



# The Science of Reading —Part 2

## Explicit Comprehension Instruction



# Objectives



**Define** the elements of reading comprehension



**Identify** ways that 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.

# Myth or Truth?



Reading comprehension is mostly about being able to remember what happened in a text after you read it.



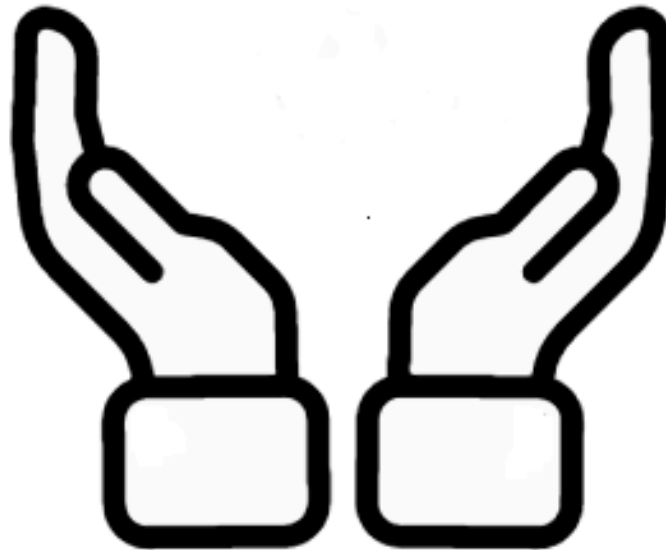
**Myth:** Reading comprehension is mostly about being able to remember what happened in a text after you read it.



**Truth:** Successful comprehension requires the reader to engage both *during* and *after* reading. And often *before* as well!

# How Do We Support “Reading to Learn”?

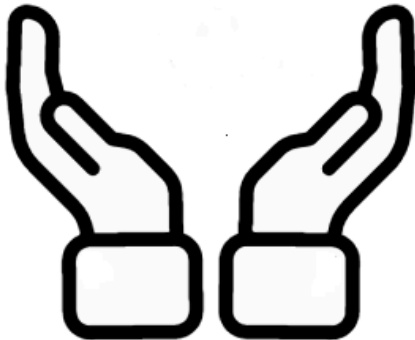
What does it take to support the process of “reading to learn” for upper elementary students into adolescence?



# Supporting Reading Comprehension

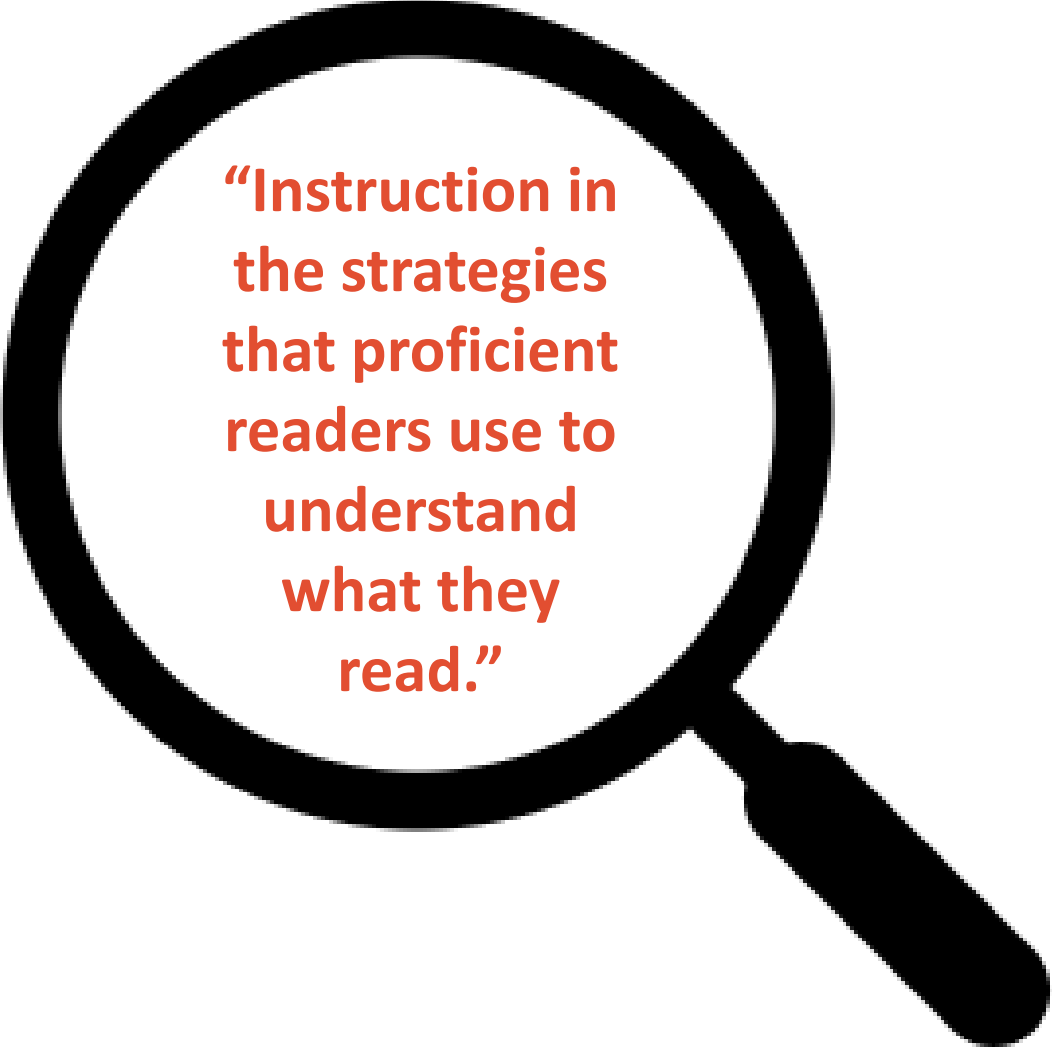


## Reading Comprehension



1. **Explicit comprehension instruction**
2. Literacy instruction embedded in context
3. Motivation and self-directed learning
4. Text-based collaborative learning and discussion
5. Strategic tutoring
6. Diverse texts
7. Intensive writing
8. Ongoing formative assessment
9. Technology component

# Explicit Comprehension Instruction



**“Instruction in  
the strategies  
that proficient  
readers use to  
understand  
what they  
read.”**

—Biancarosa & Snow

# Macro- and Micro-Comprehension

MACRO



# An Exercise

Read the following passage:

*“Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you’d expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn’t hold with such nonsense.”*

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*

J.K. Rowling

<http://blog.amplify.com/microcomprehension>



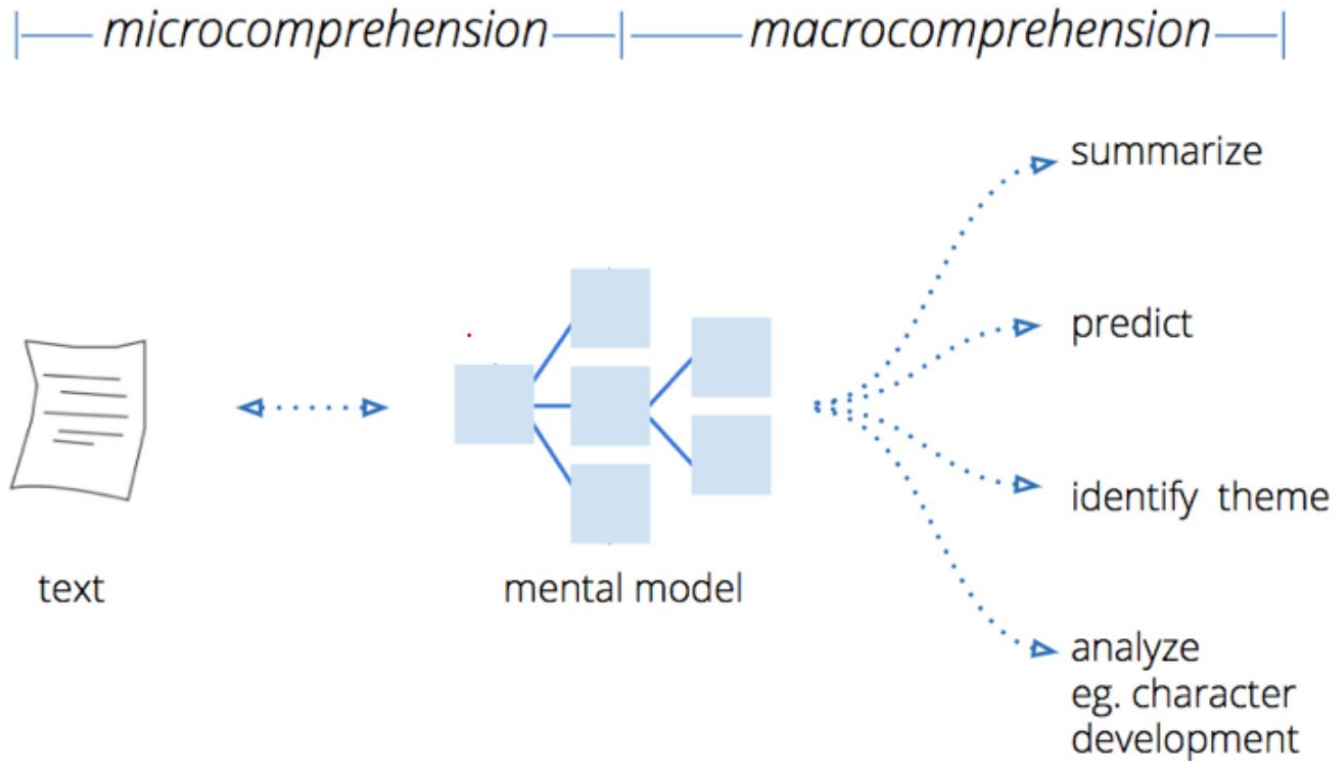
# An Exercise, Continued

Now, try to remember as much as you can about what you just read without looking back at the passage.



<http://blog.amplify.com/microcomprehension>

# Macro v. Micro Comprehension



<http://blog.amplify.com/microcomprehension>

# Micro-Comprehension Skills

## Gap-Filling Inference

- Reading “Jamal forgot his umbrella and got drenched” and understanding that it rained

## Sentence Structure Processing

- Understanding relationships among words based on their place in a sentence

## Allocating Attention

- Figuring out which parts of the text are most important and focusing on those over less-important pieces

## Figurative Language Processing

- Identifying and interpreting metaphor, personification, simile, etc.

## Applying Text Structure

- Using prior knowledge to identify familiar text genres (such as mystery, persuasive essay, etc.)

## Comprehension Monitoring

- Stopping and rereading or using “fix-up” strategies when something doesn’t make sense

# Macro- & Micro-Comprehension: Key Idea

Research tells us that there are two big components of reading comprehension: macro- and micro-comprehension.

Historically, teachers have focused on macro-comprehension when teaching reading, but we now know that micro-comprehension is equally important. Students benefit from explicit comprehension instruction in both areas.

# Turn and Talk



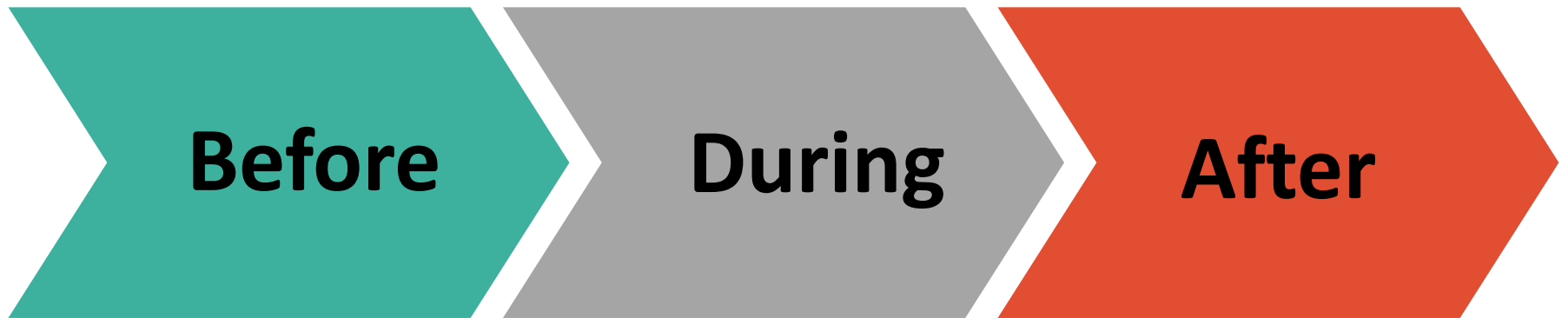
1. When you teach reading comprehension, do you typically focus more on macro- or micro-comprehension skills?
2. Which, if any, micro-comprehension skills could you add to your current approach?
3. What text structures are most relevant to address in your class?

## DEFINITIONS

**Macro-comprehension**—what we do with the mental model of our reading (for example, summarizing, predicting, identifying theme)

**Micro-comprehension**—the small inferences we make during reading to create a strong mental model of a text

# Before-, During-, and After-Reading Skills and Strategies



# Before-Reading Strategies

The **goals** of before-reading, or pre-reading, strategies are to support students to:

- Access prior knowledge
- Interact with key parts of the text before reading
- Practice skills such as sequencing, finding cause and effect relationships, making comparisons, making inferences, etc.
- Identify vocabulary that might be challenging
- Construct meaning before reading

**Examples** of pre-reading strategies:

- Activate prior knowledge (for example, Know, Want to Know, Learned, KWL, charts)
- Use anticipation guides
- Engage with images, excerpts, or other text features (such as tables, figures) to make predictions before reading



# Turn and Talk



**What are some effective ways to engage students in the following before-reading strategies in your class/content area?**

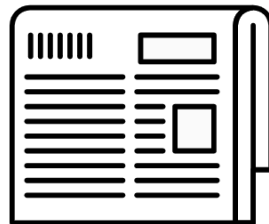
- Access prior knowledge
- Interact with key parts of the text before reading
- Practice skills like sequencing, finding cause and effect relationships, making comparisons, making inferences, etc.
- Identify vocabulary that might be challenging
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# During-Reading Strategies

The goals of during-reading strategies are to support students to:

- Question when they don't understand something in the text
- Monitor understanding of the text
- Find ways to “fix up” things that have confused them
- Comment on the text as they read
- Connect with the text
- Visualize the text



Examples of during-reading strategies:

## Usually Macro-Comprehension:

- Engage in “accountable talk”
- Double-entry journals
- Bookmarks
- Use graphic organizers

## Usually Micro-Comprehension

- Visualize the text
- Reread
- Generate and answer questions
- Make inferences

# After-Reading Strategies

## After-reading strategies support students to:

- Make predictions about what will happen next
- Reflect on and question what they didn't understand
- Fix up or clarify things that they didn't understand
- Summarize, retell, or identify the gist of the text
- Make connections to, evaluate, and analyze aspects of the text

# Before-, During-, and After-Reading Comprehension: Key Idea

There is a great deal that teachers can do to support students' comprehension of a specific text and develop their ability to tackle a range of similar texts. But it can't happen all at the end of a reading!

Students benefit from before-, during-, *and* after-reading comprehension strategy instruction.

# Turn and Talk



1. When you teach reading comprehension, do you typically focus more on before-, during-, or after-reading strategies?
2. Which, if any, strategies could you add to your current approach?
3. What strategies are most relevant to address in your content area?

# Sources

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- Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from [https://production-carnegie.s3.amazonaws.com/filer\\_public/b7/5f/b75fba81-16cb-422d-ab59-373a6a07eb74/ccny\\_report\\_2004\\_reading.pdf](https://production-carnegie.s3.amazonaws.com/filer_public/b7/5f/b75fba81-16cb-422d-ab59-373a6a07eb74/ccny_report_2004_reading.pdf)
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- See: <https://www.readinguniverse.org>