

Comprehension and Fluency

- Thank you for joining us today for the second in a series of four webinars on dyslexia and other language-based reading disabilities.
- This webinar, titled “*Comprehension and Fluency*” is a two-hour overview that is designed to satisfy the professional development requirement established by the New Jersey Legislature.

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Part 1-Comprehension

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- Eileen Marzola has an M.A. degree in Early Childhood Education, an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education, and a doctorate in Learning Disabilities.

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**Translating Research Into Practice:
Improving Reading Comprehension**

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2016 3

**Barriers to Reading Comprehension:
Why do they occur and what can we do about them?**

- What are the possible roots of poor reading comprehension?
- How can we use assessment tools to guide instruction?
- What are some of the most effective strategies to help students improve comprehension skills?

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Digging Deeper into Assessment

- Reading Comprehension skills evaluated on group-administered, standardized tests are best used as indicators of progress in teaching all students to read
- Group-administered tests provide little information to guide instruction or identify why students obtained low scores

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POSSIBLE CAUSES OF LOW COMPREHENSION SCORES

- Inaccurate or slow identification of words
- Limited vocabulary
- Weak language skills
- Lack of prior knowledge of content/failure to activate prior knowledge
- Failure to attend to text structures for clues
- Failure to monitor understanding (applying effective comprehension strategies/thinking skills)
- Weak stamina
- Weak memory (active working memory? look-backs?)
- Inappropriate test-taking strategies (anxiety, carelessness, failure to understand the task)

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Consider adding an informal reading inventory to your assessments

- Informal Reading Inventories allow you to dig deeper into an analysis of WHY comprehension is weak.
- Analysis of Informal Reading Inventories:
 - Nilsson, N.L. (2008). "A Critical Analysis of Eight Informal Reading Inventories." *The Reading Teacher*, 61(7), pp. 526-536.
 - <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/23373?theme=print>

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One example of an IRI: What is the *Qualitative Reading Inventory?* (5th edition)

- Individually-administered informal reading inventory
- Graded word lists
- Narrative and expository passages: Pre Primer-High School levels (generally familiar topics)
 - PP-Grade 2 options with and w/o pictures
- Grade 6-High School (representative of the curriculum)
 - Literature, science, social studies
 - Extended passages, think-alouds

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DIAGNOSTIC OPTIONS OF THE QRI-V

- Word reading ability
 - Words correct vs. automatic
 - Words in and out of context
 - Use of graphic/letter/meaning cues
 - Reading by analogy
- Comprehension ability
 - Narrative/Expository text
 - Prior knowledge assessment
 - Familiar/Unfamiliar text
 - Oral/Silent/Listening formats
 - Unaided free recall
 - Explicit/Implicit questions

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We know there's a problem. . .now what?
 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READING COMPREHENSION
 INSTRUCTION FROM NATIONAL READING PANEL (2000)

- **Text comprehension is enhanced when. . .**
 - Readers actively relate the ideas presented in print to their own knowledge and experiences
 - Construct mental representations in memory
- ▶ **Explicit/formal instruction in comprehension strategies enhances understanding including strategies for:**
 - Recall of information
 - Summarizing
 - Question generation

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TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION: How has instruction changed?

YESTERDAY	TODAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluent reading = good comprehension • Independent practice in subskills = improved reading comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading as an active process • Activating prior knowledge • Identifying important ideas • Organizing information to facilitate retrieval • Creating webs of connections within text • Metacognition (monitoring understanding)

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BEHAVIORS OF GOOD AND POOR READERS
Teaching Adolescents with Learning Disabilities: Strategies and Methods by Donald Deshler, Edwin S. Ellis and B. Keith Lenz (1996)

Before Reading. . .	
GOOD READERS	POOR READERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate prior knowledge • Understand task and set purpose • Combine intrinsic and extrinsic motivation • Use positive, affirming self-statements • Choose appropriate strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start reading without preparation • Begin reading w/o knowing why • Use primarily extrinsic motivation • Use negative, deprecating self-statements • Read w/o considering how to approach the task

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During Reading. . .	
<p>GOOD READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus attention • Monitor their understanding by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing that comprehension is occurring • Knowing what is being understood 	<p>POOR READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are easily distracted • Do not know they do not understand • Read to get done • Do not know what to do when they lack understanding • Do not recognize important vocabulary

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During Reading. . .	
<p>GOOD READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate and predict • Use fix-up strategies when they lack understanding • Use contextual analysis to understand new terms • Use text structure to assist comprehension • Organize and integrate new information 	<p>POOR READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not see any organization • Add on rather than integrate information

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After Reading. . .	
<p>GOOD READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on what was read • Summarize major ideas • Seek additional information from outside sources • Believe success is a result of effort 	<p>POOR READERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop reading and thinking • Believe success is a result of luck

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 1: Speed and Accuracy of Decoding

- Children who don't develop the ability to read words accurately and quickly will encounter difficulty in comprehension (Perfetti, 1985; 1988)
- Attention over-directed to identifying individual words -> inability to access word meanings efficiently and integrate sentence meanings across a passage

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NATIONAL ORAL READING FLUENCY NORMS
Hasbrouck & Tindal (2006)

Grade	Percentile	Fall WCPM*	Winter WCPM*	Spring WCPM*
1	90		81	111
	75		47	82
	50		23	53
	25		12	28
	10		6	15
2	90	106	125	142
	75	79	100	117
	50	51	72	89
	25	25	42	61
	10	11	18	31
3	90	128	146	162
	75	99	120	137
	50	71	92	107
	25	44	62	78
	10	21	36	48
4	90	145	166	180
	75	119	139	152
	50	94	112	123
	25	68	87	98
	10	45	61	72
5	90	166	182	194
	75	139	156	168
	50	110	127	139
	25	85	99	109
	10	61	74	83
6	90	177	195	204
	75	153	167	177
	50	127	140	150
	25	98	111	122
	10	68	82	93
7	90	180	192	202
	75	156	165	177
	50	128	136	150
	25	102	109	123
	10	79	88	98
8	90	185	199	199
	75	161	173	177
	50	133	146	151
	25	106	115	124
	10	77	84	97

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NATIONAL ORF NORMS

50th Percentiles Hasbrouck & Tindal (2006)

Grade	Fall wcpm	Winter wcpm	Spring wcpm
1		23	53
2	51	72	89
3	71	92	107
4	94	112	123
5	110	127	139
6	127	140	150
7	128	136	150
8	133	146	151

GREEN zone -10 or more to -4 YELLOW Zone -5 to -10 RED Zone > 10 below

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Strategies to Improve Fluency

- Direct instruction in decoding
- Model fluent reading, then have students reread the text on their own or to their partner
- Provide extensive reading practice
- Work on fluency at the word, phrase, sentence levels as well as longer texts
- Feedback critical
- Encourage wide independent reading

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary

Vocabulary is linked to reading comprehension

- Vocabulary size in kindergarten is an effective predictor of reading comprehension in the middle elementary years (Scarborough, 1998)
- Orally-tested vocabulary at end of Grade 1 predicts more than 30% of grade 11 reading comprehension (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997)

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary (2)

NRP findings on Vocabulary Instruction (2000):

- Vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly
- Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important
- Learning in rich contexts improves vocabulary
- Incidental learning
- Computer technology

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary (3)

Resources:

- Beck, I. L., McKeown, M.G. & Kucan, L. (2003). *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction. 2nd edition*
- Hiebert, E. H. & Kamil, M. L. (2005). *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing Research to Practice*
- Biemiller, A. (2009). *Words Worth Teaching: Closing the Vocabulary Gap* (includes CD)
- *Collins Cobuild Dictionaries* (student-friendly definitions)
- Word Lists: <http://www.textproject.org/teachers/word-lists/> (includes Academic Word Lists)

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 3: Lack of Prior Knowledge

Major problem:

- Poorest readers read least-> “Matthew Effect”
- Can’t wait for decoding skills to develop as knowledge gap increases
- Preteach essential knowledge/vocabulary
- Books on Tape:
 - www.LearningAlly.org
 - www.Bookshare.org
- Kindle/iPad/Nook read-aloud functions
 - <http://www.ehow.com/>

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 4: Failure to Attend to Text Structures

- **NARRATIVE WRITING**
 - Story grammar is the most useful text structure to teach for narrative -> Improved comprehension
- **EXPOSITORY WRITING**
 - Contains a variety of text structures
 - More difficult to identify
 - Narrative strategies not helpful

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BENEFITS OF VISUAL LEARNING TECHNIQUES

- Help students to . . .
 - Clarify thinking (process, organize, and prioritize new information)
 - Reinforce understanding (reveal patterns, interrelationships and interdependencies)
 - Integrate new knowledge
 - Identify misconceptions

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Uses of graphic and semantic organizers

- Activating background knowledge and setting a purpose for reading
- Generating lists of character traits with supporting evidence
- Helping students to see text structure, aiding in understanding, remembering, retelling and writing summaries
- Deepening understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary

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Characteristics of Narrative Writing

- Narratives that follow structure of fables (setting-character-goal/problem-events-resolution) are easier for children to recall (Brennan, Bridge, & Winograd, 1986; Stein, 1979)
- Narratives are more structurally familiar
- Primary grade instructional materials are predominantly narratives (Durkin, 1981)

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STORY MAP

Title: _____

Setting: _____

Characters: _____

Problem: _____

Event 1 _____

Event 2 _____

Event 3 _____

Event 4 _____

Event 5 _____

Solution: _____

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DETERMINING CHARACTER TRAITS

- PHYSICAL TRAITS
 - The way people look
- CHARACTER TRAITS
 - Ways to tell what a person is like
 - Help us to understand a character's personality
 - Clues to what someone likes, feels, or how he or she behaves

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WAYS WE FIND OUT ABOUT A CHARACTER'S TRAITS

- Direct statements
- Dialogue
- Action
- Observations of appearance

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FLATS Strategy for Determining Character Traits

(Diana Ambats, 2003)

- **F** How does your character **FEEL**?
- **L** What does your character **LOOK** like?
- **A** How does the character **ACT** toward....?
How do others **ACT** toward your character?
- **T** What is your character **THINKING**?
- **S** What does your character **SAY** about....?
What do other characters **SAY** about him?

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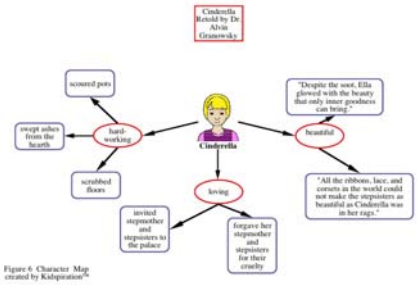


Figure 6 Character Map created by Kalyanasan

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TEXT STRUCTURE: Expository Writing

- Common Text Structures
 - Sequence or chronological presentation
 - Problem/solution
 - Causal relations
 - Compare and contrast
 - Illustrations and examples
 - Narrative writing
 - Descriptive writing

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WORDS COMMONLY FOUND IN DIFFERENT TEXT STRUCTURES

<p><u>Cause and effect and problem and solution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> because as a result therefore since reasons why if . . . then nevertheless thus 	<p><u>Description</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for example characteristics are includes such as also for instance
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<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/12/compare-contrast-cause-effect-problem-solution-common-text-types-in-the-times/>

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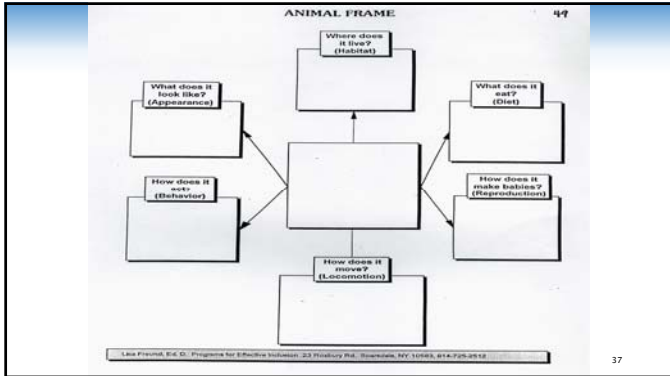
GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: BIOGRAPHY

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS: CONDITIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage carefully to determine how Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass were alike and how they were different. Use the diagram to record their similarities and differences.

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Resources for Graphic Organizers

- http://edhelper.com/teachers/graphic_organizers.htm
- <http://printables.scholastic.com/shop/SearchCmd?Ntt=Graphic+Organizers&storeId=12502&PrintableType=all>
- <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/>

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POSSIBLE PROBLEM 5: Lack of Strategy Use During Reading Process

- Comprehension monitoring
- Cooperative learning
- Question answering
- Question generating
- Summarization

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Monitoring Comprehension

- Think-Aloud strategy helps students to monitor comprehension of texts they read
 - predicting what happens next (“I bet that. . .”)
 - picturing the text (“I can see that. . .”)
 - making comparisons (“This reminds me of. . .”)
 - identifying problems (“What does this mean?”)
 - fixing problems (“Maybe this means. . .”)
 - making comments (“I like this part because. . .”)
- Warning! Don’t overdo this to point that students lose sense of the gestalt

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PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING STRATEGIES (PALS)
 Partner reading question cards (Fuchs, D. et al, 2008)

- Prompt Card 1: Retell
 - What did you learn first?
 - What did you learn next?
- Prompt Card 2: Paragraph Shrinking
 - Name the who or what.
 - Tell the most important thing about the who or what.
 - Say the main idea in 10 words or less.
- Prompt Card 3: Prediction Relay
 - Predict: What do you predict will happen next?
 - Read: Read half a page.
 - Check: Did the prediction come true?

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Questioning: TYPES/LEVELS OF QUESTIONS

- 70% of teacher questions are literal in nature
- Questions usually require only recognition (locating information) or recall (answering from memory)
- Bypass literal understanding of important info
- Need for more “beyond text” questions that tap higher levels of thinking
 - Critical analysis
 - Interpretation
 - Generalization and expansion of ideas presented in text

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RESEARCH ABOUT QUESTIONING

- Students asked text explicit questions. . .
 - Recall parts of text verbatim
- Students asked text implicit questions. . .
 - Draw more inferences from text
 - Integrate ideas within text
- Students asked script implicit questions. . .
 - Make more interpretive/evaluative connections between text and their prior knowledge

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QAR (Question/Answer Relationship)
 (T. Raphael, 1982, 1984, 1986; T. Raphael & K. H. Au, 2005)

FOUR KINDS OF QUESTIONS (“In the book” questions)

1. **Right There:** The answer is in the text, usually easy to find. The words used to make up the question and the words used to answer the question are RIGHT THERE in the same sentence.
2. **Think and Search** (also called “Putting It Together”)

The answer is in the text, but the words used in the question and those used for the answer are not in the same sentence. You need to think about different parts of the text and how ideas can be put together before you answer the question.

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QAR (Question/Answer Relationship)
 (T. Raphael, 1982, 1984, 1986; T. Raphael & K. H. Au, 2005)

FOUR KINDS OF QUESTIONS (“In my head” questions)

3. **Author and You:** The answer is not in the story. You need to think about what you already know, what the author tells you in the text, and how it fits together.
4. **On My Own:** The answer is not in the story. The author can’t help you much. The text got you thinking, but the answer is inside your head. Use what you already know to answer the question.

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QAR RESEARCH RESULTS

- Increase in both quality and quantity of correct answers to comprehension questions
- Particularly effective with children with average to low reading levels
- Higher comprehension scores
- Students transferred strategy to content area classrooms

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RECIPROCAL TEACHING: What is it?
(Palincsar, A. S. & Brown, A. 1984)

- Strategies for reading comprehension
- Teaches self-monitoring for comprehension
- Instructional format in the form of a structured dialogue between teachers and students (students assume role of the teacher)
- Dialogue structured by use of four strategies: predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing

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Research Support

- Originally designed for students who were adequate decoders but poor comprehenders
- Studies and results replicated and carried over to general education classrooms with larger group sizes
- Designed for expository text but easily transferable
- According to research, RT is easy to generalize and transfer to new and unique situations
- Once strategies are internalized, they become automatic and second nature to readers

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**RECIPROCAL TEACHING:
The Strategies**

- Preview and Predict
- Clarify hard parts
- Ask a high level question or two
- Summarize the paragraph or assignment segment in a sentence
- Predict what the next paragraph segment will discuss

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COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING
(Janette K. Klingner and Sharon Vaughn
Teaching Exceptional Children July/August 1998)

BEFORE READING

1. PREVIEW
 - a) BRAINSTORM: What do we already know about the topic?
 - b) PREDICT: What do we think we will learn about the topic when we read the passage?
- READ (the first page or section)

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DURING READING

2. CLICK and CLUNK
 - a) Were there any parts that were hard to understand (clunks)?
 - b) How can we fix the clunks? (Use fix-up strategies)
 - Reread the sentence and look for key ideas to help you understand the word
 - Reread the sentence with the clunk and the sentences before or after the clunk looking for clues
 - Look for a prefix or suffix in the word
 - Break the word apart and look for smaller words

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MORE FOR DURING READING

3. GET THE GIST

- a) What is the most important person, place or thing?
- b) What is the most important idea about the person, place or thing?

- READ (Do steps 2 and 3 again, with all the paragraphs or sections in the passage)

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AFTER READING

4. WRAP UP

- a) Ask questions: What questions would show we understand the most important information? What are the answers to those questions?
- b) Review: What did we learn?

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FINDING THE MAIN IDEA

- QUESTIONS TO ASK
 - What is this paragraph about?
 - This paragraph is about _____.
 - What does it tell me about _____?
 - It tells me _____
- PLACES TO LOOK
 - Look in the first sentence of the paragraph
 - Look for repetitions of the same word or words in the whole paragraph

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REQUIREMENTS FOR A PARAPHRASE

- Must contain a complete thought
 - Subject
 - Verb
- Must be totally accurate
- Must have new information
- Must make sense
- Must contain useful information
- Must be in your own words
- Only one general statement per paragraph is allowed

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RAP: PARAPHRASING STRATEGY
(Deshler, Ellis, Lenz, 1996)

- Step 1: **Read** a paragraph
As you are reading the paragraph, look for the topic sentences or clue words that signal the main ideas and details
- Step 2: **Ask** yourself, "What were the main idea and details in this paragraph?"
What was this paragraph about? What should I remember about it?"
- Step 3: **Put** the main idea and details into your own words.
Say, "This paragraph is about _____."

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Key Points to Remember about Reading Comprehension Instruction

- Multiple strategy approach is most effective
 - Emphasize comprehension monitoring
 - Provide instruction in comprehension strategies
 - Use graphic and semantic organizers
 - Use story structure to help students to recall content and answer questions
 - Combine teacher questioning with immediate feedback and student-generated questioning
 - Encourage cooperative learning with partners or in groups
- No positive effects for routine, practice-oriented approaches

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RESOURCES

- **GENERAL**
 - *Report of the National Reading Panel* 1-800-370-2943
www.nationalreadingpanel.org
 - *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 3rd ed.* (ed. Judith Birsh) Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, 2011
- **GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**
 - Continental Press 1-800-233-0759
 - Creative Teaching Press 1-800-287-8879
 - *A Field Guide to Using Visual Tools* by David Hyerle (ASCD Publications 1-800-933-2723)
- **Narrative Text Post-Its**
 - ELEMENTS OF PLOT POST-ITS
 - Project Read/Language Circle 1-800-450-0343
 - www.storystickies.com

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RESOURCES (2)

- **Specific Programs**
 - From Clunk to Click: Collaborative Strategic Reading by J. K. Klingner et al.
 - Super QAR for Test-Wise Students by T.E. Raphael & K. Au
 - Visualizing and Verbalizing <http://www.lindamoodbell.com>
- **Software/apps**
 - www.kidspiration.com & www.inspiration.com
- **Websites**
 - <http://coe.jmu.edu/LearningToolbox/>
 - <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest>
 - www.meadowscenter.org/vgc/
 - <http://www.miamisci.org/tec/> (Reciprocal Teaching materials)
 - <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies>
 - <http://www.resourceroom.net/>

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**Reference Slides:
Translating Research Into Practice:
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Please pause for discussion

Suggested time: 15-20 minutes

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