



Oral Language and Language Comprehension

Gather what you need to support language comprehension:

- ✓ **Read-aloud texts**
 - ★ choose texts that will stretch listening comprehension by providing exposure to rich ideas, wide vocabulary, background knowledge, and novel language structures
- ✓ **Text sets**
 - ★ built around a particular topic/theme, representing a range of text complexity. These will provide multiple entry points for students to build background knowledge, acquire language structures, and expand vocabulary around key topics
- ✓ **A collection of high-leverage instructional routines**
 - ★ for building and extending both intentional and incidental classroom conversations – including reading aloud and using interesting words



Dialogic Conversations

1. Engage

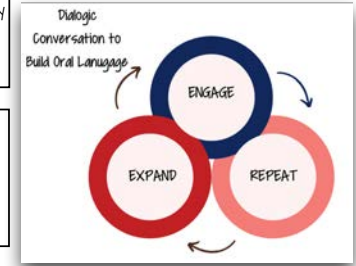
- verbal interaction around a text or general conversation
- may involve asking children's opinion, to name or recall something from a text, or to make a connection

2. Repeat

- repeat, embedding the child's response in a natural way
- repeat only the correct part of a student's response, or integrate a correction into this step

3. Expand

- as you repeat, say a little more
- expand the language to include a new word, phrase or idea



A Sample Dialogic Reading Conversation

Try it with a partner, repeating and expanding on what they say. Then switch so you each get a turn.

Sample Prompts:

- What did you do last night?
- How do you usually celebrate your birthday?
- What's your favourite book?
- What do you like to do for fun?

Dialogic Conversation

1. Engage
Engage children in a verbal interaction around a text or just in general conversation. This may involve asking the child's opinion, asking the child to name or recall something from a text, or asking the child to make connections to personal experience.

Sample Prompts:

- What are you thinking about?
- How did you celebrate?
- What was your favorite part?
- What did you do last night?
- What do you think _____ means?

2. Repeat
Repeat what children say, embedding this in your response in a natural way. If the student's response includes a mistake, only repeat the correct part or integrate a correction into this step.

3. Expand
As you repeat, say a little more than what the child said. Expand the language to include a new word, phrase, or idea. Then begin the process again!

Sample Dialogic Reading Conversation

1 Engage

2 Repeat & Expand

1 Engage

What was your favorite part of the book?
When the mouse saved the lion.

Oh, when the mouse saved the lion! That was so surprising!

How do you think the mouse felt?
Happy!

Dialogic Conversation Tips

1. Adjust your responses and language based on the age of the child.
2. Make your conversation authentic. Show interest in the child, the conversation, and/or the text.
3. Be intentional! This process is simple to understand but takes intentionality and practice.



Recognizing Types of Text Structures

If readers can anticipate that a text will contain certain types of information, and that information will be presented in a certain way, they will be able to make a mental model easier.



- ★ **NARRATIVE TEXT** – tells a story or describes a series of events
- ★ **EXPOSITORY TEXT** – gives information

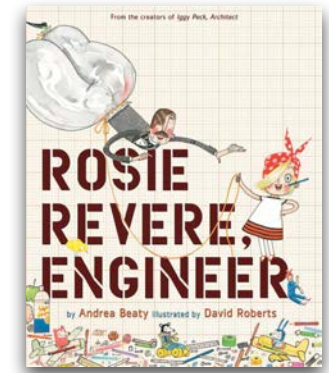


Narrative / Fiction Text Sample

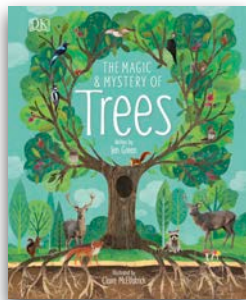


STORY ELEMENTS

- ★ Setting
- ★ Characters
- ★ Problem
- ★ Plot / Action
- ★ Solution
- ★ Theme



Expository / Nonfiction Text Sample



TEXT FEATURES

- ★ Table of contents
- ★ Labels
- ★ Illustrations/photos
- ★ Diagrams/charts
- ★ Definitions
- ★ Headings
- ★ Glossary



The upward spiral of reading success

Our teaching



Their learning experience



The More You Read, The More You Know: Best Practices for Comprehension Instruction – Dr. Molly Ness
Presentation of the 2024 Reading League Conference in Charlotte, NC



“The more words he knew, the more clearly he could share with the world what he was thinking, feeling and dreaming”



Image from: The Word Collector by Peter H. Reynolds



Books

Bringing Words to Life: Beck, McKeown, & Kucan
Differentiating Phonics Instruction for Maximum Impact: Blevins
Shifting the Balance K-2: Burkins & Yates
Shifting the Balance 3-5: Burkins, Cunningham & Yates
Reach All Readers: Geiger
7 Mighty Moves: Kemery
Presentation: The More You Read, The More You Know – Best Practices for Comprehension Instruction: Dr. Molly Ness
A Teacher's Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day: Wright
Strive for Five Conversations: Zucker & Bell



Online Resources

TheSixShifts.com

[Keys to Literacy – Effective Vocabulary Instruction](#)

[ReadWriteThink.org – Creating Text Sets for Your Classroom](#)

[Milne Library at SUNY Geneseo – Text Sets](#)

[Word Torque](#)

[Can Do Kids Academy](#)

[Word of the Day – YouTube](#)

[ASCD Article – When Young Readers Get Stuck – Nell Duke](#)



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