

Ready-to-Go Reading Comprehension

High-interest Activities to Build Skills

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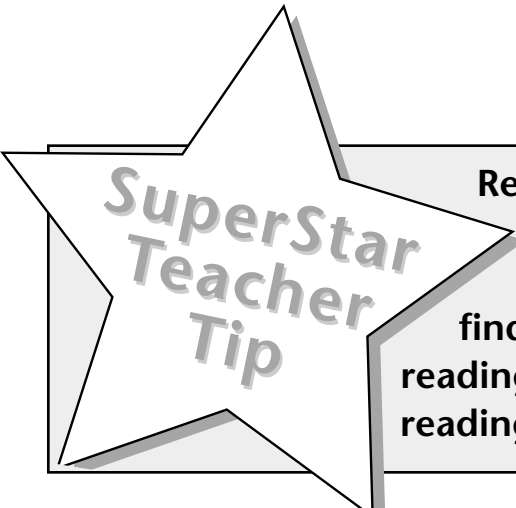
What Is Comprehension?

Children understand what they read when they can make a personal connection to the material. The child who has been to a farm will better comprehend a story that takes place on a farm. Children who have played with siblings or cared for family pets will better understand stories about families. Children make a connection with a story after they have experienced similar situations and feelings in their lives. Engaging children in class discussions about stories related to experiences they have already had can help them make the connection between their experiences and the story.

Reading aloud to children can boost comprehension. In addition to modeling the reading process, reading aloud to children

- Exposes them to new words in the context of a story
- Gives them opportunities to use their imaginations
- Is a pleasant experience
- Exposes them to stories they may not have read independently
- Can help them gain new perspectives about people and places

To maximize time on task, choose comprehension activities carefully. Many project-type activities take a lot of time, and they can often be completed successfully without children truly understanding the story. Instead, children should spend as much time as possible engaged in reading and discussing stories. The most valuable reading activities are ones that engage children in actual reading and involve them in discussions with high levels of participation.



**SuperStar
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Tip**

Remind children that they don't have to force themselves to finish every book they start. If they choose books from the library that they later find they are not interested in, tell them to stop reading and choose a different book. This will help make reading a positive experience.

Teaching Children to Read

Classroom Environment

In a we-love-to-read classroom there are displays of children's work, charts, words on classroom walls, and reading materials galore. The classroom library area welcomes children with lots of books and places to sit and enjoy reading. Posters about books and reading decorate walls in the library area.

Children feel like staying a while and reading when they can sit on rocking chairs, beanbag chairs, and rug squares. They find books easily when the books are sorted into boxes or baskets by topic or author.

Classroom furniture is arranged so there are places where children can work independently, in small groups, and as a whole class. Children enjoy opportunities to listen to stories read by the teacher, to read with partners and groups, and to read independently.

Teacher-Directed Reading Instruction

During instructional reading time, the teacher takes children through discussions and activities for prereading, reading, and postreading.

Prereading:

- Discuss what children already know about the story or topic
- Build connections between prior knowledge and story content

Active Reading:

- Set purposes for reading a page or several pages
- Discuss pages children have read to enhance comprehension
- Help children relate reading to their life experiences
- Teach word skills and reading strategies within the context of the story

Postreading:

- Engage children in retellings and in summarizing activities
- Extend reading by involving children in group or individual writing activities

Use the KWL Strategy

This oral activity is valuable and requires no teacher preparation.

Prereading: K (know) What do we already know about the content/topic?

Reading: W (what) What do we want to find out when we read?

Postreading: L (learn) What did we learn from what we read?