



Reading Strategies

What Do Good Readers Do?

What Can You Do to Become a Better Reader?

(Based on information in Expanding Expectations: Reading)



Before Reading

- **Set a Purpose for Reading**

Think if you will you be reading to find out what happens in a story or to learn specific information.

- **Preview the Text**

Look at the title, pictures, captions under pictures, headings, bold-faced print and other graphics.

- **Activate Background Knowledge**

Think about what you already know about the content of what you will read.

- **Predict**

Think what might happen in the story, what words may be used, or what information the text might contain.



During Reading

- **Cross-check**

Check one cue with another. Ask yourself, "Does this word look right, sound right, and make sense?"

- **Reread**

When problems occur, return to the beginning of a sentence or paragraph and read it again.

- **Predict and Confirm**

Ask yourself, "What word do I expect to see?", "What do I think will happen next?", "Did that make sense?", or "Am I finding the answers to my questions about this topic?"

- **Skip, Read On, and Go Back**

Sometimes you can skip an unfamiliar word and read to the end of the sentence or paragraph, thinking about what would make sense. Then, using the context, go back and reread to try to

determine the word.

- **Connect Background Knowledge to the Information in the Text**

Think about what you already know about the subject and the kind of material you are reading. Think about how the information is similar to what you already know about the topic, event, or person. If you have many questions about the topic or the kind of book, you may need to ask someone for help.

- **Think About Explicit and Implicit Information**

Think about what information is given directly. Also think about what you know from reading that is not directly stated in words such as how a character's actions show feelings or why things may have happened based on the clues the author gave.

- **Stop and Review**

If you are reading a longer text, stop and think about what has happened in the story so far or what information has been given.



After Reading

- **Retell and Summarize**

Tell someone or write what happened in the story, including characters, plot, and important events. If you read a nonfiction piece, review what information was presented.

- **Use a Graphic Organizer**

Use a story map, biography wheel, Venn diagram, or other way to show what was included in what you read. (You may need to check with your teacher for suggestions.)

- **Draw Conclusions**

Think about what predictions you made before and during reading. Look back and think about what you have read. Consider how the information read relates to what you already knew about the topic. Were your questions answered? Do you have more questions about the subject?

- **Reread**

Reread the text or a section of the text to help you understand it better.

- **Discuss and Respond**

Talk with someone about what you have read. Ask each other questions. Look back at the book to defend your opinions.

- **Write to Support Understanding**

Write about what you have read, telling what it made you think of or what you learned.

Instructional Strategies

Reading



On this page I'll cover four strategies that are ready to use in any classroom. All four are beneficial in reading or language instruction and are easily applied across all subject areas.

THINK- PAIR- SHARE

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to talk about what they read as they read it

Materials: fiction, nonfiction, and expository text

Procedures:

1. Students find partners.
2. The teacher identifies stopping points for discussion and shares these with students.
3. Students read to the first stopping point and then pause to think about the reading. They might consider such issues as what they found interesting or puzzling, making brief notes about their thoughts.
4. The pairs will then talk with one another using their notes to remind them of the points they wish to make.
5. The large group shares, focusing on interesting issues that arose during the paired discussions. Length will depend on students need and interest.
6. This completes the first Think-Pair-Share cycle. Students can read the next portion of the story and begin the cycle again.

HERRINGBONE

Purpose: to help students summarize and synthesize what they have read; to provide a supportive framework for students to sort through the information provided in expository text and make their own decisions about what is important; to help students think about the main idea, significant details, and the relationships among them.

Materials: fiction, nonfiction, and expository text

Procedures:

1. Students read and then work with partners to complete the chart.
2. Together they must decide on answers to each of the detail questions on the chart (Who, What, When, Why, Where, How). This frequently involves rereading and always involves discussion as students identify potential answers and settle on the most important.
3. Students combine these details to develop a main-idea summary statement for the entire passage.

STORY MAP; GROUP MAPPING ACTIVITY

Purpose: to promote individual response to reading; to provide a framework for discussion; to help readers

recall and retain what they've read.

Materials: fiction, nonfiction, and expository text

Procedures:

1. Students read selected passage; after reading, students create maps.
 2. Maps are shared with and explained to others.
 3. Classmates may ask questions or make comments about each others' maps.
 4. Students' comments lead into class discussion of the text where they will be able to develop further insights into what they have read and realize that text interpretations differ.
- The first time students are asked to map a story, the following directions may be helpful: "Put your ideas about the story in a diagram. You can sketch, use circles, boxes, lines or arrows. Try to show your ideas without using words. Don't worry about a right way to map; there isn't one."

These three strategies came from:

Rasinski, T. & Padak, N. (1996). *Holistic Reading Strategies: Teaching children who find reading difficult*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall

THEMATIC UNITS

Thematic units stem from the whole language philosophy and help students see the patterns among content areas. The thematic approach appeals to global learners because it puts learning in context. They see the big picture and find it easier to learn and remember information. A commonly used approach to thematic, integrated instruction is the web. The web begins with an idea or theme as the central focus of all instruction. The theme must be broad enough to allow for meaningful instruction of several disciplines without seeming contrived or shallow. One of the aims of the thematic unit is to provide children with experience in a wide range of resources for learning. These resources might include a variety of genres of children's literature and other printed information, many manipulable materials, and resources from the community.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE A THEMATIC UNIT ON DEAF CULTURE](#)

For more info on thematic units:

Schrenko, L. (1994). *Structuring a Learner-centered School*. Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing

Pappas, C. C., Kiefer, B.Z. & Levstik, L.S. (1995). *An Integrated Language Perspective in the Elementary School: Theory into Action. Second Edition*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Manning, M., Manning, G. & Long, R. (1994). *Theme Immersion: Inquiry-based curriculum in elementary and middle schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Kucer, S., Silva, C. & Delgado-Larocco, E.L. (1995). *Curricular conversations: Themes in multilingual and monolingual classrooms*. York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Reading Strategies Notebook

1. Semantic mapping for vocabulary development
 1. Purpose: This is one of the concept based approaches for teaching vocabulary. The assumption is that new knowledge is gained from finding new relationships in old knowledge and from relating new information to old knowledge.
 2. Procedure: The teacher starts by writing a word that represents a key concept. The youngsters are asked to think of words that relate to the key word. These words are grouped around the key word in categories, either pre-set by the teacher or created by youngsters. The teacher then suggests new words and encourages a discussion about where these words might fit into the map.
 3. Application for deaf students: The map provides a visual display of the relationships between concepts in a key word which is relevant to the learning style of most deaf students.
2. Story map
 1. Purpose: This activity is used to increase students' awareness of story grammar.
 2. Procedure: After a book (story) is read, the teacher will display a chart that has spaces for the title of the book, setting, characters, problem, event 1, event2,...,solution or conclusion. The students will participate in filling in the appropriate information in the appropriate space. The teacher discuss with the students their input. The students will agree at the end on what should be on the chart by the end of the activity.
 3. Application to deaf student: Deaf children have difficulty ranking events in terms of importance. This activity helps them identify critical events and main characters.
3. Attribute web:
 1. Purpose: This activity helps students identify the different dimensions of a character in the a story.
 2. Purpose: The teacher chooses one (or every) main character in the story for this activity. The name is placed in the middle of a web. From the name stems four branches; Act, Feels, Looks, and Says. The students will compose a small list for each of the above attributes. They will use the book to directly quote sentences, or come up with statements implicitly implied in the story.
 3. Application for deaf students: It helps them realize the different dimensions of the characters in the story. And makes understands the different point of views in story telling or writing.
4. Gist Strategy [Schirmer]:
 1. Purpose: The teacher uses seven prompts to model and coach students in understanding the text material they are reading.
 2. Procedure: A DRTA like procedure is used, except the teacher's guided questions are in the form of prompts that are meant to focus the students' thinking on making and proving their predictions. the first two prompts are used before the reading:
 1. What do you think this material is going to be about? What makes you think so?
 2. What do you think (the text) is going to tell you about? What makes you think so?

The next three prompts occur during the reading

 3. Did you find evidence that supports your prediction? What was it?
 4. Did you find evidence that does not support you prediction? What was it?
 5. Do you want to change your prediction at this point? If not, why not?

The last tow prompts are used after the reading
 6. Do you want to make any changes in you statement of what this is about? If

- yes, what changes do you want to make? Why do you want to make these changes?
7. What did you learn that you did not know before reading?
 3. Application for deaf students: When used with youngsters who are deaf, it can encourage them to make, test, and revise hypotheses during reading.
 5. Guided Reading Procedure (GRP) [Schirmer]:
 1. Purpose: The assumption in this strategy is that students are able to read the text independently but need guidance in comprehending it fully.
 2. Procedure: The steps include the following:
 1. a purpose is set and the students read the text, being told to remember all they can
 2. as a group, the students tell everything they can remember and the teacher records it on the board in no particular order
 3. the students are instructed to go back to the text to check on inconsistencies apparent from the differing information recorded on the board.
 4. the students organize the information in the form of an outline, semantic map, or diagram.
 3. Application to deaf students: Because this strategy is built on the assumption that the students can read the text independently, it is not appropriate for many deaf students whose textbooks are written well above their reading levels.
 6. Concept-Text-Application (CTA) [Schirmer]:
 1. Purpose: This approach is similar to the DRTA.
 2. Procedure: In the first phase, concept, the teacher assesses the students' background and introduces those concepts and vocabulary that are new to the students. In the second phase, text, the teacher sets a purpose, the students read the section silently, and the teacher asks literal question. When the entire section is completed, the teacher engages the students in a discussion during which the information is organized into some type of visual structure. In the third phase, Application, the teacher encourages the students to evaluate the material and to think divergently about the information.
 3. Application to deaf students: The visual structure may be a particularly worthwhile part of the strategy for deaf youngsters who may otherwise miss some of the information contributed during the class discussion.
 7. K-W-L [Schirmer]:
 1. Purpose: This approach emphasizes the student's prior knowledge.
 2. Procedure: The first step in this approach is step K, which is defined as accessing what I know. In the first part of this step, the teacher write the topic on the board and the students brainstorm what they know about it. In the second part of this step, the students are encouraged to develop categories for the ideas they brain stormed. The second step is step W determining what I want learn. In this step, the students are encouraged to create questions and are asked to write down the ones that interest them the most. The final step is step L recalling what I did learn as a result of reading. In this step, the students write or discuss what they have learned with specific attention to their original questions.
 3. Application for deaf students: K-W-L encourages deaf students to become actively engaged in thinking about the relevance of the material before and after reading.
 8. Close procedure [Luft] :
 1. Purpose: To increase students' use of contextual skills in reading through practice in choosing semantically appropriate words within a sentence and paragraph.
 2. Procedure: Choose 3 -4 paragraph from interesting text students have read before, or that is of high interest and familiarity. Delete key words to focus on identifying synonyms, or use the 1/10 formula (for a random assortment of words). have students read and fill in the blanks by reading the whole selection and making guesses. When each is done, ask students for suggestions -have students give reasons for making those guesses and discuss why some are better. Discuss why several words may be appropriate (synonyms or syntactically correct. Provide an

- opportunity to modify later guesses. Allow students to work in pairs if they become frustrated.
3. Application to deaf students: use of contextual skills, making guesses, and identifying synonyms are very difficult for many deaf students. This will also help counter beliefs that there is only one right answer when reading.
9. Reading response journals [Schirmer]:
 1. Purpose: To provide students with the opportunity to respond to the literature they read.
 2. Procedure: In a literature log, students are asked to write their responses and reactions to what they are reading.
 3. Applications for deaf children: Reading response journal provide deaf students with a meaningful way to respond actively to the literature they are reading.
 10. ReQuest [Schirmer]:
 1. Purpose: This is a pre-reading activity that helps development in the questioning ability of the student.
 2. Procedure: The students read the title and first sentence of a story, and look at the picture. They then ask the teacher anything they want to know about the title, sentence, and picture. When the teacher finishes answering all of their questions, the procedure is repeated from the second sentence. If the students run out of questions to ask, the teacher can suggest questions. Teacher questions not only add to the students' understanding of the upcoming passage but they also serve as a model for good questions. After all the questions are answered, the teacher asks the students what they think will happen in the passage. At that point, the youngsters read the passage silently.
 3. Application for deaf students: For deaf children, an added benefit of the ReQuest procedure is that it encourages language development in the area of asking questions, including all types of wh-questions and yes/no questions.

Schirmer, B. R. (1994). *Language and Literacy Development in Children Who Are Deaf*. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company.
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[Back to reading page](#)

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CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES

Here I present seven critical reading strategies that I have shamelessly stolen from someone else. These are strategies that you can learn readily and then apply not only to the reading selections in this class, but also to your other college reading. Although mastering these strategies will not make the critical reading process an easy one, it can make reading much more satisfying and productive and thus help you handle difficult material well and with confidence.

Fundamental to each of these strategies is annotating directly on the page: underlining key words, phrases, or sentences; writing comments or questions in the margins; bracketing important sections of the text; constructing ideas with lines or arrows; numbering related points in sequence; and making note of anything that strikes you as interesting, important, or questionable.

Most readers annotate in layers, adding further annotations on second and third readings. Annotations can be light or heavy, depending on the reader's purpose and the difficulty of the material.

Previewing: *Learning about a text before really reading it.*

Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This simple strategy includes seeing what you can learn from the headnotes or other introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.

Contextualizing: *Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts.*

When you read a text, you read it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is informed by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place. But the texts you read were all written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to contextualize, to recognize the differences between your contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the text.

Questioning to understand and remember: *Asking questions about the content.*

As students, you are accustomed (I hope) to teachers asking you questions about your reading. These questions are designed to help you understand a reading and respond to it more fully, and often this technique works. When you need to understand and use new information though it is most beneficial if you write the questions, as you read the text for the first time. With this strategy, you can write questions any time, but in difficult academic readings, you will understand the material better and remember it longer if you write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in your own words, not just copied from parts of the paragraph.

Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values: *Examining your personal responses.*

The reading that you do for this class might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. As you read a text for the first time, mark an X in the margin at each point where you felt a personal challenge to your attitudes, beliefs, or status. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?

Outlining and summarizing: *Identifying the main ideas and restating them in your own words.*

Outlining and summarizing are especially helpful strategies for understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining reveals the basic structure of the text, summarizing synthesizes a selection's main argument in brief. Outlining may be part of the annotating process, or it may be done separately (as it is in this class). The key to both outlining and summarizing is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. The main ideas form

the backbone, the strand that hold the various parts and pieces of the text together. Outlining the main ideas helps you to discover this structure. When you make an outline, don't use the text's exact words.

Summarizing begins with outlining, but instead of merely listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. Whereas outlining depends on a close analysis of each paragraph, summarizing also requires creative synthesis. Putting ideas together again -- in your own words and in a condensed form -- shows how reading critically can lead to deeper understanding of any text.

Evaluating an argument: *Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact.*

All writers make assertions that want you to accept as true. As a critical reader, you should not accept anything on face value but to recognize every assertion as an argument that must be carefully evaluated. An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion -- an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point of view -- that the writer wants you to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that give readers the basis for accepting the conclusion. When you assess an argument, you are concerned with the process of reasoning as well as its truthfulness (these are not the same thing). At the most basic level, in order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be appropriate to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another.

Comparing and contrasting related readings: *Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better.*

Many of the authors we read are concerned with the same issues or questions, but approach how to discuss them in different ways. Fitting a text into an ongoing dialectic helps increase understanding of why an author approached a particular issue or question in the way he or she did.



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ENGL 232B

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Strategies for Reading a Narrative

1. Depending on the narrative type:
 - For a written text: **take careful notes as you read**, jotting down whatever you might think is important. Mark in the text (if it's not a library book) or make notes on a separate sheet of paper. After you finish each reading session, take a few moments to think about what you've just read, and brainstorm for any possible ideas, significance, etc.
 - For a visual narrative: while watching the movie, **briefly** jot down scenes and images that strike you as important (but don't spend much time writing at this point-watch the film!).
2. Immediately after finishing the narrative, write for about 15 minutes on everything that comes to your mind. These can be personal reactions, observations, and interpretations of what you've just seen. Write down questions you have about the narrative, ones that you may want to bring up in a class discussion.
3. Some things to consider while writing your post-reading/viewing notes:
 - **Narrative structure** - what happens in the narrative and how the story is told.
 - **Themes, ideas, values** - anything major concerning human and cultural issues expressed in the narrative; or in other words, what you think the narrative is about.
 - **Characterization** - what the characters are like, how they are depicted (positively, negatively, mixture?), what their importance is in the narrative.
 - **Setting** - the characters' environments and the symbolic importance they may have.
 - **Writing** - important lines, dialogue significant to the narrative's theme(s).
 - **Technique** - the significance of writing style (the way the author uses words and the particular words used) in written texts or the camera movement and editing in film.
 - **Overall impression** - what you thought of the narrative and why. Try to go beyond the labels "good" or "bad." Express **why** you did or didn't like it and define what you mean by "good" or "bad."

Please bring your notes to class so that you may refer to them during our discussions. All of this should help you to sharpen your memory and your ability to be a critical reader.

Spelling Strategies

What Do Good Spellers Do?

How Can You Be a Better Speller?

(Adapted from Expanding Expectations: Spelling)

- **Stretching out Words / Using Phonics**

Ask yourself, "What sounds do I hear when I say this word very slowly?" Upper grade students use this strategy mostly with words that have more than one syllable, especially compound words or words with known prefixes and suffixes.

- **Applying Knowledge of Word / Letter Patterns**

Ask yourself, "What other words do I know that can help me spell this word?" For example, if you know how to spell paw, you would also spell straw or dawn.

- **Applying Knowledge of the Background of Words**

Ask yourself, "What words or word parts are similar in other words that will help me to spell this word?" For example, if you know how to spell revolt, it would help you in spelling related words such as revolting, revolution, and revolutionary.

- **Using "Have-a-Go" (Using Visual Information)**

Write the word and ask yourself, "Does this word look right?" If it doesn't, try it again.

- **Applying Generalizations**

Ask yourself, "How does what I have learned help me spell new words?" For example, you can learn how to use ing or learn that /shun/ can be spelled cian, tion, or sion.

- **Using a Memory Aid**

Ask yourself, "How can I remember how this word is spelled?" For example, hear - I can hear with my ear, or friend - She is my friend to the end.

- **Editing**

As you read through a piece of writing you have completed, ask yourself, "Is my writing spelled correctly?" You may want to circle any words you think are not spelled correctly so that you can check them.

- **Using Resources**

When writing, ask yourself, "Where have I seen this word before?" or "Where can I find how to spell this word?" Use dictionaries, fiction and nonfiction books, personal word lists, class charts, learning logs, or electronic spell-checking tools.



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