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Introduction

The saying “Every teacher is a teacher of reading” is well known but not always true. It is usually regarded as the task of the English or language arts teacher to guide students through the effective use of comprehension strategies as they read. Although students read in almost every subject area they study; content-area teachers typically overlook the need for guiding students through their textbook-based and trade book-based reading tasks. Comprehension strategies best serve students when they are employed across the curricula and in the context of their actual learning. It is only then that students can independently use the strategies successfully when reading. Students typically read literature or fictional stories for English or language arts; but they will spend the majority of their adulthood reading nonfiction or expository writing. The strategies that students use to comprehend literature are different from those they use for nonfiction. It is important to note that around grades four and five; educators see a drop in reading achievement. At this time; students seem to lose interest in reading independently; spend less time reading for pleasure; and struggle more to read the materials required of them at school. It is for this reason that all teachers at all levels must actively pursue ways to greatly enhance their students’ abilities to understand reading material. This can be accomplished by working directly with reading comprehension strategies.

How to Use This Book

Reading comprehension is a complex process involving interactions between the reader and the text; using multiple skills. Students need a variety of strategies to be successful readers. *Successful Strategies for Reading in the Content Areas* contains a variety of reading strategies that will help increase comprehension. This book has grouped the strategies and skills to match the seven categories of strategies and skills taught in *Exploring Nonfiction: A Differentiated Content-Area Reading Program* (Teacher Created Materials Publishing 2008). An additional section; titled Developing Vocabulary; is also provided in this book. This book is divided into the following sections:

- **Monitor Comprehension** (including **Set the Purpose** and **Author’s Point of View**)
- **Activate and Connect**
- **Infer Meaning**
- **Ask Questions**
- **Determine Importance** (including **Main Idea and Supporting Details; Text Structures; Text Organizers; and Using Parts of the Book**)
- **Visualize**
- **Summarize and Synthesize**
- **Developing Vocabulary**



Determine Importance— Text Organizers

Strategy 1: Coloring Print Features

Using the activity on page 180, students can color in the title with bold bright colors. Coloring reminds them of the title's importance in relaying the book's main idea and helps young students stay focused on the main topic of the text. Just for fun, they can also color in the cover picture under the title.

(Pre-K Standards 5.3, 5.12; K-2 Standards 5.2, 7.2)

Strategy 2: Writing Print Features

Several sentences on the activity sheet on page 181 give definitions relating to various places in a town or community such as a post office, a fire station, a grocery store, or a hospital. Students read the sentences and copy the words in bold print. After the activity is completed, students work with a partner and take turns telling each other what the words in bold print mean.

(Pre-K Standards 5.8, 8.2; K-2 Standards 5.2, 5.6, 7.4)

Strategy 3: Title Drawings

The activities on pages 182 and 183 allow students to draw their own pictures to illustrate the title pages. The teacher encourages students to share their pictures with the class using descriptive words to explain their drawings. (Pre-K Standards 5.3, 5.12; K-2 Standard 7.3)



Strategy 4: Title Names

The simple illustrations on pages 184 and 185 need titles. Let students title each page and then color the illustrations to go with them. After completion of the activities, students share their titles and the reasons why they chose them. This verbal sharing is very important for young students because it helps them listen to each other. Sharing not only builds self-confidence, but it also helps students model their thinking for each other. (Pre-K Standards 5.3, 5.12, 8.2)



Determine Importance— Text Organizers

Title Names—Part 1

Directions: Make up a title to go with the picture.

Title: _____

