

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Researchers have identified several reading comprehension strategies that proficient readers use to aid their comprehension. Below is a list of reading comprehension strategies⁵ and sample tools and activities that can be used to explicitly teach them to students.

Reading Comprehension Strategies	Tools and Activities
1. Activating prior knowledge / Making connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This reminds me of...” • Use post-it notes or margins to make connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Text to Self connections ○ Text to Text connections ○ Text to World connections • Journaling to make connections to prior knowledge
2. Determining importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective underlining / highlighting of important ideas, themes, or information. • Two column notes (Quote from text / why it is important)
3. Asking Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write questions on post-it notes or in margins • Two column notes (Quote from text / question) • Two column notes (Literal / inferential questions) • Three column notes (Question / my answer / answer from next) • Reciprocal reading: Students read in groups of four. Each student is assigned a role: asking questions, clarifying, summarizing, or predicting.
4. Drawing Inferences / Predicting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing charades to model drawing inferences • Directed reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) • Two column notes (Quote or picture from text / my inference) • Three column notes (Quote or picture from text / my prediction / what happened?) • Reciprocal reading (see above)

⁵This list of comprehension strategies includes strategies identified by Keene & Zimmerman (1997). Dole, Duffy, and Pearson (1981), Harvey & Goudvis (2000), and Baker (2004).

Reading Comprehension Strategies (Continued)

Reading Comprehension Strategies	Tools and Activities
5. Visualizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create story boards, visual timelines, illustrations based on text. • Create visual directions or procedures based on text. • Draw setting, characters, conflict, etc. • Guided imagery: concepts explored through mental images • Movie poster (visuals, catch phrase, actors)
6. Summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using various summarizing techniques like GIST (p.98) • Reciprocal reading (see above) • Using graphic organizers and webs to summarize
7. Getting critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I agree/disagree...because..." • Two column notes (author's opinion / my opinion) • Two column notes • Issues continuum • Journaling
8. Retelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retelling dyads: A pair of students take turns to read the same text, after every section the reader stops and the listener retells. • Read-Write-Retell
9. Repairing Understanding/ Fixing Breakdowns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher think-alouds to model identifying and fixing breakdowns • Brainstorm strategies to fix breakdown • Prompting: "What do you do if you don't understand?" • Re-reading • Looking at prefix, suffix, glossary, index, dictionary, etc. to fix breakdowns in understanding