The Science of Reading —Part 1

Reading Comprehension Overview

Objectives

☑ **Define** the elements of reading comprehension

☑ **Identify** ways teachers *across content areas* can develop students' comprehension skills

☑ **Focus** on a critical research-based approach: explicit comprehension instruction

☑ **Identify** next steps for learning more and systematically improving instruction together

Section One

Revisiting the Simple View of Reading

Myth or Truth?

? Children don't need to "learn to read" beyond third grade.

Myth: Children don't need to "learn to read" beyond third grade.

Truth: Some children will have mastered the components of the simple view of reading by third or fourth grade, but others will not. *All* students can benefit from reading comprehension support as they master the simple view of reading and beyond.

The Simple View, Revisited

Decoding × **Language Comprehension** = **Reading Comprehension**

(Gough and Tunmer, 1986)

OPPORTUNITY CULTURE
An Initiative of Public Impact

Looking Beyond the Simple View
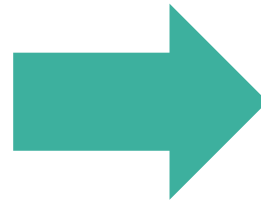
Learning to Read

The simple view:

Decoding x

Language Comprehension =
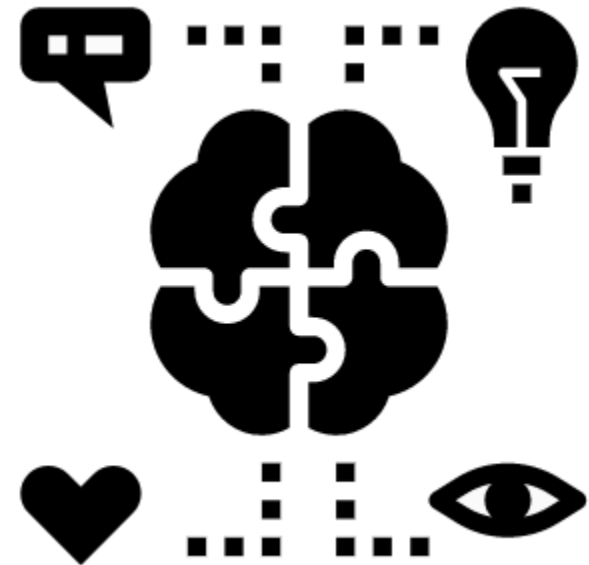
Reading Comprehension

Reading to Learn

?

So, What Is "Reading to Learn"?

Reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning through interaction and engagement with print"
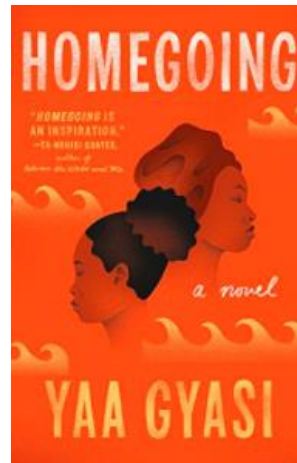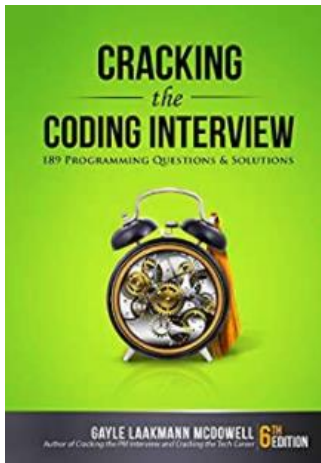
—RAND Reading Study Group, 2002

Reading To Learn

- Understand text's meaning
- Think for yourself about meaning

Reading to Learn
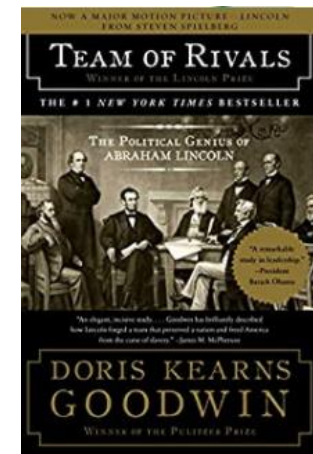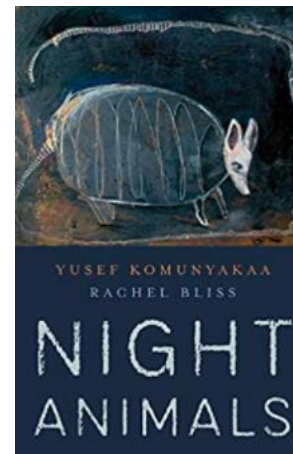
Section Two

Elements of Reading Comprehension:

Unpacking the RAND Reading Comprehension Model

Myth or Truth?

? The boundaries of what it means to comprehend a text are clear: You either comprehend it, or you don't.

Myth: What it means to comprehend a text is clear: You either comprehend it, or you don't.

Truth: Reading comprehension is a complex task made up of several components, including the sociocultural context for reading. Strong reading teachers understand all the pieces that drive comprehension to have the best possible picture of if and how their students *really, fully u*nderstand.

Elements of Reading Comprehension

Dominant Language
Ethnicity
Home Environment
Socioeconomic Status

Context(s) for Reading

Text

Activity

Reader

Task, Purpose,
& Products

Complexity
Levels of Meaning
Length
Structure & Cohesion
Clarity & Coherence

Decoding Skill
Background Knowledge
Vocabulary
Verbal Reasoning
Purpose
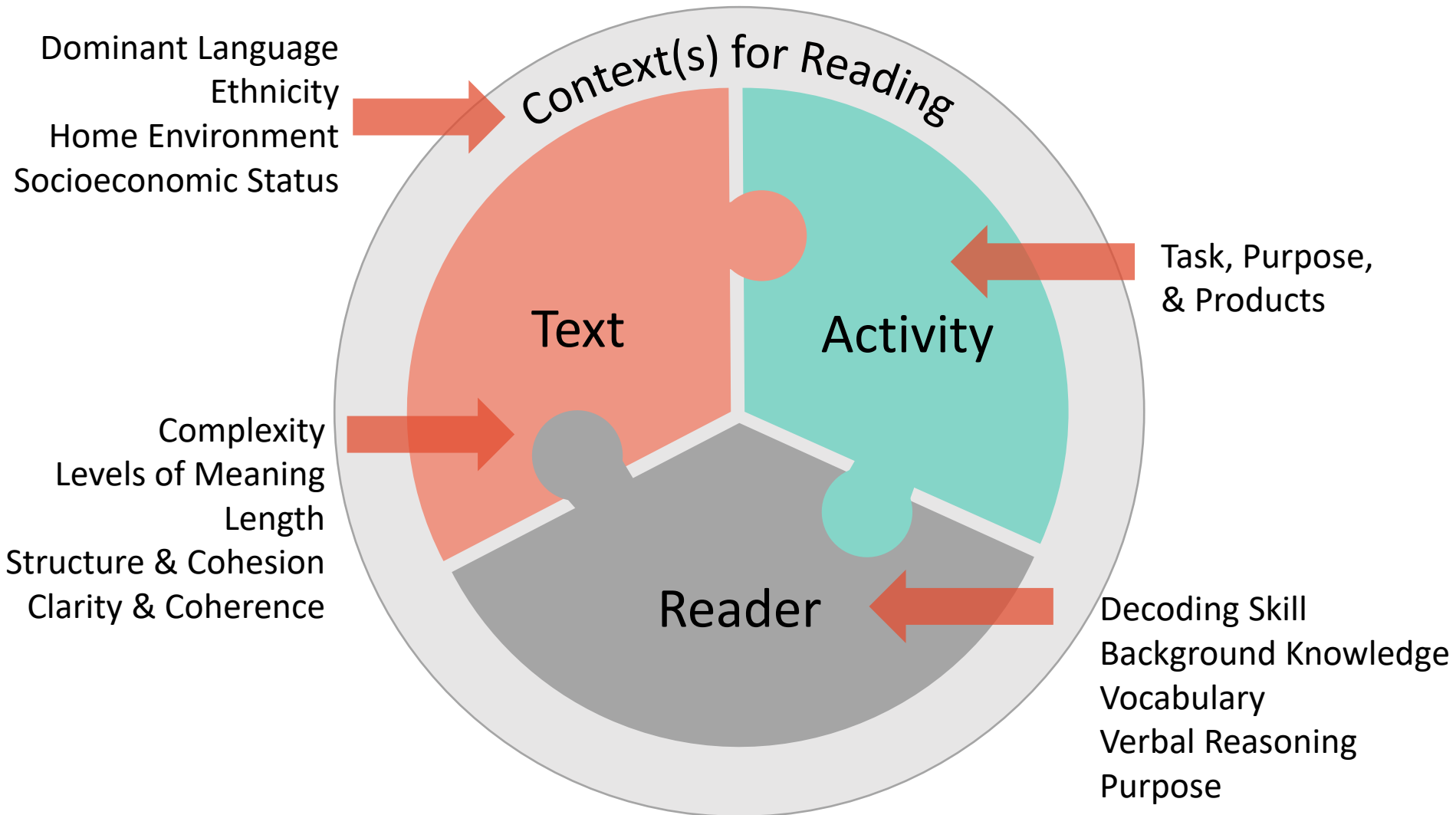
Turn and Talk

TEXT	READER	ACTIVITY	CONTEXT(S) FOR Reading
• Complexity • Levels of Meaning • Length • Structure & Cohesion • Clarity & Coherence	• Decoding Skill • Prior/Background Knowledge • Vocabulary • Verbal Reasoning • Purpose	• Task • Purpose • Products	• Dominant Language • Ethnicity • Home Environment • Socioeconomic Status

Pause & Reflect: Which parts of the elements of reading comprehension are you most familiar with?
Which parts are less familiar?

The Reader: Prior Knowledge & Background Knowledge

Prior Knowledge:

The information and understandings that a reader brings to a text from prior academic study and life experiences

Background Knowledge:

Supplemental information provided *by the teacher* to support students' comprehension

Key Takeaway: Teachers who understand what a student knows already can add critical background information to help students understand each text.

The Reader: Vocabulary
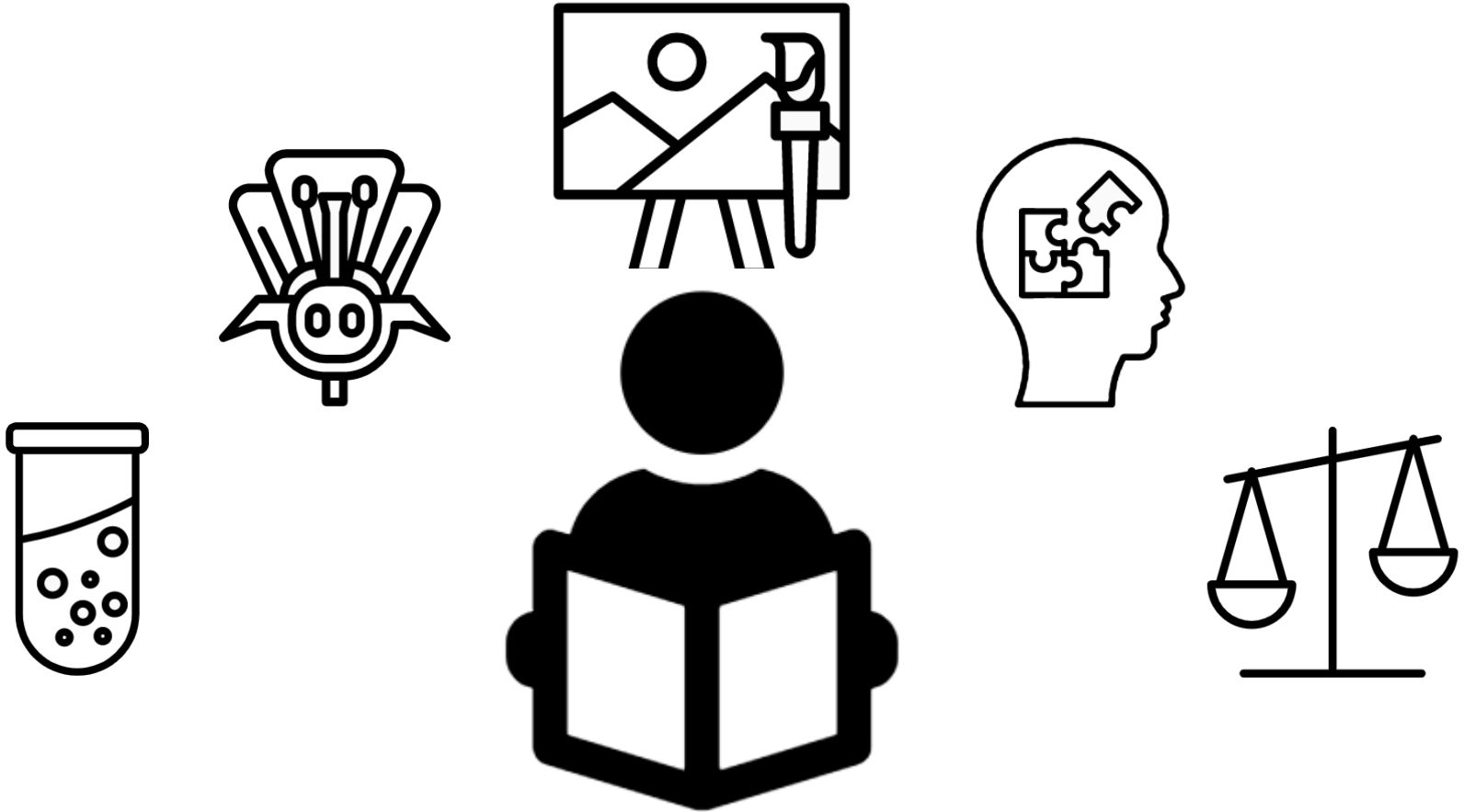
Key Takeaway: When a student is likely to be less familiar with a text's vocabulary, teachers should add explicit study of words critical to understanding the text.

The Reader: Key Idea

By adolescence, readers' skills and range of prior knowledge is even more varied than in primary grades.

Secondary teachers must be even more adept at differentiating reading instruction to meet the needs of subgroups and individual students with diverse prior knowledge, vocabulary, and skills.

Pause & Reflect: What steps can you take to understand a reader's prior knowledge? What steps can you take to teach vocabulary explicitly to students with varied prior knowledge and vocabularies?
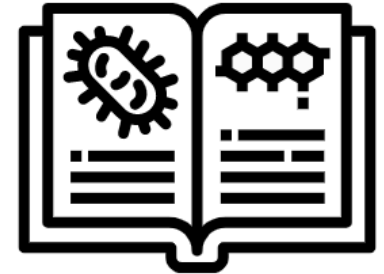
The Text: Structure

LITERARY TEXT

- Plot
- Character
- Setting
- Point of View
- Goal
- Theme
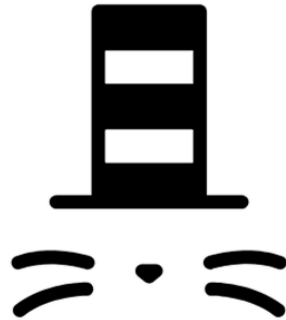
INFORMATIONAL TEXT

- Description
- Sequence
- Comparison
- Cause and Effect
- Problem and Solution
- Argument

Key Takeaway: Teach how text structures work across similar texts and strategies to interpret them.

The Text: Cohesion & Coherence
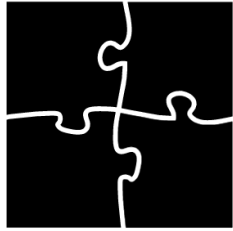
Cohesion:

The way that a text fits together based on grammatical and linguistic devices such as sentence structure, connective words, etc.
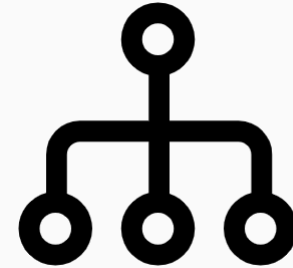
Coherence:

How a text makes sense based on the way that ideas in the text follow from one to the next.

Key Takeaway: Teach students micro-comprehension strategies to help them make clear connections between parts of sentences and in between sentences. More on this later!!

Text Readability vs. Complexity

What's the difference and why does it matter?

Readability

- ✓ **Quantitative** measure
- ✓ Multiple formulas exist
- ✓ Usually considers factors like:
  - Word length
  - Word frequency
  - Sentence length

Complexity

- ✓ **Quantitative** *and* **qualitative** measure
- ✓ Usually considers factors like:
  - Readability
  - Style
  - Theme
  - Visual support and layout
- ✓ **Reader and task** also matter

Key Takeaway: Determine the readability and complexity of a text before you assign it to gain a better understanding of how difficult it will be for a student or students.

The Text: Key Idea

As students progress through grade levels, the texts that they encounter are increasingly challenging and content-specific.

The more expert teachers are in the features of those texts and what makes them complex, the better they can support students to comprehend their reading.

Pause & Reflect: What steps can you take to understand the features of the texts you assign? How readable and complex are the texts you typically assign in your class?

Activity: What's the Purpose?

Surface—Literal *What does it say?*	Text-Based—Inferential *What does it mean?*	Deeper—Situational *What do I think?*
At the surface level where information is explicitly stated in the text *What, where, when?*	At the text or structural level where information within the text must be pieced together to infer new meaning. *How?*	At the reasoning level where information from background knowledge or other sources is linked to information in the text to infer new meaning *Why?*
Involves sequencing and details	Involves understanding author's word choice and word meaning	Involves reasoning and assumptions using evidence from the text
Relies on accurate decoding and serves as a critical foundation for higher levels	Relies on a grasp of syntax and grammar; provides a foundation for higher levels	Relies on critical and analytical skills for deepest understanding and application of knowledge beyond the text

Adapted from: www.readinguniverse.org

The Activity: Key Idea

Challenges arise when readers' purposes are mismatched with what's been asked of them by a teacher or their lack of motivation to read.

To increase student engagement and motivation, teachers must be clear about what type of reading they're asking students to do and share why that purpose for reading is valuable.

Pause & Reflect: How explicit are you when you explain the purpose(s) for reading in your class? How could you share reading purposes more explicitly with students?

Affirming Motivation & Purpose: Classroom Practices

Motivations	Teacher Practices	Student Reasons to Read
Interest/Intrinsic Motivation	Relevance (selecting or allowing students to select relatable texts)	I enjoy this material. It's fun. I can relate.
Ownership	Offering Choice	I chose it. It matters to me. It belongs to me.
Self-Efficacy	Supporting Success (providing targeted praise)	I can do it well. I enjoy being successful.
Social Interaction with Peers	Collaboration	I can do it with others. I enjoy relating to my peers.
Mastery	Thematic Units	I want to understand. I like to learn new things.

Turn and Talk

- What do you typically know about your readers before starting a text with them?

- What do you know about the text itself?

- What about the demands of the activity?

Brainstorm 2–5 ways that you could…

1. Learn about the reader before starting a unit/skill/reading activity
2. Learn more about the text itself
3. Clarify the demands of each activity

Sources

- Loveless, B. (n.d.) Learning to read to read to learn. Myth or reality? Education Corner. Retrieved from https://www.educationcorner.com/learning-to-read-to-read-to-learn.html

- Gough, P. B., & Tunmer, W. E. (1986). Decoding, reading, and reading disability. *Remedial and special education*, *7*(1), 6-10.

- Annenberg Learner. (n.d.) *Chall's states of reading development.* Retrieved from https://www.learner.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/RWD.DLU1_.ChallsStages.pdf

- Snow, C. E. (2010). Reading comprehension: Reading to learn. *International Encyclopedia of Education, (5),* 413-418. Retrieved from http://www.cal.org/create/conferences/2012/pdfs/reading-comprehension.pdf

- See: https://www.readinguniverse.org/copy-of-vocabulary

- Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A practice guide* (NCEE #2008-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

- Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2010). Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved from https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/8c/8d/8c8dfd82-b5fc-4bb9-8bd1-bb262175eaf4/ccny_report_2010_tta_agenda.pdf

- RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/2005/MR1465.pdf

- See: www.readinguniverse.org