

English Language Arts Strategies

Improving Reading Comprehension

Grades K–3rd

RECOMMENDATION 1

Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Teach students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content.

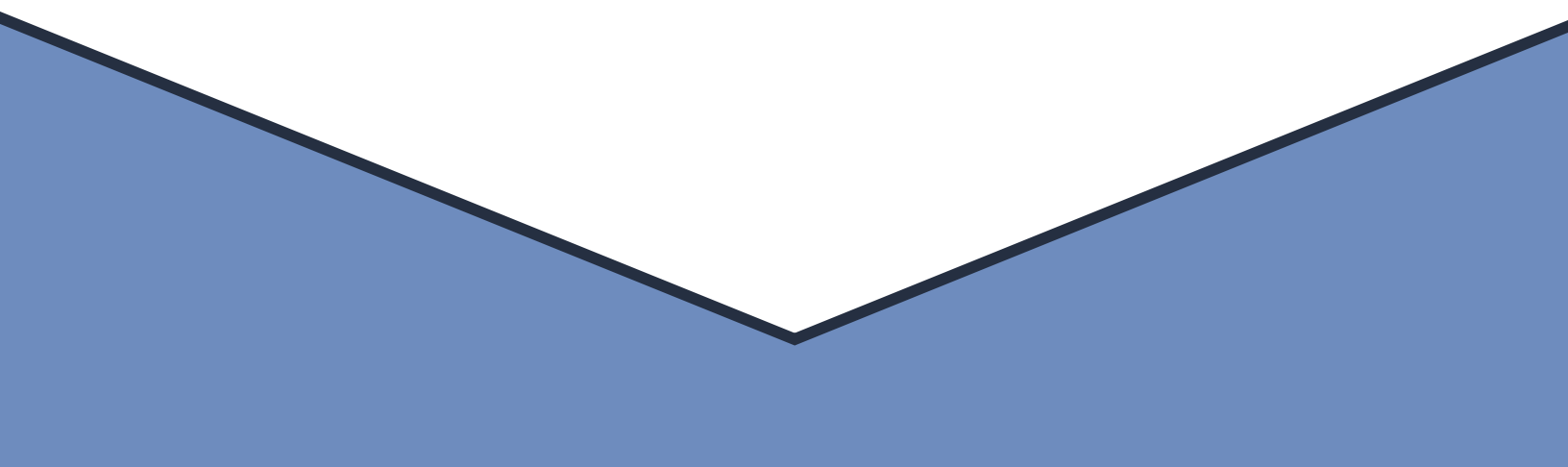
RECOMMENDATION 3

Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of the text.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension.

This document provides a summary of recommendations from the WWC Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade Practice Guide (Shanahan et al., 2010).



Content Area	Level of Evidence	Grades
English Language Arts	 Minimal	K 1 st 2 nd 3 rd

RECOMMENDATION 1

Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies.

Good readers use a variety of strategies for thinking and analyzing text, so it is important to teach beginning readers strategies for constructing meaning from text. Comprehension strategies help readers build understanding, overcome difficulties in comprehending a text, and compensate for weak or imperfect knowledge related to the text. These strategies can be taught one by one or in combination, as both approaches have been shown to improve reading comprehension. Teachers should choose the approach they are most comfortable with in the classroom.

Teachers should also gradually release responsibility to help students learn to use comprehension strategies independently. Yet teachers should keep in mind that students will differ in the extent of modeling or support they need in order to use strategies effectively.

Strategies

1. Teach students how to use several research-based reading comprehension strategies.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Use multiple strategies to support reading comprehension (see table below).
- Explain how the strategies help with reading comprehension.
- Explain how to use the strategy.

The following six strategies have been shown to improve reading comprehension, especially in the primary grades. Teachers should present several of the strategies because different strategies cultivate different kinds of thinking. They should explain how the strategies can help students learn from a text—as opposed to memorizing strategies—as well as how to use the strategies effectively.

Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension

Strategy	Description	Activities to Promote Strategy Practice
Activating prior knowledge/predicting	Students think about what they already know, using that knowledge and other clues to: • Construct meaning from what they read. • Make predictions about what will happen next and then continue to read to validate their predictions.	• Pull out a main idea from the text and ask students a question that relates the idea to their experience. Ask them to predict whether a similar experience might occur in the text. • Partway through the story, ask students to predict what will happen at the end. Ask them to explain how they developed their predictions. This activity helps students make inferences about what they are reading and look for the deeper meanings of words and passages.
Questioning	Students develop questions about important ideas as they read the text, using words such as <i>where</i> or <i>why</i>, and attempt to answer these questions.	• Put question words (e.g., <i>where</i>, <i>why</i>) on index cards and distribute them to students. Then, have students, in small groups, develop and ask each other questions using these words.
Visualizing	Students build a mental image of what is described in the text.	• Explain that visualizing what is described in the text can help students remember what they read. • Have students examine several objects placed in front of them, then provide a related picture depicting a scene. Remove the objects and picture, and ask students to visualize and describe what they saw. • Read a sentence and describe what you visualize. Choose sections from the text and ask students to do the same.
Monitoring, clarifying, and fixing up	Students check whether they understand what they are reading, and when they do not understand, they reread or use strategies to help them understand.	• Relate strategies to traffic signs (e.g., stop sign—stop reading and, in your own words, restate what is happening; U-turn—reread parts of the text that do not make sense). • Write each strategy on a card with its sign, and then have student pairs work to apply the strategies to the text they do not understand.

Strategy	Description	Activities to Promote Strategy Practice
Drawing inferences	Students generate information important to constructing meaning that may be missing from or not explicitly stated in the text.	• Teach students how to look for keywords that help them understand the text and demonstrate how they can draw inferences from such words (e.g., sand and waves could indicate a beach). • Identify keywords in a sample passage and explain what students can learn about the passage from those words.
Summarizing/retelling	Students briefly describe, in speech or in writing, the main points of what they have read.	• Ask students to describe the text in their own words to a partner. • If a student has trouble, ask questions such as “What comes next?” or “What else did the passage say about [subject]?”

Note. Adapted from pages 12–13 of *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade* (Shanahan et al., 2010).

2. Teach reading comprehension strategies individually or in combination.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- In the single strategy approach, introduce each strategy independently and allow time for practice.
- Encourage students to use the learned strategies in combination over time.
- In the multi-strategy approach, introduce multiple strategies simultaneously and provide opportunities for students to practice them in combination.
- Choose the approach that works best for your classroom.

Single-strategy approach

Introduce each strategy independently and include time for practice, usually a few weeks, before the next strategy is introduced, allowing students to master a collection of strategies over time. It may be easier to begin with this approach. As additional strategies are introduced, encourage students to use all the strategies they have learned. Doing so will allow them to review and continue to build mastery of previous strategies.

Multiple-strategy approach

Introduce several strategies simultaneously and allow students to practice them in combination. Multiple-strategy instruction might be more complicated initially, but it familiarizes students with using the strategies together from the very beginning, providing a more authentic strategic reading experience.

There is not enough evidence to advocate for using multiple-strategy instruction over single-strategy instruction, or vice versa, so teachers should choose the approach that is best for their classroom environments. Regardless of the approach, the goal should be to teach students several strategies.

3.

Teach reading comprehension strategies by using a gradual release of responsibility.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Gradually release responsibility for using the strategies to students.
- Periodically review the purpose of the strategy and how it improves comprehension.
- Start over with the gradual release process as the text becomes more complex.

Because students may not naturally use strategies, gradually release responsibility for them. For example, first, explain how to use the strategy and then give students increasing independence in practicing and applying the strategy over time.

An example of gradual release of responsibility is included in the table below. Effective instruction in reading comprehension strategies often includes some or all of these steps. While going through the steps with a class, periodically review the purpose of a strategy and how it improves comprehension until students can apply it independently. Cycle back through the gradual release process as the texts/topics/concepts become more difficult.

Examples of Gradual Release of Responsibility			
Task	Share of Responsibility Student (blue) / Teacher (red)		Example
Explicit description of the strategy			“Predicting is making guesses about what will come next as you are reading. You should make predictions often when you read by stopping and thinking about what might come next.”
Teacher and/or student modeling			“Looking at the cover of this book, I see a picture of an owl wearing pajamas and carrying a candle. I predict this story will be about this owl, and it is going to take place at night.”

Task	Share of Responsibility Student (blue) / Teacher (red)		Example
Collaborative use			“Let’s make some predictions together. When I stop reading, I want each of you to think about what might happen next... Okay, let’s hear what you predict and why.”
Guided practice			“Here is a list of pages from the book we are reading. After you read a page on the list, stop and write a prediction. When you finish reading the next page on the list, check whether your prediction happened, will not happen, or still might happen.”
Independent use			“For now, stop every two pages as you read and evaluate the predictions you have made, then make some new ones for the next two pages.”

Note. Adapted from page 15 of Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade (Shanahan et al., 2010).

Potential Roadblocks



A multiple-strategy approach is more elaborate than a single-strategy approach.

Suggested Approach. A multiple-strategy approach may require more professional development than a single-strategy approach. Teachers should have an opportunity to see examples of successful multiple-strategy instruction and to try it out with feedback from knowledgeable professionals, including other teachers and coaches with experience using the approach. Guides that show teachers how to implement specific multiple-strategy approaches in the classroom (e.g., professional books, manuals, and videos) are also available.



The school reading assessment emphasizes comprehension skills (e.g., main idea, drawing conclusions), not strategies.

Suggested Approach. Although there is nothing wrong with instruction that emphasizes certain types of questions or information in a text, the purpose of teaching reading comprehension strategies is to teach students how to think when they are reading, which in itself will improve their ability to perform well on reading assessments. It is critical for teachers to focus on the strategies described in this recommendation, as these strategies can help students learn other skills outlined in state and local content standards.



Students bring a wide range of abilities in reading and reading comprehension to the classroom, so adapting strategy instruction to an individual student is a challenge.

Suggested Approach. Teachers should form small groups of students with similar comprehension needs or skills, allowing them to focus targeted help on a few students at a time. For instance, instead of releasing responsibility to all students at once, teachers may model a strategy more than once for some students or lengthen the periods of guided practice while giving feedback to students who are struggling to practice on their own. Breaking down the lesson into smaller sections or reading a smaller section of a text together can also help students who are having difficulty comprehending a particular text at the same level as other students.

Content Area	Level of Evidence	Grades
English Language Arts	 Minimal	

RECOMMENDATION 2

Teach students to identify and use the text’s organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content.

Teaching students to recognize the structure of a text aids in comprehension and recall of content. Providing this type of instruction can help students extract and construct meaning while they are reading. Students can begin to develop a sense of the structure of the text as early as kindergarten. Although instruction in kindergarten is typically based on narrative text, students in the early grades should also be exposed to informational text because its structure can build their understanding and recall of key points. Teachers should guide learning in recognizing text structure by gradually releasing responsibility, keeping the goal of independent reading in mind. This involves guiding students to draw on what they know about structure to help them understand more complex texts.

Strategies

1. Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Model and explain the structure of a narrative text.
- Include questions about the structure of the text in class discussions.
- Develop tools to help students identify and remember the elements of text structure.
- Explain what the tool is, why it is useful, and how to use it.
- Adapt instruction to class needs.

Teachers should both model and explain how to identify and understand the aspects of a narrative text that provide meaning and “shape.” They should engage students in identifying and using these elements to guide their understanding of the text. Effective class discussions of recently-read books include questions about key elements of the text’s structure. To help students identify and remember the elements of structure, develop tools, such as simple mnemonics. When introducing these tools, explain what the tool is, why it is useful, and how to use it with an overall goal of teaching students to think about the structure as they read and not just when required to use one of these tools.

Stay aware of the capabilities and grade levels of students, adapting instruction about text structure for each student. For example, a kindergarten teacher would identify elements of structure using simpler clues (e.g., When and where? Who? What happened? How did the story end?).

As students progress, the teacher should encourage them to look at a wider variety of structural elements, using texts that involve multiple conflicts and subplots as they extract and construct meaning from a story.

Other ways for students to build capacity in identifying structural elements include making up their own stories, developing stories from story maps, illustrating each episode in the story, or participating in a dramatic retelling.

Elements of Structure in a Narrative Text

Element Description	Element Description
Characters	Who the story was about
Setting	Where and when the story happened
Goal	What the main character was trying to do
Problem	Why the main character took certain actions
Plot or Action	What happened to the main character or what they did to try to solve a problem
Resolution	How the problem was solved and how the story ended
Theme(s)	General lessons or ideas

Note. Adapted from page 19 of *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade* (Shanahan et al., 2010).

2. Provide instruction on common structures of informational texts.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Introduce the structures of informational texts.
- Use texts that provide clear examples of structures.
- Ask students to identify clue words.
- Ask students to organize information from text using graphic tools.
- Move from direct guiding questions to more complex ones that ask the student to identify structures independently.

When teaching text structures, teachers should introduce students not only to the structural elements in narrative text but also to those of informational, or expository, text. Informational text structures typically apply to paragraphs or passages, and when considering the entire text, students may encounter multiple structures, as well as multiple repetitions of the same structure.

Teachers should use ideas and topics familiar to the students when teaching about the structure of an informational text and should initially use texts that provide clear, easy-to-recognize examples of a given structure. During a reading of the text, the teacher should ask students to identify clue words in a passage that signal the use of a certain structure. An approach advocated by many researchers is to instruct students to organize information from expository text using graphic tools (e.g., concept maps, Venn diagrams, fishbone charts, and sequence diagrams or flow charts).

Once students can comfortably identify the structure of a passage and recall its content, the teacher can replace more direct, guiding questions (“What was the cause? What was the effect?”) with complex questions that do not include clue words, such as “How did the author organize the information in this text?”

Structures of Informational Text

Structure	Description	Common Clue Words
Description	What something looks, feels, smells, sounds, tastes like, or is composed of	n/a
Sequence	When or in what order things happen	first, then, next, after, later, finally
Problem and Solution	What went wrong and how it was or could be fixed	because, in order to, so that, trouble, if, problem
Cause and Effect	How one event leads to another	because, therefore, cause, effect, so
Compare and Contrast	How things are alike and different	both, alike, unlike, but, however, than

Note. Adapted from page 20 of *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade* (Shanahan et al., 2010).

Narrative texts portray a story, or sequence of related fictional or nonfictional events involving individuals or fictional characters; in the elementary grades, narrative texts can include historical fiction, fables, and autobiographies.

Informational texts include expository writing, pieces that argue in favor of one position or another, and procedural texts and documents. In the elementary grades, informational texts can include news articles, speeches, and timelines.

Potential Roadblocks



Teachers may not have time to analyze texts to determine how they are structured and how learning that structure contributes to students' reading comprehension.

Suggested Approach. Use common planning time to collaborate on identifying texts that offer clear examples of particular structures and structural elements and to develop clue words to go along with these texts. This work allows teachers to develop a broader range of texts than if they were working alone, and the knowledge can be spread across many teachers and even put into a repository for future teachers. Additionally, the school library is a good resource for trade books that identify texts that are good choices to teach particular elements.



Students can apply text structure knowledge in classroom assignments but may not do so independently or with more complex texts.

Suggested Approach. Encourage students to pay attention to text structure across a wide variety of reading experiences. Students who can use text structure successfully during a reading lesson may forget to do so when reading a social studies book or reading on their own. Providing a quick reminder of the value of structure just as such a reading is about to begin can help. Also, encourage students to bring you any texts whose structure they cannot figure out. Use these opportunities to clarify the structure and help students resolve problems with more complex texts.

Content Area	Level of Evidence	Grades
English Language Arts	 Minimal	

RECOMMENDATION 3

Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of the text.

Lead students through focused, high-quality discussions to help them develop a deeper understanding of what they read. These discussions go beyond simply asking and answering surface-level questions to a more thoughtful exploration of the text, which helps students learn to argue for or against points raised in the discussion, resolve ambiguities in the text, and draw conclusions or inferences about the text.

Students in kindergarten through grade 3 can engage in these discussions if they have appropriate guidance from their teacher. While some of the suggestions for putting this into practice apply to more experienced readers, teachers can make them applicable to very early readers and those reading below grade level. This approach can build students' ability to think more critically and independently about what they read.

Strategies

1. Develop discussion questions that require students to think deeply about the text.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Use higher-order questions to guide students to think deeply about the meaning of the text.
- Plan the time, order, and where in the text questions should be asked in advance.

Move beyond having students simply recall details about the text or asking them to provide their opinions by instead developing higher-order questions that guide them to think deeply about the meaning of the text. These questions should reflect what conclusions you want students to draw from the text, including implicit and explicit information.

Typical Higher-Order Questions

- Why did ____?
- What do you think ____?
- If you were the author ____?
- What does ____ remind you of and why?

When preparing questions, consider the best time to present each question to students—before, during, or after reading—as well as which questions should be asked when students first read the text and which questions should be asked after a second or subsequent reading. Additionally, determine exactly where in the text a question will be asked (e.g., after a specific page, paragraph, or illustration). For students in kindergarten and grade 1, shared reading time or read-alouds can provide opportunities to introduce higher-order questions.

2. Ask follow-up questions to encourage and facilitate discussion.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Ask follow-up questions that involve the students applying reading comprehension strategies.
- Ask questions that require students to think about and elaborate on their answers and expound on the meaning of the text.
- Ask students to refer to the text to justify their answers.
- Use follow-up questions to engage in a discussion about the text.

Reading comprehension improves when teachers ask follow-up questions that encourage students to apply the reading comprehension strategies they know. In a sustained discussion, respond to the students' answers in ways that lead them to both think about and elaborate on their answers, as well as expound on the meaning of the text. Then ask students to refer to specific portions of the text to justify their responses. Depending on the grade level, this may mean recalling events and passages in the text or pointing to illustrations. Follow-up questions should provide students with a model for thinking about the text and its meaning more actively, as well as help them learn to construct and support opinions with textual evidence.

Recommended Follow-Up Questions

- What makes you say that?
- What happened in the book that makes you think that?
- Can you explain what you meant when you said ____?
- Do you agree with what ____ said? Why or why not?
- How does what you said connect with what ____ already said?
- Let's see if what we read gives us with any information to resolve ____'s and ____'s disagreement.
- What does the author say about that?

Ideally, initial and follow-up questions should resemble a collaborative discussion instead of a typical cycle of teacher initiation (teacher asks a question), student response (one student answers the question), and teacher evaluation (teacher evaluates the student's response), followed by the teacher asking an unrelated question directed at the class or a different student. Although common in classrooms, this kind of discourse does not allow students to build meaning collaboratively from the text.

For younger students, follow-up questions can facilitate discussion, particularly when teachers conduct the discussion in small groups with appropriate support. Students new to this type of discussion may have difficulty, so teachers should model the format and guide them in responding to the text while keeping them focused on both the meaning and the discussion question at hand. Throughout the discussion, teachers should remind students to talk to one another and not just to the teacher.

3. Have students lead structured small-group discussions.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Provide opportunities for small-group discussion about the text, encouraging students to ask questions of their peers.
- Model structures and procedures to allow for peer-led discussions.

As students become more proficient in discussions about text, provide opportunities for small-group discussions in which students pose questions to their peers. In creating groups, include students who are relatively good at discussion in each group and allow students to direct the discussion.

Teachers May Select from Many Structures and Techniques for Peer-Led Discussions

- Describe and assign a role to each student to ensure that all students participate in the discussion.
- Have students discuss the predictions or summaries of their peers as they use their reading comprehension strategies. (Note that this approach may be difficult for kindergarteners and grade 1 students.)
- Give students higher-order questions, graphics, or pictures, and ask them to discuss the materials with a partner. This approach is beneficial for students in kindergarten and grade 1 or as a warm-up for a more challenging discussion for students in grades 2 and 3.
- Ask students to make up questions that get them thinking. Rotate the responsibility for coming up with a “thinking question.” For younger students, provide question stems orally or use word banks or picture clues to remind them how to build questions that make them think.
- After students read a text or a section of a text, guide them to reflect on the text by asking them to draw or write in a journal as preparation for a discussion the next day. Explain that entries should be questions or concerns they want to raise with their peers in the discussion. Teachers can support younger students by providing sticky notes with symbols (e.g., question marks, smiley faces, or exclamation points) to mark sections of the text they want to talk about.

Students in kindergarten through grade 3 will need extensive modeling and practice to be successful in peer-led discussions. The discussions should start out short and become longer as students get older and have more practice. Introducing the entire activity and its rules (e.g., taking turns, not dominating the discussion, and staying on task) before group work begins will prepare students for it.

Teachers Can Then Use Simple Tools to Encourage Students to Participate Fully and Fairly

- Give students a chart of rules (with picture clues for younger students) to remind them of appropriate behavior in peer-led discussions.
- Consider setting a rule that no one can talk more than three times until everyone has spoken once. To keep track, consider giving students chips before the discussion begins and having them turn one in each time they talk.
- Require students to prepare ahead of time. Ask them to reflect on specific questions about the text by drawing a picture or writing in a “reading log” before the discussion or have them talk in small groups before the full class discussion.
- Give students time to formulate their thoughts. When moderating the discussion, wait in silence until many students raise their hands, and call on those who have not yet contributed.

Potential Roadblocks



When students are talking with peers, some teachers believe they do not have control of the classroom discussion.

Suggested Approach. Though discussion involves giving up some control, teachers can do things to ensure that students stay on task during a discussion. For instance, provide a clear set of guidelines for discussing the text, including the structure of the discussion and the use of discussion guides, and model higher-order questions and responses to help students stay on point. These supports can serve as “training wheels” while students strengthen their ability to take part in this kind of discussion. They allow the teacher to monitor how well students stay on task outside the group and offer assistance as necessary.



Students do not understand how to conduct productive discussions about the text with one another.

Suggested Approach. Give students opportunities to observe and practice discussion techniques; what is expected of them as discussion leaders should be clearly outlined. Prepare students to lead a discussion by modeling a leader’s behavior and techniques, and then gradually release this responsibility to the students. Consider setting aside time at the beginning of the year to focus on discussion skills. You may also want to keep peer discussions relatively brief at first, giving students enough time to develop the ability to lead longer discussions. For younger students, who may struggle the most with the group nature of discussions, have them turn and talk to their neighbors.



It is difficult to find time to prepare for classroom discussions.

Suggested Approach. To capitalize on limited time, teachers should collaborate with one another, taking turns preparing discussion questions and guides. Teachers should also establish regular times for discussion early in the school year. In schools where there is only one teacher per grade, teachers can plan collaboratively with teachers at other schools via email or the Internet; cross-age discussions can be valuable as well. The more practice students have with discussion, the less time teachers will need to spend teaching the activity. Finally, fully developed discussion guidelines can be used repeatedly, saving preparation time.

Content Area	Level of Evidence	Grades
English Language Arts	 Moderate	K 1 st 2 nd 3 rd

RECOMMENDATION 5

Establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension.

Teachers must create an environment where students actively engage with a text to extract and construct its meaning. This involves choosing reading materials that offer students a choice in what to read and opportunities to collaborate with one another. Creating this context by clearly conveying the purpose of each lesson, explaining to students how the comprehension strategies will help them learn, and impressing on them that the power to be successful readers rests as much with them as it does with their teacher will guide students to become better readers. Additionally, teachers must help students focus not only on completing classroom tasks, but also, and more importantly, on the larger goal of learning.

Strategies

1. Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Model the role and importance of reading in everyday life.
- Give reading a prominent role in the classroom.
- Pair text with pictures to provide content and explanation.
- Create a special place for reading in the classroom.

During the school day, teachers should model the importance of being able to read in our everyday lives and how it helps us learn about the world around us. For example, as you walk around the school, point out various notices posted and talk about the information presented. Teachers should make reading enjoyable in the classroom by giving it a prominent role and providing as many books as possible aligned with their students' interests and relevant to their lives.

To adapt for younger students who may not be able to read what is posted around the classroom, pair text with pictures that provide context and explanation. Additionally, as students learn to understand the importance of reading and move toward reading on their own, creating a welcoming and special place for reading in the classroom can help set the stage and build a sense of excitement about reading.

2. Give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers.

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Help students perceive their role in a peer reading group as valuable.
- Motivate students to help their peers learn rather than just giving them the answer.

Collaborative learning activities are most productive when (1) students perceive their roles as valuable, and (2) teachers motivate students to help their peers learn rather than simply giving their peers the answer.

Examples of Collaborative Learning Opportunities

- Have students read the same text and then talk to a partner about what they read, what they predicted, and any connections they made while reading.
- Ask students to work in pairs to retell a story, identify the main characters or story setting, or make predictions about how the story will end.
- To guide students to learn interesting facts using informational text, group students and have them take turns sharing their favorite facts from the same text.
- Using texts that provide guidance about a simple task, have groups of students take turns following the instructions step-by-step to complete the task as a group.
- Organize students in small groups and have them perform a scripted version of a story they have read, create their own dramatization of a story, or write a new story.

Potential Roadblocks



When I put students in learning groups, they get off task.

Suggested Approach. Teachers should ensure students understand the activity's purpose. Additionally, teachers should provide clear and explicit expectations for the group while being careful not to give up too much control all at once.



Some students still will not engage in classroom reading comprehension activities.

Suggested Approach. Developing special projects involving reading can provide additional motivation for students. Furthermore, teachers should provide positive feedback and be mindful that aversion to reading may signal frustration, boredom, or possibly a learning disability. For particularly disengaged students, having colleagues and other school personnel observe in the classroom and then brainstorm together about how to reach them can be beneficial.



Teachers do not have the resources to offer the range of choices that may appeal to students, or they may believe that content standards do not allow them to offer such choices.

Suggested Approach. When developing choices for students, focus on offering choices that are appealing but not elaborate or costly. Many resources and ideas developed by other teachers are readily and freely available via the internet. If the concern is about a particular learning objective or content standard, a teacher can follow up on a lesson by allowing students to choose a text to read on their own or another activity, such as reading to a peer.



Students often choose texts that are too easy or too difficult for them.

Suggested Approach. Group students by reading level, offer them a selection of books that match that level, and explicitly teach students how to select appropriate titles. For example, the “five-finger method” has students choose a text and begin to read it, holding all five fingers up. For each word that gives them trouble, they fold down a finger. If all five fingers are folded down while reading the same page, they should choose an easier book.

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