point for small-group instruction. Say something like, "This is what you need to work on next to continue to grow as a reader. It's your next reading goal, and this is how it will help you understand what you read."

**5. Add new information** to the student observation form to reflect current progress.

### Assessment During the Small-Group Lesson: Making the Most of Your Time

I incorporate on-the-run, teacher-friendly informal assessment tools during each group lesson to maximize instructional time and to ensure I'm meeting students' current needs. These assessments include running records, skill/strategy use checklists or rubrics, and forms for observational note taking.

During each lesson I keep a copy of the Student Reading Goals and Observations Form (page 22) for one or two students on my clipboard. I listen to these students more than the others and document any signs of progress or difficulty. Often I add something to these notes right after the lesson. If I leave it longer than this, some of the details escape my memory.

Time for reflection on the assessment tools comes at the end of the literacy block or the day. Guidelines for setting up a planning notebook with sections for the different forms is described on page 31 in Chapter 3.

## Planning Differentiated Reading Lessons

In this section, we will discuss how assessment data guides the selection of lessons in comprehension, fluency, and word solving. Students are placed together in a small group when they demonstrate need for instruction in the same skill or strategy. To decide upon an instructional focus and the corresponding lesson(s) for each group, we ask ourselves questions such as:

- What skills and strategies have these students mastered?
- What is the greatest area of need?
- What skill or strategy needs to be addressed?
- Which lesson will I use to address this need?
- How will I know if I need to reteach this skill/strategy or can I continue to the next reading goal?

The four steps outlined below address these questions so that the lessons meet the needs of our students. To plan and implement the lessons, review each of the four steps below. The fourth step is designed to ensure our instruction remains responsive to the rate of student learning. Keep in mind that some students will require more extensive teaching and practice in a skill or strategy than others. Assessment data and flexibility in our lesson planning can help to address the difference in the number of lessons on the same skill or strategy.

## Four Steps to Differentiated Reading Lessons

**1. Identify the appropriate lesson focus for your students.** Use student assessment data to identify the skill or strategy that forms the appropriate reading goal for each student. Record on the Student Reading Goals and Observations Form, page 22.

STUDENT READING GOALS AND OBSERVATIONS FORM

Student:

Text Levels:
Word Solving:          Fluency:          Comprehension:
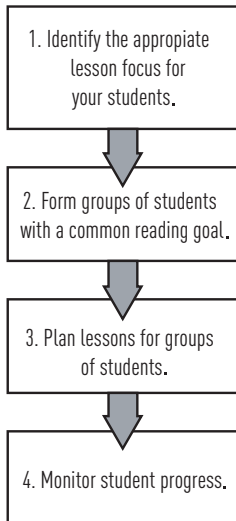
Reading Goal(s):

Observation/Assessment:

Instruction:

SEE PAGE 22

**2. Form groups of students with a common reading goal.** Review the Student Reading Goals and Observations Form from step 1 to identify groups of students who share a common reading goal. Record the goal and names of the students on the Planning for Group Instruction Form (page 23) and the Class Reading Goals Form (page 24).

PLANNING FOR GROUP INSTRUCTION FORM

Group: _____ Date: _____

Students:

Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:

Text/Materials:

Notes:

Group: _____ Date: _____

Students:

Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:

Text/Materials:

Notes:

Group: _____ Date: _____

Students:

Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:

Text/Materials:

Notes:

SEE PAGE 23

| Students | I sound and say | I chunk the words | I use what I know | I switch the vowel | I see a word I know | I read groups of words together | I look at the marks | I use my voice | I connect | I predict | I wonder | I figure it out | I stop and fix | I retell | I sum it up |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

SEE PAGE 24

**3. Plan lessons for groups of students.** Refer to Aligning Student Need and Reading Lessons charts (pages 20–21) to select the lesson(s) that support(s) the goal on the Planning for Group Instruction Form.

**4. Monitor student progress.** Identify how you will monitor student progress (see Ongoing Informal Assessment on page 15 and Assessment During the Small-Group Lesson on page 18). Use this information to determine further lessons for reteaching or student readiness to move on to their next reading goal. Record further observations on the Student Reading Goals and Observations Form.

1. Identify the appropiate lesson focus for your students.

2. Form groups of students with a common reading goal.

3. Plan lessons for groups of students.

4. Monitor student progress.

## When/Then Charts for Planning Small-Group Reading Lessons

Which lessons support the reading goals identified in assessment data?

The following charts align student needs with relevant lessons in this book. The charts are organized into three key areas: word solving, fluency, and comprehension. I've also included some record-keeping and planning sheets that are helpful when forming groups and planning instruction—Student Reading Goals and Observations Form, Planning for Group Instruction Form, and Class Reading Goals Form—located on pages 22–24. Keep in mind that the lessons can be used with the same group more than once—simply vary the text.

## Aligning Student Need and Reading Lessons: Word-Solving When/Then Chart

| WHEN the student requires instruction in: | THEN provide these reading lessons: | Page Number |
|---|---|---|
| • Accurate and fluent blending | I Can Sound and Say: <br> ∗ Build and Blend | 43 <br> 49 |
| • Blending words in isolation and in context | ∗ Blending Words in a List and Connected Text | 51 |
| • Recognition of common vowel patterns | I Can Chunk the Word: <br> ∗ Sound and Say the Chunk | 54 <br> 60 |
| • Using vowel patterns in familiar words to read new single and multisyllabic words | ∗ I Can Use What I Know | 63 |
| • Flexibility with vowel pronunciations | ∗ I Can Switch the Vowel | 67 |

## Aligning Student Need and Reading Lessons: Fluency When/Then Chart

| WHEN the student requires instruction in: | THEN provide these reading lessons: | Page Number |
|---|---|---|
| • Increasing accuracy in reading irregular high-frequency words | I Can See Words I Know: <br> ∗ Train Your Reading Brain <br> ∗ X-Ray Eyes | 73 <br> 79 <br> 81 |
| • Increasing rate of reading irregular high-frequency words | ∗ Countdown Game | 83 |
| • Reading with intonation and expression | I Can Use My Voice: | 85 |
| • Reading with meaningful phrasing | ∗ I Can Read Groups of Words | 87 |
| • Attending to punctuation cues in the text | ∗ I Can Look at the Marks | 91 |

## Aligning Student Need and Reading Lessons: Comprehension When/Then Chart

| WHEN the student requires instruction in: | THEN provide these reading lessons: | Page Number |
|---|---|---|
| ● Making Connections | I Can Connect | 103 |
| ● Predicting | I Can Predict | 108 |
| ● Making Causal Inferences | I Can Figure It Out: Making Causal Inferences | 116 |
| ● Making Relational Inferences | I Can Figure It Out: Making Relational Inferences | 118 |
| ● Generating and answering literal questions | I Can Wonder: Literal Questions | 126 |
| ● Generating and answering inferential and evaluative questions | I Can Wonder: Inferential and Evaluative Questions | 129 |
| ● Self-monitoring using clarifying strategies | I Can Stop and Fix | 134 |
| ● Using story structure and vocabulary to retell narrative text | I Can Retell | 141 |
| ● Summarizing informational text; determining important information | I Can Sum It Up | 145 |
| ● Integrating the use of multiple comprehension strategies | I Can Code My Thinking | 149 |

QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DISCUSSIONS

1. What is the basis for student grouping in your classrooms? What information do you use? Do you need any additional information?

2. How could the scope and sequence of skills and strategies in your curriculum/standards be used as a guide for student grouping and teaching points for the lessons?

# Student Reading Goals and Observations Form

**Student:**

**Text Levels:**

   Word Solving:           Fluency:          Comprehension:

**Reading Goal(s):**

**Observation/Assessment:**

**Instruction:**

# Planning for Group Instruction Form

Group: _____ Date: _____

Students:

Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:

Text/Materials:

Notes:

Group: _____ Date: _____

Students:

Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:

Text/Materials:

Notes:

Group: _____ Date: _____

Students:

Teaching Point/Lesson Focus:

Text/Materials:

Notes:

# Tracking Class Reading Goals Form

| Students | I sound and say | I chunk the words | I use what I know | I switch the vowel | I see a word I know | I read groups of words together | I look at the marks | I use my voice | I connect | I predict | I wonder | I figure it out | I stop and fix | I retell | I sum it up |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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# Organizing for Differentiated Reading Groups

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The most common concerns about small-group teaching that I hear from colleagues have to do with the daily management of students, time, and materials. Let's take a close look at these factors so we can make differentiated small-group reading instruction a reality in your classroom.

## Grouping Students

### How many students should there be in a differentiated reading group?

Groups in a differentiated reading program range from three to seven students. For low progress readers, the groups should be between three and five students; for students performing at or above grade level, from five to seven students (Kosanovich, Ladinsky, Nelson, & Torgesen, 2006). Research supports that *intervention is unlikely to be effective when there are more than five students in the group* (Torgesen, 2005). The fewer students in the group, the more intensive the instruction becomes. To sum up, the number in a reading group depends upon:

**1.** The level of student need
**2.** The number of students requiring instruction in the skill or strategy

### Should every student be in a small reading group?

Ideally, all students will have an opportunity to participate in differentiated small-group instruction on an ongoing basis to receive differentiated instruction and constructive, positive feedback. However, we know that low progress students will require more time and instruction. The number of low progress students in a class may result in a schedule where not all students participate in small-group instruction every day or continuously throughout the year. The learning needs of on-grade and advanced students may be served for periods of time with partner reading, independent reading, and responding to text (see Reading-Writing Connection: The Reading Response Journal on page 39), or participation in a book club. Participation in a small group is therefore flexible and determined by the level of student need in any one classroom.



As a follow-up activity to a lesson on the I Can Chunk the Word strategy, students generate and build new words with the target vowel pattern. This supports recognition of these 'chunks' in new and more complex words.

# Scheduling: Common Problems ... and Suggestions

Over the past two decades of small-group teaching, I have confronted each and every one of these challenges in my own classroom. Let's look at some problem-solving ideas to nip these issues in the bud.

## I just can't seem to find enough time for small-group instruction

Perhaps you are trying to do it all—who isn't these days? But can you really keep doing everything you are now and fit more into the same time frame? Small-group reading instruction is not an add-on; it is essential if we are to provide the level of support each child deserves. *Maybe something you are doing now has to go* to make the time for it—and that something is whatever is giving you the least results for your teaching (and student learning) time. Here are some possible ways to crunch those teaching minutes in your schedule.

- Create a visual of your schedule to allow you to see the big picture. Draw a timeline of your literacy block (60 to 120 minutes) in five-minute increments vertically down the left of a sheet of chart paper. Alongside, list the instruction taking place, bracketing time intervals such as 10 or 25 minutes. Examine carefully each instructional activity you have listed. Take a highlighter and highlight the "must haves" in your schedule—the formats where you are seeing tangible student growth. What is left may need to go. Often what remains are activities and rituals we have always done. Prioritizing can be painful, but the effort is worth it—and you will see increased levels of student success.

- Student sharing during reading and writing workshop can be in partners or within small groups, with all groups meeting simultaneously. I trained my kindergarten and first-grade students to do this right from the beginning of school. One student in each circle of four was the group discussion leader and made sure every student got their "one minute" to share, passing the "talking stick" around the circle.

- Look for other time-eaters, such as transition time between short periods of instruction that require students to refocus and perhaps move or switch out their materials frequently. Note the time taken for transitions between different areas of instruction. Is there a more efficient order of activities or movement of students and their materials? Do the instructional formats flow into one another, e.g., shared reading into small-group reading?

- Integrate phonics and spelling into word study. We used to see spelling as a separate subject from phonics (letter-sound correspondences and vowel patterns), but research supports that students need to be learning to read and spell the same sets of words so they are learned in integration (see reading-writing connection activities in Chapter 4). For sight words that do not fit the phonics elements you are teaching, provide brief (five-minute) interactive activities three or four times a week alongside multisensory small-group and word study center activities.

- Teach grammar within writer's workshop mini-lessons using literature examples, and not as a separate subject.

## Timeline

| Time | Activity |
|---|---|
| 8:15 | Entry Routines; Book Exchange |
| 8:25 | **Readers' Workshop: Whole-Class Mini-Lesson:** Read Aloud/Shared Reading; Demonstrations and Collaborative Practice |
| 8:55 | **Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons/Literacy Centers/Book Clubs** |
| 9:45 | Recess/Daily Fitness and Nutrition Break |
| 10:00 | **Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons/Literacy Centers/Book Clubs** (cont'd) **Reading Strategy Conferences** |
| 10:25 | **Word Study Workshop:** High Frequency Word Wall Practice; Group Rotation: Mini-Lesson/Word Sort Practice |
| 10:45 | **Writers' Workshop:** Mini-Lesson; Guided Writing Group/Independent Writing/Revision Stations |
| 11:30 | **Lunch Break** |
| 12:00 | **Reading Strategy Conferences** |

- Integrate comprehension and vocabulary development with narrative and expository writing during content learning. Strategies for comprehending, summarizing, and writing informational text are appropriate across the curriculum, no matter what the grade level.

- In kindergarten and first grade, teach letter formation (handwriting) as you teach the letter-sound correspondences and monitor carefully for fine motor control and confusions. Handwriting should no longer be another subject on the list to fit into a day in second and third grade. I remember in my earlier teaching years how we used to spend as much as 20 minutes a day teaching cursive handwriting. Now there are scripts that are much more student friendly, that students learn right from kindergarten, and students don't use precious learning time mastering a second type of letter formation.

We are each trying very hard to maximize those minutes in our literacy block. I have come to the conclusion there will never be enough time to do everything I would like to do with my students. But I will always advocate for protected small-group teaching time: It is the heart of the reading program.

Our core reading program takes up so much time I don't have any left for small-group instruction.

Core reading programs or literature sets and small-group instruction are not mutually exclusive. They can both have their place in the program. Whole-class read-alouds, shared reading, and literature-driven discussions enable every student to have access to grade-level literature and the opportunity to grow from hearing the thinking of others. The proportion of time designated for these is the question. You must find the balance between whole-class and small-group instruction. Is it mandated in your school that you teach every lesson in the core program? Unless you are using a highly structured special education program, where following the sequence is critical to support cumulative skill-building, then you must be able to select from your program the lessons that correlate with student need. You may spend a longer or shorter time on different skills in response to student achievement levels. It is not a matter of "doing the book." You are a professional who is able to identify which skills and strategies from the core program and district standards require more intensive instruction within a small-group setting, and it is your responsibility to provide the responsive teaching that will make a difference for these children. It will be essential for you to document how you use student data to plan your lessons so that you have the necessary evidence to demonstrate how you are meeting both district literacy goals and student needs within your small-group instruction. The lesson planning forms in this chapter and the When/Then charts in Chapter 2 are designed to assist you with this. There is ample research supporting the efficacy of small-group instruction when it targets the data-based needs of students. (See the quotes throughout the book and references on page 159 that you can use to advocate for your students and provide the rationale for your program.)

What do I recommend as the proportion of time allocated to whole-class instruction, small-group lessons, and one-to-one conferences? If you think about a pyramid divided into three tiers, small group would be at the base of the pyramid, representing the most time, followed by whole-class instruction and then independent reading (in conjunction with a reading response journal, so that it is accountable time) alongside one-to-one teacher-student conferences.

**Figure 3.1** Allocating time for each component of a balanced reading program

I devote approximately 30 minutes to whole-class instruction using read-alouds and shared reading text and 45 to 60 minutes for small-group reading instruction. Some would argue that time conferring with individual students should represent the most time. I recognize the power of one-to-one tutoring and goal setting, and this could certainly be the second tier of the pyramid, where possible. I confer with and informally assess two students each day, which means over a two-week period every child has had individual feedback on his or her growth as a reader and current goals. I would like to see more time for individualized instruction, but in the majority of classrooms (and intervention programs), there are too many students for one teacher to tutor individual students with the frequency necessary to achieve learning goals. Practicality necessitates a small-group format.

How often should I meet with each group?

We vary not only the teaching point or content but also the frequency, duration, and intensity of group meetings (Gibson & Hasbrouck, 2007). For students who are not performing at grade level, daily small-group instruction is essential to bridge the gaps that have developed and achieve an increased rate of progress. Those performing at grade level should have the opportunity for small-group learning at least twice a week to extend their understanding of key concepts, and to take them higher in their critical thinking skills and deeper in their understanding of different genre and text structures. The peer discussion that takes place in small-group sessions is also an important growth opportunity for all students.

I find it difficult to watch the clock and end up running out of time for small-group instruction at the end of our literacy block.

If you find that whole-class instruction takes up a disproportionate amount of time and small-group instruction time suffers, begin the literacy block with small-group instruction and close with whole group or alternate periods of small-group and whole-class instruction.

I want to work with two groups a day, but my students can't remain independent for that long. Are there any scheduling options that would help me with this?

If you are meeting with multiple groups each day and this is not a realistic length of time for your students (developmentally and/or behaviorally) to work independently, schedule alternate periods of whole-class instruction and small-group lessons/literacy centers. For example, try small-group instruction for 20 to 30 minutes followed by a word study lesson or shared reading activity, then a second small-group session. This means students come together and refocus before going back to independent tasks at the centers.

## How much time should I spend on each part of the lesson?

Create a visual time guide for yourself to represent the parts of your lesson. Draw a pie chart with three sections, the size of each section corresponding to the time you spend on teaching that part of the lesson, and write the time in your pie chart. How much time do you spend explaining and demonstrating the teaching point, guiding student practice, coaching students during reading, and restating the teaching point? In a 20-minute lesson, allow no more than five to six minutes for the first slice, seven to eight minutes for the second and eight to ten minutes for the last slice of your pie. If your lessons are 25 to 30 minutes, then adjust the guided practice time accordingly. Struggling readers require multiple demonstrations of a new skill, but be aware of the need to include student responses throughout your demonstration or you will lose their attention. Student practice should always be the largest part of the lesson; these are the activities under Guide Me and Coach Me in the lesson plans.
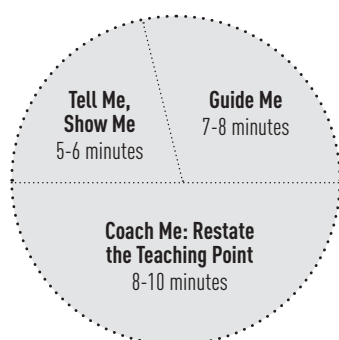
Plan your teaching time for each part of the lesson.

## I always run out of time before I finish the lesson.

Use a timer at the small-group table and set it for five minutes before the end of the lesson, so you will not run out of time to review the teaching point and have a group share of the roadblocks and successes students experienced during the reading (this is the Coach Me: Restate the Teaching Point part of the lesson; see Lesson Format/Sequence, Chapter 1).

## Rotation Systems

In many classrooms, students rotate through literacy centers and the small-group teaching table using a rotation visual with icons representing each center (see Southall, 2007). You need to decide whether you want your small-group instruction to be part of the rotation system or separate from it. A rotation system where the teacher is part of the rotation means that the time for the lessons is the same amount of time students spend on a independent task at a literacy center, partner reading, etc. (see the first two rotation options). If you want flexibility in the lesson schedule, then do not include yourself in the rotation, but rather pull students to the teaching table from ongoing independent activities, based on common needs (see the bottom rotation option). You may also wish to have a follow-up task from the lesson as part of the rotation (see third rotation option).

**Rotation Options**

Teaching Table | Comprehension Center
Word Study Center | Fluency Center
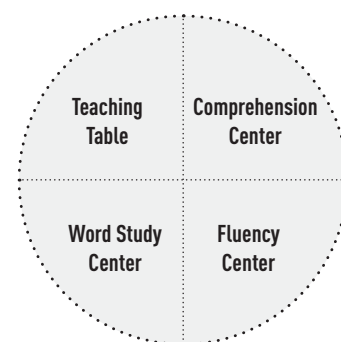
Small-Group Instruction + 3 Centers

Teaching Table
Literacy Center | Literacy Center
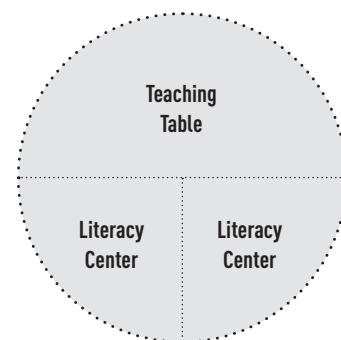
Small-Group Instruction + 2 Centers

Teaching Table | Reading Group Work
Literacy Center | Literacy Center
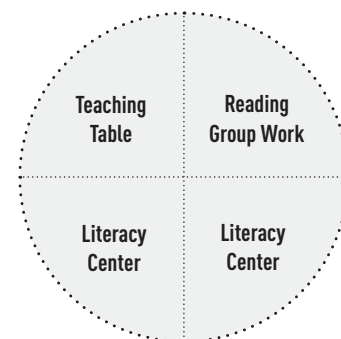
Small-Group Instruction + Follow-Up Task + 2 Centers

Reading Group Work | Comprehension Center
Fluency Center | Word Study Center
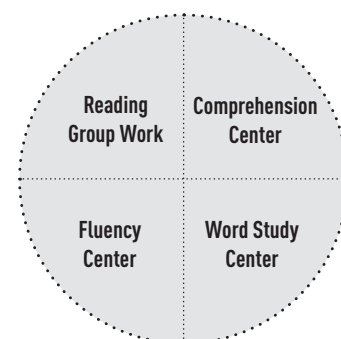
Small-Group Follow-Up Task + 3 Centers

# Working With Differentiated Reading Groups Within Response to Intervention (RTI) and Collaborative Teaching Models

### How does this approach support the Response to Intervention model?

A growing number of districts across the country are implementing the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). If you are working with this three-tier model, the lessons in Chapters 4 through 6 will address the needs of Tier 1 students, who meet grade-level expectations but demonstrate varying instructional needs. The differentiated reading lessons are especially appropriate for Tier 2 students, who require more opportunities for small-group instruction to achieve grade-level goals. Low progress readers (Tier 2) can participate in the classroom teacher's group first, then work with a specialist in a second small-group session, and thus be supported by a double dose of targeted instruction on the same skill or strategy (Torgesen, 2005).

### How would this work with a push-in model of classroom support?

A similar framework to the one described above is used for in-class support systems, where specialist teachers provide students with supplemental instruction on a regular basis. For example, the reading specialist, Title 1, or special education resource teacher works with a small group of students who have demonstrated need in a specific skill or strategy, while the classroom teacher also works with a small group. The benefit of having a second reading teacher is that low progress students are able to participate in small-group instruction on a daily basis.

### *Grouping Students From Multiple Classrooms*

Some schools use their assessment data to form groups with common needs across classrooms, with students working with a second teacher during small-group reading instruction. The basis for distributing students among teachers is generally the students' functioning reading levels. For example, one teacher may work with low progress readers, while another works with students working at or near grade level and a third teacher works only with advanced readers.

The differentiated small-group reading framework can be readily implemented in a collaborative teaching model using skill-based grouping (with common instructional goals) instead of ability-based grouping. Individual teachers can then focus on a specific area of instruction, such as word solving, or have a dual-strategy focus, such as word solving and fluency. For example, one teacher can work with students requiring instruction in decoding skills and word-solving strategies; a second teacher on fluency aspects such as reading rate (correct words per minute), meaningful phrasing, and the use of expression; and a third teacher on comprehension strategies and vocabulary building. This would provide three reading "stations" at which students could participate depending on their current need. A fourth teacher may work with students engaged in partner reading or book clubs. In this way, students will spend time with different teachers based on their current reading goal(s). Of course, the numbers of students requiring instruction in each area will vary at

different times of the year, and the instructional focus will not remain static for each teacher. Teachers will have the opportunity to teach two or more of the stations over the course of a year as they collaborate to meet the changing needs of students in their grade level(s).

### Rotating Intervention Groups

Where there are two or more intervention teachers, each teacher can focus on a different aspect of reading. For example, during a 50- to 60-minute intervention schedule, students rotate between two "dual-strategy" reading stations (Torgesen, 2005). The first group begins with a 25- to 30-minute lesson on word solving and fluency, while a second intervention group works on vocabulary and comprehension strategies. After each lesson, the groups rotate to their next reading station for the remainder of the intervention schedule.

# Materials to Support Instruction: Designing and Stocking Your Small-Group Teaching Space

What teaching and learning materials do I need during small-group lessons?

You need to have the necessary teaching materials at your fingertips to maintain student engagement and the pacing of the lesson. I have listed here the essential tools I use along with the interactive learning aids that are included in this book, such as strategy chart visuals, and student bookmarks. In each of the lessons in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 you will find suggestions for specific materials to support the skill or strategy.

## Small-Group Teaching Binder

I designed the lesson plans in this book in an at-a-glance format so that you will be able to refer to them during the lesson. In addition, I keep a binder at the table that contains the information that drives my small-group instruction. I divide my binder into the following sections:

**1.** District reading standards, strategy statements based on these (see below)

**2.** Tracking Class Reading Goals Form (page 24)

**3.** Planning for Group Instruction forms (page 23)

**4.** Student Reading Goals and Observation forms (page 22); I use dividers with tabs labeled in alphabetical order (available from office supply stores) to divide this section by students' last names

## Common Strategy Statements

The use of a set of common statements helps us achieve one of the criteria for explicit instruction—clear, consistent teacher wording (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005). The importance of this cannot be underestimated.
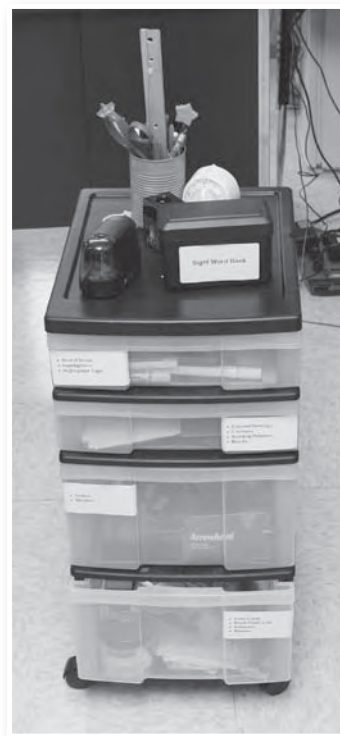


Labeled, stacked drawers store interactive tools designed to support each skill during the small-group lessons. What do you need in your teaching toolbox?'

Many of our low progress readers are confused by the conflicting terminology they hear from different teachers. I have followed students from classroom to intervention settings and heard different terminology being used for the same phonics element or comprehension strategy. These are the students who already struggle to grasp new concepts, and by neglecting to ensure consistency in our instruction, we slow the pace of student learning.

I've developed strategy statements to express the steps and thinking processes used for each reading strategy or skill. The strategy statements are based on my district standards, and I use them when discussing student reading goals, while making teaching points during small-group lessons, and during whole-class instruction. I've used these statements on the Strategy Charts, Student Bookmarks and Teacher Prompt Cards that are incorporated into each lesson sequence and referred to during group discussions, partner sharing, and independent reading.

Strategy statements are phrased in student-friendly language so young learners can verbalize and internalize their strategy use. The language used in our district standards is often too complex for young students and needs to be reworded for instructional purposes.

A number of schools and districts are making a concerted effort to build this school-wide consistency in their reading programs across classrooms and grade levels. A bulletin board display of grade-level strategy statements in each classroom can provide a central reference for teaching and learning goals. The strategy statements should be visible and accessible during whole-class and small-group instruction. The Classroom Bulletin Board of Reading Strategy Statements on page 33 shows how the strategies included in the lessons in this book could be displayed on a bulletin board or wall. You may add to or delete statements as appropriate for your grade level or range of grade levels your students represent. Each of the strategy statements is printed on a sentence strip and added to the display as it is taught, in the same way that words are added to a word wall. The three category headings on the bulletin board represent all five areas of instruction, where Word Solving includes both phonemic awareness and phonics, and Comprehension includes vocabulary development. I have used terms such as Word Workers (word solving), Smooth Talkers (fluency) and Meaning-Makers (comprehension) with young students, but whatever language you use it, needs to be consistent with the terminology they hear during instruction.

Assessment walls have become commonplace in schools, where student progress is monitored and student name cards organized according to level of need (benchmark, strategic, or intensive) or text levels. We know that linking assessment to instruction requires going beyond these categories to the identification of teaching points and instructional formats (see Chapter 2). During grade-level team and intervention meetings, the visual of common strategy statements is used to organize students into differentiated reading groups in the classroom and, where necessary, into intervention groups focusing on the same skill/strategy. During these meetings, each teacher refers to their copy of the skill/strategy statements to support the discussion process. You may decide to create a central bulletin board for your school or grade level, where student name cards (names on the back of the cards) or sticky notes are placed under the corresponding skill/strategy statements, that is their current instructional goal.

# Classroom Bulletin Board

| WORD SOLVING [c] [ake] | FLUENCY | COMPREHENSION |
|---|---|---|
| **I can read the words.** | **I can read smoothly.** | **I can understand what I read.** |
| **I can sound and say.**<br>r-a-n → ran | **I can see words I know.** | **I can connect.** |
| **I can chunk the word.**<br>[c] [ake] = cake | **I can read groups of words together.** | **I can predict.** |
| **I can use what I know.**<br>d(ay) pl(ay) ✓ | **I can look at the marks.**<br>? ; ! | **I can figure it out.** |
| **I can switch the vowel.** | **I can use my voice.** | **I can wonder.** |
| | | **I can stop and fix.** |
| | | **I can retell.** |
| | | **I can sum it up.**<br>1 + 1 = 2 |

### Strategy Prompt Cards

The importance of responding to student need with consistent prompts for each skill area has been supported by numerous studies as essential for ensuring transfer from instructional to independent reading (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999). I've included a teacher prompt card in each of Chapters 4 through 6 that uses the same terminology as the strategy charts. I recommend keeping a copy at the teaching table, so that when students have difficulty, you can quickly glance at the card for a prompt to use during coaching that corresponds to the strategy they are neglecting and need to apply to self-correct.

### Anchor Strategy Charts

Using picture-cued strategy charts is another way to make the reading process more explicit for young learners. I use these charts at the teaching table during small-group instruction to ensure that every student can access the strategy statements. The lessons in this book integrate anchor strategy charts for word solving (Chapter 4, page 45), fluency (Chapter 5, page 76), and comprehension (Chapter 6, page 100). The strategies for each of these teaching areas are introduced cumulatively in each chapter, and together form the complete picture-cued Reading Strategy Chart on page 35 .

While lists of general good reader strategies and comprehension anchor charts are becoming more common, there are fewer word-solving and fluency-strategy charts available. I have been using a picture-cued word-solving strategy chart alongside similarly cued comprehension charts for nearly a decade. These picture-cued charts with their student-friendly language have made a real difference in the ease with which students have understood and applied the strategies.

I display the charts at the teaching table for each lesson. A tabletop whiteboard stand is useful for this purpose; simply clip the strategy chart onto the whiteboard. When I demonstrate and refer to specific strategies on the chart, I use a colored paper clip or clothespin and clip it alongside the icon for the strategy. To prepare for the lessons, copy the strategy charts on pages 45, 76, and 100 to make charts that you can use at the teaching table. To create wall-size copies of the strategy charts to display in your teaching area, enlarge on a photocopier and paste onto poster board. Students may have a copy of the Reading Strategy Chart pasted inside the cover of their reading response journal to refer to, in addition to the Reading Strategy Bookmark on page 38 in this chapter.

## Interactive Tools for Responding to Text

The interactive tools described in this section, together with the routines for brief "turn and talk" formats, offer the solution to the dilemma of how to ensure every student in the group is accountable to respond in some way within a short timeframe. I have found each of these materials to be an invaluable aid in helping students to remain focused on the skill or strategy they are learning.
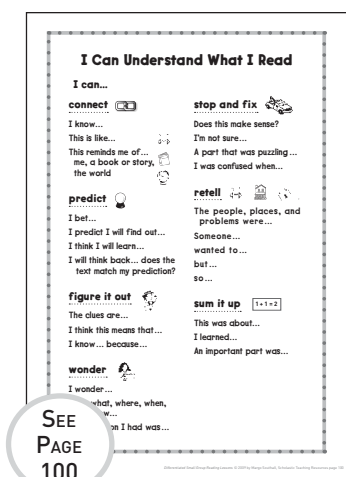
# Reading Strategy Chart

## I can read the words

I sound and say  *r-a-n*  *ran*

I chunk the word  c  ake  = cake

I use what I know  d(ay)  pl(ay)  ✓

I switch the vowel

## I can read smoothly

I see words I know

I read groups of words together  I ran fast  to catch  the ball

I look at the marks  **? ; !**

I use my voice

## I can understand what I read

I connect

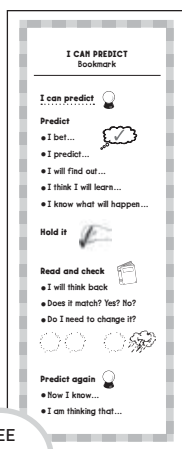I predict

I figure it out

I wonder

I stop and fix

I retell

I sum it up  1 + 1 = 2

## Strategy Bookmarks

Reproducible student strategy bookmarks accompany each lesson and correspond to the Reading Strategy Chart on page 35. The bookmarks provide valuable tactile memory aids and support a high level of student engagement (Allen, 2007). Students can "think-pinch-share," using the strategy icon on their bookmark to help them verbalize their strategy use with a partner or the group (see page 38). The phrases on the bookmarks are meant as a support, but should be used flexibly so that students are not stifled in how they explain their strategy use. I do not confine responses to these phrases alone, but use them as a springboard to initiate and maintain discussion.

### *Preparation of the Bookmarks*

Copy the bookmarks onto cardstock, making one for each student in the group. Use correction tape or a sticky note to conceal any strategy that is likely to pose a distraction or be a source of confusion to some students at this time.

### *Introducing the Bookmarks: Model Each Strategy Statement*

Read a short section of text aloud and model how to use one of the phrases on the bookmark to think aloud about your strategy use during the reading. Invite students to practice by using the same statement or by selecting a statement and using it to compose a response to share with a partner or the group. Repeat for the other phrases in subsequent lessons until students understand and can use each of the statements with success.

### *Think-Pinch-Share Format*

During the reading, pause at preplanned stopping points so students can respond to the text. When students may select from more than one statement and icon, ask them to hold up their bookmark and pinch the picture cue/ statement that represents their strategic thinking. For example, in the I Can Wonder: Inferential and Evaluative Questions lesson (page 129), students pinch different question starters and use these to share a question they have about the reading. One student might have a "What if" question, wondering what might have happened if the character had responded in a different way, while another student may have a "Should" question about something the character did.



One partner reads, while the other partner coaches him to apply the word-solving strategies on the bookmark.

Designate partners before the lesson begins and have students sit next to their partner. I suggest varying the partners so that they benefit from exposure to multiple perspectives. These focused sharing formats will support writing in response to reading (see Reading-Writing Connection: The Reading Response Journal, page 39)—if they can't say it, they can't write it. Thinking aloud to an audience provides a valuable opportunity to clarify their thinking, piggyback on the thinking of others, and deepen their level of understanding, which leads to a more detailed written response.

### *Integrate Strategy Use*

Provide cumulative practice by integrating the strategies on two bookmarks (copy two-sided or provide both copies) as you progress through the lessons. Once students have practiced all of the strategy bookmarks, then provide

the Reading Strategy Bookmark on page 38 that integrates all strategies into a single bookmark. Allow students to choose the statement that best represents their thinking and use this to focus their response. For example, one student may make a connection while another generates a question about the reading.

**Summary of Procedure:**

- Review the statement(s) and icons on the bookmark
- Read to a key stopping point in the text
- Model strategic thinking by sharing your response to the reading using a cue from the bookmark
- Prompt students to use the same or a different statement to compose a response
- Provide a five-second wait time
- Ask students to hold up their bookmark and pinch their fingers next to the icon that best represents their thinking
- Invite sharing of these responses—in partners and with the group

> *We have read a few pages. Let's stop and talk about the story. Hold up your bookmark to let us know what you want to say. I see all kinds of questions. [For partner share:] Tell your partner what you are thinking. [For group share:] Let's hear what ___ has to say. [Or] __ , can I hear your thinking?*

## Other Tools: Sticky Notes, Flags, Page Markers, and Highlighter Tape

Many of the lessons suggest using consumable sticky notes for the interactive activities. These enable students to mark the text in places where they have a strategy-related response, such as an event they find confusing and need to "stop and fix" (clarify). By marking the text, students can then quickly locate their "thinking spots" to share with their "thinking partner" in the Think-Pinch-Share activity (see example on page 51).

An alternative material for this purpose that I include in my reading teacher's toolkit are sticky flags (one inch). I especially like these because they are reusable. I provide each student with a laminated strip of cardstock with a set number of these sticky flags. In the coding lesson on page 149, you will see an example of how to print codes on the flags with a permanent marker to represent specific types of responses. This provides a focus for student responses and develops application of integrated strategy use.



Students write their predictions on sticky notes to place on a group chart. This will provide a visual reference for confirming or adjusting predictions as they read.

You can also provide sticky page markers that come in packs of four or five different colors. Several ways to use these include: marking the text with one color where students are to stop and make a prediction, then using a second color further in the text where they are to confirm or adjust their prediction; asking students to mark the clues that support their inference; and placing a marker where they generate a question and then another where they locate the answer. These page markers can also be kept on the strip of cardstock described above and reused in further lessons.

## READING STRATEGY
### Bookmark

**I can read the words**

I sound and say  r-a-n    ran

I chunk the word   c    ake

I use what I know  d(ay)  pl(ay)  ✓

I switch the vowel

**I can read smoothly**

I see words I know

I read groups of words together

I look at the marks   ? ; !

I use my voice

**I can understand what I read**

I connect

I predict

I figure it out

I wonder

I stop and fix

I retell

I sum it up   1 + 1 = 2

Other useful tools include highlighter tape that can be stored in strips on cardstock at the table. Students can highlight parts that were confusing or where a prediction was confirmed or disconfirmed, etc., and then place the tape back on the card when they have finished. Some teachers like to provide the student with special pointers, such as plastic fingers and popsicle sticks with "googly" eyes on the end to support tracking the text.

Together all of these tools support mastery of each strategy and also the goal of integrated strategy use during independent reading. Now let's look at what the students will need to record their responses.

Students use highlighter tape to mark words and events that are puzzling or confusing during an I Can Stop and Fix (clarifying strategy) lesson (see Chapter 6). The group will practice using the "fix-up tools" on their strategy bookmark to solve problems and maintain comprehension during reading.

## Reading-Writing Connection: The Reading Response Journal

As adults, we seldom remain silent about a novel we have just read. We look for others with whom to share our insights and reflections. Students are no different. Journals can be exchanged between reading partners and used as a springboard to more writing (a reply) or further discussion. Either way, students benefit from piggybacking their ideas off another student, extending their own understanding of the text. In each of the lessons in Chapters 4 through 6 there are suggestions for written responses that support the teaching point. See also, "How are reading and writing integrated within the lesson structure? in the Lesson Structure" section of Chapter 1, page 11, for an explanation of how the journal is used for different skills and strategies.

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BUILDING CAPACITY IN YOUR SCHOOL—COMPILE AND SHARE A COLLECTION OF LESSONS

- As you plan and teach the lessons in this book, no doubt you will think of other ways to extend the skills and strategies in response to the needs of your students. Use the Planning for Group Instruction Form on page 23 to jot down an outline of your lesson. Reflect on the lesson, and what you might change next time. Place a copy in your small-group teaching notebook and share a second copy in a school or grade-level notebook of lessons organized by skills and strategies.

- As a literacy coach, I set out to share and compile a three-ring binder of lessons for specific skills and strategies that could be accessed by teachers across K–3 classrooms as an addition to our literacy resource room, or "teacher take-out" as I like to call it. Now other teachers have begun to contribute to this resource, the result of a professional learning focus on co-planning in grade-level teams.

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# Word-Solving Lessons

The goal of word-solving instruction (phonemic awareness and phonics) is for students to be able to solve new words in running text while maintaining fluency. The lessons in this chapter address the most common difficulties students experience in acquiring word-solving strategies, including blending, recognizing vowel patterns, and using analogy. Students with word-solving difficulties can fall into the following categories.

- At-a-glance readers, who scan words ineffectively and do not attend to the successive elements in the word, such as final and medial sounds. They often use only initial letter cues.

- Huffers and puffers, who experience difficulty blending letter-sounds in words accurately and fluently. They may not yet be able to hold a sequence of sounds in their phonological memory to pronounce the word.

- Overly analytical readers, who often rely on smaller units of sound to decode (e.g., phonemes) rather than larger units, such as vowel patterns and affixes, and who over-analyze even familiar words.

- Word callers, who have not acquired the self-monitoring strategies required when problem-solving new single-syllable and multisyllabic words. They may substitute a nonsense word or omit words. These students do not use patterns in familiar words to decode new words (analogy).

- Isolationists, who do not transfer or apply their phonics knowledge in different contexts (e.g., from small-group lessons to independent reading) or to the reading of new text.

- Solo-strategy readers, who are unable to integrate strategy use to solve more complex words.

Researchers from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999) identified the qualities of effective word-solving instruction in the primary grades. "One major 'how' quality was that most teachers not only taught phonics in isolation but coached students or provided help to students as they attempted to use various phonics skills in real reading situations."

(Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, p. 435, 2007)

## Word-Solving Lessons: An Overview

The word-solving lessons in this chapter progress in complexity, as organized below.

- Segmenting and blending successive phonemes
- Recognition of short and long vowel patterns
- Using familiar parts of words to decode new words
- Flexibility with vowel pronunciations

The first two lessons focus on accuracy and fluency in decoding words with phonetically regular spellings. Students segment and blend using a cumulative blending approach (see page 43) that has proven successful with students whose decoding is inaccurate, slow, and laborious (Beck, 2006). We teach segmenting and blending as we introduce letter-sound relationships. When we begin instruction with continuant consonant sounds (such as *m, f, s,* sounds that can be stretched) together with a vowel, students can form words even at the earliest stage of decoding, such as *am, sam, an, fan, man.*

We teach students how to analyze words by phoneme and do not begin instruction with or rely solely on the teaching of rimes for two reasons. First, this ability to analyze words by phonemes is a precursor to storing and retrieving vowel patterns in both their phonological and visual (orthographic) memory. If students try to memorize the vowel pattern as a single unit without being able to segment and blend each phoneme, they may store an incomplete representation of the rime in their visual and phonological memory. This results in gaps in the recall of the rime and unsuccessful decoding during reading. Failure to retrieve all the letters in a vowel digraph or diphthong and silent consonants in a spelling pattern such as _ight_, is a common outcome when students do not fully match, or when they mismatch, sounds to letters (see lessons under I Can Chunk the Word, page 54). Secondly, when students attempt to decode more complex words, where there is not always a rhyming word to help them figure it out, being able to analyze a sequence of phonemes and vowel units will be necessary for successful decoding. Word study center activities, such as word sorts and word building, are listed with the lessons to support independent practice of each skill.

The reproducible Word-Solving Prompt Card on page 44 provides suggested prompts for each strategy and can be used as a guide when responding to student difficulty. When a student comes to an unfamiliar word and begins to struggle, select a prompt that directs the student's attention to the neglected strategy. This prompting scaffolds the student's application of skills during reading to ensure transfer of taught skills to the reading process.

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Progress in Word Solving

Reading accuracy depends upon a number of skills, including blending sounds in sequence and discriminating sound-spellings of common vowel patterns. Each of these also depends upon several phonological awareness skills (see suggestions in the chart under Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty, page 48). When a student's accuracy is a concern, assessment of these underlying skills will identify which requires more intensive small-group teaching.

In addition to the lessons in this chapter, you will also find detailed suggestions on how to address specific difficulties students may encounter while acquiring each of these skills. Just like the When/Then charts in Chapter 2, these charts list the type of difficulty paired with ways in which the teacher can support the particular area of need.

Clark (2004) describes the steps for prompting a student during reading: "Mrs. Green began the interaction by identifying a possible strategy and cueing a relevant sound, and then she become more specific by guiding the student through the strategy." (p. 445)

# Tools for Interactive Learning

In the following section we examine picture-cued visuals and materials specifically designed to scaffold the application of word-solving strategies during reading, so that students internalize the process. When used in conjunction with supportive text, and practice in reading and writing the same words, we provide our students with a systematic, integrated approach to the learning of word-solving strategies.

## Anchor Strategy Chart

Each strategy is represented on the picture-cued I Can Read the Words anchor chart on page 45. Photocopy and laminate the chart so you can display it and refer to it during the lessons. The student-friendly key words and phrases allow struggling readers access to the language of word solving so that they can successfully internalize the process of problem-solving new and complex words. My word-solving chart has evolved over the years, and I have revised and extended it after observing how other teachers used visuals to demonstrate a strategy (Lynch, 2002).
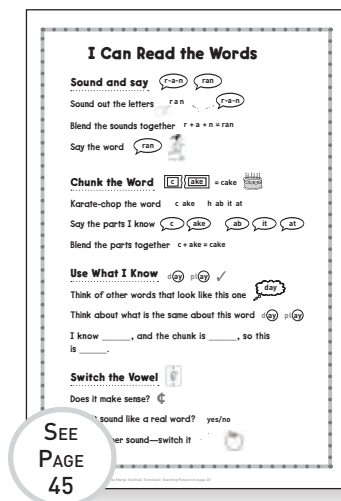
## Strategy Bookmark

The reproducible, picture-cued Word-Solving Bookmark (page 46) helps students verbalize word-solving strategies. The bookmarks also encourage a high level of student engagement during lessons as students "think-pinch-share," using the statements on their bookmark to apply the strategy. Together, these activities support long-lasting understanding and application of each strategy. By cumulatively practicing each one, students become independent, flexible word-solvers who are able to integrate multiple strategies to solve new words they encounter in text.
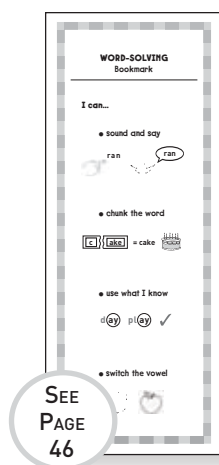
## The Text: How to Select

Students benefit from reading words in running text that contain the same decodable elements they are learning (Blevins, 2006), which raises the question of whether to use decodable text or uncontrolled text in the lessons. Low progress readers who are struggling at the earliest level of decoding may benefit from more controlled text that incorporates a significant proportion of the phonics elements they are learning within instructional contexts. However, a diet of controlled texts alone would likely pose a barrier to these students successfully reading the books they self-select or other classroom materials.

Fortunately, some of the newer series of books that are designed to support word solving have addressed the problems of being overly contrived, which impedes comprehension. I have included examples from several of these texts in the lessons. First, select the appropriate level of text for word-solving lessons (90–94%) and scan the text for words with decodable elements students know and are currently learning. Next, choose words for analysis (Show Me) and support transfer by reading them both in isolation and within connected text (Guide Me, Coach Me). Some publishers list them at the back of the book or in an accompanying teacher guide.

## Other Materials

Other materials that support the word-solving lessons include:

- Blank index cards for masking words and parts of words (they close in on the word/part like automated sliding doors)
- Translucent highlighters, such as counters found in math catalogs, for locating parts in words
- Small whiteboard for illustrating how words work
- Lowercase magnetic letters and magnetic boards
- Picture-cued alphabet chart to use when prompting for recognition

## Reading-Writing Connection

As a follow-up to a lesson, students compose sentences containing words with the same spelling elements in shared or independent writing. You may dictate a sentence or compose a language experience story that incorporates the target phonics elements and/or high-frequency words. I try to use children's names in the stories we compose.

Generate charts of words with the same patterns and display for students to use as a source of possible words they can incorporate in their writing. Poems are often the easiest for students to write when you are working on rimes.

Reading and spelling words with the same features helps students consolidate their understanding of how words work and accelerates the transfer of skills to independent reading.



When the students' reading goal is increased accuracy and fluency with high frequency words, teachers provide practice with developmentally appropriate tactile materials, and support recognition of these same words during reading.

# I Can Sound and Say: Accurate and Fluent Blending

The successive blending technique used in this series of lessons, in which students cumulatively blend the sounds together as they decode a word, has proven to be more effective with struggling readers than the final blending approach, which requires the student to segment each phoneme and then recall a string of individual phonemes to pronounce a whole word, e.g., /c/ /a/ /t/, *cat* (O'Connor, 2007). Beck (2006) notes that "the strong advantage of successive blending is that it is less taxing for short-term memory because blending occurs immediately after each new phoneme is pronounced ... at no time must more than two sounds be held in memory, and at no time must more than two sound units be blended" (page 50). This instructional technique is especially supportive for children with phonological memory difficulties.

The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) noted that while phonics programs address letter-sound relationships, not enough attention is placed on teaching children *how* to blend efficiently to decode new words. Even fewer programs provide information on how teachers can avoid the most common problems children experience as they learn to blend letter sounds. The following lessons address this common gap in our teaching materials.

"Blending can be an area of great difficulty for many youngsters with reading difficulties. ... It is recommended that teachers teach letter-by-letter decoding as students' first reading strategy, followed by other strategies to augment this approach as children gain skills and confidence."

(O'Connor, 2007, p. 61, on results of the National Reading Panel, 2000)

## Word-Solving Prompt Card

| Strategy | Prompt |
|---|---|
| **Sound and Say** | • Get your mouth ready … say the first sound(s)<br>• Does that fit with your first sound?<br>• Say it slow. Touch and say each sound.<br>• Use your eyes, finger and mouth to check it.<br>• Run your finger under it to check the sounds.<br>• Blend the sounds together to say the word.<br>• Say it fast … Bulldoze it … Keep your motor running.<br>• Look across the word. What are the other letters in the word?<br>• Did you look to see what letters the word began and ended with?<br>• You said _____. What letter would you expect to see at the beginning/end of _____? Does it match?<br>• Check that it makes sense and matches the letters. |
| **Chunk the Word** | • Look inside the word. Is there a chunk (part) you know?<br>• Use your fingers to find the parts you know.<br>• Cover up part of the word so you can see the chunk.<br>• Karate-chop this word into parts you can say.<br>• Find a part of the word you can say.<br>• Blend the parts together/crash the parts together (if student pauses between onset and rime). |
| **Use What I Know** | • Is this like a word you know?<br>• What is the same about this word and the new word? (show familiar word on whiteboard).<br>• Where would you break this word to see a part that's the same as the word you know? (underline chunks or use slashes to demonstrate)<br>• You can use the part you know to help you read the new word.<br>• Cover the beginning/prefix … and ending/suffix. What word/root word is that? Now, uncover the beginning/prefix and ending/suffix … the word is _____. |
| **Switch the Vowel** | • What sound does the vowel stand for in this word?<br>• What do you think that (vowel) sounds like?<br>• What other sound can you try?<br>• Is that a word you know? Is it a real word? Does it make sense?<br>• Try changing the vowel to the [short/long] sound.<br>• Flip the sound. |

# I Can Read the Words

## Sound and Say   r-a-n   ran

Sound out the letters   r a n   r-a-n

Blend the sounds together   r + a + n = ran

Say the word   ran

## Chunk the Word   c | ake   = cake

Karate-chop the word   c ake   h ab it at

Say the parts I know   c   ake   ab   it   at

Blend the parts together   c + ake = cake

## Use What I Know   d(ay)   pl(ay)  ✓

Think of other words that look like this one   day

Think about what is the same about this word   d(ay)   pl(ay)

I know _____, and the chunk is _____, so this
is _____.

## Switch the Vowel

Does it make sense?   ¢

Does it sound like a real word?   yes/no

Try the other sound—switch it

**WORD-SOLVING**
Bookmark

---

**I can...**

- **sound and say**

  r a n        ran

- **chunk the word**

  c ⟩⟨ ake  = cake

- **use what I know**

  d(ay)  pl(ay)  ✓
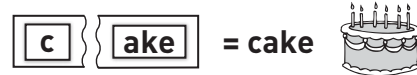
- **switch the vowel**
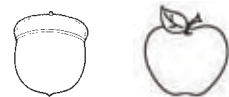
## Teaching Tips

Review letter names and sounds before beginning to ensure the focus is on blending rather than letter-sound correspondences. Monitor student letter-sound recognition during guided practice and independent applications. Reteach any that cause hesitations. Provide repeated practice cumulatively blending letter sounds to decode words with common syllable patterns. During reading, prompt for:

• Saying successive sounds quickly

• Using context and sentence structure to self-monitor and self-correct nonsense errors

## Student Profiles

We all have students who "huff and puff" and "hiss and spit" their way through words, laboriously sounding out each phoneme in a word: /ka/ – /a/ – /tuh/." By the time they get to the second or third phoneme they have forgotten what the first one was. Not only does this leave no mental energy for comprehension, but it is an inefficient way to decode words. I have found that the successive, or cumulative, approach to blending prevents this common problem.

The following lessons provide practice in cumulatively blending letter sounds to decode words with CVC, CCVC, and CVCC syllable patterns and applying the strategy to reading new words within connected text. They are designed to meet the needs of students who:

• Over-rely on initial consonants to predict a word in running text (accuracy)

• Recognize sounds and letters in isolation, but have difficulty blending a sequence of sounds to pronounce a word (fluency)

• Laboriously sound their way through words and continue to overanalyze familiar words

After sufficient practice, students internalize this process. They can scan a sequence of phonemes and pronounce a word without having to segment and blend each time. You will observe students in the transitional phase stretching and blending the first two or three phonemes and then pronouncing the word. At this stage, they no longer need to go through cumulatively blending every phoneme in the word.

The next section describes ways to support students who may experience initial difficulty in blending letter sounds.

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty with Accurate and Fluent Blending

Teacher observation of students during guided practice and independent reading provides an insight into the specific letter-sound relationships that may be causing them difficulty. The teacher can then provide the appropriate additional modeling, corrective feedback, and instruction, and can monitor student understanding during reading by having students point to a word and blend it. The chart below describes common difficulties students may experience in blending letter sounds to decode and the corresponding instructional response.

In a study of struggling readers that compared student outcomes from three approaches to teaching blending—1. initial bigrams with a final consonant (*mo-p*) 2. onset-rime (*m-op*) and 3. three letter sounds (*m-o-p*) … "Children who learned to blend the initial bigrams (*fi-x*) read significantly more of the transfer words correctly than any other group."

(O'Connor, p. 59, 2007)

"Blending is one of the few strategies that children can transfer to words they have never seen before."

(O'Connor, p. 64, 2007)

| Student Difficulty With Accurate and Fluent Blending | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br>Fails to recognize a sound-symbol correspondence/confuses letters | **Teacher**<br>● Reviews letter names and sounds. Points to a letter and cues the student:<br>　＊ Letter?　＊ Sound?<br>● Reteaches the sound-symbol correspondence using memory aids such as a picture-cued alphabet card and corresponding action or song<br>● Reviews letter names and sounds before beginning to ensure focus is on blending rather than recognizing letter-sound correspondences<br>● Monitors student letter-sound recognition during guided practice and independent applications, and reteaches any that cause hesitations<br>● Places tactile letters (e.g., magnetic letters) above the letters causing hesitation in the word to support recognition<br>● Has student discriminate the problem letters from an array of letter cards or magnetic letters and remove them from the array, e.g., *b's* or *d's* (see Dufresne, 2002) |
| Pauses between phonemes when stretching the sounds (blending is not continuous) | ● Assesses phonemic awareness skills: oral blending and segmentation<br>● Stops the student and models the process. Has them slide their finger under the word and cues them to hold the sounds as if singing the word (two seconds for continuant sounds, one second for stop sounds):<br>　＊ Pull the sounds together so it sounds like talking<br>　＊ Say the sounds fast. Say the word<br>　＊ Bulldoze the word ... keep your motor running<br>● Provides practice in cued, timed blending (see lessons page 50 and 53) |
| Omits or substitutes a phoneme | ● Points to the letter and asks the student to say the phoneme. If student is unable to, the teacher silently mouths the sound<br>● Prompts the student to "touch and say" the sounds in the word<br>● Prompts for meaning cues when the student pronounces a nonsense word or one that does not fit the context |
| Adds schwa sound after the consonant (when it is a stop sound—*b, c, d, g, h, j, k, p, q, t, x*—that cannot be stretched). This distorts the pronunciation of the medial vowel and prevents accurate decoding of the word | ● Begins by having student locate and identify the medial vowel (which can be stretched), then blend this with initial consonant, followed by identifying the last consonant and blending all three phonemes, e.g., [student points at letter *a*; teachers asks] *What sound does this letter stand for*? [/*a*/] [Teacher points to first letter] *And this letter*? [/*c*/] *Blend these sounds together.* [/*ca*/] [Points to last letter] *What sound does this letter stand for*? [/*t*/] *Now blend the sounds*: /*cat*/. *What's the word*? cat (O'Connor, 2007) |
| Inaccurately decodes medial sounds | ● Reteaches the vowel sounds<br>● Has students build and sort words that differ by medial vowel (minimal pairs such as *cat*, *cot*, *cut*)<br>● Presents sentences that require the student to distinguish the correct word to complete a sentence |
| Inaccurately decodes final sounds | ● Prompts for visual scanning across the word: Say ___. What letter would you expect to see at the end of the word?<br>● See further prompts for the strategy on the Word-Solving Prompt Card, page 44<br>● Isolates and highlights the final letter(s)<br>● Teaches common rimes and affixes (-*ed*, -*ing*) |

## Reading Materials to Support Accurate and Fluent Blending

Select words from the text that contain previously taught letter-sound correspondences and that are in students' listening vocabulary. Decodable words in order of difficulty are:

- VC and CVC words that begin with continuous sounds (vowels, the consonants *m*, *n*, *f*, *l*, *r*, and *s*), e.g., *am*, *sit*
- VCC and CVCC words that begin with a continuous sound (e.g., *ask*, *rest*)
- CVC words that begin with a stop sound that cannot be stretched (*b*, *c*, *d*, *g*, *h*, *j*, *k*, *p*, *q*, *t*, *x*), e.g., *jam*, *pen*
- CVCC words that begin with a stop sound and end with a consonant *blend*, e.g., *past*, *desk*, *hand*, *gift*
- CCVC words that begin with a consonant blend, e.g., *plan*, *spin*
- CCVCC, CCCVC, and CCCVCC words that begin and end with a consonant blend, e.g., *spend*, *trust*, *scrap*, *sprint*

The following letter positions represent the highest error rate for struggling readers in order of increasing frequency: 1. final consonants; 2. medial vowels; 3. second consonant in a blend or digraph; 4. first consonant in a final consonant blend (McCandliss et al., 2003). Procedures for blending CVC, CVVC, and CVCC words are provided in lessons to address these common miscues. Select words from your text appropriate for your students.



SEE PAGE 45

### LESSON: BUILD AND BLEND

#### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible Word-Solving Strategy Chart (page 45) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible Sound and Say Bookmark (page 55) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy the Word-Solving Prompt Card (page 44).
- Gather a large colored paper clip or clothespin and magnetic whiteboards and letters for each student.
- Select practice words.
- Select a text or create sentences containing the practice words.

#### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the Sound and Say strategy on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.



*When readers see a new word they quickly sound the letters and say the word. Today we will use the Sound and Say strategy on our Word-Solving Chart to build and read words from our story. We will sound out the letters and quickly blend them together to say the word.*

#### Show Me

Point to the icons and statements you use on the chart or bookmark.



*I will build an important word from our story today. I will say each sound and then blend the sounds together to say the word.*

Place your letters across the top of your magnetic board in alphabetical order. Leave a two-finger space between each letter. Slide each letter down in sequence to form the word as you touch and say the sound. In this example, I use the word *Sam*.
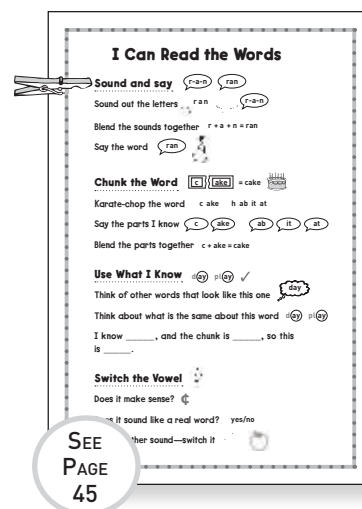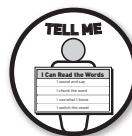
### Tip

Procedures for blending CVC words are provided in this lesson. The easiest words to decode are VC and CVC words beginning with a continuant sound—which can be stretched and held.

**s a m**
←

**sa m**
←

**sam**

Touch the first letter (C) and say the phoneme, /s/.
Touch the second letter (V) and say the phoneme, /a/.
Slide the second letter alongside the first letter.
Run your finger under the two letters and blend, /sa/.
Slide the third letter (C) alongside the second letter.
Touch the third letter and say the phoneme, /m/.
Blend the first two (CV) and last (C) sounds without pausing: /sa/ /m/.
Slide your finger under the three letters and say the word: /sam/.
Say, "This is the word *Sam*."

## Guide Me

Distribute the magnetic boards and letters. Have students place the letters across the top of their boards. Model and practice sliding down the letters they need for each word before you begin the build-and-blend procedure.

*Pull down the letters* M A T *like this. Leave a two-finger space between each letter like mine. Now we are ready to build and blend.*

Prompt and support students to build and blend each word. Provide verbal and physical cues to guide them. Touch the letters and say the sounds together. Then guide students through the following steps, repeating three to four times with different words.

❍ **Sound /**Say It Slow
   *Let's stretch and blend an important word from our story today. Touch and say each sound in the word with me.*

**m a t**
←

**ma t**
←

**mat**

Touch the letter *m*. Say the sound /m/.
Touch the letter *a*. Say the sound /a/.
Slide *a* over to *m*. Run your finger under *m-a*. Blend /ma/.
Touch the letter *t*. Say the sound /t/.
Slide the *t* over to *a*. Run your finger under m-a-t. Blend /mat/.
What word is this?

❍ **Say /**Say It Fast: Cued, Timed Blending
   Print or build the words you have practiced on your whiteboard. Point to the words one at a time. Signal students to say the sounds in their head, then pronounce the word.

   Provide a silent, timed cue. Hold up one finger at a time with your other hand to the count of three, then ask students to say the word. Reduce this time in further lessons from three to two seconds, and finally, allow only one second, which is the goal for fluency. Cued, timed blending develops the necessary processing speed for fluency in decoding. With sufficient practice, students will no longer continue to overanalyze each word they meet in running text.

   *Say the sounds in your head.*

   Finger-cue the wait time: 1-2-3. Students may mouth the sounds only.

   *What word is this? Yes, the word is _____.*

## Coach Me

Introduce the text. Ask students to read these same words in sentences to ensure the transfer of skills to connected text. You may provide a teacher-created sentence on a chart or a short story to read.

*We know these words. Now let's read them in the story to find out* [*something about your particular text*].

Students now begin to read the story independently and at their own pace using a whisper voice. Cue individual students to read a sentence or two aloud to you so that you can monitor their understanding, and prompt as necessary. The rest of the group continues to read as you listen in to each student in turn (see Prompts on Word-Solving Prompt Card page 44).

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

Invite students to share a word they sounded out and blended with a partner by repeating the process they used by sounding and saying the word aloud. Ask them to use the bookmark, "pinching" the correct strategy icon/phrase, to help them verbalize their strategy use.

❍ Group Share

Invite partners to share a word they discussed with the rest of the group. Write the word they share on the whiteboard and demonstrate again how to apply the strategy.

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

*When we sound out the letters and quickly blend them to say the word, we can solve new words in the story.*

## Reading-Writing Connection
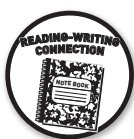
After reading, compose a sentence together to summarize the story. Have students repeat the sentence, counting each word on their fingers to aid in recalling the sentence and to support self-checking. Invite individual students to write a word from the sentence on the chart in an interactive writing format. The rest of the group provides feedback and/or writes the word on their whiteboards at the same time. Read the sentence to and with the students several times to check it. Students may copy this sentence in their reading journal.



The group composes and records a sentence using the words they have segmented and blended. Students copy the sentence in their reading response journal.
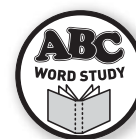
## Practice at the Word-Study Center

❍ **Sentence Puzzle**

∗ Copy the shared writing sentence you created in the Reading-Writing Connection onto a sentence strip.

∗ Cut the sentence into individual words and store in an envelope or baggie along with a complete copy of the sentence on a 3″ x 9″ flash card or index card.

∗ Place this at the word study center. Label the activity with the reading group logo so they will know to complete this task at the center.

∗ Students will reconstruct and read the sentence, first with the model as a guide. Next they will turn over the model sentence, mix up the words, and rebuild it (without looking at the model).

The following supporting center activities can be found in *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):

● Word Sorts: Initial, Final, and Medial Letter Cues; Initial Blends; Final Blends
● ABC Pick Up: Initial Blends and Digraphs

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### *Lesson:* Blending Words in a List and Connected Text

## Preparation

● Copy the reproducible Word-Solving Strategy Chart (page 45) onto cardstock.
● Copy the reproducible Sound and Say Bookmark (page 55) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
● Copy the Word-Solving Prompt Card (page 44).
● Have on hand a colored paper clip or clothespin.
● Select text containing words with the target syllable patterns (CVC, CCVC, CVCC). This may be a book, a poem, or a teacher-created sentence or story.
● Print the selected words in large letters on a chart or whiteboard.

**Lesson Text Example:**

*Meg and Jim's Sled Trip* by Laura Appleton-Smith (1998)

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the Sound and Say strategy on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.

> *When readers see new words in stories, I they sound the letters in their head and quickly blend them together to say the whole word. We need to be able to do this quickly while we read so we can think about what is happening in the story.*

### Show Me

Demonstrate the strategy with the words you have printed on the chart.

> *I will sound and say a word from our story today. I will say the sounds and blend them together as I go across the word.*

Words are in order of increasing difficulty:

#### CVC Words

Point to the *s* and say /s/.

Point to the *u* and say /u/.

Slide your finger under the *su* and say /su/.

Point to the *n* and say /n/.

Slowly slide your finger under *sun* and say /sun/ (stretch the sounds).

Quickly slide your finger under the word and say /sun/ at a natural speed, so it sounds like talking.

Circle the word with your finger say, "The word is *sun*."

<u>s</u> u n

s <u>u</u> n

<u>s u</u> n

s u <u>n</u>

<u>s u n</u>

#### CVCC Words

Point to the *s* and say /s/.

Point to the *o* and say /o/.

Slide your finger under the *so* and say /so/.

Point to the *f* and say /f/.

Slide your finger under *sof* and say /sof/.

Point to the *t* and say /t/.

Slowly slide your finger under *soft* and say /soft/ (stretch the sounds).

Quickly slide your finger under the word and say /soft/ at a natural speed, so it sounds like talking.

Circle the word with your finger say, "The word is *soft*."

#### CCVC Words

Point to the *t* and say /t/.

Point to the *r* and say /r/.

Slide your finger under the *tr* and say /tr/.

Point to the *i* and say /i/.

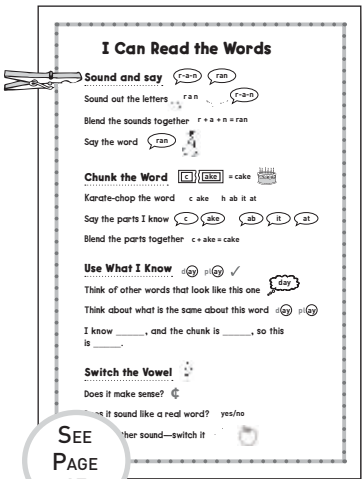Slide your finger under *tri* and say /tri/.

Point to the *p* and say /p/.

Slowly slide your finger under *trip* and say /trip/ (stretch the sounds).

Quickly slide your finger under the word and say /trip/ at a natural speed, so it sounds like talking.

Circle the word with your finger say, "The word is *trip*."

Repeat the same procedure with two more words from the text.

**CVC Words**

| | |
|---|---|
| Meg | sun |
| Jim | wet |
| den | mugs |
| sit | |

**CVCC Words**

| | |
|---|---|
| fast | rest |
| soft | gust |

**CCVC Words**

| | |
|---|---|
| sled | drag |
| trip | spin |
| snug | |

## Guide Me

Prompt and support students to apply the same strategy that you demonstrated to further words on the chart.

❍ **Sound /**Say It Slow

*Let's stretch and blend another word we will read in our story. Say each sound with me, and blend them together as we go.*

Repeat the procedure with three or four other words from the story. Gradually remove the cues as you progress to further words or in subsequent teaching sessions for this strategy:

**1.** Provide sounds and cues, and use finger pointing.

**2.** Cue the students verbally for each step, but do not say the sounds; continue to use finger pointing.

**3.** Use finger pointing only, with no verbal cues or sounds.

When all the words have been stretched and blended, have the students choral read through the list of words on the chart without analyzing each word.

## Coach Me

Point to each word on the chart one by one. Cue students to say the sounds in their head and then pronounce the word, following the guidelines below.

❍ **Say/Say It Fast**

Say the sounds in your head. What word is this? *Yes, the word is _____.*

Ask students to choral read these same words in sentences located in the story to ensure transfer of word analysis skills to connected text.

*We know these words. Now let's read them in the story to see how the author used them to tell us what happens in* Meg and Jim's Sled Trip.

You may have students find and frame these words in the text on one or two pages, then read the sentence to see how the word is used in context. This supports transfer to independent reading of the text. Prompt them to identify the initial, medial, and final sounds to guide the process of locating them in the text. Emphasize initial sounds by stretching them out or repeating the sound.

*What letter would you expect to see at the beginning of the word* w-w-w-wet*? What is the second letter in* w–eee-t*? What is the last letter in* wet*? Find it and frame it with your fingers* [or framing tool, such as translucent counter or strip of highlighter tape].

Repeat with two or three more words.

Have students read the story (from the beginning) independently at their own pace using a whisper voice. Listen in to each student as they read a sentence or two, and prompt as necessary (see Word-Solving Prompt Card, page 44)

＊*Touch and say each sound. Run your finger under it to check the sounds.*
＊*Use your eyes, mouth, and finger to check it.*
＊*Look across the word. What are the other letters in the word?*
＊*Blend the sounds together to say the word.*
＊*Bulldoze the word … keep your motor running.*

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

Have students share how they sounded out and blended a word during the reading with a partner. Ask them to use the bookmark, "pinching" the correct strategy, to help them verbalize their strategy use.

○ **Group Share**

Invite partners to share an example with the rest of the group. Write the word they share on the whiteboard and demonstrate again how to apply the strategy.

○ **Restate the Teaching Point**

*When we sound out the letters and quickly blend them we can keep on reading the rest of the story* [*focus on the meaning*].
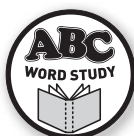
### Reading-Writing Connection

Have students use the words on the list to compose a sentence or retelling of the story.

### Practice at the Word-Study Center

**Build and Blend Dominoes**

● Students pronounce the first consonant(s) and vowel together and then connect this to a final consonant(s), blending them together to pronounce the word, e.g., /do/, /g/ - /dog/.

● Cut index cards in half. Print Beginning and Final Sounds on cards. Students match the cards to build, blend and read words.

***Example:***

Beginning Sound Cards          Final Sound Cards

| **mi** | **ha** |     | **x** | **s** |

# I Can Chunk the Word: Vowel Patterns and Onset-Rime Analogy

To be fluent readers at the third-grade level, students need to be able to recognize 80,000 words (Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000). That is far too many words for students to memorize. All students will need strategies for problem-solving new words they meet in print every day. For reading efficiency, they must recognize larger units in words, such as the vowel pattern in a syllable or chunk. I also use the term chunks to refer to diphthongs like *oi, oy, ou, ow,* and other syllable patterns like *–ion*, because they all begin with a vowel.

## Teaching Tips

To help students decode successfully, I teach them to scan words by first attending to the initial consonant(s) and then identifying the first vowel and the letters that follow in the syllable (the chunk). I want them to learn how to visually scan words and look for familiar patterns that begin with a vowel and use these to decode.

Guiding principles for teaching vowel patterns include the following.

**1.** Introduce rimes cumulatively as you teach the letter-sound correspondences. For example, teaching the letters *s, a, t, c, m, e, p, n* enables students to read words with the rimes *–at, –an, –am, –ap,* and *–ee,* such as *sat, pan, map,* etc.

**2.** Teach the analogy phrase so that students internalize it as a strategy for decoding unfamiliar words: "I know *cat* (familiar word) and the chunk is *at,* this is *bat* (new word)." Have students practice problem-solving words aloud using this dialogue during reading (Gaskins et al., 1997).

"Teaching procedures like phonics instruction, use of context cues for word recognition, and solving words by analogy to know words are designed to foster searching strategies."

(Schwartz, p. 176, 1997)

## SOUND AND SAY
### Bookmark

**I can...**

- **sound out the letters**

r a n     r-a-n

- **blend the sounds together**

r + a + n = ran

- **say the word**

ran

- **check it makes sense**

¢

**3.** Display a key word for each rime on a bulletin board or chunking word wall for reference during reading and writing (Wagstaff, 1999).

**4.** Plan multiple practice opportunities for students to recognize and apply the key words in a variety of reading and writing contexts.

Students should cumulatively practice words with more than one syllable as they learn different vowel patterns. Use simple words like *napkin* and *catnap* for students at the earliest stages of reading. This prepares them for reading authentic text, which contains words with more than one syllable in all but the first few text levels.

## Word Wall

| a | | e | | i | | o | | u |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| jam | cake | shell | tree | hill | mice | stop | joke | bug |
| fan | mail | vest | seat | chin | nine | pot | boat | truck |
| cat | rain | bread | great | ship | light | | store | jump |
| pack | whale | | | sit | | | snow | skunk |
| trash | game | | | chick | | | cow | |
| | plate | | | | | | | |

I use a chunking word wall with a category heading for each vowel and one key word for each vowel pattern (not multiple words) on cards organized by their first vowel (Wagstaff, 1999). The rime is printed in a different color or underlined. I also include the letter *y*, with key words such as *baby* and *fly* to represent both pronunciations. As we progress to vowel digraphs, I display one word for each pronunciation, such as *seat*, *bread*, and *great* for *–ea*, *snow* and *cow* for *–ow* (see I Can Switch the Vowel lesson, page 67).

To foster the transfer of this skill to reading, when we come to a new word in the text, I ask students to touch the first vowel and look at the word wall words displayed under that vowel. Then I ask, "Is there a word we know that can help us (that contains the same chunk)?" We use the analogy dialogue to verbalize how we use a word wall word to solve a new word: "We know *seat* (familiar key), [and] the chunk is *eat*, so this word is *wheat* (new word)."

When teaching intervention groups, I use a project display board and have a different set of key words on each side, as groups are at different developmental stages. Continual reinforcement of this strategy in whole- and small-group instruction increases the rate at which students transfer these patterns to their independent reading.

"Because some poor readers have difficulty with rimes, rimes are broken down into their individual sounds after being presented as wholes."

(Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000, in Gunning, p. 247, 2002)

## Student Profiles

Vowels are not friendly, and their sounds vary depending upon the letters that surround them. The advantage to teaching rimes is that the vowel is part of a stable unit that students can rely on to decode—rimes are pronounced in the same way 95% of the time. Beyond common rimes, though, students will require flexibility with vowel sounds. We teach the most common pronunciations for each vowel pattern first, and then introduce the other pronunciations for the same spelling.

There are three profiles of need I see in this area again and again, and the following lessons are designed to address them. The first profile describes students who have difficulty storing and retrieving vowel patterns in their phonological and visual memory. They simply do not recognize these parts in words, whether they are presented in isolation, in words, or in running text.

In the second profile, students may perform satisfactorily on assessments that require them to recognize words in isolation, yet something happens when they open up the page of a book. They don't transfer their phonics knowledge to problem-solving new words in running text or use analogy from words they know.

A third profile describes students who rely on one pronunciation for the vowel or vowel pattern. When their miscue is a nonsense word or does not make sense in the context of the story, they are unable to self-correct their miscues by trying other possible sounds for the vowel or pattern.

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty With Vowel Patterns and Onset-Rime Analogy

Struggling readers often try to memorize words one by one and soon reach a plateau in the number of words they can recall. They need strategies for solving words in running text like the Chunk the Word, Use What I Know, and Switch the Vowel strategies. Many phonics programs do a good job of teaching letter-sound relationships and vowel patterns but neglect to show students how to use these to read new words. It is critical to teach this skill explicitly, or it will not transfer to reading. What makes the difference for struggling readers is the metacognitive dialogue or self-talk that is part of the I Can Sound and Say the Chunk lesson:

> *Whenever you come to a word you don't know, think of a word you know that looks like this one (contains the same chunk) and say: I know _____, and the chunk is __, so the word/this is _____.*

The steps in this process are based on the Word Analysis Chart developed by Gaskins et al. (1997). Students learn the step-by-step approach to using their phonics knowledge rather than remaining passive (and inaccurate) readers. If this dialogue is too challenging for some students to remember and say, simply ask them to find a part of the word they can say, say that part, and blend the parts together through the word (Gunning, 2002).

### Strategy Prompts

**Most Support**

- Make the word with magnetic letters and help the student break the word apart.

- Write a known word on an index card and place beneath the new word. Say: *This word has a chunk you know that can help you. What's the chunk? Use that chunk to help you say the new word.* Scaffold segmenting and blending the parts.

- Cover the beginning consonant(s) with a finger and prompt: *You know this chunk. Say this chunk.*

- *Where could you break that word? Put your finger there and break the word apart.* Direct student to cover part of the word.

- *Do you see something that might help you? Do you see a chunk you know?* Use a masking card or finger to cover the initial letter and isolate a familiar word part; or use a translucent counter to highlight the chunk.

- *Is there a part of the word you can say?*

**Least Support**

| Student Difficulty With Vowel Patterns and Onset-Rime Analogy | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Has difficulty with auditory discrimination (discriminating parts of words that sound the same) | **Teacher**<br><br>● Assesses phonological awareness and provides instruction in areas not yet developed:<br><br>∗ rhyme discrimination tasks: *Do these words have a part at the end of the word that sounds the same?* cat, cap<br>∗ rhyme production tasks: *I'm going to tell you a word and I want you to tell me a word that rhymes with it. Tell me a word that rhymes with* cat.<br>∗ onset-rime blending: *I'll say the sounds of a word. You guess what word it is:* /m/ /ap/ [*map*]<br>∗ onset-rime segmentation: *Say the* [*two*] *parts you hear in* map. [/m/ /ap/]<br>∗ phoneme deletion: *Say* map. *Now say it again, but don't say* /m/. [/ap/] |
| Is not able to retrieve the spelling of the vowel pattern to decode | ● Demonstrates how to listen to and record the sounds of a word in sequence using sound boxes or a series of lines to represent the position of each letter (see Reading-Writing Connection in I Can Sound and Say the Chunk lesson); guides student to do the same<br><br>● Dictates words with the pattern<br><br>● Incorporates word building ("making words") and word sorting |
| Has difficulty (visually) locating chunks or familiar parts in words | ● Covers up the onset, as described in the list of scaffolds prior to this chart, so they can focus on the rime; asks child to do the same, copying their model: *Can you show me that part?*<br><br>● Provides lists of the words with the pattern in a different color; helps students blend the word parts<br><br>● Presents lists of words and has student circle or highlight the vowel pattern<br><br>● Has student build the word with magnetic letters, then break it apart at the chunk(s), reading the chunk and then blending with the letters in the rest of the word<br><br>● Incorporates word sorting into daily instruction, where the student is required to discriminate between two or three patterns<br><br>● Provides concrete models, such as environmental print (see Reading Materials to Support using Vowel Patterns and Onset-Rime Analogy, page 59) |
| Does not use familiar word parts to read new words; struggles to apply the analogy strategy to single-syllable and multisyllabic words. | ● Builds a word bank of known words (regular high-frequency words such as *see*, *that*) on which to base analogies (like the key words on the word wall); extends on the parts in these words to build new words (known word: *cake*; new word: *take*)<br><br>● Shows the student how a known part of a word can be used to build and read a new one; uses magnetic letters to pull a rime from the word and add a different onset to form a new word (see I Can Use What I Know lesson, page 63; Dufresne, 2002, for more examples)<br><br>● Pulls two known words from text containing two different chunks and prints on cards, then presents a new word with the same pattern as one of the words and has child match it up to the known word that will help him or her read it: *Which one of our two words will help us to solve this tricky word?*; asks student to verbalize strategy, using part of a known word to read a new word<br><br>● Coaches during reading by modeling the analogy dialogue<br><br>● Prints a known word containing the rime on an index card and places this directly below the tricky word in the text (or syllable in a multisyllabic word); models and has student use the analogy phrase: "*I know* cake, *and the chunk is* ake (points to rime in *cake*), *so the word is* rake"<br><br>● Provides daily chunking word wall practice to read and write new words<br><br>● Incorporates challenge words and writing sorts activities where students write dictated words, chunk by chunk (see Reading-Writing Connection in I Can Use What I Know: Problem-Solving New and Complex Words lesson, page 63) |

| Student Difficulty With Vowel Patterns and Onset-Rime Analogy | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Is unable to break apart a complex word at the syllable boundaries to decode | **Teacher**<br><br>● Has student say the word with him/her, tap/clap the syllables, and identify the number of syllables: *How many vowels are there? Are they together or apart? Is there a silent* e?<br><br>● Has student build the word, then break it into that number of syllables by sliding their letters to the right (this may take trial and error, as first attempts may not always sound right); students move letters from one syllable to another until it matches what they say and looks right: *What is the first syllable? Where will you break your word? Say the word again. What is the second syllable? Where will you break your word?*<br><br>● Writes the new word with familiar words directly underneath that contain the same syllable patterns, and demonstrates how to use these to decode (see I Can Use What I Know lesson, page 63)<br><br>● Dictates the word; has students build the word, then rewrite it and examine the difference in the two spellings to demonstrate the need to analyze each syllable |
| Mispronounces word using incorrect vowel sound; does not attempt to self-correct by trying other pronunciations for this vowel | ● Teaches the multiple pronunciations for vowels in isolation, and teaches vowel digraphs (e.g., *ea*, *ie*) cumulatively in the program<br><br>● Uses a picture-cued visual to support student attempts (Bear et al., 2004; Vogt & Nagano, 2003; see I Can Switch the Vowel lesson, page 67)<br><br>● Displays key words on the word wall to represent each sound<br><br>● Incorporates sound-based word-sorting activities, e.g., for *ea*, short *e* sound (*bread*) and long *e* sound (*seat*), and long *a* (*great*)<br><br>● Provides practice reading words in connected text that have more than one possible sound and use meaning cues to adjust pronunciation of the vowel<br><br>● Coaches the student during reading to apply the strategy with a hand signal to "flip" the sound, or uses a concrete visual, such as a light switch, to model the procedure of being flexible with our vowel pronunciations |

## Reading Materials to Support Using Vowel Patterns and Onset-Rime Analogy

There are a number of reading series for beginning readers that include sets of books that focus on word families. I often use poetry to support the transfer of strategies because it can provide a short, humorous text for rereading. Two of the books I have used include *Phonics Poetry* by Timothy Rasinski and Belinda Zimmerman (2001) and *Phonics Through Poetry* by Babs Bell Hajdusiewicz (1999). I copy these onto chart paper.

Create your own decodable text with ideas and topics generated by your students, using a list of possible words that contain the elements you are teaching for reference. This can be completed in a shared or interactive writing format. I include students' names in the stories we compose together. We also write about nonfiction topics we are studying. I type them up for the students to take home in their I Can Read folders, so they can show off their newly acquired skills and gain increased motivation for reading from positive feedback.

I also include environmental print, such as food wrappers, on the word wall because they provide a concrete example of the usefulness of chunks.

Before it goes on the wall, I highlight the pattern on the wrapper, and attach it to the top of the chart. We use this as a reference to generate more words with the pattern.

Homographs are examples of words to use to practice the I Can Switch the Vowel strategy and my students enjoy books such as *The Dove Dove: Funny Homograph Riddles* by Marvin Terban (1998), in which there is a play on words that requires flexibility in vowel pronunciations.

### *LESSON:* SOUND AND SAY THE CHUNK

#### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible Word-Solving Strategy Chart (page 45) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible Chunk the Word Bookmark (page 66) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy the Word-Solving Prompt Card (page 44).
- Copy the I Can Sound and Say the Chunk steps on a chart and laminate for use with a wipe-off pen, or write the chart on a whiteboard (see lesson).
- Have available a large colored paper clip or clothespin.
- Select text containing words with the target vowel patterns.
- Print selected words in large letters on chart or whiteboard where the vowel in the pattern is printed in red, consonants in green or black.
- Unwrap a chocolate bar (optional).

#### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the I Can Chunk the Word strategy on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.

You may break apart a chocolate bar into chunks to demonstrate the concept.

> *Words are like chocolate bars; they are made up of chunks. Today we will practice the I Can Chunk the Word strategy on our chart and look for chunks we know in the words we read.*

Present a word on a chart or whiteboard (with color-coded vowels and consonants). Point to the vowel and the letters that follow in the syllable to form the chunk.

> *When we read, we look for the biggest chunk of the word we can say. This helps us read words without having to sound out every letter, and we have more time to think about what we are reading. We can find chunks in words because they always start with a vowel, like the* -at *in* cat *or the* -ug *in* bug *on our chunking word wall.*

#### Show Me

Review the steps on the chart and bookmark with the demonstration below. Show a word with a familiar chunk (rime or vowel pattern). Point to the statement "[I can] karate-chop the word" on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart. Tell students that you will karate-chop (segment) a word at the chunk. Demonstrate how to find the chunk in the word by scanning the word from the first vowel. Run your finger under the initial consonant(s) and then touch the first vowel in the chunk. Pretend to karate-chop the word at the chunk. I use *trap* in the example below.

> *We can karate-chop a word into chunks. Here is a new word I need to read. I know the first letters,* t *and* r, *stand for /tr/. Now I will look for a chunk I know. I will touch the vowel and look at the next letter(s) to see if it is part of a chunk I know.*

TELL ME

I Can Read the Words

cat

bug

SHOW ME

Run your finger across the chunk in the word. Use the statements on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart to demonstrate the strategy.

*This chunk begins with the letter* a, *and the next letter is* p. *I know this chunk; it is /ap/. Now I will say the parts and blend the parts together to say the word: /tr/, /ap/,* trap. Cat trap. *That makes sense, so I can read on.*

### Guide Me

*We need to know lots of chunks so we can read any book we choose. Let's learn a new chunk today that is found in many words in our books. First we stretch the word and listen for the sounds. Then we use the sounds to figure out the letters. We hook the sounds to the letters so our brain will remember the chunk and use it to read new words.*

Follow the steps on the Sound and Say the Chunk chart. Here is an example of the process, using the word *lake*.

- Say the key word containing the chunk (*lake*). Ask students to repeat it.
- Model how to stretch the word: "lllllaaak."
- Support students by stretching the word slowly together. Ask students to count the sounds they hear and hold up one finger for each sound (begin with thumb, raise fingers of left hand one at a time).
- Say, *I hear three sounds in the word.*
- Display the key word. Count the number of letters with the students. Record the number on the chart.
- Examine whether the number of sounds matches the number of letters. Note that the silent *e* at the end gives the vowel a long sound, but does not make any sound of its own. In short-vowel (closed-syllable) words, there will be a one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters. For example, in the word *fun* the teacher would record on the chart: *It has three letters because each sound is spelled with one letter.*

In addition to words with the silent *e* pattern (such as *lake*), words with vowel digraphs and r-controlled vowels also have a mismatch of sounds to letters because two letters stand for one sound. This is important for students to note. Discuss the reason why there is a match or mismatch of sounds and letters. Note: Consonant blends (*bl*, *tr*) have one sound for each letter, while in consonant digraphs (*th*, *wh*, *ch*, *sh*, *qu*) one sound is spelled with two letters. You can explain it by saying:

*I hear _____ sounds, and/but I see _____ letters because _____.*

To review, identify the vowel pattern or chunk and have students state it.

*The chunk is _ake.*

You can make the match or mismatch more evident by writing the number of sounds under each letter or drawing a Y-shape line from the two letters that form a sound to the number of sounds.

```
l a k e        s a i l
| | |          |  Y  |
1 2 3          1  2  3
```

Repeat the steps with another word from the story that shares the same syllable pattern or represents the same phonics principle, for example, closed syllable (short vowel, *dog*), silent *e* (*lake*), open syllable (*me*, *tiger*), vowel digraph (*keep*), r-controlled (*car*).

**Sound and Say the Chunk**

1. The word is _____.

2. S-t-r-e-t-c-h the word.
   It has _____ sounds.

3. It has _____ letters because _____.

4. The chunk is _____.

❍ **Review the Spelling and Sound of the Chunk**

***Example:***
*What letters stand for the _ake sound?* a-k-e
*What sound does* a-k-e *stand for?* /ake/

## Coach Me

Review how to find the chunk in a word by scanning the word from the first vowel, using a further example on the whiteboard.

*Put your finger on the word. Say all the letters.*

*Touch the vowel. Look for a chunk you know. Say the chunk, then blend the parts together.*

Introduce the text. Next, distribute the bookmarks, reviewing the strategy of recognizing familiar parts in words to read new ones. As students read the text independently, prompt them to identify familiar parts of words and blend the parts together to pronounce the word (see Word-Solving Prompt Card, page 44 and Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty, page 58, for levels of support in coaching).

***Examples:***

- *Do you see something that might help you*? *Do you see a chunk you know*? Use a masking card or finger to cover initial letter and isolate a familiar word part; or a translucent counter to highlight the chunk.
- Cover the beginning consonant(s) with a finger and prompt: *You know this chunk. Say this chunk.*
- *Look for chunks you know. Use your fingers to find the parts you know.*
- *Where could you break [karate-chop] that word? Put your finger there and break the word apart.* Direct student to cover part of the word.
- *Break the word apart and put it back together. Chunk and crash the parts together.*
- *Is there a part of the word you can say*?
- *What could you try*?

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

After reading, have students share how they figured out a tricky word during the reading. You may have students share with partners before sharing with the group to make sure everyone verbalizes their strategy use. Ask them to use the bookmark (by ¨pinching¨ it) to help them verbalize their strategy use.

❍ Group Share

Have partners share an example with the group. Write the word on the whiteboard and underline the chunk. Invite students to demonstrate how they used the chunk to say the word.

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

Reaffirm strategy use with positive feedback. Tell them what they did so they will use it again:

*You used a part of the word that you knew to help you say the whole word.*

## Reading-Writing Connection

- Generate more words with each pattern and record them on a chart labelled Our Chunk Chart. Use these words in a shared writing activity. Copy the story for student reading folders and partner reading. We call these our I Can Read folders, and they go home regularly for repeated readings.

- Invite students to write a poem using the Chunk Chart word list.

- Practice with sound boxes. These are a series of connecting boxes also known as Elkonin boxes (Clay, 1997). The number of the boxes corresponds to the number of sounds in the word. Have students say and stretch the sounds in the word, and then indicate how many sounds they hear with their fingers. Then

have them draw that many boxes (or provide a form with the required number of interconnected sound boxes). Stretch and say each sound in the word and have students record the letter(s) they would expect to see to represent that sound: *What is the first sound you hear in* lake? *What letter would you expect to see?* Stretch the sound again. *What is the second sound you hear?* Chant and check the letter sequence and have students draw a dot under each letter in sequence as they say it to ensure self-checking (Wagstaff, 1999; Gaskins et al., 1997).

● Practice with word or sentence dictation. Dictate three to five words and have students stretch and spell each one. Alternatively, dictate a sentence for students to write: Say the sentence, then say each word one by one, then repeat the sentence. Students check their own writing for spelling errors, writing the correct spelling underneath, where necessary.

## Practice at the Word-Study Center

Provide independent practice with the following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007)

● Magic Mat    ● Cut and Sort    ● House of Rimes
● Wrapper Rimes    ● Find a Rime    ● Flap Book
● Story Rimes    ● Word Games    ● Tic Tac Rime

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### *Lesson:* I Can Use What I Know: Problem-Solving New and Complex Words

## Preparation

● Copy the reproducible Word-Solving Strategy Chart (page 45) onto cardstock.
● Copy the reproducible Chunking Bookmark (page 66) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
● Copy the Word-Solving Prompt Card (page 44).
● Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
● Select a text containing words with the target vowel patterns.
● Print practice words that contain familiar chunks or vowel patterns on a whiteboard.

## Tell Me

Point to the icon for the I Can Use What I Know strategy on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.

*Good readers think about what they know to help them solve new words. Today we will use chunks in words that we already know to read a new word. Remember a chunk always begins with a vowel—a, e, i, o, u. We can break apart (karate-chop) a word at the vowel to find the chunk.*

## Show Me

Take a word from the story and write on your whiteboard. Examine the letters in the word and think aloud about words you know that contain the same parts (rimes, vowel patterns, consonant clusters).

Model the analogy strategy of using a familiar word to decode a new word with the steps:

*If I don't know a word, I can think of another word I know that looks like it.*
*I know a word that looks like this one. This is like our key word _____. I will it use it to help me.*
*I am thinking, what is the same about this word and the new word? They both have the same chunk.*
*The chunk is _____.*

Write the supporting known word directly underneath the new word. Begin with words that contain the same rime and progress to words that contain the same digraph or diphthong and are not part of a rime. Say and sound the consonant blends and then identify the vowel pattern using the dialogue structure.

| New Word: | str<u>ay</u> | bl<u>ea</u>ted | st<u>ee</u>d |
|---|---|---|---|
| Familiar 'Key' Word: | day | eat | feed |

Use the structured dialogue below to verbalize how you used words (parts) you knew to assign a pronunciation to each part/syllable in the new word:

*I know* [day], *and the chunk is* _ay, *so this is* [stray].

### Guide Me

Write a sentence from the story on your whiteboard. Underline a word in the sentence that contains a familiar chunk or syllable pattern. Direct students to look for a word on the Chunking Word Wall or Chunk Chart with the same chunk or think of another word they know that looks like this one (see Teaching Tips).

Select another sentence containing a word with a familiar chunk. Repeat the procedure that you have modeled, which is summarized below.

❑ Summary of Steps
  ∗ Present the new word on the whiteboard.
  ∗ Invite students to suggest words they know that will help them problem-solve this tricky word.
  ∗ Write these directly underneath the corresponding syllable (see example above).
  ∗ Have students verbalize how they figured it out using known words.

### Multisyllabic Words

If the word is a multisyllabic word, students repeat the process for each chunk. Challenge students to figure out these big "college" words.

● Count the number of vowels and note that there is more than one pattern in the multisyllabic word.

● Blend each pronounceable part as you go through the word, then say the whole word (see dialogue below). Sight words from the group's word bank can also be used in analogy lessons (see example below).

| <u>umbr</u>ella | e s t <u>i</u> m a t e | d <u>if</u> f <u>er</u> ent | <u>adven</u>ture |
|---|---|---|---|
| gum well | best him | if  her went | dad ten sure |

*I know* if, *so this is* dif. *I know* her, *so this is* fer. *Blend together:* differ. *I know* went, *so this is* ent. *Blend together:* different

If students have difficulty dividing into syllables, have the students first build the word with magnetic letters and then divide the word by syllables (see Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty chart, page 58).

### Next Steps

When students demonstrate understanding of the steps, model the strategy without using familiar words. Simply say the chunks (vowel patterns or syllables) and blend to say the word.

### Coach Me

Introduce the text. Distribute the bookmarks and review the strategy icons. As students read, prompt them to verbalize how they used the strategy to solve a word (see Word- Solving Prompt Card, page 44).

***Examples:***
- *Is this word like another word you know?*
- *You know a word that looks like this one.*
- *Where would you break this word to see a part that's the same as the word you know?*
- *What do you know in this word?*
- *You can use the chunk you know to help you read the new word.*

  ❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

     Invite students to use their bookmarks, "pinching" the strategy, to help them share how they figured out a tricky word using the analogy strategy with a partner.

  ❍ Group Share

     Take up examples that students have shared with the whole group.

  ❍ Restate the Teaching Point

     Provide positive feedback on how students applied the strategy during reading and review the steps they used to successfully solve new words.

       *We used chunks in words we know to solve new words.*
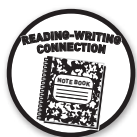
### Reading-Writing Connection

- Invite students to use the words on the Chunk Chart they have generated with the target vowel patterns to write stories and poems.

  - Dictate words containing familiar chunks, including multisyllabic words.

- Have students tap out the syllables and draw the same number of lines on the page as there are syllables.

- Say the word syllable by syllable and have students listen for the chunks they know and use those chunks to spell new words. Say, *When we write, we say the word and listen for a chunk we know. Then we think about how that part is spelled, the letters that stand for the chunk.*

Present new words for students to locate and solve, and provide an opportunity for them to verbalize their strategy use

### Practice at the Word-Study Center

Provide independent practice with the following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):
- Wrapper Rimes
- Cut and Sort
- Story Rimes
- Word Games
- Find a Rime
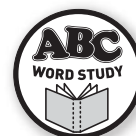
## CHUNK THE WORD
### Bookmark

**I can...**

- karate-chop the word

  c } { ake

- say the parts

  c    ake

- blend the parts together

  c + ake = cake

- use what I know

  d(ay)  pl(ay)  ✓

- check it makes sense

  ¢

## I Can Switch the Vowel: Flexibility With Single Vowels, Vowel Digraphs, and Diphthongs

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible Word-Solving Strategy Chart (page 45) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible Chunk the Word Bookmark (page 66) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy the Vowel Switch card (page 70) onto cardstock.
- Copy of the Word-Solving Prompt Card (page 44).
- Have available a large colored paper clip or clothespin.
- Select words from a text that contain vowels with more than one pronunciation.

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the I Can Switch the Vowel strategy on the Word-Solving Strategy Chart. Display the Vowel Switch picture card. Say:

*We know that vowels can have more than one sound. Sometimes we need to switch the sound so the word makes sense and sounds right in the story. There is a word from our story today that has a vowel with more than one sound. We will use the pictures on our Vowel Switch card to try both sounds and check which one makes sense.*

### Show Me

*Let's practice using some words from our book.*

Proceed through the lesson using words in which a single vowel sound must be switched, or in which a vowel digraph or diphthong must be switched. I provide examples of each below.

#### **Example 1:** Single Vowel

Present the word from the book on the whiteboard. In this example, the target word is *wiped*. Underline the first vowel. Guide students in attempting all pronunciations by referring to key words on the I Can Switch the Vowel card that represent each sound.

*This word has the vowel* i. *First we will try* /ĭ/ *as in* igloo, *because that is the most common sound for* i. *If that does not sound like a real word we will try* /ī/ *as in* ice cream. Point to the picture cues on the vowel switch card as you say each sound and picture name. *What are you going to try?*

Have students repeat the vowel sound and key word—/ĭ/ like *igloo*, or /ī/ like *ice cream*. Demonstrate application to independent reading.

*I will use the vowel switch card to help me figure out this tricky word. First I will try* /ĭ/ *as in* igloo [pronounce the word]. *Now I will read the sentence to check that it makes sense in the story.* Henry's mother wiped Henry's nose. *Does it make sense in the story?* No.

*Now I will try* /ī/ *as in* ice cream *and see if that makes sense. Let's read the sentence together and check.* Henry's mother wiped Henry's nose. *Yes, that makes sense and sounds right.*

wi̲ped
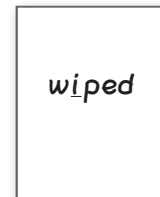
**Vowel Switch**

| Short Vowels | Long Vowels |
| --- | --- |
| a | a |
| e | e |
| i | i |
| o | o |
| u |  |

## Guide Me

After briefly introducing the text:

- Have students locate another sentence in the story and find and frame the target word. Practice trying two different vowel sounds in several words from the text, using the same dialogue structure that you modeled.

- Ask students to read the word in context to check that it is a real word, makes sense, and sounds right grammatically.

- Remind students to check the I Can Switch the Vowel card using the self-monitoring dialogue structure you used in the Show Me part of the lesson.

- Remodel the self-monitoring statements, then say them together as necessary to support student understanding.

## Coach Me

Prompt students to apply the strategy as they read the text independently, using the Word-Solving Prompt Card.

> *What sound does the vowel stand for in this word?*
> *What other sound can you try?*
> *Try changing the vowel to the short/long sound.*
> *Is that a word you know? Is it a real word? Does it make sense?*

❍ **Restate the Teaching Point**

Restate the word-solving strategy of trying different pronunciations and checking that it makes sense in the story:

> *We switched the vowel when it did not sound right or make sense.*

**Example 2:** Vowel Digraph *ea*

## Show Me

> *There is a word from our article today that has the vowel team* ea. *We will use the pictures on our Vowel Switch card to try both sounds and check which one makes sense.*

Present the word on the whiteboard. Underline the vowel digraph *ea* in *ready*.

> *When I see the vowel team* ea, *what sounds can I try? Let's check our vowel switch card. First, I will try /ē/ as in* eagle, *because that is the most common sound for* ea. *If that does not sound like a real word, I will try /ĕ/ as in* egg. *[Point to the picture cues on the card as you say the sound and picture name: /reedy/.] I am thinking, Is this a word I have heard before? Is it a real word? No. I need to switch the sound. I will try /ĕ/ as in* egg *and see if that makes a word that sounds right and makes sense: /reddy/. Yes, sounds right, and it makes sense.* [Discuss meaning in context of the story.] *I used the vowel switch strategy and what was happening in the story to figure out the word with a vowel team. When I came to the vowel team* ea *I tried e /ē/ as in* eagle, *then /ĕ/ as in* egg *and checked what made sense in the story.*

You may demonstrate the multiple sounds of the digraph by mapping the letters in the word to the sounds to show two or three possible pronunciations for the two vowels (see below).

Provide guided practice with further examples from the text.

| **meat** | **bread** | **great** |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| Y | Y | Y |
| **/Ē/** | **/Ĕ/** | **/Ā/** |

○ Restate the Teaching Point

Review how students applied the Switch the Vowel strategy.

*When we came to the vowel team* ea *we tried /e̅/ as in* eagle *and when it did not sound right we tried /e/ as in* egg, *and it made sense.*

**Example 3:** Vowel Diphthong *ow*

When teaching flexibility with vowel diphthongs *ow*, *ou*, and variant vowels such as *oo*, use a familiar word with the same pronunciation, such as *look* for *crooked* and *zoo* for *scoop*, to guide students to attempt all pronunciations.

## Show Me

*When I see* o-w, *what sound will I try? First I will try /ow/ as in* snow, *because that is the most common sound for* ow. *If that does not sound like a real word, I will try /ow/ as in* cow. Point to the key words printed on cards as you say each one.

Present the word from the story on a card and place above the two key words. Model how to apply previously introduced word-solving strategies, such as I Can Sound and Say and I Can Chunk the Word to decode the spelling elements before and after the vowel pattern. For example, the *ow* in *chow*:

*I will try the word with* ow *as in* snow

Pronounce the word *chow* with /ow/ as in *snow*.

*Does that sound like a word you know? Does it make sense in the story? No. Now I will try the other sound, /ow/ as in* cow *and see if that makes a word we know.*

Pronounce the word with /ow/ as in *cow*.

*Yes, that's a word we know. Let's read the sentence to check that it makes sense in the story.*

Provide guided practice with further examples from the text.

○ Restate the Teaching Point

Restate the word-solving strategy and how students applied it in combination with meaning-making strategies to successfully problem-solve this word. Extend upon the meaning of the word where appropriate to ensure transfer to different contexts:

*When we came to the vowel team* ow, *we tried* ow *as in* snow *then* ow *as in* cow *and checked what made sense in the story.*

This strategy can also be used for hard and soft consonant sounds, each using a picture cue. For example *c* as in *cat*, and *c* as in *centipede*, *g* as in *goat* and *g* as in *giraffe*, as well as *b* and *d* confusions—with a key word for each consonant, e.g., *b* as in *bear*, *d* as in *dog*.

## Reading-Writing Connection

● Have students write their own homograph riddles using riddle books as a model (see Reading Materials to Support the Strategy, page 59).

## Practice at the Word-Study Center

● Word sorts with words that contain more than one possible vowel sound.
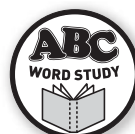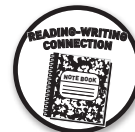
| sn**ow** | c**ow** |

| ch**ow** |

### Guidelines for the most common pronunciations in order include:

When a vowel is in isolation—try short sound first
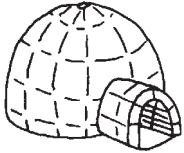
*ea*—long *e* as in *eagle*, short *e* as in *bread*, then long *a* as in *great*

*ow* as in *snow*, *ow* as in *cow*

*oo* as in *zoo*, *oo* as in *book*

# Vowel Switch

| Short Vowels | Long Vowels |
|:---:|:---:|
| a | a |
| e | e |
| i | i |
| o | o |
| u | u |

**Chapter 5**

# Fluency Lessons

····································································································· .
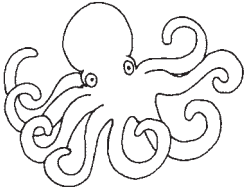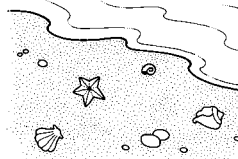
As students learn how to decode words accurately, we encourage them to read with the same rate and expression they use when they talk—that is, with fluency—so they can focus on comprehension. Profiles of students who will benefit from the lessons in this chapter include the following.

- Word stumblers or bumper car drivers (stop and go, stop and go), who lack automaticity with irregular sight words (such as *eight*, *would*) due to difficulties in storing and retrieving the sequences of letters in words in their visual or orthographic memory

- Robot readers, who read in a monotone voice, without expression

- Impersonators or false positives, who attend to punctuation cues and use appropriate expression, but do not make inferences about the character's intent or use this information to determine cause-and-effect relationships

- Stoplight runners, who take no notice of the signals on the highway, such as punctuation marks and text features (lists, questions, and so on) or other "yellow lights" in the text that tell them they need to adjust their reading speed

- Speed demons or stopwatch readers, who see reading as a race to get to the end as soon as possible, with a negative impact on comprehension

## Fluency Lessons: An Overview

Fluency includes reading accurately, at a pace like talking, with phrasing and expression appropriate to the content of the message. Word-solving lessons provide a foundation on which fluency skills develop. The lessons in this chapter move students along the reading continuum so they read accurately at a fluent rate, recognize phrase boundaries, and attend to intonation cues in the text. The Fluency Prompt Card on page 74 has statements and questions to encourage students to apply these fluency skills.

| Lesson | Skill/Strategy | Page |
|---|---|---|
| ● I Can See Words I Know: | | 73 |
| ＊ Train Your Reading Brain | Increasing accuracy in reading irregular high-frequency words | 79 |
| ＊ X-Ray Eyes | | 81 |
| ＊ Countdown Game | Increasing rate of reading irregular high frequency words | 83 |
| ● I Can Use My Voice: | Attending to punctuation cues in the text | 85 |
| ＊ I Can Read Groups of Words | Reading with meaningful phrasing | 88 |
| ＊ I Can Look at the Marks | Reading with intonation and expression | 91 |

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Progress in Fluency

We know that students need to build reading stamina and read at a rate that supports their thinking, or they will struggle as text becomes more lengthy and complex. We also know there is a danger in focusing our fluency training solely on how many correct words they read per minute. There is not a direct one-to-one causal relationship between reading rate and comprehension. We will need to monitor growth in *both* areas and determine how much time we devote to each in small-group instruction. A dual-strategy approach fosters the integrated strategy use characteristic of effective readers.

Reading fluency incorporates a number of foundational skills, and a gap in any one of these presents a stumbling block requiring instructional support. Assessment data and teacher observation will identify whether the roadblock is decoding, sight word recognition (accuracy and rate), vocabulary development, recognition of phrases and punctuation, or text-based aspects such as the students' experience with the topic, vocabulary, language structures, writing style, genre, or text structure. We observe students during reading for information such as the following.

- Where and why are students hesitating? Which parts did they read slower? Which parts more quickly?

- Which words require corrective feedback? Which words represent unfamiliar concepts?

- Do they understand what they are reading?

- Are they repeatedly rereading and then self-correcting/not self-correcting? Rereading is usually seen as a constructive reading behavior, but it can also be a sign that the words or text is too challenging, or that the student has come to over-rely on rereading as a clarifying strategy and needs to develop others. They may also lack confidence as a reader.

- What is their reading experience? Are they familiar with this topic, vocabulary, or text structure?

- Is the text too challenging?

Self-monitoring is an important part of fluency. In *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (2007), I provide a Fluency Feedback Form for partner reading and a Tell-a-Tape form on which students self-evaluate their own recorded reading.

**Fluency Feedback Form**

Name: _____ Date: _____

I read: _____.

**Reading # 2**: Here's how my reading got better:

**Circle** the face that best fits the reading

- Knew more words     ✓✓✓
- Read more smoothly  〜
- Sounded like talking 〇
- Used the punctuation  ! ? .

**Reading # 3**: Here's how my reading got better:

Circle the face that best fits the reading

- Knew more words     ✓✓✓
- Read more smoothly  〜
- Sounded like talking 〇
- Used the punctuation  ! ? .

My goal is to: _____

_____

A picture-cued form enables students to evaluate each aspect of their reading fluency and set goals for improvement

## Tools for Interactive Learning

I have several tools in my reading toolbox that I use to support fluency, and to which I refer to in the Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty Charts (pages 78 and 87) and in the lessons in this chapter. For example, I use tracking aids such as soft, translucent pocket-chart highlighters, which are available from teacher resource stores. Students place these directly under

the line of text they are reading to help maintain their focus. Another advantage of pocket-chart highlighters is that they do not block the return sweep, so students can sustain a fluent pace and do not hesitate in the middle of a phrase, which in some cases can alter the meaning.

To provide auditory feedback, I recommend providing reading phones so students can monitor their own rate of reading and use of expression. Reading phones also help students focus while reading aloud in a whisper voice in a small group. There are two types of reading phones available, the type made with PVC pipe elbows and the hands-free Whisper Phones® that allow students to use both hands (available from www.whisperphones.com).

The fluency strategy chart (page 76) and bookmark (page 77) provide a visual reminder of the skills students can apply to maintain fluency. These are incorporated into each lesson as students share their strategy use with a partner and the group.

Reading phones provide auditory feedback and keep voice-levels to a whisper, so that each student can read at their own pace without interrupting those seated beside them.

## Reading Materials to Support Fluency Instruction

Different types of texts support different types of fluency training: word level for reading rate, phrase level and connected text for expression and intonation. Fluency training at the word level requires materials containing words students know, but not always automatically (i.e., words they can decode within one second). This means the accuracy rate must be at least 98% if the student is to read the text *independently*. To achieve this accuracy rate, the materials used in fluency training are often familiar readings, texts that have been used several times in a shared reading format, in which the teacher reads with students to model and support a fluent rate of reading.

To help students recognize phrase boundaries, we look for text that contains clear phrases, sometimes identified by commas, but most often phrases that represent the subject of the sentence, the action, or are prepositional phrases. To help students read with expression, I use poetry, Readers Theater scripts, stories with lots of dialogue, and nonfiction text with questions and opinions that require adjusting both reading speed and intonation. (See the introductions to the following sections for more details on materials for each type of fluency training.)

# I Can See Words I Know: Fluency Training With High-Frequency Words

High-frequency words are often referred to as "glue words" because they hold the meaningful parts of a sentence together. Knowing how to read these words fluently greatly improves accuracy and reading rate and sets the reader up for success with the content nouns in the sentence that tend to be more challenging. Although approximately 87% of our words follow regular orthographic patterns, the remaining words have irregular sound-spelling relationships, and their spelling gives little

"Once a word can be read fluently, the reader no longer has any need to rely on context. Fluency does not describe a stage in which the reader is able to decode all words instantly; rather we become fluent word by word."
(Shaywitz, p. 105, 2003)

| Strategy | Prompt |
|---|---|
| **See words I know** | • Do you see a little word you know? Look and say the word.<br>• You know that word. Show me that word.<br>• Do you spy words you know? (Play "I spy with my little eye" on the page.)<br>• Can you see the word in your mind's eye? (Look up and to the right.) |
| **Read groups of words** | • Look for words that belong together.<br>• Where could you take a quick breath?<br>• What does that phrase tell you? (Isolate phrase with masking cards.)<br>• Where would it make sense to break the sentence? |
| **Look at the marks** | • Stop at the periods.<br>• Take a quick breath at the commas.<br>• Watch for signs along the way … exclamation marks … question marks. |
| **Use my voice** | • How would the character say that?<br>• How is the character feeling when they say this?<br>• Can you read it like you're talking?<br>• Speed up at the exciting parts.<br>• Slow down when there is lots of new information.<br>• Try reading it without your finger. |

clue to their pronunciation (think of *one*, *of* ). Even high-frequency words with regular spellings often include advanced phonics elements, such as which, each, and how (Gunning, 2002). Students do not learn irregularly spelled high-frequency words as easily or quickly as regular ones. These words lack a distinctive appearance and are easily confused. For example, the words *of*, *for*, and *from*; the reversible words *on/no* and *was/saw*; and words with *th*, *wh*, and *w* such as *there*, *their*, *where*, *were* (Blevins, 2006 ) are frequent sources of confusion.

## Teaching Tips

The lessons on irregular high-frequency words focus on developing visual memory for letter sequences that are not decodable. Students typically require more practice recognizing these irregularly spelled words, and repeated practice with them in isolation and in text is necessary. Analyzing the letter sequences in the words to determine the regular and irregular parts helps build orthographic (visual) memory for these words. Useful strategies for teaching irregular high-frequency words include the following.

"Because words with irregular spellings still offer clues to their identities, it is helpful to students when teachers require them to examine all letters in these words and to determine how each letter functions to contribute towards the pronunciation of the word."

(O'Connor, p. 81, 2007)

- Pointing out the supporting letter-sound correspondences, usually initial and final consonants, for example, *said*, *find*

- Highlighting the patterns or repeated letter sequences that can be found in some irregular words, such as *-ould* in *would*, *should*, and *could*, *-ere* in *here*, *there*, *where*

- Providing visual memory training for parts that are not pronounceable: Students visualize the word on a large screen, such as they see at the ball-park, or a digital sign where the letters come up one by one (according to brain research, we look up and to the right when we try to recall a visual image, so you can ask students to try this when they are visualizing a letter sequence)

- Using a time delay technique, where you cue students to say the word after three, then two, then one second; providing a visual or kinesthetic cue increases attention and engages the brain

- Displaying on a word wall and providing brief, interactive practice throughout the week (regular sight words such as *can* and *did* should not be on a Words We Know word wall as they are decodable and can be displayed under the first vowel on the Chunking Word Wall (see Teaching Tips for the I Can Chunk the Word strategy on page 54–56)

- Including repeated reading of irregular words in text

- Asking students to locate the word and read it within context; you can play the I Spy game during this word-find activity using the terminology of the strategy statement: *I see (spy) a word I know, the word is _____*

Create word banks of target words you have pulled from text by writing them on index cards. Store the word cards in an index card holder, using dividers labeled for each group of students. To quickly locate the words that require additional practice, mark new words with a green sticky dot and words causing difficulty with an orange sticky dot.

## Student Profiles

In this section we address the needs of our "word-stumblers" or "bumper car drivers," who continue to hesitate at these tricky little words that cannot be completely decoded. These students often demonstrate the following reading behaviors.

- Have difficulty recalling irregular words because they have not stored (and retrieved) a complete sequence of letters from their visual memory

- Often over-rely on phonics; they try and sound out irregularly spelled words that are not fully decodable

- Spell what they hear and so use phonetic spellings for irregular words such as *because*

- Frequently confuse words where there is a minimal difference, such as *where* and *were*

- Have difficulty recognizing the spellings of words that share the same pronunciation, such as *write* and *right*

- Try to memorize a "picture image" of each word, which is futile as learning words by sight (logographic) is limited to about 40 words because there are not sufficient distinctive features to remember each word in this way (Gunning, 2002)

"Students who lack orthographic awareness [awareness of letters and letter sequences in words] over rely on phonics and are slower in their reading… they may continue to sound out words that they have encountered many times … they tend to confuse words such as what and want that are orthographically similar and may continue to reverse and transpose letters."

(Badian, N.A. (2000) in Gunning, p. 44-45, 2002)

# I Can Read Smoothly

**I can...**

**see words I know**

I see a word I know                                      said

I see 2 little words I know                      some thing

I see words I know inside big words      re read ing

**read groups of words**      I ran fast   to catch   the ball

Look for groups of words

Read the words in one breath

**look at the marks**   ? ; !

Use the signs on the way   SLOW

**use my voice**

Make it sound like talking

## I CAN READ SMOOTHLY
### Bookmark

**I can...**

- see words I know

come

- read groups of words

I ran fast   to catch   the ball

- look at the marks

**? ; !**

- use my voice

## I CAN READ SMOOTHLY
### Bookmark

**I can...**

- see words I know

come

- read groups of words

I ran fast   to catch   the ball

- look at the marks

**? ; !**

- use my voice

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty with High Frequency Words

Struggling readers who over-rely on context clues will find a problem when trying to predict irregular high-frequency words because they often have little meaning of their own. The following chart lists teaching techniques designed to support our word-stumblers who must develop the ability to recognize these words on sight, within a second, to reach their fluency goals.

| Student Difficulty With High Frequency Words | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
| --- | --- |
| **Student**<br>Unable to immediately recognize irregular sight words in isolation and in running text | **Teacher**<br>● Has student build the word with magnetic letters. Says the word, touches and says each letter in sequence, and reads the word again. Mixes up the order of the letters and has the student rebuild it<br><br>● Places two or three target words written on sticky notes across the front of the student's desk. Provides two-minute daily one-to-one coaching sessions by pointing to the word and signaling the student to read the word using a countdown format—a show of fingers for 3-2-1 (see Countdown Game lesson, page 83)<br><br>● Provides personal word banks with word cards written on index cards held with O-rings. Writes the word on one side and the word in a phrase or sentence on the other to check for meaning<br><br>● Includes kinesthetic movement to learn the letter sequence where this is helpful, such as *where* vs. *were*. Students spell the word by stretching tall for the tall letters, touching hips for letters that sit on the midline, and touching their toes for letters below the midline<br><br>● Uses music and rhymes with high-frequency words<br><br>● Plays "guess the missing letters" in a game show format. Omits the tricky medial vowels and silent consonants in the word and replaces with a line for each mystery letter<br><br>● Incorporates word sorting using word cards that require attending to letters in confusable words (see lesson Train Your Reading Brain on page 79)<br><br>● Cumulatively teaches the words in sight word phrases, adding a new word to previously taught words<br><br>● Provides meaning cues, such as highlighting the word in a sentence, using the word within a student-dictated sentence to add to their personal word bank, having student build and read rebus sentences with picture and word cards<br><br>● Incorporates word games like "flip up" (concentration), go fish, lotto, bingo |

## Reading Materials to Support Accuracy with High Frequency Words

Any text contains high-frequency words. Examine the text and identify opportunities for repeated practice of target words. Reading materials with predictable sentence structures and familiar vocabulary, along with texts specifically designed to support instruction, such as reading series that introduce the words cumulatively, are suitable resources for fluency training with high-frequency words.

## *Lesson:* **Train Your Reading Brain**

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Strategy Chart (page 76) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Bookmark (page 77) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy the Fluency Prompt Card (page 74).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Select target high-frequency words and make word cards for sorting for each pair, or make individual sets (see categories in the lesson).
- Select reading material that contains target high-frequency words.

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the I Can See Words I Know strategy on the I Can Read Smoothly Strategy Chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.

> *Today we will use the I Can See Words I Know strategy on our chart. To read smoothly we need to know all the words. But there are tricky little words in every book that can trip up our reading brain. Our word-solving strategies alone will not work with these words. We need to train our brain to remember them as soon as we see them—to see the word and know it instantly, so we can keep on reading and thinking about the story. To help our reading brain know these words the second we see them, we will look carefully at each letter in the word so our brain remembers it.*

### Show Me

Show the first word card to students and model how to analyze the order of letters in the word, pointing out the regular and irregular parts of the word. Demonstrate how students need to look carefully at the medial letter(s), because the vowel sound may be an exception to the usual pronunciation. Illustrate the mismatch with other words containing the same pattern, such as *rain* and *said* in the example below.

> *Here is a word from our story that is on nearly every page.* [Read a sentence with the target word to illustrate its usefulness.] *There are parts of this word that we can sound out and parts that we cannot. In the word* said, *we hear /s/ at the beginning of the word and /d/ at the end of the word. The tricky part is in the middle, where we see the letters* ai. *In many words, like* rain *and* mail [use examples they know], *the* ai *stands for the /a/ sound, but in the word* said, *it has a different sound. The* ai *stands for /e/. We will need to remember that when we read this word in our book today.*

> **said**

### Guide Me

Introduce another irregular sight word from the text and have students analyze it:

> *As I show you each of the tricky words in our book today, look carefully for the easy parts and the tricky parts. The first word is _____. What's the word? What are the easy parts that we can sound out in _____? What are the tricky parts?* [Saying parts encourages risk-taking because it implies there is no single correct answer but several possibilities.] *Now let's read the word together again and say each letter so they will stick like glue in our brain. What's the word? Spell it!*

> *The next word is _____.* [Repeat the process for one or two more words.]

❍ Sort the Words From the Story

Word sorts support student learning of high-frequency words when one or more words are exceptions to phonics rules or are "out of sorts." You can label a category heading with a question mark to designate these or call them "oddballs" (Ganske, 2000).

Model the procedure of sorting the word cards into categories. You may provide partners or individual students with a set of the cards for independently sorting the words you have been reading. Introduce the process by saying something like the following.

> *When we compare words, we find they have letters that are the same and letters that are different. Watch me sort these words. We will look closely at the letters in each word to see what is the same and what is different. Now let's sort these words together.*

Explain each category for the guided word sort. Provide partners or individual students with a set of cards for sorting. Read and review the words together before supporting students as they sort them.

**Categories for word sorts include:**
- **Initial Consonant or Consonant Clusters (blend, digraph)** Example: words that begin with *t* and *th*, *w* and *wh*
- **Pattern** Example: -*ould* words, -*ere* words
- **Sound** Example: homophones, where students need to distinguish the different spellings, such as *their* and *there*, *where* and *wear*

Provide sight-word sorts according to appropriate level of difficulty.

**Level 1**
- Beginning Letters: Same/Different, e.g., *me*, *my* vs. *can*, *will*
- Final Letters: Same/Different, e.g., *was*, *his* vs. *was*, *saw*
- Word Shape (where this varies), e.g. *the*, *and*, *you*, *for*
- How Many Letters? e.g., two-, three-, and four-letter sight words

**Level 2**
- Single Initial Consonant vs. Blend or Digraph, e.g., *t* vs *th*, *w* vs. *wh*
- Same/Different Final Letters, e.g., *went*, *want; the*, *them*, *then*, *there*, *their*, *they*
- Same/Different Medial Vowels, e.g., *went*, *want; come*, *came*; __*a*__, __*e*__, __*o*__
- Pattern, e.g., _*ould*, _*ere*, _*en*

**Level 3**
- Silent Consonants: Yes/No, e.g., *could*, *laugh* vs. *sleep*, *best*
- Silent Vowels: Yes/No, e.g., *does* vs. *well*
- Same Sound, Two Spellings (homophones), e.g., *to*, *two*

| Yes | No |
|-----|-----|
| was | saw |
| his | him |

**Level 1:** Final Letters

| w | wh |
|-----|-----|
| were | where |
| work | what |

**Level 2:** Single Initial Consonant vs. Blend or Digraph

| Yes | No |
|-----|-----|
| you | me |
| read | with |

**Level 3:** Silent Vowels

## Coach Me

Introduce the reading material. Play I Spy by having students locate the practiced words on several pages. Help students read the words in context fluently. Students continue to read the rest of the text independently at their own pace. Have each student read a sentence or two to you aloud, in turn, and prompt as necessary (see Fluency Prompt Card).

> *You know that word. Tell me that word. Read that word in the sentence. Read the words smoothly.*

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share
  Students share a part in the story where they saw a word they know, and could read instantly.

❍ Group Share
  Ask partners to share one of the words they found with the group. Have students locate the word in the text, and read in context of the sentence together. Discuss the meaning of the sentence.

> *Show us where you can see a word you know (like the I Spy game).*

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

Provide positive feedback on how students looked for words they knew. Review the strategy and how it helped them as readers (link to statements you used in Tell Me).

*Today you looked for words you know in the story. You used your reading brain to see and say the word quickly, without having to stop. This helped you to stay focused on the meaning of the story.*

## Reading-Writing Connection

- Students use the words they sorted to write a sentence or short story. This can be a shared or independent activity.
- Word sorts may be recorded in word study journals. Have students record the words in columns with category headings.
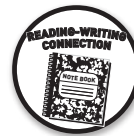
## Practice at the Fluency Center

Select independent practice activities from the following center tasks found in *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):

- Mix and Fix
- Partner Tic Tac Read
- Word Windows
- Sight Word Sort
- Flip Up Sight Words
- Sight Word Hunt
- Rebus Sentence
- Homophone Flip Up

## *Lesson:* X-Ray Eyes

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Strategy Chart (page 76) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Bookmark (page 77) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy the Fluency Prompt Card (page 74).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Stock table with whiteboard and erasable pen.
- Select reading material that contains target high-frequency words.
- Select high-frequency words for practice. Print on index cards.

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the I Can See Words I Know strategy on the strategy chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.

*Today we will use the I Can See Words I Know strategy on our chart. We are going to play the X-Ray Eyes game to help our brain remember the tricky little words we see in our books. This game helps you see the letters for a word in your head, just like on a big screen or digital sign. When you have a complete picture of a word in your head, you will know that word each time you see it in a book, and you won't have to stop and try to remember it.*

### Show Me

*Let me show you how we play the X-Ray Eyes game.*

Print the high-frequency word from the book on a whiteboard. Point to the word and read it.

*Here is our new word:* would.

Touch and say each letter in sequence, then read the whole word again as you sweep a finger under it in a single, quick movement.

*I am going to erase one of the letters in the word and see if my brain can remember it.*

Erase a letter from the word. (The easiest letters to recall are usually in the initial and final position; the hardest are the medial vowels and silent consonants.) You may draw a short line to represent the missing letter (as in "guess the missing letter" games) or simply leave a blank space. With longer words, such as *because*, students may require this visual support when naming letters that have been erased.

**_ould**

*I will use my x-ray eyes to see and say the missing letter.*

Touch and say each letter, including the letter that has been erased, touching the blank space as you say this "invisible" letter.

**w-o-u-l-d**

### Guide Me

Ask a student to choose a second letter they would like you to erase from the word. The letter can be in any position in the word. The group reads the word, chants all the letters along with you (including those that have been erased) as you point to each letter or space, then reads the word again.

**_ o u l_**

*Let's use our x-ray eyes to see and say the missing letters.*
*What's the word?*
*Everybody, spell it.*
*What was that word?*

If you wish to role-play the act of using your x-ray eyes, ask students to form circles with their thumb and finger around their eyes, to represent the special glasses that enable them to see invisible letters (like a superhero!).

Continue by asking another student to choose a third letter to erase, until all the letters have been erased and students have successfully retrieved the complete letter sequence for the word from their visual memory. Ask students to visualize the letters in the word coming up on a big screen, letter by letter (like a digital sign or big screen at a football/baseball stadium) as they spell it aloud.

Print the word a second time on the whiteboard and say, *Let me quickly write the word again. Now you know how to play the X-Ray Eyes game. It's your turn to play the game together without my help.*

Repeat the process of erasing a student-selected letter and chanting the spelling, but this time, do not say the letters with them. The group reads the word, chants the letters in sequence as you point to each letter or space, and reads the word again. Repeat the process you modeled and practiced together above, removing one more student-selected letter each time until none are left and students have to recall the entire word. Check that the students say each letter in the word in the correct sequence. If students have difficulty recalling the correct letter, display the word on a card or write on the whiteboard as a visual reference, ask them to locate the correct letter, and highlight this in the word.

### Coach Me

Introduce the reading material containing the target word. Ask students to locate the target word they have practiced by framing with their fingers or highlighting with a transparent counter.

*Find the tricky word we practiced today on this page. What's the word? Now that you know it you can each read the story on your own.*

Students read independently, at their own pace, all at the same time. Coach individual students to apply fluency strategies during reading (see Fluency Prompt Card page 74).

○ **Partner Think-Pinch-Share**

Students share with their partner a page in the story where they saw a high-frequency word they know.

○ **Group Share**

Have partners share an example of a high-frequency word they found with the group and read the word in the sentence.

○ **Restate the Teaching Point**

Provide positive feedback on how students read high-frequency words without hesitating, and trying to remember them.

*Today you looked for words you know in the story. Your reading brain remembered the words and you said them quickly so you could keep on reading the story.*

## Reading-Writing Connection

● Have students build and write/draw rebus sentences using word cards and pictures.
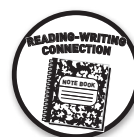
## Practice at the Fluency Center

● Make a set of word cards omitting one or more letters, replacing the missing letter with a line. Students are to copy and complete the word. Laminated cards can be used with an erasable pen.
● Partners or small groups can play the X-Ray Eyes game, with one student being the recorder.

Provide these activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):
● Word Pyramids
● Tic Tac Look and Say
● Homophone Flip Up

### *Lesson:* Countdown Game

## Preparation

● Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Strategy Chart (page 76) onto cardstock.
● Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Bookmark (page 77) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
● Copy the Fluency Prompt Card (page 74).
● Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
● Create high-frequency word cards. Make four to six word cards from the group word bank (words students have been introduced to and have read in context in previous lessons, but do not recognize within the one-second fluency rule). The number of words you present in the lesson depends on the developmental level of the students.
● Select reading material that contains the target high-frequency words.

## Tell Me

Point to the icon for I Can See Words I Know on the strategy chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.
Today we will play the Countdown Game with our words. When we read, we need to know our word bank words fast. If we have to stop each time we see these words, we may forget what the story is about.

### Show Me

*Sometimes when I see a tricky word, I have to stop and think about where I have seen it before. Then I often forget what I was just reading. Today we will play a countdown game that will help us to read these words fast, without having to stop and try to remember them.*

Point to the target word in the text and read it aloud.

*Here is the word ____.*

Show the same word on a card.

*I am going to practice reading this word fast using the word card. First, I will give myself three seconds, then two, then only one second to read it. Let's see how I do.*

Hold up the word card and use the fingers on your other hand to count to three, holding up one finger at a time, until you show three fingers. Read the word. Repeat the process of finger-counting to two, then, finally, only counting to one before reading the word.

### Guide Me

*Now it's your turn.*

Present the set of word cards to the students one by one. Each time you read through the set of cards, reduce the time by one second just as you demonstrated, using the time-delay countdown format. Remind the students to read the word aloud together (choral-read) on your cue. Brain research tells us that a physical cue increases student
engagement and attention.

*As I show you each word from our word bank, look carefully, wait, and watch my fingers count down from three, then read the word out loud together. Three, two, one (finger-count). What's the word?*

Repeat for each word card in the set. For the next round, reduce the time by one second.

*This time, when I count down from two, read the word. Two, one. What's the word?*

In later sessions, repeat the process until students are able to say the words within one second.

*Now that you have a picture of this word in your brain, when I hold it up and ask you, "What's the word?" you will all say it together.*

When students meet the one-second goal over three consecutive sessions, the words retire from the bank.

**Next step:** The following activity provides practice in discriminating between the high-frequency words. As students progress, present common confusions, such as *where* and *were*, and have students practice reading these words in context with your support.

❍ 3-2-1, Pick-Up Cards

Provide each student with a set of two to four word cards to place face up in a row in front of them

Say one of the words and ask students to select the correct word card and hold it up upon hearing your cue: *Three, two, one! Cards up!* Students now hold up their word cards all at the same time.

When the students have held up their cards, acknowledge with a "Yes!" Next, give the cue, *Cards down!* Students place their card back in the array in front of them, face up.

Provide corrective feedback as necessary. If a student holds up the incorrect card, support him or her in analyzing the letter sequence, touching and saying each letter in sequence, and reading the word.

With confusable words, ask them to discriminate between the two possible words, pointing to the differences in their spellings (e.g., *there*/*their*).

they

they

### Coach Me

Introduce the reading material containing the target words. Have students locate the words on specific pages in the text, framing with their fingers or using a highlighting tool. Students will read independently (whisper or silent reading) while you coach individuals.

❍ **Think-Pinch-Share**
Students share with their partner a page in the story where they saw a high-frequency word they know.

❍ **Group Share**
Partners share an example of a high-frequency word they found with the group. The group locates the word and choral reads the word in the sentence.

❍ **Restate the Teaching Point**
Provide positive feedback on how students recognized high-frequency words in the story without pausing to try and recall them, and read smoothly.

*You used your reading brain to quickly say the words you know in the story.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

- Students copy and illustrate the sentence from the book containing a high-frequency word they know. The high-frequency word is printed in color.
- Have students write a retelling using one or more of the target high-frequency words.
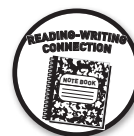
### Practice at the Fluency Center

Activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):
- Word Reading Relay      ● Flip-Up Sight Words

# I Can Use My Voice: Phrasing and Expression

We have all heard students who read in a robotic manner, without emotion, neglecting to attend to punctuation and context cues. This can interfere with understanding and even alter the meaning of the text. In the following lessons we focus on recognizing meaningful phrases in the text and adjusting the use of expression and emphasis to reflect the author's intent.

## Teaching Tips

Phrasing requires a great deal of practice with supportive text. By practicing with the same text, students grow from reading the words to understanding what they read to presenting it orally in a meaningful, well-phrased way.

As I teach each high-frequency word, I integrate it cumulatively with previously taught high-frequency words to form phrases. In this way, students have repeated practice and review of these glue words in a sentence. The Frog and Toad series by Arnold Lobel abounds with high-frequency word phrases. We

teach high-frequency phrases in isolation, but we always practice reading them within context in the same lesson to ensure transfer to independent reading. When you examine the reading materials for the group, you will notice that many of our prepositional phrases are almost entirely high-frequency words.

Reading in phrases supports comprehension, and the same phrases can be used to support the retelling. Authors of both narrative and informational text locate important facts within phrases. I integrate phrasing with comprehension by sorting the phrases under story structure elements or topic subheadings. This is equally useful in both fiction and nonfiction text. We are all familiar with the "who, what, where, when" categories that lend themselves well to sorting phrases, e.g., "The bear is eating honey in the woods today."

I extend this with sentence-building activities, in which I pull phrases from familiar literature—characters we have read about, the settings where the story occurred, the character's actions—and print these on 9" x 3" flash cards. I color code these: green for the first phrase in a sentence, yellow for the second, and red for the last phrase, like a traffic light sequence. Students use these to construct "silly sentences." They mix them up to create innovations on familiar stories, placing Arthur in a setting where Junie B's story took place and so on. We build upon this in our writing by using story structure phrases as springboards for writing a complete story.

**Example:**

| Arthur | is writing a postcard | at the beach |
|--------|----------------------|--------------|

When students demonstrate poor use of expression, we focus their attention on the intent of the character, what he or she might be thinking and feeling at that moment, what is happening in this part of the story, and the punctuation marks on the page that the author provides as signposts that tell us how this passage should be read to convey the meaning.

Provide a reason and motivation for rereading for fluency by varying the focus each time you read the same passage. The first reading is for meaning and enjoyment of the text (comprehension), the second for locating high-frequency words (accuracy and rate), the third for reading in phrases, and the fourth reading for practicing expression and intonation, including attention to punctuation.

## Student Profiles

Students who require fluency training demonstrate a range of reading behaviors. Many students continue to read word by word and benefit from small-group instruction in recognizing phrases in the text, which are meaningful groups of words. When students are able to read phrases, their reading becomes smoother and their comprehension is enhanced. In oral reading, phrasing impacts the understanding of the listener. Word-by-word readers also benefit from learning when to adjust the pace of reading, such as increasing the rate with independent level text that is being read for enjoyment. Prior experience with timed fluency tests can lead some students to view successful reading as a matter of accuracy and speed—and they become "stopwatch readers," whose aim is to get to the end of the text as soon as possible.

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty with Phrasing and Expression

In this section you will find techniques that have proven to be successful when working with the student profiles described above.

| Student Difficulty With Phrasing and Expression | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Reads word by word; does not use phrasing and reading is choppy | **Teacher**<br>● Makes concept concrete:<br><br>∗ Uses the "phrase steps" activity: writes phrases from stories and poems on cards and places on the floor so students can step from one to the other as they read to tell a complete sentence or short story (see Step to the Beat activity in Southall, 2007)<br><br>∗ Displays a vertical sentence: cuts apart familiar sentences into phrases; places phrases vertically on the table, and reads to and with the students, supporting appropriate pauses (see I Can Read Groups of Words lesson)<br><br>∗ Scaffolds during reading: frames a two- or three-word phrase with two masking cards, helps student read the phrase, and prompts:<br>*Read across these words*<br>*Now read these two/three words together*<br><br>∗ Constructs phrase pyramids (see I Can Read Groups of Words lesson)<br><br>∗ Marks slashes in the text with pencil or marker if using a photocopy so students can practice reading attending to the phrase marks; then erases the marks or provides an unmarked copy and monitors for transfer (Blevins, 2006)<br><br>∗ Draws arcs under phrases in chart sentences for student to read<br><br>∗ Provides phrase sorts (see Teaching Tips and I Can Read Groups of Words lesson) |
| Does not attend to punctuation | ● Has student use a colored pencil to mark the punctuation on a photocopy of the text; the same as we use to edit our writing, and then provide repeated oral reading opportunities with the marked text:<br>∗ underline capitals in green<br>∗ circle end marks with red<br>∗ mark commas in yellow or brown<br>∗ mark dialogue with purple |
| Does not adjust their reading speed | ● Has students choral read a short part of the text, holds up a color-cued card in places where the students need to slow down (yellow) and speed up (green) to play the "flag game," as if students are driving a racing car<br><br>● Marks the text with color-coded sticky flags to indicate change in reading speed is required |
| Reads without expression and intonation | ● Provides short text, such as comic strips, for repeated reading, where getting the joke depends upon the use and understanding of expression<br><br>● Displays picture-cued emotion cards (see I Can Look at the Marks, I Can Use My Voice lesson). Substitutes a different emotion cue and has the student reread, adjusting their use of expression according to the character's motives, feelings, actions and to reflect the student's personal responses to the story<br><br>● Incorporates performance oral reading, where each student reads the part of a character or a specific part of the text for the purpose of presenting the information in a way that is enjoyable for the audience (class or group) |
| Reads with frequent repetitions; stops and rereads one to three words | ● Slides a masking card over the words, covering them as they are read, to train the student to look beyond the word they are saying (students need to be able to scan three to five words ahead as they read to maintain fluency) |

These speed demons and stoplight runners ignore the traffic signals on the road, such as punctuation cues and text structure. They neglect to adjust reading speed, slowing down for important information, such as dates and names, and they may lose the gist of what they are reading.

The use of expression in reading requires that students make inferences about a character's emotions and also use intonation that demonstrates their personal response to the reading. Some students use expression, but can be described as impersonators or false-positives. They are adept at using punctuation cues to mimic the appropriate intonation, but are not processing the meaning of what they read. By including comprehension checks within our fluency instruction we can monitor student understanding and adjust our teaching to include shorter text, with frequent student interaction.

## Reading Materials to Support Phrasing and Expression

Short, motivating text, such as comic strips, are ideal resources because getting the joke depends upon the use of intonation and expression. Readers Theater scripts and books that rely heavily on dialogue can be found at different reading levels with many reading series. Rhythmical text, such as poetry, also supports phrasing. For beginning readers, look for books that include poems for phonics and sight words to address both accuracy and fluency. Web sites that provide downloadable copies of the Dolch sight words in phrases at no cost include www.createdbyteachers.com and www.schoolbell.com. A list of Edward Fry's sight words in phrases can be found at www.flashcardexchange. com and in Timothy Rasinski's book *The Fluent Reader* (2003).

### *Lesson:* I Can Read Groups of Words

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Strategy Chart (page 76) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Bookmark (page 77) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy of the Fluency Prompt Card (page 74).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Provide one sticky note for each student.
- Select reading material.
- Print a sentence from the text onto sentence strips and cut apart into phrases; print a second sentence and cut apart to form a cumulative sequence of phrases (see example on next page).
- Print labels Who, What, Where, When, How on index cards.
- 4–6 blank index cards.

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for the I Can Read Groups of Words on the strategy chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon.

*To read smoothly, we read groups of words together. When authors write, they put important information into groups of words called phrases. A phrase might be two or more words. As readers, we look for these groups of words to help us understand the story. When we talk, we say words that belong together; we talk in phrases. When we take a quick breath after each phrase, it gives the other person a chance to think about each phrase as we say it.*

## Show Me

Read the sentence (that you cut apart) word by word (choppy), then read it again and pause at the phrases. Do not show the text to the students. Ask students what they noticed about your reading. Which reading was easier to understand? Why?

Display the sentence you cut into phrases, placing phrases vertically on the table. Read it to and with the students, pointing to each phrase as you read. Use the phrases to generate predictions about and connections to the story or topic.

*Here is a sentence from our book today. In your book, the phrases are written across the page, but I am showing them to you like this so you can see how the author put important information in phrases. What have we already found out about this book from reading the phrases (the characters, what they like to do)? Notice James Howe didn't just write "Dolores," he wrote "mostly Dolores." What information does that tell us? What do you predict? What might happen in a story about three mice who love adventure? Turn to your partner and share your prediction. Begin your sentence with "I predict," "I think," or "I bet"*

**Example:** *Horace and Morris but Mostly Dolores* by James Howe (1999)

| Horace and Morris | but mostly Dolores | loved adventure |
|---|---|---|

## Guide Me

Display the second sentence you cut apart to form a cumulative sequence. Read the pyramid sentence to the students. Discuss the phrase breaks. Read the sentence together, attending to the phrases. You can mark the phrase boundaries with a sticky dot or slash mark.

*Here is another sentence from the book today. What do you notice about the way these strips look? (They get longer as you progress to the bottom.) That is because I have added on one more phrase to each line until we have the whole sentence at the bottom.*

*I'll read it to you. Listen for groups of words that belong together—the phrases. You will need to know where the phrases are so you take a quick breath there. Where is the first phrase? Now look at the next strip. Can you spot the phrases? It's getting tougher. Now look at the third strip. Take a breath; now let's read together.*

> I'll bet•

> I'll bet• Horace and Morris•

> I'll bet• Horace and Morris• couldn't do that,•

> I'll bet• Horace and Morris• couldn't do that,• she thought.•

Have students read to the first stopping point in the story. They use their sticky notes to mark a place where they find a group of words that belong together and can be read in one breath.

*We will read the first part of our story and look for groups of words that tell us about the characters and what happens to them. Use your sticky note to mark a group of words you read together, a phrase.*

After students read, have students retell the story, and then use the following activities.

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share
  Ask them to share with a partner the spot in the book where they placed their sticky note, and to read their phrase.

❍ Group Share
  Ask partners to share one of their phrases with the group. Record the phrases on index cards. Display to the group. Have students locate each phrase within the text, if possible, and read it together. Discuss the information it gives the reader. Keep the cards for later.

  *Let's hear a group of words you found that you read with one breath.*

### Coach Me

Students read the next part (or the rest of the story, if short) and move their sticky notes to a new phrase. Coach individual students to read with appropriate phrasing.

Support individual students by framing two to three words in the text with a masking card, and reading the phrases to and with the student.

*Read across these words.*

*Now read these two words together.*

**Next step:** Students will collaboratively sort the phrases they located according to meaningful categories and use these to retell the story.

❍ Group Phrase Sort
  Ask students to share the phrases they found and record these on index cards. Add these to the ones you recorded earlier together and display all on the table. Read them together. Pause after each card and ask students if they notice something the same about two phrases; do they tell us who, what, where, etc.? Sort the phrase cards by meaning under the index cards you labeled. Ask students to identify additional categories by which they could be sorted.

  ***Example:***

| When | What | Where |
|---|---|---|
| One day | They sailed | the seven sewers |
| Now-and-forever | They climbed | Mount Ever-Rust |
| Next day | go exploring | clubhouse |
|  | build a fort |  |

❍ Restate the Teaching Point
  *We read groups of words together, smoothly, so our reading of the story made sense.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

Students can:
● Use the phrases to write a retelling or an innovation to the story.
● Find more phrases and identify possible categories for a phrase sort.
● Illustrate phrases from the book.
● Copy sentences and cut into phrases.

### Practice at the Fluency Center:

Provide independent practice with center tasks from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007);

- Fast Phrases
- Phrase Sort
- Froggy Phrase Slide
- Step to the Beat

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### *Lesson:* I Can Look at the Marks

#### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Strategy Chart (page 76) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Read Smoothly Bookmark (page 77) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy the Fluency Prompt Card (page 74).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Make picture-cued emotion cards; see image at right.
- Write punctuation marks on sticky notes or flags (see lesson example) for each student or distribute one blank sticky note and pencil to each student. Store sticky flags on a bookmark made of cardstock.
- Select a text with dialogue and/or varied punctuation.
- Write a sentence from the text with an exclamation mark on whiteboard or chart.
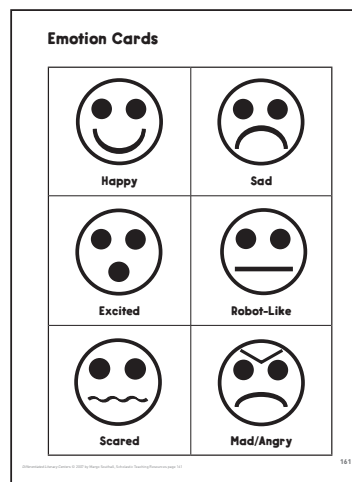
#### Tell Me

Point to the icons for the I Can Look at the Marks, I Can Use My Voice on the strategy chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icons.

Today we will look for punctuation marks in the text and use our voice to help us read smoothly and understand what we are reading.

*How we use our voice when we are talking tells the listener many different things. Are we serious or joking? Are we happy or upset? The author of this book knew he/she would not be here to read it to us, so we wouldn't hear his/her voice, but he/she gave us clues so we know how to read it! We can use clues like the punctuation marks on the page. If we see a question mark like this* [point to ? in text], *then we know our voice will go up at the end of the sentence. If we see an exclamation point, then we say it like we really mean it, or maybe as if we are surprised. When we see quotation marks, we know someone is talking, and we need to know something about just how they might say the words. Authors also give clues to help us with the dialogue. They tell us about the characters and how they might be thinking and feeling, and they describe what is happening when they say it. Then we know what emotion to use when we read it so we get the meaning. Emotion and thinking are both part of reading. Today we will look for clues or signposts in the book/poem that tell us what kind of emotion we should use when we read it.*

#### Show Me

Read a poem or dialogue from a story without emotion. Then read it again with expression and have students brainstorm what they noticed, prompting them to note the different types of inflection, emphasis, intonation, and expression, including the type of body movement you used. List these on a chart as students share them and discuss how these are all part of fluency.

Display the sentence you wrote on a whiteboard to the group. Read it to and with the students. Introduce the emotion cards and choose and display the one that matches your sample text.



**Emotion Cards**

| | |
|---|---|
| Happy | Sad |
| Excited | Robot-Like |
| Scared | Mad/Angry |

Picture-cued emotion cards are used as a visual prompt to indicate when students need to adjust their use of intonation and expression, so they will gain increased understanding of the author's intent

*Here is a sentence from our book. I will show you how I use my voice to help me, and you, understand the meaning of what I am reading. The author gave me two clues so I know how to read it. The clues are an exclamation point and the word* cheered. *I can also use what I know, my schema; I know how excited we get on the last day of school!*

**Example:** *Arthur's Family Vacation* by Marc Brown (Scholastic, 1993)

> "...school's out!" Everyone cheered.



**Excited**

*Now I will switch out the punctuation and put a period there instead.* [Erase and replace on whiteboard or put a sticky note with a period over the exclamation mark on chart.] *How will that sound?* [Read sentence without excitement.] *Does that change the meaning? I don't sound excited about it anymore.*

*What if I switch the emotion card for mad/angry?* [Read with angry voice.] *Now that would mean the character was feeling very differently about this, and that could change what happens in the story.*

*Here is another sentence where Arthur is talking to Buster. I don't see any punctuation clues. I will have to think about how Arthur is feeling when he says this. What emotion would he use to say this? How do you think he is feeling? What emotion should I use?* [Display emotion card.] *What would that sound like?* [Choral read using appropriate expression. Repeat the process, switching out the emotion card and rereading.] *I wonder why Arthur doesn't want to go on vacation. Turn to you partner and share why you think Arthur isn't happy about going.* [Students share their thinking—what they predict is the answer to this question.] *We will have to read and find out.*

"I wish I didn't have to go on vacation with my family," said Arthur.

### Guide Me

Review the emotion cards and punctuation sticky notes. Then read two to four more sentences or phrases from the text together. Switch the punctuation and/or emotion icons to reread the same sentence in two or three ways. Read it first as a statement, then switch the emotion icon and read again using different intonation and expression. Discuss how this affects the meaning and possible storyline.

**Examples:**
"I can't wait for baseball practice to start," said Francine.
"I'm taking a computer course," the Brain announced.
"I'll really miss you at Camp Meadowcroak this year, Arthur," Buster said.

Introduce the next section of the text. After working with the sample sentences, students read to the first stopping point in the text. Provide each student with the bookmark and sticky flags with punctuation marks (or have students print a question or exclamation mark on a blank sticky note). Have students match the punctuation sticky note to a sentence with the same punctuation in the text. Display the punctuation cards on the table as a visual reference for students.

> *As you read page ___ to ___, look for sentences with each of these punctuation marks. Place a sticky with that punctuation mark in the margin next to the sentence. Read it to yourself and think about how the author uses these marks so you know how it will sound, which emotion to use.*

**Next step:** During the following small-group session(s), have students substitute different punctuation marks in the text and read with a different emotion. Display the emotion cards as a visual reference.

*Choose one sentence. Switch the punctuation mark and read again. How does that change the story? Try reading one thing the character says with a different emotion. Use the emotion cards to help you. How would it sound? Would it change the story? Think about the clues the author gives you so you know how this would sound. Be ready to read something the character said to your partner, to show how they are feeling.*

## Coach Me

Ask students to show you a part they marked with their punctuation sticky note. Prompt them to read the sentence with the appropriate expression and intonation. Probe to monitor student understanding of the author's intent or the meaning associated with the punctuation and emotion clues in the text.

❍ **Partner Think-Pinch-Share**
Have students read to their partner the sentence where they matched [or switched] the punctuation mark and used a different emotion to guide their expression.

❍ **Group Share**
Ask partners to share their sentences with the group. You may have the group locate and read two or three sentences together and use the same emotion, expression, and intonation.

❍ **Restate the Teaching Point**
*We looked at the punctuation marks and used our voice to help us read smoothly and understand the story.*

## Reading-Writing Connection

Students can write an innovation on the story using different punctuation marks and altering the emotion so that the storyline is changed. They could show how a character reacted in a different way, using dialogue and description to illustrate the emotion.

## Practice at the Fluency Center

Provide independent practice with these activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):
● Say That Again
● Say It With Feeling
● Comics and Riddles
● Get the Beat
● Read-a-Round

# Comprehension Lessons

·····································································.

The lessons in this chapter address challenges students often experience in developing effective comprehension strategies. Students with these difficulties can fall into the following categories.

- Storytellers, who over-rely on background knowledge. They make up their minds about what is going to happen before they read the text and do not integrate new information.

- Under-predictive readers (no map, no GPS), who read without anticipating events or information, do not revise predictions when they do not match the text, and fail to monitor for meaning during reading.

- Literalists, who depend solely on what is written in the text and have difficulty responding to questions that require inferring or integrating multiple sources of information.

- Left fielders, who are unable to answer questions, or who offer responses that are unrelated to the events, information, or topic.

- Unequipped readers, who lack fix-up strategies to solve problems in comprehension.

- Solo strategists, who apply strategies in isolation rather than integrating them, resulting in a superficial level of comprehension.

## Comprehension Lessons: An Overview

Many intervention programs focus primarily on developing decoding skills. We know that word analysis is a barrier to comprehension for many students. However, even when working with appropriate leveled text, we need to use a dual-strategy approach in our small-group instruction, teaching a balance of word recognition and fluency alongside comprehension; otherwise, a gap in comprehension will develop (Walpole & McKenna, 2007).

I have worked with many second-, third-, and fourth-grade students who have gaps between their word-solving skills and their comprehension. They look blankly at me when I ask for responses to the text; they can decode the words but don't understand what they have read. The assessments currently being implemented across the country reflect a greater emphasis on higher-order thinking. We can't wait until our students are fluent decoders before we begin to work on comprehension. When the teaching point is word solving, we do integrate dual strategy use through sharing our connections, questions, and retellings in brief partner and group discussions. But this is not the primary focus of the time allocated to direct instruction in the lesson. Each comprehension strategy needs to be taught more explicitly and over a period of time. The scaffolds incorporated into the following lessons are designed to make these higher-order thinking processes accessible to *every* student.

In each of the following lessons you will notice that the key emphasis is on interacting with the text *during* reading as opposed to the traditional emphasis on often lengthy book introductions before reading and answering teacher questions *after* reading. The teacher prompts on the Comprehension Prompt Card on page 98 are organized by strategy and enable teachers to question and probe student understanding during reading. These are part of the Coach Me step in the lesson sequence.

| Lesson | Skill/Strategy | Page |
|---|---|---|
| ● I Can Connect | Making connections | 103 |
| ● I Can Predict | Predicting | 108 |
| ● I Can Figure It Out | Making Causal Inferences | 116 |
| ● I Can Figure It Out | Making Relational Inferences | 118 |
| ● I Can Wonder | Generating and answering literal questions | 126 |
| ● I Can Wonder | Generating and answering inferential and evaluative questions | 129 |
| ● I Can Stop and Fix | Self-monitoring using clarifying strategies | 134 |
| ● I Can Retell | Using story structure and vocabulary to retell fictional text | 141 |
| ● I Can Sum It Up | Summarizing informational text; determining important information | 145 |
| ● I Can Code My Thinking | Integrating strategy use by coding the text with multiple strategic responses during reading | 149 |

## Monitoring and Responding to Student Progress in Comprehension

As you know, children can experience a wide range of challenges in comprehension and we need more than one teaching technique at our fingertips. The same approach may not work for each child, so look at the charts accompanying the lessons as menus *from which you can select additional levels of support* to meet the varied needs of your students.

## Tools for Interactive Learning

Using the interactive learning tools listed below ensures every student is continuously interacting with the text. These memory aids are incorporated into the reading, talking, and writing applications so that every student is accountable for his or her strategy use during the lessons. The strategy chart and bookmark use the same language for each strategy as the classroom bulletin board display described in Chapter 3 (See Common Strategy Statements page 31) to support students in verbalizing and internalizing their strategy use. Further interactive props and materials are described in the introduction to each strategy and preparation section of the lessons.

### Anchor Strategy Chart

The strategies are introduced cumulatively to correspond to the *picture-cued comprehension anchor chart* found on page 100.
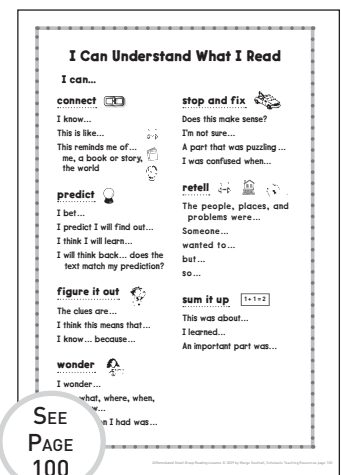
## Strategy Bookmarks

Each lesson has a bookmark with visual cues for each step in applying the strategy. These are copied onto cardstock for each student in the group. Use white-out before copying to erase any icon that is not being taught at that time (see Chapter 3).

## Strategy Hats and Masks

To help students develop self-talk skills and the ability to think aloud, props such as masks and hats labeled with strategy icons can be incorporated into the lessons. Teachers explain and model their purpose during the Show Me part of the lessons. As part of the think-aloud, point to the page in the text you are reading and then to the prop as you share your thinking, demonstrating the process of responding to the text during reading. During the Guide Me and Coach Me parts of the lesson, students hold/wear the mask or hat as they share their thinking in group and partner discussions.

Some teachers use specific types of hats to establish the purpose for reading, the genre, and the type of thinking it requires (Marcell, 2007). For example, students don a construction hat when reading expository text (challenging text) for the purpose of learning important facts about a topic; baseball caps for narrative text, where the purpose is recreational reading; and a visor when "skimming and scanning" text to locate information or examining text for research purposes. I also use the visor when reading magazines, which we seldom read in sequence cover to cover, as well as catalogues, comics, the newspaper, and other text that we tend to flip through.

To make the mask, draw a large thinking bubble on poster board and cut out a circle in the center large enough for the students to see through. Cut a rectangle of poster board for the handle or use a craft stick. Draw a series of connected bubbles on the handle. Copy the icons from the strategy charts on pages 45, 76 and 100 and attach the appropriate label at the top of the mask using Velcro so you can quickly switch it out for different lessons. If you are using the genre hats described above, attach strategy labels in the same way.

## Selecting Text for the Lesson

In each lesson in this chapter there are recommendations for reading materials that support the strategy. As you browse your reading materials you may wish to code them by the strategies they lend themselves to with a sticky dot or marker on the back of the book. For example, I use I for inference, C for connecting, CL for clarifying, and so on. I devote separate pages for listing books and other reading materials by level and comprehension strategy in my planning notebook. I add to this throughout the year to save time later when I am looking for a book at that reading level to support a specific strategy.
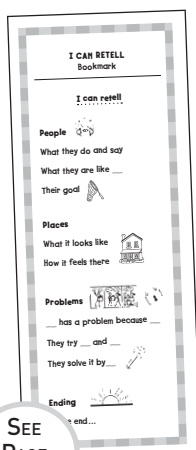
## Reading-Writing Connection: The Reading Response

Some students who provide minimal responses in oral discussions may provide a more expanded answer in writing (with appropriate scaffolds). Other students participate enthusiastically within group discussions, yet use an economy of words in their written responses. It can be frustrating as a teacher to
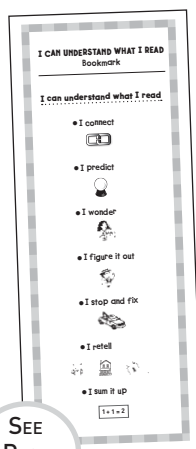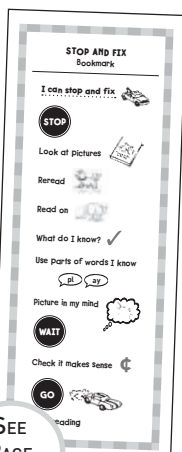
know a student has valuable points to share, yet is not able to convey them either orally or in writing.

As students learn to respond to the text, they often begin with a simple retelling or summary, even in a list format. We move students beyond this rote retell by providing frameworks in which students can share what the story or information means to them. These tasks include making connections to familiar experiences, people, or other readings, and generating questions. Such responses require students to analyze what they have read on a deeper level, reflecting on the information and the author's purpose. Journals can be shared with a partner or the group so students can gain ideas from each other and expand upon their thinking. As you read through student journals, look for patterns in their responses and evidence of their thinking. Do they go beyond the text?

### Writing Prompts

You may provide prompts like the following to support students' writing about their thinking on the text:

- Write about what you know.
- Write an "I wonder" question.
- Think about the book and write about the ideas/facts the author shared with you.

Alternatively, select a powerful sentence from the text you are reading and use it as a focus for discussion and writing a personal response or as a model of sentence structure for writing an innovation.

Mentor authors and texts provide a valuable springboard for student writing. Students gain a model for their own writing style, and practice a variety of writing techniques. For example, Joy Cowley's narratives often use animal characters, humor, and a twist at the end. Once we identify what is characteristic about each author's works, we can then challenge students to write an innovation or extension on the text by integrating these same techniques.

Likewise, the text structure can provide a model for student writing. This approach can be used with students at even the earliest level of literacy development. For example, a nonfiction book that describes the life cycle and habits of an animal provides a model for students to use as they organize the facts about an animal they know and write a descriptive text. A text that invites students to express their opinions, such as *Should We Have Pets*? by Sylvia Lollis (2002) can form the model for students to write a persuasive piece. Connecting your reading and writing program by focusing on the same text structure will enhance both comprehension and writing skills.

## Graphic Organizers

A blank page can be daunting to many young readers and writers. Incorporate simple graphic organizers that are designed to support students in synthesizing the information in the text.

### Charts

Students can use the two- or three-column format in their notebooks outlined in Chapter 3 (page 39) to provide a supportive format for writing in response to reading. See example at right.

| It says | I think |
|---------|---------|
|         |         |

## Comprehension Prompt Card

| Strategy | Key Phrase |
|---|---|
| **Making Connections** | • What do you already know about _____? <br> • What does this remind you of/make you think about? <br> • How are you connecting this to your life? Did something like this happen to you or someone you know? What experiences have you had like _____'s ? <br> • Does this remind you of a book you read, something you saw on the Internet or TV, or something that has happened in the real world? |
| **Predicting** | • Skim and scan. Run your fingers down the sides of the page and look for clues. <br> • What do you think might happen/you will find out? <br> • What makes you say that? (evidence) <br> • Now you know _____. Does that match your prediction? |
| **Generating and Answering Literal Questions** | • Ask a who, what, where, or when question about what you read. <br> • What might a teacher ask about what happened/this information? <br> • Show me the part that supports your answer. <br> • Show me where it says that. |
| **Generating and Answering Inferential Questions** | • What makes you say that? How do you know _____? <br> • What are you thinking about the character or information? <br> • What might the character be thinking? <br> • Why do you think the character did/said that? <br> • How do you think the character feels now? <br> • What was the effect of _____? What do you think caused that to happen? |
| **Inferring** | • Use the clues the author has given you in the book and what you already know to figure it out. <br> • On page ___ the author says _____. What does that tell you? How does that help you figure it out? <br> • What did you notice that helped you figure it out? |
| **Clarifying (fix-up tools), Self-Monitoring** | • Is there a part/word that is puzzling or confusing, that is not clear? <br> • Show me that part/word. <br> • Which fix-up tool could you use? |
| **Retelling** | • Where does the story happen? Who has the problem? What was the problem? Why was it a problem? <br> • What was their goal? What did they want? What stands in the way of _____ achieving their goal? How do they solve the problem? What happens that explains how they solve the problem? <br> • What can you tell me about [topic]? What more do you know? What have you read? |
| **Summarizing/ Determining Importance** | • What does the author most want us to remember? <br> • What is the most important idea or event? <br> • Can you summarize what you read in one sentence? <br> • Think about your reason for reading this. What are you trying to find out? Look for words that will help you to sum it up. |

*Text Structure-Based Organizers*

Graphic organizers that allow the information to be organized according to the text structure support a variety of comprehension strategies, such as summarizing and writing skills, and organization of ideas and facts. For example, a book comparing seals and sea lions lends itself to a Venn diagram, whereas an article on the life cycle of the butterfly is a sequential text structure that can best be represented by a flow chart with a series of connected boxes. The facts in a descriptive text on a specific animal can be organized into categories of information in a web. Problem and solution in both fiction and nonfiction text such as environmental issues can be represented in a two-column chart. Bring students' attention to the signal words and phrases that indicate each text structure at stopping points during the reading.
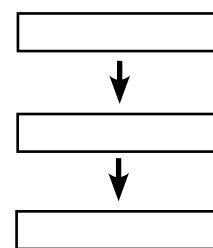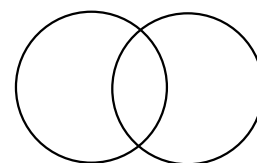
# Making Connections

**W**hen readers connect to prior knowledge, they build a bridge in their minds from the known to the new. The experience the reader brings to the reading is also referred to as our schema (Miller, 2002) or the compilation of all our life experiences, ideas, and opinions. As each of our schemas differ, because of varied experiences, student connections will also differ.

## Teaching Tips

A teaching sequence progresses from helping students make connections to their own lives to making connections with other sources of information acquired in reading, listening, and viewing experiences, to making connections with larger themes found across literature, such as friendship, and world issues or events, such as protecting endangered animals. These three levels of connection are described below and are incorporated into the following lesson. Begin by focusing on text to self, then introduce the other two types of connections one at a time, responding to the readiness of your students.

### Text to Self

Help students make text-to-self connections by focusing on events, ideas, or facts that convey key information or the author's purpose. They are, in order of difficulty:
- Personal experiences, feelings, opinions
- Other people I know and places I have seen

### Text to Text

These include connections to other books, television programs, movies, or Internet content. Display a cumulative chart listing different types of texts that you have read together as a class and the types of text-to-text connections students made (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007), which may include:
- Comparing characters: what they do, say, and think
- Comparing the events in a story or facts in a book on the same topic
- Identifying the different themes or author's messages in stories
- Identifying the style of an author
- Comparing how different authors write about the same theme or topic
- Identifying what is the same and what is different in two versions of the same story



**Flow chart**



**Venn diagram**

"The background knowledge we bring to reading colors every aspect of our learning and understanding. If readers have nothing to hook new information to, it's pretty hard to construct meaning … when we know little about a topic or are unfamiliar with the format, we often find ourselves mired in confusion."
(Harvey & Goudvis, p. 92, 2007).

# I Can Understand What I Read

## I can...

### connect

I know...

This is like...

This reminds me of...
   me, a book or story,
   the world

### predict

I bet...

I predict I will find out...

I think I will learn...

I will think back... does the
   text match my prediction?

### figure it out

The clues are...

I think this means that...

I know... because...

### wonder

I wonder...

Who, what, where, when,
   why, how...

One question I had was...

### stop and fix

Does this make sense?

I'm not sure...

A part that was puzzling...

I was confused when...

### retell

The people, places, and
   problems were...

Someone...

wanted to...

but...

so...

### sum it up

1 + 1 = 2

This was about...

I learned...

An important part was...

*Text to World*

Text-to-world connections require students to notice new information as they read and link it to what they already know. Students can make connections to:

- New information: family, community, state, country, world
- Global theme: friendship, courage, bullying, honesty, kindness, prejudice, tolerance, survival, responsibility

## Student Profiles

Many struggling readers do not connect with what they read. They do not see something or someone in the text that is relevant to their life and remain disengaged readers. To avoid this, making connections is typically where we begin when introducing a new text to students; we try to hook them to the book in some way to engage them both personally and intellectually with the theme or topic.

Two profiles of need we often encounter when teaching this strategy are the following.

**1.** Disconnected students, who lack the background knowledge necessary to build a bridge between known and new concepts.

**2.** Off-track connectors, who become distracted by other ideas that come to mind that are unrelated to the events or facts in the text. These students would happily talk about everything from their dog's favorite toy to what they had for breakfast this morning, if given the opportunity. This requires we tread a delicate balance of protecting the learning opportunities of the rest of the students while also respecting individuals within the group.

I describe techniques that I have found to be successful with these two profiles in the chart on page 102.

## Reading Materials to Support Making Connections

We have all taught a reading lesson when students express a lack of connection to the title you have selected, often saying "I just don't get it." It doesn't engage them because the concepts are not within their range of experience, interest, or imagination. If you can't make an on-the-spot switch, it's best to carry on, admit to yourself this wasn't a good choice for this group, and find a text that they can relate to for the next session.

It is often easier to narrow down nonfiction topics, where a few questions can quickly determine whether or not students have any background knowledge. Determining fictional themes that will support connections can require more probing as they are less finite, but this will save precious teaching time later.

To support text-to-self connections, incorporate books with characters and experiences that students can identify with, such as a boy or girl in their own age range and/or from sociocultural contexts they can relate to.

Series books that revolve around consistent characters make excellent resources for learning text-to-text connections. Students build upon their connections by reading and comparing several books in a series, each time learning more about how and why a familiar character responds to different events and issues in a characteristic way. Reading a nonfiction and a fiction title on the same topic or theme also supports making text-to-text connections, as students are able to build upon prior knowledge on a topic they might otherwise have little experience with.

| Student Difficulty With Making Connections | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Has difficulty making connections to the character, event, or information; may lack supporting background knowledge or experience | **Teacher**<br><br>● Provides text with picture supports for new vocabulary and concepts in a familiar text structure<br><br>  ＊ Models making a connection with a think-aloud<br><br>  ＊ Provides an example based on a shared classroom experience: *What is happening in the story is like what happened …*<br><br>● Reads text/section with students before beginning strategy instruction, so that the content is familiar and a higher level of analysis is possible<br><br>● Provides background information on the topic<br><br>● Rereads a sentence or two, points to the illustrations, prompts for possible school-based or personal experiences that could connect to this: *How is this like* [a familiar experience, book or concept]?<br><br>● Incorporates concrete props, such as interconnecting plastic math links (students each have a link that they place on the book page as they describe the link or connection they have made) |
| Shares connections that are *not related to the text*, or fails to make the connection clear; these connections may be personal and superficial in nature, such as having a cat the same color | ● Demonstrates how off-track connections get in the way of understanding what you are reading:<br><br>  ＊ Thinks aloud how to refocus back on the text by stopping and self-monitoring their understanding: *Does what I am thinking have anything to do with this story? If it doesn't, I need to be thinking about what is happening in the story to get back on track with my understanding*<br><br>● Brings students' attention to how their thinking does or does not help them understand the text:<br><br>  ＊ Asks them to explain the link they are making between their experience (schema) to an event or fact; rephrases what the student said, asking *How are you connecting to this?*<br><br>● Rereads the same part from the text and prompts:<br><br>  ＊ *What in the book/what I have just read reminds you of* [student example]?<br><br>● Records student connections during the lesson on large sticky notes; after reading, the group collaboratively sorts these into two columns: connections that are "important to me" (unrelated) and connections that "helped us understand" (related) |

Reading different versions of the same story by different authors or further books on the same topic by different authors also develops students' ability to compare and contrast a variety of texts. This becomes more challenging than connections to characters or topics, as we require students to analyze a number of variables across multiple texts. By identifying the similarities and differences between pairs of these books, you will scaffold the thinking processes you require of your students.

The genres that typically present the greatest challenge for making connections are science fiction and historical fiction; both incorporate events and concepts that students have no personal experience with. Beyond genre, text structure is also an important element in scaffolding student connections. Keep this in mind when you are selecting the text for the lesson: Is it in a format that is familiar to the students? Are there text features or a writing style they have not encountered before? If that is the case, it may be best to either read and examine these first and then reread for connections or select a more supportive text.

## Preparation

● Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Strategy Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
● Copy the reproducible I Can Connect Bookmark (page 151) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
● Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
● Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
● Select a book (see Reading Materials to Support Making Connections, page 101)
● Optional: Have two to three sticky notes for every student or sticky flags labeled ¨R.¨
● Optional: Prepare picture cards for every student representing each type of connection in the lesson.
● Optional: Several plastic math ¨links¨ for each student (the kind used for measurement activities).

## Tell Me

Present the comprehension strategy chart and place a paper clip next to I Can Connect. Explain what the strategy is and how this helps us as readers:

*When we are reading something new, we think about what we already know. Thinking about what we know helps us understand what we read.*

## Show Me

Display the book and point to the title and any illustration. Describe the steps in your thinking as you activate your ¨reading brain¨ to make connections. Point to the icon and statement you use for each type of connection on the chart or bookmark.

*Our book today is about _____. Looking at the book, I am thinking, ¨What do I already know about this topic? What experiences have I had like this?* [Or] *What books have I read that are like this one?¨ I know something about _____ because this reminds me of something that happened.* [Or] *I read a book/ saw something on the Internet/watched a program on TV about _____ . I know _____.*

Prompt for student responses to your think-aloud.

*What are you thinking? What might we find out in a book about _____?*

Read a short section of the text. Stop and model making a connection. Pinch and use the sentence starters on the bookmark, such as ¨This reminds me of….¨ Place a sticky note on the outside edge of the page, and draw a happy face symbol for this or print the letter *R* for this reminds me. If you want students to write a statement during reading, then model by recording your connection on the sticky notes. Repeat for each type of connection you are teaching at this time, such as text-to-self and text-to-text.

Reread a part of the text: *When I read these words this reminds me of … .*

Show the picture: *When I saw the picture of _____ it made me think about … .*

*This is like something that happened to me… .*

Recap your thinking processes.
*Notice that as I read I am thinking about experiences I have had that might relate to this book in some way and what I already know about _____.*

Prompt students to describe what they heard you say and do. Then prompt them to share their connections so they begin to engage in the thinking process, rather than remaining passive or just imitating your model. Have students share a connection with the group or turn and talk to a partner: *How are my connections the same or different from the connections you made to this? Share a connection you had.*
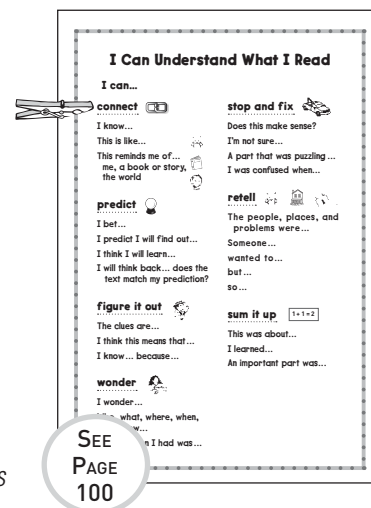
**SEE PAGE 100**

**SEE PAGE 151**

**103**

### Guide Me

Set the amount of text you want students to read (2-3 minutes) and remind them of their focus during reading. Distribute sticky notes and ask students to mark the text where they made a connection.

*Now it is your turn to read. Read page(s) _____ to _____ on your own and look for things that remind you of someone or something you know. Use a sticky note to mark where you made a connection.*

❍ **Group Share**

Ask students to pause when they have read to the first stopping point (see above) and have them "turn and talk" (you can call this "push-pause") to share their connections. Extend upon their connections with the following activity.

❍ **Connection Cards (Optional)**

Place the connection cards in three piles, by type (self, text, world). Distribute the connecting plastic "links." Have each student in turn place it on a page in a book where they "connect" to an event or fact. Alternatively, they can simply place their bookmark on it. After they do this, they take a card from the pile that represents the type of connection they have made to this page/event and place it in a collective pile in the center of the table or in a bowl labeled "Our Connections." As they place it on the pile they describe their connection to the text. If you are using masks, pass one around the group, taking turns to share their connections (see Tools for Interactive Learning at the beginning of this chapter).

Remind students to use the language on the bookmark that you have modeled. Prompt for responses. Monitor student strategy use. Record their responses and the type of connection (see chart below).

*We have read a few pages. Let's stop and talk about the story. Does this part of the reading remind you of something? Did something like that happen to you? Did you ever feel that way? How does this connect to your life? What connections are you making to this?*

*Does that remind you of something from a book you have read ... a character ... a setting? Describe something you know about that is connected to _____.*

*How does this connect to the world around you? How does this help you understand the story/ information?*

**Comprehension in Action:** *Bats* by Lily Wood (Scholastic, 2001)

| Text | Sharing Our Connections | Type of Connection |
|---|---|---|
| Most bats fly at night. (page 3) | I know that bats fly at night because our class talked about that last year. | text-to-self |
| Bats sleep upside down. (page 9) | That reminds me of something I saw on TV that showed bats hanging upside down in a cave. | text-to-text |
| Bats live in many parts of the world. (page 10) | This is like when we learned about different animals in Australia. | text-to-world |

Review and reinforce how they used the strategy, or demonstrate how they could have used the strategy during this section of the reading.

## Coach Me

Ask students to continue reading to the next stopping point. Have them mark two or three more places where they made a connection so they will be ready to share with their partner. Ask individual students to verbalize a connection they have made so far and prompt any students having difficulty.

- Do they link what they already know to something in this text?
- Do they notice when something is familiar to them? Note any difficulties you observe.

> *Let's read to _____ and mark _____ more connections so you can share them with your partner.*

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

Ask students to think of a connection, pinch an icon/phrase on their bookmark to share their connections with a partner. Remind them they can use the language on the bookmark to help them, as you did in the beginning of the lesson.

> *Pinch the word or picture that represents your thinking (self, text, world).*

> *Hold up your bookmark to let your partner know what type of connection you have to this. Share your connection with your partner. What is their connection to this? How is it the same or different from your connection?*

❍ Group Share

Invite students to share one of the partner "think-pinch-share" connections with the group:

> *What experiences did you share that make this text real for you?*

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

Review how making connections helps us grow as readers:

> *We have shared all kinds of connections. These will help us understand the message/information the author is sharing with us in* [title of book or article].

## Reading-Writing Connection

Extend student understanding and strategy use with one of the following writing in response to reading activities:

❍ Reading Response Journal

Students will now have an opportunity to expand upon their thinking shared during the group and partner discussions. Making connections includes expressing opinions, thoughts, ideas, and personal experiences. Both personal and intellectual connections to the reading are appropriate entries for the reading journal. Journals can be exchanged between reading partners and used as a springboard to more writing as students read and write a reply to each other's journal entries. These provide a basis for further discussion in partner and group shares in subsequent sessions and during independent reading time. Possible prompts for writing and discussions include:

* Does this remind you of something that happened to you or someone you know?
* What did you notice in this book that is like real life?
* How did your connection help you to understand the book?

❍ Sticky Notes (optional)

Provide sticky notes for each student to use during the reading. Students mark a place where they had a connection. They can draw the type of connection—face, book, or globe on the sticky note for the three levels of connections (self, text, world)—or print an *R* to represent that this reminds them of someone or something (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Another easy option is to draw a tally mark on the

sticky to represent that this is something "I know." This notation corresponds to the Coding Bookmark and sticky flags described on page 147, which integrates strategies from each of the lessons in this chapter. Sticky flags provide a reusable way to mark locations in the text, with students storing them on a bookmark (see Interactive Tools, page 34). After reading, students locate where they have marked the text and expand upon their thinking in their journal.

| In the book | My connections |
|---|---|
|  |  |

❍ **Two-Column Format**

Students select a key event, idea, fact, word, or quote from the text and record it on a chart like the one at left in the first column, In the Book, and then note the type of connection to this in the second column, My Connections.

### Practice at the Comprehension Center

The following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007) support the strategy:

- What Do I See? What Do I Know?
- What I Think
- Build a Connection
- Connection Stems
- Read, Relate, Respond
- Tic Tac Connect

## The Predicting Strategy

Effective readers anticipate what is going to happen next. Making a prediction requires the reader to think ahead, before and during reading. It also requires readers to pause during reading and think back to check their predictions. Students check and revise their predictions as they acquire more information or clues in the text. A prediction is based on different sources of information in the text and the reader's understanding of the theme, topic, genre, and/ or text structure. Like connections (and inferences), predictions will also depend upon the student's background knowledge and experience with this topic.

Predicting and inferring are related processes. The difference between a prediction and an inference is that a prediction can be confirmed in the text, whereas an inference may or may not be confirmed—it depends upon the interpretation of the reader (see Inferring Lessons page 116 and 118). If the students' predictions are neither confirmed nor refuted, they will need to make an inference as to the outcome.

"[S]truggling readers often operate under the misconception that meaning 'will come to them' as they decode words; they do not understand that meaning-getting requires active probing for meaning. These students may need explicit information about how this seemingly instantaneous mental activity works."

(Duffy, p. 88, 2003)



**I CAN PREDICT**
Bookmark

I can predict

Predict
● I bet…
● I predict…
● I will find out…
● I think I will learn…
● I know what will happen…

Hold it

Read and check
● I will think back
● Does it match? Yes? No?
● Do I need to change it?

Predict again
● I know…
● I'm thinking that…

1. Make a prediction

2. Hold onto your prediction as you read

3. Ask yourself whether it still makes sense now that you have read some more

4. Use the new information you learned (and what makes sense) to make a new prediction

(Duffy, 2003)

### Teaching Tips

When we teach predicting, we demonstrate to students that readers actively predict and re-predict continuously as they read. It is not an activity relegated exclusively to the beginning of the reading. Again, the emphasis is on activating strategy use during the reading. The two key concepts we want students to understand about making predictions is that:
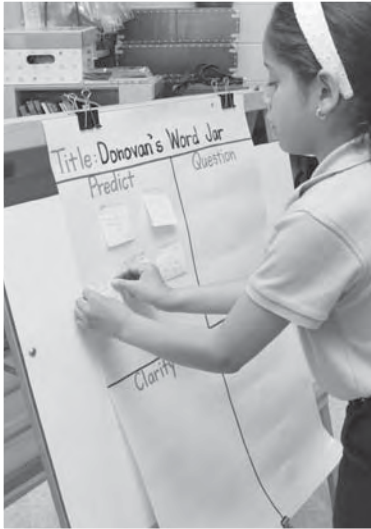
● Predicting is a form of self-monitoring
● Predictions change as we read

Initial predictions may be superficial when based on cover clues only. I know some of my students

have been led astray or distracted by irrelevant details in cover illustrations. As a consequence, I had to work hard to refocus their predictions. When introducing a book and inviting student predictions, I recommend that you go beyond examining only the title and cover illustration if it is ambiguous and may lead to tangential predictions. Instead, also read the first paragraph or page before inviting predictions. This is typically where we find out the character and setting, or topic statement, upon which to base predictions. In this way you will avoid having to refocus a group of off-track readers. With nonfiction text, examining the table of contents and/or subheadings and captions provides a basis for successfully predicting the information they are likely to learn.

In the following lesson, students are asked to stop at key points in the reading, generate a prediction, read on, and then stop again to check their predictions. By examining the text before the lesson, we can designate critical stopping points in the reading and have students mark these with their sticky notes.

| Student Difficulty With Predicting | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Is unable to make predictions during reading | **Teacher**<br><br>● Selects a text on a familiar topic or theme with supporting illustrations; alternatively, provides background information on the theme or topic and prompts for connections so students can use their prior knowledge to make a prediction (e.g., familiar storyline or character)<br><br>● Asks them to generate questions about the book and then turn that into a prediction<br><br>● Prompts students to reread a section of the text in which important information is located and use key words to form a prediction:<br><br>    ＊ *Let's read what the author has to say about _____ . Use a word/fact from this to predict what will happen next/you will learn next* |
| Lists what he/she sees or reads without making a prediction, such as facts about characters, animals, etc. | ● Refers to student's retell (information or list of events) and how they support a prediction:<br><br>    ＊ *Now that we know _____ , what do you think will happen?* |
| Guesses without using clues in the text, resulting in predictions that are not logical or likely to occur | ● Prompts for predictions based on the story elements (characters, setting, etc.) or facts learned so far: *What else might the author include in a book about whales?*<br><br>● Marks short sections of text and prompts for retelling or provides a retelling; rephrases student retelling and prompts for text-based predictions |
| Does not integrate new information in the text to revise his or her predictions; sticks to earlier predictions despite a mismatch with the evidence in the text | ● Prompts them to examine if the information they just read matches (supports) their prediction: *You predicted _____ . Does it match the text?*<br><br>● Probes to find out the clues student is using for his or her predictions; can student justify prediction with evidence? *What makes you say that?*<br><br>● Uses Story Structure Sort (I Can Retell, page 142) in which students predict and sort words from the text under story structure headings, such as character, setting and problem; after reading, students return to the sort and may revise predictions by moving words to different category headings |

## Student Profiles

This lesson supports students who are under-predictive readers, those who do not anticipate events or information before and during reading. Many students have difficulty adjusting their predictions when they conflict with the evidence in the text. Some over-rely on background knowledge and ignore or fail to integrate new information as they read. It is as if they are saying, "I've made up my mind what is going to happen, so don't confuse me with the facts." Readers who struggle with comprehension may insert words as they read, and tell their own version of the text, without attending closely enough to the author's words. Teaching responses to these profiles of difficulty are listed in the chart on page 107.

Students who are English language learners may not have experience with the concepts in the book that are culturally specific, such as the way a family celebrates a birthday. This will affect the predictions they make and the teacher will need to scaffold success and build background knowledge before reading so that the focus can be upon developing the predicting strategy.

Students share the predictions they made during reading and check if they match the text, or need to be revised.

## Reading Materials to Support Predicting

Stopping points will be critical to supporting predictions. Look for logical stopping points following the structure of a narrative text: after the basic story elements have been introduced in the beginning of the book; when a problem arises; just before the solution; again before the conclusion or resolution. In nonfiction, we have subheadings and other signals in the text that we have reached an appropriate stopping point. Plan stopping points that invite predictions on the story elements, events, or new information you may learn in the next section.

### LESSON: I CAN PREDICT

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Predict Bookmark (page 152) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Select a book.
- Place three 3"x 5" sticky notes at planned stopping points, for example, after the beginning of the story, in the middle, and on the last page. You can also use sticky flags to mark the stopping points on the edge of the pages.
- Have sticky notes or index cards on hand so you can write your predictions and the evidence for your predictions. Prepare two cards labeled "I Predict" and "Because" to serve as category headings (see page 109 in the lesson).
- Optional (for Match-Up Activity): Prepare index cards labeled "Match" and "No Match," plus 10 blank index cards. Alternatively, write these headings across the top of an open file folder ruled into two vertical columns and use as a sorting mat.
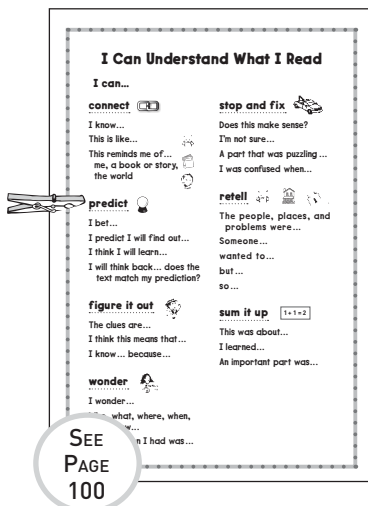
### Tell Me

Display the strategy chart and place a paper clip next to I Can Predict. Describe the thinking process involved in making a prediction and why it is helpful for the reader to use the language on the strategy chart and bookmark.

SEE PAGE 100

I Can Understand What I Read

I can...

**connect**
I know...
This is like...
This reminds me of...
me, a book or story,
the world

**predict**
I bet...
I predict I will find out...
I think I will learn...
I will think back... does the
text match my prediction?

**figure it out**
The clues are...
I think this means that...
I know ... because...

**wonder**
I wonder...
who, what, where, when,
... I had was...

**stop and fix**
Does this make sense?
I'm not sure...
A part that was puzzling ...
I was confused when...

**retell**
The people, places, and
problems were...
Someone...
wanted to...
but ...
so ...

**sum it up**
This was about...
I learned...
An important part was...

TELL ME
I Can Read the Words

Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons © Margo Southall, Scholastic Teaching Resources

*When we read a new book, we think about what might happen or what we might learn. This is called predicting, or making a prediction. To make a prediction means we think ahead of what we are reading. We hold the prediction in our head, read some more and check to see if our prediction matches what happens in the book. If it doesn't match, we use the clues in the book ("Now you know") to make a new one. Checking our predictions helps us make sure we understand what we are reading.*

## Show Me

Display the cover of the book to the group. Guide students to attend to the clues readers use to make predictions.

*Let's see if I can find any clues about this book in the title and illustration.*

Read the title of the book, a chapter, or a subheading. Examine the illustration.

*I predict the author used this title to tell us that this book will be about _____. Looking at the illustration and what is happening in the picture I am also predicting _____.*

Activate student background experience with the genre of the book and/or a familiar author. You can focus predictions on the story elements or text features.

*I'm noticing that this is a story, which means that there will be characters who have a problem to solve or will have something interesting happen to them. I know that [author] wrote another book about _____. So this book might _____.*

Model how to skim and scan the text for clues to support predictions. Run your index fingers down each side of the page as you scan the text up to the next stopping point, like moving the cursor on a computer screen. Have students practice this by moving their fingers down each side of the page, searching for clues.

*Let me show you how I make a prediction as I begin to read. Before reading, good readers skim and scan the text. They look for words that jump out at them and other clues that tell might tell them what they will find out.*

*I am looking for clues that can help me. Are there any words or illustrations that can help me? I can see _____, so I am predicting _____. I notice the word _____, so I predict that _____.*

Read up to your first sticky note stopping point in the book, just a page or two. Share a prediction you have and pinch the corresponding statement on the bookmark, such as "I predict" or "I bet" (step 1 on bookmark). Model how to hold it (step 2 on bookmark) and write your prediction on the sticky note or index card (or just share orally if students will not be writing during reading). Repeat for each prediction.

*As I read page ___ I find out that _____. Right now I am saying to myself: This means that _____. I will read on and check if that does happen.*

Continue reading to the next stopping point. Model steps 3 and 4 on bookmark:

*When I get to the bottom of page _, I check to see if my prediction matches what I just read. I think back to the first prediction I made about the title of the book. Now I know that _____ didn't happen, so I need to use what I read to make a new prediction. I predict _____.*

Invite students to comment on what they observed you do and say. Was your demonstration clear to them?

*What clues did you see me use to make a prediction?*

*When did I use the book?*
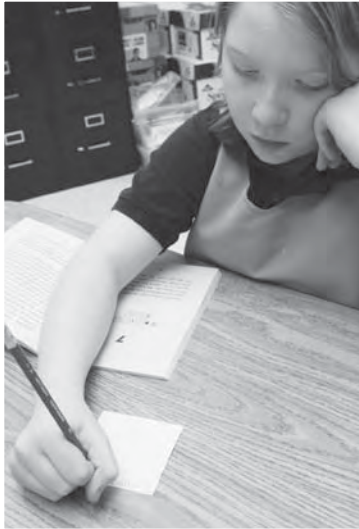
*When did I use my own thinking about what I already know?*
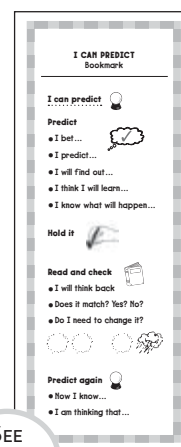
**I Predict**

**Because**

Plan stopping points in the reading where students can pause to write their predictions.

Record reasons for these on sticky notes or index cards and place alongside the predictions (if writing during reading is part of the lesson). Recap the self-monitoring process of confirming or revising predictions:

*Did you notice how I ask myself: Does my prediction match what I just read? If it didn't, I used the information to make a new prediction.*

### Guide Me

Provide a purpose as students read to the next stopping point in the text. Students are to make a prediction when they get to this stopping point.

*Now it is your turn to read and make a prediction. We will read to page _____. As you read, think about what might happen next in the story. Use your sticky note to write your prediction so you will be ready to place it on the chart and share it with the group.*

❍ **Group Share**

Invite students to share their predictions with the group by placing them on the chart under Our Predictions. Remind them to use the language on the bookmark. (If students are just orally sharing and not using sticky notes, then record their predictions on the chart.)

*What predictions did you make that helped you understand the story? As a reader, what did you notice that helped you predict?*

Take up some of the predictions. Question and prompt students to expand upon their prediction: What evidence did they use in the text to make this prediction? Discuss the evidence for each prediction.

*Why do you think that might happen? What do you think the characters will do? Why? What in the book makes you say that?*

Ask students to read to the next stopping point. This time they are to check the prediction they made at the first stopping point. Did it occur? If it didn't, they are to make a new prediction.

*Read to the next sticky note and ask yourself: Does this match my first prediction? If it does match, write "Yes" on your first sticky; if it doesn't, write "No." Then use what you just read to make a new prediction.*

Alternatively, have students mark their sticky notes with a plus or minus sign, instead of "yes" and "no."

### Coach Me

Students read to the next stopping point. Ask them to make one new prediction for this part of the story and read on to check the prediction. Remind them to mark the sticky notes with "yes" or "no" (as above).

*Let's read to _____ and record our predictions so we will be ready to share them with our partners. Use what you know so far to predict what will happen next. Read and check your predictions.*

While the group reads, question individual students on the predictions they have made and the reasoning behind them. Ask yourself the following:
● Are students able to make logical predictions?
● Can they justify their predictions based on evidence in the text?

**Comprehension in Action:** *Early One Morning* by Greg Lang (Scholastic Canada Ltd. 2001)

| Text | Sharing Our Predictions | Match? Because... |
|---|---|---|
| Title: *Early One Morning* | This story is about a special day for the girl and her father. They will see all the things that happen in their neighborhood early in the morning. | Yes—title and cover illustration |
| "Sshh!" he said, "don't wake the others ..." They had something important to do. (page 4) | It is going to be a surprise. *[This matches our prediction that it is a special day.]* | Yes—"Dad says not to wake the others" |
| As they walked down the sidewalk, Anna and her dad saw the town waking up. They saw ... (page 6) | *[This matches our prediction that they will see what happens in their neighborhood—but now we know it's not just the neighborhood—it's their whole town.]* | Yes—They said it would be "an important day" |
| But Anna and her dad walked to the bakery. They had something important to do. (page 10) | They are going to buy a birthday cake at the bakery—for a party. | Yes—They "saw the town waking up" |
| They bought some warm bread and muffins. (page 12) | *[This does not match our prediction that they will buy a cake for a birthday party. We need to make a new prediction.]* | No—they bought bread and muffins |
| When they got home, everyone was still asleep. "Everybody! Breakfast is ready!" called Anna. (page 15) | The food is for a surprise breakfast. *[This matches our prediction that it will be a surprise breakfast.]* | Yes—"breakfast is ready" |
| "Happy Mother's Day, Mom!" said Anna. (page 16) | *[We found out that it was for Mother's Day instead of a birthday.]* | No—"Mother's Day" |

- Do they recognize that their prediction matched or did not match the text?
- Are they able to form a new prediction when it does not match the text?

  ○ Partner Think-Pinch-Share
   *Hold up your bookmark and share your prediction with your partner. What predictions did you make as you read? How are they the same or different from your partner's predictions?*

  After the partners share, ask students to write the new predictions on the chart or dictate them for you to write on sticky notes. Read through the predictions you recorded on the chart during the group share. As you read each one, ask students to give a thumbs up or down to indicate whether it occurred. Move the sticky notes under "Match? Because" on the chart after each one is examined. Invite students to share how they confirmed or revised a prediction with the group.

   *Let's read through our predictions and see which ones matched the text or if we needed to revise it and make a new prediction. Are there any predictions we need to change? How could we change them?* [For nonfiction:] *Did you learn _____? Did you find out about _____?*

  ○ Match-Up Activity (Optional)
   To make learning concrete, have students sort the predictions they have written or dictated in two piles under cards labeled "Match" and "No Match." If students are not able to write the predictions, record those they shared orally on index cards and write the evidence they cited for each one on separate

blank index cards. Shuffle the cards and ask the group or partners to identify which pile or category they belong in. Have students cite the evidence (book and schema) used for each prediction and why this did or did not occur. Give students credit for both columns, as many predictions could have occurred, and the mismatch is a result of the author's plan for the text.

| **Match** | *The food is for a surprise breakfast* | **No Match** | *It is a birthday party* |

Ask students to review their predictions and identify those that helped them understand the text.

*Which of our predictions were most useful?*

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

> *Our predictions helped us to think carefully about how each of the character's actions caused further events to happen.* [For nonfiction:] *Our predictions helped us find out if this information was new to us or not, and reflect on the new information we learned.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

Each of the following reading responses builds upon the lesson activities:
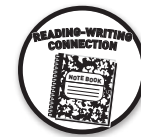
| I predict | Because... |
|---|---|
|  |  |

| I predict | Because... | Match... yes or no |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |

❍ Sticky Notes

After reading, students use the sticky notes they have marked with a yes or no (or a plus and minus sign) to write about the predictions they made or record them in a two- or three-column chart format (see left) in their response notebook.

❍ Two-Column Format:

Students record their predictions and the evidence they used from the book and their schema.

❍ Three-Column Format:

Extend the first format to include a "Yes or No" column and explanation if the prediction did not occur, such as words or events in the text that contradict their prediction.

### Practice at the Comprehension Center

The following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007) support the strategy:
- What I Think
- I Wonder
- Tic Tac Question #1

## I Can Figure It Out: Inferring

Unlike predictions, inferences are open-ended. Authors do not always state key ideas or information directly in the text. They engage their audience by giving them some work of their own to do, some thinking "between the lines." Inferring helps students achieve a deeper level of thinking and gain ownership of their own understanding. We can liken the process of inferring to being a reading detective who gathers all the information and uses it to come up with the most likely explanation.

"In our work with young students, we often note that they do not generate inferences naturally and spontaneously. They can usually deduce information from one segment of the text, but they fail to integrate it with implied information in other parts of the story or in storybook illustrations.... Readers can improve their abilities to infer information when teachers model how to reason, make assumptions, and come to conclusions."

(RICHARDS & ANDERSON, P. 291, 2003)

Harvey and Goudvis (2007) define inferring as "merging background knowledge with clues in the text to come up with an idea that is not explicitly stated by the author. Reasonable inferences need to be tied to the text" (p. 131). Students need to be able to draw upon multiple sources of information to infer a "reasonable" conclusion. By "reasonable," we mean that they justify their thinking with examples from the text and related personal experiences or connections. In the second inferring lesson, we step students through figuring it out by identifying the clues "in the text" and "in the head." Inferring is often taught in combination with visualizing, as creating a picture in your mind requires that you go beyond the concrete to an image of your own creation. In fact, multiple strategies are used in integration to make an inference. We need to be able make connections (schema), generate questions, predict outcomes, and visualize (Miller, 2002). McGregor (2007) describes this equation as "a dose of schema and a piece of solid evidence" (page 55).

> **Clues + Connections = Inference**

## Teaching Tips

There are two types of inferences, causal inferences and relational inferences. The first lesson in this section will address causal, the second lesson relational.

**Causal Inferences** Causal inferences are based on cause-and-effect relationships, which require readers to infer consequences from a character's actions or an event. For example, in the book *Miss Nelson Is Missing* by James Marshall (1977), the teacher pretends to be a scary witch because her students are misbehaving. In nonfiction text, we may infer information through analyzing cause-and-effect relationships. The first lesson provides a format for supporting students to make causal inferences. To support *causal* inferences:

**1.** Write the events and their causes on index cards or sentence strips before the session begins. (Alternatively, stop and record the events and causes at stopping points in the reading.)

**2.** At planned stopping points, display and review the appropriate event card.

**3.** Ask students to identify the corresponding causal inference(s). Place alongside the event.

**4.** Conclude by rereading the cards and leading a discussion of how these supported an understanding of the "big idea."

**5.** As you progress, provide only the events for the "What happened?" or "Then" column and have students generate the "Why Did It Happen?" or "When"— the causes behind each one at the corresponding points in the reading. This supports the development of reasoning skills essential to inferring. For example:

| What Happened? (Then) | Why Did It Happen? (When) |
|---|---|
| Wombat chewed a hole in the door | The people did not give him carrots |

**Relational Inferences** Relational inferences require readers to integrate multiple sources of information across the text and identify the author's message or theme (the big idea). When reading narrative text, we ask students to examine the character as a source of information and to infer their personality traits and emotions by noting the dialogue, action and description the

author uses to depict them. The way the author describes *how* characters do or say something is key in making inferences, so we attend to how the author shows rather than tells us *why* something is happening. Themes in literature are seldom explicitly stated in the text; that would take away interaction between author and audience.

This level of inference is more challenging for young readers because it requires sustained attention to clues in the text. In the second lesson, we support students in making relational inferences by integrating multiple sources of information. To scaffold relational inferences:

**1.** State the main idea or theme. Have students share questions that were left unanswered by the author, e.g., Why did …?

**2.** Ask students to locate and record the clues in this part of the reading, or throughout the book. Students may role-play being a detective, using a magnifying glass and wearing plastic glasses or a mask, described under Tools for Interactive Learning on page 34, as they "seek and find" clues in the text. Record these on a chart (at left). This helps students hold on to this information and cumulatively integrate the clues as they read further.

**3.** Prompt for student inferences based on the clues they have found and record these in a statement like the one in the chart at left.

## Student Profiles

Inferring is complex and requires higher-level thinking skills. This is typically where struggling and on-grade-level readers alike hit a plateau in their comprehension growth. They respond with literal answers to questions on assessments that require inferential thinking. These are the students who say they cannot "find" the answer to the question. When students do not get it, also consider text-based factors that may present roadblocks to strategy application. Check that they are familiar with the topic or theme, vocabulary, and sentence and text structures.

Illustrations and photographs are often an excellent resource for scaffolding students who struggle making inferences. If you are concerned about the transfer of picture-based inferences to "real reading," have students dictate or write captions and dialogue on sticky notes and place them in the text, numbering each one in sequence. This supports ongoing inferential thinking during reading and the sticky notes form the basis for an oral or written retelling. I have students transfer their sticky notes to the spaces in a storyboard grid (a sheet of paper divided into four to 12 frames) and use this to write a retelling, including dialogue, captions, and other text features used in the text. Both fiction and nonfiction text can be used for this activity.
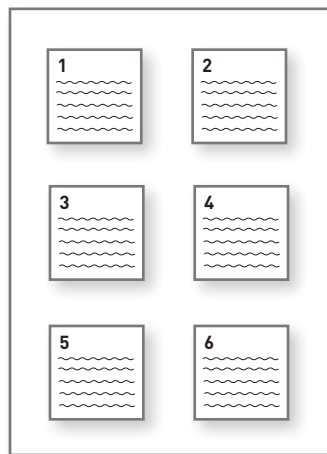


Storyboards Support Both Inferences and Retelling

## Reading Materials to Support Inferring

Students need highly supportive text to practice inferring. Limitations of emergent reading materials have always been a challenge when it comes to teaching higher-level thinking. Tales of "the fat cat on the mat," for example, do not always lend themselves to inferring. When students are working with emergent-level text and decodable text, I use the illustrations or photos as a rich source for inferences. For example, examining the expression on a character's face and the way the setting is depicted helps readers infer the mood the author/illustrator is trying to create to convey information. Making text-to-self connections

will be an important part of scaffolding the inferences young students make with the text (see I Can Connect lesson, page 103), so familiar topics, themes, and characters that invite connections are also part of our criteria.

Mysteries like the Young Cam Jansen series by David Adler encourage students to make inferential statements, often beginning with "Maybe …" or "It could be that …." When you need to connect this strategy to the real world or something students are familiar with, you can always refer to the television series and movie *Scooby Doo* as an introduction to the strategy (McGregor, 2007). I scaffold this strategy with the use of comic strips and graphic novels that rely on carrying the message through illustration. The Owly series by Andy Runton is almost wordless and supports emergent readers, while other titles, such as Raymond Briggs's humorous tale *Ug: Boy Genius of the Stone Age* (2001) are more challenging and contain a range of text features. Those who enjoy mysteries will find graphic versions of these as well, including the Nancy Drew graphic novels by Stefan Petrucha and Sho Murase.

| Student Difficulty With Inferring | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Is unable to make inferences | **Teacher**<br><br>● Provides concrete examples to demonstrate the strategy, such as a type of shoe/boot or hat that reflects an occupation: *Who might wear this hat? How do you know?*<br><br>● Uses examples from familiar stories, such as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears: *There were three bowls of porridge, three beds, so how many lived in the house? How did Papa Bear know that someone had been in their house while they were away?*<br><br>● Selects a supportive book that has:<br><br>∗ a familiar character, so students can use what they know about this character to infer how the storyline may unfold<br><br>∗ a familiar theme or experience that the student can make connections to<br><br>∗ a familiar topic<br><br>∗ a familiar text structure<br><br>● Has the student quickly sketch the clues (+) and what they think is happening (=) in a + __ + __ = formula for an inference, describe their drawing, and provide a caption or speech bubble |
| Does not make logical inferences based on text clues and background knowledge | ● Points out sources of information in illustrations: *What is in the picture to help you?*<br><br>● Draws attention to what the student already knows about the character, setting, events, theme, or topic: *You know about ___. How is this like ___?*<br><br>● Takes specific examples from the text, such as dialogue, action, or description, and reads to student, prompting them to think about what this reminds them of (connections): *What did they do and say? Why? What might they be thinking when ___? What would you do if that happened to you? Why?* |
| Gives a text-based answer to a question that requires reading between the lines | Supports visualization with picture cues for the five senses: A*s you read this part, think about what you can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste. Imagine a picture in your mind. Tell me what you see.*<br><br>(See further suggestions for inferential thinking in the chart with the I Can Wonder: Inferential and Evaluative Questions lesson page 129) |

Riddle books, where getting the joke requires making an inference, are also a useful source for student practice and illustrate the relevance of this strategy in our lives. Poetry that requires visualization and interpretation is also an appropriate context for practicing the strategy of inferring. Finally, we don't always have to read the 16- or 36-page book; short texts—and lots of them—provide meaningful practice for this and all comprehension strategies.

Remember, when the student reading goal is developing comprehension—not decoding—the guiding principle is to select text that every student in the group can read at their independent level (95%+). Easy text is a good thing when practicing this strategy! If you need to read the text with them first to make it accessible—that is okay, too. I do teach word solving (see Chapter 4), but not in combination with a comprehension strategy that requires higher-level thinking, especially when it is challenging for so many of our students (see Chapter 2 for more detail on selecting text for the lessons).

### LESSON: I CAN FIGURE IT OUT: MAKING CAUSAL INFERENCES

## Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Figure It Out Bookmark (page 152) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Write three to four events and their causes from the text on index cards or sentence strips. Prepare two category headings on separate cards: "What Happened?" or "Then" and "Why Did It Happen?" or "When."
- Optional Match-Up Activity: blank index cards.

## Tell Me

Display the strategy chart and place a paper clip next to "I Can Figure It Out." Introduce the inferring strategy using the language on the strategy chart and bookmark:

*Authors don't always use words to tell us why something happens, so we can use the clues to figure it out. Just like a detective, we look for clues in the words and in the pictures. There is always a reason why something happens. We think about what we know and what makes sense to figure it out.*

## Show Me

Read up to the first event and cause (inference) you recorded on the index cards.

Display and review the event card. Place it under the "What Happened" category heading. Select the corresponding causal inference(s). Place alongside the event under the heading "Why Did It Happen?" Reread the event and cause cards. Discuss how you used the clues in the text to support your inference. Demonstrate the use of clues to figure it out and pinch the corresponding statement on the bookmark, such as "I can use the clues in the words" or "I can use the clues in the pictures." Use a think-aloud to demonstrate how you arrived at the cause. For example:

| **What Happened?** | **Why Did It Happen?** |
|---|---|
| *Wombat chewed a hole in the door* | *The people did not give him carrots* |

Text: *Diary of a Wombat* by Jackie French (2002)
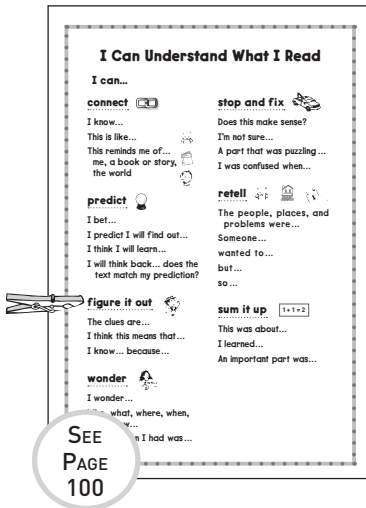
*The author, Jackie French, doesn't say why Wombat chewed a hole in the door. I will search for clues in the words the author used to tell the story. I know that Wombat likes carrots, because he said, "The carrot was delicious." I also read that he "demanded more carrots" but there was "no response." I can use clues in the pictures. When I look at this picture, I see he has a sad look on his face, so I am figuring out that this means he is not happy that they have not given him any more carrots. On the next page, I see Wombat after chewing a hole in the door. He is looking hopeful. I think that Wombat chewed the hole to get the people's attention, and more carrots. And look—it worked!*

Ask students to give you feedback on what they observed and their own thinking about what happened in the story. Are there any clues that you missed? Repeat with a second example.

*How did I figure that out? What clues did I use? Did I miss something? What connections are you making to what has happened so far? Do you see a picture in your mind of why this happened? Describe your picture.*
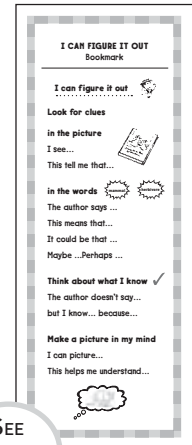
## Guide Me

Students read to the next stopping point in the text. Students are to look for clues that will tell them the reasons why the characters act the way they do, why events occurred.

❍ Group Share

Ask students to retell the events up to this point. Display (or write) the corresponding event card and place under the "What Happened?" (Then) category. Prompt students to think of reasons why this happened. Refer to the strategy chart and/or bookmark statements and guide them to look for clues in the words, in the pictures, and in what they already know.

*Think about the clues in the book and what you know that will help you figure it out.*

*As a reader, what did you notice in the book that helped you to figure it out?*

*On page ___ the author says ___. What does that tell you? What does the author mean? How do you know?*

*Does this remind you of someone or something you know?*

*What did the character do and say? This caused something to happen. What was it?*

Discuss and record their responses on cards and place under the "Why Did It Happen?" (When) category heading. You can use cards (or record the information at each stopping point on a two-column chart like the one below). Conclude by rereading the cards and leading a discussion of how these supported an understanding of the "big idea."

## Coach Me

Ask students to read to the next stopping point and see if they can find clues to the main event.

*Let's read to ___. Use what's in the book and what you know to figure out why these events happened.*

Prompt for strategy use and probe the reasoning behind the inferences they make.

*Why do think ___? What in the story makes you think that? How do you know? What are the clues?*

❍ Monitor for Strategy Use
  ∗ Are students able to make and support inferences?
  ∗ Do they notice the clues in the text?
  ∗ Are their inferences reasonable?
  ∗ Can they create a picture or movie in their mind?

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

Have students share their thinking with a partner. Invite partners to share an example from their discussion with the rest of the group. Add these to the chart.

*Use your bookmark to talk about how you figured out something in the story.*

**Comprehension in Action:** *Diary of a Wombat* by Jackie French (2002)

| What Happened? (Then) | Why Did It Happen? (When) |
|---|---|
| Wombat bashed up the garbage bin. | He wanted to get more carrots. |
| The people did not give him rolled oats when he wanted them for dinner.<br><br>He was amazed that humans were so dumb. | Wombats can't talk.<br><br>The people didn't know what he wanted. |
| He chewed up the people's boots, flower pots, and garden chair. | He wanted to get their attention so they would give him something different. |
| Wombat called the humans his "pets." | He has trained them to do what he wants. |
| Wombat dug a hole under their house to live in. | He wouldn't have to go far to get his food.<br>He likes being near them. |

❍ Match-Up Game: Events and Causes (Optional Activity)

As a review, the statements on the chart can be written on index cards, shuffled, and then displayed for students to match each event with the cause.

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

*Today we read like a detective. We used the clues in the book and what we know to figure out what happened, and why it happened. Now we know why Wombat did all those naughty things and why the people acted the way they did.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

Reading Response Journal

The following writing in response to reading activities can be completed in students' journals.

● **Two-Column Chart:** Have students record their own chart based on the model you constructed during the lesson.

● **Connections:** Students can describe how they figured out the cause of the events by using experiences and prior knowledge—what they already know about characters, events, and facts similar to these.

### Practice at the Comprehension Center

The following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007) support inferring:

● I See, I Wonder
● Who or What Am I?
● Character Close Up
● Tic Tac Question #2 and #3

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*LESSON:* **I CAN FIGURE IT OUT: MAKING RELATIONAL INFERENCES**

### Preparation

● Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
● Copy the reproducible I Can Figure It Out Bookmark (page 152) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
● Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).

- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Optional: Have three or four sticky notes for each student.
- Optional: Index cards labeled "I Figured Out," "Book Clues," and "My Clues"; sorting mat divided into three columns; blank index cards

## Tell Me

Display the strategy chart and place a paper clip next to "I Can Figure It Out." Introduce the inferring strategy using the language on the strategy chart and bookmark.

*Authors don't always tell us why or how something happens in their story, but they always give us clues to help us to figure it out. So, just like a detective, we look for clues in the words and in the pictures. We also think about what we know that will help us figure it out.*

## Show Me

After introducing the book, read a short section of text. Recap what you have read and share a question you have that is not answered in the book. Demonstrate the use of clues to figure it out and pinch the corresponding statement on the bookmark, such as "I can use the clues in the words" or "I can use the clues in the pictures."

*When we read we ask ourselves, how does this all fit together to make sense?*
*I am thinking about what I know so far. I know that _____, but the author doesn't say how/why_____.*
*I wonder _____? How will I figure it out? I can figure it out using what I know and what is in the text.*
*I will search for clues in the words and pictures. Here it says that _____. I know something about _____ because we read another story where _____, so I am figuring out that this means _____.*

Write clues (book clues, my clues) and inferences (I figured out) on separate index cards if you are going to sort them by category in the activity below.

Repeat with a second and third example, using different sources for clues.

*I will look at the pictures and see if they help me. I can see _____ and this tells me that _____. If I put this together I can make a picture in my mind of what is happening. I see _____. I think _____. The author doesn't tell us much about _____. I am questioning how _____. I will read and use the clues to figure it out.*

Recap the think-aloud.

*I used the clues to figure out that _____.*

Ask students to give you feedback on what they observed and their own thinking about what happened in the story. Are there any clues that you missed? Which clues do they think were the most important? Which ones give a hint or tells us the big idea or theme or author's point of view?

*How did I figure that out? What clues did I use? Were these clues in the book or something I already knew?*

Record student input on index cards. Place the clues under the correct category heading as you identify what type of clue it is.

| I Figured Out | Book Clues: Words and Pictures | My Clues ✓ |
|---|---|---|
| This means... | I see... I read... | I know... |

**119**
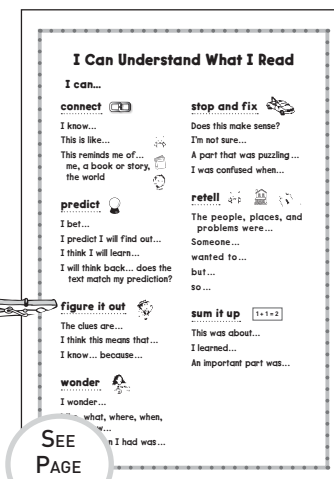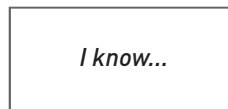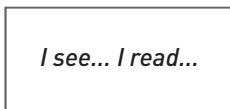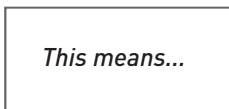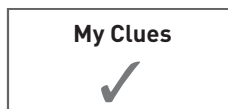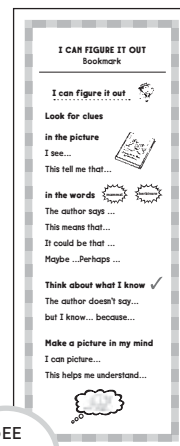
*Did I miss something? Which one do you think is going to be important for us to know to understand the story? What connections are you making to what has happened so far?*

### Guide Me

Provide a purpose as students read to the next stopping point in the text. Present questions or have students generate a detective question. Students are to generate a detective question that requires the group to use the clues to figure out the answer. You may have them mark the places where they found clues to a question with sticky notes.

*What question would you like to ask that is not answered in the book?*
*Think about the clues in the book and in your head that will help you figure out the answer.*
*Does this remind you of someone or something you know?*
*Make a picture in your mind of what it would look like.*

❍ Group Share

Begin by having students retell or summarize what they have just read. Invite students to share their questions. You may have them turn and quickly share one question with a partner before sharing with the group. Record their unanswered questions on the chart (see below) under "It Doesn't Tell Us."

Read each of the questions and ask students to think what might be a possible answer. Explain that there is no "right" answer. Write their inferences under "But We Figured It Out."

Ask students to locate the places in the text they marked with sticky notes and share the clues they found to answer the question. Probe for the reasoning behind student inferences and record these under "Because." If there is more than one answer under "We Figured Out," read through the reasons and come to a consensus on the most likely answer; and a star next to it. Prompt students for their inferences:

*What do we know so far? Are you picturing what has happened in the story? Can you see _____ ?*
*What does it look like? What did you wonder about when you were reading?*
*As a reader, what did you notice in the book [picture, words] that helped you to figure it out?*
*How does knowing [events and information in retelling] help you figure it out?*
*How are you connecting to this? Did _____ remind you of something or someone you know?*
*We learn about characters by what they say and do. Notice the expression on _____'s face.*
*What do you think _____ might be thinking?*
*How do you think the character felt when _____ ? Why? What were the clues?*
*On page ___ the author says _____. What does that tell you? What does the author mean? How do you know?*
*The author didn't tell us _____, but we figured out/think _____ because _____.*

Record questions, clues, and inferences cumulatively in a three-column chart.

**Comprehension in Action:** *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka (1993)

| It Doesn't Tell Us | But We Figured Out | Because |
|---|---|---|
| Why does the [second] boy talk so quietly? | He is afraid to play with the other boy. He is lonely. | He has his hands behind his back. He says "Who? Me? No fun. No friends." |
| What happens to the boys? What will they do next? | They will be good friends. The second boy won't be lonely anymore. | The boy is smiling. He says, "Yes!" in a big voice. They say "Yow!" And jump into the air and do a "high five." |

To focus on a single inference that is central to understanding, use the alternative format at right. Record the most common or "important" unanswered question that students share using the format at right. List the clues they located and then the inference they made based on these in a statement.

❍ Detective Game Activity (Optional)

Use the index cards labeled Book Clues and My Clues/I Know as category headings. On blank index cards record student inferences and the clue(s) they used. Read each inference aloud to the group and have students identify if the clues they used were based on information the author provided in the book or what they already knew, and place the card under the appropriate heading.

| **I Figured Out** | **Book Clues: Words and Pictures** | **My Clues** |
|---|---|---|



**Inferences based on clues:**

Our Question:
_____

Clues:

1. _____

2. _____

We think
_____

because
_____

## Coach Me

Ask students to read to the next stopping point and see if they can find any more clues to support an answer (inference) to a question on the chart. Alternatively, they can generate a new question and search for clues.

*Let's read to _____. Use what you know in the book and your connections to figure out the answer to a question you have about the story.*

Prompt for strategy use and probe the reasoning behind the inferences they make.

*What in the story makes you think that? How do you know? Why do think _____? Did you connect this to something that you know about _____?*

*How do you know _____? What are the clues?*

*What makes you think _____?*

❍ Monitor for Strategy Use
  ∗ Is the student able to make (and support) inferences?
  ∗ Do they notice the clues in the text?
  ∗ Do they integrate clues to make an inference?
  ∗ Are their inferences "reasonable"?
  ∗ Do they make connections to the characters, events, or information?
  ∗ Can they create a picture or movie in their mind?

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

Have students share their thinking with a partner. Invite partners to share an example from their discussion with the rest of the group. Add these to the chart.

*Use your bookmark to talk about how you figured out something in the story.*

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

*Sometimes we have to read like a detective and use the clues in our head to figure something out that we don't know.*

*We used the clues the author gave us in the book and put it together with what we know about _____ to figure out the answers to our questions.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

Extend the learning with the following responses:

*Fiction:* Students can make a character web listing traits of the protagonist. Support this by restating the actions and dialogue associated with the character and asking students to think of a word that would describe someone who does or says that.

*Nonfiction:* To respond to an informational text, have students describe how the information might be used by a scientist (or other related occupation) or why the author wrote about this topic.

*Visualization:* Students can draw a thinking bubble. Inside the bubble they can sketch the events or information as they "see" them.

### Practice at the Comprehension Center

The following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007) support inferring:

- I See, I Wonder
- Who or What Am I?
- What Kinds of Questions Do They Ask?
- Character Close Up
- Tic Tac Question #2 and #3
- Partner Quiz Cards

# Generating and Answering Questions

**Q**uestioning is where we often spend the most time in comprehension instruction, particularly on the questions that require higher-level thinking. When we see readers skim the surface of the text without generating questions, we know their understanding will be negatively impacted. However, the purpose of teaching questioning reaches far beyond an effort to engage the reader; student questions are the raw material we need to build upon in order for students to infer, clarify (self-monitor for meaning), and retell. When reading expository text, students can easily become overwhelmed with factual information. Questioning provides a way for them to self-check their understanding as they read and then determine what is important to remember.

## Teaching Tips
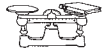
We incorporate questioning into the text activities before, during, and after reading so our readers will be able to apply higher-order processes when the text demands it. The first type of question we teach is the open-ended "I wonder" question, where no specific question words are required and where there is no right answer. This is a "safe" type of question for young readers who may have already developed an awareness of their own lack of success on assessment questions. Open-ended questions are appropriate throughout our comprehension lessons; however, for students to continue to develop as readers and to be able to understand and respond to assessment questions successfully, we introduce sentence starters that familiarize them with the language and thinking behind specific types of questions.

The I Can Wonder bookmarks on page 153 provide supportive picture cues and sentence starters for questions and personal responses to the reading. In the first lesson, the bookmark for literal level, or "*seek and find,*" questioning focuses on the story structure in fiction or the facts in informational text. Each student is accountable for supporting their answers with evidence in the text, to seek and find the facts or quote. The second bookmark, at the "*think and feel*" level, targets higher-level questions, with readers sharing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about what they have just read. This requires inferential and evaluative thinking.

Body or kinesthetic cues are also incorporated in the language of the lesson and bookmarks (see chart below) to represent the thinking processes (Willner, 2003). In both lessons, students retell, reflect upon, and then question the text. This provides a three-step scaffold for students who might not otherwise be successful in generating and answering questions.

As students progress from the literal to the inferential and evaluative tasks, you can copy the two bookmarks onto both sides of the cardstock so that students can then have the flexibility to select the response that best fits their thinking.

## Question Types

| Question Type | Character Cues | Body Part Cues | Key Words |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Literal* (reading the lines)<br>Questions that can be answered by identifying or touching information in the book | Reporter or game show host | Hand | Who, what, where, when, how |
| *Inferential*<br>Questions you can figure out by using the clues in the book and what you already know | Detective | Head | How do you know?<br>Why did ___?<br>Figure it out.<br>The author doesn't say, but I know because ___. |
| *Evaluative*<br>Questions that ask the reader to form an opinion or make a decision about the actions, ideas, or information in the text | Me | Heart | What do you think?<br>How do you feel about ___? What is your opinion of ___?<br>Should ___?<br>I believe ___.<br>I feel that ___. |

(Based on the work of Raphael et al., 2006; Boyles, 2004)

## Student Profiles

When a student struggles to generate or answer a text-based question, first we need to determine whether the issue is word recognition or lack of familiarity with the sentence/text structure, writing style, vocabulary, or concepts. All of these can interfere with processing the text sufficiently to come up with a question or to respond to one. Students who struggle with questioning an informational text may rely on background knowledge and ignore new information.

Some students demonstrate avoidance tactics and "shoot from the hip" with answers that require the least thought and time to provide. This may be because they associate questioning with testing and pass/fail answers. Open-ended questions that invite personal responses, such as observations (*I wonder why*) and opinions (*I think … What do you think*?) are an important place to begin, as these are not "teacher questions." My students enjoy asking *other* students in the group questions when this is presented in a role-play format: Each student in turn can be the quiz show host, passing the plastic microphone around the table.

From open-ended questions we progress to providing specific types of question starters that require literal, inferential, or evaluative responses (see bookmarks on page 153).

| Student Difficulty With Questioning | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **GENERATING QUESTIONS**<br><br>**Student**<br><br>Struggles to generate questions about the text | **Teacher**<br><br>● Incorporates student "I Wonder" questions within literature study, social studies, and science activities and records and displays student questions on a class bulletin board; encourages individual research for answers<br><br>● Invites open-ended questions based on personal connections before reading so that there is not an emphasis on one "right" type of question (and answer)<br><br>● Focuses students' attention on what they notice in the illustrations: *What do you wonder about what you see?*<br><br>● Provides picture cues and question starters (see bookmarks on page 153)<br><br>● Includes a game show format during which a toy microphone is passed around the table and each student role-plays being a game show host by asking the group a question<br><br>● Incorporates board games in which students use picture-cued story element cards as the basis for generating questions (see I Can Retell lesson cards, page 155) |
| Asks questions that are not logical or are unrelated to actual events or information; questions focus on details rather than main ideas or important information | ● Supports memory of important ideas and events by pausing after short sections of text for students to retell and question<br><br>● Provides multiple think-aloud demonstrations and encourages building upon the responses of others: *Piggybacking off* [student's response], *I wonder _____* |
| Difficulty generating inferential and evaluative questions | ● Incorporates kinesthetic questioning to make the concept concrete by using the "Body Parts" approach—hand, head, and heart (see chart on page 123) |
| **ANSWERING QUESTIONS**<br><br>**Student**<br><br>Does not volunteer answers to teacher questions | **Teacher**<br><br>Ensures responding to teacher questions is a safe activity:<br><br>● Allows at least an eight-second wait time before inviting a response and may cue by counting down with fingers one at a time<br><br>● When one student volunteers an answer, teacher asks a second student to locate/read the part that supports the first student's answer so that the first student is not put on the spot to read aloud in front of peers; this is especially important for disfluent readers and students with low self-esteem as a reader<br><br>● Includes partner questioning before sharing with the group<br><br>● Provides positive feedback to all responses<br><br>● Invites responses from all students without spotlighting individuals |
| Is unable to answer the question | ● Rephrases the question; allows wait time (see above)<br><br>● Retells the part of the text related to the question<br><br>● Prompts for connections to the information or event<br><br>● Changes the question into an answer statement to model an appropriate response for literal questions; thinks aloud for inferential and evaluative questions |

| Student Difficulty With Questioning | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| Retells accurately and responds to literal questions with success, but is unsuccessful with questions requiring higher-level thinking; provides text-based literal answers to inferential questions and may respond to probing by the teacher with comments such as *The book said that _____*, *That wasn't in the book;* or *It didn't tell us about that* | ● Models and provides supported practice answering questions that require integrating information and personal reflection<br>● Demonstrates the difference between literal, inferential, and evaluative questions with examples and picture or body part cues; reaffirms personal responses are appropriate with inferential and evaluative questions<br>● Focuses on making connections to the theme or topic in the prereading activities; points out how these are related to students' lives and validates their ideas<br>● Highlights the "markers" or key words in the questions on the group chart that indicate which type it is (for student- and teacher-generated questions)<br>● Supports students in discriminating between literal and inferential or evaluative questions with a sorting activity in which the group identifies the questions that require them to *seek and find* (literal) or *think and feel* (inferential and evaluative); records these and has students place the cards under the appropriate categories<br>● Provides time for journal writing and partner dialogue journals during which partners (or teacher and student) exchange journals to ask and respond to each other's "I Wonder" statements<br>● Incorporates regular sharing of book reviews in which students give their evaluation or opinion of the book in "sharing circle" format (see Scheduling in Chapter 3) |
| Responds to higher-level questions with vague and/or ambiguous answers full of general statements and weak descriptors; is unable to explain what they mean; says *I don't know* | ● Focuses on story or text structure and cause-and-effect relationships, such as chain (sequence) of events, two-column "This Happened/Because" formats, story maps, story structure sorts (see I Can Retell lesson, page 141), character analysis to identify the theme or main idea in fiction, and summarizing activities with nonfiction to determine important information (see I Can Sum It Up lesson, page 145)<br>● Includes compare-and-contrast activities using Venn diagrams or two-column charts to clarify students' thinking<br>● Highlights key words in the text such as *before, after*, and *because* that indicate a relationship between events and ideas (see inferring lesson, page 129)<br>● Integrates vocabulary development in the prereading activities so students are able to understand and use these words or concepts they represent to express their thinking (See Story Structure Sort in I Can Retell lesson, page 142) |
| Provides brief responses that lack sufficient detail to be "correct" answers; for example, when asked to describe how a character might be feeling at this moment in the story, responds *bad* and when asked to expand says *very bad* or *That's all I can think of* | ● [see vocabulary development above]<br>● Provides guided practice on cumulatively integrating multiple sources of information across the text by breaking text into short sections and analyzing the clues available to the reader so far. *What do we know so far? How does this help us figure out …?*<br>● Suggests students sketch a visual representation of their understanding in their response journal before reading, then add more details to represent new information, during and after reading<br>● Supports understanding through concept maps |
| Neglects the information in the text | ● Provides categorizing information activities such as sorting facts under subheadings or doing a story structure sort (see I Can Retell lesson)<br>● Incorporates visualization activities (see "I can make a picture in my mind" on the Stop and Fix Bookmark, page 154)<br>● Provides vocabulary from the text before reading so that students use the words to generate their prediction; after reading they compare their predictions to the actual events or information in the text<br>● Asks "How do you know?" and prompts students to locate and read the evidence in the text and/or give reasons for their thinking |
| May appear to be anxious during questioning activities and have a fear of being *wrong*, asking *Did I get it right*? | ● See under the first category for "Generating Questions" |

## Reading Materials to Support Questioning

To encourage student participation, we look for reading materials that are likely to evoke questions. For narrative, a clear story structure supports literal questioning, the "seek and find" strategy in the first lesson. We also integrate nonfiction content reading about our social studies and science topics, where questioning will support recall of important information. By pausing and inviting student questions, we give them a chance to note what is familiar and what is new and to ask "teacher questions" of the group.

Only certain books have the necessary content for generating inferential and evaluative questions in the second lesson, the "think and feel" question types. The types of reading materials suggested for making inferences with the I Can Figure It Out lesson on page 116 are those that also support both generating and answering inferential questions. For evaluative questions, select reading materials that have a theme students can relate to and express opinions about, such as friendship, loyalty, bullying, and overcoming challenges, where students are likely to evaluate the character's actions through the connections they make to them. Nonfiction text that describes larger issues in the world around them, particularly those written in a persuasive style, will engage the critical thinking skills that support evaluative questions. I often use nonfiction articles in children's magazines as a source for generating these types of questions, as they reflect the current "hot topics" of interest to our students. For example, magazines such as *National Geographic Explorer* (available in two reading levels on the same topic), *Time for Kids*, and *Scholastic News* are popular choices.

SEE PAGE 100

### LESSON: I CAN WONDER: GENERATING AND ANSWERING LITERAL QUESTIONS

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Wonder Bookmark (page 153) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Have on hand two to four sticky notes of two different colors for each student, or reusable page markers or flags (see Integrating Multiple Strategies—I Can Code My Thinking lesson page 149)
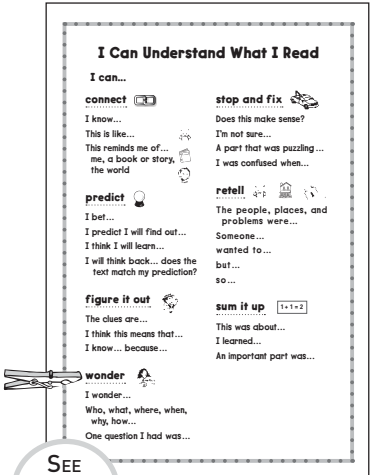
### Tell Me

Point to the icon for "I Can Wonder" on the I Can Understand What I Read Strategy Chart. You may place a paper clip or clothespin alongside the icon for the reporter as you introduce "seek and find" questions.

Readers ask questions about what they are reading. We read to find out the answers to our questions. Often we ask about something we don't know yet. Today we are going to learn about questions that you can seek and find in the book. You can touch the answer on the page with your hand. These are questions that tell us who this is about, what it is about, where and when something happened.

### Show Me

Pose focusing questions before reading. Point to the question words on the bookmark.

*What can you tell me about [topic or theme]?*

*Why do you think the author wrote this book? Why might we want to read this book?*

*What do you want to find out about?* [Record answers on chart paper.]

Demonstrate the seek-and-find strategy:

*Looking at the title and cover of the book, I wonder _____.*

Invite student questions before reading. List these on your whiteboard or on index cards with student initials beside each one (optional).

*What are you wondering? Let's read and find out if any of our questions will be answered.*

Model asking a main idea question or a question about a story element or important fact on the topic:

*I am going to read the first part of the book and see if I can find the answer to _____.*

*After reading the part about _____, I wonder, _____?*
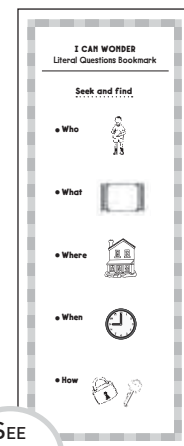
## Guide Me

Students read to the first stopping point.

*Read to page ___. Put a sticky note where you have an "I wonder" question.*

❍ Group Share

Ask students to retell what they have just read.

If it is fiction, ask questions about the characters, setting, problem, and sequence of events or plot.

If it is nonfiction, pose questions about important information that represents the main purpose of the text. Refer to information from any illustrations or graphics as well as the text to support integration of information. Record the facts or events under the first heading on the chart "We Read."

[Ask the first student] *What have we learned so far?* [Ask the second student] *Show me in the book where it says that. This part was about _____.*

Have students use the retelling to generate a question. Ask them to quickly "turn and share" a question they have about this part of the reading with a partner.

Students use the information in the first column together with the question starters on the bookmark to compose a question for the group, in a game show format. They may pass around a toy microphone or wear the mask of the questioner to "get into the role" of the game show host.

*Ask the rest of the group a quiz question that can be answered in the book. Use the question words on the bookmark to help you.*

Record these under "Seek and Find Questions" on the chart. Support with prompts and model as necessary.

**Prompts:**

*I have a* [where] *question: _____?*
*Who are _____? What does _____ mean? What did _____? How many _____?*
*What kind of _____? Where did _____? How many _____? What happened before/ after to _____? How do you _____? What examples can you find?*

***Note:*** "How" questions can be literal when they refer to how many or how much or how something occurs. Students do not have to use the bookmark starters if this constrains their questioning.

Read to the next stopping point and repeat the process, adding to the group chart.



I CAN WONDER
Literal Questions Bookmark

Seek and find

● Who

● What

● Where

● When

● How

**Comprehension in Action:** *Mountain Gorillas* by Julie Connal (1995)

| 📖 **We Read** | 👉 **Seek and Find Questions** |
|---|---|
| Zaire is in Africa. | Where is Zaire? |
| Gorillas build a nest from branches and foliage to sleep in at night. | How do mountain gorillas sleep at night? |
| Park rangers guard the gorillas in the parks. | Who protects the gorillas? |

### Coach Me

Students read the selected passage, as you monitor and provide feedback. Students generate a question(s) from the reading and mark the places where a question occurred to them and where the question is answered, using two colors of sticky notes or flags.

*As you are reading, think about the questions that come into your mind. Mark the places you have a question with the [yellow] sticky notes. Seek and find the answers to your question. Place a [green] sticky where you find the answer.*

Prompt students to use evidence from the text to support their answers:

*What did you wonder about _____ ?*

*Show me the part that supports your answer.*

○ **Monitor for Strategy Use**
   ∗ Are students able to generate questions that are related to the main idea or only asking detail questions? Are they logical questions?
   ∗ Do they locate evidence in the text and use this to answer the question?
   ∗ Can they integrate information in more than one place in the text?

○ **Partner Think-Pinch-Share**
   Each student presents their question to their partner. Partners need to both answer the question and prove it by locating the evidence that supports it in the book. If they are unable to find the evidence, then their partner supports them by pointing to this in their book (they have marked the answer in the book with a sticky note). Then students switch roles.

   *Read page(s) ___. Think of a question you have about what the author just shared.*
   *Use your bookmark to help you think of a question.*
   *Pinch the question word (so your partner knows the type of question it is).*
   *Ask your partner a question and to show you the evidence in the book that proves her answer.*

   Ask partners to share a question they had with the rest of the group. Add these to the chart and invite sharing of possible answers.

○ **Restate the Teaching Point**
   *Readers ask themselves questions as they read. We shared questions that could be answered in the book and this helped us to remember important information.*

## Reading-Writing Connection

Students record their opinions and other personal responses to the reading. Provide the prompts on the bookmark along with others that are appropriate to the text:

## Practice at the Comprehension Center

The following activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007) support:

- I Wonder
- Who or What Am I?
- I See, I Wonder
- Tic Tac Question #1, #2
- Picture Question Cards

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### *Lesson:* I Can Wonder: Inferential and Evaluative Questions

## Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Strategy Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Wonder Bookmark (page 153) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card page (page 98).
- Have large paper clip or clothespin on hand.
- Have two to four sticky notes or reusable sticky flags for each student.
- Optional: Create category cards labeled Head and Heart; provide blank index cards.

## Tell Me

Point to the icon for I Wonder on the I Can Understand What I Read Strategy Chart. Put a paper clip or clothespin next to the icon for the "What I think and feel" questions.

*Using your head and your heart is part of being a reader. Authors can write stories and information that make us laugh, cry, even feel angry. They know that if we think about it and not just read the words on the page we will understand their message even more. For example, when we read about how a character behaves in a story or something that happened, we usually have opinions about it. Remember, an opinion is how you feel about something; it does not have to be a fact.*

## Show Me

Engage students' thinking on the topic or theme:
*What do we already know about [topic or theme]?*
*Why do you think the author wrote this book? Why would we want to read this?*

Demonstrate the strategy by sharing your inferential and evaluative thinking:
*I think _____ because on page ___ it says that _____ and _____.*

## Guide Me

Students read to the first stopping point. Have them mark places in the text where something made them think more about it (connect, predict, question) or have an opinion. They can sketch a head or heart on their sticky note to indicate the type of response.
*Read to _____. What are you thinking and feeling as you read?*
*Place a sticky next to a part where you had a response with your head or heart.*
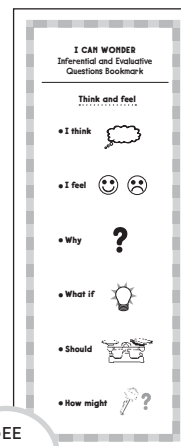
❍ **Group Share**

Ask students to retell what they have just read. Record on the chart under the heading "We Read." Students then ask the group questions that require them to share their opinions and feelings, using the bookmark as a support. List these under "Think and Feel." Have students turn to the part in the text that is being discussed.

Prompt students to include references to the text and their life (connections) in their responses.

> *Ask the group a "think and feel" question. Use your bookmark to help you.*
> *Let's hear a thought that you are having.*
> *How do you feel about _____? What do you think about _____? What is your opinion of _____?*
> *Why do you think they said/did that? Do you think _____ should _____? Why or why not?*
> *What in the book or your life makes you feel/think that way?*

**Comprehension in Action:** *Hit by a Blade* by Brian Beamer (2000)

| 📖 **We Read** | 🙂 ♥ **Think and Feel Questions** |
|---|---|
| Jessie and Juan went on motorboat trip with their granddad. The boat hit a manatee and the propeller hurt it. | *Why didn't they look where they were going?* I feel worried that the manatee won't be all right. I feel angry with the people. |
| They took the manatee to a place for sick sea animals. | *How will they take the manatee to the hospital?* I hope the manatee gets well again. |
| The vet told them that the manatee would get better. | *How could we stop this from happening to other manatees?* *Should people be allowed to use motorboats where manatees live?* *What if we could have some places for the manatees where people aren't allowed to have motorboats, just sailboats?* I think there should be speed limits for the boats so they can see the manatees better. |

Rephrase what students say. Probe for an explanation of their thinking:

> *What in the book and in your life makes you think/feel that? What does it remind you of?*

Invite students to piggyback off the responses of others to extend and clarify their thinking.

> *I hear _____ feels that _____. Let's piggyback off what _____ just said and add our own thoughts and feelings.*
> *Who would like to add to that?*

Read to the next stopping point and repeat the process, adding to the group chart.

❍ **Head and Heart Question Sort (optional)**

Record student questions on index cards. Shuffle and pass out to the group. Students take turns placing them under the appropriate categories and justifying why a particular question requires a particular type of answer.

| *How could we stop manatees being hurt by motor boats?* | *Should people be allowed to use motor boats where manatees live* |

## Coach Me

Students read the selected passage, as you monitor and provide feedback.

*What do you think and feel about what you just read?*
*Where did you place a sticky with a head or heart response?*
[Prompt students to explain and expand upon their responses.]
*How did you feel about the part where …?*
*Do you agree with what the author has to say about ..?*
*What would you do if …? If you were going to …? If you could …?*

❍ Monitor for Strategy Use

 ∗ Do they support their statements with examples from the text and their own life?
 ∗ Do they synthesize information to come up with their own ideas or do they simply retell?
 ∗ Are the statements related to the theme or purpose of the text?

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

 Students use their bookmarks to share a response.
 *Share a thought you had with your partner.*

❍ Group Share

 Ask partners to share a response they discussed with the rest of the group. Provide feedback and
 probe with ¨think and feel¨ questions that require them to extend beyond the information in the book.
 *Let's hear a thought that you shared.*
 *What would have happened if …? What if ….? What might…?*
 *Why would the author write this way about …? How could someone use this information?*
 *What would you tell a friend about this book?*

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

 *By using your head and your heart you were able to think deeper into the author's message and gain
 a greater understanding of what you read.*

## Reading-Writing Connection

In their reading response journals students can:
● record their responses in a two-column chart in their notebook: I Think/I Feel
● chart their responses and questions under a ¨body parts¨ three-column chart
● write their thoughts and opinions and then exchange journals with a partner
● write a book review that will be shared with a group of students
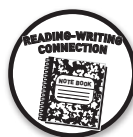
## Practice at the Comprehension Center

Center activities include those from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):

● What I Think   ● Talk to the Author   ● Critic's Cube
● Connection Stems   ● Read, Relate, Respond

# I Can Stop and Fix: Self-Monitoring and Clarifying Strategies

Clarifying is when we first identify and then resolve problems in comprehension by using specific strategies. Clarifying or fix-up strategies are important for every student, not just struggling readers. Understanding can break down for a number of reasons, including an unfamiliar writing style or a point that is not clearly made. We may also lose track of information and how it is related to what we are currently reading over a stretch of text, such as relationships between different characters, or cause-and-effect relationships. Clarifying strategies are different from questioning strategies (see I Wonder lessons) in that these are questions we ask ourselves as a reader to help our understanding of the text.

## Teaching Tips

Teachers model how to stop and ask themselves self-monitoring questions as they read, such as:

- *Does this make sense to me*? *How does this part fit with what I just read*?
- *Am I following what is happening*? *Can I make a picture in my mind of what I just read*?
- *Am I getting the main idea*?
- *Do I know what this word means*?
- *How can I fix this problem so I understand what I am reading*?

When we stop to question our own understanding during reading, we can then demonstrate how to apply several fix-up strategies including the following.

- **Reread the sentence and look for key ideas.** Model how much rereading is necessary—whether it's on the same page or earlier in the text. This requires us to scan the text for the needed information. Demonstrate the different ways to reread, always keeping a specific purpose in mind, and looking for something that will answer our question/solve our problem, such as searching subheadings, illustrations, and captions.

- **Reading on.** Show how to read the next sentence or two to see if new information is provided that solves the puzzle.

- **Creating a picture in our head.** When we read fiction, we see an ongoing movie in our mind, as the camera in our head captures/interprets each scene. For nonfiction, it is more like a slide show of facts, as if we were watching the news on TV. New information keeps coming as each new slide appears. If the picture screen in our mind goes blank during reading, we stop to think about the character or topic and what the author's purpose was in writing.

- **Thinking about what we know:** our connections with this experience or topic; what this story or topic is about; the big picture and how what we've just read relates to this.

- **Breaking the word apart, looking for parts we know and saying each part.** For students who have had instruction in roots and affixes, this would include meaningful parts of the word (morphemes such as *sand* in *sandstone*). Lastly we coach students to try another word that would make sense.

- **Older students:** Looking for commas in the sentence since an explanation is often between commas; scanning the sentence or next sentence for words that tell us there is an example, e.g., *such as, for example*.

The stoplight visual is a color-coded self-monitoring tool. Students can use the color sequence of the stoplight as a barometer of their understanding, touching the color as they read that best represents their level of understanding for this part of the reading. For example, they touch green when they understand, yellow when it's getting confusing and they need to slow down to process the text more carefully and use all available clues, and red when they need to stop and use a fix-up tool. Another option is to provide students with a color wheel such as those found at paint stores, where colors are displayed in a gradient from green to red (McGregor, 2007).

## Student Profiles

Some students read at a brisk pace but do not notice or pay any attention to something they don't understand. A fast pace of reading without adjusting reading speed at any point is not conducive to self-monitoring. I use the analogy of driving a car to explain why they need to monitor their reading or keep their "navigation screen turned on" (Marcell, 2007). They need to slow down (I use a colored flag made out of colored paper) for the curves in the road—such as new information, text that is dense in information, complex sentence structures, and figurative language—which is where we often have to stop and repair our understanding, just like racing car drivers pull in for a pit stop.

To ensure all students participate in the self-monitoring activities and internalize this strategy, we need to be very aware of the prompting language we use—it needs to keep students' self-esteem intact and encourage sharing of strategy use. Students who lack confidence as a reader are especially sensitive to identifying something they do not understand and may remain passive rather than share a part that was puzzling to them or seek help during reading. I never say: "Is there something you didn't know?" They do not want to be seen by their peers as not knowing something. Instead I say something like: "Is there something you found puzzling or confusing or would like to ask the author about?" Or the driving analogy: "Did your navigation screen go blank at some point and you had to turn it on again?" or "Did you need to have a pit stop and fix something along the way?"

## Reading Materials to Support Self-Monitoring and Clarifying

Reading materials that are useful for practicing this strategy include those that contain a few words that students are unlikely to be familiar with and that represent useful vocabulary (i.e., not technical terms they are unlikely to encounter again). Many expository texts such as the Magic School Bus series (Joanna Cole) provide practice using text features such as sidebars and diagrams to clarify important information.



When new vocabulary poses a roadblock to understanding, students record the word on a card to share and discuss with the group.

Even the simplest fiction or nonfiction emergent text can provide practice in using context clues to gain meaning. Narrative texts with twists in the plot develop self-monitoring. For young readers, I use many of the books by Joy Cowley, which typically have a twist at the end. Literary devices such as flashbacks are another source for clarifying practice; the author provides plenty of clues—phrases such as "I remembered when" or "only yesterday"—found several times within one part of the text.

| Student Difficulty With Self-Monitoring and Clarifying Strategies | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Does not notice when something does not make sense | **Teacher**<br><br>● Provides a self-monitoring tool with visual cues, such as the bookmark and traffic light, which are a concrete reminder of clarifying strategies available to them; the traffic light visual can also be used as a color-coded indicator of their understanding that they touch as they read in order to self-monitor understanding (see Teaching Tips on previous page)<br>● Models self-questioning, asking why and how questions throughout the reading<br>● Poses questions for each short section of the text |
| Keeps on reading even when they recognize they do not understand; does not pause to self-monitor for meaning | ● Provides short, easy text read with frequent stopping points; has student stop and mark with a sticky note, retell with partner, and check for understanding<br>● Models fix-up strategies (see following lesson)<br>● Suggests visualization activities (see Inferring)<br>● Prompts to adjust reading speed, going slower in parts with new information, important events and marks places in the text with a sticky note to show they need to slow down and watch for/integrate new information (see Monitoring and Responding to Student Difficulty section in I Can Retell lesson, page 139) |
| Is unfamiliar with concept and lacks background knowledge | ● Refers to supporting text features such as photos and diagrams. Explains the author's purpose for including them and how it fits with the information in the text |
| Is unable to see how information is related | ● Uses graphic organizers, such as concept webs, cause-and-effect two-column charts |
| Loses track of pronouns; doesn't know who or what is being talked about | ● Asks student to highlight pronouns in text (with highlighter tape), read sentences before to find point of reference and highlight it; write noun on sticky note and use this to replace the pronoun (place it in the text - they can move this sticky as they read where necessary)<br>● Lists characters, facts, and corresponding pronouns in a two-column chart |
| Is able to pronounce the word and understands one meaning for the word, but it does not fit the context | ● Incorporates a multiple-meaning web activity in which students are asked where they have seen and heard this word before. Responses are used to construct a mind map, where the word is written in the center and then student examples are recorded in a web around it<br>● Presents word in context of a sentence where it represents a different meaning |

### *Lesson:* I Can Stop and Fix

#### Preparation

● Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Strategy Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
● Copy the reproducible Stop and Fix Bookmark (page 154) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
● Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
● Have two to four sticky notes or reusable sticky flags or highlighter tape for each student.
● See Reading Materials to Support Self-Monitoring and Clarifying page 133.

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for I Can Stop and Fix on the Comprehension Strategy Chart.

*All readers have times when something they are reading does not make sense to them. When I am reading, I often come to a word I have never seen before—and I'm not always sure what it means. Other times I am confused about what the author is talking about; it is not clear to me. I stop reading and use one of my fix-up tools so I can understand what I am reading. Have you ever talked to yourself when you are doing something, talking through each step? Today we will talk our way through using three fix-up tools.*
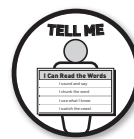
### Show Me

Use the bookmark traffic light visual as a reference when you demonstrate the clarifying strategies.

*This part I just read on page _ doesn't make sense to me/is not clear to me. I don't understand ___. Which fix-up strategy will help me?*

*First I will reread.* [Point to picture cue for "reread" on the bookmark.] *No, that still doesn't make sense. I will try another fix-up tool, read on to the next sentence or two.* [Point to the picture cue for "read on."] *Oh, now I get it. The next sentence explains ___.*

*But I don't know what this word means. This is a tricky word because ___. Let's see if one of my fix-up tools will solve the problem.* [Point to the picture cue for "use parts of words I know."] *I will break the word apart and look for parts I know.*

### Guide Me

Read to the first stopping point.

Provide sticky notes or red/pink highlighter tape for students to mark the text where there is a word, fact, or idea they find puzzling or confusing.

*Mark the places where something doesn't make sense or is confusing. Think about the strategies you can use on your bookmark to stop and fix it. Remember, as you read, keep a picture in your head. If your navigation screen goes blank, use a fix-up strategy.*

❍ Group Share

Have students briefly turn and share these puzzling parts with a partner. Then, each pair shares one with the group. Record these on a chart like the one below.

*Were there any words/idea/facts you found puzzling or confusing? That you had questions about? Did your navigation screen go blank at one part of the reading?*

Ask students to share with the group how they fixed the problems and record these solutions in the second column.

*What do you think the author meant when he said ___? Which fix-up strategy did you use? How did you use it? Were there any clues that helped you?*
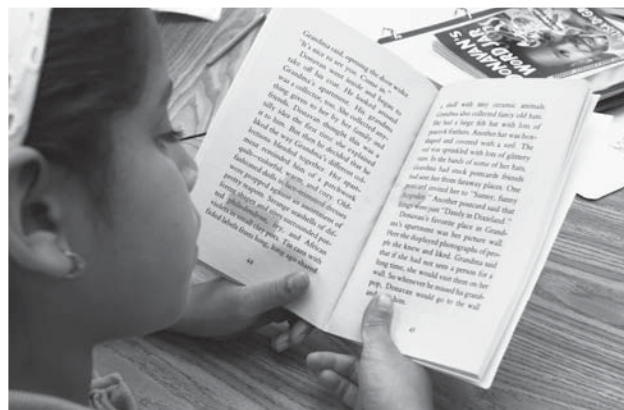
Students self-monitor their understanding by highlighting puzzling words, ideas or facts in the text during reading. The group will practice applying fix-up (clarifying) strategies to solve these roadblocks to comprehension, and repair their understanding.

**Comprehension in Action:** *Dogs* by Gail Gibbons, 1997

| We Stopped | And Fixed |
|---|---|
| The first <u>ancestors</u> of wolves and dogs … | Used <u>parts we know</u>: an_ est__or<br>Put the parts together to say the word |
| Four of their teeth are called <u>canine</u> teeth, or fangs. | <u>Looked at picture</u> with caption "canine teeth, or fangs" |
| Inside the nose are about 400 million cells that help identify <u>odors</u>. | <u>Reread</u>: "Smell is a dog's sharpest sense" |
| It is learning to be a <u>social</u> animal. | <u>Reread</u>: "A puppy will become a good pet if it is around people" |

### Coach Me

Students read the next part as you monitor, prompt, and provide feedback.

❍ Monitor for Strategy Use
  * *Show me a spot in the reading that was puzzling or confusing to you. Were there any parts that were messy or seemed to be mixed up?*
  * *Which fix-up tool did you use? Did it work? What else could you try? What do you know about* [the story or topic] *that could help you?*
  * *What questions did you ask* [the author] *as you were reading?*

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share
   *Share with your partner how you stopped and fixed something that did not make sense.*
   Ask partners to share one of the responses they discussed with the group and add each to the chart.

❍ Restate the Teaching Point
   *We noticed that there were some tricky parts in the reading today that were not clear to us/ where we lost understanding. We stopped and used three fix-up tools so we could understand what we read.*
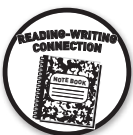
### Reading-Writing Connection

Students:
- Draw and describe a picture they had in their mind as they read
- Record the questions they would like to ask the author
- Describe how they used a fix-up tool to clarify a part that was puzzling

### Practice at the Comprehension Center

- In the Driver's Seat activity from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007)

- Students read independent level text and use the bookmark and a corresponding checklist to mark the tools they used to stop and fix something confusing in the text

# Retelling and Summarizing

Retelling of a narrative text requires students to recall important events in sequence and notice causal relationships between characters and events. A summary of a narrative demands the reader synthesize the events, identify the theme, and state this in her own words, rather than regurgitating the text verbatim. An expository retelling requires students to accurately recall facts, while a summary also requires that they determine which information is important to remember and then paraphrase this to make a "main idea" statement. Main ideas may be stated in the topic sentence, or students may need to infer. Summarizing requires an understanding of what you have read; it is not just rote recall.

## Teaching Tips

The first lesson focuses on retelling. When students are able to retell, they are then able to progress to the next lesson, which scaffolds the summarizing strategy. The lesson on retelling integrates story structure, predicting, and examining the meaning of story vocabulary. Students are asked to predict which vocabulary word belongs with each story element or which words they think the author will use to tell them about the people, problem, and places in the story. Students will need to check that their predictions are justified, or revise them by moving the Retelling Cards (page 156) used as props in this lesson (Richek, 2001). When the vocabulary is linked to the story elements, students have the building blocks for a retelling.

You may use the language in the lesson of People, Places, and Problems that is on the bookmark (page 155), the terms on the Retelling Cards (problem, events, solution, ending) or the question cards from the I Can Wonder: Literal Questions lesson (who, what, where, etc.), depending on what is developmentally appropriate for your students. To explain the concept of retelling, I use an example of a classroom scenario in which a student was absent and we need to fill him in with all the details of what happened on the day he was out. Some teachers use the cell phone conversation analogy, in which the speaker is describing an event to someone who is not there.

In retelling, we model and guide students to successfully do the following (in order of complexity):

**1.** Identify the beginning, middle, and end, e.g., What happened in the beginning/first part?

**2.** Describe the character and setting, e.g., Who is the main character? Where did the story take place?

**3.** Identify the problem and resolution.

**4.** Retell events and facts, e.g., What happened in the story?

**5.** Make inferences to link events and information, e.g., How do you know?

**6.** Identify what caused the actions or events and the effects that resulted, e.g., Why did _____?

**7.** Evaluate the actions of the characters in the story, e.g., Was this good or bad? Why?

In the second lesson on summarizing, we help students determine important information from the list of facts they recall from the reading and then use these facts to compose a summary statement. We support students to provide a summary that:

- Is accurate

"Teachers and students often confuse retelling with summaries. Retellings are oral or written postreading recalls during which children relate what they remember from reading or listening to a particular text. Conversely, a summary represents a short, to-the-point distillation of the main ideas in the text. When students retell, they attempt to recall as much of the information in the text as possible, not just the main points. Retellings are an important precursor to helping students develop summarization skills, both oral and written. Students who are unable to retell will find it difficult, if not impossible, to summarize effectively."

(Moss, p. 711, 2004)

- Includes important information
- Contains the main idea (in 10 words or less, one word on each finger as they summarize)
- Is in the student's own words

I explain (and demonstrate) the principle of summarizing with the analogy of a funnel, where we take a lot of information and narrow it down to a short summary. I may also use a strainer (such as the kind for draining salads and pasta) to show that when we remove the extra water we are left with the key ingredient. In the same way, when our brains remove all the unimportant details we are left with the "big idea." A further, less messy analogy, is one involving packing for a holiday and only being able to take one suitcase, thus needing to decide what is going to be most important to take and why. A student backpack or your purse could be used to illustrate in the same way: What do we really have to have with us each day, what is most important? (McGregor, 2007). Together we brainstorm a list of possibilities and then narrow them down in the prioritizing process described in the lesson I Can Sum It Up.

## Student Profiles

Here we may find our "minimalists," who demonstrate a "shorter is better" approach to oral retellings. That might be acceptable in summarizing—if in fact they do determine what is important—but these students will not meet the requirements of a complete retelling that assessments typically require. We also find here students who are "lost in plot" and unable to provide a logical and sequential retelling.



A story map outline provides a supportive structure for students, allowing them to expand upon each of the key elements

Often students view stories as a series of random events, and this perpetuates the problem of disjointed retellings. In a narrative, the character and their motives drive the plot: How they respond to other characters and situations as they strive to achieve their goal or overcome a challenge forms a chain of events or roadmap for a retell. When students are confused, I bring them back to the characters—their goals, what they say and do as a consequence, how one thing leads to another or the causal relationships discussed in the second lesson on making inferences on page 129. I often use a story analysis chart (see Reading-Writing Connection in the I Can Retell lesson) to present this concept visually to students.

Visual aids, such as the Retelling Cards on page 156 will be an important scaffold to understanding the text structure that determines the retell.

## Reading Materials to Support Retelling and Summarizing

Supportive reading materials for fiction include stories with a familiar structure, such as the following:

- Circular stories, like the If You Give … series by Laura Joffe Numeroff (1991)
- Linear stories, such as *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle, that have a time sequence
- Cumulative text that repeats the events in sequence several times throughout the reading

| Student Difficulty With Retelling and Summarizing | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Is unable to retell | **Teacher**<br><br>● Connects theme or topic with child's prior knowledge and personal experience<br><br>● Uses concrete analogies, such as a cell phone conversation or dialogue from a familiar TV show (see Teaching Tips, page 137)<br><br>● May provide a prop such as a cell phone for students to use as they role-play<br><br>● Implements sharing circles during which students share personal news, book reviews, and their work to provide oral practice retelling events and information (see Scheduling in Chapter 3)<br><br>● Provides tactile learning aids, such as the Retelling Cards on page 156 made of poster board; students touch each card as they orally retell the story<br><br>● Integrates retelling with writing instruction in which students write a play script for the characters in the story (as with Readers Theater)<br><br>● Invites student questions about the theme or topic<br><br>● Models "look backs" by rereading and focusing student attention on the section they are unable to retell<br><br>● Provides key vocabulary (see activity in the I Can Retell lesson)<br><br>● Introduces the vocabulary cumulatively—before each part of the reading; students use the vocabulary in their retelling of each section and in the final retell<br><br>● Focuses on developing understanding of the concept of "event" as something that happens in a typical day at school, or in a TV show (Caldwell & Leslie, 2005)<br><br>● Explains the parts of a story—or the text structure (character, setting, goal, problem, events, solution/resolution) —using a highly structured text and picture cues (see Retelling Cards page 156)<br><br>● Uses examples from videos of classic children's novels to illustrate the importance of setting, actions, and dialogue of the characters<br><br>● Includes story mapping activities or graphic organizers for expository text for the students to represent the information with a visual; students can use this as a springboard for oral retells when they require additional "think time" |
| Is unable to summarize | ● Relates the principle of summarizing to personal experience by asking: *What happened to you today that was important? What do you bring to school each day that is important to remember?*<br><br>● Uses concrete analogies, such as a funnel, strainer, or suitcase to demonstrate the process of reducing a list of events or facts to only the most important (see Teaching Tips, page 137)<br><br>● Supports the student by prompting with a short section of text to identify the subject and what it is about: *What or who is this about? Why? Where? When? How? (is something done or looks)*<br><br>(See also "struggles to integrate new information" (on the next page) |
| Echoes the child next to him/her when asked to retell | ● Uses the round-the-table retelling (see Reading-Writing Connection), distributing picture cues for the story elements that each student is responsible for recording on their whiteboard or marking the text information on one of the story elements (in addition to I Connect and I Wonder responses); students then cumulatively retell—repeating what the students have shared before them and then adding on their information from the notes they made or marked in the text |

| Student Difficulty With Retelling and Summarizing | Teaching Response/Next Steps |
|---|---|
| **Student**<br><br>Provides an incomplete two- or three-word retelling | **Teacher**<br><br>● Relates retelling to having a cell phone conversation where you want the other person to know all the details of what just happened<br><br>● Focuses student attention on the dialogue between characters as an aid to recalling events<br><br>● Refers to graphic features in nonfiction text, illustrations in fiction, and demonstrates how these add additional information to the running text<br><br>● Cues retelling of each story element with a picture-cued five-finger retelling glove (attach picture cards with Velcro to fingers of a gardening glove); cues retelling of nonfiction using topic, three details, and "big idea" as the five fingers; for nonfiction, students pinch their thumb and baby finger together as they sum up the topic and concluding sentence, the other three fingers represent three facts with details<br><br>● Provides the icons and/or question words (see Retelling Cards, 156)<br><br>● Displays picture cards representing each story element vertically on the table in front of the student (number them in order of the retelling sequence), and prompts them to slide these across the table or magnetic board one by one as they retell the information related to each icon (Caldwell & Leslie, 2005)<br><br>● Incorporates graphic organizers (see "Is unable to retell," above)<br><br>● Models embellished retellings by including personal connections, evaluating character actions, expressing opinions (connecting, evaluative questioning, inferences) |
| Struggles to integrate new information into their retelling or summary, relying on prior knowledge only | ● Prompts to adjust reading speed, going slower in parts with new information, important events, and includes frequent stopping points for student to retell and check their understanding of the part of the reading; may place color-coded sticky notes in the text to show parts where they need to slow down (yellow or orange)<br><br>● Has student record information on two colors of paper strips, what they know on green, new information on yellow or orange<br><br>● Asks student to stop and jot or sketch each short section, cumulatively adding details onto the same sketch as they read the next section or adding more details to their writing<br><br>● Includes characterization activities that focus on why and how the character acted in a certain way, demonstrating how characters drive the plot and how their responses to others and to situations cause the next event<br><br>● Prepares concept sorts to support summaries in which students list the facts after reading and then identify possible categories; alternatively, provides the words before reading for students to sort under subheadings in the text based on their predictions, then checking the sort during and after reading and asking, *Do they still belong in these categories?* (See I Can Retell lesson) |
| Does not include key elements of the story or key information | ● Supports students in a story element match-up activity where they sort character names, events, etc., under cards depicting each of the elements (see I Can Retell lesson)<br><br>● Highlights words and phrases in the text that indicate when new facts or details are being introduced (another, for example), so that students can identify new and supporting information; displays these on cards or a chart for student self-monitoring |
| Responds with a retelling that is not in logical sequence | ● Writes the events on a chart (may be student-dictated) and cuts apart or prints on index cards, with the student sequencing these to retell; teacher provides the book as a model for student self-checking, gradually removing this scaffold in following sessions<br><br>● Has student complete a four-frame comic strip version of a familiar story in a shared writing format ("freeze frames" in a movie), listing events on sticky notes or sentence strips and placing them in the order they occurred, using the text as a reference<br><br>● Has student create a storyboard using a sheet of paper divided into 4–12 frames, depending on the length of the text and student need, sketching the events in sequence, completing the beginning and ending first to ensure a logical and linear sequence (for shorter text, each frame may represent a page they read); this same format can be used as a draft for writing their own innovation to the story in a Reading-Writing Connection activity<br><br>● Highlights transitional phrases, such as *first, then, after that, next, finally* that indicate to the reader that another event or new information is coming; has student use these in oral and written retellings (see Reading-Writing Connection in the lesson) |

- Character/problem/solution narrative structure of so many familiar fairy and folk tales, like the "Three Billy Goats Gruff," and series that center on a character, such as the books about Arthur written by Marc Brown (Scholastic). These have a clear sequence of events with cause-and-effect relationships and support plot analysis as they emphasize the main character and the steps they take to solve a problem, and how they grow and change as a result. These can usually be easily divided into beginning, middle, and end.

Nonfiction retelling and summaries are supported by text with features that provide signposts to new information such as:
- Table of contents
- Subheadings
- Key words in bold
- Diagrams and photos with captions and labels
- Signal words that indicate the text structure: *because of*, *so that* in cause-and-effect text structure; *compared to*, *different from* in compare-and-contrast text structure; and words such as *first, then, finally*, which tell us that section of the text or entire text is a sequence structure

### LESSON: I CAN RETELL

### Preparation
- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Retell Bookmark (page 155) onto cardstock. Make one for every student. Option for nonfiction: Copy the I Can Wonder bookmark (page 153).
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
- For fiction, print words from the text that represent the main character, setting, problem, and solution on index cards. Prepare category headings for these (see illustration in the lesson). For nonfiction, print the headings or subheadings in the text on cards, or entries from the table of contents and words from the text related to them.
- Optional: Copy Retelling Cards, page 156, onto cardstock and cut apart.

### Tell Me

Point to the icon for I Can Retell on the Comprehension Strategy Chart. If you are using the Retelling Cards, substitute the language on the cards in the teacher dialogue below.
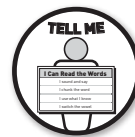
  ❍ Fiction Retell

   *When we are telling a friend about something that happened to us, we tell them what happened and how it happened—enough detail to give them a picture in their minds, so they can understand what happened. We tell them who was there: the people, where it happened, and what happened. Sometimes there might have been a problem, like the dog running away, that we had to solve. Before we stop talking, we always tell them how it all ended.*

   *As a reader, it also helps you understand a story when you think about all the people (characters), places (settings), and problems.* [Point to the icons on the bookmark.]

  ❍ Nonfiction Retell

   *If you are reading a book with lots of facts, then retelling will help you to remember them. We want to know what the book is about, where and when it happened, and why or how* (4 W's and an H).

### Show Me

○ **Before Reading**

Introduce the title or topic of the text. Invite connections and questions in a brief discussion. This may be a partner "turn and talk" activity only.

○ **Story Structure Sort**

Explain the category headings and introduce the vocabulary words or phrases you have printed on cards one by one (see Preparation). Briefly discuss the meaning of each word, where necessary.

*Authors choose certain words to tell us about the people, places, and problems in their story. In our story today, we will find these words* [Show and read the word cards.]

*I am going to read the first part of the story and see if I can find how the author used these words. I will ask myself if they tell me about the people (or animals), the place where the story happens, or whether they describe a problem that one of the people has.*

Read a short section of the text and identify the category on the Retelling Cards for two to three words, leaving some for students to sort. Model the reasoning behind identifying the category:

*Tiger belongs under People/Who, because we know the story is about "my sloppy tiger," and we have read other stories about Sloppy Tiger.*

*The word* room *belongs under Places/Where because it tells us where the action happened.*

Students read the vocabulary words in context to determine if the author used them to tell about the people, places or problems in the story. Next they will sort the word cards into the corresponding categories using the Retelling Cards as category headings (p. 156)

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**Comprehension in Action:** Before Reading: *My Sloppy Tiger* by Joy Cowley (1987)

| People | Places | Problems | ? |
|--------|--------|----------|---|
| Sloppy Tiger | room | spills | claws |
| excited | town | | shower |
| fur | | | |

---

### Guide Me

Challenge students to help you identify where the rest of the words should be placed, which category they belong in. You may move the card along under the categories, pause under each one and ask students to indicate whether you should place it here with a show of thumbs (up or down). When the word could belong in more than one category or when there is not consensus among the group, place the word under the question mark header.

*Shower could be just a place or it could be a problem if S.T. gets into trouble with it. The word* claws *could be telling us about a part of S.T.'s body or it could be a problem. We will read on to find out.*

Ask students to read the next section of the text and be watching for the vocabulary words from the sort and check that they really tell us about the same story element.

> *Let's read to check our story sort. Did the author use this word to tell us about people, places, or problems?*

❍ Group Share

Pause and have students retell what they have read with a partner in a quick one-minute retell. Invite them to share this with the group. Model and support student retelling as necessary.

> *What did we find out first/What happened in the beginning? What happened after that?*
>
> *Let's check our story sort. What words have we read so far in the story? Did ___ tell us about ___? Show me that part. How does the author use that word?*
>
> *We still haven't read the word __. Keep reading and see if they really do tell us about people, places, or problems.*

## Coach Me

Students read on to the end of the story. Prompt and listen to individuals retell what they have read.

> *Tell me about _____.*
>
> *In the story, why did _____ happen?*
>
> *Can you tell me more about that?*
>
> *Tell about this book as if you were telling a kindergarten student.*

Review the story vocabulary sort with the group. Reread the words under each category and ask students to indicate whether they still match. If not, why?

> *Now we have read the story, we need to check our sort and see if it still matches the story.*
>
> *We need to revise our predictions for words that tell about the problem because [when we read this page], we found out _____.*

***Example:*** *Sloppy Tiger made a mess in the shower, so the word shower was part of the problem. He ripped up the T-shirt with his claws. The word* claws *was not just telling about parts of the body of the tiger; it was part of the problem.*

❍ Step 2: After Reading

| **People** | **Places** | **Problems** | **?** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sloppy Tiger | room | spills | claws |
| fur | town | shower | shower |
| claws | | | |
| excited | | | |

❍ Partner Think-Pinch-Share

*Tell your partner what you remember about the story. Use your bookmark to help you tell about each part.*
*Who was the most important character and why were they important?*
*How do they solve their problem in the story?*
*Retell what happened. Use the words in our sort to help you.*

❍ Group Share

Invite retellings from the partners within the group.

*What can the next partners add on to what we just heard? What else do we remember?*
*Let's use the words in our sort to retell all the things that happened in the story. What happened in the beginning? In the middle? At the end?*
*What else can you remember?*
*What do you think the girl would tell a friend about what happened that day?*

Optional: Write on a whiteboard as a shared writing activity.
*What might the girls have written in their diary after this happened?*

❍ Restate the Teaching Point

*When we retell what we read, it helps us understand more about the people, places, and problems in the story.*

## Reading–Writing Connection

To support students in processing all the information in the text, have them complete one of the writing in response to reading activities:

❍ Round the Table Retell (During Reading)

At the Coach Me step in the lesson, distribute a whiteboard and a different story retelling card (page 156) to each student. Have students place their card at the top of their whiteboards. Students stop and jot the information for their Retelling Card on their whiteboard during the reading of the next section/text (e.g., one student is responsible for recording the main characters, another the setting(s) and so on). After reading, go around the table and have each student read what they have on their whiteboard; this is recorded in a shared writing format for a complete written retelling.

❍ After Reading

Students may:
∗ Write dialogue that could have taken place in the story (such as a cell phone conversation)
∗ Write a news report on the information
∗ Sketch the main event

## Practice at the Comprehension Center

These activities are from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007):
● Retelling Flap Book
● Retelling Cube for Stories
● Tic Tac Tell for Facts
● Retelling Cube for Facts
● Tic Tac Tell for Stories
● Stop, Draw, and Write

### LESSON: I CAN SUM IT UP

#### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- For fictional text: Copy the reproducible I Can Sum It Up Bookmark (page 155) onto cardstock. For nonfiction, copy the Summary Cards and I Can Sum It Up bookmark for each student.
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
- Choose a short text (passage or article).
- Gather three to four sticky notes for each student.
- Chart paper.
- Optional: Provide three star-shaped sticky notes.

#### Tell Me

Point to the icon for I Can Sum It Up on the Comprehension Strategy Chart.

> *When we read a book that has a lot of information, we can't remember everything the author said. We can only remember what we absolutely have to know. Just like packing a suitcase for a holiday, we can only take what we really need* [see Teaching Tips]. *So we have to decide what is most important—and we use our own words to sum it up in one or two sentences.*

#### Show Me

Read a short passage or article. Model the process of summarizing, using the bookmark as a guide.

> *I know _____.*
> *I learned _____.*
> *An important word was _____.*
> *Three important facts were _____.*
> *This was about _____.*

Introduce the new text. Invite student predictions about the content to provide a purpose for reading.

> *What do you predict you will learn in a book about kangaroos?*
> *What information do authors typically share with us in a nonfiction book about an animal?*

#### Guide Me

Students are to read the text and mark the places where they find important information. Provide sticky notes for each student. Remind them they only have so many sticky notes, and there are more facts than that in the book. They will need to decide which ones are important. Students can change their mind and move a sticky if they come to a fact they think is more important.

> *Find [1–3] important facts the author wants us to remember. Use your bookmark to remind you to look for important words and facts. Put your sticky note on the edge of the page next to it.*
>
> *Think of your purpose for reading this book. What are you trying to find out?*

Have more advanced readers/writers write a fact on the sticky note at each stopping point in the reading.

❍ Partner Share

> *Read your facts to your partner. Are they the same or different from yours?*
> *Can they explain to you why they chose those facts?*

❍ Group Share

Have students tell as many facts as they can remember and record on a chart like the one on the following page.

**Comprehension in Action:** *Kangaroos* by Carolyn MacLulich (1996)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ *mammals* | *warm-blooded* | *joeys are baby kangaroos* |
| *tails help them balance* | *short legs for scratching* | *there are lots of different types of kangaroos* ☐ |
| *bettongs, potoroos, wallabies, and wallaroos are kangaroos* | *the largest are red kangaroos* | *all kangaroos eat plants, like grass, leaves, and bark* |
| ☐ *kangaroos live only in Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia* | | |

**Interesting**

*Tails help them balance*

**Important**

*Kangaroos are mammals*

Review the list of facts, reading them one by one. Each time, ask students if this is a very important fact.

They can choose one to three depending on how many facts you have listed.

Allow flexibility, as students may change their minds as you read further on the list; this supports the prioritizing process involved in determining importance.

Place sticky notes alongside these important facts.

> *Remember, you only have three sticky notes, so we have to decide what the author really wants us to remember about kangaroos.*
>
> *Were there any facts that the author repeated or gave us more information (details) about?*
>
> *Which are our all-star facts (the most important)?*

You may need to talk briefly about what is interesting as students may be sidetracked by startling facts or personal interests. We code those facts that are merely interesting with and a little *i* for interesting, and those that are more important with a big *I*. You can also sort the facts on cards in two columns under these headings to make this process more concrete and support the discussion that is necessary so students can talk, think, and reason through the prioritization process.

### Coach Me

Support students during reading to mark important facts or events. Ask them to explain their rationale for the decision they made.

> *Look for facts that are repeated in more than one place; they are usually important*
> *What was this part about?*
> *Why was this an important part?*

❍ **Partner Think-Pinch-Share**

Ask students to use these facts to sum it up for their partners, using the bookmark phrasing "this was about _____" or "I learned _____."

Listen in to the partner discussion, and prompt, support, and provide feedback.

> *If you were telling someone about kangaroos and you had to say it in two sentences, what would you say? Which facts would you use?*
>
> *If you had only one minute to tell a friend (or younger sibling) about this, what would you tell them that would sum it up?*

*What words from the chart would help you to sum it up?*

❍ **Group Share**

Have partners share their summaries. Optional: You may have them compose and write a cooperative summary, each student using a strip of paper, so it has to be short.

In a shared writing format, compose one or two sentences that sum it up:

*This was about _____.*

*We learned _____.*

❍ **Restate the Teaching Point**

*When we sum up the important parts, it helps us to understand and remember.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

Students can record important information using these simple graphic organizers:

Two-column chart formats:
- Picture/Why it is important
- Words/Why they are important
- Interesting/Why
- Important/Why
- Sketch and label a picture that represents the theme or "big idea"
- Round the Table Summary: Use the same format as page 144, using the Summary Cards on page 157
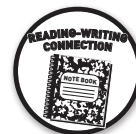
### Practice at the Comprehension Center

Provide independent practice with these activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007)
- Pyramid Summary
- What's Most Important?
- Critic's Cube
- Partner Quiz Cards
- Roll and Respond Cube

# I Can Code My Thinking: Integrating Multiple Strategies

**M**y students love coding, a hands-on approach to reading! Many colleagues across the country have given me positive feedback after workshops during which I shared this idea—telling me how their students have taken off in their comprehension strategy use with the coding technique. They use it continuously throughout the year in small-group, partner, and independent reading contexts.

The codes are simple notations, such as a star, printed on to sticky notes or flags to represent a comprehension strategy or self-monitoring behavior. These are the same strategies from the previous lessons and on the comprehension strategy chart at the beginning of the chapter (see page 100). Students use these coded flags to mark the text with their thinking, and in doing so apply multiple comprehension strategies. The power of these coded flags is that every student is accountable for interacting with the text using a strategic focus (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Hoyt, 2002). These are prepared before the reading and distributed to the students, who keep them on their bookmark alongside each code (see Teaching Tips).
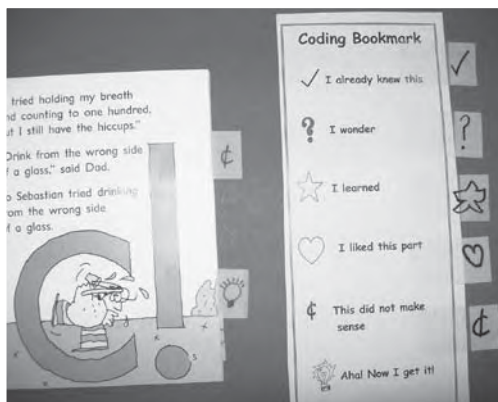
Sticky flags labeled with the codes are stored on a strip of card. Students place these in the margin of the text to mark their "thinking spots." The evidence for their thinking is now easy to locate after reading and will support both their oral and written responses.

## Teaching Tips

The codes are introduced and practiced one by one, then cumulatively across a series of lessons. For example, after you have introduced the first and second codes, students use both to mark the text. When I am teaching connecting and questioning, we use the first three: know, wonder, learn. Then I take up student responses and record them on a KWL chart. At first, students practice the codes in lessons where the teacher identifies which one to use, but after sufficient practice, students will be able to self-select the appropriate response at different points of the reading. At this point, the activity has become a student-driven form of self-monitoring.

I prefer to use sticky flags and print the codes with a permanent marker. Each student has his or her own bookmark with the sticky flags that are appropriate for the lesson on the bookmark. You will find that if you laminate the bookmark, the flags will last even longer. I keep a group set of coding bookmarks with flags in my reading toolbox on the teaching table. You may provide more than one for a strategy you are focusing on, for example, three question mark flags when you want them to mark three places where they had a question. If you find students use all their flags on one page and you want them to interact at different points in the reading, chunk the text into short sections and specify the number of flags for each section, such as, "Read pages 6 to 8 and find one connection you have and one question." You can also divide books into beginning, middle, and end with specific requirements for each part.

## Student Profiles

This activity is successful with students who are passive readers and/or apply strategies in isolation rather than integration. We know that to be effective readers, students need to be able to apply comprehension strategies to the text simultaneously. Predicting alone is not enough; you also need to question, infer, and so on. We may teach each strategy one at a time and explicitly, but we also continually model and practice how they build upon each other. Our goal is for students to become strategic readers who use multiple strategies in a flexible manner.

## Reading Materials to Support Integrating Multiple Strategies

Any text is appropriate for coding, fiction and nonfiction of all genres. Nonfiction may generate more "I wonder" and "I learned" responses, while narrative text often supports personal connections with students using the "This reminds me" sticky flags.

## *Lesson:* I Can Code My Thinking

### Preparation

- Copy the reproducible I Can Understand What I Read Chart (page 100) onto cardstock.
- Copy the reproducible I Can Code My Thinking bookmark (page 158) onto cardstock. Make one for every student.
- Copy of the Comprehension Prompt Card (page 98).
- Prepare the coded sticky flags: Print the code(s) you are using in this lesson on sticky flags and place on the bookmark alongside the code.

### Tell Me

Point to the Comprehension Strategy Chart and review the strategies that are related to the codes you are using in the lesson.

> *Readers use many different strategies. The more strategies we use, the more we grow as readers and the stronger readers we become.*

Point to the codes on the bookmark as you describe how to use each one.

> *Today we will use the strategies we practiced as we read about* [title, topic of the book].

> *I will show you how we are going to use these sticky flags on the bookmarks to code or mark our thinking spots as we read. I will use different codes in different parts of the book. As I read something, it might remind me of what I already know about this. If it does, I put the flag with the tick mark next to that part, right on the outside edge of the page. This way I can quickly find it to share. When I read the next part, I might have a question. I will put the flag with the question mark there.*

### Show Me

Introduce the book. Model how you code your thinking for different events or facts.

> *This book is about _____. I will read the first two pages and show my thinking with a code.*

**Example:** *Sebastian Gets the Hiccups* by Jenny Feely (2001)

> *"Oh, no!" said Sebastian. "I have the hiccups, Mom. What should I do?"*
> *"Hold your breath and count to one hundred," said Mom.*

*What am I thinking about when I read this part? Which code could I use to show my thinking? I am wondering if holding your breath and counting to one hundred will work. I will put my "I wonder" sticky flag next to this part.*

> *"I tried holding my breath and counting to one hundred, but I still have the hiccups." "Drink from the wrong side of a glass," said Dad.*

*Now I am thinking that doesn't make sense. How can you drink from the wrong side of a glass? I am confused about this. I will put my cents sign next to this part. Then I will try a fix-up tool; I will read on. Oh, I see in the picture that Sebastian has turned his head around to drink from the other side of the glass. That must be what his dad meant when he said the wrong side; it was the other side of the glass. I will put my lightbulb/stoplight flag here to show that I stopped and fixed it, and now I understand.*

### Guide Me

Students read the text and mark their thinking spots with a coded flag. Specify which flags and how many.

> *Read pages ___ to ___. Use the* [number and type] *flags on your bookmark to show what you were thinking.*

Have students share a place where they coded their thinking. Record this on a chart with the code on the left of the chart and the student response written alongside in a shared writing format.

**Comprehension in Action:** *Sebastian Gets the Hiccups* by Jenny Feely (2001)

| | |
|---|---|
| ☺ | I tried blowing into a paper bag, too. It didn't work and the bag blew up. |
| ? | How can you rub your tummy and pat your head at the same time? |
| ☺ | If I stand on my head I get dizzy. |
| 🧩 🧩 | Is Isabella his sister or a friend? I am puzzled about who she is. |
| 💡 | I figured out that she is probably his sister, because everyone in the story so far is in his family. |
| ☺ | I would feel angry too if someone came up to me and shouted "Boo" like that. |

### Coach Me

Students continue to read as you coach and support.

*What are you thinking about when you read this part? Which code could you use to show that?*

❍ **Partner Think-Pinch-Share**

Students show their partner where they have coded the text and explain what they were thinking about and why this was an appropriate code.

*What was their thinking for this part of the story? Can they explain to you why they used that code? How does the code show their thinking?*

❍ **Group Share**

Have partners share how they coded the rest of the story.

❍ **Restate the Teaching Point**

*We marked the text with a code that showed our thinking. Thinking about the story in different ways helps us to understand what we are reading and to grow as readers.*

### Reading-Writing Connection

● Students draw the codes in their notebook and record their thinking alongside, just like they did on the group chart.

### Practice at the Comprehension Center

Provide independent practice with these activities from *Differentiated Literacy Centers* (Southall, 2007)

● Read, Relate, Respond
● Sticky Questions

## I CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT I READ
### Bookmark

**I can understand what I read**

- I connect

- I predict

- I wonder

- I figure it out

- I stop and fix

- I retell

- I sum it up

1 + 1 = 2

## I CAN CONNECT
### Bookmark

**I can connect**

- I know

✓

- This is like

- This reminds me of

me

a book or story

the world

## I CAN PREDICT
### Bookmark

**I can predict** 🔮

**Predict**

- I bet…

- I predict…

- I will find out…

- I think I will learn…

- I know what will happen…

**Hold it**

**Read and check**

- I will think back

- Does it match? Yes? No?

- Do I need to change it?
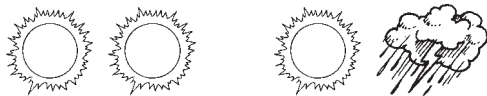
**Predict again** 🔮

- Now I know…

- I am thinking that…

## I CAN FIGURE IT OUT
### Bookmark

**I can figure it out**

**Look for clues**

**in the picture**

I see…

This tells me that…

**in the words** mammal herbivore

The author says …

This means that…

It could be that …

Maybe …Perhaps …

**Think about what I know** ✓

The author doesn't say…

but I know… because…

**Make a picture in my mind**

I can picture…

This helps me understand…

## I CAN WONDER
### Literal Questions Bookmark

#### Seek and find

- **Who**
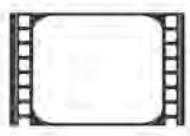
- **What**

- **Where**

- **When**

- **How**
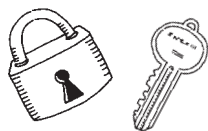
## I CAN WONDER
### Inferential and Evaluative Questions Bookmark

#### Think and feel

- **I think**

- **I feel**

- **Why**

- **What if**

- **Should**
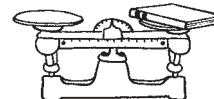
- **How might**

## STOP AND FIX
### Bookmark

**I can stop and fix**

**STOP**

**Look at pictures**

**Reread**

**Read on**

**What do I know?** ✓

**Use parts of words I know**

pl    ay

**Picture in my mind**

**WAIT**

**Check it makes sense** ¢

**GO**

**Keep reading**

## I CAN RETELL
### Bookmark

**I can retell**

**People**

What they do and say

What they are like ___

Their goal

**Places**

What it looks like

How it feels there

**Problems**

___ has a problem because ___

They try ___ and ___

They solve it by___

**Ending**

In the end...

## I CAN SUM UP
### Bookmark

**I can sum it up**

● **I know**

● **I learned**

● **An important word**

mammal

● **An important fact**

kangaroos are...

● **This was about**
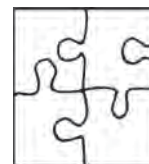
# Retelling Cards

## Places

**Where and When**

## People and Goals
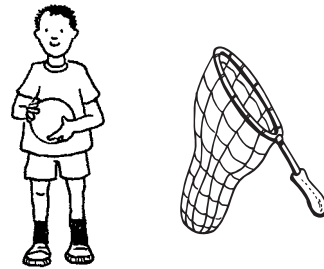
**Who and Why**

## Problems
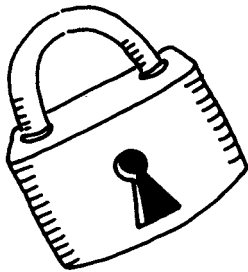
## Main Events
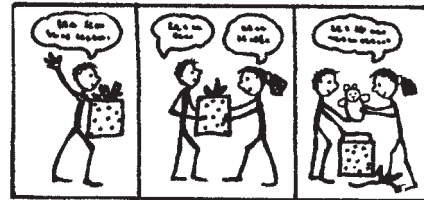
What

## Solution
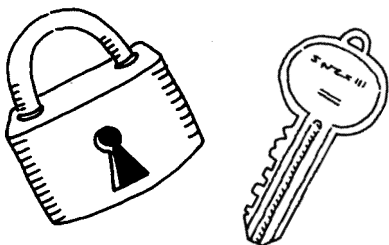
How

## Ending

# Summary Cards

| | |
|---|---|
| **I know**<br><br>✓ | **I wondered**<br><br>? |
| **I learned**<br><br>★ | **Some important words were**<br><br>mammal   herbivore<br><br>endangered |
| **An important fact or event was**<br><br>kangaroos are… | **This was about…** |
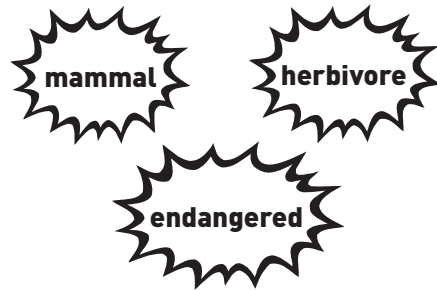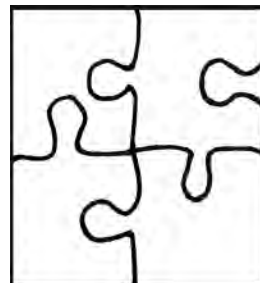
**CODING**
Bookmark

**I Can Code My Thinking**

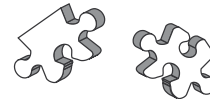● **I know**

✔

● **This reminds me**

☺

● **I wonder**

**?**

● **I learned**

★

● **I am puzzled**

● **Aha! Now I get it**

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