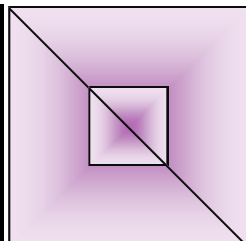


## Reading Comprehension Strategies

### High 5! Strategies for Reading Comprehension:

1. **Activate Background Knowledge** - Making connections between what you know and what you are reading, helps improve your overall understanding of the text. Research shows that comprehension is boosted when readers stimulate or make connections to prior knowledge. Prior Knowledge is understanding that stems from previous experience either through “hands on” involvement or earlier formal learning (from books or classroom instruction). If you lack prior knowledge, do a quick internet search to find effective websites to gain some basic information so that you have a starting point for reading the text.
2. **Questioning** - You should generate and answer question before and during your reading. Good readers continually ask and answer questions while they read. Preceding the reading of the text, ask questions to activate prior knowledge. While you are reading, ask yourself these three types of questions:
  - \*Right There Questions = factual questions...such as, what are the facts being explained in the text?
  - \*Think and Search Questions = analytical and inference questions...such as, what does the writer want me to figure out based on the facts?
  - \*Beyond the Text Questions = assumptive and critical questions...such as, what is not being said here that I should check by doing some background research?
3. **Analyzing Text Structure** - Analyzing text structure involves knowing how writers organize information and how the ideas in a text are interrelated to convey a message to a reader. The various types of structure fall under these main categories:
  - Descriptive structures – these focus on the attributes of something...the qualities that distinguish it from other things. The three most common descriptive patterns are list, web, or matrix.
  - Sequential structures – these focus on presenting a series of events or steps that progress over time. The types of sequential structures often follow the string, cause-effect, problem-solution patterns
  - Persuasive structures – these focus on presenting the writer’s view on a particular subject and convincing the reader to hold that same view as well. The types of persuasion are defined by the type of appeal the writer is using: Ethos, Pathos, or Logos
4. **Creating Mental Images** - Good readers form a picture in their mind of what they are reading. Great readers move beyond just pictures of content to structural images as well. They visualize how the text is structured. For this reason, strategies 3 and 4 reinforce each other. Structure is the key to comprehension...it gets at the writers purpose, whether it is to simply inform their audience , analyze a complex topic, or argue an interesting or controversial issue. Purpose shapes the content of a text and also shapes the mental images the reader creates.
5. **Summarizing** - Summary is “the ability to delete irrelevant details, combine similar ideas, condense main ideas, and connect major themes into concise statements that capture the purpose of reading for the reader”( Block & Pressley 117). To Summarize using the High 5! Strategies follow this methodology: First, Read the text; second, Identify the text structure; third, Make a diagram of the structure; fourth, Discard redundant information so only the key ideas remain; and fifth, Circle only the critical ideas that you need for the summary.

Adapted from “‘High 5!’ Strategies to Enhance Comprehension of Expository Text” by Susan Dymock and Tom Nicholson printed in *The Reading Teacher* November 2010



# SASS TIP SHEET

## Reading Comprehension Strategies

### Seven Strategies of Successful Readers:

1. **They use existing knowledge to make sense of new information.** Successful readers reflect on the knowledge they have gained through previous reading, lectures, labs, experience, etc. to make sense of the new material they encounter in a reading. They make connections between prior information and the new information.
2. **They ask questions about the text before, during, and after reading.** It is very helpful to start with a set of questions before reading and continue to reference those questions as well as add new both during and after reading. Questioning is a way to get you engaged with the reading material so that you come away from the reading with greater understanding.
3. **They draw inferences (conclusions drawn from evidence) from the text.** Good readers connect to the reading material by making inferences from the information being presented. These inferences are conclusions that can be made from the evidence the author has provided the reader. It is like the reader is a detective that uses the clues (information) from the text to “solve” (make conclusions about) the case.
4. **They monitor their comprehension.** Successful readers make sure that they are understanding the text as they are reading. They do not rush through a reading and then realize they do not understand it. Instead, good readers make sure to take their time and pause to monitor whether or not they are comprehending the material.
5. **They use “fix-up” strategies when meaning breaks down.** A successful reader makes sure to stop and repair any break down in understanding. They do not continue reading when they do not comprehend the text. They will use some strategy or technique that works for them to fix the confusion, such as, retelling aloud what they have read, looking for patterns in the reading, rereading if necessary, or visualizing the reading.
6. **They determine what is important.** A good reader knows that not every single word or piece of information needs to be retained from a reading. A successful reader will identify the main ideas, key terms or phrases, and the supporting ideas in a text.
7. **They synthesize information (combine various components into a new whole) to create new thinking.** When an effective reader encounters new reading material, they take that information and blend it with other information either from the same text, same author, texts on the same subject, or even texts from other subject areas. This blending or synthesis leads to new ways of understanding and thinking about the reading material or subject matter.

Adapted from *I Read But I Don't Get It* by Chris Tovani (2000)