



New Tutor Training Packet

This packet contains supplemental materials referenced in the required online training course

Table of Contents

Handout 1: Alphabetics Practice Activities (10 pages)

Handout 2: Fluency Activities (3 pages)

Handout 3: Top 300 Most Common English Words (2 pages)

Handout 4: Reading Comprehension (4 pages)

Handout 5: Comprehension Activities (3 pages)

Handout 6: Sample Timesheet (1 page)

Handout 7: Instructional Materials Available in Office (1 page)

Handout 8: Contact Information (1 page)

Handout: Alphabetics Practice Activities

Phonics

Word Toss

This is a good activity for discerning beginning and ending sounds. It is played like the Name Game. You can play Word Toss with individuals or in teams.

Steps

1. Sit in a circle if individuals are playing. If playing in teams, line up each team. After a team member gives an answer, they will go to the back of the line.
2. Determine who will go first.
3. The first person (or team) says a word, such as *bird*
4. The second person or team must say a word that begins with the same sound as the end sound in *bird*. For example, *dog*
5. The next person or team must now say a word that begins with the same sound as the end sound in *dog*. For example, *garden*.
6. The teacher writes the words used on the board. Words may not be used twice.
7. When a person or a team is unable to come up with a word, they are eliminated. The game continues until one person or team is left.

Phonics Bingo

This is a great way to review lots of phonics elements. There are lots of variations to the game, as you will see below.

Steps

1. Select the phonics sounds you want to work on.
2. On a piece of paper, draw a grid of five rows and five columns (like a bingo card).
3. Write a phonics sound in each of the spaces (you can use some more than once). Make the middle space a “Free” space.
4. Do the same on cards for the remaining students. You can use the same phonics sounds, but put them in different places.
5. Select words from the lessons that represent the sounds. Write these words on pieces of paper, underline the phonics sound, and put them face down in a pile.
6. Draw a word from the pile. Read it aloud and then give the sound the word represents.
7. Each student should cover the matching sound on his or her bingo card.
8. The person who first covers five sounds in a row wins.

Variations

1. You don't have to use the beginning sound of the word. You can have students listen for the end sound of the word and cover the letter or letters on their bingo cards.

2. Some sounds can be spelled many different ways. You can have multiple ways of spelling the sound on the bingo card. Instead of reading a word and giving the sound, just give the sound and have students cover all the ways to spell that sound. For example, if the sound was /k/, students might cover *c*, *k*, *ck*, or *ch*.

Word Find

This is a great way to use real-world materials to reinforce phonics study.

Steps

1. Pick an article from a newspaper or other piece of realia that students are interested in.
2. Read the article to the students.
3. Give students a sound, such as /b/. Ask students to find all the words in the article (or paragraph, if the article is long) that have the sound in the beginning, middle, or end of the word.
4. Ask students to write the words they found, grouping them by where the target sound occurs.

Same or Different

This activity helps students distinguish between sounds.

Steps

1. Select two initial consonant sounds to practice. Write the letter for each sound along with a keyword. If students have created study flash cards, they can use them.
2. Review each sound and letter.
3. Say two words that begin with the same sound. Ask students if the words begin with the same sound or different sounds. Ask students what letter each word begins with.
4. Say two words that begin with the other sound. Ask students if the words begin with the same sound or different sounds. Ask students what letter each word begins with.
5. Say two words, each beginning with one of the sounds. Ask students if the words begin with the same sound or different sounds. Ask students what letter each word begins with.
6. Repeat the process with other words with the same or different beginning sounds until you are sure students can distinguish the sounds.

Sound Boxes


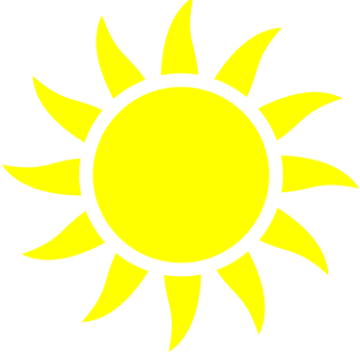
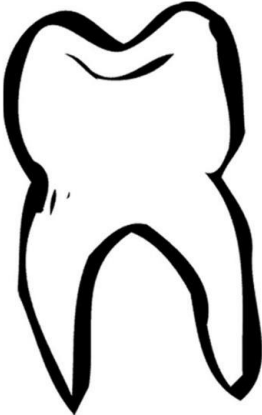
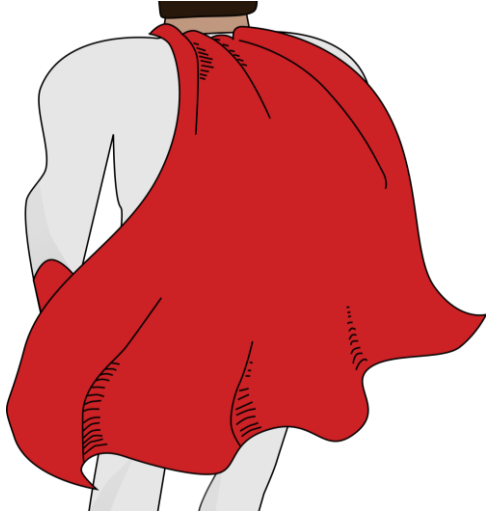
Sound boxes, also known as Elkonin boxes, help students break words into individual sounds. They are good for spelling practice.

Steps

1. This activity requires some computer skills – the ability to insert clip art or pictures into a document and the ability to make boxes.
2. Identify the words you want students to practice.
3. Find an image that represents the word. Insert the image into a document.
4. Underneath the image create a series of boxes, one box for each sound (not letter).

5. Explain to students that they are to identify the word, identify the individual sounds in the word, then spell the word in the boxes provided. Each box represents one sound.

Examples

 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Word Patterns

Concentration Game

This game provides practice in sounding out words using patterns and recognizing patterns in print.

Steps

1. Create matching pairs of word patterns and write each word on a separate index card. Examples: *cat/mat*, *had/mad*, *love/glove*.
2. Determine how many pairs you will use for the board. A good size board is eight pairs.
3. Turn the cards facedown and shuffle them. Put them into a grid—for 16 cards the grid would be 4 x 4.
4. The first player turns over two cards. If they do not use the same word pattern, the player turns them back over, and it is the second player's turn.
5. If the cards use the same word pattern, the player must read each word correctly to pick up the cards. It is then the second player's turn.
6. The second player turns over two cards. If they do not use the same word pattern, the player turns them back over, and it is the first player's turn. If they use the same pattern, the player must read each word correctly to pick up the cards. It is now the first player's turn again.
7. Play repeats until all the cards have been picked up. The player with the most cards wins.

Word Slides

Word slides are a great hands-on learning tool for working with word patterns.

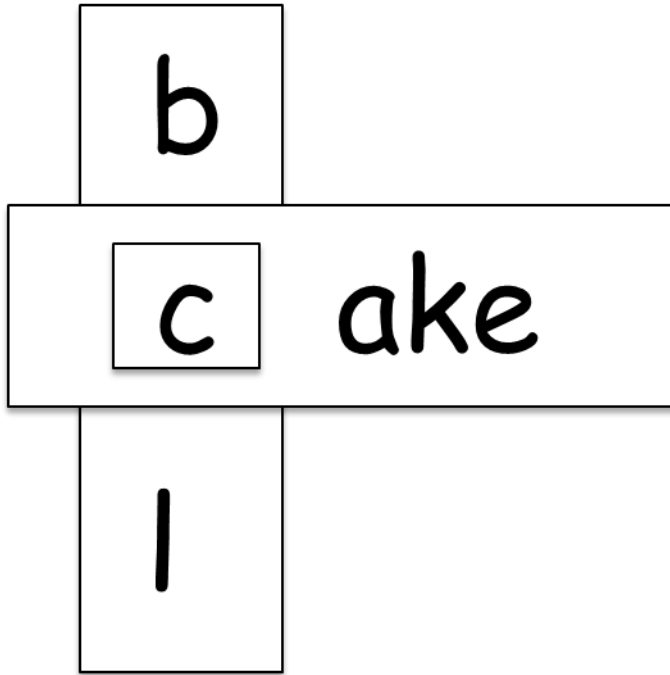
Steps

1. Select the word pattern or patterns to review.
2. Place students in pairs or small groups.
3. Give each set of students a word pattern. Have students brainstorm all the words they can form using that word pattern.
4. Give each student two 4x6 index cards
5. Instruct students to fold one index card in half lengthwise.
6. Instruct students to print the word "family" on the right side of the card.
7. Instruct students to cut a window for the missing initial sound, and then cut a slit in the fold of the index card.
8. Instruct students to fold the second index card lengthwise.
9. Instruct students to write the initial consonant sounds from the words they brainstormed on the second index card.
10. Insert the second index card into the slot of the first index card.
11. As students pull the index card, the consonant sounds will appear in the window. Students can practice reading each word.

Variations

1. Instead of cutting a window at the beginning of the word, you can cut a window in the middle of the word. Write the vowels on the pull strip and practice substituting them to create words.
2. Write one word pattern on the front of the strip and another on the back of the strip.

Example



Word Parts

Teaching Syllables

Use this process for teaching students to divide words into syllables and apply three rules to help with pronunciation.

Steps

1. Select a group of words to practice. These words can come from the reading or can be part of students' known vocabulary.
2. Explain to students that a syllable is a word or word part that has only one vowel sound.
3. Give examples: *bat* (1), *paper* (2), *little* (2), *employment* (3), *example* (3)
4. Read the first word. Ask students how many vowel sounds they hear. Ask students to identify the vowel sounds. Continue with the remaining words.
5. If students have difficulty with step 4, continue to practice that skill. When students can accurately identify vowel sounds, move on to step 6.
6. Explain that students can use three rules about syllables to help them decode and pronounce new words. Explain that we will learn the rules and then see how they apply to the words in the list.

- Write each rule at the top of an index card. Leave room at the bottom for students to write examples.

Rule 1: The two-consonant rule

If there are two consonants between the vowel sounds, divide the word between the consonants. Do not divide blends or digraphs.

- Ask students to write the following words below the rule: *into, lesson, traffic, fender, bashful, emblem*.
- Ask students to put a dot under each vowel.
- Ask students to put an x under any e that ends a word.
- Ask students to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
- Ask students to divide the words according to rule 1.
- Ask students to pronounce each word according to rule 1.

in/to	les/son	traf/fic	fen/der	bash/ful	em/blem
• •	• •	• •	• •	• — •	• — •

Rule 2: The one-consonant rule

If the word has only one consonant sound between two vowel sounds, divide the word before the consonant. If the vowel is at the end of a syllable, it will usually have a long sound. The letter y in the middle or at the end of the word acts as a vowel.

- Ask students to write the following words below the rule: *bacon, female, syphon, lady*.
- Ask students to put a dot under each vowel.
- Ask students to put an x under any e that ends a word.
- Ask students to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
- Ask students to divide the words according to rule 2.
- Ask students to pronounce each word according to rule 2.

ba/con	fe/male	sy/phon	la/dy
• •	• •x	• — •	• / •

Rule 3: The one-consonant oops rule

Sometimes the one consonant rule doesn't work. If the word doesn't sound like a word you recognize, divide the word after the consonant. The vowel will have a short sound.

- Ask students to write the following words below the rule: *lemon, visit, second, travel*.
- Ask students to put a dot under each vowel.
- Ask students to put an x under any e that ends a word.
- Ask students to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
- Ask students to divide the words according to rule 2.
- Ask students to pronounce each word according to rule 2.
- Ask students if the way they pronounced the words sounded like words they recognized.
- Ask students to write the words again under the rule, putting a dot under each vowel, writing an x under any e that ends a word, and underlining digraphs and consonant blends.

9. Now ask students to divide the words according to rule 3.
10. Ask students to pronounce the words according to rule 3. Do students recognize the words now?

lem/on • •	vis/it • •	sec/ond • • _	trav/el _ • •
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8. Now give students the first word from your list.
9. Ask students to put a dot under each vowel.
10. Ask students to put an x under any e that ends a word.
11. Ask students to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
12. Ask students which rule applies to the word.
13. Ask students to divide the word according to the rules.
14. Ask students to pronounce the word according to the rules.
15. Give students another word.

Word Maps

Word maps can help students identify prefixes, suffixes, and word roots to decode words; to recognize words with similar roots; and to use prefixes and suffixes to build new words.

Steps

1. Begin with a word students have discovered in their reading. It may have been new to them or they may have had trouble decoding it. We'll use the word *predict* as an example.
2. Explain that the word is comprised of a word root, *-dict*, and a prefix, *pre-*. Write the root *dict* in the middle of a piece of paper. Write the word *predict* to the side and draw a line connecting *predict* to the root *dict*.
3. Ask students what words they can make by adding prefixes and suffixes to the word *predict*. If students have difficulty identifying words, give them an example like *prediction*, *predictable*, or *unpredictable*. As students come up with words, write them off the word *predict* (if they are related to *predict*). If students generate words related to the root *dict*, but different from *predict*, write them to a different side of *dict* and connect them to the root.
4. After you write the words related to *predict*, point out the common word root and prefix in each one. Explain that looking for elements you already know in longer words can help students decode words.
5. Returning to the word root, ask students if they can think of any other words that contain that root. If students have trouble thinking of words, give them a list of prefixes and suffixes. Encourage them to try adding prefixes and suffixes until they come up with words they recognize. When they think of another word, follow steps 3 and 4 with these words as well.
6. Continue to do steps 3 to 5 until you have developed a word map. Review each word, asking students to identify the prefix, suffix, and root for each word, then read it.

Variation

1. For vocabulary instruction, give students a list of common prefixes and suffixes and their meanings after you have created the word map.
2. Give students the meaning of the word root. In the example above, *dict* means to tell.
3. Point out that the prefix *pre-* means before, so *predict* means to tell before. Ask students what *predict* actually means. Answers should be similar to “to tell what you think will happen before it happens.” Ask students if “to tell before” makes sense based on their definition.
4. Continue with other forms of the word, using prefixes and suffixes to show how these word parts can help students understand a word’s meaning.
5. If students don’t know what a word means, have them make a guess based on the meaning of the root and prefixes and suffixes. Use a simple dictionary to look up the meaning and compare the actual definition to their guess.

Sight Words

Sight Word Flashcard Practice

Flashcards are one of the best and easiest ways to practice recognizing words by sight. It’s also useful that many other literacy practice activities involve writing words on flashcards, so they are often readily available for practice.

Steps

1. Choose six to ten words the student wants to learn. They may already exist on flashcards. If not, have the student write each word on an index card.
2. Shuffle the stack of index cards. Flip the top one over and ask the student to read it. If the student reads it correctly, put it to the right.
3. If the student misses the word, put it to the left. If a student has trouble, read the word aloud and ask him or her to use it in a sentence. Put the card to the left.
4. Once a student has gone through the stack once, pick up the cards on the left that the student missed. Shuffle these cards and review them again, following the same procedures. Continue this until the student reads all the words correctly.
5. Shuffle the entire deck and review all the words again. Continue until the student can read the entire deck, or until you sense that the student is becoming frustrated.

Variations

1. Once the student can read the entire stack correctly, focus on reading the word quickly and accurately. Using a stopwatch, begin timing as you flip over the first card. Work your way through the deck. Record the time and any misses. Repeat the process two to three more times, recording the time and number of misses. Discuss any improvement the data shows.

Context Clues

Create a Cloze Activity

Cloze activities are a great way to practice using context clues to decode words.

Steps

1. Select a passage from a lesson.
2. Leave the first sentence intact, and then delete words in subsequent sentences. Select words for which there are context clues. Example *There were four eggs in the bird's _____, not There were _____ eggs in the bird's nest.*
3. Provide a word list. Review the words with the students.
4. Ask students to fill in the missing words. Students may work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
5. For beginning students, you can
 - provide a choice of two words for each blank;
 - provide the first letter of the word in the blank space;
 - provide the exact number of spaces for the deleted word.

Strategic Decoding

Teaching Students to Decode Strategically

In strategic decoding, students combine decoding skills with a consistent problem-solving process to help them decode difficult words. The steps below describe the process and explain how you can introduce it to students.

Steps

1. As a student reads a passage, listen for places where he or she struggles to decode a word. If the student is unable to decode the word, encourage him or her to say “blank” and keep reading. You will return to that part of the passage later.
2. After the student has finished reading the passage, return to the sentence with the difficult word. (Depending on the sentence, you may want to start with the previous sentence to provide context.)
3. Ask the student to read the sentence(s) again, saying “blank” for the difficult word. Ask, “Based on the meaning of the sentence, is there a word you think makes sense here?” Depending on the student’s response, ask if there are visual clues (initial letter, shape of word) that confirm the guess.
4. If the student is unable to think of a word that makes sense in context, isolate the word. Encourage the student to try to sound it out using phonics, word patterns, and word parts skills. Does the student recognize the word? Does the word make sense in the sentence? Reread the sentence to find out.
5. If the student is unable to use decoding skills to identify a word that makes sense, suggest using different vowel sounds. This may be a word that does not follow a common phonics pattern. Does the student recognize the word? Does the word make sense in the sentence? Reread the sentence to find out.

6. Encourage the student to think of a word that makes sense in the sentence and read the sentence using that word.
7. Read the word the student was unable to decode and demonstrate which decoding skills they could have used to decode it. If the word is new to the student, explain what it means.
8. Ask the student to reflect back on the process they just used. Point out that the student
 - a. used context and visual clues to decode the word;
 - b. tried to sound out the word;
 - c. tried different vowel sounds;
 - d. thought of a word that made sense and used that word.
9. Explain that any time the student encounters a word they are unable to decode while reading, they can use this process to try to figure out the word.

Handout: Fluency Activities

Below are several activities you can use with students to improve their reading fluency.

Echo Reading

Echo reading provides support to students because they hear fluent reading modeled before attempting to do it themselves.

Steps

1. Select something to read that is short and at the student's instructional reading level. Read the first sentence aloud, modeling proper pace and phrasing.
2. Ask the student to read the same sentence aloud after you.
3. Continue this pattern to the end of the passage.
4. When you've finished the passage, go back to the beginning and follow the same pattern again. As the student improves, expand the amount of text you read before the student "echoes" you. For instance, increase to two sentences and then to a paragraph.

Variations

- For higher-level students, you can begin by reading a few sentences or a paragraph before asking the students to read.
- To adapt this activity to a classroom environment, you might read through the passage once with the entire class echoing in unison, then go back through the passage using the same technique and calling on individual students to read. Remember to read the sentence aloud before each student reads to model proper pace and phrasing.

Modeled Reading

Modeled reading provides the student an opportunity to hear reading done with good expression and good phrasing. It also provides a change of pace in instruction and allows students to practice listening skills.

Steps

1. Choose fiction materials that are of interest to students. Since students are not reading aloud, the text may be a reading level above the students' instructional reading level.
2. Provide students with a copy of the passage.
3. Ask the students to relax and listen to the reading as they follow along in the text.
4. Read aloud and model expressive and fluent reading for the students.
5. The reading need only be about five minutes in length.

Variations

- The model does not have to be the teacher. It can be a recording or another student.

Dyad/Choral Reading

Dyad reading involves a teacher and one student; choral reading is a teacher and a group of students. For both activities, the students and you read the same passage aloud together. Both provide an opportunity for students to read fluently and independently, knowing that support is available from the teacher or other classmates if needed.

Steps

1. Begin by selecting something to read that is short and at an independent reading level for the students. As in echo reading, your role is to model proper pace, phrasing, and emphasis.
2. If the students are reading comfortably, you will simply stop and allow them to continue on their own.
3. If students encounter a word they do not know, provide it quickly so the pace is not disrupted.
4. If students start to struggle with the selection, begin reading again to provide a model.
5. At the end of the selection, ask one or two factual comprehension questions.
6. Repeat the process until students can read the passage aloud independently, with proper pace and phrasing.
7. Ask comprehension questions about the passage each time the students read to emphasize that as they reread a passage with better fluency, their comprehension improves as well.

Variations

- This is a good activity for students to practice at home with a recording of the passage.

Duet Reading/Neurological Impress

Duet reading, or neurological impress, helps students improve fluency by developing “automaticity” in reading—the ability and confidence to recognize words automatically rather than spending a lot of time and energy decoding, which can hinder fluency.

Steps

1. Select an article to read that is at the high end of the students’ instructional level.
2. Explain to the students that you are going to read the article out loud and you want the students to read aloud with you. Explain that the article was selected because it will be difficult for them and that you expect that there will be places where the students will not be able to keep up. This is OK. Explain also that students will not be asked questions about what they are reading. This is not a comprehension activity and comprehension will not be tested.

Say It Like You Mean It

This activity helps students understand how changing the emphasis on words in a sentence can change the meaning.

Steps

1. Write a sentence, or have a student select one from the reading passage. Here is an example:

I never said you hit my car.

2. Ask the student to read the sentence aloud, emphasizing the first word of the sentence. Ask the student what the sentence means. In the example, *I never said you hit my car*, the author or the person speaking might be saying they were not the person who said you hit my car, implying that someone else might have said it.
3. Continue to ask a student to read the sentence aloud, emphasizing the second word of the sentence, then the third word, etc. After each time, ask the student what they think the sentence means. Here is what students might say for the example above:

I **never** said you hit my car. (The speaker is denying the statement completely.)

I never **said** you hit my car. (The speaker is contesting that they “said” you hit my car. Implying they may have conveyed such a statement in other ways.)

I never said **you** hit my car. (The speaker confirms making the statement, but it was about someone else.)

I never said you **hit** my car. (The speaker is implying the person did something else to their car.)

I never said you hit **my** car. (The speaker is saying the person hit someone else’s car.)

I never said you hit my **car**. (The speaker is saying the person hit something that belonged to the speaker, but it wasn’t the car.)

Roll It!

This activity helps students understand how the same sentence can convey different emotions.

Steps

1. Select six sentences from the reading or generate six sentences of your own. Number the sentences 1-6.
2. Roll the die. This tells you which sentence you will read.
3. Roll the die again. This tells you how you will read the sentence. Use the chart below:



Excited



Sad



Angry



Shocked



Irritated



Tired

4. Take turns with the student reading sentences with different emotions.

Top 300 Most Common English Words

These are the most common words in English, ranked in frequency order. The first 100 make up about half of all written material.

1	the	76	more	151	sentence	226	between
2	of	77	day	152	set	227	city
3	to	78	could	153	three	228	tree
4	and	79	go	154	want	229	cross
5	a	80	come	155	air	230	since
6	in	81	did	156	well	231	hard
7	is	82	my	157	also	232	start
8	it	83	sound	158	play	233	might
9	you	84	no	159	small	234	story
10	that	85	most	160	end	235	saw
11	he	86	number	161	put	236	far
12	was	87	who	162	home	237	sea
13	for	88	over	163	read	238	draw
14	on	89	know	164	hand	239	left
15	are	90	water	165	port	240	late
16	with	91	than	166	large	241	run
17	as	92	call	167	spell	242	don't
18	I	93	first	168	add	243	while
19	his	94	people	169	even	244	press
20	they	95	may	170	land	245	close
21	be	96	down	171	here	246	night
22	at	97	side	172	must	247	real
23	one	98	been	173	big	248	life
24	have	99	now	174	high	249	few
25	this	100	find	175	such	250	stop
26	from	101	any	176	follow	251	open
27	or	102	new	177	act	252	seem
28	had	103	work	178	why	253	together
29	by	104	part	179	ask	254	next
30	hot	105	take	180	men	255	white
31	but	106	get	181	change	256	children
32	some	107	place	182	went	257	begin
33	what	108	made	183	light	258	got
34	there	109	live	184	kind	259	walk
35	we	110	where	185	off	260	example
36	can	111	after	186	need	261	ease

37	out	112	back	187	house	262	paper
38	other	113	little	188	picture	263	often
39	were	114	only	189	try	264	always
40	all	115	round	190	us	265	music
41	your	116	man	191	again	266	those
42	when	117	year	192	animal	267	both
43	up	118	came	193	point	268	mark
44	use	119	show	194	mother	269	book
45	word	120	every	195	world	270	letter
46	how	121	good	196	near	271	until
47	said	122	me	197	build	272	mile
48	an	123	give	198	self	273	river
49	each	124	our	199	earth	274	car
50	she	125	under	200	father	275	feet
51	which	126	name	201	head	276	care
52	do	127	very	202	stand	277	second
53	their	128	through	203	own	278	group
54	time	129	just	204	page	279	carry
55	if	130	form	205	should	280	took
56	will	131	much	206	country	281	rain
57	way	132	great	207	found	282	eat
58	about	133	think	208	answer	283	room
59	many	134	say	209	school	284	friend
60	then	135	help	210	grow	285	began
61	them	136	low	211	study	286	idea
62	would	137	line	212	still	287	fish
63	write	138	before	213	learn	288	mountain
64	like	139	turn	214	plant	289	north
65	so	140	cause	215	cover	290	once
66	these	141	same	216	food	291	base
67	her	142	mean	217	sun	292	hear
68	long	143	differ	218	four	293	horse
69	make	144	move	219	thought	294	cut
70	thing	145	right	220	let	295	sure
71	see	146	boy	221	keep	296	watch
72	him	147	old	222	eye	297	color
73	two	148	too	223	never	298	face
74	has	149	does	224	last	299	wood
75	look	150	tell	225	door	300	main

Handout: Reading Comprehension

The goal of reading is to understand what you have read. To do that, you need to accurately decode the words on the page, recognize what they mean, combine them into meaningful phrases, and read with expression. You also need to interpret what the author intended to say, make inferences, integrate information with your own knowledge and evaluate it, and apply what you've read to other contexts.

Many literacy students may not be aware they have a comprehension problem. Others may realize they don't understand what they are reading, but are unaware of the many comprehension strategies and skills that good readers use to help them gain meaning from text. Tutors must provide explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and skills to help students improve their comprehension.

Comprehension Strategies

Good readers can apply broad-based comprehension strategies to a variety of reading topics and genres to help them understand what they are reading. They use these strategies before they read, while they are reading, and after they read. These strategies include:

- **Setting a purpose for reading.** Good readers use this strategy when reading nonfiction to learn something – like reading a newspaper or website to find out what happened at the school board meeting or reading an instruction manual to learn how to program the timer on your coffee pot so you can wake up to freshly brewed coffee. Having a clear purpose for reading helps the reader determine what other reading strategies they might use.
- **Using background knowledge and prior experiences.** Good readers use what they know to help them relate to and understand what they're reading. This strategy can be used for fiction or nonfiction. It generally requires the reader to have some idea of what the text is about before they read. Often readers will ask themselves questions to help draw on their knowledge and experiences.
- **Making predictions.** Good readers predict what they expect to find in an article or what a character might do next. This strategy and the next one, asking questions and looking for answers, are strategies readers use to help them focus – to look for specific pieces of information or to read and pay close attention to details. Good readers make predictions before they read and while they are reading. Good readers might combine this strategy with marking text, highlighting information, and taking notes.
- **Asking questions.** As they read, good readers ask themselves questions and then look for the answers in the text. This helps readers look for specific pieces of information and identify details. Good readers also ask themselves questions after they read a portion of the text to help them monitor their comprehension. If they are unable to answer their questions, it might mean they need to reread the portion of the text.
- **Marking text.** Good readers often mark text, such as highlighting important points, and take notes.

- **Summarizing.** Summarizing after reading is a good way to check comprehension. However, good readers also break the text into smaller chunks and periodically summarize as they read. This is an important comprehension monitoring strategy.
- **Rereading things that don't make sense.** Sometimes readers ask themselves questions they can't answer, or they are unable to summarize what they just read. Good readers understand this to mean they didn't really understand what they just read. When this happens, they will reread the text, often applying new strategies while they read to improve their comprehension.
- **Reorganizing information.** When they have finished reading, good readers will often reorganize information from the text into a new format, making it easier for them to understand and apply to other contexts. This often involves using a graphic organizer – creating a chart of information, drawing a diagram, or summarizing and numbering the steps in a process.

Comprehension Skills

Good readers also use specific comprehension skills that help them recognize how information is being presented and then make decisions about that information. These include:

- **Recognizing cause and effect.** Cause and effect is an organizational pattern commonly found in news articles, history books, biographies, and fiction. Consider a newspaper article about the school board. A reader might learn from the article that some of the attendees were upset. Understanding the relationship of cause and effect can help the reader identify why the attendees were upset, which might be more important information.
- **Recognizing main idea and details.** This is a foundational comprehension skill for being able to summarize. Good readers need to be able to identify the main idea and make decisions about which details are important and which are not to be able to summarize what they've read, internalize it, and use it. Because it is such a foundational skill for reading comprehension, students are often asked to read texts and identify the main idea and details on academic tests like the GED.
- **Discerning fact from opinion.** Good readers use this skill to help them evaluate information. It is becoming more important as the distinctions between news and commentary; articles, sponsored articles, and ads; and science and sponsored science are blurred.
- **Classifying information.** Grouping or classifying information is an important comprehension strategy for remembering information.
- **Comparing and contrasting.** Comparing and contrasting information is a specific way of classifying how items are alike and different. It is an especially useful comprehension tool when evaluating two things.

- **Sequencing events.** Sequencing is a comprehension skill that good readers often use as they go about their everyday lives. They might use this skill to follow a recipe or follow a procedure at work. Sometimes the sequences are easy to identify, such as in the examples above. A more difficult example would be when a reader follows a sequence of events in a fictional story where the time changes from present to past. In these cases, readers rely on keywords to help them identify the proper sequence. This is also where comprehension monitoring is important – a reader must be able to recognize when the sequence doesn't make sense.
- **Drawing inferences and reaching conclusions.** Readers automatically draw conclusions as they read if they are concentrating on meaning. The text supplies the information, but the reader has to determine how the information can be used. Making inferences is more difficult because the information isn't clearly stated in the text. The reader must use clues and draw upon their own knowledge and experiences to infer what the author means. This is why teaching students to use their own knowledge and experiences is important.
- **Understanding how plot, character, and setting contribute to a story.** When reading fiction, good readers use their understanding of the genre, plot structures, characters, and setting to help them understand and enjoy the story.

Different Levels of Comprehension

Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension is the ability to understand and remember what the text says. It does not involve the reader's feelings or opinion, or require the reader to be able to apply information from the text to other contexts. You can check a student's literal comprehension by asking factual questions about the text such as "What time did Bob wake up?" or "What does the emergency switch do?" You can also check for literal understanding by asking the student to summarize the story or identify the main idea and details of an article. These types of activities check the student's understanding of the entire text, but still at a literal level.

Literal Comprehension provides the foundation for more in-depth comprehension of a passage. Without literal understanding, it is difficult to make inferences or think critically about a text. Literal comprehension is the focus of comprehension for beginning readers. When working with intermediate and advanced students, you will check for literal comprehension and then build on their literal understanding to develop their inferential and critical thinking comprehension skills.

Inferential Comprehension

Inferential comprehension is the ability to combine what the text says with the reader's own knowledge and experiences to draw conclusions about the text. "How" and "Why" questions are good to use to check inferential comprehension. Examples might include "What do you think Mr. Jones thought when Bob showed up late for work?" or "Why do you think the article suggests making a list before going to the grocery?" Inferential comprehension is an area of focus for intermediate and advanced students.

Critical Thinking Comprehension

Critical thinking comprehension is the ability to understand the information or story well enough to use it in other contexts. This requires the reader to:

- take the knowledge they learned from the article or story and apply it to a different situation
- think more deeply about the characters, exploring their moods and the motivations behind their actions
- develop an opinion or stance based on information from a range of sources, including this text, then applying it to another text or context
- compare and contrast elements in the text and make judgements based on that information

Examples of questions that require the reader to think critically about the text might include “How do you think the story would be different if this was a job that Bob liked?” or “You said you liked this planning process as a way to help you organize your work. How might you use a similar process with your kids to help them organize their work at home?” Critical thinking comprehension is an area of focus for intermediate and advanced students.

Handout: Comprehension Activities

Think Aloud Technique

The Think Aloud technique is a great way to help adult students improve their reading comprehension skills. In the Think Aloud technique, you read a passage aloud to the students. As you read, you periodically “think aloud” as you apply different reading comprehension strategies. This helps students see the “invisible” strategies a good reader uses when they read. Below are the steps to the Think Aloud technique.

Steps

1. **Review the reading and select the reading strategies you will use.** Although there may be many strategies you would actually use, you should limit the number you focus on to two or three. Explain the strategies and why they are useful so that students can more easily identify them when they hear or see them used.
2. **Set the purpose for reading and be clear about it with students.** This is the first thing a good reader does, but many students don’t do this, especially if they’ve been assigned a reading. Setting the purpose will also help students connect specific strategies with specific purposes for reading.
3. **Read the article and model the strategies you identified.** Model the strategies by stopping during the reading and thinking aloud. It’s important to rehearse when you’ll use the strategies and what you’ll say, rather than demonstrating this on the fly. This will help you focus on the specific strategies and present them clearly. It is OK, even preferred, to demonstrate the thinking process as imperfect. For example, you may make predictions that are wrong. Just explain why you’ve made the error, how you recognized the error, and your correction. While you’re doing the Think Aloud technique, have students follow along in the text and mark where you use different comprehension strategies.
4. **Identify the strategies and discuss how they were used.** Have students identify where you used each strategy and why that particular strategy was useful. Ask students if they can think of other things they’ve read where that strategy would be useful. Ask them to think of other strategies that you might have used.
5. **Have students use the Think Aloud technique to apply the same strategies.** You can do this many ways. You can have each student read a portion of a passage and think aloud to the entire class. You can have students work in pairs and think aloud to each other, while you go around the room and listen.

Mind Map

A mind map is a graphic organizer that can be used to help students with reading comprehension. It is sometimes called clustering, a brainstorming web, an idea map, or a concept map.

Steps

1. Have the student read a story or article. Briefly discuss with the student what she just read to get her thinking about it.
2. Have the student draw a circle in the middle of a piece of paper. Have the student write a word or a couple of words to represent the main idea of the story.
3. Ask the student what else occurred in the story. Use questions about the people involved, location, cause and effect, and so forth. For each detail, have the student write key words in circles and connect it to the main idea.
4. Have the student look back over the map and the story and see if there are any details she missed. If so, have her add them to the map.
5. Ask the student to use the mind map to tell you what the story was about. She should be able to summarize the story or tell you the main idea and details of an article without referring back to the story or article.
6. It's a good idea to model the process of creating a mind map with students before asking them to create a mind map on their own.
7. Beginning literacy or ESL students may have difficulty with the writing. Discuss the story with the student and use what she says to create a mind map on the board. Then ask the student to copy what you have written onto a piece of paper and use it to retell the story.

Creating Independent Readers

This activity encourages students to use a before-during-after questioning strategy outside class to improve their comprehension while reading independently.

Steps

1. Give students three index cards. Label one card "Before I Read," another card "While I Read," and the third card "After I Read."
2. Write the following questions on the Before I Read card:
 - What is this going to be about?
 - What do I already know about the topic?
 - What's my purpose for reading this?
3. Write the following questions on the While I Read card:
 - What do I think the next part is going to be about?
 - Was I right or wrong?
 - What else do I want to know about this topic?

5. Write the following questions on the After I Read card:
 - What did the article tell me?
 - What did I have to figure out?
 - What else do I want to know about this topic?
6. Practice using the cards with students in class with you or with each other. When students become comfortable asking themselves these questions, encourage them to use the cards outside class when reading.

Rowan County Literacy Council

Monthly Tutoring and Attendance Timesheet

Student: _____ Tutor: _____ Meeting Place: _____

Tutoring Day: M T W Th F S Su Time: _____ Calendar Month: _____ Calendar Year: _____

Please complete and return to office even if no tutoring occurred. Instructional Hours: _____ Prep Hours: _____ Travel Hours: _____

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

1. Enter dates in small boxes.
2. Enter lesson synopsis in larger box.
3. Enter total class time in larger box.
4. If lesson cancelled, note reason.
5. If tutoring ended, give date and reason.

Book Used: _____ **Lesson:** _____

Other Materials Used: _____ **Lesson:** _____

Accomplishments

(Please check any that apply.)

Applied for Citizenship	Make an appointment or communicate with providers
Became a US Citizen	Obtain Driver's License
Completed Checkup	Obtain Library Card
Completed Job applications/resume	Obtain Licensing- Job related
Convey ideas in writing	Partially pass GED/HSED
Enter employment	Read a book for first time
Enter postsecondary education or training	Read for pleasure
Fill out forms	Read job related materials
Improve comprehension	Read Medicine labels and directions
Improve Employment	Read recipes and food labels
Improve English language skills	Registered to vote.
Improve Financial Literacy	Speak so others can understand
Improve Health Skills	Understand emergency procedures
Improve job search/interviewing skills	Use a calendar, schedule, map, newspaper or dictionary
Increase involvement in child's education	Voted for the first time
Involvement in Family Literacy	

OTHER _____

Did you provide any services other than tutoring for your student this month? If yes please describe.

Did you refer your student to any other agency for help this month? If yes, what agency?

Other Comments?

Materials Available in Office

Title	Category
Laubach Way to Reading 1-4	ABE
Laubach Way to English 1-4	ESL
Laubach Focus on Phonics - 1-4	ESL/ABE
Laubach Readers 1-4	ESL/ABE
Laubach Cursive Writing	ESL/ABE
American Lives 1-3	ESL/ABE
Challenger 1-8	ESL/ABE
Intercambio 1A-6B	ESL
From Home to School 1-4	ESL
The New Oxford Picture Dictionary	ESL
English No Problem! 1-4	ESL
Life Prints	ESL/ABE
Timeless Tales	ESL/ABE
Grammar Wise 1-2	ESL/ABE
Groundwork for a Better Vocabulary	ESL/ABE
Building a Strong Vocabulary for Life Skills	ESL/ABE
Building a Strong Vocabulary for Work Readiness	ESL/ABE
Voyager 1-8	ESL/ABE
Endeavor 1-8	ESL/ABE
Stories Plus/More Stories Plus/Easy Stories Plus/More Easy Stories Plus	ESL/ABE
Health Stories	ESL/ABE
Novel Scenes	ESL/ABE
Patterns in Spelling	ESL/ABE
Pre-High School Equivalency Reading -Comprehension and Critical Thinking	HSE
Pre-High School Equivalency Writing 1-Grammar, Spelling, and Writing Basics	HSE
Pre-High School Equivalency Writing 2-Developing and Organizing Written Responses	HSE
Pre-High School Equivalency Math 1-Whole Nbrs, Decimals, Fractions, Pcts, Measurements	HSE
Social Studies for the GED Test 2016 Edition	HSE
Science for the GED Test 2018 Edition	HSE
Writing for the GED Test 1-Grammar Usage and Mechanics	HSE
Writing for the GED Test 2-Reading Comprehension	HSE
Writing for the GED Test 3-Extended Response and Short Answers	HSE
Teaching Adults-A Literacy Resource Book	TUTOR
Teaching Adults-An ESL Resource Book	TUTOR
Teaching Adults-GED Test Resource Book	TUTOR
LitStart-Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors	TUTOR
Citizenship-Passing the Test: Civics and Literacy	CIT
Citizenship-Passing the Test: Literacy Skills	CIT
Citizenship-Passing the Test: Ready for the Interview	CIT
Learn About the United States-Quick Civics Lessons	CIT
Civics Flash Cards for the Naturalization Test	CIT
Vocabulary Flash Cards for the Naturalization Test	CIT

*Full descriptions of most materials may be found at newreaderspress.com

Many other resources are available in the office, including short story collections, novelas, dictionaries Bible-themed readers, adaptations of literary classics, conversation flash cards, and much more.

Please check with the office if you need help locating or selecting appropriate materials for your student.

If we don't have a resource you need, we may be able to purchase it or borrow it from the library.

ROWAN COUNTY LITERACY COUNCIL

CONTACT INFORMATION

REV 12/17/19

To Reserve Study Rooms704-216-2843
RCLC Office704-216-8266
Library Main Number704-216-8228

Tutor Trainers:

Laurel Harry704-216-8266
Don Doering704-245-8802
Helen Peacock704-798-3708

RCLC Office Hours

Monday through Thursday

9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

1:30 p.m.– 5:00 p.m.

Friday

9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Holidays

The RCLC Office will be closed on all dates that the Rowan Public Library is closed.
Closure dates are posted on the RPL website: <https://www.rowancountync.gov/615/Holidays>

Inclement Weather Policy

The Rowan Public Library usually remains open regardless of weather, but if the Rowan County School system is closed because of weather conditions, tutors and students usually DO NOT meet. Push notifications are sent out via our Smartphone App. Search Google Play or App Store for "Rowan County Literacy Council"

Follow Us!

Keep up to date on RCLC happenings by following us on Facebook at Rowan County Literacy Council, Inc and on Twitter at @RCLiteracy

Sight Words

Sight words are words learned as complete units. They are immediately recognized and understood and do not have to be decoded or sounded out. Increasing the number of sight words that the reader knows will result in greater fluency and better comprehension.

According to studies of printed material in English:

- The first 25 most commonly used words make up about 30% of all written material
- The first 100 make up about 50% of all written material
- The first 300 make up about 65% of all written material

Here's a list of the 300 most commonly used words in English:

<http://englishyourway.com.br/vocabulary-the-300-most-commonly-used-english-words/>

No matter what level your student is, they can benefit from incorporating more sight words into their reading vocabulary.

Guidelines for Teaching Sight Words:

Don't overdo it. 6-8 sight words per lesson is a good number, maybe fewer for beginning readers. Mastery is more important than volume, experiment to find the optimal number per lesson for your student and work with that number.

Use sight words that will be found in the text you will be using that day to reinforce the usage in context.

Avoid teaching easily confused words in the same lesson (through and though or bye and buy).

Flash card Activities for Sight Word Instruction

- have student write the word on card, or tutor can write word if student is a beginner.
- Have the student say each letter in the word and then practice reading the word out loud several times
- Have student use word in a sentence of their own creation.
- Have student read a sentence containing the word
- Have the student circle new sight words found in a sample text.