

COMPREHENSION

Challenges	Possible Solutions
<p>My STAR students have weaknesses in alphabetics, fluency, and vocabulary. Do I even need to teach comprehension strategies?</p>	<p>Not yet. Their reading problems are the consequence of these weaknesses; therefore, you should focus on strengthening them. They are struggling to read and understand at word levels; too much comprehension instruction may tax their already consumed working memories! As they build their word accuracy and knowledge, text rate and prosody, their comprehension will improve.</p> <p>In the meantime, check their comprehension during fluency instruction. After reading a paragraph, passage, or book section, stop and ask a few 6W questions to make sure they are understanding text meaning and text evidence.</p>
<p>If my STAR students will benefit from comprehension strategies, how many do I teach?</p>	<p>Limit the number of strategies. It is more important to develop understanding and use of 2-3 strategies. Review their Comprehension Interviews to determine which ones they already use and select new ones for instruction.</p>
<p>What are the steps for teaching summarizing?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some students need to begin with <u>finding the topic</u> (who or what each paragraph is mostly about) using easier text. Model and guide finding the topic and if needed, show them how to count the number of times a name (or pronoun) is used in each paragraph. 2. Other students are ready for <u>identifying the main idea</u> (the most important point the author makes about each topic) using easier text. <i>Often</i> the main idea is stated in the first sentence, <i>sometimes</i> in the last, and <i>occasionally</i> embedded in the middle. Model and guide identifying explicit (clearly stated) and implicit (not clearly stated) main idea sentences. 3. After students can find paragraph topics and identify main ideas, they are ready for <u>summarizing</u> with easier materials. Model and practice combining (and revising) main idea sentences into a cohesive summary paragraph. 4. When students are ready, have them complete the same three steps using Instructional Level text.
<p>What are the steps for teaching questioning?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin by discussing the 6 W questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and hoW. 2. Post the 6 W questions in the classroom for reference. 3. Using easier text, model generating 6 W questions. 4. Using easier text, guide students in generating a Who question, a What question, a When question etc. 5. Put the 6 W questions on index cards. Then have students draw a card, generate a question, and give the answer using easier text. 6. When students are ready, have them generate and answer 6 W questions using Instructional Level text.

<p>How do I teach fix-ups? There are so many on the handout!</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be sure students understand the need for stopping and fixing up what they do not understand. Talk about how good readers do this all the time – including you – especially when text is unfamiliar or difficult. 2. Review their Comprehension Interviews to determine which fix-ups they already use. Discuss which ones they use, why, and how. 3. Introduce a few others -- one at a time -- and explicitly model and guide their use. 4. Further discuss which ones work best for them.
<p>Which materials are recommended for STAR comprehension strategy instruction?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many STAR teachers use high-interest, leveled passages from <i>Timed Readings</i> and <i>6-Way Paragraphs</i> – both are available at http://www.glencoe.com/gln/jamestown 2. There are many abridged and leveled novels and books available from Townsend Library at http://www.townsendpress.com/our-books/townsend-library-ampbluford-series 3. There are many FREE sources of leveled articles and passages available at http://atlasabe.org/resources/ebri/ebri-comprehension 4. Also consider using renowned poetry from Tupac Shakur, Langston Hughes, Edgar Allen Poe, or Minnesota poets. 5. For STAR students who want to complete their GED, use pre-GED materials so they can improve their reading ability and work on their personal goals simultaneously.
<p>Where do I find graphic organizers?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the graphic organizers available on the STAR Tool Kit; they are ready to download and print. 2. Google “graphic organizers” and you will find many more than you can print and use! 3. Consider partially filling in graphic organizers to get students started in using this evidence-based comprehension strategy.
<p>Should I use a mix of fiction (narrative) and non-fiction (expository) passages for assessment and instruction of comprehension?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using only fiction passages may not give a complete picture of students’ comprehension levels. Therefore, use a mixture of fiction and nonfiction passages for <u>comprehension assessment</u>. 2. The <i>College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education</i> focus on three shifts for literacy instruction: complexity, evidence, and knowledge. It is recommended to use 50% (at Levels A-C) or 70% (at Levels D-E) content-rich nonfiction for <u>all reading instruction</u>.
<p>Which text should be used for explicit instruction of text structures?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The text used for modeling and guided practice should clearly be organized into a fiction or non-fiction text structures. 2. Use shorter, easier text for modeling and guided practice; assign longer, Instructional Level text for application.