

Comprehension Strategies

LCGW Comprehension Tips



Literacy Council

OF GREATER WAUKESHA

1. Ask students questions about the text as they are reading. Students should not read more than a couple of paragraphs without stopping. Below are **comprehension questions** students can ask as they read. Students should progress from factual to inferential questions.
2. Ask students periodically what a complex word means. Just because a student can correctly pronounce a word without stumbling, it does not mean he or she understands what that word means.
3. Work with students so they begin asking their *own* questions by using the different kinds of comprehension questions provided below.
4. Incorporate students' learning styles into reading and learning new material.

Prompts for "Making Meaning"

What do you think this book is about?

What might happen next?

How can you tell that...?

Why did...happen?

What would you have done?

Did you ever...?

How did ...make you feel?

What made ...do (or say)...?

How would you feel if...?

What did you like about this book?

How could we learn more about...?

The Story

Plot:

1. What happened in the story? What was the sequence of events?
2. What might have happened if a certain action had not taken place?
3. Were you able to predict the ending?
4. What other way might the story have ended?
5. Under a heading (such as People, Animals, Places, Things), list important words.
6. Which chapter do you think is the most important to the story? Why?

Setting:

1. Where did the story take place?
2. What was the place like?
3. Could there be a place like this? Do you know of a place like this?
4. When did the story take place (past, present, future)?
5. Which part of the story best describes the setting?
6. How does the writer create the atmosphere for the setting?
7. Are there any particular words that create this atmosphere?

Mood:

1. How did you feel while reading the book? Why did you feel that way?
2. What was the saddest/funniest incident?
3. What was the most exciting/unusual mysterious incident?
4. How did the author make you feel the way you did?
5. What did you remember most about the story?
6. Does the mood of the story change? How?

Style:

1. How did the author describe the characters?
2. Were there any unusual ways of saying things?
3. Does the author give you enough information?
4. How does the author keep you interested?
5. What special words does the author use to help you hear, see, smell, taste or feel things?
6. What pictures have the author's writing left in our mind?
7. What strengths does the author have? What do you like about his/her style?

Thinking Aloud Strategy

1. Why am I reading this?
2. What kind of reading is this?
3. Stop and Think.
Does this part make sense?
4. Hypothesize (predict).
What do I think will be presented next? Or, what will the next part be about?
5. Check Your Understanding.
Is there any part I didn't understand (word, sentence, paragraph)?
Did this part talk about what I predicted (expected)?
Did I change my mind about anything?
6. Remember Back.
Does this information fit with what I already read or know?
What is the most important idea(s) in this part?
Did I get any pictures in my head about this part? Describe.
7. Clarify
Did I ask myself questions about this part?
Do I need to REREAD anything?

Thinking Strategies

Literacy strategies used by good readers to “make meaning”:

- *Inferencing* Using information in the story to gain understanding, reach conclusions, and make predictions.
- *Identifying important information* Finding critical facts and details in the story.
- *Monitoring* Rereading to “fix” the problem or not understanding what was just read.
- *Summarizing* Pulling together information from the whole story and being able to relate the key points.
- *Question generating* Asking questions that will lead to understanding of what was read.

Adapted from a U.S. Department of Education booklet on the Internet, *State of the Art: Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning to Read*, November 1993, [http://www.gov/pubs/State Art/Read/](http://www.gov/pubs/State%20Art/Read/).