

Comprehension Strategies Teaching Charts - Grades 4-6

Designed to meet these objectives:

Language

- Students will use different comprehension strategies to understand and analyze text.
- Students will engage in reading and comprehending a variety of texts.
- Students will improve reading comprehension skills.

These 24 colorful charts include everything you need to teach, model, and practice reading comprehension strategies! The charts focus on 8 key reading strategies, with 3 different charts for each strategy. Each chart comes complete with a mini lesson, reading passage, plenty of comprehension tips, and follow-up questions! Areas of the text are highlighted to guide students and help them become aware of how the strategy is used. Each passage is also designed to engage students in reading a variety of genres, including fictional stories, nonfiction pieces, narratives, biographies, newspaper articles, and poetry. These charts are a perfect way to introduce comprehension strategies to your whole class—or use them with small reading groups for practice and review. This guide includes reproducibles of all the charts, so students can follow along in whole group or small group instruction, or they can practice on their own! The guide also includes a reproducible student chart of all the strategies so students can keep a copy for quick review anytime!

About the Charts

This set covers 8 different key comprehension strategies, with 3 charts per strategy—allowing students multiple opportunities to practice and master each one. The goal is for students to apply an appropriate strategy independently and automatically when reading. The 8 strategies covered are:

- Ask Questions (Charts 1-3)
- Determine Importance (Charts 4-6)
- Make Connections (Charts 7-9)
- Make Inferences (Charts 10-12)
- Make Predictions (Charts 13-15)
- Summarize (Charts 16-18)
- Synthesize Information (Charts 19-21)
- Visualize (Charts 22-24)

About the Strategies

Ask Questions

Asking questions while reading keeps the reader engaged, supports comprehension, and alleviates confusion and frustration. When students ask themselves questions, they are clarifying what they understand and what they don't understand. Asking questions throughout reading helps students become aware of misunderstood or confusing text before it becomes too frustrating. They can address what they do not understand through rereading or other comprehension strategies. As they are reading, remind students to ask themselves questions such as:

- What is happening in this passage?
- Do I understand everything the author wants me to?
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- What does _____ symbolize?



Determine Importance

This strategy encourages students to be thoughtful readers who differentiate between important and less important information. Students identify key words and sentences that capture the main idea(s) or meaning of the text. Practical strategies such as underlining key ideas and listing key facts can help students apply this strategy in a useful way. Point out to students that the title and the topic sentence in a piece of writing often tell the main idea of the text.

Make Connections

This strategy encourages students to connect their personal experiences and knowledge to what they are reading. This leads to a deeper understanding of the text. They may connect their reading to something that happened to them, to another person, or to a character in another book. It is important that students identify how their connection helps them understand the text as well. A simple T-Chart labeled "My Connection/How It Helps Me Understand" is an easy way for students to engage in this type of thinking.

Make Inferences

Making inferences involves taking clues from the text to discern meaning or themes within the text. Some call making inferences "reading between the lines." This strategy is especially helpful when writers are intentionally vague or indirect and the passage has an underlying message or meaning not directly stated. Identifying clues such as the audience to which the writing is addressed, the author's tone, and descriptions and characterizations will help students make accurate inferences.

Make Predictions

When making predictions, students decide what is going to happen based on their understanding of what has happened so far, and based on how their own prior knowledge connects to the text. Students then confirm or adjust their predictions as they continue reading. This strategy fosters reading comprehension because students have to understand and infer the text's meaning in order to make reasonable predictions. Predicting outcomes throughout the text also encourages students to read carefully and with anticipation. Have students pause and make or adjust predictions after reading titles, topic sentences, and individual paragraphs. Also, have students tell why they made a prediction. Have them point out clues or evidence within the text that led to their predictions.

Summarize

Summarizing requires students to take larger selections of text and reduce them to the main events, key ideas, or main points that are worth noting and remembering. In order to do this, students sum up important information or events in the order they occur, and in their own words. A good summary is brief, yet tells who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Synthesize Information

Synthesizing information requires students to combine new information with knowledge they already have, so they can develop an interpretation or an original idea. When students synthesize information, they must think beyond the surface of what the text is saying and find insights into what the overall text means to them. Synthesizing information involves more than just summarizing what is read; it involves students connecting their own experiences and knowledge to the text so that they can form new thoughts and ideas. To encourage students to think beyond the surface meaning of the text, ask questions such as:

- What do you think the author is trying to say?
- What is your opinion on what you have read?
- Have you ever had a similar experience to what the author describes?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why?

Visualize

Visualizing is a form of inferential thinking. Visualization requires students to take the written information they have read and create a mental picture of it. Students should be able to visualize people, places, and events that are happening in the text. These mental images are created when students understand and interpret the information they read. In addition to supporting comprehension, visualization also helps students better remember what they have read. To help visualization, have students look for words that describe people, places, things, and events.

Getting Started

First, decide which reading strategy you want students to practice. Then, choose a chart that teaches the strategy and has the type of passage you want students to practice with. If desired, make photocopies of the corresponding reproducible. You might need to adjust the density on your copier to ensure that highlighted text is readable. (Note that all of the charts can be used to model all of the different reading comprehension strategies. However, the passages selected for each category are particularly suited to that strategy.) Display the chart and distribute the reproducibles to your students.

Before you read the passage, review the strategy mini lesson at the top of the chart with your students. As you begin reading through the text, pause along the way to read and discuss the tips and questions that appear in the margins of the reading passage. Point out that these are the kinds of questions and thinking good readers use when applying the comprehension strategy at hand. Allow opportunities for students to share their thinking aloud as you move through the lesson.

Finally, wrap up the activity with the “Follow Up” prompts at the bottom of the chart. These “Follow Up” questions and activities can be done with the whole class as well as independently, or in partners. Make sure to take time to discuss the students’ work and to revisit how their work relates to the reading comprehension strategy.

Remember: Good readers will combine multiple strategies to fully comprehend text. Remind students that although they are focusing on a specific strategy, they can and should use multiple strategies when appropriate.

Differentiated Instruction

ELL

Pre-teach any unfamiliar vocabulary in the reading passage(s) prior to using the charts. Help students make flash cards or a poster with the name of each strategy. Write a brief description of the strategy, and include a simple picture for students to use as a reference. You may choose to have students work in pairs or small groups to read a passage aloud and complete a follow-up activity.

Reteach

For students who need additional practice with certain reading comprehension strategies, choose the corresponding charts to provide targeted review. Assess what students already know and understand about the particular comprehension skill so that you can focus on reteaching the skills students need the most. Work with small groups to apply the targeted strategy to another reading assignment.

Challenge

Encourage students to write a reflection after reading a selected passage or assignment. Ask students to explain the strategies they used to help them comprehend the text. Challenge students to write a song or poem naming and defining the importance of each reading comprehension strategy. Have students share their work with their classmates.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Strategy	What it means:
Ask Questions	As you read, make sure you really understand what's going on by asking yourself questions about the story. Do you understand what you just read? Do you know what the author is trying to say? Do you remember the characters and what each character is doing? Is there symbolization in the story? What are the symbols and what do they mean? If you are confused, reread to find an answer.
Determine Importance	While you read, decide what is important in the passage and what is less important. Main ideas are very important. The title of a passage and the topic sentence can tell about the main idea. Other important elements include the problem and solution that a passage presents. If you underline key ideas and facts in the passage, they will help you to better understand what you are reading.
Make Connections	Good readers make connections between what they read and their own lives and the world around them. As you are reading, think about whether something similar has happened to you or someone you know. You can also make connections between books. Maybe the book you are reading reminds you of another book you have read.
Make Inferences	Use clues from the text to help you figure out what's really going on. This strategy is also called "reading between the lines." Sometimes, an author will tell you exactly what is happening, or the author will just give you clues so that you have to figure out what is happening for yourself. Many times an author will want the reader to infer the message or meaning of the story. Look for clues such as the author's tone and descriptions of places and characters.
Make Predictions	Making predictions means thinking about what is going to happen next in a story. You guess what will happen next based on what has happened so far. As you read, you find out whether your predictions were correct or not. This strategy really helps you stay engaged in your reading because you want to know what happens next.
Summarize	As you read, summarize the main events of the story or important details from a passage. Think about who, what, when, where, why, and how, but keep it brief. Don't include unimportant details.
Synthesize Information	Synthesizing information means putting together the new information you learn with information you already know. It means having an opinion about what you are reading. Think about what the author is trying to say or what message the author may be trying to get across. Ask yourself if you agree or disagree with the message and why.
Visualize	Visualizing means making a picture in your head of the events in the story. These "mental pictures" will help you to remember what is happening and will help you to better understand what is going on in the story. To visualize events in a story, look for describing words that tell about people, places, and things.