Glossary of Reading Strategies

Most of the strategies listed below—all research-based and classroom-tested—are demonstrated in the video segments included in *More Reading Strategies in Action.* For more detailed explanations as well as information about implementing these and other reading strategies, refer to the excellent sources listed in "Recommended Resources for All Content Areas."

Activating prior knowledge

Research shows that comprehension improves when readers think about or discuss what they know about a topic **before reading**. Activating prior knowledge is an important part of several other reading strategies, including **K-W-L, Anticipation Guides**, directed reading/thinking, and **predicting**. Most of teachers featured in *More Reading Strategies in Action* model the use of **prior knowledge**, either in their "Make Connections" or "Activate Prior Knowledge" segments.

Active reading

The term **active reading** covers a broad range of **during reading** strategies designed to improve comprehension and retention by increasing the reader's involvement in the text. Jennifer Howerton uses active reading strategies with her ninth-grade English students, including **X Marks the Spot**. See Jennifer's clips under "Monitor Comprehension."

Admit slips

This **before reading** strategy is an effective means of **activating prior knowledge** or encouraging **predicting** about reading. It also can engage students in content and clarify their thinking. At the beginning of class or as a brief homework assignment, students are given a slip of paper or index card along with a specific prompt—printed on the paper, written on the board, or delivered orally by the teacher. Students may keep the admit slips throughout class to refer to and add to as they read. Alternatively, the teacher may ask for volunteers to read their admit slips to the class or the students may turn them in so the teacher can read some of them aloud and respond to them. A variation on this strategy may be found in middle school math teacher Pat Black's "Reflect on Reading" segment, where he asks students to answer a question they developed the previous day.

Anticipation Guide

In this **before reading** strategy, the teacher provides students with general statements related to the topic they are going to read about and asks them to agree or disagree with the statements. Anticipation Guides provide a connection to **prior knowledge**, engage students with the topic, and encourage them to explore their own thoughts and opinions. An example of an Anticipation Guide may be found in high school math teacher Tom Stull's "Activate Prior Knowledge" clip.

Context clues

Good readers use this strategy **during reading** to help them understand unfamiliar vocabulary. Students determine the meaning of the new word by looking at the words around it. Teachers can facilitate the process by introducing students to important new words **before reading**. Research shows that even a brief amount of vocabulary instruction greatly improves students' understanding of new words in context. (See Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, *Classroom Instruction That Works*, listed in *Recommended Resources*.)

Decoding

This broad term covers a variety of strategies used to help readers understand unfamiliar words, including breaking words down into their parts. An application of a decoding strategy is Jane Clouse's use of the graphic organizer **Vocabulary Squares** to help her seventh-grade science students understand new vocabulary, demonstrated in Jane's "Understand Vocabulary" clip.

Graphic organizers

Graphic organizers provide students with visual representations for their thinking and learning **before, during, or after reading**. They are effective for making abstract concepts more concrete, organizing and categorizing information, and depicting relationships among ideas.

Cornell Notes (Split-Page Note Taking)

In this popular note-taking strategy, students organize the page into columns for questions/topics and for supporting details. As they read, they convert topics and sub-topics into questions and then record corresponding notes or information beside each question. This strategy encourages **active reading** and **summarizing**, plus it provides a study guide for students to use when they review the material. An example of this strategy may be found in middle school science teacher Jane Clouse's "Take Notes" segment.

Cycle Organizer

This graphic organizer, used **during reading** for taking notes, provides a representation of circular patterns in ideas, events, or concepts, so that students can see the progression of a cyclical sequence. The Cycle Organizer is one of the note-taking options Jane Clouse offers her middle school science students in her "Take Notes" segment.

Frayer Model

This graphic organizer requires students to study concepts in a relational way. Students define a concept, state its characteristics, and provide examples and non-examples. For a classroom application of the Frayer Model, see high school math teacher Tom Stull's segment on "Understand Vocabulary."

The **herringbone** [⧸⧸⧸] provides readers with a framework for recognizing and recording main ideas and supporting details **during** and **after reading**. The categories included in the diagram are often the main idea (the spine of the fish) and "who, where, what, why, when, and how" (the ribs), but they can be altered to fit the particular text students are reading.

H-maps provide a visual representation—a large H-shaped outline—for comparing two concepts or items. Contrasting characteristics are listed on the vertical columns of the H, while similarities are listed on the connecting bar.

KNWS

This **during reading** worksheet guides science and mathematics students as they analyze word problems. Students read the problem and record what facts they know, what information is not needed, what the problem is asking them to find, and what strategy they will use to solve the problem. See high school math teacher Tom Stull's segment in "Monitor Comprehension."

Summary Sheet
This graphic organizer guides students to important information **during reading**. The teacher analyzes the material ahead of time and provides categories for student responses. High school science teacher Sara Poeppelman models a summary sheet in her "Read in Groups" clip.

Venn diagrams are graphic organizers used for comparison. They consist of two or more overlapping circles, each of which represents a different item or concept. Students list the similarities between the items in the intersecting area and list differences in the parts of the circles that are separate.

Vocabulary Comparison/Contrast
This type of graphic organizer serves both to develop concepts and enrich vocabulary. Two figures or drawings represent opposing viewpoints, and students brainstorm words describing each. See the "Understand Vocabulary" clip from middle school social studies teacher Marc Milanich for an example.

Vocabulary Squares
Middle school science teacher Jane Clouse uses this graphic organizer in her "Understand Vocabulary" segment. The graphic requires students to define a word, analyze its structure, write variations of the word, and visualize the word by drawing a picture.

Group summary
Middle school language arts teacher Christy Petroze demonstrates this strategy in her "Read in Groups" segments, as well as her "Summarize Main Ideas and Supporting Details" and "Monitor Comprehension" segments. In this strategy, students use text features to identify major topics. Then they read the material, take notes on what they think is important in each section, work with partners to rank the information, and share their findings with the class. Finally, the class breaks into discussion groups to prepare summary statements for each section of the reading.

"I Do It, We Do It, You Do It"
In "I Do It, We Do It, You Do It," the teacher models a reading strategy. After the students practice the strategy in groups, they do the strategy alone. The "We Do It" phase indicates to the teacher if more modeling is needed for students to acquire the skill. For an illustration, see high school English teacher Jennifer Howerton's segment in "Knowing Your Students as Readers" in which she models the strategy **X Marks the Spot**.

Jigsaw
In this reading strategy, students are assigned to a group, sometimes called the home, base, or beginning group. Each member is assigned a chunk of the reading material. Then students meet in expert groups with other students who were assigned the same chunk. The experts decide what is most important in that segment and then return to their home groups to share the information. This strategy is a good way to cover a long reading assignment. For two variations on Jigsaw, see the "Read in Groups" segments from high school science teacher Sara Poeppelman and high school social studies teacher Sue Wimsatt.

K-W-L
This well-known strategy can be used **before, during,** and **after reading**. Before reading, students are asked to record what they know about the subject of the text and what they would like to know. Then during and after reading, they write down what they have learned.

Making personal connections
This technique increases comprehension by giving students a frame of reference for what they are reading. Marc Milanich demonstrates the strategy with his eighth-grade social studies students in his "Make Connections" segment. He gives his class starter sentences that require them to assume roles related to the historical period they are studying. Students state what decisions they would make in their roles.

Making text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections
This **before reading** strategy is used to activate students' **prior knowledge** and to help them **make predictions** about what they are going to read. As the wording suggests, "text-to-self" involves students connecting what they read to their own lives, "text-to-world" is connecting their reading to other people and events, and "text-to-text" is making connections with other reading. This strategy is commonly used throughout the reading process (**before, during,** and **after**).

Paired reading
In this collaborative **during reading** strategy, one student reads aloud and the other listens and then summarizes what he or she heard as the main ideas.

Predicting
In this **before reading** strategy—often a component of more comprehensive strategies—readers make predictions about the content of a text. Predicting helps students focus on what they are going to read and encourages them to be more active readers as they compare the actual text with their predictions. Christy Petroze uses a **vocabulary prediction activity** with her middle school language arts students (see Christy's "Make Predictions" clip), and Sue Wimsatt demonstrates **using text features to predict** with her high school social studies class (see Sue's "Make Predictions" clip).

Previewing
This **before reading** strategy involves looking at text features—illustrations, titles, headings, tables, etc.—to help understand the reading task and set a purpose for reading. For an example of **previewing**, see high school social studies teacher Sue Wimsatt's "Use Text Features" video segment.

Question/answer relationships (QAR)
This **before, during,** and **after reading** strategy helps students improve their comprehension by illustrating the relationship between questions and answers. QAR employs three types of questions:

> **Text-explicit questions** can be answered with wording that comes directly from the text. Factual questions fall into this category.

Text-implicit questions require the reader to draw conclusions and make inferences based on the information found in the text. To answer the question, the reader must engage in higher-level thinking: *interpreting, explaining, summarizing, defining, analyzing*, etc.

Script-implicit questions or prior knowledge questions ask readers to predict outcomes based on their own experience.

Read-alouds
Read-alouds offer opportunities for teachers to model fluency, build students' comprehension, and develop students' vocabularies.

Reading circle
Alternatively called "**literature circle**," this group approach to reading can improve and extend students' understanding of what they read. Although it is often used with fiction, it also works well with informational text. The teacher determines key ideas for discussion, and then each student is assigned a job within the circle, i.e., "leader," "summarizer," "connector," etc. A variation on this idea may be found in Jennifer Bernhard's work with sixth-grade science students. See Jennifer's "Teacher Talk" and "Read in Groups" segments.

Reading symbols
By marking the text they are reading with symbols **during and after reading**, students become more active readers. After reading, they can use these symbols to revisit passages that may be particularly important, interesting, confusing, surprising, etc. High school English teacher Jennifer Howerton uses a variation on this strategy, **X Marks the Spot,** in her "Monitor Comprehension" segments,

Reciprocal teaching
Reciprocal teaching leads to the mastery of important thinking skills including **summarizing, questioning,** clarifying, and **predicting**. After the teacher models these skills and the students practice them, students assume the responsibility for using the skills to learn and teach new material to small groups.

Recognizing comprehension problems
One of the strategies in the arsenal of a good reader is the ability to recognize when comprehension is not occurring. In her middle school science class, Jane Clouse helps her students recognize when their comprehension is failing and offers them a range of fix-up strategies that will help them solve the problem (see Jane's "Monitor Comprehension" clip).

SQ3R
This strategy provides an overall structure for **before, during,** and **after reading**. Students begin by *surveying* or **previewing** the text, looking for text features that will help them **make predictions** about content and begin to create a scaffold for their learning. Based on their survey, they develop *questions* that they will answer as they *read*. After they read the selection, they *recite*—tell a partner what they have learned and listen to the partner's recitation. Last, they *review* their questions and answers to make sure they haven't missed any important concepts.

Student-generated questions

Generating questions **before, during,** and **after reading** causes students to focus on their reading and to search for meaning. For an extended example of the use of questioning to improve comprehension, see middle school math teacher Pat Black's segments on "Activate Prior Knowledge" "Read in Groups," "Ask Questions," and "Reflect on Learning" in which he has his students write questions to engage them in their reading and to guide them to important content.

Summarizing

This strategy for understanding and retaining information has been the subject of extensive research. High school science teacher Sara Poeppelman uses a **Summary Sheet** graphic organizer to help her students do group summaries of reading material in her "Read in Groups" segment, and middle school language arts teacher Christy Petroze uses a **Group Summary** graphic organizer throughout her teaching segments A third example of summarizing may be found in Sue Wimsatt's high school social studies segment on "Take Notes."

Think/Pair/Share

This **during** and **after reading** strategy requires students to read and perform the assigned task individually and then share and compare their responses and ideas with a partner. For an illustration of a Think/Pair/Share, see middle school language arts teacher Christy Petroze's "Read in Groups 1" segment.

Twin Text

In this strategy, the teacher pairs related readings, either fiction and non-fiction or two non-fiction, to provide depth, enrichment, and different perspectives. For example, Marc Milanich uses a novel in his eighth-grade social studies class to offer his class additional historical perspective on the era they are studying. Another variation on Twin Text is to use an accessible high-interest text to establish prior knowledge before students attempt to read a more difficult text on the same topic.

Using text features to predict

Before reading, students read the bold headings in the text and predict what kind of information they think they will find when they read. High school social studies teacher Sue Wimsatt demonstrates this strategy in her "Make Predictions" segment.

Vocabulary prediction activity

In vocabulary prediction, students guess at the meanings of words **before reading**. **After reading**, they check to see if their predictions were correct. This strategy activates **prior knowledge** and engages the students in **predicting**. An example of a vocabulary prediction activity may be found in middle school language arts teacher Christy Petroze's "Make Predictions" segment.

Word association activity

In this vocabulary brainstorming activity, the teacher says a word, and students respond by writing the first word that comes to mind. Then the students share their words with the class. This activity, which builds connections to the students' frame of reference, is demonstrated in Jane Clouse's middle school science class under "Make Connections."

Word sorts

In this vocabulary development strategy, appropriate for **before** and **during reading**, students sort vocabulary terms into categories. The goal is to help them recognize semantic relationships among important concepts in their reading. One type of word sort is "closed": that is, the teacher provides the categories for the students. In an "open sort," students develop their own categories for sorting vocabulary.

X Marks the Spot

This **active reading** strategy requires students to monitor their own comprehension by using **reading symbols**: an "x" for important, a "?" for a question, a "!" for interesting. High school English teacher Jennifer Howerton demonstrates X Marks the Spot in her "Monitor Comprehension" segments.