

Comprehension

Comprehension is the construction of meaning from written and oral language.

Prior knowledge enables children to construct meaning during reading & writing.

Effective readers are those who have:

- knowledge about purpose, organization, and structure of different genre
- a variety of strategies to unlock the meaning of text
- knowledge of texts and their structures within different content areas
- strategies for accessing and integrating information

Competent readers & writers use effective comprehension strategies to:

- activate relevant prior knowledge
- determine the most important ideas and themes
- ask questions to clarify
- to visualize information
- draw inferences
- synthesize
- apply appropriate fix-up strategies

In an effective balanced literacy program, teachers provide activities that develop the child's ability to understand and apply what is read.

Teachers can:

- ✓ ask children to make connections to their own lives to better understand text.
- ✓ encourage children to make predictions from the title, pictures, or text.
- ✓ help children focus on the structure of a story (setting, characters, events, problem) using mapping techniques, etc.
- ✓ provide opportunities for children to retell text.
- ✓ have children arrange pictures or text from a story in sequence.
- ✓ involve children in discussions that encourage higher level thinking skills.
- ✓ encourage children to summarize text, focusing on main ideas and supporting details.

Comprehension strategies must be explicitly taught using quality short text to teach and practice the skills good readers use to comprehend text.