

Learning Comprehension Strategies Activity Center (Grades 2-3)

Designed to meet these objectives:

Language

- Students will use comprehension strategies to understand text.
- Students will read and comprehend a variety of texts.

This easy-to-use activity center strengthens comprehension skills. Students read the directions on the displayed strategy prompt, take a reproducible worksheet and a reading passage, then complete the activity. Perfect for use by individual students, small groups, or early finishers, the center provides excellent opportunities for learning important reading comprehension strategies while reading both fiction and nonfiction text.

What's Included

- 8 reading comprehension strategy prompts with reproducible graphic organizer worksheets (on back of prompt)
- 12 different reading passages

About the Center

The Learning Comprehension Strategies Activity Center includes eight double-sided strategy prompts (one side has directions for practicing the strategy and the other side has the corresponding reproducible worksheet), 12 reading passages (six fiction, six nonfiction), and a box designed for display and storage of materials. The reading passages are color-coded, with fiction having a blue border and nonfiction having a red border. The comprehension strategies are: Make Connections, Ask Questions, Determine Importance, Make Predictions, Synthesize Information, Summarize, Make Inferences, and Visualize.

The reading level of the text correlates approximately to Fountas & Pinnell levels L–M, DRA levels 24–28, and Lexile levels 500–599.

Getting Started

Separate the strategy prompts from the passages and choose one strategy you would like students to practice. Make copies for each student of the reproducible worksheet for that strategy. Then place the strategy prompt in the display slot with the directions facing front, and place the worksheets in the bottom tray. Place the 12 reading passages in the top tray. Store the remaining strategy prompts in the bottom tray under the worksheets.

Note: Some of the strategy prompts work only with nonfiction passages, and some only with fiction. The directions will denote if the strategy can be used with any passage or if students need to choose from either the fiction or the nonfiction passages. Please point out to students that the fiction passages have a blue border and the nonfiction passages have a red border. Also, please note that the strategy prompts and worksheets can be used with any text students are reading.

Using the Center

The center can be used by individual students or by a small group. As a small-group mini-lesson, model using the reading comprehension strategy by following the step-by-step directions on the front of the strategy prompt.

As an independent activity, display the strategy prompts that you have introduced and that students are familiar with. Students can come to the center, read the directions on the displayed prompt, select a worksheet and a reading passage, and complete the activity. Collect these worksheets to use as an informal assessment or to check for understanding and proper application of each comprehension strategy.

Reading Strategies

Reading comprehension strategies are used to improve comprehension of text. Strategies can be used before, during, and after reading. The goal is for students to apply appropriate strategies independently and automatically when reading. Before students complete the activities on their own, model each comprehension strategy using the included passages and step-by-step directions on the front of each strategy prompt. Complete the worksheet together.

These are the eight strategies covered:

Make Connections

Students will connect their personal experiences and knowledge to what they are reading. This leads to a deeper understanding of the text. They may connect their reading to something that has happened to them, to another person, or to a character in another book. It is important that students identify how their connections help them understand the text. The back of the strategy prompt has a reproducible worksheet where students can record their connections and explain how these helped them understand the text.

Ask Questions

Students will ask questions about the topic of the text they are reading. Asking questions while reading keeps the reader engaged, supports comprehension, and alleviates confusion and frustration. When students ask questions, they are clarifying what they understand and what they don't understand. Asking questions while reading helps students become aware of misunderstood or confusing text before it becomes frustrating. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record their questions and then follow up with the answers after they have finished reading the text.

Determine Importance

Students will identify important facts that capture the main idea or meaning of the text. This strategy encourages students to be thoughtful readers who differentiate between important and less-important information. Point out to students that the title and the topic sentence in a piece of writing often tell the main idea of the text. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record the important facts from the text, as well as unimportant details.

Make Predictions

Students will decide what is going to happen next based on their understanding of what has happened so far and how their own prior knowledge connects to the text. Students then confirm or adjust their predictions as they continue reading. This strategy fosters reading comprehension because students have to understand and infer the text's meaning in order to make reasonable predictions. Predicting outcomes throughout the text also encourages students to read carefully and with anticipation. Have students pause and make or adjust predictions after reading titles, topic sentences, and individual paragraphs. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record their predictions and list the clues or evidence within the text that led to their predictions.

Synthesize Information

Students will combine new information with knowledge they already have so they can develop an interpretation or an original idea. When students synthesize information, they must think beyond the surface of what the text is saying and find insights into what the overall text means to them. Synthesizing information involves more than just summarizing what is read; it involves connecting students' own experiences and knowledge to the text so they can form new thoughts and ideas. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record facts from the text and write their own interpretations of the text.

Summarize

Students will take large passages of text and reduce them to the main events, key ideas, or main points that are worth noting and remembering. To do this, students sum up important information or events in the order they occur and in their own words. A good summary identifies the main ideas and details and is brief. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record the main ideas and important details of the text and then use these to write summaries of the text.

Make Inferences

Students will use clues from the text to discern meaning or themes within the text. Some call making inferences “reading between the lines.” This strategy is especially helpful when writers are intentionally vague or indirect and the passage has an underlying message or meaning not directly stated. Identifying clues such as the target audience, the author’s tone, descriptions, and characterizations will help students make accurate inferences. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record quotes from the text, their inferences, and to identify the clues that helped them make the inferences.

Visualize

Students will take the written information they have read and create mental pictures. Students should be able to visualize people, places, things, and events that are happening in text. These mental images are created when students understand and interpret the information they read. In addition to supporting comprehension, visualization helps students remember what they have read. To help students visualize, encourage them to look for words that describe people, places, things, and events. On the back of the strategy prompt is a reproducible worksheet for students to record the descriptions that were used in the text and then draw the images that they pictured in their heads.

Meeting Individual Needs

ELL

Preselect a reading passage and review any difficult vocabulary with students. Start with the Visualize or Make Predictions strategy. Briefly explain these strategies and use a simple picture to show students what each one is. Depending on the levels of students, read the passage aloud or read it as a group. Walk students through the strategy prompt, modeling how to practice the strategy. Complete the worksheet as a group.

Reteach/Extra Support

If the reading passages in this center are at too high of a reading level, have students complete the worksheets with a preselected passage or book at their levels. Focus on one strategy at a time and model how to practice the strategy. Have students complete the worksheet with a partner and then check for students’ understanding.

Challenge

Invite students to use the strategy prompt and worksheet with a book, news article, or magazine of their choice. This will allow students to understand that these comprehension strategies work with all types of reading materials.

Informal Assessment Ideas

Before explaining the strategies, ask students to think about what they do while reading a story. Prompt them by asking questions such as “When you read, do you stop to think about what will happen next? Do you think of questions that you hope the text will answer? Do you picture what is happening in your head?” Write down students’ answers. Keep in mind which strategies students are familiar with and note which strategies students are not aware of. Explain that these are called reading comprehension strategies and they will be learning more about them.

After students have had the chance to practice all eight strategies, provide them with the reproducible included in this guide. It can be used as a post-assessment activity to share with parents or for your own records. This will allow students to evaluate the strategies and share which strategy they found the most useful.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What strategy did you find to be the most helpful? _____

Explain why. _____

2. What strategy did you use the most? _____

Explain why. _____

3. What strategy did you feel was the most difficult to use? _____

Explain why. _____

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