

**A READER'S HANDBOOK  
A STEP TOWARDS INCREASING SELF-DIRECTION  
IN ADULT LITERACY LEARNERS**

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## Acknowledgments

The completion of this handbook is a long-awaited goal for me. It is the final step towards realizing a dream I have held for many years - that of completing a graduate degree from the University of Lethbridge. This institution is very special to me, and I am proud to have completed all three of my degrees from here.

I could not have completed this handbook, nor reached my dream without the support of many others. I am delighted to finally have this opportunity to acknowledge the many people who have helped me in so many ways. My thanks to Dr. Michael Pollard, my project advisor, for his patient assistance with my work. I would also like to thank other University of Lethbridge staff for assisting me in my studies.

I also want to thank my colleagues at Lethbridge Community College who listened patiently to me talk about this project, and so many other projects I was involved in during my graduate studies. They were a constant support to my efforts.

Special thanks also must be given to the many students in my classes over the years. I often feel I have learned much more from them than they have from me. Their willingness to risk returning to school encouraged me to complete my studies.

I also wish to thank my "travelling mates". Sharing rides to class made the experience much more worthwhile. Many enthusiastic discussions were held on the road between Grassy Lake and Lethbridge!

Most importantly, I wish to thank my family for their support. Without my parents, parents-in-law, and many other family members, completing my degree would have been a much more difficult task.

I save my most special thanks for last - to my husband Blaine and our young son Mackenzie. Without my family, my goal would be meaningless. Thank you for making my dream come true!

## **Rationale**

### **Project Overview**

The goal of this project was to develop a reading handbook for adult literacy learners based upon the principal of increasing self-direction among learners in an adult literacy program.

### **Background**

I teach academic upgrading and adult basic education (ABE) in a small learning centre in my community. The ABE program focuses primarily upon literacy, but also includes a math, science and social studies component. The ABE group is small, but diverse. Class size is usually less than ten students, however they often range in reading ability from about the grade three to about grade seven or eight. The ABE group is a very rewarding but challenging group to instruct. The curriculum is very flexible in order to allow instructors to best meet the learning needs of individual students. But at the same time it is often difficult to design a class to adequately meet the learning needs of such a diverse group.

In previous graduate courses, I have investigated the principles of self-directed learning. I have discovered that literacy learners need to be introduced to these principles gradually, but that they are capable of increasing their self-direction. One important step in becoming more self-directed is the ability to identify appropriate reading strategies for a new reading experience. I believe that it would be very useful for students to have a resource book which outlines a great variety of strategies so that they can choose one they feel will be most appropriate.

### **Conceptual Framework**

I believe that the goal of a literacy program is twofold: First, it is to develop the student's reading abilities. Doing so should enable to assist the learner to become an independent learner, for by doing so can encourage them to transfer skills learned in the classroom to

more informal learning experiences in their daily lives. Secondly, a literacy program should use literacy instruction as an opportunity for personal development. Many learners who enter the program have low self-esteem and have little confidence in their ability to learn. Helping them to become more successful, independent learners should be an important goal of a literacy program. Based upon these two goals, therefore, I can conclude that literacy materials should be developed to encourage independent learning.

The resource book I developed is based upon a variety of concepts, including, personal development, metacognitive and study skills, and whole language learning. It is organized around the belief that the adult learner is a responsible adult who comes to a learning situation with a vast amount of experiences that can be used as learning resources. Adult learners are also capable of, and often desire greater control over their learning experiences. The principles of self-directed learning imply that the learner should be given the opportunity to develop learning strategies that he or she can utilize to become more independent, lifelong learners.

It is my belief that literacy learners are capable of self-directed literacy learning. However they must be introduced to many of the skills gradually. It is not realistic to expect a learner to work through this handbook in isolation. Nor is it an attempt to simply hand over learning responsibilities to the learner. Instead, it is designed to be used in conjunction with a learning facilitator, whether it be a tutor or a classroom teacher. The learning responsibilities should be shared, with the ultimate goal of giving students greater input into the learning process as they become more skilled at doing so. I believe that if students are gradually given more choices in their learning, they will learn to identify successful learning strategies and apply them to new learning situations.

I have attempted to design the handbook to be flexible enough to meet many different learner needs. The learner / facilitator pair should work through the handbook together, finding reading examples that are appropriate to the learner's interests and needs. They may select the strategies they feel will be most useful to a particular reading situation.

### **Project Development:**

The project is actually a culmination of much of the research I have completed while working on my Masters of Education at the University of Lethbridge. I have been

compiling ideas and plans almost since I began the program. I have also been collecting ideas during the last few years of my teaching career. Therefore, when I actually began working on this project, I had already informally compiled many ideas. The first formal stage of this project was to review what I had thus far accumulated. I then narrowed my focus to specifically identify what skills I would include in a Reader's Handbook: I selected the following general skills:

- Explanation of reading process
- Word Attack Strategies such as basic phonics, pronunciation rules, vowel sounds, and others
- Comprehension Strategies such as the use of context clues, tips for identifying main idea / supporting details, sequencing, questioning strategies and others
- Glossary of significant terms students / learners need to know

I selected the contents based upon the results of my research combined with my teaching experience. The handbook is designed for middle to advanced level literacy students (about a grade four to nine reading level). I did not target the lowest level literacy students as I felt their reading skills would be too limited for this depth. However, some pages from the book may be useful for these students.

The handbook begins with an overview of the reading process. I included this section because I believe it is important that adults be informed of the reading process. I have found that many adult learners do not really understand what reading involves. They often say they "can read every page" but they do not understand what they read. These comments indicate that they are unaware of the complex nature of the reading process. They are usually very insecure about their reading abilities, and feel overwhelmed by the task of improving their skills. Once they have been told how reading works, they seem to be more confident. I also believe that explaining the reading process is important because it gives learners an idea of where they are headed. They can better understand why certain skills will help them read if they are told how they fit into the whole reading process.

I then divided the handbook into two major sections - word attack and reading comprehension strategies. I included strategies for the skills that in my experience students are most in need of developing. In the word attack section I included some general vocabulary building skills as well as some specific skills such as learning sight words and

contractions. The reading comprehension section includes many reading strategies designed to improve general comprehension. These include strategies such as KWL and SQ3R. I also included specific areas such as recognizing the structure of different types of paragraphs and identifying the main idea.

I attempted to set up each strategy in a similar format so that students could easily recognize the organization. For each strategy I included a list of new words, an explanation of the strategy, and a method for using it. When possible I included sample worksheets for learners to use. I also tried to label each strategy according to two reading levels - easier and more difficult.

I developed a draft of the handbook and then showed it to two colleagues. I asked them to review for content, reading level and format. Their comments were very helpful. I also was able to try out a few pages with my students. Based upon the informal feedback I received, I then revised the content to lower the reading level and difficulty of the concepts. I also developed a more consistent format for the layout.

### **Follow-Up:**

I plan to begin using the handbook with my Adult Basic Education class in September. I feel that it will be necessary to work with students for at least one semester before I will be able to make any major revisions. Students should be able to give me feedback on many aspects of the handbook. From their experience, I hope to determine if the layout is appropriate and easy to follow. I also hope to determine if any strategies need to be adapted, deleted or added. In time I also want to include more examples for the strategies. Finally, I also want to determine how I can include some emphasis on greater self-evaluation, a skill necessary to become a more independent learner. Following these revisions, I plan to develop a facilitator's guidebook which will include more background information on the strategies.

### **Concerns / Limitations**

I had planned to have the handbook completed early enough to try it out on a group of students. Unfortunately many other events prevented me from doing so. Other



commitments at work resulting from staffing changes and cutbacks resulted in me having an extraordinarily challenging workload in my other classes. In addition, the ABE students' extraordinarily poor attendance and progress problems made it even more difficult to implement a trial section in a specified period of time. Attendance was often so poor that I could not conduct a regular class. I therefore had to move to a much more individualized learning program and did not have the time to try out any new ideas.

I was, however, able to try out a few pages on an informal basis. One student did not respond well to the information. He still had great difficulty understanding the concepts. I attribute this to several factors. First, the reading level was too difficult for him. I have since made the handout easier to understand. Second, his attendance was so poor that he simply did not receive adequate help. The other students appeared to understand the material adequately, and commented that they liked the format and content.

A second major concern I have is regarding the content. I realize that there are many choices for students in the book. At first they may be overwhelmed by the material, and feel they have to master it all. It is therefore very important for the facilitator to stress that the handbook is a list of possibilities they may, but not **MUST** use.

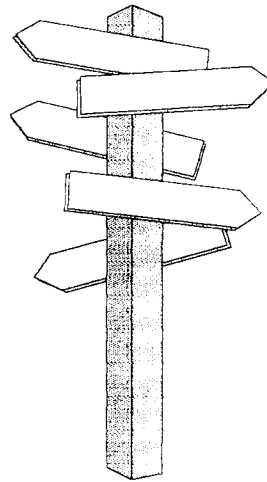
A third major concern I have is the lack of examples. I simply ran out of time to develop enough appropriate examples. I plan to eventually add examples for each strategy so that students have a model to learn from. Before doing so, however, I want to see how well the ideas work.

## **Conclusion:**

It is difficult to call the Reader's Handbook a culminating project, as in many ways it is just a beginning for me. I feel that the development of this handbook is a starting point for enabling me to increase learner's control over their literacy skills development. I have many more revisions I would like to make to the handbook in the future. Most importantly, I hope to see if using materials such as this handbook will indeed increase adult literacy learners' ability and interest in reading. If my adult students can leave the program with improved reading skills and greater confidence in their ability to learn how to read, then my goal will have been reached and perhaps my project will finally be "culminated".

# A Reader's Handbook ...

## A Guide to Better Reading



*By Connie M. Gross  
Summer, 1997*

## **Note to Teacher / Tutor**

Welcome to the Reader's Handbook, a manual designed to provide adult literacy learners with a variety of reading strategies. My goals for the manual are:

- to provide learners with useful reading strategies
- allow a learner to select strategies which work best for his or her own situation
- encourage learners to develop greater independence and self-direction in their learning process by giving them a variety of strategies to choose from

This manual is not designed as an independent study. Rather, it is a manual designed to encourage independence. I believe that with the help of a tutor or facilitator, adult literacy learners can learn to identify reading strategies which work best for their own learning styles and needs. They can then use these strategies to apply to new reading experiences. I believe the manual will work best if the learner and tutor / teacher work together to discuss the strategy, choose an appropriate reading selection to try out the strategy, and discuss the results.

This book obviously cannot cover all reading strategies. Instead, I hope that learners, tutors and facilitators can use this manual to begin the process of selecting strategies that work for each situation. I have left spaces at the end of each major section for students and / or tutors to add additional ideas as they see fit.

I have sometimes broken the reading process into specific parts. I have done so because I have found that students often find it easier to manage one task at a time. I encourage them, however, to remember that reading does involve a complete process which includes many different skills at the same time.

A bibliography is provided at the end of this manual. It is difficult to credit all strategies to a specific author, as many of my ideas have been developed from unknown sources accumulated during ten years of teaching adult literacy.

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## How To Use This Handbook



### Handbook Organization

This handbook is divided into two main parts. The first part shows you strategies for improving your word attack skills. The second part shows many different strategies you can try if you want to improve your comprehension. You do not have to use all the ideas in this book. Work with your tutor or teacher to find the ones that will work best for you.

Each new strategy also is marked to show you the reading level. Look for these symbols.



This page is easier to read



This page is harder to read

To make it easier to understand a new strategy, each new section has these ideas:

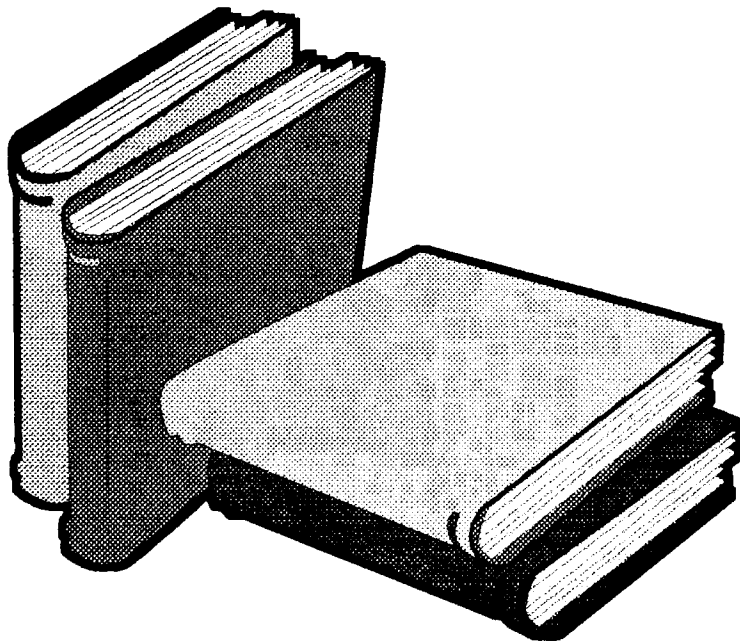
1. Title
2. Purpose
3. New Words
4. Information about the strategy

The end of each part has a page for you to add your own ideas. You may want to use these pages to keep notes on new ideas you learn.

Also, look in the back of this book. Special word meanings are listed in the **glossary**.

**Readers Handbook Part 1**

# **Introduction**



## Reading - An Introduction

### Words to Know

- **strategy:** a plan
- **comprehension:** understanding what you read
- **word attack skills:** skills needed to say or “decode” new words
- **decode:** to break words into parts so you can say them
- **interpret:** to make sense out of a new idea

Way to go - you want to become a better reader! Welcome to the world of great ideas, stories, and adventure.

A good place to start is to think about your own ideas on reading:  
Quickly think about these points:

- What does reading mean to you?
- Why do you want to be a better reader?
- What do you like to read? Why?
- What don't you like to read? Why?

### What is reading? \_

Reading is making meaning out of words written on a page.

**Decoding** words means being able to say words. Reading is being able to decode (say) words and understand them.

Decoding words + understanding = reading

This meaning sounds simple, but as you already know, reading is not simple.

Reading also **involves** sharing ideas with you and the writer. The writer has a **message** or idea he or she wants to pass on to you. It follows these steps:

1. A writer has a message (idea)



2. The writer writes message
3. You get the message
4. You read or **interpret** the message

How you understand the message will depend on many things, including ...

- how well you can read
- your experiences
- your interests
- what you already know about the topic
- your ideas about the topic
- how well the writer has written the message

Look at the first chart called “**Reading Is ...**”. The two circles show that your experience and ideas work with those of the writer’s to help you understand the reading.

In a sense, reading is no different than any other **communication**. When you talk with someone, you are following many of the same steps as when you read. If you and the sender share the same ideas, the message will be easy to understand.

Reading is not much different. You have to learn to interpret the written word. A good writer will make the job easier for you by following certain common rules and patterns. Your job is to learn and understand these rules and patterns. This handbook will give you some clues on how to intepret many of the most common written rules and patterns.

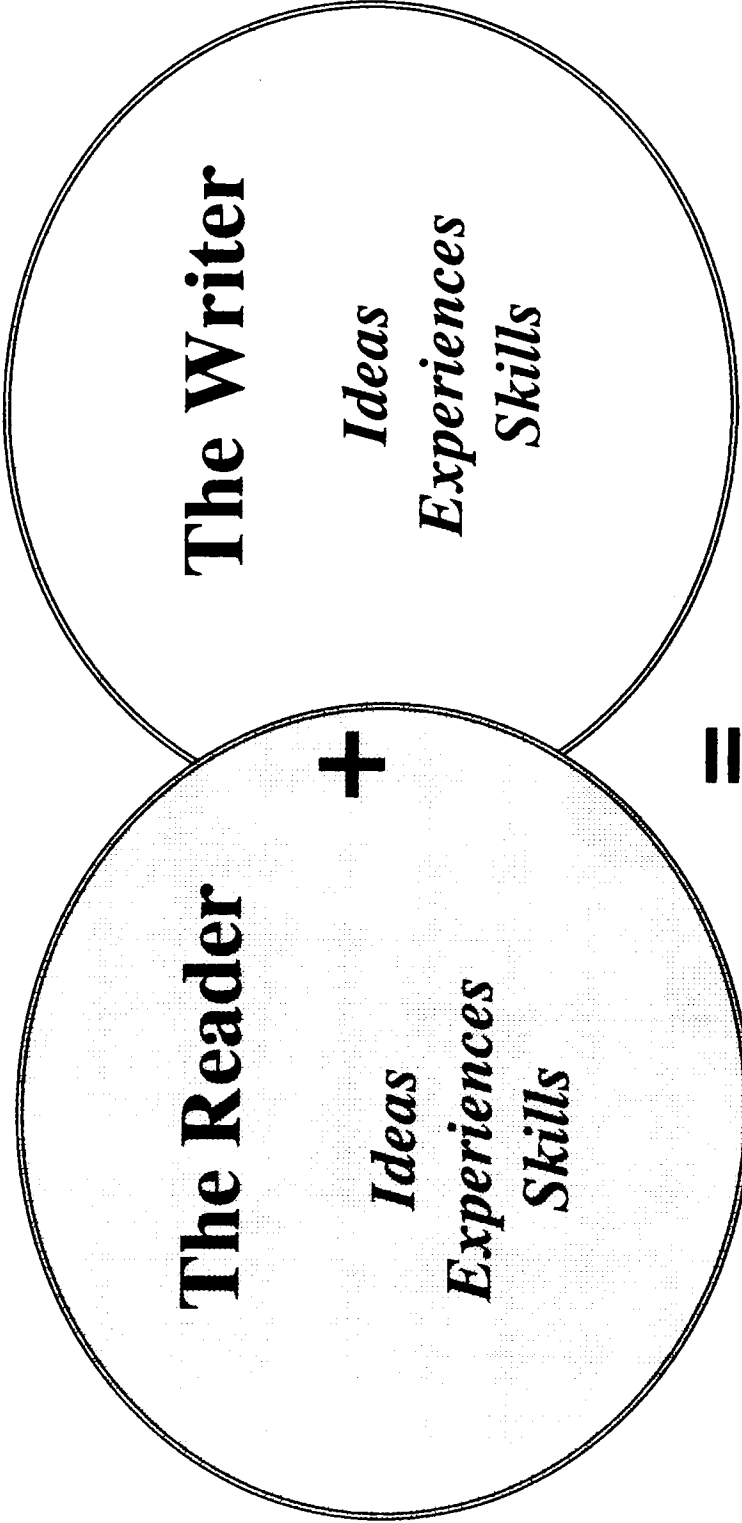
To be a better reader you need to develop **strategies**, or plans for action for special reading skills;

You will need to work on two main reading skill:

- A. Comprehension** - understanding what you read
- B. Word Attack** - decoding, or saying the words

Look at the second “**Reading Is ...**” page. It shows how comprehension and word attack skills work together to complete the reading process. This book had divided the skills into separate parts. But remember that you need to put all your reading skills together to become a good reader.

*Reading Is ...*



**Understanding**

*Reading Is ...*

**Comprehension**

+

**Word Skills**

*Understanding  
what  
you read*

*Saying the words  
Understanding the  
words*



**Reading**

## Good Readers



### New Words:

**Skill:** the ability to do something  
Practicing / practice

Becoming a better reader means you must practice many skills. But it is sometimes hard to know what **skills** you need to work on. These next ideas show you what good readers do. Good readers have many reading skills. Knowing what good readers do can help you become a better reader. Try **practicing** or doing these skills often.

### *A good reader ...*

- ⇒ enjoys reading
- ⇒ reads often

### *while reading ...*

- ⇒ thinks about the reason for reading
- ⇒ knows the reading has a point to be made and looks for that point
- ⇒ asks questions while reading
- ⇒ links what is being read to what he or she already knows
- ⇒ reads a variety of reading material
- ⇒ changes reading strategies to suit the purpose and type of reading being done
- ⇒ becomes interested in the words and sentences while reading
- ⇒ often able to hear **mentally** what is being read
- ⇒ able to see or **imagine** what is being read
- ⇒ often enjoys talking about what has been read

The goal of this book is to help you develop these skills. Remember to check this page often. See if you are getting better at these skills.

**Readers Handbook Part 2**

**Word Attack Skills ...**

**Keys to Better  
Reading**



## Word Attack Skills:

### Introduction

This section gives you some ideas on how to say new words. Being able to say the words you read is one of the keys to becoming a better reader.

This part of the handbook begins with some general tips on learning new words. It also has some helpful word lists. The last page is blank so that you can add new ideas or strategies to this part.

Remember to check the glossary if you do not understand a new word.

Also, some blank pages are added at the back of the book to keep track of new words.

---

**Don't stop trying -**  
Remember these words ...

*"The man who makes no mistakes  
does not usually make anything"*

*- Bishop Magee*

## WordWork

### Purpose:

Help you be a better reader by:

- learning ways to “decode:” or say new words

### New Words:

**Decode:** to break words into parts so you can say them

**Educated guess:** make a good guess based on common sense

Have you ever had to stop reading because you found the words just too hard to say? But when you hear someone else read, you can understand the words. You know many words if you hear them, but you just can't read them. If so, you may want to learn how to **decode** or say words. This pages gives you some tips on how to better decode these words.

Try these steps:

### When you see a new word:<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Say the parts you know
- 2 Read on. Look for clues to the word's meaning. (Often you may be able to guess the word from what comes next)
- 3 Guess at the word again.
- 4 Read on again. Check to see if you guess makes sense.
- 5 Skip the word and go on. Sometimes one or two words won't make much difference.
- 6 Look up the word in a dictionary or thesaurus
- 7 Ask for help.

To help remember these ideas try this method:

---

<sup>1</sup> pg. 8: Locating and Correcting Reading Difficulties

## SCAN

**S**ay what you can

**C**heck the rest of the sentence for clues to the word

**A**sk yourself if you can now say the word, or guess at it

**N**ow, check again. Does your guess make sense?  
Skip the word, look in a dictionary, or ask for help

**Here is another way to remember these steps**

## SCORE

Say what you can

Check the rest Of the sentence for meaning

Read on

Make an Educated guess



## Building Vocabulary



### **Purpose:**

Learn how to make sense out of new words

### **New Words:**

**Educated guess:** a guess based on common sense

**Definition:** the meaning of a word

**Synonym:** words that have the same, or almost the same, meaning

**Antonym:** words that have opposite meanings

**Thesaurus:** a dictionary of synonyms

Have you ever had to stop reading because you found the words just too hard to **say and understand**? Even when you hear the words, you are not sure what they mean. If so, then you will find it helpful to build your **vocabulary**. Knowing many different words helps you become a better reader.

Words are very powerful. They allow us to say exactly what we mean, and share our ideas with others. They can also create wonderful pictures in our minds. For example, someone can tell you about a beautiful place they visited. If they describe it well, you can “see” the place in your mind. Words, then, are one of the most important building blocks for becoming a more powerful reader.

### Try These Steps:

1. Learn to love words. Become interested in learning new words.
2. Listen to people speak on radio or television news or other programs of interest. Or listen to people around you speak. Try to pick out new words. Listen often. Soon you will hear the same words used often.
3. Ask questions. When you hear a new word, ask someone what it means.
4. Keep word lists. Keep track of new, interesting words. Look at this list often. Listen to hear how people use these words. Try using them yourself.

5. Become friends with your dictionary and thesaurus. A dictionary will give you the meaning of the word. But sometimes these **definitions**, or meanings, are hard to understand. That is when it is helpful to use your **thesaurus**. This book gives you a list of **synonyms**, or words that mean the same.

**To help you remember the new words:**

Keep a list of new words. Include these ideas on your list.

1. Find the correct meaning. Write it out.
2. Write out some synonyms (words that the same, or almost the same). Pick ones that you already know.
3. Write out antonyms (words that have opposite meanings).
4. Use the word in a sentence to make sure you know how to use the word correctly.
5. Try some fun ways of remembering words. Example: If the word reminds you of anyone or thing, write them down. You may even draw a picture of something to help you remember it. Play word games such as Balderdash or Scrabble. Make up your own word games.

**Sample Word List**

<p><b>New Word</b></p>   <p><b>How to Say It</b></p>	<p><b>Synonym</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <p><b>Antonym</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>Definition</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Sentence:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>		<p><b>Other "Fun" Ideas</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## List - Group - Label<sup>2</sup>



### Purpose:

- Help you build your vocabulary
- Help you organize your ideas

### Words to Know:

**label:** to put a name on a list of common ideas

### Background:

You will have to learn many new words for some of your classes. Sometimes it is hard to remember them all. If you can group ideas that are the same, or similar, together, you will find it easier to remember them. You will also understand them better because you will be able to see how they are all related.

Working with someone else can be very helpful to build this skill. Sharing the ideas can help you remember them.

### Try these steps...

#### 1. List:

- Find the main topic of study
- List all the words you know about the topic.

#### 2. Group

- Find a few words that are closely related.
- Write them on a separate list.
- Keep doing this until most of the words are put into smaller groups.

Note: You may have some words that fit into more than one group. You may also have some words that do not seem to fit into any group.

#### 3. Label

- Name each small group.
- Think of a few words that best shows how the ideas are related.

---

<sup>2</sup> p. 306 Reading Strategies and Practices: Dishner et al

**List - Group - Label**

**Practice Sheet**

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Brainstorm List of Words**

---



---



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---



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---

**Break these words into smaller groups**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List # 1</b></p> <p>Label: _____</p> <p>Words:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List # 2</b></p> <p>Label: _____</p> <p>Words:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List # 3</b></p> <p>Label: _____</p> <p>Words:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List # 4</b></p> <p>Label: _____</p> <p>Words:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List # 5</b></p> <p>Label: _____</p> <p>Words:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List # 6</b></p> <p>Label: _____</p> <p>Words:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## Vowels and Consonants



All letters can be divided into two groups: **Vowels** and **Consonants**

### Vowels:

**A E I O U (Y)**

- Note: Y is sometimes used as a vowel  
Example: cry, fly

### Consonants:

**B C D F G H J K L M N  
P Q R S T V W X (Y) Z**

- Note: Y is usually a consonant  
Example: Yellow, yesterday

### *To Think About:*

- Every word must have at least one vowel. Most words also have at least one consonant

**V**owels make two sounds: **long** or **short**

**Long Vowels** are vowels which say their names. You can hear them in a word

Example:

- cake = a    boat = o
- use = use    meat - e

It usually takes **two vowels** to make a long vowel sounds. This can happen in these ways:

1. Two vowels together can make the first vowel long. This saying may help you remember this pattern:

*“When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking”*

Examples: **rain, eat, feet, oats**

The pattern for these words looks like this:

**CVVC** (c = consonant, v = vowel)

2. A silent “e” on the end of a word  
Example: ice these cake phone fuse

This pattern will look like this:

**VCV**

3. You can make the long vowel sound by using “open” syllables.  
These are syllables that end in a vowel  
Example: go be by potato (po ta to)
4. Some other ways = ei sometimes makes the long a sound  
Example: weigh, neighbor, sleigh

### **Short Vowels:**

Often **short vowels** are made when you have **one vowel** with consonants on both sides. They can also be made when you have a consonant after a vowel

Example: flap bed, hit crop up

Pattern = **cvc** or **ccvc**

They can also be made in many different ways.

***Remember: Many words do not follow these patterns. They are “exceptions” to the rule.***

### **To say a new word ...**

Look at these common vowel patterns. Try one that looks closest to your word. Say the new word using the vowel sound. If it doesn’t sound right, try a different vowel sound.

## Sample Vowel Sounds

Vowel	Long	Short
<b>A a</b>	cake rain weigh lay	hat apple strap
<b>E e</b>	eat see me feet these	bed egg them bread said mountain
<b>I i</b>	ride fight ivy high fine ice by	sit in fix trick
<b>O o</b>	go slow no know wrote window loaf open	hot on stop not
<b>U u</b>	use blue tube June stew	up fun truck

## Your Turn

Make your own vowel chart. Find words that are important to you. Try to fit them into the short or long vowel chart. Look at your vowel charts to see which pattern your word best fits.

Example: Jake lunch cent swim

Vowel	Long	Short
<b>A a</b>	Jake _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
<b>E e</b>	_____ _____ _____	cent _____ _____ _____
<b>I i</b>	_____ _____ _____	swim _____ _____ _____
<b>O o</b>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
<b>U u</b>	_____ _____ _____	lunch _____ _____ _____



<b>Other Vowel Sounds</b>
---------------------------

Some letters change the vowels sounds so they are not quite long or short.  
Some examples of this are:

<b>- ar</b> far barn car	<b>- aw</b> lawn jaw straw	<b>- er</b> clerk winter
<b>-ew</b> dew flew new stew	<b>-ir</b> sir first	<b>- oi</b> oil boil
<b>-oo</b> 1. school tool moon 2. book cook	<b>-oof</b> goof hoof	<b>- or</b> born doctor
<b>- ou</b> about cloud sound	<b>-ow</b> 1. cow now brown 2. low flow snow	<b>- oy</b> boy toy
<b>- ur</b> burn hurt turn		

## Consonant Sounds

<b>B</b> - bake, boy	* <b>C</b> - cone cent	<b>D</b> - dog door	<b>F</b> - food, fun
* <b>G</b> - go, game gentle	<b>H</b> - hurry	<b>J</b> - jump	<b>K</b> - kite
<b>L</b> - lamb log	<b>M</b> - mother	<b>N</b> - nose	<b>P</b> - pet
* <b>Q</b> - quit	<b>R</b> - rest	* <b>S</b> - hiss cries	<b>T</b> - top
<b>V</b> - vet	<b>W</b> - wet	<b>X</b> - extra	<b>Y</b> - yellow
<b>Z</b> = zoo			

\* These consonants can make two sounds. Remember these rules:

1. Soft / Hard “**C**” or “**G**”:

- Hard **C** - “k” sound as in Candy or Coke
- Soft **C** - “s” sound as in city or cent
- Hard **G** - “g” sound as in go or goat
- Soft **G** - “j” sound as in giant or age

**An “I” or “E” comes after a “c” or g” usually makes the “c” or “g” soft:**

Example: city, ice, wage, spice, ace, ledge, judge

2. “**S**” can make two sounds:

- “**S**” as in hiss or snake
- “**Z**” as in close or rose

3. **Q** will usually have a “**u**” after it. The “**qu**” makes a “**kw**” sound

Example: Queen, quite, quit

### Other Sounds:

<b>ch</b> church child	<b>gh</b> 1. (f) laugh 2. (silent) right	<b>kn</b> knee knew	<b>ph (f)</b> phone gopher
<b>sh</b> show	<b>th</b> 1. then there 2. thin thick	<b>wh</b> 1. who 2. what which	<b>wr</b> wrap write

## Word Lists



**Purpose:** Help you learn words you may use often

“Sight words” are words that are used often. If you learn to know these words quickly you will become a faster reader.

Here are some of the most common sight words. These words are divided into 11 lists of 20 each. Go through the list one group at a time. Pick out the words you have trouble with. Practice them often. Use each word in a sentence to help you remember it.<sup>3</sup>

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
1. the	1. at	1. do	1. big
2. to	2. him	2. can	2. went
3. and	3. with	3. could	3. are
4. he	4. up	4. when	4. come
5. a	5. all	5. did	5. if
6. I	6. look	6. what	6. now
7. you	7. is	7. so	7. long
8. it	8. her	8. see	8. no
9. of	9. there	9. not	9. came
10. in	10. some	10. were	10. ask
11. was	11. out	11. get	11. very
12. said	12. as	12. them	12. an
13. his	13. be	13. like	13. over
14. that	14. have	14. one	14. your
15. she	15. go	15. this	15. its
16. for	16. we	16. my	16. ride
17. on	17. am	17. would	17. into
18. they	18. then	18. me	18. just
19. but	19. little	19. will	19. blue
20. had	20. down	20. yes	20. red

<sup>3</sup> Ekwall and Shanker. Modified Dolch Sight Word List Appendix D

**List 5**

1. from
2. good
3. any
4. about
5. around
6. want
7. don't
8. how
9. know
10. right
11. put
12. too
13. got
14. take
15. where
16. every
17. pretty
18. jump
19. green
20. four

**List 9**

1. soon
2. made
3. run
4. gave
5. open
6. has
7. find
8. only
9. us
10. three
11. our
12. better
13. hold
14. buy
15. funny
16. warm
17. ate
18. full
19. those
20. done

**List 6**

1. away
2. old
3. by
4. their
5. here
6. saw
7. call
8. after
9. well
10. think
11. ran
12. let
13. help
14. make
15. going
16. sleep
17. brown
18. yellow
19. five
20. six

**List 10**

21. use
22. fast
23. say
24. light
25. pick
26. hurt
27. pull
28. cut
29. kind
30. both
31. sit
32. which
33. fall
34. carry
35. small
36. under
37. read
38. why
39. own
40. found

**List 7**

1. walk
2. two
3. or
4. before
5. eat
6. again
7. play
8. who
9. been
10. may
11. stop
12. off
13. never
14. seven
15. eight
16. cold
17. today
18. fly
19. myself
20. round

**List 11**

21. wash
22. show
23. hot
24. because
25. far
26. live
27. draw
28. clean
29. grow
30. best
31. upon
32. these
33. sing
34. together
35. please
36. thank
37. wish
38. many
39. shall
40. laugh

**List 8**

1. tell
2. much
3. keep
4. give
5. work
6. first
7. try
8. new
9. must
10. start
11. black
12. white
13. ten
14. does
15. bring
16. goes
17. write
18. always
19. drink
20. once

## Contractions



Contractions are short forms of two or more words. The apostrophe ' is used to show you that some letters have been taken out.

Here are some common contractions.

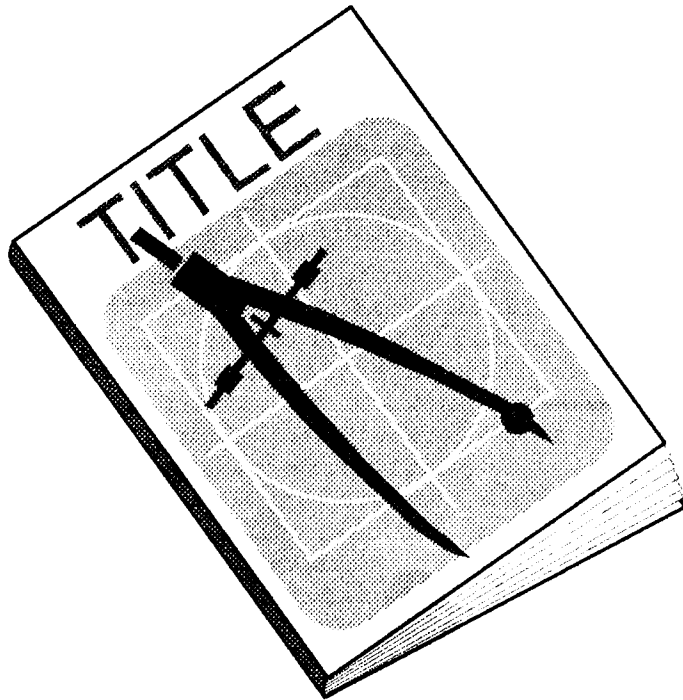
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. anybody'd = anybody would</li> <li>2. aren't = are not</li> <li>3. can't = cannot</li> <li>4. couldn't = could not</li> <li>5. didn't = did not</li> <li>6. doesn't = does not</li> <li>7. don't = do not</li> <li>8. hadn't = had not</li> <li>9. hasn't = has not</li> <li>10. haven't = have not</li> <li>11. here's = here is</li> <li>12. he'd = he would</li> <li>13. he'll = he will</li> <li>14. he's = he is</li> <li>15. isn't = is not</li> <li>16. it's = it is</li> <li>17. I'd = I would</li> <li>18. I'll = I will</li> <li>19. I'm = I am</li> <li>20. I've = I have</li> <li>21. let's = let us</li> <li>22. she'd = she would</li> <li>23. she'll = she will</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24. she's = she is</li> <li>25. that's = that is</li> <li>26. there'll = there will</li> <li>27. there's = there is</li> <li>28. they'd = they would</li> <li>29. they'll = they will</li> <li>30. they're = they are</li> <li>31. they've = they have</li> <li>32. wasn't = was not</li> <li>33. weren't = were not</li> <li>34. we'd = we would</li> <li>35. we'll = we will</li> <li>36. we're = we are</li> <li>37. we've = we have</li> <li>38. where's = where is</li> <li>39. who'd = who would</li> <li>40. who'll = who will</li> <li>41. won't = will not</li> <li>42. wouldn't = would not</li> <li>43. you'd = you would</li> <li>44. you'll = you will</li> <li>45. you're = you are</li> <li>46. you've = you have</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



# **Readers Handbook Part 3**

## **Understanding What You Read ...**

### **General Reading**



## Part 2: Reading Comprehension

The next part of this handbook will give you some ideas on how to better understand what you read. It has two parts. The first part gives you ideas on how to read **non-fiction**. Non-fiction is writing that is true. For example, non-fiction includes pamphlets, news stories, magazine articles, and other true stories. The second part gives you ideas on how to read **fiction**, or stories. Fiction includes readings such as novels, short stories, and plays.

Remember to look back at page 6 “**Good Readers**”. Keep these ideas in mind as you work to improve your understanding of what you read.

Don't forget to keep your own notes at the end of this section.

*Good luck!*



## Reading Comprehension (Understanding what you read)

### New Words

**comprehension:** understanding what you read

**complicated:** difficult or complex

**critical reading:** judging what you read

Understanding what you read can be one of the hardest skills to improve. This is because comprehension involves many different skills. Some factors that will affect your comprehension can include:

- what you already know about the subject: It is usually harder to read about new ideas than about what you already know
- your purpose or reason for reading: If you know why you are reading something it can make it easier to understand it.
- how well you can read the words: You don't have to know every word you read to get the main idea. But sometimes you may have trouble reading if there are just too many words you can't understand.

How well you understand what you read will also depend on the way the material is written. Some factors that affect how you read new material include:

1. the number of new words in the reading material
2. the length of the sentences
3. the words chosen by the writer
4. the way sentences are put together
5. the way the paragraphs are put together

Readings that have simpler words, sentences and paragraphs are often easier to read than others.

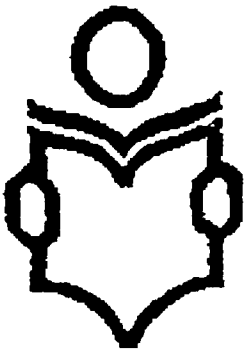
So, to become better at understanding what you read you should start thinking about what you already know and can do. You must also look to see how the writer has put his or her ideas together so you can get an idea of what the writer wants to say. To do all this takes practice. You may

want to start by looking at the main skills involved in reading comprehension. How well you understand what you read will depend on how well you can:

1. pick out the main idea
2. pick out the most important details
3. imagine (picture or visualize) what you read
4. guess what will happen next (predict outcome)
5. see how the writer has organized the ideas
6. read critically (judge what you read)

The next pages in the handbook will show you many different ways to build these skills. Some ideas will work just on one skill. Others will work on many skills at the same time.

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*Reading opens doors ...  
Which door will you open today?*

## 3 Steps to Better Reading



### Words to Know:

**pre:** a word part meaning “before”

**post:** a word part meaning “after”

**strategy:** a plan

### Purpose: Help you understand what you read

You will find it helpful to break your reading process into smaller parts. It is no different than a good exercise program:

- A. Warm-up - prepares your body for exercise
- B. Workout - gives your body the exercise
- C. Cool Down - lets your body enjoy the benefits of the workout

Like a good workout, reading also has three main stages: You need to do work before, during and after reading


- **Before** = Pre-reading
- **During** = Reading
- **After** = Post - Reading

### A. Pre - Reading

Pre-reading is the time to get ready to read. Good pre-reading skills can help you better understand what you are about to read. You can get ideas on the following:

- clues (hints) about the purpose of the material
- clues on what to look for
- helps you relate the reading to what you already know
- gets you more interested in the reading.

Try these steps to pre-reading:

 **Look** over the reading quickly. Look for:

- pictures, charts, headings, bold letters, or any other hints to what the reading is about
- Look quickly at the first and last sentences. Try to guess what the story or reading will be about.

? **Ask** yourself questions:

- When does the reading take place
- Who are the main people in the reading?
- What happens to them? Why?
- Who is the reading about? What did they do? When? Why? How?



**Think:**

- What do I already know about this topic?
- Does it look like my ideas will match the ideas of the reading?
- Why or why not?
- What do I want to know about this topic?
- What do I hope to find out? Why?

## **B. Reading:**

When you read, keep working! Try some of these ideas to help you better understand what you read:


? Ask yourself questions:

- What is going to happen next? Why do I think this?
- Do I like what the writer has said?
- Does this make sense to me?
- Ask the 5 W's: Who, What, Where, When, Why,  
Who is the reading about? What happened to this person?  
Why? Where? When?

Stop every now and then if the reading is long. Check to see if you understanding what you just read.

### C. Post - Reading:

After reading you have more work to do!

- ? Answer your questions you asked before and during reading
-  Try to put the main idea into your own words. Say or write it in less than three sentences.
- ? Ask yourself what else you would like to know about the topic.

Now that you have finished reading, take time to just sit back and enjoy the ideas. Share them with a friend or classmate. Remember, reading is meant to be enjoyed.

As you read through this handbook, you will find many more ideas that you can try in each step of the reading process. Find the ones you like best. Try them out!

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*To Think About:*

*Success comes in cans  
Failure comes in can'ts<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Kaplan, Marcia and David: Thanks: Lovable, Livable, Laughable Lines 1989

## The Big Picture (Main Idea)



The **Big Picture!** It is what we are trying to find when we read for the main idea. The big picture is like the main idea. It is the most important idea from a reading. Finding the **main idea**, or big picture, is a very important step to becoming a better reader.

### New Words

**Topic Sentence:** a sentence that tells the main idea of a paragraph

**Text:** material to be read

### To help find the main idea:

#### A. Get to know how the reading is organized

Reading is divided into paragraphs. A paragraph is a group of words related to one main idea. It usually is about three to four sentences long. But remember, sometimes a paragraph may be much longer or shorter. It all depends on how many ideas are needed to make the topic sentence seem clear.

To help understand how a paragraph works, let us compare it to a new toy that you have just bought for a child. The outside of the box shows a picture or tells you what should be inside the box. When you open the box you should find many little pieces that, when put together, make the new toy.

A good paragraph is like a new toy in many ways. It will have a topic sentence that tells you the most important idea of the paragraph. This topic sentence is like the wrapping or packaging on a box. A good wrapper tells you what to expect inside a box. In the same way, a topic sentence tells you what to expect to read about in a paragraph.

The topic sentence is often at the beginning of a paragraph. But remember, it may be also be found in the middle or end of a paragraph. It all depends on how the writer puts his or her ideas together.

After the topic sentence you will find some supporting sentences. These sentences give the reader details that support the main idea. They are the like the pieces in a box. When you put them all together, you have your main idea.

Many paragraphs also have a concluding sentence, or one that leads into the next paragraph. This sentence lets you know you are ready to move onto another new idea in the next paragraph.

***Remember: A paragraph often has the following types of sentences:***

- 1. Topic Sentence**
- 2. Supporting sentences**
- 3. Sentence that concludes or leads into the next paragraph**

### **Try These Steps:**

1. Pre-read the **text**
  - Look over the text. Get yourself ready to read. (See the pages on “3 Steps to Reading” for more ideas)
2. Read the text.
3. After reading, try some of these ideas to help you find the **main idea**:
  1. Look for the **Topic Sentence**.

Underline or circle it. Read it again. Ask yourself these questions to see if you have found the main idea:

- Does it have one main topic?
- Does it tell me what to expect when I read the paragraph?
- Could you or someone else guess what the rest of the paragraph could be about just from hearing the topic sentence?

## 2. **Headline Hunter:**

Write a newspaper headline of less than 10 words.  
Ask yourself the **5 W's** to pick out the most important ideas.

### **Who, What, Where, When, Why**

You must get the reader's interest with your headline. You do not need to worry about having a perfect sentence. Headlines do not always have as many words as complete sentences.

#### *Example*

If you have just read a story about a snowstorm in Taber, you may write a headline like this:

#### *Snowstorm shuts down Taber for Weekend*

3. Try writing the main idea in a complete sentence of less than 10 words.

- Again, ask yourself if someone could guess what the rest of the paragraph will be about from just reading your sentence.

4. Many of the other general activities in this handbook will help you find the main idea. Pick the ones that work best for you. You may have other ways that work well, too!

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### *Coming Up Next ...*

The next pages will show you different ways paragraphs can be organized. Remember, when reading a paragraph, look to see how it is organized.



## Types of Paragraphs



Paragraphs come in many shapes and sizes. Some are very long and detailed. Others are very short and simple. The way a paragraph is put together will depend on the purpose for writing. Some purposes include the following:

1. Compare and Contrast: look at how ideas are the same (compare) or different (contrast)
2. Give Directions: tell how to do something
3. Persuade: make the reader believe a point of view on a topic
4. Explain an idea or opinion: share ideas with the reader
5. Give a description: create “pictures” in the reader’s mind

Paragraphs also come in many shapes. These outlines show you **some** ways paragraphs can be organized.

Note: The main idea, or topic sentence will be wider than the details.

1. Topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph:

I will let my children go to the show again if .....

They clean their rooms every day for one week

They do their homework every night.

They save their spending money.

If they do all these things, I am sure ....

## 2. Topic Sentence at the end of a paragraph

The first speaker introduces .....

The second speaker introduces ....

The third speaker talks about ....

All of the speakers in the story are very worried about .....

## 3. Comparing Ideas:

Many people eat too much ...

Many people drink too much ...

Many people watch TV too much ...

But on the other hand there are people who ....

Even some of these do not ...

Some do not even ...

Sometimes there are those who ...

## 4. Explaining Ideas:

The store closed down because ...

Another reason was ....

A third reason was ...

The final reason it happened was ....

---

As you can begin to see, paragraphs come in many shapes. As you are reading, try to picture the shape of the paragraph in your mind. It will help you pick out the main idea and details. It will also help you remember what you read. **Good luck!**

## Compare and Contrast



### Purpose:

Help you understand what you read by:

- picking out how the ideas in the text are the same
- picking out how the ideas are different

### New Words:

**Compare:** to look at how ideas are the same

**Contrast:** to look at how ideas are different

### Background

Writers usually use special patterns or outlines for paragraphs and essay. One common pattern is **comparison** or **contrast**. Paragraphs often explain ideas by showing how a new idea is the same as or different than an idea you already know about. You can build your reading comprehension by learning when to look for these patterns.

This form can help you outline ideas in a comparison / contrast article or paragraph:

	Idea One	Idea Two
<b>What ideas are being compared / contrasted?</b>		
<b>How are these ideas the same?</b>		
<b>How are these ideas different?</b>		
<b>What do you think about these ideas?</b>		

## Directions (How - To Paragraphs)



### New Words:

**chronological:** ideas organized according to the order of time

**transitional words:** in writing, words that clearly show that a new idea is coming

### Purpose:

Help you understand what you read by:

- recognizing the organization of a paragraph
- gives you clues to the meaning
- tells you what to expect will happen next

### Background:

A direction paper tells the reader how something is or was done. These types of paragraphs usually have these common features.

- They give step-by-step instructions
- They follow **chronological** order, which means they will be written according to how things happened in time. For example, if you are telling someone how to bake a cake, you will tell them the steps that must be done first in time, and end with the last steps.
- They show a cause and effect relationship. This means that one idea causes the next, which in turn causes the next idea.
- They use vocabulary that clearly signals the next step. These words are called “transitional” words.

### Common “transitional” or signal words

First, Second, Third, Fourth, Next, After that, Following that, Then, Later, At the same time, During, Finally

## Making Sense out of Directions

When you read direction, it is helpful to keep track of all the steps. As you read, underline the **transitional** or signal words. These will help you pick out each step. Then, after you have finished reading, go back and underline or mark each of the directions. You may want to keep track of them by making a list of all directions.

Use this chart like this one to help you keep track of directions.

Step	Directions	Special Notes (list any special information needed - example - time, supplies, or other ingredients needed)
1	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## Persuasive Paragraphs

### **New Words:**

**Persuade:** to convince

**Persuasive writing:** writing meant to convince the reader to believe a certain point of view

Writing that tries to convince the reader to believe or do something is called **persuasive** writing. The writer will try to make you believe what he or she is telling you. Sometimes when you are reading it is hard to tell that you are being persuaded to believe something. Other times it is very easy to tell. Think of television commercials or other advertisements. They are trying to sell you something. When you read something persuasive you may be reading the same types of tricks that advertisers use!

A persuasive paragraph might look like this:<sup>5</sup>

“X” brand of soap cleans well ....
“X” brand leaves no ring in the bathtub
“X” brand keeps you smelling clean ....
therefore
You should always buy it.

Persuasive writing often uses some of these strategies:

1. **Expert Opinion:** The writer may use the ideas of a doctor, a scientist, or other people who are supposed to be experts in their subject.
  - Example: “Dr. Jane Doe tells her patients to use “x-brand” soap because it is safer and easier to use
  
2. **Case Studies / Examples:** The writer may include some examples or real-life experiences of people to help prove his or her main idea.
  - Example: The writer may tell a story of a person who found out that “x” brand soap is best.

<sup>5</sup> p. 139 Ekwall, Eldon E and Shanker, James L: Locating and Correcting Reading Difficulties 6th Edition Maxwell MacMillan Canada 1989

3. **Facts or Statistics:** The writer may use facts or statistics to prove his or her point
  - Example: “X” brand soap now has 50% less chemicals than before.
4. **Generalizations:** The writer may use statements that suggest all, or most people believe in an idea. Watch for words such as “everyone”, “all people”, “every time”, and “always”,
  - Example: **Everyone** in Taber likes “X” brand better than “Y” brand.
5. **Celebrity Endorsement:** The writer may use somebody famous to help prove the main point. He or she hopes that by suggesting that a famous person accepts this idea, then the reader should also agree.

Example: Michael J. Fox buys “X” brand soap.

---

Remember that persuasive writing does not only happen in advertising. Look carefully at an article that is expressing an opinion. Letters to the editor, editorials, and some magazine articles are written to convince you to accept a certain point of view.

Also remember that you do not have to believe everything you read. Again, once you learn to see the techniques used by writers, you may find it easier to agree or disagree with what you read.

## Step by Step



### Purpose:

Help you understand what you read by:

### **Predicting Outcome**

### New Words:

**predict:** to guess what will happen next

Related words: predicting, prediction, predicted

*Remember: Reading has 3 steps: Pre-reading, reading, and post-reading.*

Reading a new sentence or paragraph one step at a time can help you be a better reader. Try these steps.

#### 1. **Look at the title (Pre-reading)** Ask yourself:


- What do you think might happen in the story? Why?  
Make 2 or 3 guesses about the story  
Your guesses are your **PREDICTIONS**. When you answer your “Why” question you will find the **proof** for your prediction.

#### 2. **Read** to the end of the first sentence or paragraph Ask yourself:

- Was my guess right? Why or why not? (Your prediction)
- What do I think will happen next? Why? (Your proof)

Keep reading the story one step at a time. Keep asking yourself what will happen next?

### Hints:

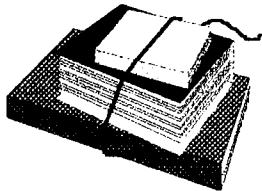
 Look for picture clues. Also look for “text” clues. Look at bold letters, headings, sub-headings, and other ways the writing is organized. These clues can help you find the meaning of the story.



**3. Post-Reading:** After you have finished reading ask yourself:

- Was I able to guess what would happen next? ( Your predictions)
- If not, what suprised me?
- If so, can I know see the clues that helped me guess correctly?  
(The proof)
- Can I look for these same kinds of clues next time I read?
- Did I learn something about reading I could use next time?

Look at the next page to see a sample worksheet to show you how to work through these ideas one step at a time.



*A good book has no ending ...*  
R.D. Cumming



**R.A.P.**

**R** = Read

**A** = After reading,

**P** = Put in your own words:

**Purpose:** Help you state the main idea of a paragraph

**Method:**

1. **Read** a paragraph.
2. **After** reading, **put** the main idea in your own words. Do so by any of these:
  - a. write a sentence on a sheet of paper
  - b. write a quick note on the margin of the page
  - c. tell someone what the paragraph was about
3. Re-read the paragraph to see if you are on the right track.

**Extra Note:**

Many people have trouble remembering the ideas by the time they finish a long article. **R.A.P.** can be a very helpful skill for understanding longer articles because it can:

- a. make you think about the idea before moving on to a new idea
- b. give you a quick set of notes you can look back over when you need to remember details

*Remember: The more you use ideas, the longer you will remember them.*

**Sample Worksheet:**

**R**ead, After **P**ut in your own words:

**Paragraph One:** Read, After, Put in your own words:

---

---

**Paragraph Two:** Read, After, Put in your own words:

---

---

**Paragraph Three:** Read, After, Put in your own words:

---

---

**Paragraph Four:** Read, After, Put in your own words:

---

---

**Paragraph Five:** Read, After, Put in your own words:

---

---

**Paragraph Six:** Read, After, Put in your own words:

---

---

(Keep doing this until you have finished the story)

## KWL



**KWL = Know, What, Learn**

***Purpose:***

Help you understand what you read

**New Words**

**predict:** to guess what will come next

**K**now: What do you already **Know**?

Quickly look over the reading.

What do you already know about the subject?

*(Remember - you can understand a new idea better if you can link it to what you already know)*

**W**hat: **What** do you want to know?

- Ask questions that might be answered in the story.
- Some questions may not be answered. That's O.K. You will get better at predicting the right questions with practice.
- Some questions could be:  
     The 5W's: Who, What, Where, When, Why (and How)

*(Remember: Questions help you dig for meaning)*

**L**earn: What did you **learn** after reading?

- Answer your questions.
- Put what you learned into your own words
- Re - Read if needed

*(Remember: Putting ideas into your own words helps you check your understanding)*

## KWL Practice Worksheet

Know	What	Learn

## Mark Your Margins



### Purpose:

Help you remember and understand what you read by:

- leaving notes that are easy to find
- reading an article one step at a time
- working through ideas carefully
- taking quick notes while you read

### New Words

**Margins:** spaces on the top, bottom and sides of the page

### Background:

*Remember, reading has 3 steps: pre-reading, reading and post-reading*

Do you have trouble remembering what you read, especially when reading something long? Try this skill to help you keep track of what you read. Marking the **margins** of your page is a quick way to keep track of your thoughts while your read. It makes it easier for you to remember what you have just read. It also helps you quickly review the main ideas of the article. Working with ideas can also help you pinpoint the spots you need to read again.

*Try these steps...*

1. Pre-read. Skim over the article quickly. Do other pre-reading activities
2. Read. Do **Margin Marking** while you read (See below for ideas)
3. Post-read: Go back and review your markings that you just made

### Margin Marking:

Read a longer article one paragraph at a time. While reading, mark ideas in the margin. Mark ideas such as:

- Parts you are having trouble understanding (Helps you quickly review these spots)
- Parts you don't agree with (helps you personally relate to the reading)

- Parts you like or agree with (helps you personally relate to the reading)
- Parts that had new ideas (helps you remember new ideas)
- New words (helps you quickly find these words to review them)

### Suggested Markings:

- Check if you understand a part
- Put a question mark by a part you don't understand, or want to know more about
- Put an exclamation mark by a part that caught your attention
- Write NW by a part that has new words. Underline the new word.
- Write a quick note about the main idea in the margin
- Use your own ideas to develop a marking system.

### Ideas for a Marking System

Mark	Meaning	Mark	Meaning
✓	you understand the paragraph	<u>NW</u>	This part has a new word. Underline the new word.
?	You don't understand the idea	!	This idea really caught your attention
✗	You don't like this idea	Y (for Yes)	You do like this idea
??	You have more questions about this idea	○	Circle a part you want to remember

*Your Turn ... Write your ideas in these spaces.*

Mark	Meaning	Mark	Meaning



## SQ3R



**S = Survey**  
**Q = Question**  
**3R = Read, Recite, Review**

### *Purpose:*

Help you understand what you read by:

- a. preparing you for reading
- b. questioning while you read
- c. reviewing what you read

### **New Words:**

**Survey:** to quickly look over a reading in order to get an idea what it will be about

**Recite:** (re sit) to repeat, describe or relate an idea

### **Method:**

#### 1. **Survey** the reading.

Quickly look at:

- headings and sub-headings
- bold / italics print
- pictures
- charts / graphs
- organization
- Beginning and end of the reading.

*Purpose:* Look to see if you can find some clues to the main idea of the reading.

- Helps you guess what will happen during the article
- Helps you think about what you already know about the topic.

### **Extra Note:**

**The Survey and Question parts are important pre-reading strategies. Completing these steps helps prepare you for what you will read.**

2. **Question:** Ask yourself some questions about the story. Some questions could include ones such as these:

- Who is the main character?
- What happened in the story? Why?
- Where did the story happen? When?
- Do the ideas fit with what I already know or believe about the topic? If not, what is different and why?
- What point is the writer trying to make?

### 3. **Read**

Read the material.

Keep asking yourself questions while you read. Some questions could include:

- what do I think will happen next? Why?
- do I believe or agree with what the writer is saying? Why or why not?
- do the ideas make sense to me?

### 4. **Recite:**

Answer the questions you asked before reading.

Re-read parts you did not understand

Talk to others about the ideas in the reading

Ask yourself questions again.

- Is there anything else you would like to know about the topic?
- Are there parts you need to re-read?
- Do the ideas make sense?
- Can you relate to the idea

### 5. **Review**

Go over parts once again to make sure you understand the ideas

**SQ3R**

<u><b>S</b></u> urvey	<u><b>Q</b></u> uestion	<u><b>R</b></u> ead
<u><b>R</b></u> ecite		

## Asking Good Questions



**Purpose:** Help you understand what you read

Asking good questions is a key to becoming a better reader. A good question can help you become more interested in what you are reading. It can also help you point out the important ideas to look for while your read. Asking questions also helps you organize your ideas. All of these will help you build a better understanding of what you read.

With some practice, you should be able to pick questions that will help you get more out of your reading. Each time you read something, try a few questions from the list below. Put a check by the ones you like best. Soon you will know which ones will help you most.

As you get better at asking questions, you will find that some questions work better for some kinds of reading. For example, the 5W's work best for a news story. You may want to keep track of the types of readings each question is best suited for.

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### Some Sample Questions

#### 1. General Questions:

1. When you picked your reading, what did you think it would be about? Why? Were you right?
2. What did you like best about the reading?
3. What did you like least?
4. Were you surprised by any ideas? Why?
5. When you were reading, did you see pictures in your mind? Could you hear the writer's voice?
6. Do you think about life the same way as the writer seems to think?
7. What did you learn from this reading that you hadn't thought about before?

8. Was there anything unusual or different about the way this was written? Why do you think the writer did so?
9. What special words do you remember?
10. What was your strongest feeling while you read? Why?
11. Do the ideas make sense? Why or why not?

## 2. The 5 W's: Who, What, Where, When, Why:

Use these to help you find the main idea of a reading about an event or news story. Ask yourself:

- Who did What,
- Where did it happen?
- When did this happen?
- Why did it happen?

## 3. Research Questions:

Use these questions if you have been asked to find information (research) about a topic.

- What do I already know about the topic?
- What do I need to know about the topic?
- Where can I find answers?
- Who might help me?

## 4. Your Turn:

List other questions you find useful:

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## Reading Speeds



### Purpose

- Prepare you for your reading
- Change your reading speed for different reading needs

### Words to Know

**Skim:** to quickly look over a reading to see what it will be about

**Scan:** to look quickly over a reading to find a detail or fact

Do you sometimes feel like you are a slow reader? Are you tired of seeing a friend read a magazine or newspaper so fast you feel you will never catch up? One reason for this could be that you have not learned how to change your reading speed to match what you are reading.

Learning to change your reading speed is a little like learning to drive a car on different roads. You know that you need to slow down for icy roads. But you also know you can go a little faster on long, clear roads. Reading speeds are the same. You slow down for harder reading, and speed up for easier reading.

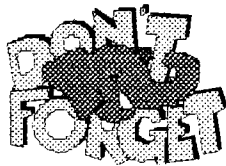
Skimming and Scanning are two very important reading skills. They are used when you need or want to read something quickly. Skimming means you look over a reading quickly, just to get a quick idea what it will be about. When you scan something you are looking quickly for some detail or fact.

You can also read something quickly when you are reading it just for fun or pleasure. For example, you may just skim a magazine while you wait in a doctor's office. You may also just want to skim through a newspaper until you find something you want to read more closely.

You will want to read more slowly when you are reading important information. For example, you may read more slowly when you have to read a letter about your income tax. You may also slow down your reading when you have information about your child's new medicine.

Look at this chart to see how you may read different types of material. See if you can add more ideas

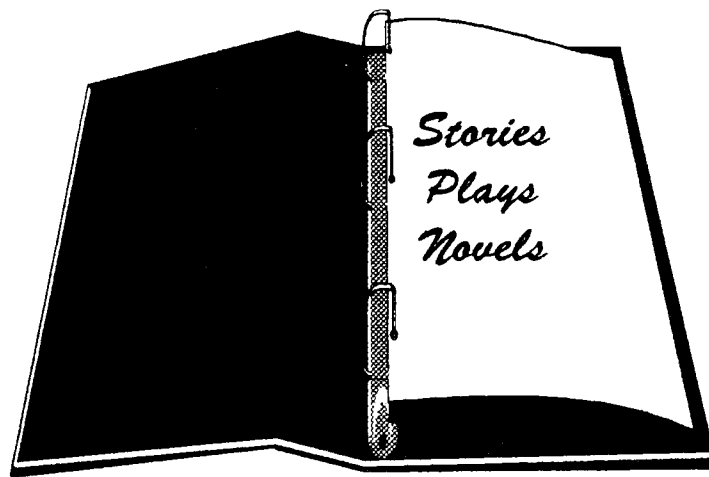
Skim or Scan	Fast	Medium	Slow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone book</li> <li>• Newspaper</li> <li>• TV Guide</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fun books</li> <li>• newspaper</li> <li>• Sales flyer</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• magazine story you are interested in</li> <li>• letter from a friend</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• text books for school</li> <li>• important letters</li> <li>• important directions</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>



*Give Yourself a Break Today ...  
Read Something JUST FOR FUN.*

# Readers Handbook Reading Comprehension...

## Reading Fiction





## Reading Fiction



### Words to Know

1. **Characters:** the people in the story
2. **Climax:** the highest point of action in the story
3. **Conflict:** a struggle between characters in the story
4. **Fiction:** writing that tells a story and is based on imaginary events
5. **Narrator:** person telling the story
6. **Non-Fiction:** Writing that is true
7. **Plot:** the order of events in the story
8. **Setting:** time and place in which the story takes place
9. **Theme:** the controlling idea of the story

### Introduction:

Do you enjoy listening to a friend tell a good story? Do you enjoy watching a good movie? If so you will enjoy reading fiction. What is fiction? It is writing that tells a story. Many times the story may seem real, but if it was invented by the writer, it is called fiction.

Reading fiction can open exciting new

doors. You read about people living in the past, imagining what it might have been like to live over a hundred years ago. You can read about the future, picturing what it might be like to travel through space to far-away galaxies. You can picture yourself caught up in an exciting adventure or mystery story. you can even picture yourself in the middle of a love story. You can find stories to suit any of your interests

Fiction comes in many shapes, sizes and forms. Fiction could cover any topic such as romance, western, space travel, adventure, mystery or horror. Characters can seem as real as the next-door neighbor, or as strange as a cartoon character. Places can also be real or imaginary. And the plot can seem so real that you that you can't tell it is fiction, or so far-out that you know in a minute the story is not real. Fiction can make you laugh, or it can make you cry. Great fiction will sometimes make you do both.

## How can you get a better understanding of what you read?

1. Find a story you think you might like.
2. Set aside some quiet time.
3. Most important tip: Try to **ENJOY** what you read. You may not like all the stories you read. That's O.K.! Even if you don't like the story, you can like something about it.
4. Keep an open mind when you read something different.
5. Know what to look for:  
Every story will have certain parts. With practice you can learn to quickly pick out the most important parts of almost any story.

Look for...

- A. Character**
- B. Setting**
- C. Plot**

### **A. Get to know the characters:**

The characters are the living part of the story. Getting to know a good character in fiction can be like meeting a new friend.

You can get a better understanding of a story if you can get to know the characters. Meeting characters is not much different than meeting new people. Think about your first impression of the character. When you meet new people you start by finding out a few facts. You may start with a little information such as: their name, age, where they live, or where they work. You also get to see what they look like and how they carry themselves.

As you get to know them better you find out more about them. You may begin to see how they feel about themselves, learn more about their background, or find out what problems they are facing.

As times goes on, you probably begin to make more careful judgments about these people. You begin to decide what you like and don't like.

How do you get to know these people? You learn by what they say about themselves, how they act, and what others say about them.

Getting to know characters in fiction is not much different than getting to know new people. As you read, begin to form a friendship with the characters. Imagine what they look like, what they sound like, what they move

like, and what they think like. As the story continues get to know the characters better. Think about the problems they are facing. Think about how they react to their problems. Begin to form a more critical opinion of these characters. As you learn to read more fiction, you can learn to relate to many new and fascinating characters.

It is helpful to ask yourself questions such as these to help your understanding of characters:

1. Who are the main characters?

Make a list if you are having trouble keeping track of the characters.

2. If I had to introduce a character to the class, which character would I pick? Why? What do I like best about this character? What do I like least?

What does this person look like?

What does this person think like?

Would you like to get to know any of the characters?

Would you like one to work for you? Be your boss? Be your neighbor? Be a friend? Be your children's friend?

If you could, what character would you want to become? Why?

3. Are any of the characters funny? If so, what makes him or her that way?
4. Are any characters sad or unhappy? If so, what makes him or her feel that way?
5. Do the characters seem real? Why or why not?
6. Can you draw a picture of a character?
7. If the story was longer, what would the characters do next? Why?
8. How do the characters react to the problems they face? Why?
9. Who is the main character?
10. Who are the other characters?
11. What is your first impression of each character? Write a few points about each of the main characters after you have read the first part of the story.
12. Does your first impression change as the story goes on? Why?
13. Has your opinion changed by the end of the story? Why or why not?

**B. Get to know the setting:**

As you read the story, try to get a feel for the place and time the story is taking place. Try to picture the place in your mind. Try to find out the time period.

1. Can you draw a picture or map of the setting?
2. What clues are there to tell you the time of the story?
3. Would you like to visit the setting? Why?
4. Have you ever been to a place like the one in the story? If so, what do you remember most about it? Why?
5. If the story is about the past, what do you know about that time?
6. If you could travel back in time, would you like to go to that time? Why or why not?
7. What do you like most / least about the time of the story?
8. If the story is in the future, does it fit with what you imagine the future to be? Why or why not?
9. Would you like to go to that time in the future? Why or why not?
10. If you won a trip, would you like to go to the setting described in the story? Why or why not?
11. Does the setting have an influence on the characters? If so, how?
12. Would the characters change if the setting changed? Why or why not?
13. Why the characters' problems be the same if the story was in a different place or time?
14. When did this story take place? Could it have happened in a different time?
15. Would the story be the same if it happened in the past? In the future?
16. Where did this story take place? Could it have happened in a different place?
17. What places were described in the story?
18. Write about the place you like most
19. Write about the place you liked least
20. Did the setting change? When? Why?
21. Did the setting move back in time? When? Why?

**C. Get to know the plot:**

As you read through the story, stop occasionally and ask yourself questions such as these:

“What will happen next? Why do I think this will happen?”

**OR**

What would happen if ...

- the main character did something different?
- the other characters did something different?
- the setting changed?
- the conflict or main problem changed?
- the characters all knew what would happen next
- all but one or two characters knew what would happen next

**Other Questions to think about:**

1. What happened first in the story?
2. What are the most important conflicts in the story?
3. List the events in the story in the order they happen
4. Do the events follow the order of time? Are there any flashbacks? Why?
5. When does the action begin to increase? Why?
6. When do you find yourself asking “what will happen next?”
7. What is the most exciting part of the story? Why?

8. When does the climax happen? Why?

9. What is the main character’s goal?

10. What problems does the main character face?

11. Who or what tries to stop the main character?

12. What happens after the climax?

13. If the story continued, what do you think would happen next to the main characters? Why?

14. Was the ending of the story fair? Did it end the way I expected it to? If not, did the ending make sense? How would I like to see the story end?

**A Final Note About Fiction**

**Remember:** Try to read many different kinds of fiction. You might be surprised to see what you enjoy reading!

*Good Luck and  
Happy Reading ...*

## Story Frames<sup>6</sup>



**Purpose:** Help you understand what you read

Sometimes it is say the main idea of a story you just read. Try using some of the story “frames” to help you pick out the most important ideas.

### Story with One Character

The story is about \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_ is  
an important character in the story. \_\_\_\_\_ tried to  
\_\_\_\_\_. The story ends when \_\_\_\_\_.

### Important Idea or Plot

In this story the problems start when \_\_\_\_\_

After that, \_\_\_\_\_

Next, \_\_\_\_\_

Then, \_\_\_\_\_

The problem is finally solved or fixed when \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The story ends \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>6</sup> p. 135 Ekwall, Eldon E and Shanker, James L: Locating and Correcting Reading Difficulties 6th Edition  
Maxwell MacMillan Canada 1989

### Setting

The story takes place \_\_\_\_\_.

I know this because the author uses the words “\_\_\_\_\_”

\_\_\_\_\_.”

Other clues that show when the story takes place are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

### Understanding Character

\_\_\_\_\_ is an important character in the story because

\_\_\_\_\_. Once, he / she \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Another time, he / she \_\_\_\_\_.

I think that (character) \_\_\_\_\_ is (character trait) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

### Comparing Characters

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are two  
characters in the story. \_\_\_\_\_ (character) is  
\_\_\_\_\_ (trait) while \_\_\_\_\_ (other  
character) is \_\_\_\_\_ (trait). For example,  
\_\_\_\_\_ tries to \_\_\_\_\_ .  
\_\_\_\_\_ learns a lesson when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .



## Sample Story Organizer

Use this sheet to help you organize the ideas in a story.

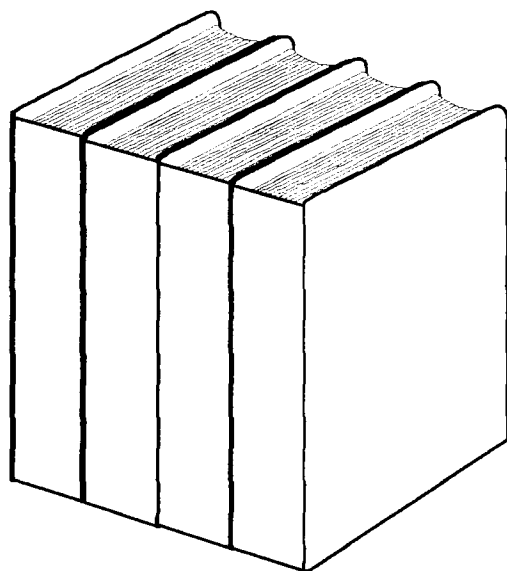
Name of Story: \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Characters</b> Main Character _____ Other Characters _____ _____	<b>Setting</b> Time: _____ Place: _____ _____
<b>T he Main Problem</b> _____ _____	
<b>Main Events in the Story</b> 1. _____ _____	2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____	4. _____ _____
<b>The story ends when ...</b> _____ _____	
<b>What I liked best ...</b> _____ _____	<b>What I like to change ...</b> _____ _____

## Readers Handbook Part 4

# Appendix



## Glossary

1. **Antonym:** words that have the opposite meaning
2. **Characters:** the people in a story
3. **Chronological order:** ideas organized according to the order of time
4. **Comprehension:** understanding what you read
5. **Climax:** the highest point of action in a story
6. **Compare:** to look at how ideas are the same
7. **Conflict:** in a story, a struggle between two characters
8. **Contractions:** short forms of two or more words put together
9. **Contrast:** to look at how ideas are different
10. **Critical Reading:** judging what you read
11. **Decode:** to break words into parts so you can say and understand them
12. **Definition:** The meaning of a word
13. **Educated guess:** to make a good guess based on common sense
14. **Fiction:** writing that tells a story and is based on imaginary events
15. **Label:** to put a name on a list of common ideas
16. **Margins:** spaces on the top, bottom, and sides of a page
17. **Narrator:** a person telling a story
18. **Non-fiction:** writing that is true
19. **Persuade:** to convince
20. **Persuasive writing:** writing that is meant to convince the reader to believe a certain point of view
21. **Plot:** the order of events in a story
22. **Pre:** a word part meaning “before”
23. **Predict:** to make a guess about what will happen next

24. **Post:** a word part meaning “after”
25. **Recite:** to repeat, describe or relate an idea
26. **Scan:** to quickly look over a reading to find a detail or fact
27. **Setting:** the time and place in which a story takes place
28. **Skill:** the learned ability to do something
29. **Strategy:** a plan of action
30. **Survey:** to quickly look over a reading to get an sense of the main idea of the article
31. **Synonym:** words that have the same, or almost the same meaning
32. **Text:** material to be read
33. **Topic sentence:** a sentence that tells the main idea of a paragraph
34. **Transitional words:** in writing, words that clearly show that a new idea is coming
35. **Theme:** the controlling idea of a story
36. **Thesaurus:** a dictionary of synonyms
37. **Words attack skills:** skills needed to say or decode words











I

Blank lined page for notes under section I.

J

Blank lined page for notes under section J.





**O**

**P**

Ruled lines for section O.

Ruled lines for section P.





U

Lined writing area for uppercase letter U

V

Lined writing area for uppercase letter V

**W**

Lined writing area for the letter 'W'. The page contains 20 horizontal lines for handwriting practice.

**X**

Lined writing area for the letter 'X'. The page contains 20 horizontal lines for handwriting practice.



**Y**

Lined writing area for the letter Y, consisting of 28 horizontal lines.

**Z**

Lined writing area for the letter Z, consisting of 28 horizontal lines.