

READING COMPREHENSION

Strategies and Tools for Teachers of MTB-MLE Classrooms



Prepared by:
**The Reading Comprehension
Interest Group**

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Common Abbreviations Used

GRM:

Gradual Release Model; an instructional process that involves decreasing levels of teacher guidance and increasing levels of student participation, commonly referred to as “I do, We do, You do”.

L1:

The first language a child learns to speak; often used interchangeably with Mother Tongue language; in cases where communities are multilingual, this may refer to another language that the child learned to speak before coming to school that may not be his/her first language/mother tongue.

L2:

The second language a child is expected to learn or has already learned.

L3:

The third language a child is expected to learn or has already learned.

LoI:

Language of Instruction.

LoTL:

Language of Teaching and Learning.

MT:

Mother Tongue language(s), which generally refers to language(s) children know and understand and does not necessarily mean the language taught by mothers; can also include sign language, etc.

MTB-MLE:

Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education.

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

Who is this guide for?

This guide was designed for teachers, teacher trainers, and education project staff to know how to support children to develop reading comprehension skills in contexts where more than one language is spoken and/or taught in schools and communities. Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is a term used to refer to contexts where children's Mother Tongue, or first language, is used as a resource in classrooms to help build children's understanding in that language as well as in other languages.

After this introduction, which explains the importance of reading comprehension and MTB-MLE teaching generally, this guide includes:

- General framing guidance for reading comprehension teaching
- A series of 2 or 3-page explanations for how to teach 14 different reading comprehension strategies and skills. Each 2-page layout contains key tips for how to adapt and apply the approaches in MTB-MLE contexts.
- A series of annexes that include references for this guide, a summary document on the framework and research behind the teaching of reading comprehension, a list of book titles that can be downloaded or printed to practice specific comprehension strategies/skills, and extended guidance for those who'd like more information about specific strategies/skills and/or more background for ministry of education officials and teacher trainers.



Why teach Reading Comprehension Strategies?

If you ever waited to study for exams until the last minute, you may recall that as a negative, exhausting experience. When we prepare for a test that way, we usually read, reread, copy notes, and repeat the material in an attempt to memorize it. However, within a matter of hours, days or weeks after the exam, we barely recall the information we studied. Perhaps you received a good grade on the exam, even though you didn't deeply understand the material.

These experiences can give us insight into how it is that so many children around the globe, who receive daily rote instruction – repeating, copying and memorizing information – fail to become thoughtful, competent readers prepared to advance to the upper grades. The instruction they receive does not ask them to understand. Understanding requires using what is being taught in a meaningful way. This guidebook, *Reading Comprehension Strategies and Tools for Teachers of MTB-MLE Classrooms*, is designed to support all teachers who want to facilitate children's learning so that they move beyond rote learning and into deep understanding.

The lessons, explanations, and illustrations within these pages clarify how to teach students to read for meaning. Starting with early-grade learners, teachers read aloud and think aloud in their mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) classrooms.

To that end, this guidebook integrates the following three essential components of high-quality reading comprehension instruction:

- ★ Teachers are shown how to build on students' knowledge of their Mother Tongue (MT) and bridge their language with the new Language of Teaching and Learning (LoTL).
- ★ Lessons are provided that introduce students to the text features and help readers understand both the message of the text and the connection of ideas within narrative (fiction) and informational (nonfiction) texts.
- ★ Models and sample lessons are given to demonstrate how to teach essential reading strategies. Those lessons start with brief and explicit "How-to" demonstrations. Then with the gradual release of responsibility, students can start selecting and using effective strategies independently, as needed.

The power of giving students strategic knowledge is captured in this wise old adage, updated here for gender inclusion: *Give someone a fish and they eat for a day, teach someone to fish and they eat for a lifetime.* Metaphorically speaking, when we teach strategies, we are moving the learner from the passively receiving “a fish” to learning “how to fish” themselves. It is not until they “take the fishing pole” by applying reading strategies and skills that students develop the confidence and ability they need to be able to understand new texts they read on their own.

It is that kind of self-direction that is highly valued in the world our students are entering. We must distinguish between *transferring information to our students so they can relay that information back to us* and *viewing our task as teaching for the unknown*. What is teaching for the unknown? It is fostering students' ability to figure things out, solve problems, ask questions, gather facts, and make decisions.

What do all those important behaviors have in common? They require original thinking, which is what students do each time they read between the lines to understand more than what is on the page. They use higher-order thinking. Higher-order thinking stimulates our brains to make new connections and find new ways to solve problems. This is how new brain connections happen:

1. First, students hear or see new information.
2. Then they do something with the information that requires original thought. For example, they visualize what the words are saying, or they make inferences to fill in what is not directly said.
3. When they process the information (step 2), certain areas of the brain form new brain cells called neurons.
4. The branches of the new neurons connect to already existing groups of neurons, where memory is stored and can be retrieved indefinitely. (See the drawings representing brain cells that are not enhanced by thinking and cells that are enhanced by thinking.)
5. When this happens, new learning is consolidated. It is converted from short term memory into long term memory. The new neurons will not be pruned away from disuse. (Willis, 2011)



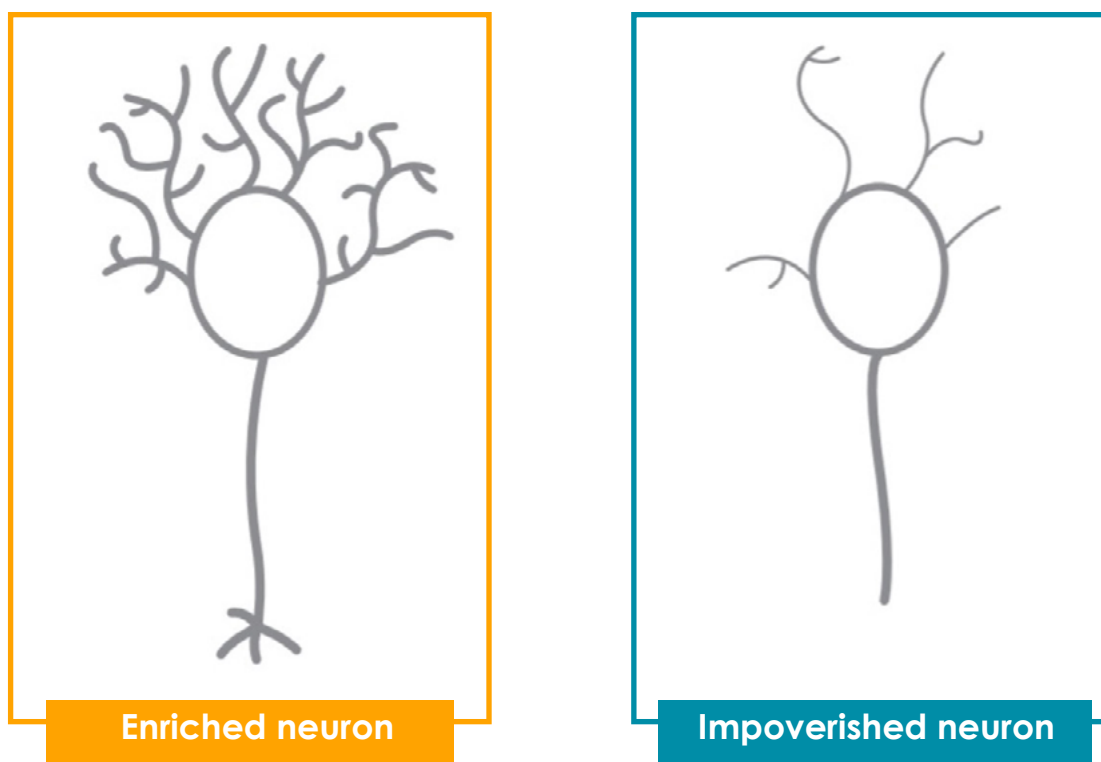


Figure 1. Enriched and impoverished neurons (Thoughtful Learning, 2013)

Why do we teach reading comprehension strategies? We teach reading comprehension strategies because we know how students perform when they don't know reading comprehension strategies. The children whose lives we touch will be enriched by our time with them. They will experience the vitality of their own ideas. We want to know these children have been brought another step closer to claiming the fullness of their potential.

When teaching reading includes only asking students questions that require repeating what the words in the text say, children are only learning to memorize and repeat text. However, when our teaching of reading comprehension engages students in a treasure hunt for connections to themselves, patterns and predictions, memorable images, lessons to learn, problems to be resolved, and language to be unlocked, they are building reading proficiency while experiencing the uniquely human satisfaction of discovery by way of creative thinking.

When our teaching of reading comprehension encompasses the teaching of strategies (behaviors of reading) we open the gateway for students to gain self-efficacy – the valuable belief in their ability to be successful. The students who are confident, self-directed learners are so because they have the awareness and knowledge to guide their actions when they are challenged. They are empowered to help themselves and others. They don't shy away from higher-order thinking because their teachers have unpacked the processes for such strategies as predicting, inferring, summarizing and synthesizing the author's message. As we have said,

these kinds of original thinking are catalysts for growing pathways in the brain that lead to real understanding and long-term memory. These students have been “taught to fish”. They are the high achievers.

Finally, we teach reading comprehension because we know the research that supports these approaches (see Annex 2 for more in-depth explanation of the research on why teaching reading comprehension skills and strategies is important and for a summary of related pedagogical strategies). Research has made it clear that learners who benefit from quality education during their first years in school become stronger readers with better comprehension across subjects, perform better in their studies, and achieve greater educational outcomes. We also recognize that more and more education funders and ministries of education have put reading comprehension front-and-center for the programs they support, emphasizing the importance of focusing instructional time on ensuring children learn to independently comprehend what they read.

What is MTB-MLE and why is it important?

Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) takes place in contexts where children may speak one or more languages in their homes and communities and then learn one or more other languages in the classroom. Depending on the context, some MTB-MLE classrooms may have a direct responsibility to teach children to read and write in more than one language, while in other contexts teachers are expected to help children to learn to read and write in one language. However, teachers can also encourage the use of home and community languages in a structured way in the classroom to support students' understanding in all languages.

What a pupil knows about his or her Mother Tongue (MT) language can support that pupil in learning a second language. Often, pupils must learn another language because they do not speak the Language of Instruction (LOI); the language spoken in the classroom, which is also called the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoTL).

In MTB-MLE contexts, it's important to remember that concepts and ideas are linked together with the culture and experiences the pupils bring with them to school. As children grow, they can add to that knowledge and their intelligence grows too. But the benefits of a developing, growing MT extend to the students' learning of second or third languages.

While all humans are still gaining MT vocabulary and communication skills their entire lives, in MTB-MLE contexts, children must learn vocabulary in multiple languages at the same time. For this reason, we try to help learners use their MT as a resource and foundation as they add to their vocabulary in the Language of Teaching and Learning. We call this **additive education**.

This guide provides suggestions for helping all learners benefit from the language skills they already have, and also to learn the LoTL in a MTB-MLE environment. Many of the tips encourage teachers to use the local language or language of the immediate environment as part of the instructional process. For each reading comprehension strategy or skill, there are recommendations for different instructional approaches that include the use of the students' MT as students are learning to speak, listen, write, and read in the LoTL(s). In this text, **purple font** will be used to highlight MTB-MLE tips teachers can use.

The importance of growth mindset and setting an environment for risk taking

We need to set up a different paradigm for teaching reading

According to Carol Dweck (2006), growth mindset is the understanding that intelligence is not fixed and can be developed. A fixed mindset is the belief that intelligence is a trait we are born with that cannot be further developed or changed. Children arrive at school with one of these two kinds of mindsets: growth mindset or fixed mindset. These mindsets are introduced by parents or caregivers and unknowingly enforced by both parents and educators. All children can learn to read and comprehend - but the learning journey will be different for each child based on his or her background and mindset. To be able to learn, a child needs to feel confident to take risks and understand that mistakes are a necessary and important part of their learning journey. They need to be taught that when they challenge themselves, they develop stronger neurons in their brains. Stronger brains allow children to learn and retain new knowledge. Children are known to take many bold risks when playing, but surprisingly, when it comes to classroom learning, they don't appear to have the same courage to take the risks required. This is true for learning all subjects, and particularly true for learning to read and comprehend.

Developing soft skills and the type of teaching that supports thinking and independent ideas

Learning to read and comprehend requires a complex set of skills: understanding word knowledge in context, the ability to empathize, visualize, compare, summarize, predict, analyze, question and make links. For a child to begin this journey, the environment needs to put the child at ease. Using the analogy of the seed, a seed in fertile soil with the right conditions will grow to become a magnificent tree or plant with the potential to bear fruits. A seed on a shelf will forever remain a seed until it is put in the right environment to grow. When teaching reading skills, creating a growth mindset environment is crucial. In addition to creating a classroom rich in text and vocabulary, children must be taught that as part of their learning journey they will be required to use **effort** (they may have to make more than one attempt); they will need to **persevere** (when they face difficulties they will have to still continue); they will need to learn that **challenges** are exciting; they will need to ask lots of **questions** about their learning; they will have to **reflect** on their learning (think about what went well and what needs to be improved); they will need to know how to work both **independently** and **interdependently** (to know how to use specific strategies to work by themselves or in a group); and they will have to be **resourceful** (find different ways to solve a problem). Children need to enter what James Nottingham (2020) describes as **the learning pit** (when the new learning is not completely clear) and know that they may make **mistakes in the process**; and, they will have to be **risk-takers** (to be able to try even if they are not one hundred percent sure). With the right support, mistakes can be used to clarify and develop deeper understanding of the new information. Children need to know that becoming a good reader takes time and it is a **process**; it is a marathon and not a sprint - a **learning journey**!



The vocabulary and language used to encourage students

It is important that children know the progress they are making with their reading. The feedback given to the child will either develop the child's confidence to take risks or will reinforce a negative belief they hold about their abilities. Phrases such as **excellent work** and **perfect work** tell the child that there is no further room for development or improvement. As adults, we know that everything can be improved. On the other hand, when effort is rewarded, the child is able to appreciate the learning process. Phrases such as **superb effort**, **good effort** or **minimal effort** will help the child to see where they are in their learning journey, regardless of their test score. It also teaches the child that becoming a good reader and comprehender takes effort - and that putting in a lot of effort is a good thing. They may not be successful yet, but if they continue putting effort in their work, they will be successful.

Once these phrases are explained, the behaviors need to be praised publicly. Some children will be comfortable being named with praise in front of their peers, but other children may not feel comfortable. In these cases, the teacher can give the positive feedback privately to the student, while publically noting the behavior (e.g., 'I noticed students challenging themselves in this lesson by ...').

It is important for the teacher or educator to highlight exactly what the praise is for – see the example in the textbox. Although this example might look like long and wordy feedback, it only takes about nineteen seconds to say this verbally and it will be nineteen seconds well spent.

Of course, when giving written feedback, this could be shortened appropriately. For example, 'Well done for taking a risk with...Superb effort!' Other examples could be, 'You were resourceful in this lesson; you used the resources on your table to help you understand the process...You persevered with this... even though you found it challenging, superb effort!'

Developing a growth mindset environment at the beginning of the academic year sets the tone for children to be successful in all their learning and most importantly in developing their comprehension skills.

Praise example:

"Well done! [Student Name], you really challenged yourself in this lesson. Although you were unfamiliar with the word 'illiterate', you used your knowledge of the root word 'literate' (meaning able to read) and your knowledge of the prefix 'il' (meaning not) to help you infer the meaning of illiterate (not able to read or write). You took a risk with your learning and you got it right. Superb effort!"



PART B: APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES FOR READING COMPREHENSION

How to make space for teaching essential reading comprehension strategies in a crowded curriculum

When researchers asked what proficient readers do to comprehend well when they read, the answers to their question were surprisingly consistent. See Figure 2 below for a listing of the 8 essential reading comprehension strategies that emerged from their research.

Proficient Reader Strategies

- Make connections** with prior knowledge and experience
- Visualize** (picture what the words say)
- Predict** what will come next
- Infer** (think about what is not stated)
- Ask questions** about what you want to know
- Summarize** (categorize details to chunk information)
- Synthesize and determine important ideas** (infer theme or message)
- Maintain meaning** (monitor reading and use fix-up strategies)



Figure 2. Proficient Reader Strategies

Experience also confirms that, with the exception of one of those strategies, when we read to very young children, their spontaneous remarks are examples of those same higher-order thought processes.

Deciding to include the explicit teaching of reading strategies can be an unsettling idea. Teaching our students about how they think when they read may seem like a waste of time compared to the solid facts and sturdy-sounding skills found on the pages of exercise books. Initially, it may be hard to believe that raising your students' awareness of their thinking behaviors will result in their increased confidence, self-direction, higher-level thinking, and scholastic achievement. Luckily,

we do not have to choose between teaching the content of the curriculum and the processes required to be a proficient reader. We can teach with a dual agenda.

The Dual Agenda of Teaching Both Process and Product

Once we make a commitment to include the teaching of strategies in our curriculum, we continue to follow the syllabus. The syllabus is also a vehicle for teaching the strategies students need to learn so that they can be successful. We continue to teach the material in the curriculum, but we also teach the students *how* to figure out the words they don't know, *how* to help themselves understand and remember the material, and *how* to build new ideas and apply what they are learning.

Once we make our students' understanding and ownership a priority, the time for teaching strategies becomes available because activities that do not produce those results no longer clutter the day. Customary comprehension questions are replaced with students' authentic responses to their reading, which reflect their understanding. Rote memorization is replaced with putting the new information to work. For example, memorizing what plants need to grow is replaced with growing plants. Reclaiming the time that was used for repeatedly reciting the letters and their sounds makes way for students to use letter sounds to decode new words when they are reading and to encode words when they are writing.

While acknowledging that teachers face many external pressures in teaching the curriculum, teachers in their own classrooms can apply this dual agenda so that conversation flows seamlessly back and forth between the content of the lesson and the behaviors the students are using to respond to it. Whether reading aloud during Guiding Reading, discussing students' thoughts about the reading, answering the questions asked by the teacher or the students, or working on a paper and pencil task, the teacher keeps the focus on the learner in equal measure to the focus on the subject and the students' assignments. Here are some examples of how a teacher can bring the conversation back to the learner:

- We are going to share the predictions you made at the end of the first page. Let's see what we can learn about how you made your predictions.
- So, what I heard you say was, first you got the big picture by reading the whole page. Then you gathered all the clues. That is important when you have a question to answer.
- You helped yourself figure out this word by thinking about a word you know that has the same pattern. That is a really good strategy.
- This author sometimes uses words we have not learned. What can you do while you are reading to help yourself understand the hard words?



When the teacher puts the focus on the learner as well as what is being learned, the interactions with the students take on a different tone, a different time frame, a different line of questioning, and a different set of teacher responses. The students' answers to the questions are the *starting point* for instruction instead of the end point. Instruction pursues the students' line of thinking to clarify and develop strategies. This extended response is not intended as a temporary repair when a student is stuck. It is not an effort to prop up an incorrect or insufficient answer. It is intended to leave the student and his or her classmates with an ability to know **what to do** when they do not know the answer.

Recognizing when and how to use strategies is an essential catalyst for growth. Their use requires practice in different contexts. "Effective practice is not an unthinking execution of a set of steps or rote memorization" (Marzano, 2003, as cited in Koenig, 2010). Doing workbook exercises practicing strategies out of context (e.g., Getting the Main Idea) does not transfer to actual use. Please refer to *Sequence for Teaching a Reading Comprehension Strategy Explicitly* (within Annex 4) and *Summarizing with MTB-MLE tips* (pg 58-59) for examples on how to practice the strategies in different contexts.

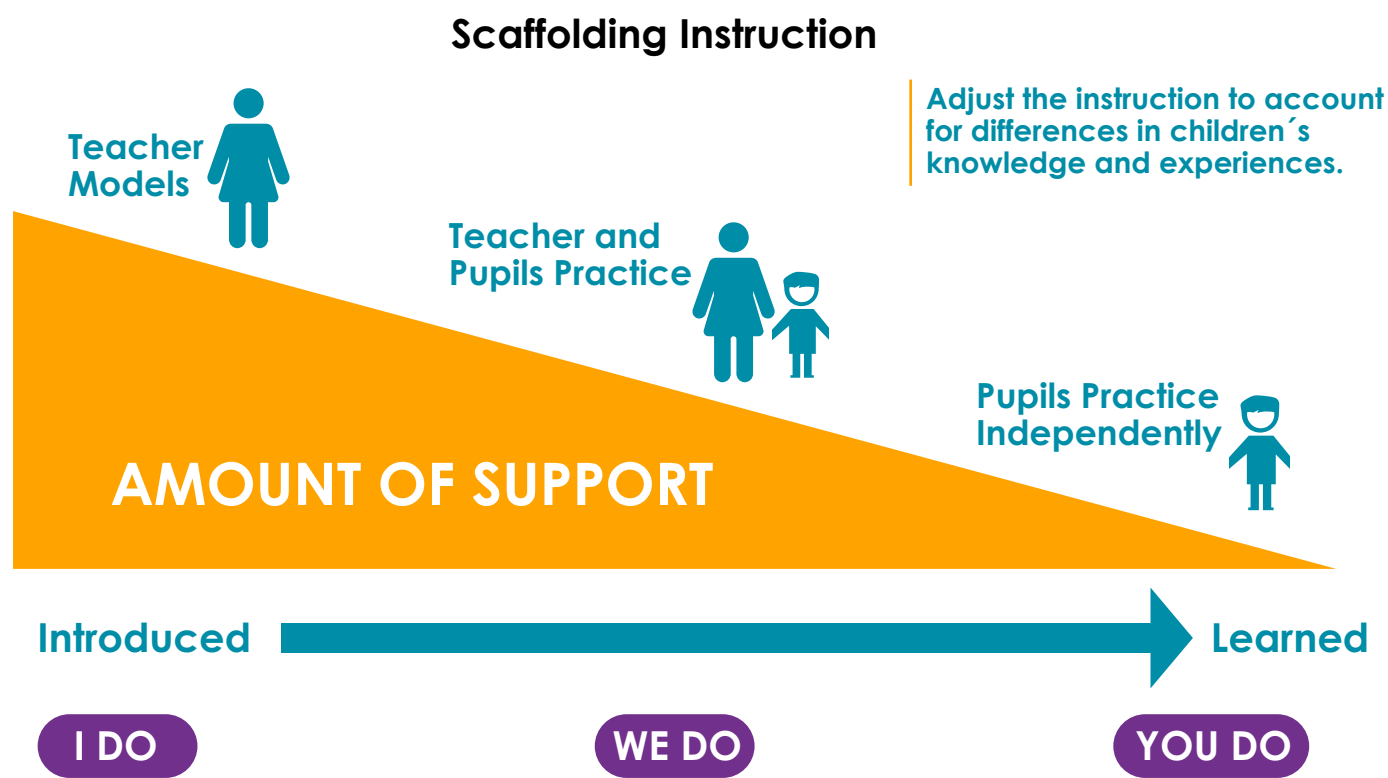
How do teachers assess their students' use of reading comprehension strategies? They:

- Gather evidence of understanding;
- Use performance-based assessment;
- Listen to young students think aloud as they read to their teacher, group or partner;
- Listen for the improvement in the accuracy and thoroughness of their recall;
- Ask students about what they read, how they read and how they got the answers;
- Read the response journals the intermediate and advanced students keep for their literature study or their informational reading;
- Record students' expanding awareness of how they make meaning and share them with students, parents, and colleagues.

The Gradual Release Model

The Gradual Release Model (GRM) of instruction is an instructional process that involves decreasing levels of teacher guidance and increasing levels of student participation. As students become familiar with the skills and what is expected of them, they assume more responsibility in reading and learning. The teacher directs the learning process and provides support (scaffolds). The support is gradually removed as the students become more proficient in the skill or strategy. This method is commonly referred to as the “I do, We do, You do” approach. Using this approach, the teacher and students follow a series of steps (Pearson et al., 2019):

- ★ The teacher models exactly what is expected of the students. He or she uses the skill or strategy and talks through the process so that the students understand what is expected of them. This is the “I do” step.
- ★ The teacher guides the students to practice the skill or strategy as a whole group with the teacher and then with peers while the teacher circulates the room and provides feedback. This is the “We do” step.
- ★ The teacher asks the students to practice the skill or strategy individually, while the teacher continues to monitor and provide feedback as needed. This is the “You do” step.



Once teachers model the skill or strategy, they should allow students to begin practicing it. The majority of instructional time should be spent in the “We do” step, where students are practicing either in groups or pairs, and the teacher is walking around the room providing explicit feedback to scaffold learning or modeling the skill again to individual learners.

When applying the GRM, the teacher must also be aware of the examples that are used for each step of the model. When teaching a skill or strategy, the teacher should model the skill or strategy using one or more examples and then guide the students to practice the skill or strategy using *new* examples. For instance, when teaching students how to summarize a paragraph, the teacher might read a paragraph aloud and then talk through how he or she would summarize that paragraph. Then, the teacher will have the students read a *new* paragraph and practice summarizing it. If the students were asked to practice summarizing the same paragraph that the teacher had used when modeling, they can simply repeat what the teacher said in his or her summary and the teacher will not know if the students actually know how to summarize or simply repeated what they had heard. Each time the students apply the skill or strategy, they should be using a *new* example.

Most skills and strategies can be taught using this model; however, it is not necessary for a teacher to teach every lesson and every skill using this approach. Additionally, it is important for teachers to stop using the GRM for skills and strategies that have already been learned by the students. After the students have learned the skill or strategy, the teacher will need to only monitor that the students are using it appropriately and provide additional guidance and correction as needed.

After children have learned *how* to do the strategy, teachers must support children to learn *when* to use the reading strategies, so that they begin to use the strategies on their own initiative. For example, the teacher can prompt students to choose which strategy would be best applied to a new text by asking, “Since this is an informational text, which strategies might be helpful to use while reading it?” Over time with this type of support, students will learn to automatically apply reading comprehension strategies as they read new texts.

The importance of including both fiction and informational texts in reading instruction

In many countries, reading instruction is carried out with mostly narrative fiction. But this is rapidly changing, as it is now recognized among reading specialists and educators that informational text plays a special and significant role in children's literacy development and learning. In fact, many countries now strive for a balance of 50% fiction and 50% informational text from the earliest grades (Kindergarten up) for reading instruction and children's independent reading.

What is informational text?

Informational text is, simply, text written for the purpose of sharing facts and information. Some examples are biographies (real stories about real people in the past or present), historical events, science topics (like space, animals and environment), social studies, arts, health and safety, technical texts (like a manual for bicycle upkeep, or a rainfall graph with a description), or functional writing (like a recipe, writing a letter to family member or politician or a sales ledger).

Why use informational text in reading instruction?

There are many reasons informational text is critical for academic success, personal enrichment, and informed decisions aiding the individual and society (Dreher & Kletzien, 2015).

- 1. Strong foundational concepts:** Key to reading comprehension is building strong mental concepts, to better understand the world and link concepts to personal experiences. Informational text offers children ways to organize and grow their understanding as they experience things, such as animals, current events, local history and culture. It also helps them in school subjects like science and history - to better understand and read topics covered.
- 2. Vocabulary development:** Informational text often uses rich vocabulary that helps children make strong conceptual connections while building their overall vocabulary knowledge,
- 3. Motivation:** Some children who care less about storybooks find their love of reading in space, bugs, animals or inspiring people from history. Well-written and engaging informational texts can get more children excited to learn, and to become fluent and interested habitual readers.
- 4. Preparation to tackle varied information sources:** Informational texts are often structured in predictable ways (cause-effect, details, compare-contrast, etc.). They also have special features, like graphs, timelines, subtitles and vocabulary definitions. Guiding children through features like these increases their readiness to read and understand independently.



What are the main categories of informational texts?

Two main types are 1) narrative-informational and 2) expository. Simply, narrative-informational text is story-like, often told in past tense and includes characters; an example would be a story about the first female president. Expository is often technical or scientific information, like a school science textbooks or a bicycle manual, written in the present tense.

Instruction of reading comprehension using informational text uses many strategies of fiction instruction – like Read Alouds, before/during/after strategies, vocabulary development, and practice writing, but is often adapted to fit the text and goals of the lesson. Instruction more unique to informational text includes a focus on text structures and features. Part C of this guide will explain which strategies and skills work best for informational texts.

What is a Read Aloud and how do you do one?

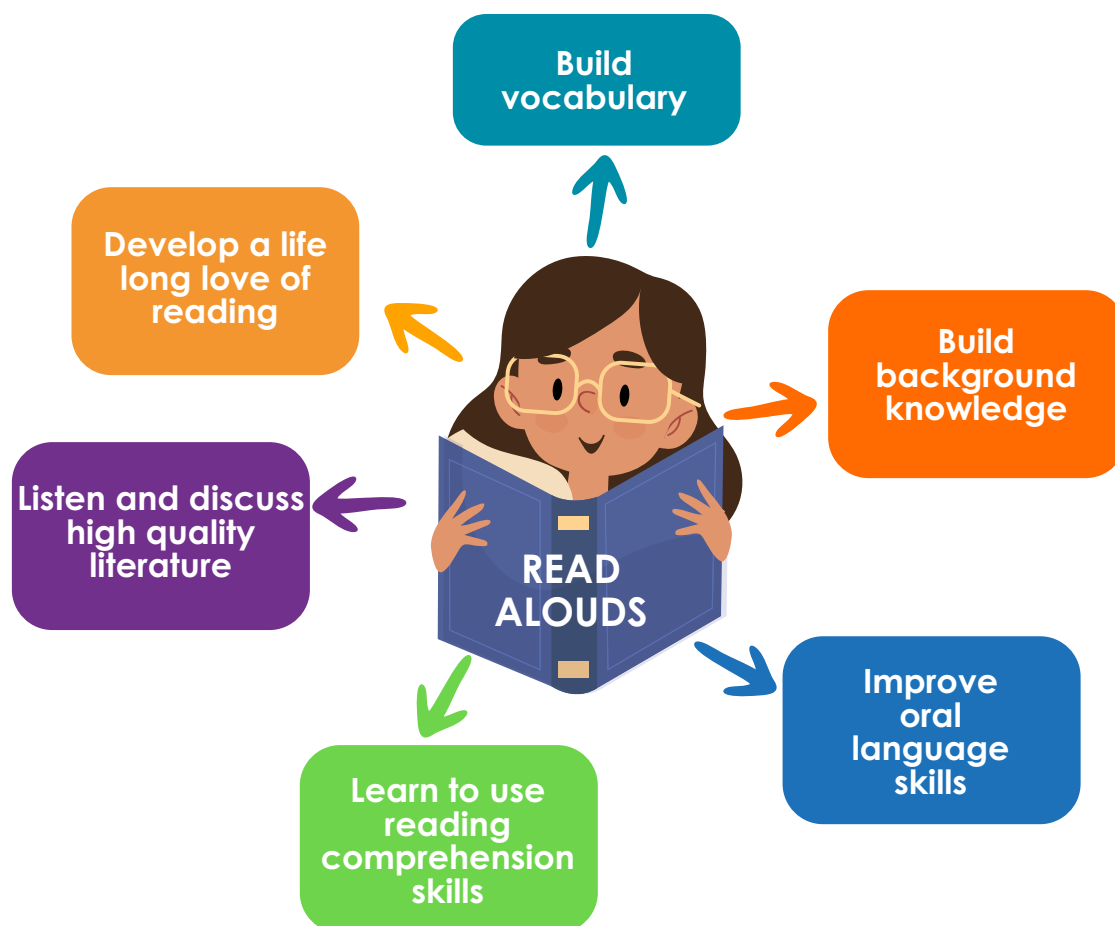
Read Alouds and their Importance

Reading aloud to children, even for only a few minutes each day, prepares them for reading. Children who are read to regularly learn how to read more easily and have higher vocabulary skills than children who are not read to regularly. Children want to model the behaviors of their parents/caregivers, older siblings, friends, and community members. Therefore, when these important people read aloud with a child regularly, the child begins to develop a lifelong habit and love of reading.

A Read Aloud is a teaching practice where teachers and parents read texts out loud to learners. During Read Alouds, children can listen or participate in interactive reading. To engage children, read with appropriate expression, tone and pacing. Pause, make eye contact with children, and ask questions. This encourages children to interact verbally with the text, illustrations, peers, and the teacher or parent/caregiver to make meaning of the text. Through teacher and parent modeling, interactive Read Alouds help children learn how to make sense of text, how stories work, how to monitor their own comprehension, and what they need to focus on as a story unfolds.

**THE SINGLE MOST
IMPORTANT ACTIVITY
FOR BUILDING THE
KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
FOR... SUCCESS IN
READING IS READING
ALoud TO CHILDREN
(Anderson, 1985).**

To build children's foundational reading skills, teachers can and should conduct an interactive read aloud with the same book more than once. Teachers can read to small groups or the whole class. As is indicated in the figure below, conducting interactive read alouds has several advantages for children; they help children:



How is it taught?

During interactive Read Alouds, teachers ask questions before, during and after the reading.

Conducting interactive Read Alouds takes careful planning:

- Think about the goals for your students and identify the strategies and skills you want to teach.
- Choose texts that are engaging.
- Preview the book before you read it with the group or child so you can anticipate questions and/or reactions as well as practice fluent reading of the text.
- Plan how you will phrase your questions - where will you pause to ask questions and invite student responses?

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce children to the book: title, cover pages, author, illustrator • Build/activate background knowledge • Teach important vocabulary • Invite predictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read fluently, using expression and gestures • Pause at significant points to invite response/ask for comments, brief discussions. • Use Who, What, When, Where, Why and How questions. Encourage predictions. • Use turn and talk. Children turn to each other and discuss their questions. • Ask open-ended questions (higher order thinking) • Model and reinforce reading comprehension strategies using Think Alouds • Explain and/or ask questions about vocabulary • Discuss illustrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions, encourage discussions about the text. • Ask students to retell or summarize the text • Ask for reactions & opinions about the content of texts (eg. facts, maps, characters) • Discuss your reaction to parts of the text. • Provide activities that develop reading skills (phonological awareness, grammar, spelling, phonics) • Provide extension activities where children can explore the texts in personal ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sketch to stretch (see Strategy #9 and Annex #4) – Writing a new ending to a story – Writing an informational text with text features (headings, captions etc)

Teachers are encouraged to read both fiction and informational texts to children every day and model good reading strategies.

MTB- MLE Strategy – Preview, View, Review

Teachers can use the Preview, View and Review Strategy as an interactive bilingual learning strategy with Read Alouds.

Step 1 Preview. Introduce and preview the text using learner mother tongue (MT). This comprises discussing key vocabulary, brainstorming, making connections and predictions, and accessing learner prior knowledge. Teachers can do a picture walk and discuss illustrations and events in the story. Learners respond in their MT.

Step 2 View. Read the story in the language of teaching and learning (LoTL). Pause and ask questions in the LoTL. Use gestures and movements, point to pictures, use real objects and learner MT to deepen learner comprehension of the story. Give the children sentence prompts if needed to help them answer questions in the LoTL.

Step 3 Review. Review the story in the mother tongue and then the LoTL. Emphasize key vocabulary in the LoTL. Learners can respond to the story and demonstrate comprehension through retelling, summarizing, role play, drawing and labeling, and writing in either or both languages.



What is a Think Aloud and how do you do one?

A Think Aloud is a teaching strategy that helps students understand what is happening in the teacher's mind as they complete a process or use a skill or strategy. This process of *thinking about or analyzing our thinking* is called metacognition, and it's very important in learning how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies. The purpose of a Think Aloud is for the teacher (or a peer student) to model what is happening in the mind of a skilled reader, so that learners are guided through the complex thinking processes associated with deeply comprehending text. The person doing the Think Aloud talks through every step that they think of as they complete an activity. By using Think Alouds frequently, teachers can help students learn to monitor their own thinking as they read and engage in comprehension activities.

Teachers can use Think Alouds to teach numerous strategies related to reading comprehension, such as making predictions, asking questions about the text, visualizing, making personal connections to the text, clarifying, summarizing, monitoring understanding, making connections between the text and another text – or to the world, making inferences, etc. Actually, any mental strategy or skill that is used to understand text can be modeled and taught using a Think Aloud.

A Think Aloud to model **making inferences** might sound like:

"The text says that Aminu left football practice early and arrived at school the next day with a cast on his leg. The text does not say that Aminu was hurt playing football, but there is no other explanation in the text. So, Aminu must have hurt his leg playing in the game and then had to leave early to visit the hospital for care."

A Think Aloud to model how a reader might determine the meaning of a **new vocabulary word** within the context of a sentence could sound like:

"The text says, 'He was a docile dog - he always followed commands and wanted to please his master.' Hmm, I don't know what docile means, but if the dog always follows commands and wants to please his master, then docile must mean that he is tame, submissive, or listens to his master."

A Think Aloud to model **comprehension monitoring** might sound like:

"I'm reading the text. I read, 'The sky was a strange color. I could see the clouds swirling around in the sky above, and could feel the wind hitting my face. I knew a bad storm was about to hit us. I needed to make sure my little sister was looking out the window.' Wait, that doesn't make sense. I should reread that. Oh, I skipped a line. The text really says, 'I needed to make sure my little sister was in the house. I turned and saw her looking out the window.'"

Social emotional learning and reading comprehension

Children's stories provide a chance for children to explore emotions, thoughts, and actions through characters. Teachers can use these stories with reading comprehension strategies and skills instruction to guide students' learning about social emotional skills. Social emotional skills, as defined in USAID's *How to Integrate Social and Emotional Learning in USAID Basic Education Programs* (Shivshanker et al. 2021), are a set of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies that are developed both through everyday life experience as well as through focused instruction, and they are essential for supporting learners' well-being and success. Social emotional skills include identifying emotions, self-awareness, helping, sharing, goal setting, and problem-solving behaviors. The way that social emotional skills are expressed and developed depends on social and cultural norms of the context, so identifying which SEL skills are most relevant for children is critical prior to integrating them across the curriculum.

Reading class is an excellent time for social and emotional learning. Through stories teachers can guide children to make inferences about how a character feels based on the words and actions of the character and their own experiences, how they have reacted in the past to similar situations and how they would want to react in the future. Children can then write alternative versions of stories where characters exhibit better self-control or use mindful techniques to calm down when stressful events happen, etc. In particular, traditional folktales, both oral and written, present a great opportunity to develop contextually relevant SEL skills as they often contain a moral which reflects one or more of the SEL skills that are most greatly valued by the community. Informational texts also provide a springboard to learners discussing the world around them and how they interact with it in different ways; for example, after reading an informational text on air pollution, they can discuss how to help to save the environment. Discussing books and linking them to social and emotional learning **using local languages and languages of teaching and learning (LoTL) also helps in oral language development** as learners listen to and talk about texts.

There are many ways to teach social emotional learning and reading comprehension skills through the same lesson, teachers just need to carefully align suitable stories with their learning objectives. Social and emotional learning works best when the teaching and learning of these skills are integrated into all education programming in schools that are safe learning environments where teachers, school staff and the community are all working towards ensuring learner well-being and academic achievement.



PART C:

14 READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

The following 14 reading comprehension strategy and skills descriptions offer teachers quick guidance about how to teach specific strategies and skills that will support children to read and understand new texts independently.

The processes described in Part B, such as Read Alouds and Think Alouds, may be referenced throughout Part C, and there is some overlap between different skills and strategies in this section. For example, building background knowledge and making connections are key for making inferences, and predictions are a type of inference. Tips on how to adapt the strategies for MTB-MLE contexts have been given in **purple**, either in text boxes or at the end of sections.

It is important to apply the gradual release method (described in Part B) with the following comprehension strategies/skills. Different students will master each strategy/skill at their own pace, which is completely normal, so teachers should plan to have students practice each of these skills/strategies with new texts multiple times throughout the year and in alignment with your national/local curriculum.

Some comprehension strategies and skills may align better with certain grades or curricular units in your curriculum, so teachers should not feel pressured to teach all of these strategies and skills immediately; instead, introduce each skill and strategy in accordance with where it matches with the curricular content and what your students are ready for. If there are gaps in the curriculum in regards to certain reading comprehension strategies or skills instruction, you can discuss with your peer teachers or school leaders to decide how to prioritize content and/or find creative ways to ensure children have opportunities to practice all the key reading comprehension strategies and skills over time.

We hope that Part C will be the most useful and practical part of the guide for teachers! It contains graphic organizers, key words/phrases, and activity ideas to help children understand how to apply the skill/strategy and/or to recognize when the skill/strategy is needed as they read.



1. Narrative Structure Strategies

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Recognize story elements including characters, setting, plot, and theme.



Story Map graphic organizers and reading gloves can help students learn about and remember the elements of stories.

Narrative Text Structure

Children are most familiar with narrative style text as it aligns with the stories they have heard and learned throughout their lives. One of the most prevalent types of narrative text structure includes characters, setting, plot, and theme. The **characters** can be human or non-human. The **plot** is the events that happen, and the sequence used to tell the story. The plot guides the reader through the events and how the problem is solved, or the goal is reached. The **setting** is the time and location where the story takes place (e.g., home, school). The **theme** is the message the author is trying to communicate, what she/he wants the reader to learn from the story. Teachers can use different methods, such as story maps and reading gloves, to teach this structure with picture books, traditional literature, realistic fiction, fantasy stories and readers' theater scripts to help students comprehend.

Signal Words and Phrases

These help the learner identify text structure.

before, during, after	first, second, third, last	later, meanwhile, next	then, today, when, until	problem, solution, goal
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Comprehension Question Frames:

1. Who is in the story?
2. What happened? / What happened first, next, last?
3. When did the story take place (e.g., morning, night, next day)?
4. Where did the story take place?
5. Why did ____ happen?
6. How was the problem solved, or the goal met?

MTB-MLE Strategies

1. The key words can be written on the map, or on the glove, in both the LoTL and MT.
2. The teacher can ask the questions in both the LoTL and MT.
3. Students can answer the question in MT and the teacher repeats their answer in the LoTL.

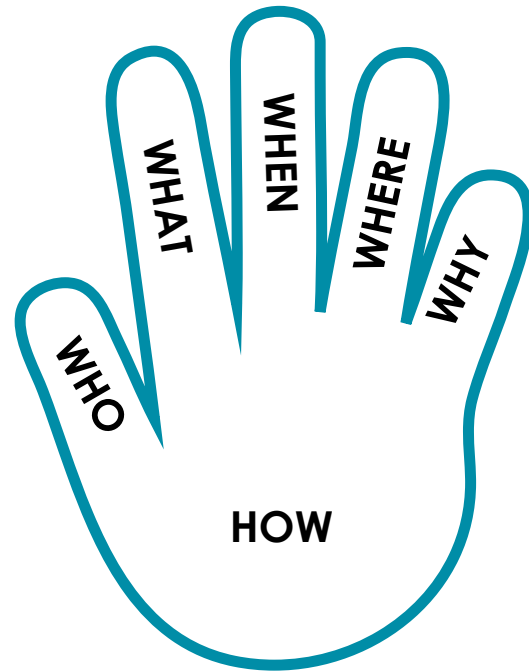


Story Map for young readers

Children can be taught to fill in this story map using illustrations or words, based on their level.

Character	Setting	
Beginning	Middle	End

Another way to help young children learn story structure is to use story gloves. Teachers can write the words on a glove or on a chart and use the glove/chart to ask the comprehension questions. If using a glove, the teacher begins with her fist closed and holds up each finger as the question is asked. When all five fingers are open, the final question "how" is asked.



Story Map for students who are independently reading stories

Setting:	Time:	Place:
Characters:		
Problem or Goal:		
Plot/Events:		
Problem Solved, Or Goal Reached; Resolution:		



2. Informational Text Structure & Features with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Recognize the features of informational text, including captions, photos, subtitles, bold words, glossaries, indexes, etc.



Informational texts are about facts or real events, and they often teach us about the world.

Why are text structures and text features important?

Being able to quickly recognize text structures and features to know if a text is fiction or informational prepares readers to know what to expect as they read. Learning about text structures helps readers organize information in their mind, to better recognize key ideas and details and to understand the relationships between them as they read. Recognizing text features helps children navigate the text and makes a unique contribution to understanding the topic. Both text structures and text features give children clues about where to focus their attention while they read (Center on Instruction, 2021).

Informational Text Types

The two main types of informational texts are **Expository** and **Narrative-informational**. Expository texts are usually written in timeless verbs and generic nouns. Examples: scientific descriptions of animals, an article about a health topic, or how-to-manuals. Narrative-informational texts often contain story elements like characters, settings, problems and solutions, with past tense verbs and specific nouns. Examples: biographies, description of a specific event in history, etc. More rare nonfiction types are Mixed (fiction with non-fiction, such as Layla's Project found on the Global Digital library) and Poetry. As students progress through school, many of the texts they will read are informational.

Informational Text Structure

While each type of informational text will have its own structure, there are several common structures including:

- ★ **Description:** Explains many details about a certain topic, such as Room to Read's (also housed on the Pratham Storyweaver website) *Garden of Medicines* (<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/43538-garden-of-medicines>), which describes different vegetables commonly used to treat different illnesses.
- ★ **Problem/Solution:** Describes a problem and tries to present a solution, such as Pratham Books' *The Seed Savers* (<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/41319-the-seed-savers>), which shows how farmers solved a problem of seeds being too expensive.
- ★ **Cause/Effect:** Presents a series of events that have a causal connection, such as Pratham Books' *Why Does A Poori Puff Up?* (<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/3841-why-does-a-poori-puff-up>) which explains the causes for why a poori expands when cooked.
- ★ **Compare/Contrast:** Describes how events/concepts are similar or different, such as Pratham Books' *So Many Leaves* (<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/259479-so-many-leaves>), which describes different types of leaves.

★ **Sequence:** Describes a series of events that happen in order, such as Pratham Books' Anna's *Extraordinary Experiments with Weather* (<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/28270-anna-s-extraordinary-experiments-with-weather>), which is the biography of an Indian weather scientist.

★ **Question/Answer:** Asks a question and provides answers; here's a mixed example: Pratham Books' (also housed on the Global Digital Library) *Where Did Your Dimples Go?* (Pratham Books' (<https://digitallibrary.io/book/where-did-your-dimples-go/>)).

★ **Generalization/Examples:** Makes a general statement, and provides examples, such as Pratham Books', *Animal Homes* (<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/61292-animal-homes>).

Text Features

Expository texts, especially more complex expository texts, often share some common features such as:

- Titles, subtitles, headings, and subheadings
- Table of Contents
- Captions
- Pictures or illustrations
- Bold words
- Tables
- Indexes
- Diagrams & Labels
- Timelines
- Glossaries



MTB-MLE tips:

Teach the names of the expository text features in multiple languages.



Implementation:

Recognizing fact from fiction: Explain the **definition** of *Informational Texts* to children using several culturally relevant text examples. Explain why quickly recognizing if a text is informational (if it is meant to be factual) or imaginary helps us better understand what we read.

Teaching text structures: Teach one text structure at a time. Use a text that is a clear example of the text structure. Graphic organizers and key words to teach - and that are specific to each text structure - are presented later in this guide.

- **Step 1:** Teachers and/or students read and discuss the text to better comprehend it.
- **Step 2:** Teacher introduces the text structure, shows how the characteristics of the text are an example of that structure, and fills in a graphic organizer.
- **Step 3:** Class reads a new text with the same structure, and students try in a group to fill in the graphic organizer. Repeat with 3-4 texts.
- **Step 4:** Teacher asks students to identify the structures they have learned as they appear in regular lessons.



Teaching text features: Teach one text feature at a time, beginning with those children see the most. Have children locate it and point to it. Explain why it is important. For example, what children will learn from a Table of Contents is : 1) what concepts the text will cover, 2) how the information is organized, and 3) where the information is located, based on the page number. Ask students to explain what they learn from a particular feature, in the example text – for Table of Contents, they can answer #1-3 above. Repeat with a few more example texts.

In small groups or pairs, have children **explore sample texts** and identify anything they notice that is new to them or different from narrative texts they've seen. As a whole class, discuss their findings and write the name of **each text feature, its definition, and an illustrated example** of each on the board or on paper that can be posted on the classroom walls. From time to time, refresh children's memories of the text feature in new texts they encounter during their regular lessons and with texts that engage them.

Plan **fun ways** for students to **practice** what they have learned about text features, such as:

- ★ Have students **count the number of informational text features** in a new text and check/compare their answers with a partner, reminding each other about the purpose of each text feature.
- ★ In pairs or small groups, have students do a **scavenger hunt** for the different text features using several non-fiction texts or even their textbooks. The first group to find one example of each text feature wins!
- ★ Students **write their own informational text**, incorporating one or more informational text features.

MTB-MLE tips:

Allow children to discuss in more than one language about the text features they find, their ideas for an informational story to write, etc. Students can write their informational text in more than one language as well.





3. Strategies for Sequencing with Circular Stories with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Provide information in time or the order in which events, actions or steps in a process take place.



Sequence organizers can help students identify and arrange the steps in sequential order. The sequential map provides a way to organize and to build schema, or framework, in the brain to understand and remember the events.

Narrative Texts – Circular Stories

Circular stories are a simple structure and easy for students to understand. The sequence in many circular stories is that the story begins and ends in the same place. For example, in the story, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, a shortened/adapted version of the sequence is: If you give a mouse a cookie, he'll ask for a glass of milk, next he will ask for a straw to drink the milk, then he'll then want a nap. When he wakes from his nap, he will ask for milk and a cookie. Another type of circular story is when a character completes a series of steps and then retraces those steps in nearly the same order. For example, in *Elephant Runs*, available on Room to Read's Literacy Cloud, a baby elephant runs by snakes, monkeys, and butterflies but then turns around and runs back after seeing a tiger, passing the butterflies, monkeys, and snakes on the return journey.

A sample narrative circular organizer is on the next page. The teacher reads the story in the language of instruction and points to each picture and says the name of the object in the language of instruction and MT (e.g., elephant). Students can use pictures and arrange them in the sequence of the story and retell the story in MT.

Informational Texts – Circular Flows of Information

Sequence or circular graphic organizers can also help students organize a series of stages, tasks, or events in a circular flow and help students see the flow and how the stages, etc. are interconnected. For example, the life cycle of the butterfly can help students visualize and understand how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. Other examples include events in the environment (e.g., rain cycle, how trees grow and develop) and steps to take to stay healthy (e.g. wash hands with soap and water, dry hands, etc.). The events can be written in the language of instruction and/or MT and pictures used to help students understand.

MTB-MLE tip

Have children dramatize the story to strengthen their vocabulary in MT or LoTL. Pairs (at desks) can act out the story while the teacher points to each event in the graphic organizer.



Signal Words and Phrases

before, during, after
as soon as,
at the same time

first, second, third,
finally

later, meanwhile, next
prior to, now,
simultaneously

soon, step, then,
today, until, when



Comprehension Question Frames:

1. What sequence of events is being described?
2. What are the major incidents that happen?
3. What happens first, next, last?
4. How is the sequence or cycle revealed in the text?

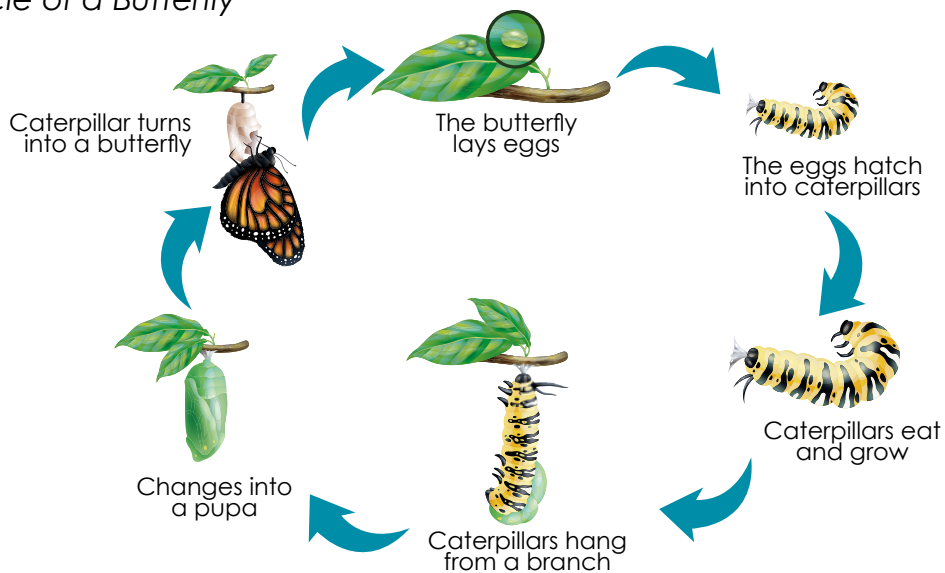
Circular Narrative Graphic Organizer:

Elephant Runs



Sequence Informational Graphic Organizer:

Life Cycle of a Butterfly



4. Strategies for Sequencing with Linear Stories with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Clarify the order in which the events, actions or steps happen.



A linear sequence graphic organizer can help students see and understand the progression of events, steps, or actions that happen.

Linear Graphic Organizer

Using a linear sequence graphic organizer, events or actions in a story can be listed in the order they happened - for example, the actions one or more characters take to reach a goal or solve a problem. Using informational text, the sequence of steps in a process, or timeline of events, can be placed in the order (e.g., to make something). And, the progression of the life cycle of humans, animals, and living things can also be ordered.

Signal Words and Phrases

first, second, third	beginning, middle, last	before, during, after	step 1, step 2, step 3	later, prior to, now, at the same time
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Comprehension Question Frames:

1. What happened first, second, third... last?
2. What steps, directions, procedures should be used to.... (e.g., make a card for mom or dad)?
3. How does a ____ grow (e.g., plant, frog, human)?
4. What happened in the story? What happened in the beginning, middle, end?

MTB-MLE Strategies

1. Place some of the students in a row and say the order of the students (first, middle, last, or first, second, third...). If possible, say the words both in MT and the LoTL.
2. Use pictures to show the events, actions, or process being discussed. Place the pictures in order and say the name of the items in the pictures (e.g., seed, plant, water, tree, flowers, lemons). After reading the text or discussing the progression of the pictures they can be mixed up and the students arrange the pictures in the correct sequence. Students may also be asked to say the information in sequence. Allow the students to use MT and the teacher repeat in the LoTL.
3. Write the names of the objects in the pictures in the pictures in MT and LoTL.



Informational Sequence

A seed from a lemon is planted in the dirt and watered daily.



A small plant begins to grow.



The plant grows and becomes a tree.



Flowers bloom on the tree.



After the flowers bloom, lemons begin to grow.



Narrative Sequence: Adapted from The Magic Bojabi Tree by Diane Hiefneyer

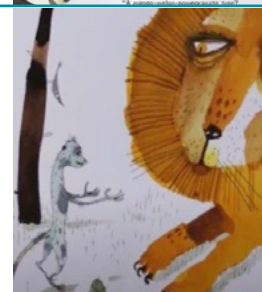
The animals were hungry, but python was wrapped around the fruit tree and would not leave. Python told the animals to find lion and ask the name of the tree. If they told Python the name, he would leave and they could eat.



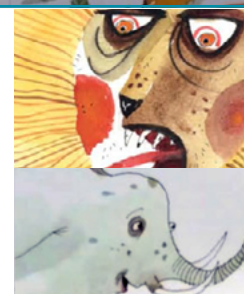
Zebra asked the lion, "What is the name of the tree?" But Zebra forgot the name of the tree on the way back.



Monkey asked the Lion the name of the tree but Monkey forgot the name on the way back to the tree.



Elephant asked Lion the name of the tree. The lion said the name but the elephant forgot the name on the way back.



Turtle asks Lion the name of the tree. The name of the tree was Bojabi. Turtle remembered the name.



Turtle tells Python the name and Python leaves. The animals are able to eat the fruit.



5. Making Predictions

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Predicting, or **making guesses** about what has not yet been told/read, engages the reader and significantly increases reading comprehension and memory of the story/information. Making predictions before and during reading gets learners to engage meaningfully with any text by **giving them a reason to read**. Making predictions requires learners to interpret clues they are given from a title, their own experiences, and any illustrations preceding the text.



Prediction activities motivate students and activate their attention to focus on the meaning and the details of the text.

Prediction starts with what learners already know from their vocabulary and experiences. Children use this background knowledge while looking at the book's illustrations and reading the title of the book to make guesses as to what will happen in the story.

Making predictions shows learners that the learning they are always doing, everywhere, is valuable and useful. Through prediction activities, you will foster a love of reading to learn, so involve the entire class by welcoming their ideas.

Readers can make predictions with easy or advanced texts and with informational, narrative or poetic literature. In fact, predictions are a type of inferences (see the Making Inferences section).

Prediction activities can take only 5 minutes if a lesson is scripted and time-sensitive, or the entire group reading of a text - either oral or silent - can be sprinkled with prediction questions, from sentence to sentence. All answers should require learners to verify their answers by reading aloud from the text, referencing the page number of where it is stated in the text, etc. This keeps the whole class listening and reading. Prediction activities can happen as a whole class, in small groups, or in pairs.

Implementation Steps

1. Before any text is read, ensure that the class can interpret any introductory illustration accurately, using it to connect their own experiences to the text. (See examples below.)
2. Explain any new vocabulary words they will encounter in the story (including in the title).
3. Ask a few questions based on an illustration, new vocabulary words they will encounter, or the title, etc. that will prompt learners to make a prediction. (See the examples below.)

MTB-MLE tips

1. Always frame motivational, predictive questions in the MT, whether the text is informational, narrative, fictional informative, or even poetic.
2. Prepare learners for the vocabulary needed, starting with their own experiences. When MT vocabulary is used by students, affirm it, expand on it if needed, and then use it to add LoTL vocabulary to any graphic organizer used. If children answer using a LoTL, accept that as well.
3. Whenever possible, ask children to justify their answers by reading the supporting text section aloud or telling the page number where they found their answer.
4. At the end of the reading, check learners' understanding of the new vocabulary words in the text.



4. As children give their guesses about what will happen in the story, thank learners for their guesses and avoid comparing people's guesses and/or proclaiming a winner.
 - a) We want children to be fearless in making their guesses, with no fear of failure or shame, since the goal of predictions is to help activate students' attention on the text while they read (not to be the best guesser). Giving children the opportunity to discuss with partners or small groups before sharing with the whole class can be helpful for shy or under-confident students.
 - b) Learners will naturally self-evaluate their guesses as they develop focused attention and comprehension as they read.

Example Illustrations/Stories with Suggested Teacher Steps/Questions

The Hyena and the Wildebeest: folktale (Nkurrana, 2020)

➤ **Before reading:** Introduce any new vocabulary words they'll find in the text. Then, ask questions: "What kind of animal do you see? (If children are not sure, point out a realistic hyena picture in an ABC wallchart or a photo). **Do you think this will be a true or make-believe story? Describe what he is wearing (in the MT). Let's read the title. What do you think this hyena will try to do? What clues does the picture give you? What other animal will be involved in this story? How do you know?"**

➤ **At the end:** Was your guess right? What did the hyena try to do? Did it succeed? Read the sentences that tell us.



Mother Hedgehog: informational fiction (USAID Ghana, n.d.)

➤ **Before reading:** Remember that informational articles, whether fictional informative stories, content area information, or even charts and maps, normally contain special vocabulary. Teach that new vocabulary, using MT as appropriate, before any predictions are made.

Then treat it like a story: "I wonder what mother hedgehogs do to protect their babies." or "I wonder how Ghana won independence." or "I wonder what route this bus driver will follow."

"Who'd like to guess?"

Florence the hedgehog is a mammal who lives in a forest. She is nocturnal, seeking food at night.

One night as she was looking for food, a dog chased her. She quickly rolled into a ball, with her spines pointing out. The dog tried to take a bite of her, but it got a mouthful of sharp needles instead! It left, squealing!

After the dog ran off, Florence searched for dinner in the dark. She found a spider, a snail and some termites. She gobbled them up quickly. Mmmm! Crunch, crunch!



➤ **At the end:** Was your guess right? Ensure that learners read the text aloud to back up their answers.



6. Asking Questions with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Recognize how to engage in self-questioning, reflection, and question response to deepen understanding



Designing questions to build comprehension is important to activate the reader's intention to make meaning through interactions between text and the reader (Durkin, 1978). When a student is engaged in specific questioning, he/she is able to interact with the text, assisting them to learn to formulate and respond to questions about situations, facts, and ideas. Questioning skills are built through deliberate scaffolding, using questions that build knowledge and awareness of specific text structures.

Literal Questioning

Students are asked questions that require a response that can be found directly within their text. The students should be prompted to look through the text to find the answer.

Teacher Question Design Considerations:

- Literal questions are based on information that can be directly found within a passage. This skill can be scaffolded by asking the questions immediately after the information is presented in the text. Example: Who, what, when, where questions are often literal questions.

Inferential Questioning

Students are asked questions that require them to respond using information from the text and information that was not directly stated from their own knowledge of the world. The students should be prompted to think and read through the text, and then consider what they already know.

Teacher Question Design Considerations:

- Inferential questions require the learner to apply their knowledge of the world to direct and indirect information from the text. Teachers should create questions that require indirect processing based on relationships, inference, and prior knowledge. (See the Making Inferences section of this guide.)

Evaluative Questioning

Students are asked questions that require them to construct a response that includes analysis of the content, formulation of an opinion, and justification for their response.

Teacher Question Design Considerations:

- Start by asking students to analyze a section of text and make an opinion.
- Then, ask students to integrate text information with their knowledge and experiences to justify their opinion.

MTB-MLE Tips & Strategies for Questioning

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Provide questions in both the Mother Tongue and the target language (LoTL). | 2. Allow learners to answer using any language that feels most comfortable for them. | 3. Provide a word bank on the board for learners who may not remember the words in the target language. | 4. Allow learners to discuss questions and answers in the MT before answering in the target language. |
|--|--|---|---|

Activity: Text Comprehension Cards

Directions:

1. Once the teacher pre-reads a text, develop questions using literal, inferential, and evaluative questions. Try to produce 8-12 questions, doubling if necessary. Write questions on one side of blank notecards.
2. Working with a small group of students, align all questions in rows randomly with the notecard questions facing down.
3. Have students read the story aloud or follow the teacher read aloud. After having students or the teacher read the text aloud a second time, have students pick up a card and answer the question on it through discussion.
4. Continue activity until all cards are face up and answered.



(The Global Center of the Development of the Whole Child, n.d.)

Alternative versions of this activity:

- Instead of cards, **write the questions on the board**, numbering each question. Allow children to choose which question they'd like to answer and/or have students answer specific questions in groups (ex. group 1 answers questions #1, #2, #3, group 2 answers #4 & #5, etc.). Or, if the board has a curtain, the questions can be covered up by the curtain and revealed one at a time.

- Have **students think of their own questions** for the story. They can even use a blank **story map** (see pg 29) as a graphic organizer to help them organize their questions.

- Teachers can use this alternative version to show that good readers are always **monitoring their comprehension** and asking questions to make sure they understand. Children do not need to know if their questions are literal, evaluative or inferential; this categorization is for teachers to use when developing questions.
- Children should be **praised** for asking questions about a text (even if the answer seems obvious to the teacher), because asking questions helps us catch when we've missed something – which happens to all readers sometimes.
- Asking questions also **develops critical thinking skills** to analyze what is missing from the text and signals that we might need to find another book or information source to answer some questions.



7. Making Connections and Building Background with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Use what the reader already knows to connect a text to their own life experiences, the world around them, or to something they learned or read in order to better understand the text.



A good reader isn't passive, but rather, the reader who comprehends well is interacting and bringing his or her experiences to the text. Before reading ask:

- **What background and experiences, or connections do my students bring to the text?**
- **What background and experiences do I need to discuss or provide before reading so students can comprehend the content of the selection?**

Sometimes a simple discussion is enough to activate students' experiences and knowledge. Other times teachers may need to build background in the form of a read-aloud from other texts, a hands-on experience, pictures, making a model, doing an activity indoors/outdoors, etc.

How does prior knowledge and making connections help students comprehend?

Readers construct meaning by using their background or prior knowledge and experiences to integrate with the new information they read and gain from the text. The more readers know about a topic or are able to relate their experiences to the reading, the easier it is to read a text, understand it, and retain the information. Activities used to develop background before reading also allow the teacher to introduce vocabulary students need to understand a text.

Surface Connections vs. Deep Connections

We want to encourage children to not just make surface connections to the text, but deeper connections. It can be valuable for a teacher to model both the 'surface level connection' and the 'deeper connection,' stressing we are striving for making deeper connections. For example:

Surface Connection: 'I have a goat like the main character.'

Deep Connection: 'I connected with the main character when she said she missed her goat. When my family took a trip to visit my grandmother in another village, I missed taking care of my goat!'

Making Connections Strategy: K-W-L Chart

K-W-L is an instructional reading strategy used to guide students through a topic using a graphic organizer with three columns. This acronym can be changed depending on the language. For example, in Swahili the acronym could be N-N-N, i.e. Najua (Know); Nataka (Want); Nafunda (Learn). First, students brainstorm everything they **know** about a given topic, which the teacher records under the K column. Next, students generate a list of questions or concerns about what they **want** to know about the topic, which is recorded under the W column. During or after reading, new information that they **learned** from the text is recorded in the L column; some of the responses in the L column may be answers to the questions in the W column.

K	W	L
What I know	What I want to know	What I learned
Introduce the topic and brainstorm with the class. Note down responses.	Record any question the class has about the topic and/or turn textbook subheadings into questions.	After reading or listening, record what students say they have learned. Note any W Questions that were answered.

Know (Najua)	Want (Nataka)	Learn (Nafunda)
What do you already know?	What do you want to know?	What have you learned?

Implementation steps for the K-W-L Chart

1. Engage the learners in a discussion of the topic.
2. If there is an illustration at the beginning of the text, use it to get learners thinking of what they know already to ask questions or make a few predictions. Write a quick summary of their existing knowledge.
3. Ask them what they still want to know and record it.
4. Have them read the text in partners, and let them know you'll ask them what they've learned.
5. When they tell you what they have learned, fill in the chart, especially nouns which show up in the motivating illustration in the textbook.
 - a) Alternative: Have everyone add a new LoTL word to their word banks, so they're ready for it if they encounter it in the text.



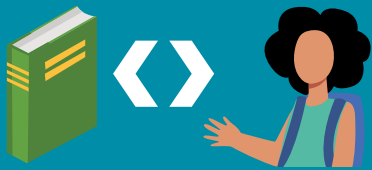


Making Connections Strategy: “Connections Chart” Text-to-Self; Text-to-Text; Text-to-World

Teachers can explicitly teach these three ways of connecting to the text. Teachers can make class charts with these three columns and stop periodically to discuss and record students’ connections. Once students are well-practiced with this, they can create their own chart as they read and record their connections in a notebook, etc.



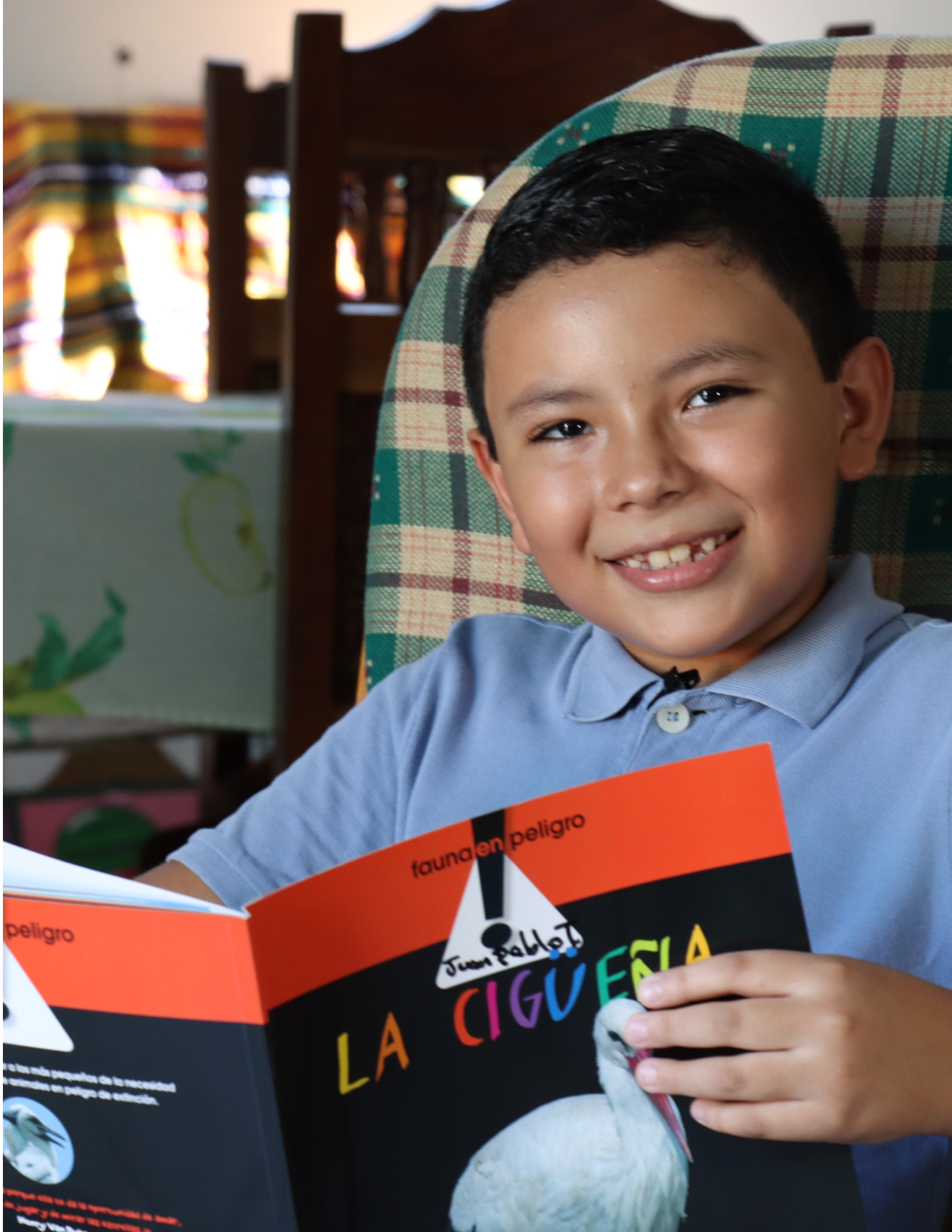
MTB-MLE tips

1. During discussions, engage children in MT first and/or allow them to respond in MT or LoTL.
2. Depending upon their level of LoTL, the captions in the table can be in MT or LoTL.
3. Fill in the charts in LoTL.

 TEXT-TO-SELF A connection between the text and your life or experiences	 TEXT-TO-TEXT A connection between the text and another text you have read	 TEXT-TO-WORLD A connection between the text and events in the world
Example: Like this character, I love to sing while threshing grain with my sisters.	Example: The story of the frogs singing reminds me of the Bremen Town Musicians, because all of them loved each other.	Example: When people march and sing for Black Lives Matter that is also about love.

A Few Warnings and Suggestions About Making Connections:

Teachers can encounter a few problems with all the connecting. Unfortunately, students can often make tangential connections or connections that only relate to some minor detail in the text. It is important for teachers to continue to model making connections so students better understand the type of connections that are most important and effective in comprehending the text. When teachers focus on connections as they come up naturally during reading, and discuss how they help us comprehend, connections become tools to strengthen students’ comprehension.



fauna en peligro

Juan Pablo

LA CIGÜEÑA



peligro

a las más pequeñas de la necesidad
en peligro de extinción.



porque esta es la oportunidad de leer,
de jugar y de aprender cosas nuevas.
Mery Van der...

8. Making Inferences

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Recognize details of a story that are not directly said by the words of the text to more fully understand characters and events.



When we make an inference, we make a good guess about something in the story or text. We guess by combining what we know already with what the text says (or the illustration shows) to understand something new that the author did not include in words (or pictures).

Example:

Imagine you read or see the following in a story:

Text example:

"Eduardo is watching a football match with his friends. Suddenly, they start to cheer and shout happily."

Illustration example:

[The children in this illustration have been watching one of their favorite teams play a football match.]



What do you think happened?

Probably, the reason that Eduardo and his friend started to cheer and shout happily is because Eduardo's team scored a goal. / The team the children support probably just scored a goal, because the children are jumping and celebrating.



They "cheered and shouted happily" while watching a football match / The children are jumping and celebrating.

People usually cheer when their team scores a goal in football.

The team that Eduardo/ the children support scored a goal.

Textual information

+

My Background Knowledge

=

Inference

Why is it important?

Making inferences helps us to better understand texts, because it fills in details about the events or characters of the story that the author/illustrator did NOT mention directly.

Implementation Steps

Step 1: Explain the **definition** of *Making Inferences* to children using a culturally relevant example, using an oral or written statement or an illustration. Explain why *Making Inferences* helps us better understand what we read.

Step 2: Play a **guessing game**, like the Inferences Triangle Game, to help children practicing making inferences with isolated text.

a) Post/Draw the Inference Triangle on the board (see example below).

b) Read aloud each situation and have students guess which answer matches the situation.

- Include 1-2 situations that could have multiple answers to show students that there is NOT always only one correct inference, since we all have differing experiences and background knowledge.



MTB-MLE tip

Use multiple languages each time you play (ex. words in multiple languages on the same triangle; clues in one language & responses in another; etc.).



Situation	Question	Possible answers
Ana came rushing into the room, sweating, panting, trying to catch her breath. "I (hah-hah) ...came (hah-hah)...as fast (hah-hah)...as I (hah-hah)...could (hah-hah)..."	What was Ana doing before she came into the room?	Running
Carlos was helping his mother in the kitchen. "Help me cut these up, please," his mother requested. After a minute, Carlos had tears in his eyes and was sniffing.	What is Carlos doing?	Cutting onions
Nandhini wiped the sweat from her forehead. "I only have 4 more to go until I reach my fitness goal," she panted.	What is Nandhini doing?	Running ; Jumping Jacks;

Step 3: Do an **interactive read-aloud** with children where you **model** how to make inferences, as you read the story, using the following **graphic organizer**:

Question	It says...	I say...	And so...
Step 1: Write the question	Step 2: Find information from the text that will help answer the question.	Step 3: Think about what you know about that information.	Step 4: Combine what the text says with what you know to find an answer (your inference).

Think Aloud your thought process for children, explaining how you find the information in the story, think of your own background knowledge, and combine them. Then ask children to do the same for each step.

- Making good inferences takes **time** to think and reflect, so model taking time to think, and give children time before inviting responses.
- Gradually move towards modeling higher-level inferences that are not about people or events, but more about ideas.

Note: Choose books that (1) are interesting/motivating to children to read about, and (2) that only require background knowledge the children already have. Otherwise, build up their background knowledge before reading the book.

Step 4: Allow children to practice using the Inferences Graphic Organizer in small groups, pairs and/or independently.

MTB-MLE tip

After children finish explaining their reasoning, say, "Great! Very interesting. Can you think of another way to say it?"



9. Visualizing with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Deepens reader understanding of texts they read and listen to as they imagine the story events visually.



Good readers draw pictures in their minds about what they are reading by paying attention to descriptive details in a text. Creating pictures or images in their minds that represent ideas, people, and objects help readers to understand and remember what they are reading (The Classroom Nook, n.d.).

Visualizing taps into what readers already know and are familiar with and helps them understand texts. This strategy also supports readers in making sense of fictional and informational texts, including content area texts, which is a very important skill for multilingual learning. As they learn to visualize, students become more fully engaged in the texts they read. There are no right or wrong answers when children visualize; each reader will create their own mental images based on what they already know (Short et al., 1996).

Visualizing with **narrative texts** involves creating mental images of characters, events, and settings, while visualizing **informational and content area texts** may involve illustrating and/or labeling main ideas, events, and details of topics. When applicable, readers should use all 5 senses to visualize (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2021).

Teachers can introduce visualizing before, during and after a read-aloud, shared reading, and/or independent reading. They should also give learners plenty of time to practice this skill.



For language learners, it is always important to **build learners' vocabulary** to help them express what they are visualizing:

- ★ Start with texts with topics and contexts children are familiar with and appeal to the senses, like a favorite local food or place.
- ★ Always start by asking learners what they know about the context. Teachers can then **build background knowledge** as they introduce texts with unfamiliar topics.
 - The **K-W-L Chart** (discussed on pg 42-44 in this guide) can help build children's vocabulary: Children start with what they know, move to what they want to know, and finally summarize or chart what they have learned from listening or reading.

- Sometimes, more detailed visualizations are needed to understand the story more deeply (ex. make inferences). For example, in a story where a character climbs a particular type of tree, it may be helpful for readers to understand what *that* tree looks like and feels like to know how easy or difficult it is to climb that type of tree.

Two activities to facilitate visualizing based upon text, either heard or read, include:

★ **Using our Senses** : Involves using a read aloud to prompt students to describe the objects in the story using their 5 senses (see more below)

★ **Sketch to Stretch**: Asks students to quickly draw/sketch what is described in a text (see Annex 4 for more details)

USING OUR SENSES

Why is it important?

It teaches children how to visualize and comprehend texts using their senses.

How is it taught?

Read a story or poem that is rich in imagery and descriptive language that appeals to the senses. During and/or after reading the story, teachers should model the strategy by reading a selection of the text and using **Think Alouds** to demonstrate visualizing using the senses. Next, they prompt children to describe what they see, what they hear and smell and what objects might feel like. Teachers can use prompts like the ones below to help learners articulate what they are visualizing.

Senses	Sentence starter
Taste	It tastes like...
Smell	It smells like...
Sight	It looks like...
Touch	It feels like...

✱ Other sentence prompts can be:
In my mind I can picture
In my mind I can see ...

MTB-MLE tips

1. Introduce the strategy in the LoTL & then explain it in another language.
2. Review vocabulary (i.e. senses) in MT and then introduce the same words in LoTL.
3. Explain the sentence starters in the MT, model how to use them in the LoTL and have children practice the sentence prompts orally and/or in writing in the LoTL.



10. Cause and Effect

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

to explain why or how something happened/happens

Effect = what happened

Cause = why it happened



Students can use their skills for identifying cause and effect in texts to better understand relationships between ideas, characters, events, and concepts found within and across texts. Students can be guided to apply recognition strategies and complete graphic organizers to build their comprehension of the texts they read.

Narrative Texts

The Cause/Effect graphic organizers and recognition strategies can be used with narrative texts to determine how and why events happen in stories.

Informational Texts

The Cause/Effect graphic organizers and recognition strategies can be used with informational texts to determine how and why processes happen in the real world.

Signal Words and Phrases

Following the gradual release model, teachers can teach signal words and phrases and use comprehension question frames together with graphic organizers in both MT and LoTL before, during, and after reading to help children learn to identify causes and effects in texts.

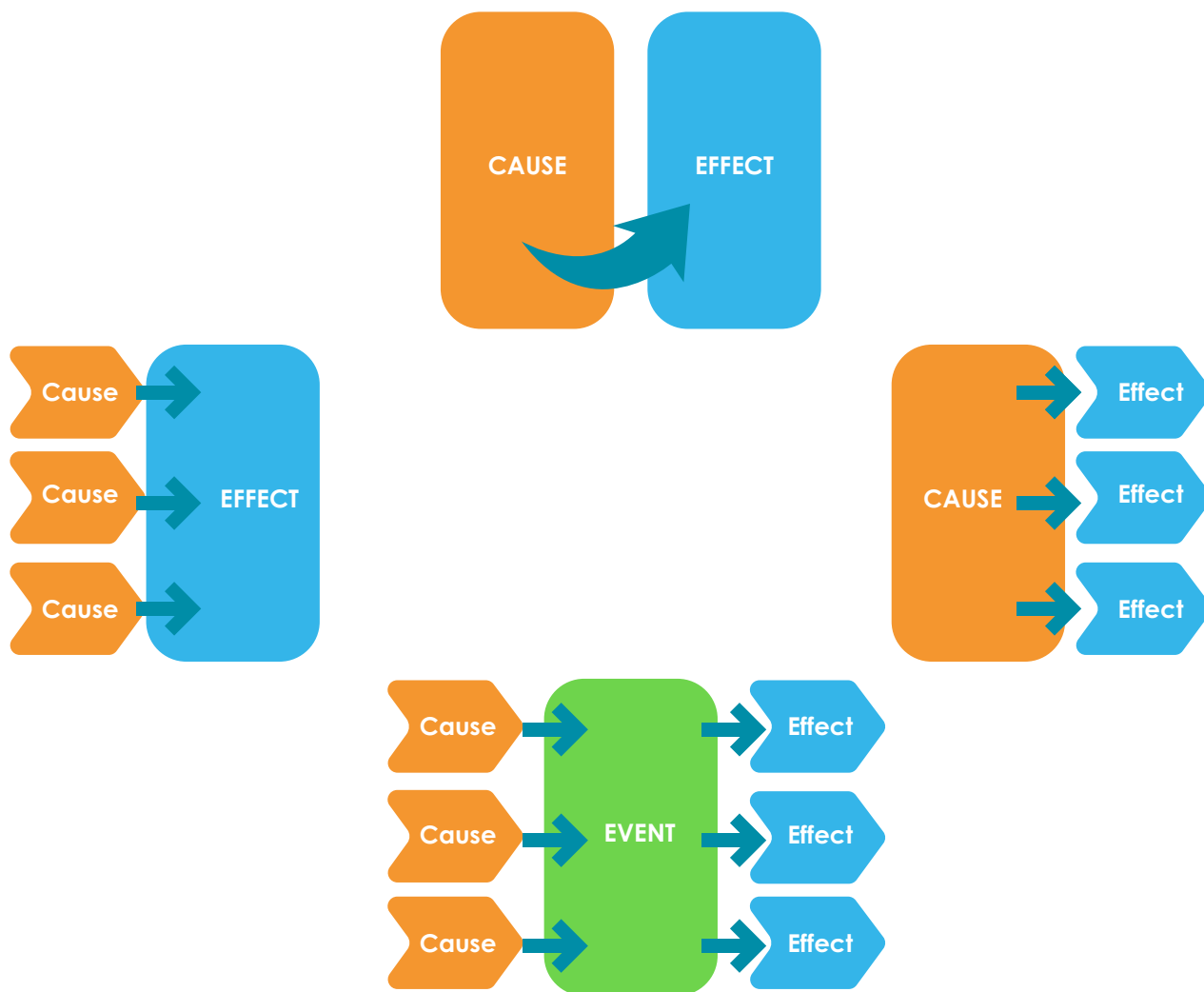
as a result	if...then	outcome	because
Impact	reasons for	consequently	in order to
since	due to	influenced by	so that
effects of	is caused by	therefore	for this reason
leads to	thus	how	when...then



Comprehension Question Frames:

1. What were the specific events that happened?
2. Why did the events happen? What were the causes?
3. What were the results or outcomes of these events happening?
4. What was the effect?
5. Did prior events cause or influence the main event? If so, in what ways?
6. What is the significance of the event and/or the results (outcomes)?

(Adapted from Center on Instruction, 2021)



MTB-MLE Tips

1. Teachers can provide a bank of words for use in the graphic organizer that are written in both the students' MT and/or the LoTL.
2. Students can be encouraged to discuss the text and complete the graphic organizer in the language(s) they are most comfortable using, producing code-meshed writing. Then, the teacher can decide if it is appropriate to summarize learning in a single language.
3. Students can read a text in the LoTL, discuss and fill the graphic organizer in their MT, and then summarize their learning in the LoTL.
4. Teachers can provide text in multiple languages to facilitate multilingual students' reading, discussion, and understanding of the concepts.



11. Problem and Solution

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

To state one or more problems and provide one or more solutions to the problem that take place in a text.



Students can use their skills for identifying problems and solutions in texts to better understand relationships between ideas, characters, events, and concepts found within and across texts. Students can be guided to apply recognition strategies and complete graphic organizers to build their comprehension of the texts they read.

Narrative Texts

The Problem/Solution graphic organizers and recognition strategies can be used with narrative texts to determine how problems can be solved in or across stories.

Informational Texts

The Problem/Solution graphic organizers and recognition strategies can be used with informational texts to determine how problems can be solved in the real world.

Signal Words and Phrases

Following the gradual release model, teachers can teach signal words and phrases and use comprehension question frames together with graphic organizers in both MT and LoTL before, during, and after reading to help children learn to identify problems and possible solutions in and across texts.

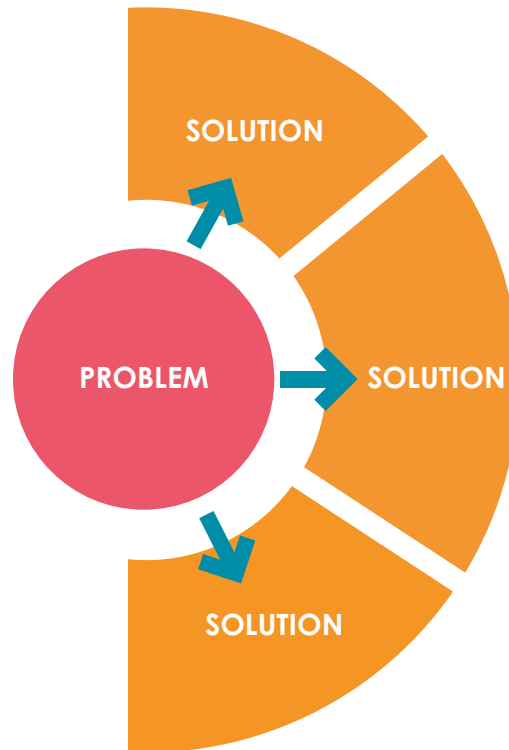
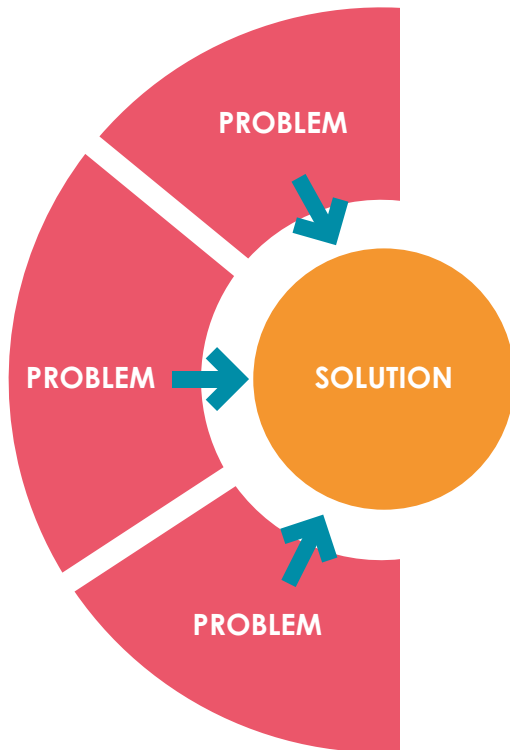
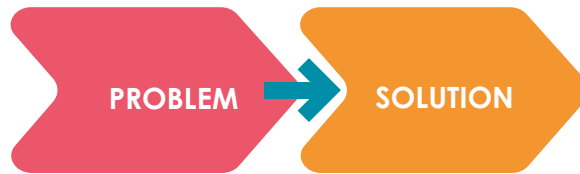
advantage	disadvantage	question	answer
in order to	since	as a result of	issue
so that	because	led to	solution
cause	problem	solved	dilemma
puzzle	result	resolved	concern



Comprehension Question Frames:

1. What is the problem?
2. Who has the problem?
3. Why is it a problem?
4. What is causing the problem?
5. What solutions have been suggested or tried?
6. What are the pros and cons of various solutions?
7. Which solutions worked or seem to have the best chance for solving the problem?

(Adapted from Center on Instruction, 2021)



MTB-MLE Tips

1. Teachers can provide a bank of words for use in the graphic organizer that are written in both the students' MT and/or the LoTL.
2. Students can be encouraged to discuss the text and complete the graphic organizer in the language(s) they are most comfortable using, producing code-meshed writing. Then, the teacher can decide if it is appropriate to summarize learning in a single language.
3. Students can read a text in the LoTL, discuss and fill the graphic organizer in their MT, and then summarize their learning in the LoTL.
4. Teachers can provide text in multiple languages to facilitate multilingual students' reading, discussion, and understanding of the concepts.



12. Comparing and Contrasting

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Identify what is the same and different about two or more things (e.g., people, objects, ideas) to better understand the text.



The Compare and Contrast graphic organizer can help students compare two or more things in a story or informational text.

Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizer

In narrative text, relationships between characters, settings, and events can be identified and described. One way to identify and understand these relationships is by comparing and contrasting what is the same and different in the specific story element. For example, readers can think about how two characters are alike and different using a Venn Diagram (see example below). With informational text, events in the world around us can be examined. For example, how the weather in the rainy season is the same and different from the weather in the dry season.

Signal Words and Phrases

Words that are used to Compare			Words that are used to Contrast		
alike	both	just like	different	but	different from
same	similar	in common	although	unlike	in contrast
also	the same as	compared to	opposite	however	but



Comprehension Question Frames

1. What things are being compared?
2. How are the things the same, or alike?
3. How are the two things different?

Summary Sentence Frame

Students can summarize their findings by completing a sentence like the one below, orally or in writing:

_____ and _____ are both _____. Both _____ and _____ have _____ and _____.
 _____ and _____ are different because _____ but, _____ is/are not.

MTB-MLE Tips

1. Use pictures to show what happens in the story or in the informational text. Write the name of the item in the picture in MT and LoTL. Point to the pictures as you write the information.
2. Have students provide answers in MT and the teacher repeats the sentence in the LoTL.
3. Key words can be written in the MT and LoTL. For example, in the story about the tortoise and the hare, the key words are: race, slow, fast, quiet, tortoise, hare, win.



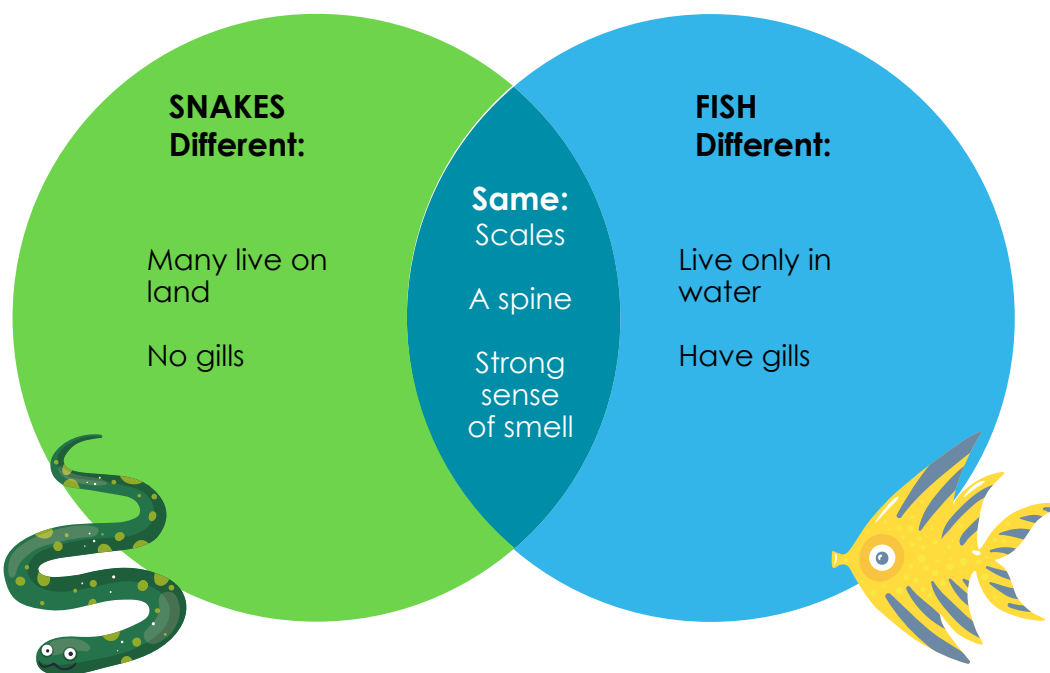
Narrative Text Compare/Contrast Venn Diagram: Tortoise and Hare



Sentence Frame:

Tortoise and hare are both animals. Both tortoise and hare have the same friends and agree to run a race to see who is the fastest. Tortoise and hare are different because hare is fast, but tortoise is not. (Images: Can Stock Photo)

Informational Text Compare/Contrast Venn Diagram: Snakes vs. Fish



13. Main Idea and Details

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

To identify a topic, idea, concept, or event by recognizing details or examples in a text that explain the main topic.



Students can use their skills for identifying the main idea and details in texts to better understand a topic, idea, concept, or event. Specifically, identifying the main idea and details in a text will help students recognize important information, ignore unimportant information, and summarize ideas. Students can be guided to apply recognition strategies and complete graphic organizers to build their comprehension of the texts they read.

Narrative Texts

The Main Idea and Detail graphic organizers and recognition strategies can be used with narrative texts to determine the important information and supporting details in or across stories. For example, when retelling a folktale, the main ideas could be the key events in the story, while the details describe what happen during those events.

Informational Texts

The Main Idea and Detail graphic organizers and recognition strategies can be used with informational texts to determine what topics are the most important and find information that supports those topics.

Signal Words and Phrases

Following the gradual release model, teachers can teach signal words and phrases and use comprehension question frames together with graphic organizers in both MT and LoTL before, during, and after reading to help children learn to identify the main ideas and details in texts.

appears to be
for instance
specifically

for example
most importantly
features

made up of
consists of
such as

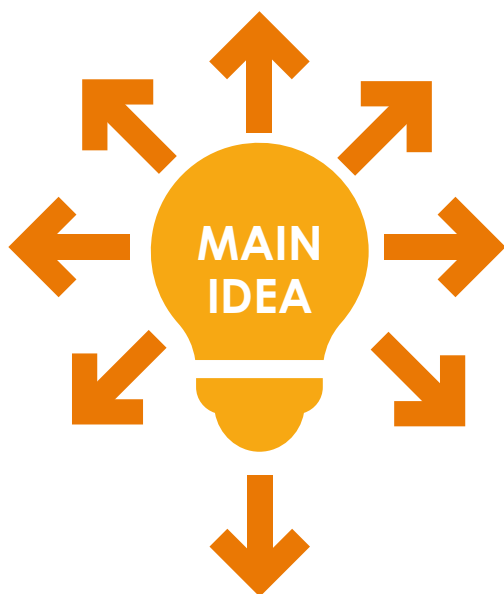
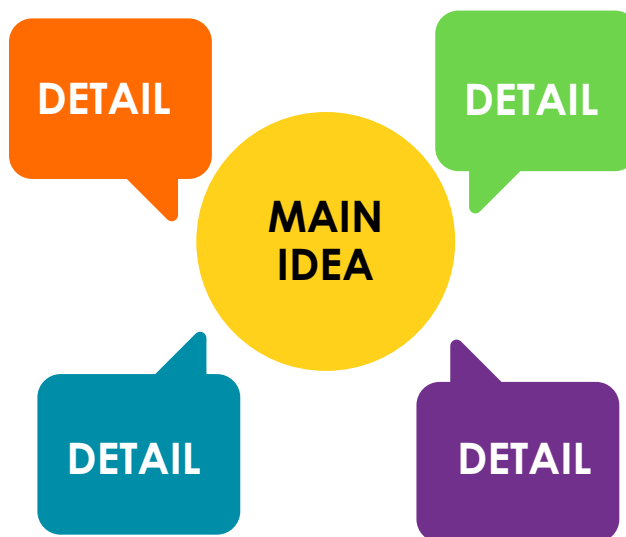
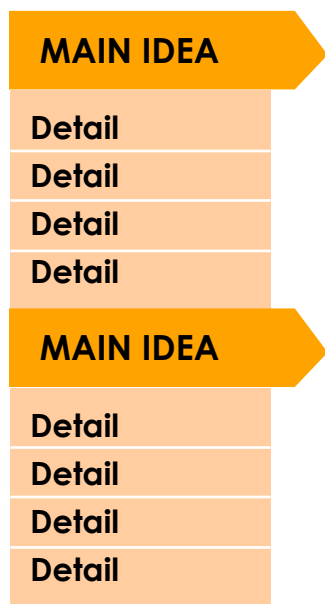
characteristics
in fact
looks like



Comprehension Question Frames

1. What is being described?
2. What is this passage mostly about?
3. What is happening in this passage?
4. How is the topic being described or explained?
5. What are the most important attributes or characteristics?
6. What specific information supports what is being discussed?
7. What important point does the author want to express?
8. What information is included at the beginning and at the end of the passage?
9. What information is in the middle of the passage?
10. What information helps me understand the message?

(Adapted from Center on Instruction, 2021)



MTB-MLE Tips

1. Teachers can provide a bank of words for use in the graphic organizer that are written in both the students' MT and/or the LoTL.
2. Students can be encouraged to discuss the text and complete the graphic organizer in the language(s) they are most comfortable using, producing code-meshed writing. Then, the teacher can decide if it is appropriate to summarize learning in a single language.
3. Students can read a text in the LoTL, discuss and fill the graphic organizer in their MT, and then summarize their learning in the LoTL.
4. Teachers can provide text in multiple languages to facilitate multilingual students' reading, discussion, and understanding of the concepts.



14. Summarizing

with MTB-MLE tips



Purpose

Summarizing helps us pay attention, understand, and remember what we read.



The Concept of Summarizing

Which picture of crayons would you use to understand what you are looking at? How many crayons are shown? What colors are the crayons? Are there more red crayons or blue crayons?

What is the difference in the way the crayons are shown? The crayons in the second picture are organized. When we organize, we put things together that go together. Organizing is necessary for understanding. Our brains require organizing for understanding and remembering.

Summarizing is thinking about how the words we are reading go together in an organized way. We look for how the sentences are connected and what they are telling us. So, when we summarize the sentences we are reading, we think about how the sentences are connected. Then we give that "chunk" of sentences a label (categorize). Here is a brief example:

THE TEXT

I saw a strange animal on my way home from school. It had four legs. The front legs were brown and the back legs had yellow and black stripes. It had a head like a giraffe, but its body looked like a lion. Strangest of all, instead of a tail, it had an umbrella.



THE CONNECTION

(what the sentences talk about)

The strange animal's body.

Summarizing is often thought of as a task we ask students to do after they read. They are expected to select the important parts of the text for a brief summary. However, summarizing is also an essential process that effective readers use to make meaning **while** they read. We can teach inexperienced readers the process of summarizing and build their awareness of how this strategy increases their ability to remember, discuss, understand the author's purpose, locate information and write succinct and accurate summaries.

Teaching Students to Summarize (Chunk) Text while Reading

Step 1. Tell students what you are teaching, why you are teaching it and how it will help them.

Teacher: Sometimes when I am reading, I am so busy reading the words on the page that when I get to the bottom, I don't know what the words said. Does that ever happen to you? I am going to show you a way to read so that doesn't happen.

Step 2. Develop the concept of organizing for clarity and understanding.

Teacher: Understanding and remembering is always easier when I put things together that go together. I'll show you.

- Dump a pile of manipulatives (Ex. Pencils & pens, colored chips, painted stones) on a table and ask questions about what they see (Ex. How many ____ are there on the table? How many of each color are there? Which color has the most?)
- Ask if there is a way to make the pile clear and easy to understand? Share ideas. Try them and compare how organizing (chunking) makes things understandable.

Step 3. Demonstrate how the words we read can be organized.

Teacher: We can also group or chunk what we read to help us understand and remember better. Watch and listen as I read and chunk a story we know. When I'm finished, I will ask you to tell-back what you saw and heard.

- Tell the story quickly but when the tale changes from one scene to the next, stop.

Teacher: Wait a minute! That sounds like something new is happening. Now the story is starting a new scene/idea – a new chunk. It is different than before – just like we made a new group for a different color before. What were those sentences about? What did they all talk about?

- Decide on a phrase or sentence that represents the first scene/event or first main idea. (Ex1. Goldilocks finds 3 bowls of porridge. Ex 2. Pigs have a strong sense of smell.) Write or draw that connection (Main Idea/Event) on a large card.
- Chunk the whole story/text. Then place the cards in a row and ask the students to retell the story. Encourage elaboration. Next, review the steps of the summarizing strategy. Prompt students as they recall what they saw you say and do.

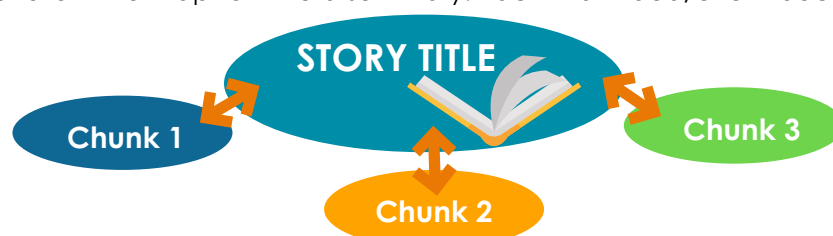
MTB-MLE tip

Allow children to describe their ideas in their Mother Tongue, perhaps with a partner, and/or write the "chunk" phrases in more than one language.



Step 4. Use the main idea/event statements, on the cards, to draw a semantic map (like the one below)

- Model how you follow the map to write a summary. Each main idea/event becomes a sentence.



Step 5. Provide guided practice chunking a story starting at the students' independent reading level

- When students can read 95% of the words with fluency, gradually increase independence so students organize (chunk) while reading and notetaking. Use shared readings for informal assessment of application.



ANNEX 1: REFERENCES

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1. Pictures / images used in this section were taken from the sources mentioned in the document and used various forms of Creative Commons Licensing (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) as follows:
 - Anna's Extraordinary Experiments with Weather: <https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/28270-anna-s-extraordinary-experiments-with-weather>
 - Garden of Medicines: <https://digitallibrary.io/book/garden-of-medicines/>
 - Layla's Project: <https://digitallibrary.io/book/laylas-project/>
 - The Seed Savers: <https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/41319-the-seed-savers>
 - Why does a Poori Puff Up? <https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/3841-why-does-a-poori-puff-up>
 - So Many Leaves: <https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/259479-so-many-leaves>
 - Where Did your Dimples Go?: <https://digitallibrary.io/book/where-did-your-dimples-go/>
 - Animal Homes: <https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/61292-animal-homes>
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1. The illustration used in this section is an original work donated to this guide by Abbey Koutnik.
2. This section draws and adapts resources from [Save the Children's Deeper Comprehension Guide: 101 Activities to Boost Students' Reading Comprehension](#) (pg16, 89-90) and Save the Children's Literacy Boost Teacher Training Manual (pg 66), which themselves are drawn from https://fccr.org/sites/g/files/upcbnu2836/files/media/PDFs/student_center_activities/45_text_analysis/45_c028_more_incredible_inferences.pdf & <https://www.readingrockets.org/pdfs/inference-graphic-organizer.pdf>

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2. Short, K., Harste, J., & Burke, C. (1996) *Creating classrooms for authors and inquirers* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
3. WETA Public Broadcasting. (2021). *Visual Imagery*. Reading Rockets.
Retrieved from: https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/visual_imagery
4. The illustration used in this section is an original work that was donated to this guide by an anonymous artist. The artist has given permission for anyone to use/adapt the image.

Summarizing with MTB-MLE tips:

1. The crayons in a row: Pixabay
<https://pixabay.com/es/photos/lápices-de-color-arte-escuela-2667761/>
2. The crayons in a circle: Pxfuel
<https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-ozecz>
3. Child thinking: Rawpixel / Freepik https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/question-mark-icon-thinking-solution_16483543.htm#page=1&query=child%20thinking&position=17

Photographs used in this Guide

1. Cover page: Reading club in Kamonyi District, Southern Province, Rwanda. Photo Credit: Thacien Biziyaremye, Save the Children
2. Girl learning to read in Creole, Haiti. Photo Credit: LAC Reads Capacity Program
3. Boy reading at home, San Salvador, El Salvador. Photo Credit: Iván Flores, LAC Reads Capacity Program
4. Girl reading at home, San Salvador, El Salvador. Photo Credit: Iván Flores, LAC Reads Capacity Program
5. Boy learning to read in Creole, Haiti. Photo Credit: LAC Reads Capacity Program

ANNEX 2: RESEARCH SUMMARY

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOSTERING READING COMPREHENSION IN THE EARLY GRADES

What is reading comprehension and why does it matter?

Reading comprehension can be defined as “the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (RAND Study Group, 2002). Therefore, while students must be taught the pre-requisite decoding and fluency skills, comprehension in and of itself is the fundamental goal of reading (Kim et al., 2016).

It is imperative that education practitioners work to address deficit comprehension skills among early grade students. Results from the Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study's (TERCE) third-grade reading assessment found that 61% of students at the regional level were within performance levels I and II. However, significant variation in achievement between countries exists. For example, all LAC Reads Program countries that participated, which included Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, scored below the regional average (Flotts et al., 2015). If we assume that ultimately knowing how to read is to understand what is being read and to be able to interact with the text, and to know how to write is to adequately express thinking by producing our own texts, we can affirm that the fundamental problem facing Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of literacy, is the learning and teaching of reading comprehension.

How can we best address the low levels of comprehension among early grade students?

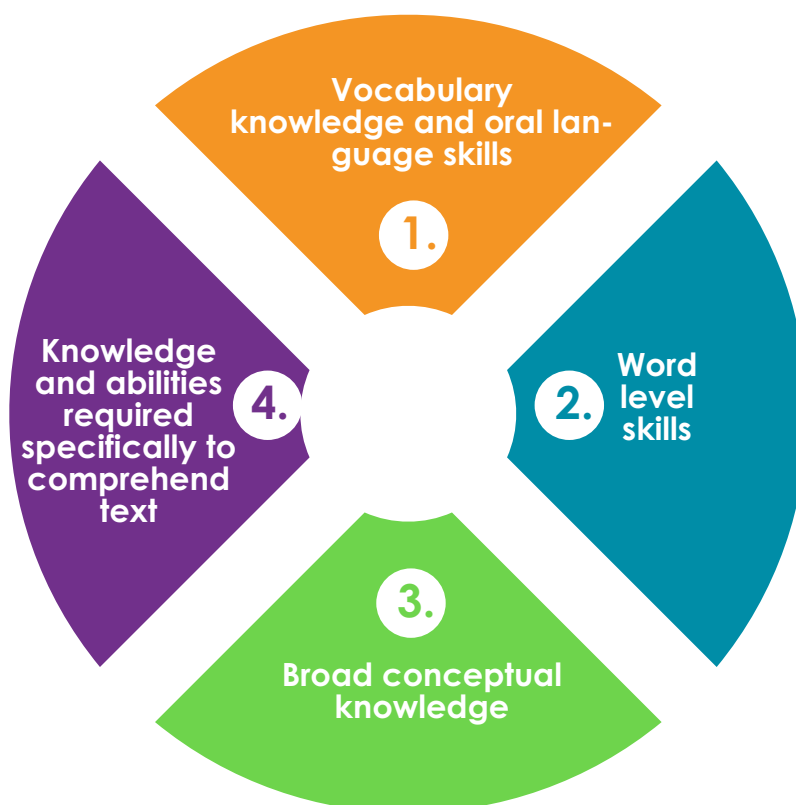
In addition to building the prerequisite phonemic awareness and fluency skills, teachers need to dedicate sufficient instructional time to explicitly teach (1) vocabulary and oral language skills and (2) various comprehension strategies, and these are both taught best utilizing participatory and active methods.



A framework for understanding reading comprehension

Research conducted by Dr. Timothy Shanahan on reading comprehension indicates that the following skills and knowledge are critical to building a young students' capacity to comprehend what he or she reads (Shanahan, 2010):

- 1. Vocabulary knowledge and oral language skills** help readers to understand the meaning of words and connected text. Instruction in this area involves strategies to build vocabulary and activities to strengthen listening comprehension.
- 2. Word-level skills** allow students to identify, or decode, words in text accurately and fluently. Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, word analysis strategies (especially phonemic decoding), and sight word vocabulary, together with sufficient practice help to increase fluency while reading.
- 3. Broad conceptual knowledge** includes not only general knowledge of the world but also knowledge drawn from science, social studies and other areas. An information-rich curriculum can help students develop the background that is necessary for good reading comprehension.
- 4. Knowledge and abilities required specifically to comprehend text** include an understanding of the different ways text can be structured and the ability to use a repertoire of cognitive strategies.



1. Vocabulary & oral language skills

Evidence

Studies have found that even with proficient word reading, students cannot achieve reading comprehension without listening comprehension skills (Kim et al., 2016; Shanahan, 2010). Vocabulary and oral language skills help students to understand the meaning of words in written text. Therefore, as early as possible and especially in multilingual contexts, teachers should frequently use activities that (1) broaden students' conceptual knowledge, (2) strengthen their listening comprehension and (3) expand their vocabulary (Kim et al., 2016).

Multilingual contexts

Evidence suggests that students learn to read best in their mother tongue (L1) precisely because they can utilize prior vocabulary and language skills to aid in decoding and comprehension (Benson & Kosonen, 2013). Since students oftentimes have limited prior exposure to the language of instruction (L2), activities that strengthen oral language skills from the outset are paramount to achieving later reading success (Kim et al., 2016). Frequent repetition, scaffolding and first language support can help language learners to successfully bridge the gap between L1 and L2 (August et al., 2014).

Pedagogical strategies

- Expose children to high-quality language daily: ask open-ended questions and extend discussions. (Dickinson & Proche, 2011)
- Explicitly teach vocabulary words both before reading and in context to model their appropriate and varied uses.
- Dialogic Approach: Read books several times and prompt students with questions on vocabulary and content (Opel et al., 2009).
- Teach students to use familiar morphemes in words as potential clues to their meaning (Kim et al., 2016).
- Use class discussions to build students' background knowledge on a topic before teaching new vocabulary or content.
- Have students practice new vocabulary and language structures often and via low-stake activities such as group or pair work.



2. Word-level skills: decoding & fluency

Evidence

While decoding and fluency are not the end goals of reading, they play a critical role in comprehension by allowing attention and working memory to be freed up for comprehension (Kim, 2015; Kim, Park & Wagner, 2015). Without achieving a threshold reading fluency, students lack the capacity to both decode text and simultaneously extract meaning. Therefore, early-grade teachers should develop students' word-level skills through systematic phonics instruction that scaffolds from easier and more frequent letter-sounds and successfully builds to harder and less frequent combinations with increasing accuracy and fluency (Shanahan, 2010).

Pedagogical strategies

- Model fluent reading everyday- students need to hear and internalize fluent reading (Rasinski et al., 2009).
- Use small groups and one-on-one activities to practice decoding and word analysis strategies (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017).
- Use decodable readers that reinforce previously taught sounds (Sánchez-Vincitore, 2017).
- Employ various visual, audio and kinesthetic modalities to teach letter sounds.
- Dictation helps students see the connection between the sequence of sounds and their orthographic symbols (Senechal et al., 2012).

3. Explicitly teach comprehension strategies

Evidence

Comprehension strategies can be defined as, “the intentional application of a cognitive routine by a reader to enhance their understanding, overcome difficulties, and compensate for imperfect knowledge related to the text” (Shanahan, 2010).

Strong readers employ various forms of thinking or comprehension strategies as they read. Therefore, it is imperative that beginning readers are explicitly taught how and what to think about when reading, otherwise they may fail to extract meaning altogether.

Recent studies suggest that teaching reading comprehension strategies has positive effects on the comprehension of primary-grade students as measured by standardized tests (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017; Shanahan, 2010). At the same time, Suarez et al. found that high achieving readers employed almost double the amount of cognitive and metacognitive strategies as struggling readers did to understand a difficult text (Suarez et al., 2013).

Because a number of different cognitive and oral language skills are involved with comprehension, it is not only necessary to explicitly teach strategies but also to actively encourage students to employ them regularly when reading.

Comprehension strategies curriculum

There are many different comprehension strategies that can be taught sequentially or simultaneously to promote reading comprehension. While not exhaustive, the following list are some important ones to consider including in early-grade curriculums:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| •Cause and effect | •Inferences | •Re-telling | •Summarizing |
| •Prediction | •Visualization | •Self-monitoring | •Text structure |
| •Main idea & Details | •Narrative elements | •Compare & contrast | •Make Connections |

Source: Shanahan, 2010; Walsh & Sattes, 2011



Pedagogical strategies

- Explicitly teach strategies via a gradual release model. Begin by explaining the process, model its use via think-alouds and give students ample opportunities to practice with increasingly difficult texts (Shanahan, 2010).
- Use graphic organizers to draw attention to the various structures of narrative and expository texts (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017).
- To peak students' interest and activate prior knowledge, lead discussions on related topics or dilemmas prior to starting.
- As students become proficient in discussing texts, allow students to lead their own discussions by posing questions to one another (Brown et al., 1995; Shanahan, 2010).
- Use story maps to draw students' attention to reoccurring structures in narrative texts (Shanahan, 2010).
- Develop high-order questions that should be asked before, during and after reading to encourage students to think deeply.
- Teachers should introduce students to a variety of genres of texts (Kendeou et al., 2016).
- When selecting texts, practitioners should consider (1) the depth of ideas presented (2) its level of difficulty and (3) whether its content supports the lesson's purpose (Shanahan, 2010).

Using Questions to Develop Comprehension Skills

The use of questions as a teaching strategy is both a powerful and effective tool for developing comprehension skills in children. Questions are a kind of “cognitive path” for organizing and analyzing information in a way that is understandable. Therefore, appropriately scaffolded questions can help early grade students to build the critical thinking skills necessary to meaningfully extract and construct meaning from increasingly difficult texts. Walsh and Sattes (2012) present a framework of five functions that teachers should implement to create a classroom culture that nurtures and supports student thinking. The five functions include:

- **Align questions** with the instructional purpose.
- **Strengthen student's thinking** by considering both their language and academic levels when developing questions and evaluating their responses.
- **Use questions as formative feedback** to both inform future instructional plans and to advance student thinking and interest in content.
- **Promote response-ability-** engage all students in thinking and responding to questions to promote ownership of their own learning.
- **Develop a culture of thinking** by partnering with students to create an environment in which thinking is expected, valued and celebrated.

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ANNEX 3: EXAMPLE TEXTS TO USE FOR MODELING/PRACTICING EACH READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY/SKILL

If you are having trouble finding books that are easy to use for practicing specific reading comprehension strategies/skills, here are a few suggestions from open-source platforms that you can print out and/or project in your classroom.

Note: You may need to translate and/or adapt them to make them more culturally relevant for your context.

Circular Texts:



Some of the following examples have simple circular sequences, while others mix linear and circular structures or have other adaptations of the simple circular structure. For the circular story structures that are mixed or adapted, teachers may need to adapt the circular sequence graphic organizer (on pg 35) to fit the story.

- The Fly Over the Pond - Global Digital Library
<https://digitallibrary.io/book/the-fly-over-the-pond/>
- Meal Time (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3454-meal-time/>
- Cloud Party (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3453-cloud-party/>
- Baby Goes Up (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3395-baby-goes-up/>
- Let's Play Football (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3399-let-s-play-football/>
- Mangoes Everywhere (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3401-mangoes-everywhere/>
- Rooster is Fast (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3403-rooster-is-fast/>
- We See (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3404-we-see/>
- Everyone Sees (literacycloud.org)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3455-everyone-sees/>



Informational Texts:



Some of the following examples can be used with several different comprehension strategies/skills, but we have labeled a couple that are particularly good for practicing identification of certain informational text structures.

- The Case of the Missing Water - StoryWeaver
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/34911-the-case-of-the-missing-water>
- Fossils: Tales of Long Ago - StoryWeaver
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/268344-fossils-tales-of-long-ago>
- How Heavy Is Heavy? - StoryWeaver
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/28266-how-heavy-is-heavy>
- Making Friends with Snakes (But from a Distance) - StoryWeaver
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/93901-making-friends-with-snakes-but-from-a-distance>
- Inside the World Wide Web - Global Digital Library
<https://digitallibrary.io/book/inside-the-world-wide-web/>
- Wild Cat! Wild Cat! - StoryWeaver: Generalization
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/21618-wild-cat-wild-cat>
- The Novel Coronavirus: We Can Stay Safe - StoryWeaver
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/128586-the-novel-coronavirus-we-can-stay-safe>
- Gadawila: Earthworms (literacycloud.org) : Describes the function of earthworm (Sri Lanka)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/3626-gadawila-earthworms/>
- If the Lights Went Out (literacycloud.org) : Cause and Effect—what would happen if the lights went out? (Indonesia)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/870-if-the-lights-went-out/>
- Umang's New House (literacycloud.org) : Sequence (Indonesia)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/857-umang-s-new-house/>
- Different or the Same? (literacycloud.org): Compare and contrast (Indonesia)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/854-different-or-the-same/>
- The World Without Wheels (literacycloud.org): Generalization (Indonesia)
<https://literacycloud.org/stories/860-the-world-without-wheels/>

Texts for Making Inferences:



From **Bloom SIL** (can download for easy translation into other languages using free Bloom software)

- **The Moon and the Cap:** <https://bloomlibrary.org/phash:FACD36C463CA8332>
 - English, French, Swahili, Cebuano, Filipino, Tibetan, and others
 - Good for different types of inferences
- **A Tiny Seed:** *The Story of Wangari Maathai:*
<https://bloomlibrary.org/language:en/book/xtDFOOj29m?lang=en>
 - English (African context)
- **Mulongo and the Hyenas:** <https://bloomlibrary.org/book/kGUb5nAp9S>
 - English, French, Hausa, Swahili, Tswana, Ffulfulde, Masaabe, and others
 - Good for inferences about characters

Global Digital Library

- **A Pizza Planet:** <https://digitallibrary.io/book/a-pizza-planet/?book-category=library-books>
 - English
 - Especially good for inferring the character's emotions
- **Whose button is this?:**
<https://digitallibrary.io/book/whose-button-is-this/?book-category=library-books>
 - English
 - Good for different types of inferences
- **« Mon poisson ! » « Non, mon poisson ! » / “My Fish !” “No, my fish” / “¡Mi pez!” “¡No, mi pez!”**
 - Français / French:
<https://digitallibrary.io/fr/book/mon-poisson-non-mon-poisson/?book-category=library-books>
 - English: <https://digitallibrary.io/book/my-fish-no-my-fish/>
 - Español/ Spanish: <https://digitallibrary.io/es-ni/book/mi-pezo-no-mi-pezo/>
 - Good for inferences about character traits/personalities
- **Brushing is no fun / Se brosser n'est pas amusant /**
 - English: <https://digitallibrary.io/book/brushing-is-no-fun/>
 - Français / French: <https://digitallibrary.io/fr/book/se-brosser-nest-pas-amusant/>
 - Good for inferences about character traits and why they do/don't do certain health behaviors





The Reading Comprehension Interest Group

