| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
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| **Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 1***: Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge. | Minimal | 1. Engage students in conversations that support the use and comprehension of inferential language. **(FS1.1)** | K-2.I.1, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.C.MC.1, K-2.C.MC.2 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, ENVI.EX.3 |
| | | 2. Explicitly engage students in developing narrative language skills. **(FS1.2)** | K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.8, K-2.EL.LCS.12, K-2.RL.MCS.11, K-2.C.MC.1 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, ENVI.EX.3 |
| | | 3. Teach academic vocabulary in the context of other reading activities. **(FS1.3)** | K-2.RL.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10, K-2RL.LCS.11, K-2.RL.LCS.12, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RI.LCS.10 | INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3 |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
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| ***Recommendation 2:*** Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters. | Strong | 1. Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech. (***FS2.1***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3 | INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 2. Teach students letter-sound relations. (***FS2.2***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3 | INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 3. Use word-building and other activities to link students' knowledge of letter-sound relationships with phonemic awareness. (***FS2.3***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10 | INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| ***Recommendation 3:*** Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words. | Strong | 1. Teach students to blend letter-sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation. (***FS3.1***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10 | INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 2. Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns. (***FS3.2***) | | INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 3. Teach students to recognize common word parts. (***FS3.3***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10 | INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text. (***FS3.4***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10 | INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 5. Teach irregular and regular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently. (***FS3.5***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10 | INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words. (***FS3.6***) | K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10 | INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| ***Recommendation 4:*** Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. | Moderate | 1. As students read orally, model strategies, scaffold, and provide feedback to support accurate and efficient word identification. (***FS4.1***) | K-2.RL.LCS.10, K-2.RI.LCS.9 | INST.MS.3, INST.PIC.3, INST.AF.1, INST.AF.2, INST.AF.3, INST.AF.4, INST.AF.5 |
| | | 2. Teach students to self-monitor their understanding of the text and to self-correct word-reading errors. (***FS4.2***) | K-2.RL.P.4, K-2.RI.P.4, K-2.RL.LCS.10, K-2.RI.MCS.5 | INST.MS.3, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |

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| | | 3. Provide opportunities for oral reading practice with feedback to develop fluent and accurate reading with expression. *(FS4.3)* | K-2.RL.P.4, K-2.RI.P.4 | INST.MS.3, INST.PS.1 |
| **Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade** | | | | |
| *Recommendation 1:* Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies. | Minimal | 1. Teach students how to use several research-based reading comprehension strategies. *(IR1.1)* | K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.6, K-2.RI.MC.7 | INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 2. Teach reading comprehension strategies individually or in combination. *(IR1.2)* | K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.6, K-2.RI.MC.7 | INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 3. Teach reading comprehension strategies by using a gradual release of responsibility. *(IR1.3)* | K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.6, K-2.RI.MC.7 | INST.TKS.3, INST.PIC.3, INST.PIC.5, INST.AM.9 |
| *Recommendation 2:* Teach students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content. | Minimal | 1. Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts. *(IR2.1)* | K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RL.MC.8, K-2.RL.LCS.11, K-2.RL.LCS.12 | INST.AM.1, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 2. Provide instruction on common structures of informational texts. *(IR2.2)* | K-2.I.2, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.LCS.8, K-2.RI.LCS.11, K-2.RI.LCS.12 | INST.AM.1, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| *Recommendation 3:* Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of the text. | Moderate | 1. Develop discussion questions that require students to think deeply about the text. *(IR3.2)* | K-2.I.1, K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.RCS.12 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, NST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
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| | | 2. Ask follow-up questions to encourage and facilitate discussion. (*IR3.3*) | K-2.I.1, K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.RCS.12 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.MS.3, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.3, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |
| | | 3. Have students lead structured small-group discussions. (*IR3.4*) | K-2.I.1, K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.RCS.12 | INST.MS.2, INST.AM.7, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.TH.2 |
| *Recommendation 5:* Establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension. | Moderate | 1. Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading. (*IR5.1*) | K-2.I.2, K-2.I.3, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.R1.RC.12 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.5, NST.AM.11, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |
| | | 2. Give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers. (*IR5.4*) | K-2.I.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.RC.12 | INST.MS.2, INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4 |
| Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9 | | | | |
| *Recommendation 1:* Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words. | Strong | 1. Identify the level of students' word-reading skills and teach vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations, as necessary. (*RI1.1*) | 3-5.RL.P.2, 3-5.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.2, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.2, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.2, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.2, 9-12.RL.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.2, 9-12.RI.P.3 | INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 2. Teach students a routine they can use to decode multisyllabic words. (*RI1.2*) | 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.3, 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9 | INST.PS.1 |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
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| | | 3. Embed spelling instruction in the lesson. (*RI1.3*) | 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9 | INST.PS.1 |
| | | 4. Engage students in a wide array of activities that allow them to practice reading multisyllabic words accurately and with increasing automaticity. (*RI1.4*) | 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9 | INST.PS.1 |
| ***Recommendation 2:*** Provide purposeful fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly. | Strong | 1. Provide a purpose for each repeated reading. (*RI2.1*) | 3-5.RL.P.2, 3-5.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.2, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.2, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.2, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.2, 9-12.RL.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.2, 9-12.RI.P.3 | INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| | | 2. Focus some instructional time on reading with prosody. (*RI2.2*) | 3-5.RL.P.4, 6-8.RL.P.4, 9-12.RL.P.4, 3-5.RI.P.4, 6-8.RI.P.4, 9-12.RI.P.4 | INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2 |
| ***Recommendation 3a:*** Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text. | Strong | 1. Develop world knowledge that is relevant for making sense of the passage. (*RI3.1*) | 3-5.I.2, 6-8.I.2, 9-12.I.2, 3-5.RL.MC.8, 6-8.RL.MC.8, 9-12.RL.MC.8, 3-5.RL.RCS.13, 6-8.RL.RCS.13, 9-12.RL.RCS.13, 3-5.R1.RCS.12, 6-8.RI.RC.12, 9-12.RI.RCS.12 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.1, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, PLAN.SW.3 |

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| | | 2. Teach the meaning of a few words that are essential for understanding the passage. **(RI3.2)** | 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9 | INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3 |
| | | 3. Teach students how to derive meanings of unknown words using context. **(RI3.3)** | 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9 | INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |
| | | 4. Teach prefixes and suffixes to help students derive meanings of words. **(RI3.4)** | 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9, 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3 | INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3 |

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| | | 5. Teach the meaning of Latin and Greek roots. (**RI3.5**) | 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9, 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3 | INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3 |
| ***Recommendation 3b:*** Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read. | Strong | 1. Explicitly teach students how to find and justify answers to different types of questions. (**RI4.1**) | RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5 | INST.AM.4, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |
| | | 2. Provide ample opportunities for students to collaboratively answer questions. (**RI4.2**) | RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5 | INST.MS.3, INST.AM.7 |
| | | 3. Teach students to ask questions about the text while reading. (**RI4.3**) | RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5 | INST.MS.2, INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.Q.1 |
| ***Recommendation 3c:*** Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text. | Strong | 1. Model how to use a routine to generate gist statements. (**RI5.1**) | RL.MC.6, RI.MC.6 | INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 2. Teach students how to use text structures to generate gist statements. (**RI5.2**) | RL.MC.6, RI.MC.6 | INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 3. Work collaboratively with students to generate gist statements. (**RI5.3**) | RL.MC.6, RI.MC.6 | INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| ***Recommendation 3d:*** Teach students to monitor their comprehension as they read. | Strong | 1. Help students determine when they do not understand the text. (**RI6.1**) | 6-8.I.5, 9-12.I.5, 3-5.RL.MC.5, 6-8.RL.MC.5, 9-12.RL.MC.5, 3-5.RI.MC.5, 6-8.RI.MC.5, 9-12.RI.MC.5 | INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3 |
| | | 2. Teach students to ask themselves questions as they read to check their understanding and figure out what the text is about. (**RI6.2**) | 3-5.RL.MC.5, 6-8.RL.MC.5, 9-12.RL.MC.5, 3-5.RI.MC.5, 6-8.RI.MC.5, 9-12.RI.MC.5 | INST.AM.5, INST.Q.8, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 3. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned. (**RI6.3**) | 3-5.I.5, 6-8.I.5, 9-12.I.5 | INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.5, INST.PS.1 |

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| ***Recommendation 4:*** Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of a stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to complex ideas and information. | Moderate | 1. Prepare for the lesson by carefully selecting appropriate stretch texts, choosing points to stop for discussion and clarification, and identifying words to teach. (***RI7.1***) | 3-5.I.5, 6-8.I.5, 9-12.I.5 | INST.MS.1, INST.LSP.3, INST.AM.1, INST.AM.2, INST.AM.3, INST.AM.4, INST.AM.5, INST.AM.6, INST.AM.7, INST.AM.8. INST.AM.9, INST.AM.10, INST.AM.11, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, ENVI.EX.3 |
| | | 2. After students demonstrate comfort with reading stretch texts with the group, provide students with electronic supports to use when independently reading a stretch text to assist with the pronunciation of difficult words and word meanings. (***RI7.2***) | 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9 | INST.LSP.2, INST.AM.11, INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3 |
| **Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 1:*** Provide explicit vocabulary instruction. | Strong | 1. Dedicate a portion of the regular classroom lesson to explicit vocabulary instruction. (***IA1.1***) | RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9 | INST.PS.2 |
| | | 2. Use repeated exposure to new words in multiple oral and written contexts and allow sufficient practice sessions. (***IA1.2***) | RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9 | INST.LSP.3, INST.AM.1 |
| | | 3. Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading. (***IA1.3***) | RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9, W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.L.4, W.RC.6, C.MC.1 | INST.PS.1 |

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| | | 4. Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners. **(IA1.4)** | RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9 | INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3 |
| ***Recommendation 2:*** Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction. | Strong | 1. Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts, not just to one text. **(IA2.1)** | RL.RC.13, RL.P4, RI.RC.12, RI.P.4 | INST.PIC.3 |
| | | 2. Use direct and explicit instruction for teaching students how to use comprehension strategies. **(IA2.4)** | I.3, I.5, RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10 | INST.LSP.2 |
| | | 3. Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that the students are learning. **(IA2.5)** | RL.RC.13, RL.P.4, RI.RC.12, RI.P.4 | INST.MS.3, INST.LSP.3, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.TKS.3 |
| | | 4. When teaching comprehension strategies, make sure students understand that the goal is to understand the content of the text. **(IA2.6)** | RL.RC.13, RL.P.4, RI.RC.12, RI.P.4 | INST.PIC.3, INST.PS.1 |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Recommendation 3:*** Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation. | Moderate | 1. Carefully prepare for the discussion. (***IA3.1***) | RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.1, INST.AM.2, INST.AM.3, INST.AM.4, INST.AM.5, INST.AM.6, INST.AM.7, INST.AM.8, INST.AM.9, INST.AM.10, INST.AM.11, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, EVNI.EX.3 |
| | | 2. Ask follow-up questions that help provide continuity and extend the discussion. (***IA3.2***) | RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12 | INST.MS.3, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |
| | | 3. Provide a task, or a discussion format, that students can follow when they discuss text together in small groups. (***IA3.3***) | RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12 | INST.MS.2, INST.AM.7, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 4. Develop and practice the use of a specific "discussion protocol." (***IA3.4***) | RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12 | INST.PIC.1 |
| ***Recommendation 4:*** Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning. | Moderate | 1. Establish meaningful and engaging content learning goals around the essential ideas of a discipline as well as the specific learning processes students use to access those ideas. (***IA4.1***) | I.5 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.PIC.1, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2. Make literacy experiences more relevant to students' interests, everyday life, or important current events. (*IA4.3*) | I.5 | INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.6, INST.AM.11, INST.Q.8, INST.TKS.2, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.3 |
| | | 3. Build in certain instructional conditions, such as student goal setting, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning, to increase reading engagement and conceptual learning for students. (*IA4.4*) | | INST.MS.2, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1 |
| **Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 2a:*** Teach students the writing process. | Strong | 1. Teach students strategies for the various components of the writing process. (**TE1.1**) | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3 | INST.PS.1 |
| | | 2. Gradually release writing responsibility from the teacher to the student. (**TE1.2**) | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3 | INST.MS.3 |
| | | 3. Guide students to select and use appropriate writing strategies. (**TE1.3**) | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3 | INST.MS.3, INST.TH.1, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 4. Encourage students to be flexible in their use of the components of the writing process. (**TE1.4**) | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3 | INST.MS.3C |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Recommendation 2b:*** Teach students to write for a variety of purposes. | Strong | 1.  Help students understand the different purposes of writing. **(TE2.1)** | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, PLAN.SW.2 |
| | | 2.  Expand students' concept of audience. **(TE2.2)** | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2 |
| | | 3.  Teach students to emulate the features of good writing. **(TE2.3)** | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.2 |
| | | 4.  Teach students techniques for writing effectively for different purposes. **(TE2.4)** | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.2 |
| ***Recommendation 3:*** Teach students to become fluent in handwriting, spelling, | Moderate | 1.  Teach very young writers how to hold a pencil correctly and form letters fluently and efficiently. **(TE3.1)** | K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.1 |

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| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| sentence construction, typing, and word processing. | | 2. Teach students to spell words correctly. **(TE3.2)** | K-2.W.L.5, 3-5.W.L.5 | INST.LSP.2, INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3 |
| | | 3. Teach students to construct sentences for fluency, meaning, and style. **(TE3.3)** | W.MCC.2, W.L.4, W.L.5, W.RC.6 | INST.AF.1 |
| | | 4. Teach students to type fluently and use a word processor to compose. **(TE3.4)** | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.4, K-2.W.RC.5, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.4, 3-5.W.RC.5 | INST.AM.11 |
| *Recommendation 4:* Create an engaged community of writers. | Minimal | 1. Teachers should participate as members of the community by writing and sharing their writing. **(TE4.1)** | K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.PIC.3, INST.PIC.2 |
| | | 2. Give students writing choices. **(TE4.2)** | K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.AM.9 |
| | | 3. Encourage students to collaborate as writers. **(TE4.3)** | K-2.I.5, 3-5.I.5 | INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4 |

| WWC Practice Guide *Recommendation* | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (*Strategy code*) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4. Provide students with opportunities to give and receive feedback throughout the writing process. **(TE4.4)** | K-2.I.5, 3-5.I.5 | INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.AF.1, INST.AF.2, INST.AF.3, INST.AF.4, INST.AF.5 |
| | | 5. Publish students' writing, and extend the community beyond the classroom. **(TE4.5)** | K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.RC.6 | INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, PLAN.SW.2 |
| **Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively** | | | | |
| ***Recommendation 1:*** Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle. | Strong | 1. Explicitly teach strategies for planning and goal setting, drafting, evaluating, revising, and editing. **(TS1A.1)** | W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC.6 | INST.MS.3, INST.TH.1, INST.PS.1 |
| | | 2. Instruct students on how to choose and apply strategies appropriate for the audience and purpose. **(TS1A.2)** | WW.RC.6 | INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.2, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3 |
| | | 3. Model strategies for students. **(TS1B.1)** | W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC.6 | INST.MS.3 |
| | | 4. Provide students with opportunities to apply and practice modeled strategies. **(TS1B.2)** | W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC6 | INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4 |
| | | 5. Engage students in evaluating and reflecting upon their own and peers' writing and use of modeled strategies. **(TS1B.3)** | W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, 2.MCC.3, W.RC.6 | INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4 |
| ***Recommendation 2:*** Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features. | Moderate | 1. Teach students to understand that both writers and readers use similar strategies, knowledge, and skills to create meaning. **(TS2.1)** | W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3 | INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, PLAN.SW.2 |
| | | 2. Use a variety of written exemplars to highlight the key features of texts. **(TS2.2)** | C.MC.2, C.MC.3 | RI.LCA.8, RI.LCS.8, RL.LCS.12 |
| ***Recommendation 3:*** Use assessments of student writing to inform instruction and feedback. | Minimal | 1. Assess students' strengths and areas for improvement before teaching a new strategy or skill. **(TS3.1)** | I.3, I.5 | INST.PIC.2, INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3, PLAN.A.1, PLAN.A.2, PLAN.A.3, PLAN.A.4, PLAN.A.5 |

| WWC Practice Guide _Recommendation_ | Level of Evidence | Instructional Strategy (**_Strategy code_**) | SC Literacy Standards Alignment | SC Teacher Standards Alignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2. Analyze student writing to tailor instruction and target feedback. **(TS3.2)** | W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC.6 | INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.AF.1, INST.AF.2, INST.AF.3, INST.AF.4, INST.AF.5 |
| | | 3. Regularly monitor students' progress while teaching writing strategies and skills. **(TS3.3)** | I.5 | INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3 |

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## Recommendation

# Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge.

Academic language skills include three skills: (1) use of inferential language (communicating about ideas across contexts); (2) use of narrative language (clearly describing a series of events); and (3) understanding a range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures. These skills help students better comprehend academic texts both across subjects and within individual subjects. Unlike social language skills that develop naturally in communication with family and friends, academic language skills more often need to be taught.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Engage students in conversations that support the use and comprehension of inferential language.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Ask open-ended questions about texts, including making predictions, making hypotheses, and comparing and contrasting.
- Ask questions before, during, and after reading.
- Model how to answer questions.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.1, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.C.MC.1, K-2.C.MC.2

**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, ENVI.EX.3

Multiple strategies can be used during conversations about the texts students are reading to support the development of students' inferential language. These include asking students to make predictions, engage in problem-solving, make hypotheses, and compare and contrast concepts. Teachers can use open-ended questions to encourage students to reflect on how the texts apply to their lives and their world.

These questions can be asked before, during, or after read-aloud activities to encourage higher-level thinking. Teachers should model how to answer such questions by providing their own complete and well-reasoned answers. Teachers can also use follow-up questions such as "Why do you think that?" to prompt students to provide additional detail to their own answers.

## 2. Explicitly engage students in developing narrative language skills.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Model complex grammatical structures.
- Teach elements of narrative language.
- Scaffold student responses.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.8, K-2.EL.LCS.12, K-2.RL.MCS.11, K-2.C.MC.1
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, ENVI.EX.3

Narrative language is the ability to understand or create a fictional or real interpretation of an experience. Skills needed for narrative language include logically organizing information and using grammatical structures to connect the information. Teachers should teach students about complex grammatical structures and elements of narrative language, such as compound sentences, subordinate clauses, adverbial clauses, prepositional phrases, connectives, noun phrases, verb phrases, and pronoun references. These can be taught during whole-class or small-group lessons. Teachers can model grammatical structures, prompt students to use these structures (e.g.,

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while summarizing a story or predicting what will happen next), and scaffold student responses.

Teachers should also provide instruction on components of story grammar, including characters, setting, and plot. Students can engage with these components when summarizing stories. Teachers can prompt students to include all of the components of story grammar in their own summaries of stories.

## 3. Teach academic vocabulary in the context of other reading activities.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Develop a common set of academic vocabulary.
- Use activities that ask students to use or talk about academic vocabulary.
- Review new words regularly and expose students to the words in new contexts.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10, K-2RL.LCS.11, K-2.RL.LCS.12, K-2.RI.LCS.9, K-2.RI.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3

Academic vocabulary are words commonly used in written text across subject areas, such as assignment instructions. Academic vocabulary can also include grammatical rules that are less common in speech. Ideally, schools or grade-level teams develop a common set of academic vocabulary that will appear frequently throughout the school year and across subjects. Teachers could explicitly teach students a few words each week from this common set of academic vocabulary. Instruction should provide clear definitions and meaningful example sentences that include the word. Teachers can help students develop a deeper understanding of the words by constructing activities that allow students to use or talk about the words they have learned. Teachers should also review the new words regularly and provide opportunities for students to encounter the words in different contexts throughout the year.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Student academic language skills can vary across a spectrum of ability, and some students may not be ready to engage in this level of skill-development activities.* | Differentiate instruction to support the language development of each student. For example, small-group reading instruction will allow teachers to better meet each student's needs. |
| *It is hard to find adequate time to devote to language instruction.* | Integrate language instruction into already-planned content areas. For example, use science or social studies texts to foster rich inferential discussion. Language instruction can also be integrated into already-scheduled read-aloud time. |

*Reference:* Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., . . . Wissel, S. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21

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## Recommendation

# Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.

For students to be able to read and comprehend, they must first develop phonological awareness, the ability to recognize and manipulate the segments of sound in words. To develop this ability, students must be able to identify the following: individual sounds (phonemes) in words; print letters of the alphabet; and corresponding sounds for each letter. The following recommendation focuses on actions teachers can take to support students in developing the ability to effectively decode and encode words.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Work with students to break down sentences into individual words.
- Work with students to break down individual words, like compound words, into smaller words.
- Work with students to break down syllables within words.
- Work with students to break down words into smaller parts like onset and rime.
- Use tools like Elkonin boxes to help students break down words into individual phonemes.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3
**TEACHER:** INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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To begin teaching students this skill, work with students to break down sentences into individual words. Then help them break down certain individual words, like compound words, into smaller words. Next, work with students to break down words further into syllables and encourage them to practice identifying syllables within familiar words. Finally, teach students to break syllables into even smaller units, such as onsets and rimes. Onsets are the initial consonant in a syllable (i.e., the /f/ in food), while the rime is the remaining sound in that syllable (i.e., the /ood/ in food). Once students can break syllables into onsets and rimes, encourage students to begin manipulating them to build phonemic awareness. A wide variety of activities can help students manipulate individual phonemes, including using Elkonin sound boxes*, sorting pictures, and using the sample activities described below.

**Sample activities for learning onset and rime**

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**Assembling Words**
**Teacher:** What word do you get when you put these two sounds together: /f/ and /ood/?
**Students:** *Food.*
**Teacher:** Exactly!

---

**Rhyming**
Explain what rhyming means to students before beginning the dialogue.
**Teacher:** What word rhymes with *bat*?
**Students:** *Cat.*
**Teacher:** Yes! Does *hat* rhyme with *bat*?
**Students:** Yes!
**Teacher:** Does *bar* rhyme with *bat*?
**Students:** No.
**Teacher:** Very good.

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**Matching Onsets**

**Teacher**: These are pictures of animals. What type of animal is this? (Show picture of cat.)

**Students:** A cat.

**Teacher:** Correct. What sound does *cat* start with?

**Students: /**c/

**Teacher:** Correct. What type of animal is this? (Show picture of cow.)

**Students:** A cow.

**Teacher:** Correct. Does this type of animal start with the same sound as cat?

**Students:** Yes.

**Teacher:** Correct. What is this animal called? (Show picture of dog.)

**Students:** Dog.

**Teacher:** Correct. Does *dog* start with the same sound as *cat*?

**Students:** No.

**Teacher:** Correct. What sound does *dog* start with?

**Students:** /d/

**Teacher:** Very good. What about this animal? (Show picture of crab.)

**Students:** Crab.

**Teacher:** Exactly. Does it start with the same letter as *cat*?

**Students:** Yes.

**Teacher:** Great work! *Cat*, *cow*, and *crab* all begin with the /c/ sound. *Dog* does not begin with the /c/ sound.

## 2. Teach students letter-sound relations.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach familiar consonant and short vowels sounds.
- Continue with familiar consonant blends, moving to long vowels, common two-letter vowel pairs, and combinations that may correspond to multiple sounds.
- Share a picture with the upper and lower case of a letter and share a short story that corresponds to and incorporates the letter throughout.
- Have students repeat the sound.
- Provide opportunities for the student to write the letter.

### South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3
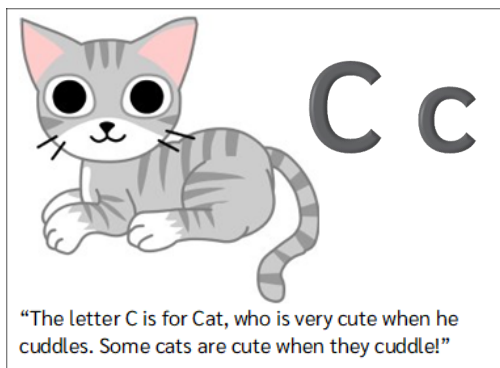TEACHER: INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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Once students begin to manipulate phonemes, start working with students on the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds. Begin by teaching familiar consonant and short vowel sounds that are more common, such as /m/, /p/, /s/, and /a/. After consonants and short vowels, consider teaching students familiar consonant blends. As students progress in their understanding, teach long vowels with a silent /e/, common two-letter vowel pairs (e.g., /ea/ and /ou/), and letters and letter combinations that may correspond to multiple sounds. Introduce each letter or letter combination one at a time. For each letter-sound, try sharing a picture with both the upper and lower case of the letter and share a short story that corresponds to and incorporates the letter-sound throughout to help students remember the sound when they see the letter. Encourage students to repeat the sound after it's shared, and provide meaningful opportunities for students to write the letters (e.g., writing their names or common words with the letter).

**Sample picture and alphabet letter**



"The letter C is for Cat, who is very cute when he cuddles. Some cats are cute when they cuddle!"

## 3. Use word-building and other activities to link students' knowledge of letter-sound relationships with phonemic awareness.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Use activities like word building with letter tiles to build an awareness of how each letter contributes to the spelling and pronunciation of a word.
- Model the activity and work on some examples with students.
- Challenge students with more difficult words as they progress.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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Activities, like word-building, help students build their awareness of how each letter contributes to the spelling and pronunciation of a word. By building this skill, students can begin spelling and decoding words. For example, provide students with a set of letter tiles and have them manipulate the tiles to create or change words. Model the activity to begin, and work through examples with students. Then encourage the students to work independently. As they progress in their understanding, challenge students with more difficult words, such as words with a silent /e/ or words with two consonants at the beginning or end.

**Sample Word-Building**

Provide students with the letter tiles *a*, *p*, *t*, *c*, and *n*.

**Teacher:** Take the *p*, *a*, and *t* tiles and put them together in that order: *p*, *a*, then *t*. Can anyone read this word?

**Student:** *Pat*.

**Teacher:** Correct. Now change one letter to make it say *pan*.

**Teacher:** Now, change a letter to make it say *can*.

**Teacher:** Now, make it say *cat*.

**Teacher:** Finally, make it say *pat* again.

Summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Students often confuse letters and their sounds.* | A common problem in early grades is students confusing the shapes and sounds of one letter for another (e.g., b and d), known as a letter reversal. To help students overcome this challenge, teach students one letter at a time, starting with the letter's shape (e.g., b). Once a student is able to instantly identify the letter, introduce another letter (e.g., d) and continue to reinforce the first letter learned. Then, shift your teaching focus entirely to the second letter. Finally, introduce the two letters in individual words to ensure students can recognize each letter independently. If issues with letter reversals continue, try using a handwriting program, which can help students focus their hand-eye coordination on the letter shapes. Particularly for older students, continued problems with letter reversals may indicate other reading challenges or disabilities. |
| *Even after focused instruction, students continue to struggle with phonemic awareness.* | One potential opportunity to overcome this roadblock is to work with a student one-on-one or in small groups. Early intervention can help overcome this persistent challenge and prevent further reading problems. |

*Reference:* Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., . . . Wissel, S. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21

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CONTENT **Reading**
GRADE LEVEL(S) **K-3**
LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Strong**

## Recommendation

# Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

For students to be able to read with greater fluency and comprehension, they must first develop their understanding of morphology, the knowledge of meaningful word parts in the language. To develop this understanding, students must learn the following: letter patterns and word parts, the relation of sounds to letters, and high-frequency word recognition. The following recommendation focuses on actions teachers can take to support students in developing their understanding of morphology to increase fluency and comprehension.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students to blend letter-sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Have students practice chunking letter-sounds.
   - Have student practice sounding out words.
   - Use manipulatives to demonstrate chunking and sounding out.

   **South Carolina standards alignment**

   **ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
   **TEACHER:** INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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Blending is a systematic process for reading words. Students read from left to right, successively adding more letters to produce the sound of the word. Chunking and sounding out are two approaches to use when teaching students to blend.

- **Chunking** – When students chunk, they combine the first two letter-sounds, then practice that combination before adding the next letter-sound. This process of adding a sound and then practicing is repeated until all the sounds are added and the whole word is pronounced.
  - Have students identify the first and second sounds and put these two sounds together. Then, encourage students to add the next sound to the chunk of the first and second sounds until they have pronounced the word in its entirety. Have students ask themselves if the word they produced is familiar as a way to check their pronunciation.

- **Sounding out** – When students sound out words, they say all the letter-sounds from left to right, connecting them as much as possible as they go.
  - Have students pronounce each letter-sound individually. Then ask students to put the letter-sounds together. Finally, ask students what the word is after combining all letter-sounds. Have students ask themselves if the word they produced is familiar as a way to check their pronunciation.

Teachers can also use manipulatives such as a pocket chart with letter tiles, magnetic letters, or an Elkonin sound box[*] to demonstrate chunking and sounding out.

## 2. Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns.

### Instructional strategies from the example

- Demonstrate how letters appear in multiple words.
- Use word cards to demonstrate spelling patterns.
- Use spelling patterns to practice spelling words.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:**
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

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[*] *Elkonin sound boxes can be created by providing students with paper squares and instructing students to write in spelling patterns. Each sound gets its own box. Then students are able to create words using the spelling patterns identified by the teacher.*

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

Demonstrate to students how letters, when combined, often appear in multiple words. To begin, use common vowel and syllable patterns like *th*, *oo*, or *ee*. To continue, teachers can use syllable-construction patterns like *gen-tle* and *Tues-day*.

**Activities to introduce and practice sound-spelling patterns**

1. Use word cards. Word cards should include words that have the identified pattern and those that do not. Students can sort the word cards into these two groups: word cards that have the identified pattern and word cards that do not.

2. Provide students with a spelling pattern. Prompt students to practice writing words that include the spelling pattern.

3. Provide students with a spelling pattern. Have students use Elkonin sound boxes to build words with the provided spelling pattern.

# 3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Develop a common set of academic vocabulary.
- Use activities that ask students to use or talk about academic vocabulary.
- Review new words regularly and expose students to the words in new contexts.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

After students have learned some common spelling patterns, show them how to break words down into smaller, meaningful parts. For example, teaching students suffixes, contractions, prefixes, and root words will help students have a strong foundational understanding of how to build and create new words. Activities to support students in learning to manipulate word parts would be most helpful in supporting student understanding of spelling.

Teachers can further students' understanding by helping students decode more complex words by, for example, identifying words parts and vowels and repeating words in context. Encourage students to adjust vowel sounds, as necessary, when reading words until they pronounce a recognizable word.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

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**Word part worksheet**

*Using previously taught suffixes, prefixes, and roots, provide students with a worksheet that students would be able to add prefixes and suffixes to create words.*

| small | er | | happ | y |
| small | est | un | happ | y |

# 4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.

## Instructional strategies from the examples

- Encourage students to identify spelling patterns in word lists and texts.

## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Word lists, decodable sentences, and short decodable texts can provide opportunities for students to practice recently learned spelling patterns. Teachers should encourage students to identify spelling patterns in word lists and texts.

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**Word List**

| how | cow | below |
| slowly | show | crow |
| know | row | |

**Connected text passage**
The crow flew across the sky and saw below a cow in a field. The crow swooped down to look closer and landed behind a row of corn. The cow did not know the crow had landed close by. The crow moved closer and closer to see the cow.

The cow slowly turned toward the row of corn, and said "Who is watching me from behind the row of corn? Show yourself!" The crow came out from behind the corn. "How did you get here?" asked the cow to the crow. "Aren't you supposed to live up in the sky?" The crow replied, "I saw you from the sky and wanted to take a closer look."

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## 5. Teach irregular and regular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Use numerous approaches to help students learn both irregular and regular high-frequency words, such as flashcards or word walls.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Teaching students high-frequency word recognition can help speed up the reading process so students can focus on the meaning of the text. For example, high-frequency words can include *the*, *there*, *was*, *in*, *and*, and *with*. However, some high-frequency words can be irregular, with exceptions to the typical sound-spelling patterns. These irregular words are hard for students to decode and should be taught holistically. When teaching high-frequency words, teachers can use numerous approaches to help students learn both irregular and regular high-frequency words, like using flashcards, having students practice writing words, or creating a high-frequency word wall for students in the classroom.

## 6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Review books to determine the presence of non-decodable words.
- Teach these words prior to introducing the book.
- Limit the number of non-decodable words that are introduced at any one time.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.2, K-2.RL.P.3, K-2.RI.P.2, K-2.RI.P.3, K-2.Rl.LCS.9, K-2.RL.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Non-decodable words have irregular sound-spelling patterns (e.g., pigeon and villain). Books may include complex, non-decodable words that are essential to understanding the story. Prior to introducing a new book, review it and determine if it includes any non-decodable words. If it does, determine which non-decodable words may be

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essential to students' understanding, and teach them the non-decodable words prior to introducing the new book. For example, a book about dinosaurs may include words such as tyrannosaurus rex or brachiosaurus. Learning these words in advance will help students better understand the context of the book. Teachers should limit the number of non-decodable words that are introduced at one time to reduce demands on students' memory.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Students sometimes use invented spellings for words.* | When students are working independently, encourage them to try spelling words on their own. Doing so provides an opportunity for them to practice what they have learned about letter-sound relations. Encourage students to use their knowledge of sound-spelling patterns as they write. Students should review their work to identify words that do not look right and make additional attempts at spelling those words. If students are consistently misspelling high-frequency words, particularly words with irregular spellings, post the words on the wall or add them to a student's writing journal to support student learning. |
| *Students may struggle with correct pronunciation for a word, even when they are able to identify letter-sounds.* | Encourage students to blend sounds smoothly, connecting all the sounds without stopping. Sometimes students encounter difficulty with this when they emphasize the schwa sound (e.g., they pronounce b as buh). This interferes with the smooth blending of sounds. Work with students to minimize the schwa sound. When teaching students to blend and sound out, encourage students to be flexible with their vowel pronunciation; this may help students improve their ability to pronounce words they can recognize. |

*Reference:* Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., . . . Wissel, S. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

## Recommendation

# Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

Reading connected text—that is, multiple sentences related to each other—requires greater skill than reading isolated words. To read and understand connected text, students must quickly recognize words, integrate what they are reading with their background knowledge, and monitor their comprehension. Daily practice with reading connected text helps students increase their accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. As students read orally, model strategies, scaffold, and provide feedback to support accurate and efficient word identification.

   ### Instructional strategies from the examples

   - Have students partner with a more fluent reader to provide feedback, support, and modeling.
   - Remind student to apply decoding skills.
   - Scaffold and provide prompts to support students in developing reading skills.

   ### South Carolina standards alignment

   **ELA:** K-2.RL.LCS.10, K-2.RI.LCS.9

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**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.PIC.3, INST.AF.1, INST.AF.2, INST.AF.3, INST.AF.4, INST.AF.5

Plan activities for students to work with a more proficient reader, such as a teacher, parent, or another student. These partners provide feedback and support and model effective word-reading strategies. Activities can be done one-on-one or in small groups, using instructional-level text, which includes sound-spelling patterns that students have recently learned. Help students when they encounter difficult words by reminding them to apply their decoding and word recognition skills (e.g., looking for parts of words they know, such as familiar sound-spelling patterns or common suffixes or prefixes, sounding out words, checking their pronunciation). Providing riddles (e.g., asking "Where do you sleep?" for a student who is struggling with reading the word *bed*) or encouraging students to guess words or sound-spelling patterns is not advised; rather, scaffolding students and providing prompts will better support students in building reading skills.

## 2. Teach students to self-monitor their understanding of the text and to self-correct word-reading errors.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Demonstrate how letters appear in multiple words.
- Use word cards to demonstrate spelling patterns.
- Use spelling patterns to practice spelling words.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.RL.P.4, K-2.RI.P.4, K-2.RL.LCS.10, K-2.RI.MCS.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

Competent readers are able to recognize when text does not make sense, if a word is misread, or if a mistake has been made. To build this skill, model self-monitoring and self-correction strategies and help students use them. The "Fix It" game can be used to teach these strategies. When students misread words, prompt them to consider if what they read makes sense rather than just providing the correct word.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide
*Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.*
Full reference is on the last page.

2

**The "Fix It" Game**

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**Steps:**
1. The teacher introduces the task by explaining that sometimes we make mistakes when we read, and the mistakes make the sentences sound silly because the words don't make sense. When a sentence or passage makes sense, it sounds right; it doesn't sound silly or mixed-up.
2. The teacher reads a list of sentences; some contain a word that does not make sense, while other sentences do make sense.
3. Students must say whether or not each sentence makes sense or sounds right. If it doesn't, students must explain why not.
4. If a sentence does not make sense, students must "fix it."

**Example:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Teacher:* | "The bus stepped at the corner." Does that make sense? |
| *Student(s):* | No. |
| *Teacher:* | Why not? |
| *Student(s):* | A bus can't step. |
| *Teacher:* | Fix it! |
| *Student(s):* | "The bus stopped at the corner." |
| *Teacher:* | Right! That makes sense! Remember that when you read, it has to make sense. If it doesn't, you have to go back and fix it! |

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## 3. Provide opportunities for oral reading practice with feedback to develop fluent and accurate reading with expression.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Model fluent reading at a natural pace.
- Teach students how to read punctuation marks.
- Provide feedback on reading with expression.
- Use activities that ask students to use or talk about academic vocabulary.
- Practice challenging new words prior to reading text.
- Ask comprehension questions after reading text.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K–2.RL.P.4, K–2.RI.P.4
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.PS.1

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide
*Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.*
Full reference is on the last page.

# Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension

Modeling reading fluency helps students understand how to read text. Be sure to model reading with expression at a natural pace and teach students about punctuation marks and how to read them to support reading fluency. Provide feedback to students, as they practice reading, on how to read with expression. To get started, consider using familiar texts to model reading with expression fluently. Begin reading at a slower pace for students and then encourage students to read along. Help students succeed during practice by practicing challenging new words with them before they read the text and asking them comprehension questions after they have read the text.

**Reading fluency activities**

- *Individual oral reading* – This activity can happen with a teacher, parent, or another student who can provide feedback. Students can also record themselves reading so a teacher can provide feedback later.
- *Partner reading* – This activity should be between two students.
- *Choral reading* – This activity should be done in small groups, with a teacher ensuring that all students are participating.
- *Echo reading* – In this activity, a teacher reads a text aloud and then a student reads the same section aloud.
- *Alternated reading* – This activity should include at least two readers (beginner and more advanced) taking turns reading through a text.
- *Simultaneous reading* – This activity will have a teacher and student read a text aloud at the same time.
- *Individual oral reading with a computerized reading device* – This activity has students read along with computerized reading devices.
- *Repeated reading* – This activity encourages students to read the same text multiple times for mastery and builds word recognition.
- *Wide reading* – This activity encourages students to read many different texts to support a more diverse vocabulary and knowledge of the world.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *It is a challenge to identify texts that are accessible for all students.* | Monitor student progress with available assigned texts to determine students' reading ability. Then assign students appropriate texts based on their reading ability; this may mean students are using different texts than other students for a given activity. Use different levels of text for different purposes. For example, easier texts can be used for independent fluency practice, while more challenging texts can be used with one-on-one teacher support for practicing word decoding skills. |
| *Beginning readers may rely on illustrations to identify words instead of practicing their word-identification strategies are able to identify letter-sounds.* | Encourage students to blend sounds smoothly, connecting all the sounds without stopping. Sometimes students encounter difficulty with this when they emphasize the schwa sound (e.g., they pronounce b as buh). This interferes with the smooth blending of sounds. Work with students to minimize the schwa sound. When teaching students to blend and sound out, encourage students to be flexible with their vowel pronunciation; this may help students improve their ability to pronounce words they can recognize. To avoid this challenge, provide beginning readers with decodable text that uses high-frequency words. When encouraging students to read more difficult text, model sounding out words, which will demonstrate a strategy that students can use in the future. |
| *With limited time, it is difficult for teachers to provide each student with individualized feedback.* | Teachers can consider establishing routines for small-group and independent reading activities. Once students have learned the routines, teachers can provide individualized instruction and feedback to each student during these times. |

*Reference:* Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., . . . Wissel, S. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

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CONTENT **Reading**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **K-3**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Minimal**

## Recommendation

# Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies.

Good readers use a variety of strategies for thinking and analyzing text, so it is important to teach beginning readers strategies for constructing meaning from text. Comprehension strategies help readers build understanding, overcome difficulties in comprehending a text, and compensate for weak or imperfect knowledge related to the text. These strategies can be taught one by one or in combination, as both approaches have been shown to improve reading comprehension. Teachers should choose the approach they are most comfortable within the classroom.

Teachers should also gradually release responsibility to help students learn to use comprehension strategies independently. Yet teachers should keep in mind that students will differ in the extent of modeling or support they need in order to use strategies effectively.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1.  Teach students how to use several research-based reading comprehension strategies.

    **Instructional strategies from the examples**

    *   Use multiple strategies to support reading comprehension (see box below).
    *   Explain how the strategies help with reading comprehension.
    *   Explain how to use the strategy.

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# Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies

| Strategy | Description | Activities to Promote Strategy Practice |
|---|---|---|
| Activating prior knowledge / predicting | Students think about what they already know, using that knowledge and other clues to <br>• Construct meaning from what they read. <br>• Make predictions about what will happen next and then continue to read to validate their predictions. | • Pull out a main idea from the text and ask students a question that relates the idea to their experience. Ask them to predict whether a similar experience might occur in the text. <br>• Partway through the story, ask students to predict what will happen at the end. Ask them to explain how they developed their predictions. This activity helps students make inferences about what they are reading and look for the deeper meanings of words and passages. |
| Questioning | Students develop questions about important ideas as they read the text, using words such as where or why, and attempt to answer these questions. | • Put question words (e.g., where, why) on index cards and distribute them to students. Then, have students, in small groups, develop and ask each other questions using these words. |
| Visualizing | Students build a mental image of what is described in the text. | • Explain that visualizing what is described in the text can help students remember what they read. <br>• Have students examine several objects placed in front of them, then provide a related picture depicting a scene. Remove the objects and picture, and ask students to visualize and describe what they saw. <br>• Read a sentence and describe what you visualize. Choose sections from the text and ask students to do the same. |
| Monitoring, clarifying, and fixing up | Students check whether they understand what they are reading, and when they do not understand, they reread or use strategies to help them understand. | • Relate strategies to traffic signs (e.g., stop sign—stop reading and, in your own words, restate what is happening; U-turn—reread parts of the text that do not make sense). <br>• Write each strategy on a card with its sign, and then have student pairs work to apply the strategies to the text they do not understand. |

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

| Strategy | Description | Activities to Promote Strategy Practice |
|---|---|---|
| Drawing inferences | Students generate information important to constructing meaning that may be missing from or not explicitly stated in the text. | • Teach students how to look for keywords that help them understand the text and demonstrate how they can draw inferences from such words (e.g., sand and waves could indicate a beach).<br>• Identify keywords in a sample passage, and explain what students can learn about the passage from those words. |
| Summarizing / retelling | Students briefly describe, in speech or in writing, the main points of what they have read. | • Ask students to describe the text in their own words to a partner.<br>• If a student has trouble, ask questions such as "What comes next?" or "What else did the passage say about [subject]? |

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.6, K-2.RI.MC.7
**TEACHER:** INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

The following six strategies have been shown to improve reading comprehension, especially in the primary grades. Teachers should present several of the strategies because different strategies cultivate different kinds of thinking. They should explain how the strategies can help students learn from a text—as opposed to memorizing strategies—as well as how to use the strategies effectively.
*Note.* Adapted from pages 12–13 of the practice guide referenced on the last page of this document.

## 2. Teach reading comprehension strategies individually or in combination.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- In the single strategy approach, introduce each strategy independently and allow time for practice.
- Encourage students to use the learned strategies in combination over time.
- In the multi-strategy approach, introduce multiple strategies simultaneously and provide opportunities for students to practice them in combination.

- Choose the approach that works best for your classroom.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.6, K-2.RI.MC.7
**TEACHER:** INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.PS.1

**Single-strategy approach:**
Introduce each strategy independently and include time for practice, usually a few weeks, before the next strategy is introduced, allowing students to master a collection of strategies over time. It may be easier to begin with this approach. As additional strategies are introduced, encourage students to use all the strategies they have learned. Doing so will allow them to review and continue to build mastery of previous strategies.

**Multiple-strategy approach:**
Introduce several strategies simultaneously and allow students to practice them in combination. Multiple-strategy instruction might be more complicated initially, but it familiarizes students with using the strategies together from the very beginning, providing a more authentic strategic reading experience.

There is not enough evidence to advocate for using multiple-strategy instruction over single-strategy instruction, or vice versa, so teachers should choose the approach that is best for their classroom environments. Regardless of the approach, the goal should be to teach students several strategies.

## 3. Teach reading comprehension strategies by using a gradual release of responsibility.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Gradually release responsibility for using the strategies to students.
- Periodically review the purpose of the strategy and how it improves comprehension.
- Start over with the gradual release process as the text becomes more complex.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

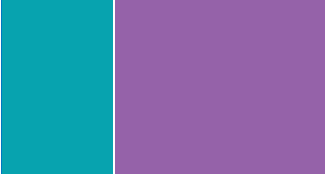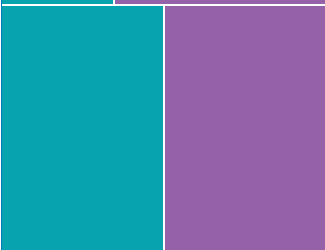**ELA:** K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.MC.6, K-2.RI.MC.7

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

4

# Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies

**TEACHER:** INST.TKS.3, INST.PIC.3, INST.PIC.5, INST.AM.9

Because students may not naturally use strategies, gradually release responsibility for them. For example, first, explain how to use the strategy and then give students increasing independence in practicing and applying the strategy over time.

An example of gradual release of responsibility is included in the table below. Effective instruction in reading comprehension strategies often includes some or all of these steps. While going through the steps with a class, periodically review the purpose of a strategy and how it improves comprehension until students can apply it independently. Cycle back through the gradual release process as the texts/topics/concepts become more difficult.

| Task | Share of Responsibility | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Explicit description of the strategy | | "Predicting is making guesses about what will come next as you are reading. You should make predictions often when you read by stopping and thinking about what might come next." |
| Teacher and/ or student modeling | | "Looking at the cover of this book, I see a picture of an owl wearing pajamas and carrying a candle. I predict this story will be about this owl, and it is going to take place at night." |
| Collaborative use | | "Let's make some predictions together. When I stop reading, I want each of you to think about what might happen next . . . Okay, let's hear what you predict and why." |
| Guided practice | | "Here is a list of pages from the book we are reading. After you read a page on the list, stop and write a prediction. When you finish reading the next page on the list, check whether your prediction happened, will not happen, or still might happen." |
| Independent use | | "For now, stop every two pages as you read and evaluate the predictions you have made, then make some new ones for the next tw o pages." |

■ Student  ■ Teacher     *Note.* Adapted from page 15 of the practice guide.

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *A multiple-strategy approach is more elaborate than a single-strategy approach.* | A multiple-strategy approach may require more professional development than a single-strategy approach. Teachers should have an opportunity to see examples of successful multiple-strategy instruction and to try it out with feedback from knowledgeable professionals, including other teachers and coaches with experience using the approach. Guides that show teachers how to implement specific multiple-strategy approaches in the classroom (e.g., professional books, manuals, and videos) are also available. |
| *The school reading assessment emphasizes comprehension skills (e.g., main idea, drawing conclusions), not strategies.* | Although there is nothing wrong with instruction that emphasizes certain types of questions or information in a text, the purpose of teaching reading comprehension strategies is to teach students how to think when they are reading, which in itself will improve their ability to perform well on reading assessments. It is critical for teachers to focus on the strategies described in this recommendation, as these strategies can help students learn other skills outlined in state and local content standards. |
| *Students bring a wide range of abilities in reading and reading comprehension to the classroom, so adapting strategy instruction to an individual student is a challenge.* | Teachers should form small groups of students with similar comprehension needs or skills, allowing them to focus targeted help on a few students at a time. For instance, instead of releasing responsibility to all students at once, teachers may model a strategy more than once for some students, or lengthen the periods of guided practice while giving feedback to students who are struggling to practice on their own. Breaking down the lesson into smaller sections or reading a smaller section of a text together can also help students who are having difficulty comprehending a particular text at the same level as other students. |

*Reference:* Star, J. R., Foegen, A., Larson, M. R., McCallum, W. G., Porath, J., & Zbiek, R. M. (2019). *Teaching strategies for improving algebra knowledge in middle and high school students* (NCEE 2015-4010). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/20

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

**Recommendation**

# Teach students to identify and use the text's organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content.

Teaching students to recognize the structure of a text aids in comprehension and recall of content. Providing this type of instruction can help students extract and construct meaning while they are reading. Students can begin to develop a sense of the structure of the text as early as kindergarten. Although instruction in kindergarten is typically based on narrative text, students in the early grades should also be exposed to informational text because its structure can build their understanding and recall of key points. Teachers should guide learning in recognizing text structure by gradually releasing responsibility, keeping the goal of independent reading in mind. This involves guiding students to draw on what they know about structure to help them understand more complex texts.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Model and explain the structure of a narrative text.
   - Include questions about the structure of the text in class discussions.
   - Develop tools to help students identify and remember the elements of text structure.

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- Explain what the tool is, why it is useful, and how to use it.
- Adapt instruction to class needs.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.MC.6, K-2.RL.MC.7, K-2.RL.MC.8, K-2.RL.LCS.11, K-2.RL.LCS.12
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.1, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

Teachers should both model and explain how to identify and understand the aspects of a narrative text that provide meaning and "shape." They should engage students in identifying and using these elements to guide their understanding of the text. Effective class discussions of recently-read books include questions about key elements of the text's structure. To help students identify and remember the elements of structure, develop tools, such as simple mnemonics. When introducing these tools, explain what the tool is, why it is useful, and how to use it with an overall goal of teaching students to think about the structure *as they read* and not just when required to use one of these tools.

Stay aware of the capabilities and grade levels of students, adapting instruction about text structure for each student. For example, a kindergarten teacher would identify elements of structure using simpler clues (e.g., When and where? Who? What happened? How did the story end?). As students progress, the teacher should encourage them to look at a wider variety of structural elements, using texts that involve multiple conflicts and subplots as they extract and construct meaning from a story.

Other ways for students to build capacity in identifying structural elements include making up their own stories, developing stories from story maps, illustrating each episode in the story, or participating in a dramatic retelling.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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**Elements of structure in a narrative text**

| Element | Description |
|---|---|
| *Characters* | Who the story was about |
| *Setting* | Where and when the story happened |
| *Goal* | What the main character was trying to do |
| *Problem* | Why the main character took certain actions |
| *Plot or Action* | What happened to the main character or what they did to try to solve a problem |
| *Resolution* | How the problem was solved and how the story ended |
| *Theme(s)* | General lessons or ideas |

*Note.* Adapted from page 19 of the practice guide referenced on the last page of this document.

## 2. Provide instruction on common structures of informational texts.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Introduce the structures of informational texts.
- Use texts that provide clear examples of structures.
- Ask students to identify clue words.
- Ask students to organize information from text using graphic tools.
- Move from direct guiding questions to more complex ones that ask the student to identify structures independently.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.2, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.LCS.8, K-2.RI.LCS.11, K-2.RI.LCS.12
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.1, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

When teaching text structures, teachers should introduce students not only to the structural elements in narrative text but also to those of informational, or expository, text. Informational text structures typically apply to paragraphs or passages, and when considering the entire text, students may encounter multiple structures, as well as multiple repetitions of the same structure. Teachers should use ideas and topics familiar to the students when teaching about the structure of an informational text

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

and should initially use texts that provide clear, easy-to-recognize examples of a given structure. During a reading of the text, the teacher should ask students to identify clue words in a passage that signal the use of a certain structure. An approach advocated by many researchers is to instruct students to organize information from expository text using graphic tools (e.g., concept maps, Venn diagrams, fishbone charts, and sequence diagrams or flow charts).

Once students can comfortably identify the structure of a passage and recall its content, the teacher can replace more direct, guiding questions ("What was the cause? What was the effect?") with complex questions that do not include clue words, such as "How did the author organize the information in this text?"

**Structures of informational text**

| Structure | Description | Common Clue Words |
|---|---|---|
| **Description** | What something looks, feels, smells, sounds, tastes like, or is composed of | |
| **Sequence** | When or in what order things happen | first, then, next, after, later, finally |
| **Problem and Solution** | What went wrong and how it was or could be fixed | because, in order to, so that, trouble, if, problem |
| **Cause and Effect** | How one event leads to another | because, therefore, cause, effect, so |
| **Compare and Contrast** | How things are alike and different | both, alike, unalike, but, however, than |

*Note.* Adapted from page 20 of the practice guide.

**Narrative texts** portray a story, or sequence of related fictional or nonfictional events involving individuals or fictional characters; in the elementary grades, narrative texts can include historical fiction, fables, and autobiographies.

**Informational texts** include expository writing, pieces that argue in favor of one position or another, and procedural texts and documents. In the elementary grades, informational texts can include news articles, speeches, and timelines.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide
*Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Teachers may not have time to analyze texts to determine how they are structured and how learning that structure contributes to students' reading comprehension.* | Use common planning time to collaborate on identifying texts that offer clear examples of particular structures and structural elements and to develop clue words to go along with these texts. This work allows teachers to develop a broader range of texts than if they were working alone, and the knowledge can be spread across many teachers and even put into a repository for future teachers. Additionally, the school library is a good resource for trade books that identify texts that are good choices to teach particular elements. |
| *Students can apply text structure knowledge in classroom assignments but may not do so independently or with more complex texts.* | Encourage students to pay attention to text structure across a wide variety of reading experiences. Students who can use text structure successfully during a reading lesson may forget to do so when reading a social studies book or reading on their own. Providing a quick reminder of the value of structure just as such a reading is about to begin can help. Also, encourage students to bring you any texts whose structure they cannot figure out. Use these opportunities to clarify the structure and help students resolve problems with more complex texts. |

*Reference:* Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/14

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

## Recommendation

# Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of the text.

Lead students through focused, high-quality discussions to help them develop a deeper understanding of what they read. These discussions go beyond simply asking and answering surface-level questions to a more thoughtful exploration of the text, which helps students learn to argue for or against points raised in the discussion, resolve ambiguities in the text, and draw conclusions or inferences about the text.

Students in kindergarten through grade 3 can engage in these discussions if they have appropriate guidance from their teacher. While some of the suggestions for putting this into practice apply to more experienced readers, teachers can make them applicable to very early readers and those reading below grade level. This approach can build students' ability to think more critically and independently about what they read.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1.  ## Develop discussion questions that require students to think deeply about the text.

    ### Instructional strategies from the examples

    - Use higher-order questions to guide students to think deeply about the meaning of the text
    - Plan the time, order, and where in the text questions should be asked in advance

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**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.I.1, K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.RCS.12
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, NST.TH.1, INST.TH.2

Move beyond having students simply recall details about the text or asking them to provide their opinions by instead developing higher-order questions that guide them to think deeply about the meaning of the text. These questions should reflect what conclusions you want students to draw from the text, including implicit and explicit information. Typical higher-order questions include:

- *Why did _____?*
- *What do you think _____?*
- *If you were the author _____?*
- *What does _____ remind you of and why?*

When preparing questions, consider the best time to present each question to students—before, during, or after reading—as well as which questions should be asked when students first read the text and which questions should be asked after a second or subsequent reading. Additionally, determine exactly where in the text a question will be asked (e.g., after a specific page, paragraph, or illustration). For students in kindergarten and grade 1, shared reading time or read-alouds can provide opportunities to introduce higher-order questions.

## 2. Ask follow-up questions to encourage and facilitate discussion.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Ask follow-up questions that involve the students applying reading comprehension strategies.
- Ask questions that require students to think about and elaborate on their answers and expound on the meaning of the text.
- Ask students to refer to the text to justify their answers.
- Use follow-up questions to engage in a discussion about the text.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

2

# Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of text

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.I.1, K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.RCS.12
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.MS.3, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.3, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2

Reading comprehension improves when teachers ask follow-up questions that encourage students to apply the reading comprehension strategies they know. In a sustained discussion, respond to the students' answers in ways that lead them to both think about and elaborate on their answers, as well as expound on the meaning of the text. Then ask students to refer to specific portions of the text to justify their responses. Depending on the grade level, this may mean recalling events and passages in the text or pointing to illustrations. Follow-up questions should provide students with a model for thinking about the text and its meaning more actively, as well as help them learn to construct and support opinions with textual evidence.

Recommended follow-up questions include the following:

- What makes you say that?
- What happened in the book that makes you think that?
- Can you explain what you meant when you said _____?
- Do you agree with what _____ said? Why or why not?
- How does what you said connect with what _____ already said?
- Let's see if what we read provides us with any information that can resolve _____'s and _____'s disagreement.
- What does the author say about that?

Ideally, initial and follow-up questions should resemble a collaborative discussion instead of a typical cycle of teacher initiation (teacher asks a question), student response (one student answers the question), and teacher evaluation (teacher evaluates the student's response), followed by the teacher asking an unrelated question directed at the class or a different student. Although common in classrooms, this kind of discourse does not allow students to build meaning collaboratively from the text.

For younger students, follow-up questions can facilitate discussion, particularly when teachers conduct the discussion in small groups with appropriate support. Students new to this type of discussion may have difficulty, so teachers should model the format and guide them in responding to the text while keeping them focused on both the meaning and the discussion question at hand. Throughout the discussion, teachers should remind students to talk to one another and not just to the teacher.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

3

## 3. Have students lead structured small-group discussions.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Provide opportunities for small-group discussion about the text, encouraging students to ask questions of their peers.
- Model structures and procedures to allow for peer-led discussions.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.1, K-2.I.2, K-2.RL.MC.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.MC.5, K-2.RI.RCS.12
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.2, INST.AM.7, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.TH.2

As students become more proficient in discussions about text, provide opportunities for small-group discussions in which students pose questions to their peers. In creating groups, include students who are relatively good at discussion in each group and allow students to direct the discussion. Teachers may select from many structures and techniques for peer-led discussions, including the following:

- Describe and assign a role to each student to ensure that all students participate in the discussion.
- Have students discuss the predictions or summaries of their peers as they use their reading comprehension strategies. (Note that this approach may be difficult for kindergarteners and grade 1 students.)
- Give students higher-order questions, graphics, or pictures, and ask them to discuss the materials with a partner. This approach is beneficial for students in kindergarten and grade 1 or as a warm-up for a more challenging discussion for students in grades 2 and 3.
- Ask students to make up questions that get them thinking. Rotate the responsibility for coming up with a "thinking question." For younger students, provide question stems orally or use word banks or picture clues to remind them how to build questions that make them think.
- After students read a text or a section of a text, guide them to reflect on the text by asking them to draw or write in a journal as preparation for a discussion the next day. Explain that entries should be questions or concerns they want to raise with their peers in the discussion. Teachers can support younger students by providing sticky notes with symbols (e.g., question marks, smiley faces, or exclamation points) to mark sections of the text they want to talk about.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

4

## Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of text

Students in kindergarten through grade 3 will need extensive modeling and practice to be successful in peer-led discussions. The discussions should start out short and become longer as students get older and have more practice. Introducing the entire activity and its rules (e.g., taking turns, not dominating the discussion, and staying on task) before group work begins will prepare students for it. Teachers can then use simple tools such as the ones listed below to encourage students to participate fully and fairly:

- Give students a chart of rules (with picture clues for younger students) to remind them of appropriate behavior in peer-led discussions.
- Consider setting a rule that no one can talk more than three times until everyone has spoken once. To keep track, consider giving students chips before the discussion begins and having them turn one in each time they talk.
- Require students to prepare ahead of time. Ask them to reflect on specific questions about the text by drawing a picture or writing in a "reading log" before the discussion, or have them talk in small groups before the full class discussion.
- Give students time to formulate their thoughts. When moderating the discussion, wait in silence until many students raise their hands, and call on those who have not yet contributed.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

5

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *When students are talking with peers, some teachers believe they do not have control of the classroom discussion.* | Though discussion involves giving up some control, teachers can do things to ensure that students stay on task during a discussion. For instance, provide a clear set of guidelines for discussing the text, including the structure of the discussion and the use of discussion guides, and model higher-order questions and responses to help students stay on point. These supports can serve as "training wheels" while students strengthen their ability to take part in this kind of discussion. They allow the teacher to monitor how well students stay on task outside the group and offer assistance as necessary. |
| *Students do not understand how to conduct productive discussions about the text with one another.* | Give students opportunities to observe and practice discussion techniques; what is expected of them as discussion leaders should be clearly outlined. Prepare students to lead a discussion by modeling a leader's behavior and techniques, and then gradually release this responsibility to the students. Consider setting aside time at the beginning of the year to focus on discussion skills. You may also want to keep peer discussions relatively brief at first, giving students enough time to develop the ability to lead longer discussions. For younger students, who may struggle the most with the group nature of discussions, have them turn and talk to their neighbors. |
| *It is difficult to find time to prepare for classroom discussions.* | To capitalize on limited time, teachers should collaborate with one another, taking turns preparing discussion questions and guides. Teachers should also establish regular times for discussion early in the school year. In schools where there is only one teacher per grade, teachers can plan collaboratively with teachers at other schools via email or the Internet; cross-age discussions can be valuable as well. The more practice students have with discussion, the less time teachers will need to spend teaching the activity. Finally, fully developed discussion guidelines can be used repeatedly, saving preparation time. |

*Reference:* Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/14

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 5 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference is on the last page.

**Recommendation**

# Establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension.

Teachers must create an environment where students actively engage with a text to extract and construct its meaning. This involves choosing reading materials that offer students a choice in what to read and opportunities to collaborate with one another. Creating this context by clearly conveying the purpose of each lesson, explaining to students how the comprehension strategies will help them learn, and impressing on them that the power to be successful readers rests as much with them as it does with their teacher will guide students to become better readers. Additionally, teachers must help students focus not only on completing classroom tasks, but also, and more importantly, on the larger goal of learning.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Model the role and importance of reading in everyday life.
- Give reading a prominent role in the classroom.
- Pair text with pictures to provide content and explanation.
- Create a special place for reading in the classroom.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.2, K-2.I.3, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.R1.RC.12

**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.5, NST.AM.11, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2

During the school day, teachers should model the importance of being able to read in our everyday lives and how it helps us learn about the world around us. For example, as you walk around the school, point out various notices posted and talk about the information presented. Teachers should make reading enjoyable in the classroom by giving it a prominent role and providing as many books as possible aligned with their students' interests and relevant to their lives.

To adapt for younger students who may not be able to read what is posted around the classroom, pair text with pictures that provide context and explanation. Additionally, as students learn to understand the importance of reading and move toward reading on their own, creating a welcoming and special place for reading in the classroom can help set the stage and build a sense of excitement about reading.

## 2. Give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Help students perceive their role in a peer reading group as valuable.
- Motivate students to help their peers learn rather than just giving them the answer.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.5, K-2.RL.RC.13, K-2.RI.RC.12
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.2, INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4

Collaborative learning activities are most productive when (1) students perceive their roles as valuable, and (2) teachers motivate students to help their peers learn rather than simply giving their peers the answer. Examples of collaborative learning opportunities include the following:

- Have students read the same text and then talk to a partner about what they read, what they predicted, and any connections they made while reading.
- Ask students to work in pairs to retell a story, identify the main characters or story setting, or make predictions about how the story will end.
- To guide students to learn interesting facts using informational text, group students and have them take turns sharing their favorite facts from the same text.

Summary of Recommendation 5 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

2

- Using texts that provide guidance about a simple task, have groups of students take turns following the instructions step-by-step to complete the task as a group.
- Organize students in small groups and have them perform a scripted version of a story they have read, create their own dramatization of a story, or write a new story.

Summary of Recommendation 5 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

3

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *When I put students in learning groups, they get off task.* | Teachers should ensure students understand the activity's purpose. Additionally, teachers should provide clear and explicit expectations for the group while being careful not to give up too much control all at once. |
| *Some students still will not engage in classroom reading comprehension activities.* | Developing special projects involving reading can provide additional motivation for students. Furthermore, teachers should provide positive feedback and be mindful that aversion to reading may signal frustration, boredom, or possibly a learning disability. For particularly disengaged students, having colleagues and other school personnel observe in the classroom and then brainstorm together about how to reach them can be beneficial. |
| *Teachers do not have the resources to offer the range of choices that may appeal to students, or they may believe that content standards do not allow them to offer such choices.* | When developing choices for students, focus on offering choices that are appealing but not elaborate or costly. Many resources and ideas developed by other teachers are readily and freely available via the Internet. If the concern is about a particular learning objective or content standard, a teacher can follow up on a lesson by allowing students to choose a text to read on their own or another activity, such as reading to a peer. |
| *Students often choose texts that are too easy or too difficult for them.* | Group students by reading level, offer them a selection of books that match that level, and explicitly teach students how to select appropriate titles. For example, the "five-finger method" has students choose a text and begin to read it, holding all five fingers up. For each word that gives them trouble, they fold down a finger. If all five fingers are folded down while reading the same page, they should choose an easier book. |

*Reference:* Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/14

Summary of Recommendation 5 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade.* Full reference is on the last page.

4

| | |
|---|---|
| CONTENT | **Reading** |
| GRADE LEVEL(S) | **4-9** |
| LEVEL OF EVIDENCE | **Strong** |

## Recommendation

# Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words.

This recommendation aims to prepare students with the skills needed to break apart and accurately sound out multisyllabic words. Steps 1 and 2 in this recommendation provide the knowledge students need to accurately sound out words. Step 3 involves spelling practice to solidify students' understanding of the vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations that make words. Step 4 ensures that students have adequate opportunities to practice reading words not only in isolation, but also in sentences and passages to build increasingly automatic word recognition skills. Together these steps will help students accurately read multisyllabic words.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Identify the level of students' word-reading skills and teach vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations, as necessary.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Assess student word reading skills prior to any intervention.
   - Use a word-list reading measure or have the student read a list of regular and irregular words.
   - Use the information to create intervention groups.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.P.2, 3-5.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.2, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.2, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.2, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.2, 9-12.RL.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.2, 9-12.RI.P.3
**TEACHER:** INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.3, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2

It is important to gauge students' word-reading abilities to determine where to begin instruction. Ideally, students' word-reading skills would be assessed prior to the intervention, and information from the assessment would be used to place students with similar needs in intervention groups. Use students' performance on a word-list reading measure to get a sense of the word-reading skills of the students in each intervention group. If students' scores on a word-list reading measure are not available, ask students to read a list of regular and irregular words.

Many intervention programs provide lists to help teachers gauge students' reading abilities and determine where they should start in the program. An oral reading fluency measure will provide more information about how words with the same kinds of vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations are read in the context of sentences and paragraphs. Use the performance of the students in the group to determine which intervention groups need additional work in common vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations, and which do not.

| Resource 1.1. Common vowel sounds and vowel combinations | |
|---|---|
| long vowel sound | *vowel sound, as in me, labor, polar* |
| short vowel sound | *vowel sound, as in cap, digger* |
| vowel-consonant-e | *"e" makes the vowel sound long, as in cake, mistake* |
| vowel combinations oa, ea, ee, ai | long vowel sounds, as in *boat, remain, teachable* |
| vowel diphthongs oi, oy, ou, ew | vowel sounds, as in *toy, destroy, newsworthy* |
| r-controlled vowels | vowel sound, as in *car, fur, personable* |
| consonant-le | consonant sound, as in *battle, belittle* |

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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## 2. Teach students a routine they can use to decode multisyllabic words.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Choose a single routine to break words into parts and blend them together.
- Explicitly teach the routine by demonstrating and guiding students through the steps multiple times before applying the routine on their own.
- Briefly explain the meaning and use of unfamiliar words.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.3, 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1

Rather than teaching a wide array of rules, choose a routine that provides simple steps for breaking words into parts and blending those parts together to sound out the word. The routine can be used flexibly across different multisyllabic words.

Explicitly teach students the routine to use when they encounter unfamiliar multisyllabic words. Briefly demonstrate how the word-reading routine can be helpful in sounding out words. Guide students through the steps of the routine and discuss how they would apply them to an unfamiliar word. To help students remember that the words they are reading have meaning, briefly explain the meaning or use of the word in a sentence, such as "If you misinform someone, you give them the wrong information." Guide students through applying the routine to several words before asking students to practice applying the routine on their own.

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**Teacher demonstrating how to identify prefixes, suffixes, and vowel combinations to decode a multisyllabic word**

The teacher refers to the following steps that are posted in the classroom:
1. Look for prefixes and suffixes. Circle prefixes and suffixes in the word.
2. Underline the remaining single vowels and vowel or vowel-consonant combinations.
3. Loop under each word part as you say it.
4. Say the whole word by blending the parts together, making it into a word you recognize.

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Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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# Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

**Teacher:** *Today, we are going to learn a routine for breaking longer words into parts so we can easily sound them out. In this routine, there are four steps. In the first step, we circle the prefixes and suffixes in the word. The first word is* unreasonable. *I am going to circle un- because it is a prefix and -able because it is a suffix. Remember un- means not and -able means capable of being.*

un**re a s o n**able

**Teacher:** *In Step 2, I am going to underline the vowel sounds that are left. I am going to underline ea and o. I am doing this because each syllable has a vowel sound.*

un<u>rea</u>s<u>o</u>nable

**Teacher:** *In Step 3, I am going to use my pencil to loop under each word part as I say it: un rea son able. Now, in Step 4, I am going to blend the parts together:* unreasonable. Unreasonable *means not capable of reason or explanation.*

un<u>rea</u>s<u>o</u>nable

The teacher follows the same procedure for two more examples, *misinform* and *salamander*. In the word *misinform,* the single vowel, *i*, and the *r*-controlled combination, *or*, are underlined. The teacher reminds students that mis- means wrong and that the word *inform* means to tell someone. *Misinform* means to tell someone something wrong. In the word *salamander,* the three single vowels, *a,* and the *r*-controlled combination, -er are underlined. Note that -er is not a suffix in the word *salamander*. "Salamand" is not a word on its own. Therefore, -er in *salamander* is not circled. The teacher explains that a salamander is an amphibian that looks like a lizard.

m<u>i</u>s<u>i</u>nf<u>o</u>rm

s<u>a</u>l<u>a</u>m<u>a</u>nd<u>e</u>r

*Note:* Adapted from page 7 of the practice guide referenced on the last page.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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# Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

| Prefixes | | Suffixes | |
|---|---|---|---|
| un– | pre– | -s, -es | -ity, -ty |
| re– | inter– | -ed | -ment |
| in–, im–, il–, ir– | fore– | -ing | -ic |
| dis– | de– | -ly | -ous, -eous, -ious |
| en–, em– | trans– | -er, -or | -en |
| non– | super– | -ion, -tion, -ation, -ition | -er |
| in–, im– | semi– | -able, -ible | -ive, -ative, -tive |
| over– | anti– | -al, -ial | -ful |
| mis– | mid– | -y | -less |
| sub– | under– | -ness | -est |

*Note:* Adapted from page 8 of the practice guide referenced on the last page.

| Teacher working with students to apply a routine to identify syllables and sound out unfamiliar words |
|---|

The teacher posts the steps of the routine on the board before providing an explanation:
1. Underline single vowels and vowel or vowel-consonant combinations.
2. Count the number of vowel sounds to determine how many syllables are in the word.
3. Break the word into parts, with every syllable having a vowel sound in it.
4. Blend each part together to form a word you recognize.

**Teacher:** *Today, we are going to learn a routine for breaking words into parts and sounding them out. In this routine, there are four steps. In the first step, we underline single vowels and vowel combinations. Remember, a lot of the time, two vowels together sound as one. The first word is* unreasonable. *I am going to underline the u, the ea, the o, the a, and the e.*

## <u>u</u>n<u>rea</u>s<u>o</u>n<u>a</u>bl<u>e</u>

**Teacher:** *Now, we will count the number of vowel sounds to determine how many syllables are in the word* unreasonable. *Count them with me.*
**Teacher and student:** *1... 2... 3... 4... 5.*
**Teacher:** *So, how many syllables are in this word?*
**Student:** *Five!*
**Teacher:** *Yes, we have five vowels or vowel combinations, so we have five syllables. In Step 3, I am going to use a slash mark to break the word into parts so that every syllable has a vowel sound in it. For the word* unreasonable*, we broke the word into these parts: un/rea/son/a/ble.*

## <u>u</u>n/<u>rea</u>/s<u>o</u>n/<u>a</u>/bl<u>e</u>

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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**Teacher:** *Now, let's blend the parts together.*

Together the group reads un reas on a ble and then blends the sounds to read *unreasonable*. The teacher tells students the word *unreasonable* means not capable of reason or explanation.

The teacher works with the students in applying the same routine for two more words, *misinform* and *salamander*.

mis/in/form
sal/a/mand/er

*Note:* Adapted from page 9 of the practice guide referenced on the last page.

## 3. Embed spelling instruction in the lesson.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Practice spelling monosyllabic and multisyllabic words.
- Ask students to read the word aloud and spell it.
- Encourage students to think about the parts of the word and how many parts there are before writing it.
- Give additional examples to spell using the same vowel and consonant letter sounds and combinations.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1

Spelling words will help reinforce the vowel and consonant letter-sounds and combinations students are learning. Include practice in spelling monosyllabic and multisyllabic words. This activity is called encoding practice. Begin by asking students to read the word aloud and spell it. Encourage students to think about the different parts of the word and how many parts or syllables are in the word before they write it. Give students additional words to spell that include the same vowel and consonant letter-sounds and combinations.

## 4. Engage students in a wide array of activities that allow them to practice reading multisyllabic words accurately and with increasing automaticity.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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# Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

## Instructional strategies from the examples

- Post the steps of the routine so that students can refer to it.
- Provide multiple opportunities to practice the routine.
- Read word lists as a group using the routine as needed.
- Practice by having students read multisyllabic words in sentences and longer texts, using the routine as needed.
- Discuss the meaning of the word, including the meaning of prefixes and suffixes, after students have used the routine to read it.

## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1

Provide multiple opportunities for students to apply the routine to build automaticity: the ability to recognize words instantly and effortlessly. Before starting, ensure that abbreviated versions of the steps of the routine (e.g., Step 1: Look for prefixes; Step 2: Look for suffixes; Step 3: Find single vowels, etc.) are readily available by posting them on the board or providing each student with a prompt card. Reminders of the steps will help students remember the routine.

Initiate practice by reading word lists out loud as a group. Include words with the vowel and consonant letter-sounds or combinations in that day's lesson, as well as previously taught sounds. Also include high-frequency words in the word lists. Continued practice with the words on the word list will help students begin to read them fluently.

Students will need multiple exposures to the words they are learning to read. Practice should include more than word lists. Equally important is having students read multisyllabic words in sentences and brief paragraphs. Ask students to read the words in sentences repeatedly to build automaticity. If sentences are not readily available, write sentences that include multisyllabic words the students are learning. Also have students read the words in longer texts. Choose age-appropriate texts used in upper-elementary and middle school grades that include the words or sounds students are working on. Ask students to read the passage and stop to apply the word-reading routine to unfamiliar words.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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# Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

Knowing the meanings of words can also help students read words in the future. If the students are unsure of the word's meaning, briefly discuss the meaning after students have used the routine to read the word. Use this opportunity to also explain the meaning of prefixes and suffixes briefly.

## Practice activities that can build students' automaticity with multisyllabic word reading

1. As a warm-up provide practice in vowel combinations in the multisyllabic words that students are going to encounter in a word list or section of text for the session.
2. Read a list of high-frequency prefixes and suffixes aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
3. Ask students to underline prefixes and suffixes in each word in a word list, and then read the prefixes and suffixes aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
4. Ask students to write words by adding a prefix and/or a suffix to a base word.
5. Ask students to read a list of words once with their partner, noting any words students have difficulty reading. Then ask them to try to read more words correctly when they read the list to their partner a second time.
6. Read a list of words (up to 20 words) aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
7. Time students as they read a list of words. Ask them to read the list again to meet or beat their previous time.
8. Dictate words for students to spell that contain the targeted prefixes and suffixes or sounds in the lesson.
9. Read sentences containing multisyllabic words aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns) or with the teacher reading first and then the students reading next.
10. Ask students to read the passage containing the words they are learning at least twice.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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# Build students' decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *My students report having difficulty reading multisyllabic words in their core subject-area classes.* | The panel recommends including words from core subject-area classes during intervention time. If the week's American history topic is the aftermath of the Civil War, then words like Reconstruction and suffrage would be critical. Words like gravity and momentum would be excellent words for a unit on gravity in science. A teacher or the team leader for social studies or science departments may be able to provide a list of words. It is also possible to locate lists of important words in the students' textbooks. |
| *A few of my students can read multisyllabic words pretty effortlessly but perform poorly on reading tests because of weak vocabulary and difficulties in comprehension.* | These students need additional work on language and vocabulary development. Therefore, teachers should minimize decoding and fluency instruction and maximize comprehension instruction. When possible, group these students in an intervention that focuses on oral language and reading comprehension. Activities should include experiences that increase world knowledge and word knowledge and provide ample opportunities to engage students in meaningful discussion about the text they are reading. |

*Reference:* Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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| | |
|---|---|
| CONTENT | **Reading** |
| GRADE LEVEL(S) | **4-9** |
| LEVEL OF EVIDENCE | **Strong** |

## Recommendation

# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text.

This part of Recommendation 3 focuses on developing both knowledge of the topics discussed in texts (referred to here as world knowledge) and knowledge of word meanings (referred to here as word knowledge). World and word knowledge have reciprocal relationships with reading: world and word knowledge can help students understand what they are reading, and reading with understanding will improve students' knowledge of word meanings and of the world. Teaching new words and their meanings can support students in learning new concepts and ways of thinking that help students make sense of sophisticated content.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Develop world knowledge that is relevant for making sense of the passage.

   ### Instructional strategies from the examples

   - Provide a brief introduction to the content prior to reading.
   - Provide a purpose for the topic introduction, and ask students to share what they learned about the topic.
   - Ask students questions about the topic.

   ### South Carolina standards alignment

   **ELA:** 3-5.I.2, 6-8.I.2, 9-12.1.2, 3-5.RL.MC.8, 6-8.RL.MC.8, 9-12.RL.MC.8, 3-5.RL.RCS.13, 6-8.RL.RCS.13, 9-12.RL.RCS.13, 3-5.R1.RCS.12, 6-8.RI.RC.12, 9-12.RI.RCS.12

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# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.1, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, PLAN.SW.3

Provide a brief 3–5-minute introduction on the topic before reading to help students develop knowledge that might help them understand what they are reading. This can be done by asking students to read an easier, brief passage before presenting the higher-level text on the same topic.

Another way to prepare students for reading about a topic is to present a short 2–4-minute video clip, podcast, or brief informational lecture with illustrations. For each resource, provide a purpose, such as asking students to look for two things they learned about the topic from the video or podcast that they will share with the group or with a partner when the video or podcast ends. The teacher can summarize the most important ideas that were shared and clarify misunderstandings.

Another way to develop world knowledge before reading is to ask students questions about the topic. Not only will this provide students with an opportunity to think about what they have read or learned about before, but it can also potentially pique their interest in the topic. To ensure that students remain on topic, ask them whether their answers help them to understand the topic better. With practice, students will get better at determining whether the information they share is helpful or is distracting them from focusing on the topic of the text. Tell students when they have correctly evaluated the usefulness of the information they shared and provide suggestions when they misunderstand the information they shared or the topic.

## 2. Teach the meaning of a few words that are essential for understanding the passage.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Identify essential words that students may have difficulty with and briefly teach their meaning before reading.
- Stop while reading to teach the meaning of other essential words.
- Continually work with new words and their meanings

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9

**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3

Summary of Recommendation 3a from the WWC practice guide Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9. Full reference on the last page.

2

# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

Identify words that are critical and conceptually central for understanding the passage but are likely to be difficult for students. These are words that appear early or frequently in the passage, and might include bolded words. Write these words somewhere for all students to see, such as on a whiteboard. Briefly teach the meaning of a couple of essential words before the lesson and quickly provide the meaning of other essential words during reading.

Select one or two of the essential words to teach before reading the passage. Since the goal of understanding the meaning of these words is to help students access the information in the text, provide a brief, simple definition that relates to the content of the passage before reading. Provide an example, non-example, and/or visual representation of the word to help students understand the meaning.

During reading, stop intermittently to briefly provide the meaning of additional essential words that are critical for understanding the passage. Provide a simple definition of the word or rephrase the sentence with a known synonym for the word. For example, a teacher could quickly clarify the word *effortless* by replacing the word with the synonym *easy* when reading the sentence a second time. The goal is to provide the meaning of the word quickly and ensure that the unfamiliar word does not disrupt comprehension.

Giving students information about a word is important to initiate word learning. However, students will need to work with the words and their meanings to remember them. Once or twice a week, provide additional opportunities for students to work with the words and their meanings after reading. For example, ask students to provide examples of the words, discuss non-examples of the words, or use the words to answer questions about the text or topic either orally or in writing. Include previously taught words to reinforce their meanings. Have students write the words and definitions in a log. These logs can help students keep track of their learning and review words they previously learned.

If students are reading independently or in pairs, ask students to look up and make eye contact when they get to the sentence with the essential word you would like to discuss. Ask students if they know the meaning of the word. If they do not, provide a quick definition in the context of the sentence or rephrase the sentence with words they know. The goal is to provide the meaning without disrupting reading too much.

Summary of Recommendation 3a from the WWC practice guide Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9. Full reference on the last page.

3

# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

After preparing students to read about the American Revolution, the teacher proceeded with building students' word knowledge.

> The American Revolutionary War was a time when the colonists had a **conflict** and fought Great Britain. The colonies got their freedom and became an independent country called the United States of America. One of the reasons that the colonists had a conflict with Great Britain is that they felt they were not represented in the British government. The British government was making new laws and making the colonists pay more taxes, but the colonies had no say in them. The colonists said, "No taxation without representation." They wanted to have some say in the British government if they had to pay excessive taxes and live by British law. The war did not happen right away. First, there were protests and arguments. Then there were some small fights between the colonists and the local British army. Things just got worse and worse over the years until the colonies and Great Britain were at war.

The teacher chose the bolded word *conflict* to teach before reading because it is conceptually central and appears early in the text. Prior to reading, the teacher says, "*conflict* means a disagreement or argument. The American Revolution happened because the Americans and the British had a disagreement about who should run the government." The teacher reinforces the meaning of *conflict* during reading by explaining the meaning in the context of the information in the text.

In addition, while reading this paragraph, the teacher quickly provides the meaning of the two underlined words based on the context of the passage: *excessive* and *local*. The teacher reads the sentence again, replacing the word *excessive* with *too much*: "They wanted to have some say in the British government if they were going to pay too much in taxes and have to live by British law. *Excessive* means too much." The teacher reads the sentence by rephrasing the part of the sentence with the word local: "Then there were some small fights between the colonists and the British troops that were stationed nearby. Local means the area near or around where you are."

Summary of Recommendation 3a from the WWC practice guide Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9. Full reference on the last page.

4

**Teacher engaging students in activities to solidify the meaning of the words that appeared**

**Teacher:** *We are going to talk about some of the words you learned today. You will work with a partner. Be ready to share your discussion with the group. The first word is* conflict. *A conflict is a serious disagreement or argument about something important. Talk with your partner about a conflict that two groups of people had in American history and how the conflict was resolved.*

Next, the teacher asks students to talk to a partner about the words *excessive* and *local*. Students share examples of each word.

## 3. Teach students how to derive meanings of unknown words using context.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach and explicitly model how to find clues to a word's meaning in the sentences around the word.
- Demonstrate a three-step process for determining the meaning of unknown words: 1. Mark the word, 2. Reread the sentence and look for clues, 3. Reread the sentences before and after.
- Guide students through the three steps and ask them to share what they learned. Provide feedback and support as needed.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9

**TEACHER:**

In some circumstances, the sentences surrounding an unknown word can help students determine its meaning. Teach and explicitly model how to find clues in the surrounding sentences to help students determine the meanings of words they do not understand.

Demonstrate three steps for determining the meaning of unknown words using surrounding sentences. First, mark the word the students do not understand. Second, have the students reread the sentence with the unknown word and look for clues in that sentence to figure out the word's meaning. Third, if the sentence with the unknown word does not provide enough information, have students reread the sentences before or after and look for clues to figure out the word's meaning.

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Summary of Recommendation 3a from the WWC practice guide Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9. Full reference on the last page.

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# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

Be sure to tell students that sometimes they will read the sentence or the sentences around the word and still have difficulty figuring out the meaning of the word. If the surrounding sentences do not provide enough information to determine the meaning, students can ask for help or look up the word.

Guide students by prompting them through the steps and having them explain the reason for their responses. Tell students when they have answered and reasoned correctly. When the answer is incorrect, provide support through prompts and clues to get them closer to the correct meaning.

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**Teacher modeling how to use the surrounding sentences to figure out the meaning of the**

In 1922, Howard Carter and his crew found King Tut's tomb. Many archaeologists searched for the tomb, but Carter and his team were the first to find it. They came across many obstacles while trying to find the tomb. One was that the daily temperature reached as high as 120 degrees. Another was that the tomb is in the desert, where nothing grows, and there is nothing to protect people from the extremely hot sun. To make things worse, there was a lot of sand and rock around the tomb that were difficult to remove because the summer sun made them very hot to touch.

**Teacher:** *I do not understand what the word* obstacle *means in this paragraph. So, I am going to try to use the surrounding sentences to try to figure out what it means. Let's look at the steps that are on the bulletin board.*

1. Underline the unknown word.
2. Reread the sentence with the unknown word and look for clues in that sentence to figure out the word's meaning.
3. Reread sentences surrounding the sentence with the unknown wording and look for clues to figure out the word's meaning.

**Teacher:** *First, I'll underline the word. Then I will reread the sentence with the word* obstacle *in it and look for clues to what it means. "They came across many obstacles while trying to find the tomb." That sentence just tells us that they came across obstacles but does not tell us what an obstacle is.*

*Now, I'll go to Step 3 and reread the sentences near the word to look for clues about the meaning: "Many archaeologists searched for the tomb, but Carter and his team were the first to find it." That doesn't give me any clues. "They came across many obstacles while trying to find the tomb. One was that the daily temperature reached as high as 120 degrees."*

*Ah, here the author tells us that one* obstacle *was very high temperatures. Being that hot would stop or slow down their work. In the next sentences, the author gives us two other*

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*obstacles: no shade from the sun, and rocks and sand that were hard to move because they were too hot to touch. With all this information, I think* obstacles *means anything that makes it difficult for you to do something because the examples the author gave us were things that made it difficult to explore King Tut's tomb.*

## Teacher guiding students in using context to figure out the meaning of the word *remote*

Seabirds or marine birds spend most of the time at sea. They also live on *remote* islands in the ocean. There are no humans or animals on the island or nearby. The island is so far away that it is a place where the birds can rest, build their nests, and incubate their eggs. This is one reason why seabirds have survived for 60 million years.

The teacher asked students to share the words they did not know and underlined with a partner. The teacher then chose one pair to share the words with the group. The students did not understand the word *remote*. The teacher guided the students using context to understand the meaning of the word *remote*.

**Teacher:** *We don't know what the word* remote *means. What do we do first?*
**Dakota:** *Underline the word and reread the sentence with the unknown word to figure out the word's meaning.*
**Teacher:** *Read the sentence for us, Emerson.*
**Emerson:** *They also live on remote islands in the ocean.*
**Teacher:** *Is the author helping you to understand what* remote *means?*
**Emerson:** *No.*
**Teacher:** *What is the author telling us?*
**Emerson:** *The author is just saying that they live on remote islands.*
**Teacher:** *Does the author give you any clues about what* remote *means?*
**Emerson:** *No.*
**Teacher:** *Okay, what do we do next, Riley?*
**Riley:** *Reread sentences surrounding the unknown word, looking for clues to figure out the word's meaning.*
**Teacher:** *Great. Will you read them for us?*
**Riley:** *They also live on remote islands in the ocean. There are no humans or animals on the island or nearby. The island is so far away that it is a place where the birds can rest, build their nests, and incubate their eggs.*
**Teacher:** *There is a lot of information in those sentences. Is there anything the author says that will help us learn the meaning of* remote*?*
**Riley:** *Well... I think* remote *means safe.*
**Teacher:** Remote *does have something to do with safe, but it doesn't mean safe. You know often there is a lot of different information in the passages, and I bet you thought it was safe because of the clues that talked about the birds resting and incubating their eggs. That would make you think that the island is safe. Let's look at the sentences after. Can anyone figure out how those sentences might help to figure out the word's meaning? This sentence says there are*

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*no humans or animals on the island or nearby and the island is so far away that it is a place where the birds can rest, build their nests, and incubate their eggs. These are good clues. Does this give you an idea of what* remote *means?*
**Riley:** *That no one is around?*
**Teacher:** *That's excellent, Riley. Sometimes it is difficult to get a word's meaning from context because of all the different information the author has provided. But here,* remote *means far away from everything. Excellent! Did you ever hear the phrase, "in the middle of nowhere"? If we say a place is "in the middle of nowhere" it means it is in a remote location because it is far away from everything! Now you can figure out how to learn the meaning of words by reading and thinking through a text.*

## 4. Teach prefixes and suffixes to help students derive meanings of words.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach the meaning of prefixes and suffixes.
- Start with commonly used prefixes and suffixes and move on to less frequently used ones.
- Teach students to isolate the base word, prefix, and suffix and determine each meaning separately.
- Practice determining the meaning through prefix and suffix.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9, 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3

Knowledge of prefixes and suffixes will help students in reading multisyllabic words (**Recommendation 1**). Knowing the meaning of prefixes and suffixes will help students understand the meaning of these multisyllabic words.

Teach the meanings of prefixes and suffixes, especially those that students will encounter in the text. If the intervention curriculum does not have a sequence for teaching prefixes and suffixes, start by teaching commonly used prefixes (e.g., un-, re-, dis-) and suffixes (e.g., -s, -es, -ed). If students know the common prefixes and suffixes, move on to less frequently used prefixes (e.g., trans-, under-, anti-) and suffixes (-ial, -eous, -ence) or on to ones that are more difficult.

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# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

Teach students to isolate the base word, prefix, and/or suffix and determine the meaning of each separately. Show students how putting the meanings of each of the parts together can help them determine the meaning of a word.

Include practice on determining the meaning of words with a base word and prefix or suffix.

| Frequently occurring prefixes | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rank | Prefix | Meaning |
| 1 | un- | not |
| 2 | re- | again |
| 3 | in-, im-, il-, ir- | not |
| 4 | dis- | not |
| 5 | en-, em- | to make or put into |
| 6 | non- | not |
| 7 | in-, im- | not |
| 8 | over- | too much |
| 9 | mis- | wrong |
| 10 | sub- | below |
| 11 | pre- | before |
| 12 | inter- | between |
| 13 | fore- | toward |
| 14 | de- | down |
| 15 | trans- | across, changed |
| 16 | super- | above, beyond |

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# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

| 17 | semi- | half |
|----|-------|------|
| 18 | anti- | against |
| 19 | mid- | middle |
| 20 | under- | not enough |

| Rank | Suffix | Meaning |
|------|--------|---------|
| 1 | -s, -es | plural |
| 2 | -ed | past tense |
| 3 | -ing | act of |
| 4 | -ly | having the qualities of |
| 5 | -er, -or | person who |
| 6 | -ion, -tion, -ation, -ition | state, quality of being |
| 7 | -able, -ible | capable of being |
| 8 | -al, -ial | related to |
| 9 | -y | characterized by |
| 10 | -ness | state of being |
| 11 | -ity, -ty | quality of |
| 12 | -ment | condition of |
| 13 | -ic | of/related to |
| 14 | -ous, -eous, -ious | full of |
| 15 | -en | made of |

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| 16 | -er | comparative |
|----|-----|-------------|
| 17 | -ive, -ative, -tive | having the nature of |
| 18 | -ful | full of |
| 19 | -less | without |
| 20 | -est | superlative |

| Other prefixes and suffixes that are frequently used in academic words | |
|------|------|
| **Prefixes** | **Suffixes** |
| con<br>ad–<br>ex–<br>e–<br>pro–<br>ob–<br>a–<br>per–<br>ab– | -ate<br>-ize<br>-ism<br>-ent<br>-ary<br>-ist<br>-ure<br>-ant<br>-logy |

## 5. Teach the meaning of Latin and Greek roots.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Explicitly teach the meaning of Latin and Greek roots.
- Share examples of words that have a particular root and explain how the meaning of the root is part of the meaning of the word.
- Develop a word map for each root and add new words as they come up in reading.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9, 3-5.RL.P.3, 6-8.RL.P.3, 9-12.RL.P.3, 3-5.RI.P.3, 6-8.RI.P.3, 9-12.RI.P.3
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3

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## Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

Latin and Greek roots appear frequently in words in math, science, and social studies textbooks (e.g., micro: microbiology, microscope, microbe; equi/equa: equivalent, equation, equal, equator, equalizer). Lists of Latin and Greek words can be found on the following websites: **yourdictionary.com** and **wikipedia.org**.

Spend some time explicitly teaching the meaning of the roots, how these roots contribute to the meaning of a word, and how words with the same root are related. Start by providing a definition of a root. For example, ambi- means both or both sides.

Share two or three examples of words that have the root and explain how the meaning of the root is part of the meaning of the entire word. For example, ambi- is part of the words *ambidextrous*, *ambiguous*, and *ambivalent*. The meaning of all three words includes both sides of something. Ambidextrous means having the ability to use both hands; ambiguous means open to both sides or more than one side, choice, or meaning; and ambivalent means having both feelings, mixed feelings, or contradictory ideas. Knowing the meaning of the root ambi- helps clarify the meaning of these words.

Work with students to develop a word map for each root. Word maps provide a graphic display of a group of words that are meaningfully related. Have students add words to the word map, as they come across them during their lessons. Integrate these words into other activities, such as writing and spelling, to provide continued exposure to the words.

| Teacher helping students understand the meaning of words with the root bio- using a word map |
|---|
| Teacher writes *bio-* on the board. |
| **Teacher:** *Bio- means life*. |
| Teacher writes *biology* on the board and underlines *bio* in the word *biology*. |
| *Teacher: I know that bio- means life, and so this word has to do with life. We learned before that -ology means study of, so biology is the study of living things, like plants, animals, and humans.* |
| Teacher writes *biography* on the board. |
| **Teacher:** *Now let's look at another word,* biography. |
| Teacher underlines *bio-* in *biography*. |

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# Build students' world and word knowledge so they can make sense of the text

*Teacher:* Biography. What do you think this is about now that we know the meaning of the root bio-?

**Stanley:** *It has something to do with life.*

**Teacher:** *Yes, we know that this word has something to do with life because it includes the root bio-. The second part -graphy is related to writing.* Biography *means writing about someone's life. The common root in both these words is bio-. Both words have to do with life. One word—* biology—*is the study of living things, and the other—*biography—*is about writing about someone's life.*

Teacher draws the word map.
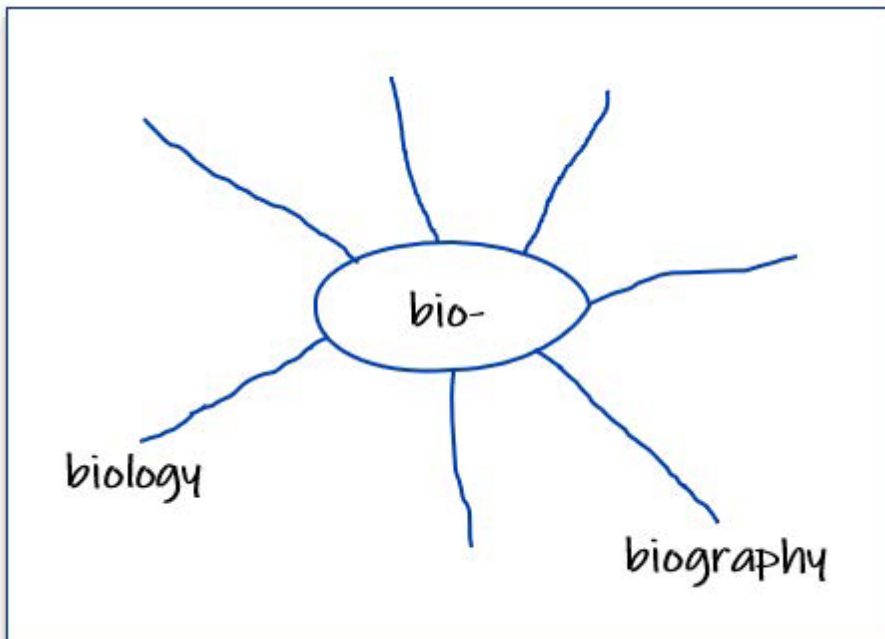


**Teacher:** *When we come across more words that include the root bio-, we can add them to this word map.*

Students copy the word map in their log. In subsequent lessons the teacher asks students to add more words to the word map. They add the words biofeedback, biographical, and biodegradable. Each time a word is added the teacher asks the students to separate the word into parts. The teacher talks about the other part of the word and its meaning. The students put the two parts together to determine the meaning and then use the word in a sentence.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *I do not know what my students know about a topic, so I don't know how to plan for teaching them world knowledge.* | Poll students briefly to see what they know about a topic before teaching world knowledge related to the passage. If students know little about the topic, use a brief video clip or podcast closely related to the specific objective of the lesson to build world knowledge and pique students' interest. |
| *There are so many words my students do not know. Working on word knowledge could take up the entire lesson.* | There are too many words to teach in depth. Students will also be learning words and their meanings in their subject-area classes. Focus on words that are essential to understanding the passage and those that students will encounter frequently in their readings. If not knowing the meaning of a particular word becomes a barrier to understanding the meaning of the text for some students, quickly provide the meaning of the word and continue reading. For example, "Here in this sentence, massive means very large and heavy. Jose was having a hard time carrying his massive backpack."<br><br>Also, it can be helpful to show students how to use dictionaries and thesauruses, including web-based ones, and functions within Word and in common internet browsers. These tools allow students to quickly locate the meanings of words or their synonyms. However, the definitions that appear can be difficult for students to understand. Students may need help figuring out how the definition applies to the text. Thesauruses may help students understand the meanings of words by providing words that make more sense to them. |
| *My students cannot find a word's meaning using the sentences surrounding the word because they don't know so many words in the passage.* | Students may not be able to use the surrounding sentences to determine the meaning of words when the reading level of the text is too high. Choose texts for which students will know more words when asking them to practice using surrounding sentences to determine the meaning of words. |

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*Reference:* Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

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CONTENT **Reading**
GRADE LEVEL(S) **4-9**
LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Strong**

## Recommendation

# Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read.

This part of Recommendation 3 includes practices for teaching students how to answer different types of questions and how to develop and answer their own questions about a text. Ultimately, the goal of this recommendation is for students to ask and answer questions to draw inferences and engage in meaningful discussions about a text.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Explicitly teach students how to find and justify answers to different types of questions.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Utilize specific questioning strategies (e.g., Right There, Think and Search, Author in Me) to help students answer questions by justifying their answers from the text.
- Draw connections between student's own background knowledge to derive meaning from the text.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.4, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2

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# Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read

Focus instruction on common questions that may be asked about a text. Encourage students to answer and justify their answers to these questions by connecting the text to their own world knowledge or deriving meaning from the context within the passage. Resource 3B.1 outlines three common question types. Work with students to answer each type of question individually and provide justification for their answers from the text. Example 3B.1 shows how to model the use of a "Right There" question in a passage of text. Include more difficult questions centered on the text, such as "Think and Search" and "Author and Me," as students demonstrate understanding. Examples 3B.2 and 3B.3 demonstrate how to move beyond "Right There" level questions into more complex analyses of the passages.

**Resource 3B.1. Types of questions**

| Question type | Description |
|---|---|
| Right There Question | The information needed to answer the question is considered "right there" because often the words in the question and the words used to answer the question are in the same sentence. This type of question can also be referred to as a text-dependent question. |
| Think and Search Question | The information needed to answer the question is in different parts of the text so the student needs to "think and search" to figure out the answer. This type of question can also be referred to as a text-dependent question. |
| Author and Me Question | To answer the question, the student must connect information in the text with information they learned or read previously. This type of question can also be referred to as an inferential question. |

Source: corestandards.org; Raphael and Au (2005); Ritchey et al. (2017); Vaughn, Cirino, et al. (2010); Vaughn, Wanzek, et al. (2010).

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**Example 3B.2. Teacher modeling how to answer a Think and Search question**

The teacher and students continue reading about President Johnson's *War on Poverty*. The teacher stops after the second paragraph to model how to answer a Think and Search question.

> President Johnson worked with Congress to pass laws to create programs to help people who were poor. Many of these programs are still here today. A major program was Head Start. Head Start was a pre-school program for students who were poor to prepare them for school. The Head Start grant office also paid people to make educational television shows such as Sesame Street, The Electric Company, and Reading Rainbow. Anyone with a television could watch these shows. The food stamps program helped those who made little money to buy food. It is still here, but now called SNAP. Other programs were also started that provided jobs and job training. The Job Corps program prepared people to be auto mechanics, cooks, nurses, and emergency medical technicians.

Teacher writes on the board: *What are three programs that were made available to reduce poverty?*

**Teacher:** *Sometimes when a question asks about naming multiple things, you might have to look in different places in the text for the answer. In other words, you are not likely going to find the answer in one sentence, like a Right There question. This is a Think and Search question. To answer a Think and Search question, you have to put together information from different parts of the text. In the first sentence, the author states that President Johnson worked with Congress to pass laws that would make many programs to help people who were poor. The third sentence says that one program was the Head Start program.*

*The question says to name three programs, but I have not come across another one yet. So, I will keep searching for more.*

*As I read further, I see that television shows such as Sesame Street and The Electric Company were made, but not to reduce poverty. So, I am going to skim past these to find another program. As I read, I see other programs like food stamps and Job Corps programs. So, I found one program, Head Start, in the third sentence. Then I had to skim through further in the passage to find other programs such as the food stamps and Job Corps programs.*

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**Example 3B.3. Teacher modeling how to answer an Author and Me question**

Teacher writes on the Board: *How did the Job Corps help people who were in poverty?*

**Teacher:** *This is an Author and Me question. The answer to the question is not in the text we just read. I will have to think about the information the author gives and what I already know to answer the question. The author's information provides clues to help me answer the question.*

*This question says: How did the Job Corps help people who were experiencing poverty? Hmm... I am not sure if the answer to this question is in the text or if I need to determine the answer in another way based on information I already know. Well, I don't remember the text saying how the Job Corps helps people. I am going to skim the text again and make sure. The author said that the Job Corps prepared people to be auto mechanics and nurses. But how does that actually help people? This might help them get a job, which can probably help people who are experiencing poverty.*

The teacher reads a sentence that gives these clues.

**Teacher:** *I am going to think about what we read about poverty last week and what I already know. We learned that people who are in poverty have very little money. I also know that my friend's family owns an auto repair shop and that my dad is a nurse and both of them earn pretty good money. So, the information or clues the author gave me said that the Job Corps program prepared people to do auto repair and nursing. These are jobs that provide more money. So, I'm thinking that if you learn a skill of some kind like nursing or auto repair, then you would probably be able to earn enough money so you would no longer have to live in poverty. In a story we read last week, we learned that you have to learn how to repair cars before you can get a job fixing them, or you have to learn how to take care of people who are sick or are injured to help them get better. So, I think that the Job Corps helped people by teaching them the skills they needed so that they could get jobs and make money so they can probably have a better life.*

## 2. Provide ample opportunities for students to collaboratively answer questions.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Utilize specific questioning strategies (e.g., Right There, Think and Search, and Author in Me) and ensure students can answer questions using these three strategies.
- Model how to select pieces of relevant information from the text to answer the questions and determine what information is less important.
- Work with both simple and complex questions and use the "Author and Me" protocol.
- Provide scaffolding, such as "prompt" cards to support students in discovering the answers to the guiding questions.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.AM.7

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## Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read

Using the three levels of questions mentioned above, have students demonstrate that they can answer each type. Make sure to include both basic and complex questions within each lesson. Guide students to the appropriate sections of the text where answers can be found but avoid directly providing the answer or the exact place in the text. Work with the whole class to identify portions of the text that provide answers to the questions and write out this information for the whole class. Support students in selecting the pieces of relevant information and identifying those sections of the text that are less important. Example 3B.4 demonstrates how to guide students through an "Author and Me" level question. Consider creating "Prompt" cards to share with students to support the process of discovering answers to the guiding questions. Resource 3B.2 shows an example of a prompt card.

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# Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read

**Example 3B.4. Teacher guiding students in answering Author and Me questions**

The teacher and students read the following passage:

> I live on Whidbey Island in the state of Washington. Every Sunday, my family and I visit my grandmother. The five of us pile into our car and drive to the waterfront, where there are many boats in the water. We drive onto a ferry and the ferry takes us across the beautiful blue water of the Puget Sound. We always have a good time when we visit our grandmother. This time was different. Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to see and what was about to happen.

**Teacher:** *Let's read the first three sentences again. Tell me in your own words what is happening.*

The students respond that a family of five is going for a car ride to their grandmother's house, which is near the water.

**The teacher:** *Read the next three sentences. What does the author mean by "This time was different"?*

The teacher asks students to reread the last three sentences and identify clues in the text.

The students respond by saying that at the start of the day, things seemed to be going well and the family was taking their usual trip across the water to grandma's house. Then, the author said that they usually have a good time when they visit their grandmother but this time it was different.

**Teacher:** *Do you think* different *is in a good way?*

**Fran:** *No.*

**Teacher:** *Could it be in a good way?*

**Stace:** *No.*

**Teacher:** *How do you know that?*

Students connect two ideas in the text that say that "we always have a good time," and "this time was different" to make the implication that something bad was about to happen. Students read the rest of the paragraph.

**Teacher:** *Think back to your own experiences or other things you may have read when someone says, "Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to see and what was about to happen." What does that usually suggest?*

Students respond with something surprising or different.

Continued on the next page…

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**Example 3B.4. Teacher guiding students in answering Author and Me questions (continued)**

**Teacher:** *What does the author mean by "Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to see and what was about to happen"? Remember when we answer Author and Me questions we need to connect something in the text with something we read or previously learned. What we know should help us make a decision about what the author meant. Do you think the author meant something good or something not so good is about to happen?*

Students respond with whether they think it is something good or not good.

**Teacher:** *It could be something devastating or something exciting like brand-new bikes for all of the kids. Based on what we discussed earlier, though, the author probably wants us to think that they are about to witness something that is not good.*

**Resource 3B.2. Prompt card for answering Author and Me questions teachers pose**

1. Read the paragraph.
2. Make connections between the text and something you have learned or read about or experienced.
3. Decide what you think the author meant.
4. Justify your answer by identifying information in the text that supports what you are thinking.

Source: The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (2014).

## 3. Teach students to ask questions about the text while reading.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Create a list of common questions that can be used with a variety of reading texts. Guide students to create their own list.
- Have students share their questions and answers with peers in a small group or pair.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.2, INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.Q.1

Creating questions for a text can lead to a deeper understanding of the meaning within the text. Establishing a list of common questions to be answered while reading can encourage independence and confidence in the reading process. As students

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demonstrate skill on these basic, pre-made questions, have them develop their own set of guiding questions. Consider creating prompt cards with common questions and space for them to create their own. As comfort with this process grows, encourage students to share and discuss questions and answers in small groups and pairs. Resource 3B.3 includes common question stems.

**Resource 3B.3. Question stems for students to use when asking questions about the text**

- Who is (are) _____?
- What happens (happened) when _____?
- What is (was) _____?
- Why did (does) _____?
- How do (does) _____?
- How do _____ and _____ compare?
- What can you say about _____?
- What would happen if _____?

Source: Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *My students are having difficulty formulating justifications for their answers.* | Students will need support as they practice justifying their answers. Model with the text how to pose and answer relevant questions and extract the phrase or phrases that support their response. |
| *When the questions use words that don't exactly match the text, my students are stumped.* | Briefly demonstrate how words can mean the same even when the words themselves differ. Clarify confusing or unclear uses of pronouns. |
| *My students still can't answer Author and Me questions even after I have modeled how to do it.* | Focus on the appropriate instructional level for the text; students will struggle when their world knowledge is not developed enough to understand the context in the text. Begin with simpler texts and use a mixture of peer work and independent practice before incorporating more complex subject areas. |
| *My students sometimes make seemingly irrelevant connections to their world knowledge.* | Encourage students to evaluate their connections and compare them to what they already know on a topic. Lead the discussion to discover why some information is relevant and ask leading questions to help students evaluate the importance of the information to the meaning of the text. |
| *My students are really struggling with generating questions as they read.* | Begin with a focus on "Right There" questions before moving to more complex evaluations of the text. Provide a prompt card with common question stems. Have a student read the passage out loud first and generate questions orally before engaging independently. |

*Reference:* Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3c from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference on the last page.

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| | |
|---|---|
| CONTENT | **Reading** |
| GRADE LEVEL(S) | **4-9** |
| LEVEL OF EVIDENCE | **Strong** |

## Recommendation

# Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text.

Cognitive science has confirmed that much of what we remember is not specific details but instead the overall "gist" of an event or idea. When reading a text, it is not often the exact wording we hope students will remember and incorporate into their own knowledge base. Our goal is for students to extract the "main idea" and to learn how to separate what is important in a passage from parts that are not.

## How to carry out the recommendation

## 1. Model how to use a routine to generate gist statements.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Provide a step-by-step process for finding the "gist" in a passage. Model this process for students.
- Collect gist statements created by students as a result of using the step-by-step process.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.MC.6, RI.MC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

Routinize the process of finding the "gist" in a passage by breaking it into smaller, manageable steps. Resource 3C.1 shows an example routine to support student discovery of the gist. Many routines begin with a search for the subject of passage – "Who or what is this section about?" Encourage students to look for clues such as

frequently repeated words and within the titles, headers, or diagrams/pictures. Resource 3C.2 explains the process of marking the text when searching for important information in the passage. Model the use of the routine across multiple text types. Consider keeping track of gist statements as students work through the text.

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**Resource 3C.1. Routine for generating a gist statement**

1.  Identify and mark the most important person (referred to as the *who*), place, or thing (referred to as the *what*) in a section of text.

2.  Mark and then list the important information about the most important person, place, or thing.

3.  Synthesize or piece together the important information to formulate a gist statement.

4.  Write the gist statement in your own words.

5.  Check that the gist statement includes all the important information in a short, complete sentence that makes sense.

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**Resource 3C.2. Marking the text**

In this practice guide, the panel recommends marking words or phrases that students do not understand or cannot read. The panel also recommends marking important information in the text, so it is easy to find and refer back to. Marking can be done by circling, underlining, highlighting, or any other method a teacher prefers. Choose any method for marking. Ensure that one method is used for difficult words or phrases and a different one is used for important information. Use the same methods consistently in all lessons. When students use electronic texts, the platforms may allow for consistently marking the text.

At first teachers can mark the text for students to see. Students can mark their text as the class works together. Over time, the responsibility of marking the text can shift to students, so they can learn to mark text when they are reading independently.

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## 2. Teach students how to use text structures to generate gist statements.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Explicitly teach text structure: cause and effect, problem and solution, and compare and contrast. Model how to determine the use of the structure across multiple paragraphs in a text.
- Teach students to use one perspective of text structure to help them write their gist statement.

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**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** RL.MC.6, RI.MC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

The organization of text can provide helpful clues toward creating the gist of a passage. Text structures such as cause and effect, problem and solution, and compare and contrast are listed in Resource 3C.3. Explicitly introduce each text structure one at a time and model how to determine which structure is in use across multiple paragraphs within a passage. Support students in seeing the commonalities among the structures as well. For example, cause and effect can be confused with problem and solution. Suggest students pick one perspective on the text structure to stick with and use as the basis for their gist statement. When no text structure is evident, support students in using the routine outlined in Resource 3C.1.

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**Resource 3C.3. Types of text structures and the related questions that help identify the gist**

**Problem/solution text** structures are used to describe a problem and how it was solved.

> Question: *What is the problem? What is the solution?*

**Cause/effect text** structures are used to explain how one thing or event led to or caused another thing or event to happen.

> Question: *What happened? What happened as a result?*

**Compare/contrast text** structures are used to explain how topics are alike or different.

> Question: *How are the topics the same? How are they different?*

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# Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text

**Example 3C.2. Teacher modeling how to use a text's structure to generate a gist statement for a group of students**

Before reading, the teacher briefly explains where Wuhan, China is located on a map and the meaning of the words *virus* and *global pandemic*. The teacher stops once while reading to rephrase a sentence, replacing the word *vaccine* with "medicine that protects you from getting too sick."

### COVID-19: A Dangerous Virus

In December 2019, a virus identified as COVID-19 began to spread from the Wuhan province in China. By March 2020, COVID-19 had caused a global pandemic, which means the virus had spread to all parts of the world. The COVID-19 virus is dangerous because it attacks the cells in the lungs, and it is easy to catch. By February 2021, half a million people in the United States had died from the virus.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, health care professionals strongly advised us to change the way we live. They asked that people wear face masks and stay at least six feet away from other people in public places. They also recommended that people stay home to control the number of people who would get sick from the virus. Instead of going to their local school, students across the United States went to school online. Several drug companies quickly developed vaccines that could be used to protect people from the COVID-19 virus. With effective vaccines, the number of people catching the COVID-19 virus will get lower and lower, and people will be able to live more normally.

After reading the short section of text aloud, the teacher gives the students the following explanation.

**Teacher:** *I think this section of text has a problem-solution text structure. The problem is the virus and all the sickness and death it is causing.*

The teacher circles the word virus.

**Teacher:** *I know the virus is a problem because it says here that it has spread to all parts of the world, that it is easy to catch, that it attacks the lungs, and that many people have died from the virus. The COVID-19 virus was in almost every sentence. Next, I ask myself, what is the solution? In this case, there were many solutions. People changed the way they lived by wearing masks, staying home, and attending school online.*

The teacher highlights the three solutions.

**Teacher:** *The development of the vaccine to prevent people from getting the virus is also a solution. I know that because it says here that the vaccines will make it so that fewer people get sick from the virus.*

The teacher reminds students that figuring out the type of text structure can help them to write a gist statement. The teacher reminds students that the problem is who or what the passage is about, and the solution is the most important information about the person, place, or thing. Next, the teacher shows students how to develop the gist using the text structure.

The teacher writes "The problem is the COVID-19 virus, and one solution is the vaccine" on the board.

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**Example 3C.2. Teacher modeling how to use a text's structure to generate a gist statement for a group of students (continued)**

Most important information:

1. The COVID-19 virus was very dangerous, and many people died.
2. Health professionals said we should wear masks and stay away from other people to stop people from spreading the COVID-19 virus.
3. Drug companies developed COVID-19 vaccines to help protect people.

The teacher formulates the following gist statements and writes them on the board.

Possible gists:

1. We changed our lives to stop spreading the COVID-19 virus, but vaccines will help us live more normally.
2. The COVID-19 virus made people sick, but vaccines will keep people safe.

**Teacher:** *Now I need to reread my gist statement to see if it makes sense. Did I identify the who or what this section is about? Yes, the what or the problem is the COVID-19 virus. Did I identify the most important information about the COVID-19 which is the solution? Yes. The most important information about the COVID-19 virus is that vaccines were developed, which is the solution. The solution is the vaccines, which will bring us back to normal. Did I write this in my own words and not copy them directly from the text? Yes. I don't see sentences exactly like mine.*

## 3. Work collaboratively with students to generate gist statements.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Collaborate with students to write their own gist statement.
- Have students explain their thinking for how they wrote the gist statement. Reduce the level of support as students become more proficient in writing gist statements on their own.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.MC.6, RI.MC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

After providing modeled examples of generating a gist statement, collaborate with students and prompt them through the routine. Encourage students to explain their decisions as they progress through the routine and to connect their thinking to the relevant portions of the text. As the gist statement develops, keep track of it on the board and have students record it in their logs. As students become more proficient with the process, gradually reduce the level of prompting and support.

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# Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text

Resources 3C.3 demonstrates how to work with a group of students to identify the gist of a section of text.

**Example 3C.3. Teacher and students collaboratively generating a gist statement**

Before reading, the teacher briefly develops students' knowledge of genetics and DNA by showing a short video clip. The teacher explains the meaning of *genes* and *traits* in the context of the passage. The students share traits they have in common with their parents or siblings.

> Genes play an important role in determining how you look and other traits you have that have been passed to you from your parents. Your genes include instructions that tell your cells to create certain traits or characteristics, such as whether you have curly or straight hair or how you smile. These instructions are called deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Each of your biological parents passes on half of their genes. That means that half the instructions in your body come from your biological mother and half from your biological father. Each gene has a special job, and the instructions or DNA tell your genes what to do. Because you share some of the same instructions in your genes as your parents, the instructions in your body will tell your genes to create some traits that are like your parents' traits, and you can end up looking like your parents. Your brothers and sisters who have the same biological parents may also have some traits like your parents.

The small group of students reads the text together. The teacher stops the reading briefly to clarify the meaning of *biological*. The teacher reviews the steps of the routine in **Resource 3C.1** for generating gist statements.

**Teacher:** *Let's generate a gist statement together. What is the first step?*

**Students:** *We need to figure out who or what this is about.*

**Teacher:** *Right. Who or what do you think this passage is about?*

**Jordan:** *Families looking alike!*

**Sammy:** *I think it is about genes.*

**Teacher:** *So, it looks like we have two different thoughts about who or what this passage is about. Let's talk about this. Why do you think it is families looking alike, Jordan?*

**Jordan:** *I think so because it says families look alike because they share the same genes.*

**Sammy:** *But it's talking about genes too. We read that genes make our traits.*

**Teacher:** *Let's read what it says. The first sentence says, "Genes play an important role in determining how you look and other traits you have that have been passed to you from your parents."*

The teacher highlights the sentence with these two ideas.

**Teacher:** *What does it seem like this sentence is about?*

**Lupe:** *Genes.*

**Teacher:** *Let's continue with the next sentence: "Your genes include instructions that tell your cells to create certain traits or characteristics such as whether you have curly or straight hair or how you smile." What are they talking about here?*

**Jordan:** *Traits*

**Teacher:** *We have to decide what it is mainly about.*

Continued on the next page...

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**Example 3C.3. Teacher and students collaboratively generating a gist statement (continued)**

**Sammy:** *It says that genes are how traits are passed on, and everything we read talks about traits. So, I agree, it is about genes.*

The teacher circles all the places *genes* and *traits* appear.

**Teacher:** *It mainly talks about genes, but sometimes it is hard to figure out what the passage is about. But for now, do you all agree that this passage is about genes or how traits are passed on? Turn and talk to your partner and decide if you agree or disagree.*

Students talk to their partner briefly and then the teacher asks them to raise their hands if they agreed. All the students raise their hands.

**Teacher:** *So, this section mentioned that half of our parent's DNA is passed on to us. If you are talking about things that are passed on that are characteristics, what do you suppose they are talking about here?*

**Jordan:** *They might be talking about a child having the same hair as their dad.*

**Teacher:** *Yes, they talked about genes and DNA, so they could be talking about characteristics you see. How can we put that all together?*

No response.

**Teacher:** *Children inherit many things. What can we call them?*

**Aria**: *Traits.*

**Teacher:** *Let's put that all together. The main "what" is...?*

**Aria:** *Genes?*

**Teacher:** *What do they do? Let's list the most important information about them.*

The teacher elicits responses from students, highlights the important information in the text, and writes it on the board.

1. Traits are passed on.
2. Our genes have instructions called DNA, which tell our body to develop certain traits or characteristics.
3. Half of each parent's DNA is passed to their child.

After this, the teacher lists all of the important information. The teacher then synthesizes the information to tell what this paragraph is about.

**Teacher:** *What is all of this important information telling us?*

**Jordan:** *Genes and traits we get from our parents.*

The teacher tells students to work with a partner to generate gist statements. The teacher reminds students to check that their gist statement includes the most important information and is a short complete sentence that makes sense. Afterward, students share the following gists:

1. Genes play a part in how children get traits from their parents.
2. Genes include instructions for traits passed on from parents to children.
3. Genes include DNA that makes traits that are passed down in families.

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## Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *My students are having a really hard time generating gist statements. What can I do?* | Break the process into smaller steps focusing first on the 'who' and 'what' of the text. Ask students to work in pairs and consider creating a few possible examples of gist statements for text and having students identify which would be the best match to the text. |
| *Students get tired of doing gist statements day after day.* | Use the creation of gist statements as just one of the many tools that encourage comprehension. Vary the instructional activity regularly to avoid fatigue on gist generation. |
| *I am not sure what text to use with students when teaching them how to generate the gist.* | Gist statements can be generated from all types of text. Have students use their subject-area textbooks or required readings as the text and seek out text that includes relatable material. |
| *Sometimes, I think my students have finally learned how to generate gist statements. But then, a few days later, we get to a new piece of reading material, and it all falls apart. Will they ever learn how to do it?* | As text becomes more difficult and complex, generating a gist statement can become more difficult. For more challenging texts, focus on increasing your use of prompts, referencing the routine, and including additional encouragement or positive feedback on their progress. |
| *I seem to spend too much time talking at my students when we work on gist statements.* | As students begin to demonstrate greater proficiency with generating gist statements, gradually pull back your use of prompts and scaffolding. Encourage students to continue providing justification for their gist statements from the text and ask follow-up questions when students appear stuck. |

*Reference:* Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

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8

CONTENT **Reading**

**Recommendation**

# Teach students to monitor their comprehension as they read.

Students may not know when they do not understand what they are reading. For some students, reading has always felt like a task to complete, but not a task that helped them learn about a topic. However, in grades 4–9, students need to gain information from what they read. Students need to learn to be aware of their own comprehension and determine whether a section of text is making sense to them. One of the first steps in building awareness is being able to say, "I don't understand this."

When students monitor for understanding as they read, they can recognize whether the text is making sense to them. There are several actions students can take when they figure out that they are not understanding the text. These actions can help students make sense of the text.

This part of Recommendation 3 focuses on teaching students to determine if they are understanding the text, to ask themselves questions to check their understanding, and to take actions to make sense of the text. The recommendation also teaches students to reflect on their learning.

**How to carry out the recommendation**

1. Help students determine when they do not understand the text.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Have students practice determining if a text makes sense using isolated sentences or nonsense sentences.
   - Have students mark words or parts of the sentence that do not make sense.

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- Discuss the parts of the sentences that are not making sense and provide feedback on student thinking.
- After practice with isolated sentences, move on to longer pieces of text with multiple sentences.

## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 6-8.I.5, 9-12.I.5, 3-5.RL.MC.5, 6-8.RL.MC.5, 9-12.RL.MC.5, 3-5.RI.MC.5, 6-8.RI.MC.5, 9-12.RI.MC.5
**TEACHER:** INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3

To help students become more comfortable with acknowledging when portions of a text do not make sense to them, have students practice with isolated sentences. This activity includes some nonsensical sentences to help students get in the habit of asking themselves, "Does this make sense to me?" The teacher asks students to read a sentence and determine if it makes sense. If the sentence does not make sense, the teacher tells students to mark (e.g., underline or highlight) the word they cannot read or do not understand or the portions of the sentence that do not make sense. Discuss the statements students were not able to understand and which parts caused the problem. Help students think through what they can do when they do not understand a word or phrase.

After students have practiced identifying whether or not what they read makes sense at the sentence level, move on to longer pieces of text with multiple sentences.

| Sample student sheet: Does it make sense? | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The Olympic games began almost 3,000 years ago on the sun. | Yes | No |
| 2. When the first Europeans arrived in North America, native Americans played grapes like football. | Yes | No |
| 3. At the library you can find books on any sport you are interested in. | Yes | No |
| 4. Many people watch sports on TV for their exercise. | Yes | No |
| 5. A student athlete goes to school and practices every day. | Yes | No |
| 6. If you can do a cartwheel, a handstand, or the splits then you can do gymnastics. | Yes | No |
| 7. Basketball and skateboarding are two fairly new stores that began in the United States. | Yes | No |
| 8. Many schools have a gym from students of exercise. | Yes | No |

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## 2. Teach students to ask themselves questions as they read to check their understanding and figure out what the text is about.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach students to stop and ask themselves what the section is about to determine if it makes sense.
- Model reading a passage and asking whether it makes sense.
- Read text as a group and ask the group periodically what the passage is about and whether it makes sense.
- Record student reading and have them listen to earlier attempts to demonstrate growth.
- Have students share with other students the questions they are asking themselves.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.MC.5, 6-8.RL.MC.5, 9-12.RL.MC.5, 3-5.RI.MC.5, 6-8.RI.MC.5, 9-12.RI.MC.5
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.5, INST.Q.8, INST.PS.1

Teach students to stop periodically and ask themselves what the section of text is about or what the gist statement is for the section of text. When they think about what the section is about, they can figure out whether what they are reading is making sense. If they do not understand, they can reread the section slowly and carefully, if necessary. They can also figure out which words are stumping them or try to think about what they know about the topic.

Model how you would read a passage and ask yourself questions aloud as you read. This will help students hear how asking questions and thinking about the words in the text can help them make sense of the text.

Read the text as a group and stop periodically to ask the group to think about whether they are understanding the text and what they can do to address their misunderstandings. Ask students the questions they should ask themselves and support them in answering the questions. Use prompts and questions to help students move toward independence in asking themselves questions. When necessary, prompt students by pointing out specific sentences that might be confusing.

As students become more comfortable asking themselves questions, have them work in pairs or small groups to read the next paragraph and share how they asked

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themselves questions during the reading. Have students talk about the questions they asked and whether those questions prompted them to do something to address their understanding.

| **Possible questions students can ask themselves as they read** |
|---|

**First, I ask myself:** *What was that section of text about? What is happening in this section?*

**Then I ask myself:**
1. If I am not sure what this section is about, I ask: *Are there any words I cannot read or do not understand? Are there any phrases or sentences that do not make sense? Should I reread that section carefully?*
2. If a word or phrase doesn't make sense, I ask: *How am I going to figure out what that word or phrase means?*
3. If I am not sure what this section is about but it reminds me of something, I ask: *What else do I know about this topic?*
4. If I think I know what this section is about, I ask: *What are the main points?*

Teacher and students are reading a biography of Mary Winston Jackson.

**Teacher:** *To keep track of what I am reading, I am going to ask myself questions. After this first paragraph, I ask, "What was this section of text about?" I read that Mary Winston Jackson loved science and that she volunteered by helping youngsters in a science club at a local community center. They built wind tunnels and conducted experiments. I think I understand this part of the passage.*

The teacher goes on to read more and realizes that the students might struggle with the next paragraph, so models how to figure out what the section of text is about.

**Teacher:** *I am going to ask myself, "What was this section of text about?" I know it is about a woman, a scientist. But I can't figure out what she did. I am not sure. I realize now that I do not understand this section. I ask myself, "Do I need to reread this section? Should I reread the section slowly?" Yeah, I need to reread this section slowly. Maybe that will help me.*

The teacher rereads the sentences aloud slowly.

**Teacher:** *Oh...I see, here the text talks about how she helped young people.*

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The teacher goes on to explain that students can monitor for understanding as they read by asking themselves questions. If they do not understand something, they can reread the text or seek more information from a peer, teacher, or online resource.

## 3. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Ask students to write down what they learned from the reading, what they are confused about, and what steps they might take to help them understand better.
- Use sentence starters to support students.
- Use comprehension questions and ask students to mark any answers that they are not confident in.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.I.5, 6-8.I.5, 9-12.I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.Q.8, INST.AF.5, INST.PS.1

Before the end of the intervention session, ask students to write down what they learned in the day's lesson, what they are still confused about, and what they might have done to help themselves understand better. This will help them to remember new information and think about what could help them in the future.

Sentence starters can help students write about what they learned. Have students choose 2–3 sentence starters to complete at the end of class.

Alternatively, ask students to answer some comprehension questions instead. Ask students to mark any answers in which they are not confident. This will help students practice identifying when they do not understand what they read.

| Possible sentence starters to complete after reading |
| --- |

1. Today I learned...
2. I was surprised by...
3. The most useful thing I will take from this lesson is...
4. One thing I am not sure about is...
5. The main thing I want to find out more about is...
6. After this session, I feel...

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *My students are reticent to share what they did not understand.* | Helping students feel comfortable sharing when they are not understanding what they are reading may take time. Some students may not feel comfortable at first. They may want to hide their confusion, or they may not be accustomed to identifying when they are stuck. Repeatedly and gently, encourage students to share when they need help and remind them that you are there to help. |
| *I keep stopping every two minutes to make sure they are understanding what they read. This does not seem to be working well.* | It can be hard to follow along with the text if you are stopping too often. If this technique is not working well, interrupt their reading after longer sections of text. Ask students to continue to mark (e.g., underline or highlight) any problem areas in the text as they read and share what they marked at stop points further along in the text. |
| *Students like to preview the text to determine how difficult it is, but this doesn't seem like a good use of their time.* | Previewing text can prepare students for reading and can help them monitor their understanding. Students can check the title, subheadings, and figures to get a sense of what they will be reading and to quickly check in with themselves to see if the passage's topic is something they know about or if it is a topic that is unfamiliar to them. Teach students to think about whether the text will be difficult for them and how much they will read before checking their understanding. |
| *My students mark too many words that they cannot read. How do I help them?* | If students underline profusely, check the difficulty level of the text. It could be that the text the students are reading is not at an appropriate level. If the text is at the students' instructional level, ask students to pick a few words or phrases that made it hard for them to understand the passage and focus on those. Consider modeling for students how you got stuck and choose a few words or phrases to mark for further exploration or discussion. If this remains a chronic problem, reconsider the reading material being used. It may be too difficult. |

*Reference:* Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

Summary of Recommendation 3d from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference is on the last page.

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CONTENT **Reading**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **4-9**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Moderate**

## Recommendation

# Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of a stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to complex ideas and information.

Experts recommend including a stretch text into the intervention 2-3 times a week for periods of 6-10 weeks. These texts are typically challenging, just above a student's typical reading level. Exposure to higher-level texts includes more complex vocabulary, sentence structures, and ideas. Prior strategies in Recommendation 3 are suggested for stretch texts as well, but a focus on providing consistent support and positive feedback is key when the content is challenging.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Prepare for the lesson by carefully selecting appropriate stretch texts, choosing points to stop for discussion and clarification, and identifying words to teach.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Provide motivating texts that are at the top of the student's individual reading level.
- Arrange the texts in gradually increasing difficulty and length to help students gain confidence as they interact with the text.
- Pre-read the texts and identify appropriate stop points to engage in group discussion to help students with comprehension.
- Create a list of difficult words and pre-teach how to understand them in the text before a student begins reading a stretch text.

# Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of a stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to…

## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.I.5, 6-8.I.5, 9-12.I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.LSP.3, INST.AM.1, INST.AM.2, INST.AM.3, INST.AM.4, INST.AM.5, INST.AM.6, INST.AM.7, INST.AM.8. INST.AM.9, INST.AM.10, INST.AM.11, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, ENVI.EX.1, ENVI.EX.2, ENVI.EX.3

Select texts at the upper boundary of students' individual reading levels. Arrange the stretch text to gradually increase in difficulty and length as students gain confidence. Topic areas for stretch texts can draw from students' subject area courses but seek out options beyond the textbook; search for materials that will motivate students. Prior to instructions, read through the text and pre-select stop points to engage in group discussion. Consider stop points where the passage becomes confusing, includes unfamiliar or difficult to decode words, or when the author provides pivotal details. Another pre-instruction suggestion is to create a list of difficult/multisyllabic words, essential words, or proper nouns and discuss with students how to work through or understand each as they read through the text. Example 4.1 shows how to prepare a short passage for this process.

**Example 4.1. Teacher preparing to read a short section from a grade-level text about noted novelist Louise Erdrich**

### Louise Erdrich Wins Pulitzer Prize in Literature

The Pulitzer Prize is one of the highest awards that writers can receive. In June 2021, the novelist Louise Erdrich won the award for her novel *The Night Watchman*. *The Night Watchman* is based on the life of her grandfather who fought to ensure the Ojibwe tribe could keep their land.

Erdrich writes frequently about life on and near the reservations. Louise's mother was Ojibwe. Although her father was not Ojibwe, both her parents attended a boarding school run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The boarding schools were intended to assimilate Native American children into the "American way of life" and to train them for low paying jobs.

Erdrich won the equally prestigious National Book Award for her novel *LaRose*. Like all her novels, *LaRose* explored the rich traditions of Ojibwe people and the struggle of children being forced to attend boarding schools many miles from their families. The novel explored the cruelty of separating children from their families and their traditions.

Erdrich's books describe horrors but are also full of humor. They include many fascinating people. Some are very wise and caring, some thoughtless, and many in between.

The teacher marks the following sections and words before beginning to read with the group. This is grade-level material for the English language arts class.

**Stop points and discussion starters:**

- Stop after paragraph 1 – What is this paragraph about?
- Stop after paragraph 2 – What was the purpose of the boarding schools for Native Americans?
- Stop after paragraph 3 – What happened in her novel *LaRose* that was disturbing?
- Stop after paragraph 4 – What are some positive aspects of her novels? What do you think the author means when describing people who fall in between being wise and thoughtless at the same time?

Continued on the next page…

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Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference is on the last page.

Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of a stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to...

> **Example 4.1. Teacher preparing to read a short section from a grade-level text about noted novelist Louise Erdrich (continued)**
>
> **Proper nouns:**
> - Pulitzer Prize
> - Louise Erdrich
> - Ojibwe
> - Bureau of Indian Affairs
> - Native American
>
> **Multisyllabic words using previously taught word-reading skills:**
> - frequently
> - reservation
> - attended
> - assimilate
> - traditions
>
> **Essential words:**
> - novel
> - reservation
> - assimilate
> - boarding school

## 2. After students demonstrate comfort with reading stretch texts with the group, provide students with electronic supports to use when independently reading a stretch text to assist with the pronunciation of difficult words and word meanings.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Encourage students to use electronic supports to help them with unfamiliar words or topics.
- Model for students how to use these supports and encourage independent practice.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** 3-5.RL.LCS.10, 6-8.RL.LCS.10, 9-12.RL.LCS.10, 3-5.RI.LCS.9, 6-8.RI.LCS.9, 9-12.RI.LCS.9
**TEACHER:** INST.LSP.2, INST.AM.11, INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3

Once students begin to demonstrate comfort with the process of reading through stretch texts, begin incorporating independent and small group-based settings. Encourage students to engage with electronic supports to help work through unfamiliar words and topic areas. Model how to find and use the embedded dictionary and thesaurus in many word processing programs. Demonstrate how to use the read-aloud function for eBooks and encourage students to make use of any provided comprehension questions with the passage.

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference is on the last page.

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Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of a stretch text (i.e., challenging text) that will expose them to…

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Stretch text is just too frustrating for my students. They tend to give up far too easily.* | Remind students of the common but challenging nature of reading a stretch text and provide often and demonstrated support. Start the practice of a stretch text by moving sentence by sentence before building up to longer sections. |
| *Grade-level science and history texts are typically many years above the instructional level for some of my intervention groups.* | Try to avoid material taken directly from textbooks for stretch text practice. Choose materials from magazines, newspapers, and books that focus on engaging topics relatable to the student. Consider selecting texts that also include visual elements as these may assist in making meaning from the text. |
| *I get confused between what is considered stretch text or challenging text, and how this all fits into Lexile levels.* | Stretch texts should be challenging and present new knowledge in more complex formats for students. This is true regardless of which descriptive terms (challenging or by Lexile level) you choose to use. |
| *My students would prefer reading short stories and novels for their stretch text rather than informational text.* | Consider hybrid texts that incorporate a narrative style within an informational text. Short biographical sketches, historical fiction, social sciences, and economics are common topics within hybrid text options. |

*Reference:* Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference is on the last page.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

CONTENT **Reading**

## Recommendation

# Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.

Explicit vocabulary instruction should be a part of all content-area classes. This type of instruction teaches students strategies for deciphering the meaning of new words, resulting in stronger independent reading skills due to an improved ability to construct the meaning of a text.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Dedicate a portion of the regular classroom lesson to explicit vocabulary instruction.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Introduce students to new vocabulary prior to reading the specific text selected.

   **South Carolina standards alignment**

   **ELA:** RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9
   **TEACHER:** INST.PS.2

   Ensure students understand vocabulary prior to engaging in reading selections. Exposing students to the vocabulary first may result in students having an easier time while reading. The amount of class time dedicated to vocabulary instruction will vary depending on the amount of new vocabulary included in the reading selection and the student's prior knowledge.

## 2. Use repeated exposure to new words in multiple oral and written contexts and allow sufficient practice sessions.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Engage students in multiple opportunities to learn new vocabulary from specific reading selections.
- Provide explicit instruction for frequently repeated words; provide scaffolded support and definitions for words that do not appear frequently.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9
**TEACHER:** INST.LSP.3, INST.AM.1

Students learn vocabulary most effectively when exposed to words multiple times, ideally over an extended length of time. Studies have shown that it can take up to 17 interactions for students to retain the meaning of a new word. Provide students with explicit instruction for frequently repeated words so that students have ample opportunities to learn vocabulary. When words do not appear frequently in a reading selection, provide students with definitions, but do not target the words for explicit vocabulary instruction.

## 3. Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Provide opportunities for students to practice new vocabulary in multiple different domains, including speaking, writing, and reading.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9, W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.L.4, W.RC.6, C.MC.1
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1

Students will best learn the correct meanings and use of vocabulary when practicing new words across multiple domain areas, including speaking, writing, and reading.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

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Through these experiences, students learn how to effectively use the new vocabulary words and better identify new vocabulary words when reading texts.

## 4. Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Focus instructional time on teaching root words, prefixes, and suffixes as they relate to the new vocabulary word.
- Explicitly teach students how to use text tools, such as a glossary, to decipher the meaning of a new vocabulary word.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10, RI.LCS.9
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3

One approach is to teach students the function of different parts of words (root words, prefixes, and suffixes) that they can utilize to decipher the meaning of new words they encounter. Another method is to support students in using text tools, such as glossaries.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Students may vary in their responses to different vocabulary instruction strategies.* | Provide multiple and varied learning opportunities to support students in learning new vocabulary. Some students may learn best when they visualize new vocabulary, while others may learn best when they listen to the meaning of new words. Teaching methods may include direct instruction, class discussions, and computer-guided learning experiences. |
| *Teachers may not know how to select words to teach, especially in content areas.* | Identify essential vocabulary versus highly specialized vocabulary and jargon words as a focus for explicit instruction opportunities. One method used is to identify Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III words.<br><br>Tier I words are high-frequency words already known by students and are not recommended for explicit vocabulary instruction.<br><br>Tier II words occur frequently in the text, are less familiar to students, are important for understanding the current context, and are expected to be used by students in the future. Tier II words should be the focus of explicit vocabulary instruction.<br><br>Tier III words are identified differently as student grade levels increase. In early grade levels, Tier III words, while helpful in understanding a specific text, provide little value to understanding other texts in the near future. In this case, supply the definition of the Tier III word and forego explicit instruction activities. In later grades, Tier III words, while rarely used outside of the content area, are essential for understanding within the content area. These Tier III words should be a focus for explicit vocabulary instruction.<br><br>A different selection method identifies words that are repeated frequently and are unfamiliar to students for explicit instruction. The value of this method decreases as reading levels increase because students are familiar with most high-frequency words. |

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

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| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Teachers may perceive that they do not have time to teach vocabulary.* | Spending a short, but focused amount of time on explicit vocabulary instruction supports students in becoming effective independent learners of vocabulary. Increasing student skills for deciphering new vocabulary will make it so less time is needed for focusing on teaching new words, meaning more time is available for learning new content. Technology can provide individualized, independent vocabulary learning experiences for students. |

*Reference:* Gersten, R., Beckmann, S., Clarke, B., Foegen, A., Marsh, L., Star, J. R., & Witzel, B. (2009). *Assisting students struggling with mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for elementary and middle schools* (NCEE 2009-4060). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/2

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

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CONTENT **Reading**
GRADE LEVEL(S) **4-12**
LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Strong**

## Recommendation

# Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.

Direct and explicit instruction focused on comprehension strategies improves students' reading comprehension. Comprehension strategies are specific actions or tools readers use to increase their understanding of texts. Classroom comprehension activities might include students using graphic organizers, summarizing, paraphrasing, or identifying main ideas. Direct and explicit instruction involves teachers modeling strategies, explaining why strategies help comprehension, and telling students when to use specific strategies. Teachers then provide students with support and feedback as they begin to apply strategies.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts, not just to one text.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Expose students to a wide variety of both nonfiction and narrative text.
- Guide students to utilize learned comprehension strategies with both nonfiction and narrative text.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RL.P4, RI.RC.12, RI.P.4
**TEACHER:** INST.PIC.3

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Have students utilize learned strategies with varying text styles. This experience will provide them with the opportunity to think critically about which comprehension strategies work best in different situations.

## 2. Use direct and explicit instruction for teaching students how to use comprehension strategies.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Explicitly teach comprehension strategies and provide the rationale for when to use a specific strategy.
- Provide regular, ongoing feedback to students as they independently utilize a specific comprehension strategy.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** I.3, I.5, RL.LCS.10, RI.LCS.10
**TEACHER:** INST.LSP.2

Research has shown that knowledge of reading comprehension strategies alone does not result in students applying strategies independently. In addition to knowledge of strategies, students must also understand why strategies are important and when to use them. Direct and explicit instruction is very detailed about what strategy to use, why to use it, and how to use it. Feedback is provided to students as they begin to apply strategies independently.

## 3. Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that the students are learning.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Based on the complexity of the comprehension strategy, provide the appropriate amount of guidance to promote the student's application of strategies independently.
- Apply a gradual release of responsibility by modeling the use of the strategy, then teaching the strategy with small groups of students, providing less support to pairs of students, and ultimately, promoting individual practice.

Summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

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**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RL.P.4, RI.RC.12, RI.P.4
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.LSP.3, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4, INST.TKS.3

Different comprehension strategies require varying amounts of time to learn. Some strategies can be learned from one demonstration, while others are more complex. For more complex strategies, start student practice in small groups with high levels of teacher support, then release the students into pairs and provide less support. Finally, have students practice independently.

## 4. When teaching comprehension strategies, make sure students understand that the goal is to understand the content of the text.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Explicitly teach students the importance of applying key comprehension strategies to understand the content of the text.
- Promote the use of reading strategies to improve overall reading comprehension.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RL.P.4, RI.RC.12, RI.P.4
**TEACHER:** INST.PIC.3, INST.PS.1

Reading comprehension strategies are a tool for supporting a better overall understanding of a text. Sometimes a focus on teaching specific strategies can distract students from overall text comprehension. Frequently remind yourself and students that improved reading comprehension is the goal, not just using strategies.

Summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

3

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Many teachers do not have the knowledge or skills to provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies.* | Teachers may find it difficult to confidently model how they use strategies to comprehend text because it is something they do automatically. Additionally, many educator preparation programs do not cover teaching reading comprehension strategies.<br><br>Professional development that includes opportunities for teachers to practice and receive feedback will help them develop the knowledge and skills required to provide explicit instruction on reading comprehension skills. |
| *Teachers from some content areas do not feel responsible for teaching reading comprehension strategies.* | The goal of teaching reading comprehension strategies is to increase a student's ability to understand texts in all contents. Therefore, the time taken to teach comprehension strategies will be regained as students become more effective content learners, resulting in better student performance in all content areas. |
| *Teachers and students become too focused on specific comprehension strategies versus improved overall comprehension.* | Stay clear and focused on the goal of increased comprehension. When teaching strategies, be purposeful in the application. Additionally, the effectiveness of different strategies will depend not only on context but also on student preferences as well. Frequently remind yourself and your students that improved reading comprehension is the goal and there is no one right way to get there. |

*Reference:* Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices* (NCEE 2008-4027). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/8

Summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

4

CONTENT **Reading**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **4-12**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Moderate**

## Recommendation

# Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.

Providing students with the opportunity to participate in effective discussions regarding the significance or meaning of a text in all content areas is a way to improve reading comprehension. Teachers may guide a whole classroom discussion or monitor students as they discuss in small groups. Effective discussions may include constructing comprehension and investigating outcomes both through cognition, relating what one knows, and listening to what others have to say.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. ## Carefully prepare for the discussion.

   ### Instructional strategies from the examples

   - Select reading texts that will engage students in a conversation about the text that includes analysis and differing points of understanding.
   - Predict areas of the selected text where students may present difficulty or opposing viewpoints. Prepare for how to address these difficulties with supportive materials.
   - Be prepared to respond to countering points of view.
   - Create discussion questions that promote student analysis and engagement in deep classroom discussion about the selected text.

   ### South Carolina standards alignment

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**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12

**TEACHER:**

Prepare for discussions by strategically selecting readings that will engage students in different understandings and analyses to drive the conversation. Predict areas of textbooks or reading selections that may present students with difficulty and prepare support materials for those areas. Also, be sure to gather information about countering points of view when available. Finally, when creating questions, focus on encouraging students to analyze and engage in deep discussions about the text.

## 2. Ask follow-up questions that help provide continuity and extend the discussion.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Create discussion questions that require students to consider different points of view and perspectives. Provide follow-up questions that engage students in deeper analysis and continued discussion.
- Ensure teacher-created questions are standards-based.
- Ensure questions promote students to use evidence from the text to support their claim.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12

**TEACHER:**

Initially, provide students with questions that require them to consider different perspectives. Follow-up with questions that spark further analyses should be based on student comments that emerge during the discussion. Discussion questions should reflect the reading comprehension standards by providing students with opportunities to think about how to support an answer using multiple parts of the text or using evidence from the text to support a claim.

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

2

## 3. Provide a task, or a discussion format, that students can follow when they discuss text together in small groups.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Organize students into small discussion groups with specific roles and responsibilities.
- Provide a reading passage that will engage students to apply reading comprehension strategies.
- Monitor group discussion and provide feedback that includes asking thought-provoking questions.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12
**TEACHER:**

Give students reading passages that require them to use reading comprehension strategies. Also, consider providing students with different roles that go into group reading, such as discussion leaders, prediction creators, and paraphrasers. During the discussion, walk around and monitor discussions, provide feedback to students, and ask thought-provoking questions.

## 4. Develop and practice the use of a specific "discussion protocol."

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Utilize frameworks and protocols to guide effective, meaningful student discussions.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** RL.RC.13, RI.RC.12
**TEACHER:**

It is difficult to facilitate meaningful student discussion that results in improved reading comprehension. Utilize frameworks and best practices identified at your school or in the literature to support the establishment of a set of processes or guidelines for effective student discussions.

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

3

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *There might be low student participation due to students' lack of interest in the topic or desire to avoid receiving negative feedback from teachers and peers.* | Elicit student participation by selecting a high-interest topic that may only be indirectly related to the intended class topic. For instance, try starting a discussion using a text that students will engage with, such as an article from the web. You must also provide a socially safe, encouraging environment so that students can confidently provide their thoughts during the classroom discussion. To increase safety and build student confidence in discussions, strategically call on quiet students for discussion questions that you know they can answer. Allowing students to work in small groups can also help quiet students engage. |
| *Time spent on in-depth discussions for one topic might result in a lack of time to cover other curriculum topics.* | Content-area and literacy standards require students to think deeply, and students need the opportunity to apply these skills in class. If the required curriculum does not allow for in-depth learning opportunities, districts or states may need to review curriculum expectations. If this is not feasible, teachers need to strategically prioritize a few topics that they will include in more in-depth conversations. |
| *Teachers may lack discussion facilitation knowledge and skills.* | Professional development can help teachers learn to be mediators of deep discussions in the classroom. It may be helpful for teachers to have time to gather topics and participate in discussions on those topics so they can learn helpful discussion techniques firsthand. |

*Reference:* Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices* (NCEE 2008-4027). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/8

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

4

CONTENT **Reading**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **4-12**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Moderate**

### Recommendation

# Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.

Instructional methods should interest students in reading and encourage them to learn. Teachers need to support students in developing reading comprehension skills, thereby increasing student confidence levels and learning abilities. The classroom environment dshould encourage students to embrace a growth mindset, independent learning, and a transfer of knowledge between assignments and contents. Literacy experiences should be focused on real-world applications and high-interest topics.

### How to carry out the recommendation

1.  Establish meaningful and engaging content learning goals around the essential ideas of a discipline as well as the specific learning processes students use to access those ideas.

    **Instructional strategies from the examples**

    - Establish clear learning goals that are specific and meaningful to students and provide clear steps toward achievement.
    - Provide the opportunity for students to set their own learning goals, especially to promote increased engagement.
    - Monitor progress towards learning goals, providing feedback to ensure growth towards goals.
    - Maintain high expectations towards growth.

    **South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.PIC.1, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1
Learning goals should be specific and meaningful to students and provide a pathway to achievement. Teachers, students, or a combination of both can set learning goals. Allowing students to set at least a few of their own learning goals may result in increased engagement. It is important to closely monitor student progress toward learning goals, maintain high expectations for all students, and provide students with timely and specific feedback to ensure growth toward their goals.

## 2. Make literacy experiences more relevant to students' interests, everyday life, or important current events.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Learn about your students and what is happening in their lives. Promote relevant learning experiences that match what is happening in students' lives and the world around them.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.1, INST.MS.2, INST.AM.6, INST.AM.11, INST.Q.8, INST.TKS.2, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.3

Connect what is happening inside the classroom to what is happening outside the classroom. Make learning relevant to students by connecting concepts to what is currently happening in students' lives and the world around them.

## 3. Build in certain instructional conditions, such as student goal setting, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning, to increase reading engagement and conceptual learning for students.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Increase student engagement by connecting ideas across content areas, connecting reading comprehension strategies, and connecting learning activities.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:**

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Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

2

**TEACHER:** INST.MS.2, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1

These instructional conditions are supported by purposefully building connections for students, connecting ideas between content areas, connecting reading comprehension strategies, and connecting exercises intended to increase student engagement as well as their social and emotional advancement.

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

3

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Activities developed to engage students may prioritize entertainment over learning.* | Activities such as having students compete toward a goal and rewarding points might motivate students to complete tasks, but that does not mean they benefit from learning. Instead of externally motivating students to engage in work, think of ways that might internally motivate them. Actions might include linking instruction with learning goals, having high expectations, providing constructive feedback, and boosting student self-reflection about their learning. |
| *Students may not be interested in textbooks or may feel that they cannot understand the text.* | Some texts fail to explain connections between themes, resulting in students struggling to understand the textbooks. When students cannot understand a text, they may start to believe they will inevitably fail. Teachers should provide additional information on difficult topics so students can learn more about the content, make connections, and increase their level of understanding. |
| *Content-area teachers may not realize the importance of teaching reading and thinking strategies or realize the benefits of using these strategies.* | Content-area teachers may not have experience highlighting the authentic application of literacy processes in their content. Literacy coaches can encourage these teachers to focus on literacy skills to enable students to be good readers and writers in all content areas. Providing professional development and utilizing publicly available resources on the web will support teacher growth around this topic. Content-area teachers should develop formative assessments that allow students to demonstrate thinking processes, including problem-solving and critical-thinking strategies. They should use the results from these assessments to inform future instruction and tools. |
| *Struggling readers may not believe that they will perform well in any class.* | Based on past performance, teachers and students may have low expectations for struggling readers. Additionally, many struggling readers also have low self-confidence in their learning and thinking capabilities. Improved learning and confidence levels are supported by identifying and focusing on student strengths, reviewing data to identify skill growth opportunities, and providing students with multiple opportunities for success in learning. Additionally, studies show that when students build connections with school staff, they have developed a better perception of themselves and the school. |

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

4

*Reference:* Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices* (NCEE 2008-4027). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/8

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*. Full reference is on the last page.

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2a from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

**Recommendation**

# Teach students the writing process.

Teachers can help students become effective writers by teaching and supporting them to apply a variety of strategies for each component of the writing process. Teachers should explain and demonstrate writing components and how they can be used alone or in combination in order to teach students to apply strategies flexibly throughout the writing process.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students strategies for the various components of the writing process.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach strategies for each component of the writing process.
- Teach basic strategies early on and introduce more complex ones later.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1

Students need to learn strategies for each component of the writing process. Basic strategies such as POW (pick ideas, organize notes, and write and say more) should be introduced in the early grades (1 or 2), while more complex strategies such as peer revising should be introduced in later grades. The table below provides a chart of various writing strategies, how students can use them, and the appropriate grade levels for each.

| Component of the Writing Process | Writing Strategy | How Students Can Use the Strategy | Grade Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| Planning | POW | • **P**ick ideas (i.e., decide what to write about).<br>• **O**rganize their notes (i.e., brainstorm and organize possible writing ideas into a writing plan).<br>• **W**rite and say more (i.e., continue to modify the plan while writing). | *1–6* |
| | Ordering ideas/outlining | • Brainstorm/generate ideas for their paper.<br>• Review their ideas and place a number by what will go first, second, third, and so on. | *1–2* |
| Drafting | Imitation | • Select a sentence, paragraph, or text excerpt and imitate the author's form (see Recommendation 2b, examples 2 and 3). | *1–6* |
| | Sentence generation | • Try out sentences orally before writing them on paper.<br>• Try multiple sentences and choose the best one.<br>• Use transition words to develop different sentence structures.<br>• Practice writing good topic sentences. | *3–6* |
| Sharing | Peer sharing | • In pairs, listen and read along as the author reads aloud.<br>• Share feedback with their writing partner, starting with what they liked. | *2–6* |
| | "Author's Chair" | • Sit in a special chair in front of peers and read their writing (see Recommendation 4, example 6, for more detail). | *K–6* |
| Evaluating | Self-evaluating | • Reread and ask these questions:<br> • Are the ideas clear?<br> • Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end? | *2–6* |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Does the writing connect with the reader?<br>• Are sentence types varied? | |
| | Self-monitoring | • Self-assess and ask these questions, either out loud or internally:<br>    • Did I meet the goals I developed for my writing? If not, what changes should I make to meet my goals?<br>    • Did I correctly use strategies that were appropriate for this task? If not, what should I change?<br>• Record their answers to self-assessment questions on a chart or teacher-provided questionnaire in order to track their progress toward writing goals and strategy use.<br>• Congratulate themselves, and inform their teacher, when they meet their goals. | *3–6* |
| Revising and Editing | Peer revising | • Place a question mark (?) by anything they do not understand in their writing partner's paper.<br>• Place a carat (^) anywhere it would be useful to have the author include more information. | *2–6* |
| | COPS (editing) | • Ask the COPS editing questions:<br>    • Did I **C**apitalize the first word in sentences and proper names?<br>    • How is the **O**verall appearance of my paper?<br>    • Did I use commas and end-of-sentence **P**unctuation?<br>    • Did I **S**pell each word correctly? | *2–6* |

Summary of Recommendation 2a from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## 2. Gradually release writing responsibility from the teacher to the student.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Use gradual release to teach writing strategies.
- Provide background on the strategy, including why it is helpful.
- Model the use of strategy multiple times to introduce it.
- Evaluate student understanding and adjust as needed.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3

Each writing strategy should be taught explicitly through a gradual release method. First, provide the necessary background knowledge on the strategy, including why the strategy is helpful. Next, articulate how to implement the strategy and model its use multiple times. Then allow small groups to apply the strategy while monitoring student performance. Once students can use the strategy in a group, give students the opportunity for guided practice of the strategy, with teacher support. Finally, provide students with opportunities to apply the strategy on their own.

During this process, be sure to evaluate students' understanding and adjust instruction when necessary. For example, for students who are struggling to acquire a particular writing strategy, more time can be spent in small-group instruction. Conversely, for those students who are moving more quickly, consider increasing the complexity of the strategy.

## 3. Guide students to select and use appropriate writing strategies.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Visually display strategies around the room.
- Design activities for the student to select certain strategies and evaluate their use of it.

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**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.TH.1, INST.PS.1

After students have learned how to use various strategies independently, they will need to learn how to select appropriate strategies for a variety of writing tasks. To support them, consider visually displaying strategies around the room by illustrating each strategy and noting when to use it. As students' skills in using a variety of strategies increase, design activities in which students set goals to use specific strategies, evaluate their success, and think critically about how to make the strategy work even better.

## 4. Encourage students to be flexible in their use of the components of the writing process.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Teach students to use strategies flexibly.
- Design activities that require students to use multiple strategies and move back and forth between them.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3C

Once students learn to use the various strategies, teachers need to provide instruction and practice using strategies in a flexible manner. Design activities that require students to move back and forth between the components (planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, editing, publishing) to strengthen their ability to apply writing strategies flexibly.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Students initially use the strategies/ techniques of writing after they are taught; however, over time they tend to stop.* | Once students begin independently applying strategies and techniques, teachers need to monitor their progress. As students develop skills with a specific component of the writing process (planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, editing, publishing), they may no longer need to rely on particular strategies. However, if a student has stopped using a strategy but is still struggling with a specific component of the writing process, the teacher should intervene and take necessary action, such as targeted one-on-one or small-group instruction. |
| *Teachers need to prepare students to take state assessments, which tend to focus on only a few genres.* | Writing for one genre often requires students to use skills they have learned for writing in another genre. For example, even when writing a persuasive essay, including a narrative example may be necessary to support an argument. Therefore, despite the specific prompts on a state assessment, students need to be prepared to write for multiple purposes. Teachers can point out particular skills they are learning that might be useful for the types of writing required for the state assessment. |

*Reference:* Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17

Summary of Recommendation 2a from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 2b from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

**Recommendation**

# Teach students to write for a variety of purposes.

Developing the ability to write for a variety of purposes provides students with the necessary skills for success in school and adulthood. Once students understand the different genres and purposes of writing, they are more likely to think critically about which type of writing they should use for each writing activity and audience.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1.  ## Help students understand the different purposes of writing.

    ### Strategies from the example

    -   Emphasize the purpose of writing and features of each type of writing.
    -   Relate each genre to real-life examples.

    ### South Carolina standards alignment

    **ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6
    **TEACHER:** INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, PLAN.SW.2

    Students need to understand the different genres of writing to choose the best genre for their writing task. Teachers should emphasize the purpose (e.g., describing, narrating, informing, and persuading/analyzing) and features of each genre while relating the genre to real-world scenarios. See the table below for further details about the purposes of writing and examples of genres used to achieve those purposes.

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| Purpose | Explanation | Examples of Genres |
|---|---|---|
| **Describe** | to describe something, such as a person, place, process, or experience, in vivid detail | • descriptions (e.g., people, places, or events)<br>• character sketches<br>• nature writing<br>• brochures (personal, travel, and so on) |
| **Narrate** | to tell a story of an experience, event, or sequence of events while holding the reader's interest | • diary entries (real or fictional)<br>• folktales, fairy tales, fables<br>• short stories<br>• poems<br>• eyewitness accounts |
| **Inform** | to examine previously learned information or provide new information | • summaries of new or previously learned information<br>• instructions or directions<br>• letters<br>• newspaper articles<br>• science reports |
| **Persuade/analyze** | to give an opinion in an attempt to convince the reader that this point of view is valid or to persuade the reader to take a specific action (writing to express an opinion or make an argument has a similar purpose); to analyze ideas in text, for example, by considering their veracity or comparing them to one another | • persuasive essays<br>• editorials<br>• compare-and-contrast essays<br>• reviews (e.g., of books and movies)<br>• literary analysis |

## 2. Expand students' concept of audience.

### Strategies from the examples

- Have students write for a variety of audiences.
- Allow students to choose an audience.
- Teach the word choices and tone appropriate for each audience.

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**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2

To support students in understanding the role of audience in writing, teachers should design lessons where students can write for various audiences. Doing so will break students out of the mindset that writing is an isolated task completed in school for the teacher to read. To aid with an expanded view of audience, teachers can generate lists of potential audiences and allow students to choose different audiences during writing activities. Teachers should also focus on teaching students how to adjust tone and word choice for particular audiences. For example, writing a description to someone who has knowledge of a particular topic would look different than writing a description of that same topic to someone who has little or no knowledge of the topic.

# 3. Teach students to emulate the features of good writing.

## Strategies from the examples

- Have students analyze exemplary texts.
- Read text aloud and explain and discuss how the text demonstrates characteristics of effective writing.
- Stop to highlight key features.
- Ask students to emulate the feature of exemplary writing.
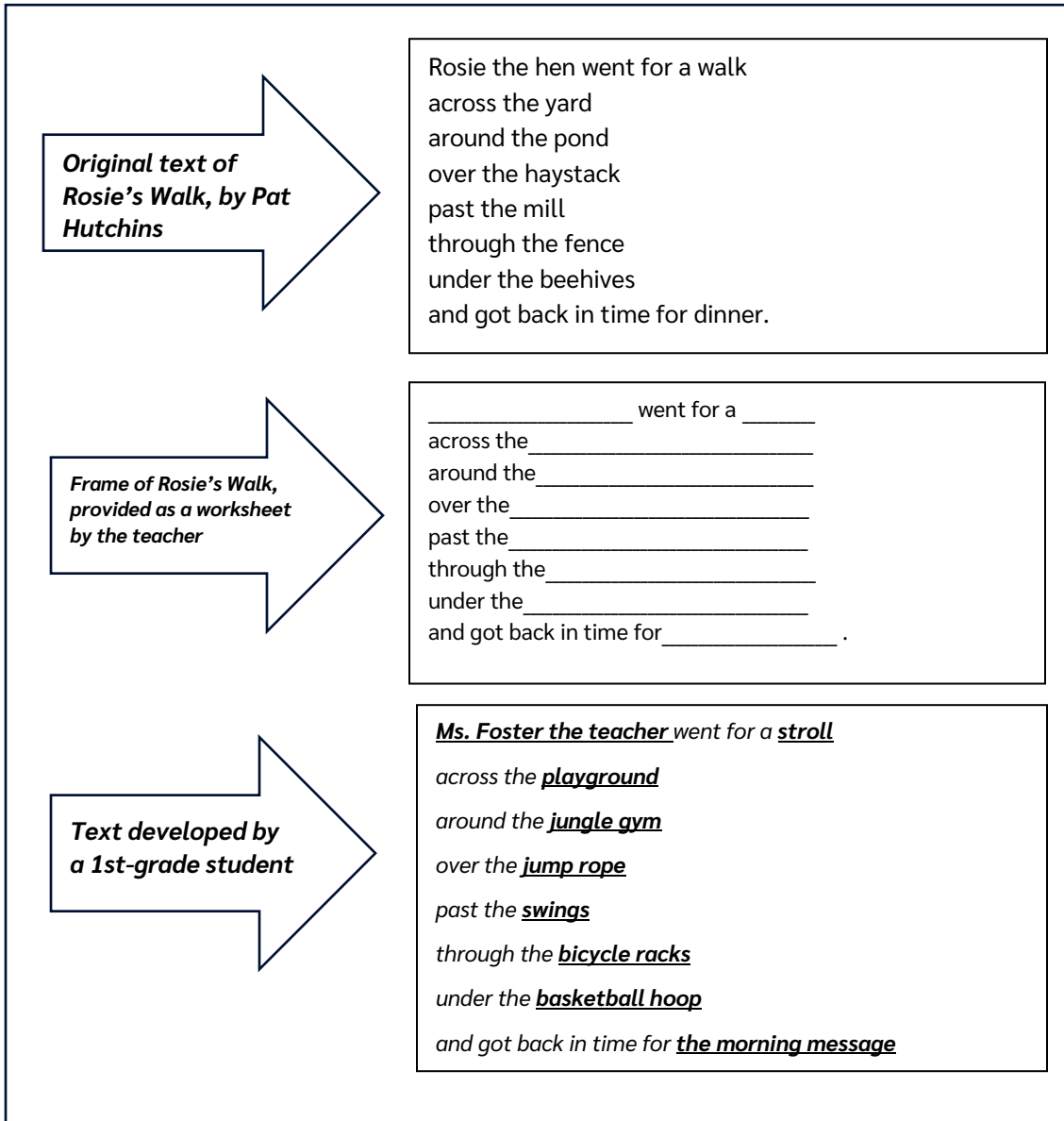
## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.2

Teachers should expose students to a variety of exemplary texts. Analyzing exemplary texts with students can enhance their writing styles. In choosing texts, make selections that support instructional goals, are grade-level appropriate, and provide exemplars of what students are being asked to do in writing activities. The exemplary texts should be read aloud by teachers or students. Teachers should explain and students should discuss how each text demonstrates characteristics of effective writing in that particular genre. Be sure to stop frequently to highlight key features of the text that support the instructional goals of the lesson. Use activities that ask the student to

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emulate the features of exemplary text. See below for examples of activities that can be used with students at different levels to emulate good writing.

**Story emulation of *Rosie's Walk* with 1st-grade students**

*Original text of Rosie's Walk, by Pat Hutchins*

Rosie the hen went for a walk
across the yard
around the pond
over the haystack
past the mill
through the fence
under the beehives
and got back in time for dinner.

*Frame of Rosie's Walk, provided as a worksheet by the teacher*

_____ went for a _____
across the_____
around the_____
over the_____
past the_____
through the_____
under the_____
and got back in time for_____ .

*Text developed by a 1st-grade student*

*__Ms. Foster the teacher__ went for a __stroll__*

*across the __playground__*

*around the __jungle gym__*

*over the __jump rope__*

*past the __swings__*

*through the __bicycle racks__*

*under the __basketball hoop__*

*and got back in time for __the morning message__*

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| Original text of "Where I'm From," by George Ella Lyon | Text developed by a 6th-grade classroom |
| --- | --- |
| I am from clothespins,<br>from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.<br>I am from the dirt under the back porch.<br>(Black, glistening, it tasted like beets.)<br>I am from the forsythia bush<br>the Dutch elm whose long-gone limbs I<br>remember as if they were my own.<br><br>I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,<br>from Imogene and Alafair.<br>I'm from the know-it-alls<br>and the pass-it-ons,<br>from Perk up! and Pipe down!<br>I'm from He restoreth my soul<br>with a cottonball lamb<br>and ten verses I can say myself.<br><br>I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,<br>fried corn and strong coffee.<br>From the finger my grandfather lost to the<br>auger, the eye my father shut to keep his<br>sight.<br><br>Under my bed was a dress box<br>spilling old pictures,<br>a sift of lost faces<br>to drift beneath my dreams.<br>I am from those moments—<br>snapped before I budded—<br>leaf-fall from the family tree. | I am from elastic strain, from the focus and<br>the epicenter.<br>I am from the destructive surface<br>waves that run through the<br>40–200 kilometer fault zones.<br><br>I am from the "Ring of Fire," the<br>tectonic and lithospheric plates.<br><br>I can cause tsunamis and fires.<br><br>I am from convergent, divergent,<br>and transform plate boundaries.<br><br>I am from seismographs that<br>determine my strength.<br><br>I am from speedy but weak<br>p-waves, from slow and hardy<br>s-waves, but I do not reach.<br><br>Seismic waves are caused by me.<br>Who am I? An earthquake. |

## 4. Teach students techniques for writing effectively for different purposes.

### Strategies from the examples

- Explicitly teach the techniques specific to each purpose.
- Describe each technique.
- Model its use.

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- Gradually release responsibility to the student.

## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.2

Teachers must explicitly teach the techniques specific to each purpose of writing. To do so, describe each technique, model its use, and gradually release more responsibility to students. See table below for examples of specific techniques for each of the four purposes of writing (i.e., describe, narrate, inform, and persuade/analyze) and the grade levels for which they are appropriate.

| Purpose | Specific Technique | How students can use the technique | Grade Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Describe** | Sensory details | • Use their five senses, as applicable:<br>  • What did you *see*? How did it *look*?<br>  • What sounds did you *hear*?<br>  • What did you *touch*? How did it *feel*?<br>  • What could you *smell*?<br>  • What did you *taste*? | *K–3* |
| **Narrate** | Story grammar | • Consider the following questions when developing their story:<br>  • *Who* are the main characters?<br>  • *When* does the story take place?<br>  • *Where* does the story take place?<br>  • *What* do the main characters want to do?<br>  • *What* happens when the main characters try to do it?<br>  • *How* does the story end?<br>  • *How* does the main character feel? | *1–3* |
| | | • In older grades, expand the strategy in the following ways:<br>  • Tell the story from the point of view of a character other than the main character.<br>  • Add an interesting or surprising twist to the story. | *4–6* |
| **Inform** | Report writing | • Complete a K-W-L chart:<br>  • What I **K**now | *2–6* |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | • What I **W**ant to know<br>• What I **L**earned<br>• In the K-W-L chart, gather appropriate information:<br> • Brainstorm. (What do I know about the topic?)<br> • Extend brainstorming. (What do I want to know about the topic? What other information would be helpful to learn about the topic?)<br> • Gather additional information and add to the chart. (What have I learned? Did I list anything during brainstorming that was inaccurate and needs to be crossed off the chart?)<br>• Review the K-W-L chart and circle the most important ideas to include in the report.<br>• Develop an outline, showing which ideas will be included in the report and the order in which they will be presented.<br>• Continue planning while writing, gathering new information, and adding to the outline as needed.<br>• Be sure to implement each aspect of the plan as they write. | |
| **Persuade / analyze** | STOP<br><br><br><br>DARE | • Before they write, STOP and:<br> • **S**uspend judgment.<br> • **T**ake sides.<br> • **O**rganize ideas.<br> • **P**lan to adjust as they write.<br><br>DARE to check their paper to be sure they have:<br> • **D**eveloped their thesis.<br> • **A**dded ideas to support their ideas.<br> • **R**ejected arguments on the other side.<br> • **E**nded with a strong conclusion. | *4–6* |
| | TREE | • As they write:<br> • **T**ell what they believe. (State a topic sentence.)<br> • Provide three or more **R**easons. (Why do I believe this?)<br> • **E**nd it. (Wrap it up right.)<br> • **E**xamine. (Do I have all my parts?) | *2–3* |
| | | In older grades, expand the strategy as follows:<br>• Replace the Examine step with Explain reasons. (Say more about each reason.) | *4–6* |

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7

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Students initially use the strategies/ techniques of writing after they are taught; however, over time they tend to stop.* | Once students begin independently applying strategies and techniques, teachers need to monitor their progress. As students develop skills with a specific component of the writing process (planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, editing, publishing), they may no longer need to rely on particular strategies. However, if a student has stopped using a strategy but is still struggling with a specific component of the writing process, the teacher should intervene and take necessary action, such as targeted one-on-one or small-group instruction. |
| *Teachers need to prepare students to take state assessments, which tend to focus on only a few genres.* | Writing for one genre often requires students to use skills they have learned for writing in another genre. For example, even when writing a persuasive essay, including a narrative example may be necessary to support an argument. Therefore, despite the specific prompts on a state assessment, students need to be prepared to write for multiple purposes. Teachers can point out particular skills they are learning that might be useful for the types of writing required for the state assessment. |

*Reference:* Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17

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This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

## Recommendation

# Teach students to become fluent in handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing.

When students are beginner writers, they lack the basic writing skills needed to produce high-quality writing. Teachers need to take the time to focus writing activities on building basic skills, such as handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction.

Spelling mistakes and poor handwriting can make it difficult for readers to understand what a student is trying to communicate. Word-processing programs can make the writing process more manageable for students. Teaching them how to type can help them become more efficient at writing on a computer. Additionally, fluency with computers is a necessary skill for daily life in today's world.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach very young writers how to hold a pencil correctly and form letters fluently and efficiently.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Teach students to comfortably hold a pencil.
   - Demonstrate how to write letters in print and cursive.
   - Practice writing from memory.
   - Provide multiple short practice sessions.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.1

Early writing instruction should begin with teaching students how to comfortably hold a pencil to fight off hand fatigue. Teachers should demonstrate how to write letters in print or cursive efficiently and neatly. Teachers should also provide opportunities for students to practice writing from memory without the support of handwriting practice diagrams. Lastly, because handwriting is a motor skill, it is recommended that teachers allot multiple short practice sessions into their lesson plans for handwriting. It is important to remember that though targeted handwriting practice is important, teachers should be sure to include opportunities for students to practice these skills during authentic writing activities.

## 2. Teach students to spell words correctly.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach commonly used words.
- Connect spelling with writing whenever possible.
- Connect phonic skills to writing.
- Teach students to spell by analogy.
- Use dictionaries while writing to correct spelling.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.L.5, 3-5.W.L.5
**TEACHER:** INST.LSP.2, INST.MS.1, INST.PIC.2, INST.PIC.5, INST.PIC.6, INST.PIC.7, INST.AM.1, INST.Q.1, INST.Q.2, INST.Q.3, INST.Q.4, INST.Q.5, INST.Q.6, INST.Q.7, INST.Q.8, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.1, PLAN.SW.3

Teachers should focus on teaching the words that are more commonly used. Though some schools have a spelling curriculum separate from the writing curriculum, prioritize connecting spelling with writing as often as possible. Also, be sure to teach and demonstrate skills such as phonological awareness (K–2), spelling phonics (K–3), and morphological spelling (2–6). These skills allow students to spell words relatively correctly while reducing the disruption to the draft writing process. The youngest of writers should be encouraged to use inventive spelling. Teachers can also teach students to spell by analogy. For example, "If I can spell hug, I can figure out how to spell rug." During the editing process, guide students to use dictionaries to check their

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

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spelling. For younger students, the use of a personal dictionary listing the correct spelling of words commonly misspelled by that student can be helpful.

## 3. Teach students to construct sentences for fluency, meaning, and style.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Focus on sentence mechanics to form high-quality sentences.
- Use activities to practice sentence construction.
- Teach students to evaluate sentences for meaning, style, and grammatical correctness.
- Demonstrate sentence revision.
- Use peer review to evaluate other's sentences.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** W.MCC.2, W.L.4, W.L.5, W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.AF.1

Students should learn to write sentences that are engaging and clearly communicate meaning. Teachers should focus on the importance of sentence mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, etc.) to form high-quality sentences. In kindergarten, begin developing students' understanding of sentences and the basic mechanics such as capitalization and punctuation. Demonstrate what sentences are and how to use capitalization and punctuation by writing out sentences that convey the ideas that students share orally. In grades 1 and 2, work with students to identify run-on sentences and demonstrate how to break them down into separate sentences.

As students' ability increases, teach them how to increase sentence complexity by demonstrating a variety of sentence types. Teachers can also develop activities that allow students to practice sentence construction. As students practice sentence construction skills, they can work with their teacher to evaluate the sentences for meaning, style, and grammatical correctness. Be sure to demonstrate how to revise sentences and allow opportunities for students to practice the evaluation and revision process themselves. More proficient students can leverage each other during peer review sessions to evaluate one another's sentences for fluency, meaning, and style.

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## 4. Teach students to type fluently and use a word processor to compose.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Teach fluent typing.
- Teach the features of word processors.
- Turn off grammar and spell checks to allow students to focus on ideas.
- Use these features to support manual editing and revision, not as a substitute.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.4, K-2.W.RC.5, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.4, 3-5.W.RC.5
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.11

Teachers should instruct students on how to type fluently using correct fingering and without looking at the keyboard. Students should be introduced to typing as early as grade 1 and be able to type as fast as they can write by hand by grade 2 or 3. Teachers should also teach students the features of word processing software and how the technology can be useful in their writing exercises. Consider turning off features such as grammar and spell checks during the drafting process so students can focus on conveying their ideas without distraction. These features can be turned back on during the editing process. Be sure to explain to students that these features are not a substitute for careful editing and proofreading. For example, though the spell checker feature is valuable, the spell checker may flag proper nouns as an error when they are in fact correct. It will also not flag words as misspelled if they are real words (e.g., their and there).

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference is on the last page.

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## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Writing can be frustrating for students who struggle to develop handwriting and spelling skills.* | If the student has significant difficulty with spelling and handwriting, teachers may want to consider switching to typing as a primary means of writing. Teachers will need to provide additional support to aid students in the use of the word processing software. |
| *Students do not consistently use the words learned during spelling lessons in their writing.* | When students are focusing on getting their ideas down on paper, they may misspell words. Teachers should emphasize that proofreading is a part of the editing process.<br>Teachers should connect spelling instruction to authentic writing activities, using strategies such as the following:<br>• Encourage students to include their spelling words in their own writing as much as possible. Have students read over their work, circle the new spelling words used, and check that they spelled those words correctly. Create a bulletin board where students can post their examples of how they used new spelling words correctly in their writing.<br>Review student work to identify common errors and include those words in spelling instruction. Work with students to set goals focused on identifying spelling errors during the editing phase and track student progress toward that goal. |
| *The school's ELA curriculum only includes isolated grammar lessons that use worksheets or copying tasks to teach sentence writing.* | When grammar instruction is disconnected from authentic writing, it is hard for students to apply what they learn in their own writing. Teachers can follow the grammar curriculum's scope and sequence but use the materials provided in innovative ways that incorporate the strategies described in the practice guide, such as gradual release. Additionally, teachers should have students practice spelling skills during writing activities to further connect spelling and writing. |

*Reference:* Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17

CONTENT **Writing**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **K-6**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Minimal**

## Recommendation

# Create an engaged community of writers.

Students need both the skill and the will to develop as writers. Teachers should establish a supportive environment in their classroom to foster a community of writers who are motivated to write well. In a supportive writing environment, teachers participate as writers, not simply instructors, to demonstrate the importance of writing. By taking part in writing lessons and activities, teachers convey the message that writing is important, valued, and rewarding.

To further develop students' motivation to write, teachers should include opportunities for students to choose their own topics and/or modify teacher-selected prompts related to the purposes and genres being taught. When students choose their own topics, they may become more engaged and motivated to write. Such engagement and motivation could potentially lead students to write more frequently and become more involved in the writing process and the writing community.

Students and teachers also should have regular and structured opportunities to interact through giving and receiving feedback as well as collaborating on writing activities. Collaboration can increase the sense of community in a classroom, as well as encourage students to become engaged in the writing process with their peers. When students feel connected to one another and to the teacher, they may feel safe participating in the writing process and sharing their writing with peers. Publishing students' work also can help them feel valued in their community.

## How to carry out the recommendation

### 1. Teachers should participate as members of the community by writing and sharing their writing.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Teachers should model writing for students, thinking aloud to make the act of writing more visible.
- Teachers could collaborate on a writing project with their students.
- Discuss the parts of the sentences that are not making sense and provide feedback on student thinking.
- Teachers can take part in a writing assignment, sharing their work with students.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.PIC.3, INST.PIC.2

Teachers should model how the ability to write affects their daily lives, demonstrate the importance of writing to communicate, model the perseverance required to create a good piece of writing, and express the satisfaction that can come from creating a meaningful text. For example, a teacher could draft a letter or an email to a friend in front of students, thinking out loud to make the invisible act of composing—which occurs internally for experienced writers—more visible to students. A teacher also could collaborate with all students on a writing project, such as composing a how-to guide for carving a Halloween pumpkin or writing a class newsletter. Teachers also should take part in writing assignments. For instance, if students are asked to describe a favorite family tradition, the teacher could offer his or her own example, actively conveying how selecting a topic one is interested in can generate excitement about writing.

### 2. Give students writing choices.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Provide students choice in writing assignments.
- Students can keep a notebook to record possible writing topics and add and refer to the notebook frequently.
- Encourage students to write for a variety of audiences.
- Provide instruction and opportunities to write to prompts.

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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- Writing prompts should inspire students to write, while being aligned to instructional purpose. They should also clearly state expectations and give room for students to express themselves.

## South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.MCC.1, K-2.W.MCC.2, K-2.W.MCC.3, K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.MCC.1, 3-5.W.MCC.2, 3-5.W.MCC.3, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.9

Teachers should provide opportunities for student choice in writing assignments—for example, choice in selecting writing topics or the freedom to modify a teacher-selected prompt. One way to foster choice is for students to keep a notebook in which they record topics for writing, such as memories, pets, vacations, "firsts" (e.g., first time riding a bike, first soccer goal, first day at camp), and favorite holidays. Students should add topics often and consult their notebooks throughout the school year. Teachers also can encourage students to write for themselves; their peers; an imaginary audience (e.g., a character in a story); adults (e.g., their parents or an author); or a wider, unknown audience.

Teachers need to provide instruction and opportunities for students to practice writing to prompts. A prompt should inspire students to write while ensuring that students practice writing skills aligned with the teacher's instructional purpose (e.g., a specific genre or a specific purpose). The prompt should clearly state expectations with regard to content and writing skills, while still giving students room to express themselves. For example, students might be prompted to write about a historical figure or a character from a story. Prompts enable teachers to emphasize specific content standards as well as promote engagement and community-building.

| Example writing prompt |
| --- |

**The Westward Movement prompt**
Choose a group of people who interested you during our study of the Westward Movement. These people might be settlers, pioneers, or explorers. Consider the challenges these people faced in moving West.

Write a multi-paragraph paper that describes two or three difficulties or problems encountered by these people. Describe how they solved, or attempted to solve, these problems and whether or not their solutions worked. You are writing an explanation, not telling a story. Your paper will be used as the opening article in our class book on

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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the Westward Movement and will be followed by first-hand accounts from settlers and explorers.

In your explanatory paper:
• write in the third person (the "they" point of view)
• identify and explain their challenges/problems
• describe how they solved or tried to solve their problems
• explain whether or not their solutions worked
• choose vocabulary words that clearly illustrate the problems and solutions
• use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar

**Adapted for early elementary**
Choose a character from a story you read or a story read to you. Describe a problem that this character had. Describe how this character solved, or tried to solve, this problem. Explain whether the solution worked.

Examples of a character and a problem to be solved:
• Ramona Quimby having to give a speech
• little pig protecting himself from the hungry wolf

## 3. Encourage students to collaborate as writers.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Ask students to collaborate as writers by brainstorming topics together, or providing peer feedback.
- Assign collaborative writing assignments.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.5, 3-5.I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4

Teachers can encourage students to collaborate throughout the writing process by brainstorming ideas about a topic, responding to drafts in a writing group, or helping peers edit or revise their work. Collaboration also can take the form of collaborative writing, whereby students jointly develop a single text. Younger students, for example, can take turns sharing the pen as they create a message on chart paper. Older students can collaborate by publishing a class newspaper or composing stories to share with their friends or classmates. One collaborative activity that helps build a community of writers is "Star of the Day."

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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| **"Star of the Day"** |
|---|
| In the "Star of the Day" activity, each student is celebrated on their own day. Seated at the front of the classroom, the Star of the Day answers interview questions from peers using a pretend microphone. After the interview, students compose one sentence about the Star of the Day. These sentences are shared and combined into a class paragraph, which is then displayed on the class bulletin board, as demonstrated by this example from a 1st-grade classroom:<br><br>*Jordan is the Star of the Day. He likes the color blue. He loves to eat ice cream. His favorite animal is a tiger. Jordan lives in Irvine. It's his birthday today!* |

## 4. Provide students with opportunities to give and receive feedback throughout the writing process.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Ask students to share their writing and respond to feedback from teacher and peers.
- Teach students to provide effective feedback.
- Develop rules and procedures for providing and sharing feedback on writing
- Model and provide sample language for providing verbal feedback.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.I.5, 3-5.I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.AF.1, INST.AF.2, INST.AF.3, INST.AF.4, INST.AF.5

Students need to know whether their writing is accurately and appropriately conveying its message. One way students can determine this is by sharing their writing and responding to written and verbal feedback from the teacher and their peers. Although teachers should provide feedback to students through teacher-student conferences and rubrics, peers also should be encouraged to participate in the feedback process. Students may be able to identify problems in other people's writing more easily than they can identify issues in their own work. Additionally, when students provide written feedback and assessment to peers, their comments and observations may enhance their understanding of their own writing.

Students need to be taught strategies and appropriate language for written feedback.

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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Without explicit instruction in how to provide and receive feedback, students may focus solely on the conventions of writing. For example, if teachers focus only on spelling errors as they grade writing assignments, student writers will likely point to similar mistakes when providing feedback to peers. Therefore, teachers should develop rules and procedures for providing and sharing feedback on writing. When teachers emphasize meaning over form and correctness in early drafts, students may learn to do the same.

Teachers also should model and provide sample language to encourage appropriate verbal feedback. During "Author's Chair," for example, teachers can encourage students to practice giving "kind comments"—constructive comments and positive statements about peers' writing.

| Author's Chair activity |
|---|
| During the "Author's Chair" activity, one student, sitting in a special chair, reads his or her work to peers as they sit on the rug. The teacher then models and facilitates giving kind, verbal comments, such as the following:<br>I really like _____.<br>A standout line in your text for me is _____ because_____.<br>I could really picture _____ because _____. |

## 5. Publish students' writing, and extend the community beyond the classroom.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Share student work in a variety of ways, including bulletin boards.
- Develop activities to share and provide feedback on stories for the larger school community.
- Include an "About the Author" page with shared student writing.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** K-2.W.RC.6, 3-5.W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, PLAN.SW.2

Students may begin to see themselves as writers if they have opportunities to publish their writing. Publishing can take a variety of forms, including displaying student work prominently in the classroom. For example, teachers can create a "Wall of Fame"

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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featuring the best excerpts from students' writing on a bulletin board in the classroom.

Teachers also can use publishing to extend the community beyond the classroom. Students can publish stories in books that include an "About the Author" page. These books can be made available in the school or classroom library. Students' work also can be displayed in the hallway or administration building, and teachers can have students participate in a "Gallery Walk." In this activity, students frame their poems or stories on poster board, decorate them, and hang them around the school or classroom to simulate an art gallery. Students then circulate around the "gallery," reading one another's pieces, writing kind comments on sticky notes, and attaching the notes to the work on display. Publishing student work in this manner celebrates writing and helps create a physical environment that is conducive to learning.

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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# Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Teachers may be uncomfortable with their own writing and therefore hesitant to share their writing and discuss the writing process with their students.* | Part of creating a community of writers involves establishing a supportive environment in which every member of the community has room to grow and it is acceptable to take risks and make mistakes. Writing is a lifelong skill, and it is important for students to understand that writing requires effort even when you are older and have been writing for many years. Making mistakes, demonstrating how to recognize those mistakes, and then correcting mistakes or revising word choice or sentence structure to make the writing more compelling can be a powerful model and learning experience for all members of the class. |
| *If students are allowed to choose their own topics for writing, teachers may not be able to focus on the content standards adequately.* | Teachers can expose students to the genres of writing required in the content standards and still allow students an element of choice. For example, when teaching the personal narrative, teachers can have students select a photograph of a vacation, favorite place, or important event and use their writing to dramatize what happened. When teaching persuasive writing, teachers can allow students to select an issue, or select which side of an argument to defend. |
| *Providing feedback on all student writing is overwhelming and time-consuming.* | It is not necessary for the teacher to provide feedback on all student writing; teachers should share the responsibility of providing feedback with students through student self-evaluation and peer evaluations. In fact, students should be able to write without expecting that every piece of writing will be assessed by the teacher. When students do complete writing pieces for teacher review and feedback, teachers should focus on specific elements, and they should discuss these expectations with students in advance. In this way, teachers can focus their comments on specific elements, such as a compelling opening, descriptive language, or effective use of transition words. Providing targeted feedback will help students better understand how to improve their writing. |

*Reference:* Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17

Summary of Recommendation 4 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*. Full reference on the last page.

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CONTENT **Writing**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **6-12**

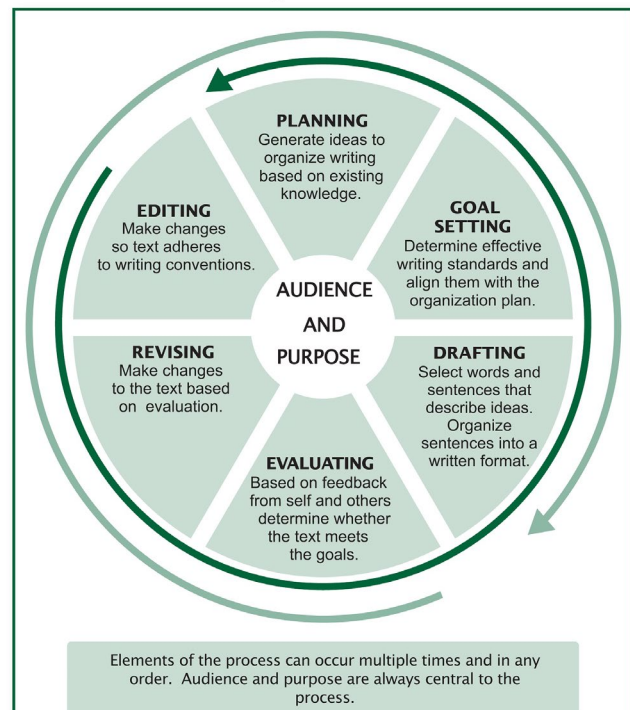LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Strong**

## Recommendation

# Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instructional cycle.

The most effective way to teach writing is through (1) explicit and direct instruction and (2) utilizing a Model-Practice-Reflect cycle. Explicit and direct instruction suggests teaching students specific components of the writing process in addition to learning how to select and execute the steps of the writing process strategies. Through the second method, students should be able to observe a strategy being used, practice the strategy on their own, and then evaluate their own writing and use of the strategy. These strategies applied in tandem support improvement in student writing.

### How to carry out the recommendation

1.  Explicitly teach strategies for planning and goal setting, drafting, evaluating, revising, and editing.

**Elements of the Writing Process**



PLANNING
Generate ideas to organize writing based on existing knowledge.

GOAL SETTING
Determine effective writing standards and align them with the organization plan.

EDITING
Make changes so text adheres to writing conventions.

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

DRAFTING
Select words and sentences that describe ideas. Organize sentences into a written format.

REVISING
Make changes to the text based on evaluation.

EVALUATING
Based on feedback from self and others determine whether the text meets the goals.

Elements of the process can occur multiple times and in any order. Audience and purpose are always central to the process.

Note. Adapted from page 7 of the practice guide.

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### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Use resources like the National Writing Project to become familiar with best strategies for the writing process.
- Expose students to the different strategies used for the writing practice and begin to have students practice the different strategies.
- Explicitly teach students on each of the strategies for the writing process.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.TH.1, INST.PS.1

Introduce students to the writing process and the different strategies used within the components of the writing process. Practicing the writing process helps students better direct their thinking and better understand that there are multiple ways to approach each of the elements. Students need explicit instruction on each step of the process, including specific steps in each strategy and how to execute them effectively. Teachers can identify the best strategies through professional learning communities, such as the National Writing Project, or various publications. Process strategy examples can be found on pages 7–14 of the practice guide referenced on the first page of this document

## 2. Instruct students on how to choose and apply strategies appropriate for the audience and purpose.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Provide a rubric or list of questions for students to use when selecting the best writing strategy. Ensure that students consider the audience and purpose for the writing.
- Have students write a reflection on which strategy they used, the reasoning for that strategy, and if it was beneficial for the identified audience and purpose for the writing.
- Encourage students to practice different writing strategies in different contexts.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

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**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** WW.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.PS.1, PLAN.SW.2, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2, INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3

Teachers should provide students with a rubric or list of questions for selecting the best writing strategy when considering the audience and purpose. Teachers should consider adding a writing assignment in which students need to describe a specific strategy they used for their assignment, what encouraged them to use that strategy, and how it was or was not beneficial for a specific purpose or audience. Other options could be having students use writing strategies in different contexts, while also assessing how well the modified strategy worked. Sample questions for strategy selection, audience identification, and purpose identification can be found on pages 14–16 of the practice guide.

## 3. Model strategies for students.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Utilize a gradual release of responsibility strategy to model the writing process. Begin with "I do" and model the thinking process for selection and applying each writing strategy. Include examples with errors to demonstrate the solutions to writing issues. Then, model the "We do" portion together in whole group. Next, have students work in pairs or individually for the "You do" portion.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3

The "I do," "We do," "You do" instruction model provides students with opportunities to observe strong writers, attempt to emulate the high-quality elements of writing, and then evaluate their writing compared to those elements. This model illustrates to students the thought process behind the selection and application of each strategy and how it can help them write effectively. Teachers should include examples of modeling statements with errors and corrections to best demonstrate solutions to those issues. Sample modeling statements can be found on pages 20–21 of the practice guide.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

3

## 4. Provide students with opportunities to apply and practice modeled strategies.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- Provide regular, frequent opportunities for students to practice the writing strategies in classroom activities, across multiple content areas.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC6
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4

Teachers should incorporate frequent opportunities for students to practice implementing writing strategies into all classroom activities. This should occur across all content areas, so students understand how strategies can be adopted for a variety of disciplines. Practice model samples for differing content areas can be found on pages 22–23 of the practice guide.

## 5. Engage students in evaluating and reflecting upon their own and peers' writing and use of modeled strategies.

**Instructional strategies from the examples**

- As students practice a strategy, instruct students to reflect on the use of their strategy and discuss with other students how the strategy worked or did not work for them.

**South Carolina standards alignment**

**ELA:** W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, 2.MCC.3, W.RC6
**TEACHER:** INST.AM.7, INST.AF.5, INST.GS.1, INST.GS.2, INST.GS.3, INST.GS.4

After students have had a chance to practice a particular strategy, they should reflect on their use of the strategy or discuss with other students how the strategy did or did not work for them—the goal is for students to understand how certain strategies can lead to effective writing. Writing reflection and evaluation tools can be found on pages 24–27 of the practice guide.

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

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**Instructional adjustments for increasing use of strategies**

| Identified Challenge | Instructional Adjustment |
|---|---|
| Students have not internalized strategies. | Reteach the steps of the strategies. Create visuals of strategy steps to post or distribute in the classroom. |
| Students lack confidence in applying strategies. | Provide opportunities for students to evaluate, select, and explain why they chose to use different strategies. |
| Students occasionally apply strategies. | Provide positive written or verbal feedback when students use strategies to improve their writing. |
| Students do not appear to be applying strategies; however, their writing has improved. | Students may be implementing strategies automatically. Celebrate and continue to monitor student progress. |

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

5

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *I teach my students specific writing strategies, but then they don't seem to use them while composing.* | Explore the reasons why students are not implementing strategies and respond accordingly. See the table on page 3 for instructional adjustment ideas based on the challenges identified. |
| *For some of my students, strategy instruction doesn't seem to improve their writing achievement.* | Teachers should assess why certain students' writing is not improving and then tailor their instruction based on each student's skill level. This can occur by simplifying and streamlining the steps for strategies. |
| *I struggle to be a strong writer—how can I teach my students to be effective writers?* | Teachers can strengthen their writing by doing assignments they ask students to complete, by understanding that writing is not always complex or long, by viewing writing as a progression of steps, or by joining a support group with other teachers. Use this opportunity to reflect, discuss, and model personal growth with your students. |
| *I model the use of rubrics for my students, but my students' self-assessments aren't accurate.* | Teachers can model the use of rubrics by first using the rubric to annotate and compare two pieces of student work. Then the students, in pairs, can annotate each other's writing by discussing how the rubric criteria can change or by assessing the degree to which students have confidence in their writing. Finally, require students to submit a completed rubric with their writing. |
| *How can I help my students to feel comfortable reflecting on their own work?* | Teachers should demonstrate the reflection process multiple times, while modeling how self-criticism is helpful to improving one's writing skills. |

Reference: Graham, S., Bruch, J., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Furgeson, J., Greene, K., . . . Smither Wulsin, C. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively* (NCEE 2017-4002). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/22

Summary of Recommendation 1 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

6

CONTENT **Writing**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **6-12**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Moderate**

## Recommendation

# Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features.

Combining both writing and reading into classroom instruction and assignments supports students in leaning essential features of effective texts. By reviewing and reflecting on exemplar texts, students can strengthen their writing.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1.  Teach students to understand that both writers and readers use similar strategies, knowledge, and skills to create meaning.

    ### Instructional strategies from the examples

    -   Help students understand the connection between reading and writing by connecting what they just read to how they can use similar word structure to strengthen their own writing.
    -   Instruct students to imagine the author's senses or annotate a text to highlight how the author engages the readers.
    -   Use cognitive-strategy activities to guide student reflection.

    ### South Carolina standards alignment

    **ELA:** W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3
    **TEACHER:** INST.TCK.1, INST.TCK.2, INST.TCK.3, PLAN.SW.2

    To best identify the connection between reading and writing for students, teachers should directly state the connection between a concept students just read and how they can apply a similar word structure to strengthen their writing.

Teachers can also have students imagine the senses an author used or provide annotations in texts to highlight how writers attempt to engage the readers through the use of context. Finally, students can utilize cognitive-strategy activities to guide student reflection. Sample activities can be found on pages 34–36 of the practice guide referenced on the first page.

| Type of Feedback | Purpose | Outcome |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Teacher Feedback | To highlight the strengths, successes, and challenges of student writing | Scaffolds instruction and customizes supports for the student's text and writing process |
| Peer Feedback | To highlight the strengths, successes, and challenges of student writing | Supports student in developing a deeper understanding of effective writing and constructive feedback |
| Self-Assessments | To review one's own writing as a reader | Identifies areas of text that require clarification and helps raise awareness of where the student has grown and in which areas they still need support |

## 2. Use a variety of written exemplars to highlight the key features of texts.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Utilize exemplar texts that highlight specific features of effective writing. Use these exemplars when teaching specific learning objectives.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** C.MC.2, C.MC.3
**TEACHER:** RI.LCA.8, RI.LCS.8, RL.LCS.12

Exemplar texts should be used to illustrate specific features of effective writing, such as organization and structure, ideation, grammar, punctuation, voice, style, and word choice. These texts can exemplify specific learning objectives being taught or diverse writing qualities. For a detailed list of key features for different text types, review pages 36–39 in the practice guide.

Summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference on the last page.

2

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
| --- | --- |
| *Teaching writing and reading aren't central to my discipline. I have too much content to teach already, and I don't have time to develop students' writing skills as well.* | Reading and writing activities support student learning, retention, and critical thinking in all content areas. For example, in math, students will need to write to verify and support their logical reasoning. Broadening the definition of reading and writing will help teachers realize that all content areas require reading and writing. Collaborating with subject-matter and grade-level colleagues can support reading and writing instruction across all content areas. |
| *My school teaches reading (or literature) and writing separately. How can I integrate reading and writing?* | In classes that focus on teaching writing, students can read and analyze exemplary texts as models to emulate in their writing. In classes that focus on teaching reading, teachers can offer opportunities for students to prepare short analytical writing products such as short journal entries after each chapter in a book to better identify themes and key points. |
| *My students have trouble understanding the content of their reading, let alone writing about it.* | Writing is a tool that helps students develop a deeper understanding of what they are reading. Teachers can consider differentiating starting texts for students and gradually increasing the goals for each student. |

Reference: Graham, S., Bruch, J., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Furgeson, J., Greene, K., . . . Smither Wulsin, C. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively* (NCEE 2017-4002). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/22

Summary of Recommendation 2 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference on the last page.

3

CONTENT **Writing**

GRADE LEVEL(S) **6-12**

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE **Minimal**

## Recommendation

# Use assessments of student writing to inform instruction and feedback.

The formative assessment cycle is a process where teachers regularly assess student skill levels, adapt instruction based on the assessment data, and then reassess skill levels. When teachers monitor student progress throughout the entire writing process, it provides helpful information for lesson planning and provides additional feedback to students. Assessment should occur on a regular basis, not just through final written products. This helps teachers better understand student progress and therefore can provide students with targeted instruction.

## How to carry out the recommendation

1. Assess students' strengths and areas for improvement before teaching a new strategy or skill.

   **Instructional strategies from the examples**

   - Utilize frequent assessments to identify student strengths and challenges.
   - Use carefully defined on-demand writing prompts to assess student skills.
   - Organize student data to identify groups with similar needs.

   **South Carolina standards alignment**

   **ELA:** I.3, I.5
   **TEACHER:** INST.PIC.2, INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3, PLAN.A.1, PLAN.A.2, PLAN.A.3, PLAN.A.4, PLAN.A.5

Utilize frequent assessment to identify strengths and challenges for individual students and groups of students. Assessment can occur through class work, complex essay writing, or on-demand writing prompts. On-demand writing prompts are short writing assignments that are carefully designed to assess student skills. Effective on-demand writing prompts identify a purpose and audience, offer some form of student choice, are age-appropriate, and should reflect authentic topics. For on-demand writing samples and design guidelines, reference page 46 in the practice guide referenced on the first page of this document. Teacher teams can collaborate to design common prompts and analyze common data. The use of a graphic organizer helps identify common student strengths and areas of need across student groups. A sample organizer is located on page 47 of the practice guide referenced on the first page of this document.

## 2. Analyze student writing to tailor instruction and target feedback.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Use formative assessment data to create lessons that challenge students. Use the data to provide constructive feedback that supports student growth.
- Modify lessons and assignments for different instructional groupings.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** W.MCC.1, W.MCC.2, W.MCC.3, W.RC.6
**TEACHER:** INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.AF.1, INST.AF.2, INST.AF.3, INST.AF.4, INST.AF.5

Choose learning objectives and create lessons that challenge students based on formative assessment data. Customize lessons and assignments for different instructional groupings, including individual students, small groups, classes, and grade levels. Support student growth through specific feedback targeted to the student's identified needs. Provide constructive feedback using protocols such as "Glow and Grow" and "Praise-Question-Polish." Student teams can aggregate and review school and grade-level data for trends in overall strengths and areas of need.

Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

2

**Locate and Recall**

| Type of Feedback | Purpose | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher Feedback | To highlight the strengths, successes, and challenges of student writing | Scaffolds instruction and customizes supports for the student's text and writing process |
| Peer Feedback | To highlight the strengths, successes, and challenges of student writing | Supports student in developing a deeper understanding of effective writing and constructive feedback |
| Self-Assessments | To review one's own writing as a reader | Identifies areas of text that require clarification and helps raise awareness of where the student has grown and in which areas they still need support |

## 3. Regularly monitor students' progress while teaching writing strategies and skills.

### Instructional strategies from the examples

- Monitor students' progress frequently and regularly based on students' progress and learning goals. Utilize tracking tools or visual representations to inform student groupings and instruction and to monitor student growth and areas for improvement.

### South Carolina standards alignment

**ELA:** I.5
**TEACHER:** INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3

Monitor student progress at regular intervals. The frequency of monitoring students depends on their progress and learning goals. Through the use of tracking tools or visual representations, student growth and areas in need of improvement can be monitored and used to inform student groupings and instruction. Refer to page 54 of the practice guide for a sample data-tracking sheet.

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Summary of Recommendation 3 from the WWC practice guide *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*. Full reference is on the last page.

3

## Potential roadblocks and how to address them

| Roadblock | Suggested Approach |
|---|---|
| *Writing is a nuanced discipline and each of my students needs support with a unique collection of skills. I do not have the resources to provide that level of differentiation.* | Finding time to personalize instruction for students is difficult but beneficial because it is targeted support and students feel cared for when someone takes the time to customize instruction for them. Teachers should allot a small amount of class time, 5 to 10 minutes weekly, to work with students who need help in similar areas. Small-group instruction can occur while other students are completing independent work assignments. Collaborate with colleagues from other content areas about strategies for efficiently supporting student writing in the classroom. |
| *I don't have time to regularly conduct formative assessments for all of my students.* | Use existing assignments and assessments as a formative assessment. Provide students with opportunities to participate in formative assessments through peer and self-assessments. |
| *I am not allowed to modify my school's curriculum or standards. How can I still use formative assessment?* | Data-informed instruction can occur with existing curriculum and standards; the goal is to identify what areas of the curriculum students have not mastered and to support them in those areas. |

Reference: Graham, S., Bruch, J., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Furgeson, J., Greene, K., . . . Smither Wulsin, C. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively* (NCEE 2017-4002). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/22

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