



Useful reading:

- [Put Reading First](#)
- [Reading Rockets Comprehension](#)
- [Understanding Reading Comprehension Problems](#)
- [NSW Comprehension](#)
- <http://teaching-reading.org>

Reading Comprehension

Many people struggle with reading comprehension. This can be for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, to be able to understand what you are reading, you need to be able to decode and read at a fairly fast level (around 95 - 120 words per minute). This is so that all the words in a sentence are able to be retained in the working memory for comprehension.

Secondly, the reader needs to be able to 'read between the lines' using their own experiences and prior learning. An author will not write every last detail. He relies on imagery created by use of words and the reader's knowledge to fill in these gaps or to create a fuller picture. This is made harder if a child does not have an age appropriate vocabulary, knowledge of figures of speech and a rich social environment.

Thirdly, the reader must be able to engage with text, analyzing, thinking about and questioning what is happening and why.

So, reading comprehension combines decoding skills with fluent reading, thinking and reasoning.

What can we do to help?

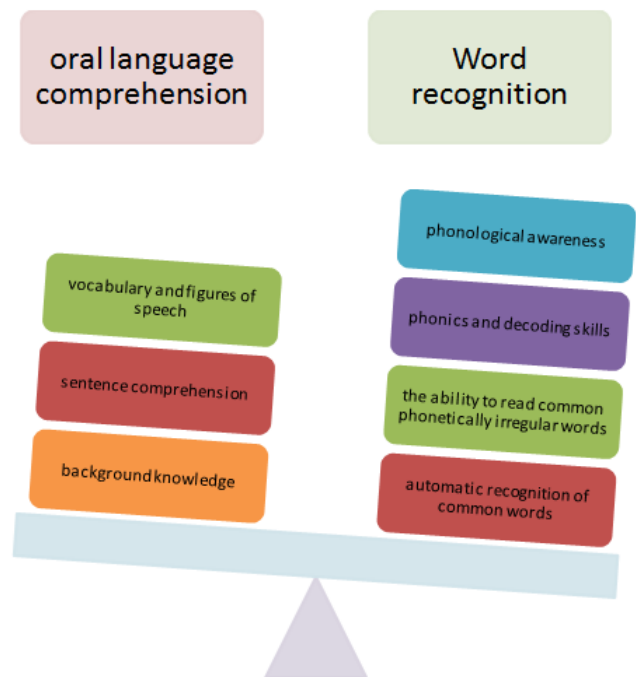
Big question – short answer

1. Begin teaching comprehension strategies orally using pictures, video clips and picture books.
2. Make sure that your pupils are reading age and stage appropriate materials.
3. Work on giving your pupils extensive life experiences either through personal experiences or through class novels, TV programs, role play and relating your own experiences.
4. Increase your pupil's vocabulary by extending your own use of vocabulary and using this new vocabulary regularly, explaining its meaning and encouraging the pupils to use it too. Check out [Highland Literacy - Vocabulary for better literacy](#) and [NSW Vocabulary](#)
5. Talk regularly about genre and show how different genres are structured differently and characterized by different elements.
6. Help pupils to distinguish what information in a sentence and a paragraph is important.
7. Many pupils, who struggle with reading comprehension, can comprehend text that is read to them. Use spoken text: text read by adult or buddy or text read by audio books or computers, when teaching comprehension strategies.
8. Model reading with fluency and expression because this ties the text together into chunks of information and brings inflected information which aids comprehension.

Reading Comprehension – Where does it fit in?

In the early stages of reading, decoding and word recognition skills should carry the greatest weight. Without these skills, it will be difficult for pupils to engage with text and analyze its meaning.

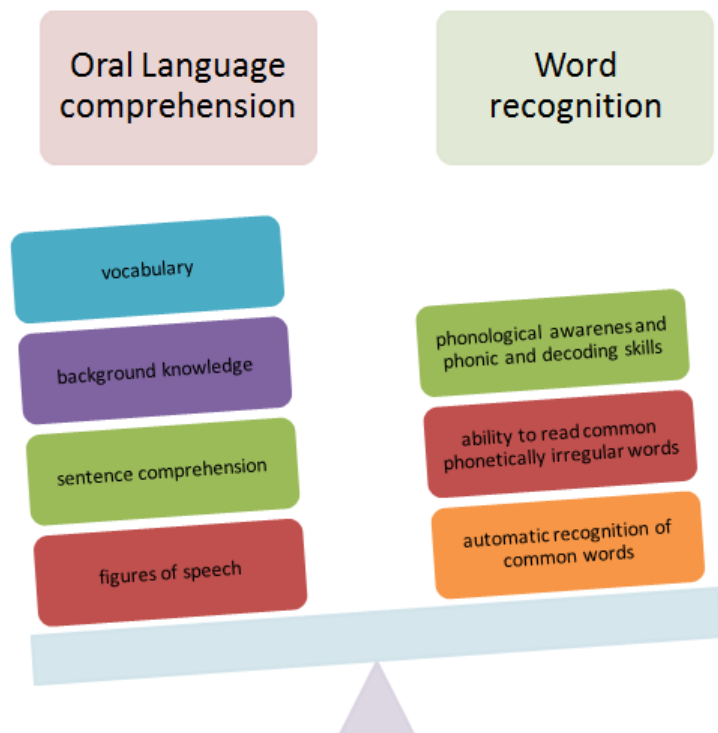
This does not mean that we do not surround the child with a growing knowledge and experience of oral language comprehension or even beginning to develop comprehension of what is being read. This must be taught to provide the foundations of comprehension in preparation for when the decoding and word recognition skills are sufficiently advanced for the child to be able to concentrate on reading comprehension rather than decoding.



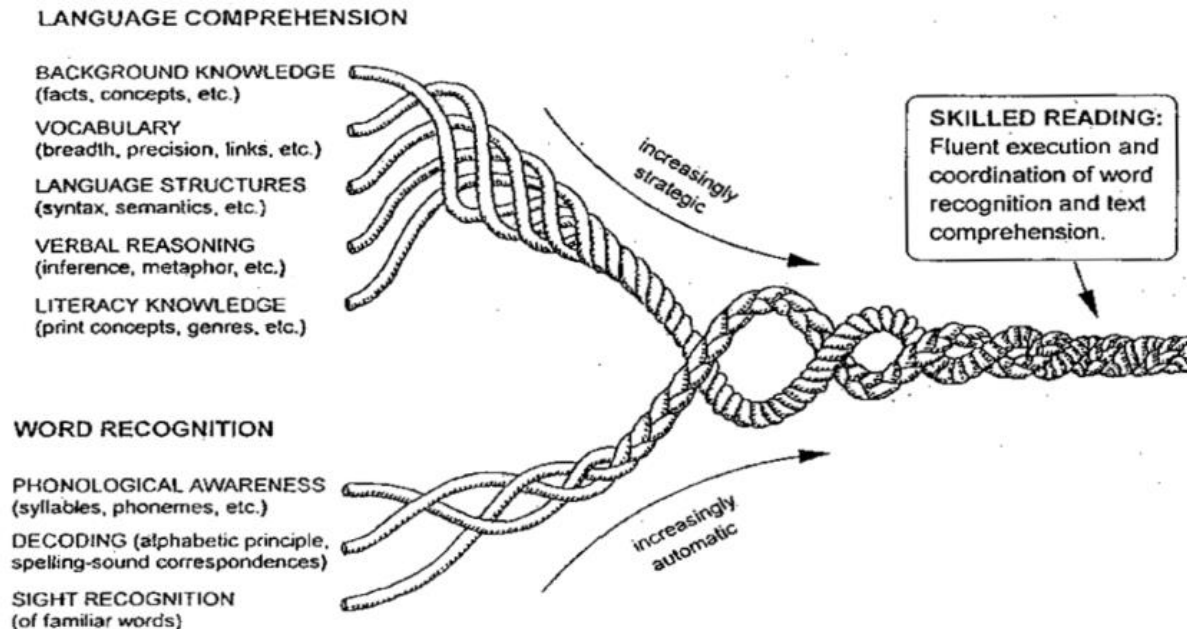
As the child becomes fluent in reading, the focus then shifts from reading for accuracy to reading for meaning. 'Learning to read' turns into 'reading to learn'. (Jeanne Chall (1983)).

Stages of Reading Development.

McGraw B Hill Book Company



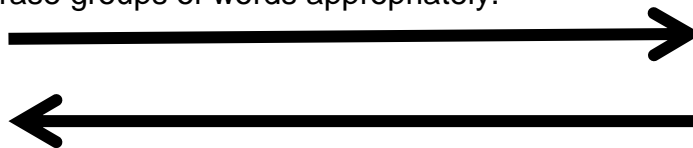
All of these strands must be wrapped around each other to create children who not only learn to read but read to learn.



From Scarborough (2001)

*(Note: While the visual representation above is helpful in visualising the complex elements of reading, the term 'recognition' for some means 'memorisation'. Sight word memorisation is **NOT** a productive reading strategy.)*

Fluency can only occur if the reader comprehends the material as it is read in order to pause and phrase groups of words appropriately.



Similarly, if reading is hesitant and disjointed, meaning is lost.

When a reader is both accurate and rapid, it means that the word identification processes have become automatized – they no longer require conscious attention. This frees cognitive space for the higher order comprehension processes.

Top 10 Evidence Based strategies in teaching reading

For further information click [here](#)

1. Clear Lesson Goals. If you and your pupils can clearly state what your lesson goals are, you pupils are 32% more likely to achieve them.
2. Show and Tell. Show is modelling how you do something and tell is explaining or telling some information.
3. Regular checking for understanding. This is often done by questioning.
4. Summarise new learning in a graphic way.
5. Practice. It is important to make sure that they are practicing the correct things.
6. Provide pupils with constructive feedback.
7. Be flexible in how long it takes. Each pupil learns at a different speed. Rushing a child will mean that their learning is not necessarily retained securely.
8. Encourage collaborative learning.
9. Teach strategies not content.
10. Nurture metacognition. Metacognition is not just using strategies but thinking and weighing up which ones to use and analysing afterwards if it had been an effective strategy for that situation.

Understanding the questions

One of the major hurdles that pupils encounter in comprehension exercises is that they do not always understand what the question is asking.

Much work needs to be done orally before moving on to written work. When you work orally it is easier for the pupils to hear what a good answer sounds like and to watch as you model thinking strategies, answers and improvements.

Teach your pupils to highlight the instructional verbs in the text.

They can do this in blue – Blue for what you should do!

Teach your pupils to highlight what information they need to look for.

They can do this in green – Green for what is seen!

This will give them a better idea as to what is expected of them and what information is required.

The Successful Six – Comprehension Strategies

As we have already seen, comprehension – or reading to learn – is one of our primary purposes in teaching our pupils to read.

It is not something that comes without focus or effort and comprehension strategies should be taught in a structured and nurtured way. Children's' comprehension and memory of text improves when they are actively taught comprehension strategies.

There are many different templates for teaching comprehension strategies. In Highland Council, we have settled for six main strategies. Many of them overlap and are interconnected.

The six strategies for Comprehension are:

1. Visualising
2. Making connections
3. Predicting
4. Asking questions
5. Monitoring
6. Summarising

In the early stages (early into first level), comprehension is secondary to decoding and word recognition but still needs to be taught.

At this stage it is worth introducing the strategies in an oral way when listening to the child reading or in a guided reading group.

As children progress and become increasingly fluent in their reading and proficient in decoding, comprehension takes the main focus in reading. This still should be taught orally with increasing levels of independent written comprehension word. The strategies need to be actively taught, rehearsed, modelled and tried.

Inspector Heurisko Task Cards can be given to groups or individuals to encourage focus and engagement in text.

Children should also be given the opportunity to engage with a wide variety of genres and as they progress through the Primary School, the amount of factual text should increase.

As the scales tip towards the end of first level, the main focus is on comprehension and reading for learning.

Comprehension strategies must be taught in a systematic way, focussing on individual strategies and show how some strategies overlap and connect with others.

It is also important that you work on developing the understanding of comprehension questions. Many pupils aren't able to answer a comprehension question because

they don't understand the question or what is being asked of them. Training pupils to highlight the instructional words is important so they know what kind of answer is required.

i.e.

- Summarise
- Discuss
- Highlight
- Name
- Explain the meaning
- Find
- Back up your answer with evidence
- What do you think

Show them how to use part of the question in the answer.

Encourage pupils to rehearse their answers orally before writing them down. This means that the pupils are more likely to write a coherent and logical answer.

e.g. 'Name some of the early forms of telling the time.'

Instruction is to name more than one form of telling the time.

Answer: sundials

Response: what about sundials?

Answer: Sundials are an early form of telling the time.

Response: Were there other forms because the question asks you to name some.

Answer: Sundials, hour glasses and mechanical clocks are early forms of telling the time.

Response: Great. Can you say that again?

Answer: Sundials, hour glasses and mechanical clocks are early forms of telling the time.

Response: Now can you write it?

Model thinking about what the question is asking.

Model answering the question.

Model monitoring that all the necessary information is in the answer.

Levelling the playing field for Dyslexia and Persistent Literacy Difficulties

1. Print work on pastel coloured paper (pale peach, green, yellow or blue).
This will help those who struggle with visual stress and also those who may struggle from visual stress but haven't been assessed. Research suggests that this could help around 20% of children.
2. Have reading rulers available for anyone who would like to use them regardless of whether they have been identified as dyslexic.
3. Make sure you give explicit goals for each lesson and check that pupils have all understood them.
4. Use signs and symbols to back up your directions and commands.
5. Ensure that work is carried out at the children's cognitive level not reading text level. Support pupils to engage with the text to enable independent learning.
6. Make your learning provision as multisensory as possible.
7. Use mind maps and graphic organisers to help pupils identify important vocabulary, to organise thoughts and make connections of text to thought.
8. Encourage collaborative learning in mixed ability groups/pairs.
9. Allow pupils to use text to voice and voice to text software.
10. Use a variety of written styles for assessment and reinforcement:: posters, leaflets, annotated charts and diagrams.
11. Provide vocabulary word walls or word mats.
12. Give pupils constructive feedback.
13. Use whole class choral reading for the first or second reading of text.
14. Provide shaded lined paper for those who find it useful. (Examples at the end of pack)
15. Don't expect the same amount of written work from children with persistent literacy difficulties as you would from others.
16. Praise for every success, no matter how small. Do not criticise in a destructive way.

Heurisko's Resources

The following pack gives a variety of resources that may help you to teach reading comprehension in a structured way using the many resources that you have in your school and will find on the internet.

There are Heurisko Detection Cards. These can be used by a group to focus on one question or strategy to aid focus in reading and discussion. They can also be used by giving each child in a group a different card. Each child will focus on the task on their card whilst reading and will feed back to the group what they have learned once the passage has been read.

There are also worksheets which can be used with many different texts, which are designed to help pupils engage with the text using different reading comprehension strategies.

One page strategy cards give the teacher and pupil's information about the particular strategy and how that strategy can help the readers understanding of the text and how to develop the competency of using that strategy.

You will find some posters for information and a couple of examples of ways you can set out text with questions that can help a reader engage with text in a structured and purposeful way.

You can find a variety of text off the internet using sites such as [Newsround](#) and [English for Students](#).

Inspector Heurisko - Under the spotlight

Inspector Heurisko's Lights

When Inspector Heurisko first enters a crime scene, it is dark. He doesn't know what he is going to find or what is waiting for him. He takes his torch out of his pocket. He sees the obvious information. He finds the light switch and turns on the lights. He sees things that were still hidden when all he had was torch light. Things that are of most interest for him, he brings in the flood lights to examine them in more detail.

When we read for information we are like Inspector Heurisko.



Switch on the torch and see what is there.
Look for all the obvious information in the title, illustrations and text.



Switch on the light and see the hidden things.
Look for figures of speech like similes and metaphors. What else do they tell you about the meaning of the text?



Switch on the floodlight and see everything using all your knowledge.
What more information can you add to this? Think about what you have experienced and what you have seen in the world around and what you have read about in other texts.

Texts under Inspector Heurisko's spotlight

Literal - What do the words say?











Inferential - What does the message mean?



Personal - What do I think about it?

Inspector Heurisko's Note Book



Question	Prompt
What kind of text is this?  i.e. fiction, non-fiction, poetry	
What clues does the title give me? 	
What is the main meaning? 	
If there are pictures what clues do they give me? 	
What are the clues of hidden messages? 	
What figures of speech has the writer used? 	
What do I think? 	
What is the purpose of the text? Why am I reading it? 	

Reading for information

Topic:		
What I already know	What I want to know	What I have learnt
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 1

Literal



Genre

What kind of text is this?

(i.e. poem, fiction, invitation,
information....)

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 2

Literal



Title

What information does the title of
the text give me?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 3

Illustrations



Illustration

Look at the illustrations in the text.
What information do they give about
what the text is about, who it is
about, who it is for, and its purpose?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 4

Literal



Topic

What is the text about?

What is the topic?

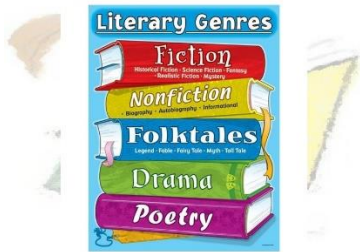
What is the purpose?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 16

literal

Genre



Types of Text

What genre is the text?
What are the clues to the genre?
i.e. Title, author, illustrations, blurb...
What is the purpose of the text?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 17

literal

Genre



Types of Text

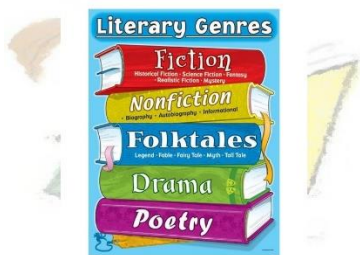
What genre is the text?
What is the purpose of the text?
How does the 'genre voice' differ
from books of a different genre?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 18

Literal

Genre



Types of Text

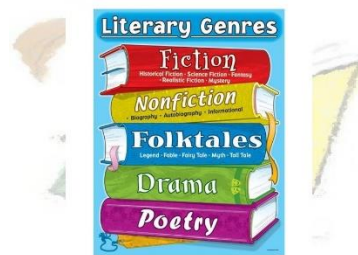
What genre is the text?
What is the purpose of the text?
How does the 'genre voice' differ
from books of a different genre?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 17

Literal

Genre



Types of Text

What genre is the text?
Give an example of text to support
your claim.
What is the purpose of the text?
Why would you read it?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 5

Inferential



Figures of speech

Are any figures of speech used to help you understand the real message?

(i.e. similes, metaphors, personification....)

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 6

Inferential



Hidden message

Are there any lessons which are being taught in the text?

What technique did the writer use to teach this lesson?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 7

Inferential



Ambiguity

Is there anything in the text which could mean more than one thing?

What do you think the real meaning is in this text?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 8

Inferential



Ambiguity

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 9

Personal



Emotion

How did the text make you feel?

What techniques did the writer use to make you feel this way?

(i.e. jokes, choice of words, subject problems.....)

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 10

Personal



Prior knowledge

What did you know about the topic before?

What new things have you learnt about the topic now?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 11

Personal



Attitude

Do you agree with what the writer is saying in the text?

Why?

Inspector Heurisko's

Detection card 12

Personal



Purpose

What do you feel is the purpose of the text?

Making Connections

What are connections?

We understand most things through what we already know. That knowledge may come from something that we have experienced or read or heard about.

- Something in their own life – **text to self**
- Another text – **text to text**
- Something happening in the world – **text to world**



Understanding the text using connections

As we read the text we can add understanding to it by thinking about our knowledge that comes from other experiences.

Text to self

- It reminds me of when I

Text to text

- It reminds me of when I read because

Text to world

- It reminds me of something that I heard because.....
- It reminds me of something that I saw

Developing connections

Use the **Inspector Heurisko** cards as a focus on **making connections** while you read.

Make a chart with two columns with the headings: text and me.

Before reading the text, discuss and write details about the connections between the text and your life experiences.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 1

Making Connections



Have I ever been in a similar situation?

Has this ever happen to me?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 2

Making Connections



Have I read about this topic before?

Did it say the same thing or did it say something different?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 3

Making Connections



Have I ever heard about something similar?

Where?

How does that help me to understand this?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 4

Making Connections



Is there anything in the text that I do not understand?

How could I find out more to help me understand?

Making Connections

Topic of the text:	
Text	→ Me
Text	→ Text
Text	→ World

Which way?



After reading the title, what are my ideas about the topic?

After reading the first paragraph, what is the text about?

After reading to the end, what is the text about?

Predicting

What are predictions?

Predictions are made when we use information from a text, graphics and experiences to predict what may happen next or what the text is about or how the story line might end.

Our predictions often change as we go through the text and learn new information.

A story is a bit like a journey. We don't know the outcome but it can be fun going on that journey and seeing how our ideas and predictions change as we travel through the book.

Understanding the text through predictions

As we read and look at the pictures/ text, we can continuously think about how our understanding of what is happening and our predictions change.

Sometime we can get a big surprise because we have not seen the clues in the story and something very different happens to what we had though (predicted).



Developing predicting

Use the Inspector Heurisko cards to help in looking at what the text is telling us and make predictions.

Make a before, during and after prediction table.

The before column could be filled in before reading as to their prediction for the outcome (or some other prediction i.e. who comes to help; where do they find the missing object.....)

As the story progresses, other predictions could be made taking into account the new information.

At the end, write what actually did happen.

The three columns could be compared and a discussion take place over what influenced any changed opinions and whether the final account could have been predicted.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 1

Predicting



Looking at the title of the book,
any chapter headings,
and illustrations, what do you think
may happen ?

Give a reason for your prediction.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 2

Predicting



From the beginning information in
the story, predict how the story will
end.

Give a reason for your prediction.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 3

Predicting



What do you think might happen
next in the text?

Give a reason for your prediction.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 4

Predicting



Did your predictions change during
the story?

**What information made your
predictions change?.**

Predicting

Sometime our predictions about what will happen in a story change as we read and learn new information. Record your changing predictions.

What is your question? i.e. What do I think will happen to....?	Prediction 1	What makes me think that?

What is your question? i.e. What do I think will happen to....?	Prediction 2	What makes me think that?

What is your question? i.e. What do I think will happen to....?	Prediction 3	What makes me think that?

Questioning

Why should we ask questions?

We ask ourselves questions, to help us think about things in a deeper way.

Sometimes we don't have enough knowledge to answer these questions and then it is useful to ask a friend or a teacher to see if they can help clarify and enable deeper understanding of the text.



Understanding the text through questioning

If we don't ask questions then we can miss important pieces of information or not read them accurately. As questions are asked and answered we understand more clearly what is going on.

Sometimes we ask questions, not because we don't understand, but we are curious to find out more.

- Why do you think....?
- I wonder why he did...
- I find that confusing
- Who....?
- What....?
- Where....?
- When....?

Developing questioning

Use the Inspector Heurisko cards to direct your questioning to make sure that you understand and to find out more.

Using a chart or post-it notes, list all the questions you have about the text. As you read the text, continue to write questions. When an answer is found for one of the questions or ponderings write the answer on the post-it.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 1

Questioning Who?



Who is the text about?
Who is the main character?
Who are the less important characters?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 2

Questioning What?



What happens in the story?
Is there a problem?
What is done to solve the problem?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 3

Questioning Why?



Why do you think the text was written?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 4

Questioning Where?



Where does the story take place?
What are the clues that give you this information?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 5

Questioning When?



When does the story take place?

What are the clues that give you this information?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 6

Questioning Who?



Is there a character who tries to cause trouble?

Who solves the problem?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 7

Questioning Why?



Why do you think there was a problem in the story?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 8

Questioning What?



What lesson can you learn from the story?

Investigating the main idea

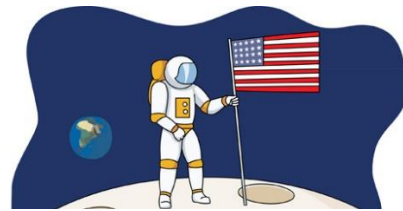
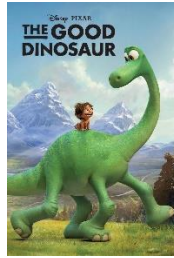


Look at.....

title

illustrations

topic



Read the text.....

Who?

What?

How?

Ask yourself.....










Why?

Where?

When?

Investigating the main idea



Title 	
Illustration 	
Topic 	
Who? 	
What? 	
How? 	
Why? 	
Where? 	
When? 	

Visualising

What is visualising

Visualising is when we make a mental image of what we have read or heard of the text. This helps to bring the text to life and harnesses our imagination.

The visualising uses our senses making it feel real.



Understanding the text through visualising

Using our senses can lead us to think thoughts such as:

- I see in my mind what I am reading
- I feel with my emotions and imagined senses of touch what I read
- I can create pictures in my mind as I read

Developing visualising

As the text or story is being read and discussed, the pupils sketch their visualisation. This could be in story boards to show sequencing.

In groups they can share their sketches and discuss reasons for their interpretations.

Pupils draw mind maps and graphic organisers of their visualising of the text.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 1

Visualising



What do you think the main character looks like?
What kind of clothes do you think he/she wears?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 2

Visualising



What kind of film strip do you think would be in this story?
Car chases, mystery, shoot outs etc

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 3

Visualising



What emotions does the story build up in your mind?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 4

Visualising



In your mind do you see anything that reminds you of something in your life?

Summarising

What is summarising?

Summarising is taking all the information in the text and working out what elements are the most important. This should mean that you are writing a much shorter passage than the original text and it should be in your own words.

When we tell someone about a book we have read or a film that we have seen, we are summarising.



Understanding the text through summarising.

Summarising is an important skill as it helps us to cut out important information and focus on what is important.

It shows we understand but also helps us to understand better.

Once we have the most important facts and ideas from a text, we tell it in our own words often beginning with thought such as:

- The author is trying to tell us that.....
- From the text I learned that
- The most important facts and ideas are
- Paragraph one is about.....
- First.....Lastly

Developing Summarising

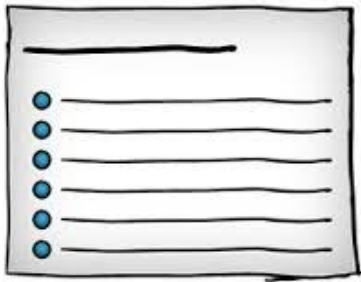
Use the Inspector Heurisko cards as a focus on summarising whilst you are reading over the text.

Make a mind map or graphic organiser while you are reading over the story, showing the most important facts and ideas.

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 1

Summarising
Filing a report



What are the main bullet points?



Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 2

Summarising
Filing a report

1. First
2. Then
3. Next
4. lastly

Write in order what happened

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 3

Summarising
Filing a report



In your own words write what happened?

Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 4

Summarising
Filing a report



Create a mind map of all the main points as you read.

Monitoring

What is Monitoring?

Monitoring is looking at whether something is making sense. Sometimes things don't make sense because we are reading it incorrectly. Sometimes it is because there is something that we don't understand or that there is a mistake in the text!

So we monitor what we understand. If we are unsure or don't understand, we must work out how we are going to find out the true meaning. When we understand the true meaning, we will find it easier to understand the text.

We must also monitor our answers. Have we included all the necessary information using good sentence structure?

Understanding the text through Monitoring

We need to make sure that we know what we are reading means. We must ask ourselves and other questions to work out what it means.

Sometime we read something that we understand in one context but its meaning seems to be different in another context.

Sometimes writers use Figures of Speech to make the writing more enjoyable but that can make it a bit more difficult to understand.

We must think about what we are reading and if we don't know or are not are, we must re-read or ask questions.

Developing Self-monitoring

Use the Inspector Heurisko Monitoring task cards to help develop strategies for clarifying what is known, to correct misunderstanding and find out what is not understood.

When you are reading mark the text (if on paper – NOT in a book) with a code to show:

I know and understand this	✓
I don't understand this	x
I'm not sure about his	?

When I lose meaning in what I read I:

- Stop, back up and re-read to see if I now makes sense.
- I ask myself and others questions about what I am reading
- I look for hidden meanings in metaphors, similes and puns
- I adjust the speed of my reading

Monitoring Strategies

Readers may use several comprehension monitoring strategies.

1. Identify where the difficulty occurs

("I don't understand the second paragraph on page 76.").

2. Identify what the difficulty is

("I don't get what the author means when she says, 'Arriving in America was a milestone in my grandmother's life.'").

3. Restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words

("Oh, so the author means that coming to America was a very important event in her grandmother's life.").

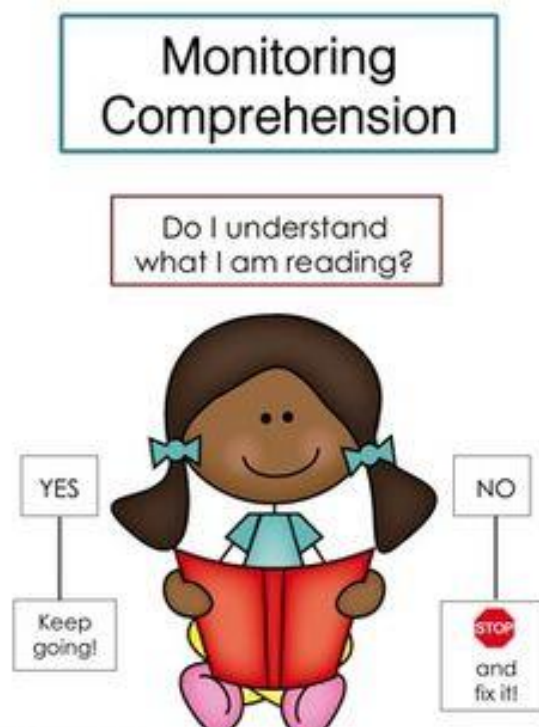
4. Look back through the text

("The author talked about Mr. McBride in Chapter 2, but I don't remember much about him. Maybe if I reread that chapter, I can figure out why he's acting this way now.").

5. Look forward in the text for information that might help them to resolve the difficulty.

("The text says, 'The groundwater may form a stream or pond or create a wetland. People can also bring groundwater to the surface.' Hmm, I don't understand how people can do that . . . Oh, the next section is called 'Wells.' I'll read this section to see if it tells how they do it.").

Taken from: <http://teaching-reading.org>



Inspector Heurisko's

Strategy Card 1

Monitoring



I found a hidden message.
What does it say?
What does it mean?



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Strategy Card 2

Monitoring



I found something that I don't
understand.
I don't understand

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Strategy Card 3

Monitoring



I found something that I am not
sure of.
I'm not sure if this means this
..... or this

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Strategy Card 4

Monitoring



I found something that I thought
that I understood but it doesn't
make sense in this context.

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Strategy Card 5

Monitoring



I found a saying that I have heard people saying.

When I heard it, it meant.....

In this text, I think it means....



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Strategy Card 6

Monitoring



Are there any figures of speech in the text?

What are they?

What do they mean?

Why do you think the author chose to use a figure of speech instead of just telling the meaning?

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Strategy Card 7

Monitoring



Are there any figures of speech in the text?

What are they?

Can you think of a different figure of speech that could be used for the same effect? You can make one up.

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Strategy Card 8

Monitoring



Are there any figures of speech in the text?

What are they?

What do they mean?

Is the author using them to create ambiguity or inference?

Figures of Speech

Alliteration

Alliteration is where several words begin with the same letter.
i.e. The swan swam swiftly.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggeration that can add a bit of humor to a story.
i.e. The suitcase weighed a ton!

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia describes something that sounds like the word itself.
i.e.
the sausages sizzled in the pan.

Assonance

Assonance focuses on the vowel sounds in a phrase, repeating them over and over for effect.
i.e. Try to light the fire!

Personification

Personification gives an object the characteristics of a living thing.
i.e. The sun smiled down on us.

Metaphor

The use of metaphor compares two things that are not alike and finds something about them to make them alike.
i.e. The snow is a white blanket covering the Earth.

Puns

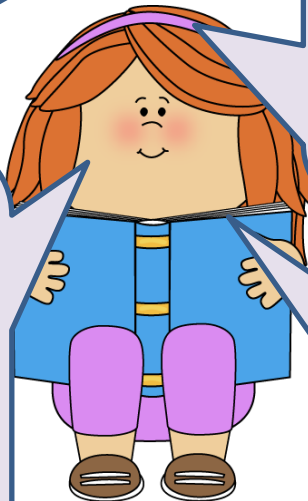
Puns are a play on words using different meanings or sounds in a word.
i.e. 'Time flies like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana!' Groucho Marx

Simile

A simile compares two things that are not alike. They are compared using the words **like** or **as**.
i.e.
She sings like a nightingale.

Euphemism

A euphemism is a word or group of words used instead of something which is not nice to talk about.
i.e. He passed away. (He died)



Blind Corners

'Be careful Kev,' mum said. 'Listen to your brother.'

'And Stew, don't leave Kev alone for one moment!'

'Yes mum!' the brothers said together.

Kev smelt the leathers that Stew was wearing. He smelt the combination of oil and petrol that always surrounded his brother and he felt happy and safe and FREE!

'Hay bro, put this on,' said Stew as he placed a crash helmet into Kev's hand.

Stew felt the helmet working out which way round it should go. He was impatient to be out on the open road: to feel the wind buffeting him like a playful friend, to hear the engine of the bike roaring, to follow the movements of his brother as leaned into the corners of the road.

'Mum, don't worry!' said Stew. 'I'll look after him'. There was silence. Kev wished he could see his mother's face. He knew he would see a look of worry, but what really worried him was that he couldn't remember what her face actually looked like.



Literal meaning

1. What things were the brothers wearing to keep them safe?
2. Who are the three people in the story?

Inferential meaning

1. What does, 'to feel the wind buffeting him like a playful friend' mean?
2. Why do you think Mum was so worried?
3. Which was the older brother?

Personal meaning

1. Why do you think Kev couldn't remember what his mum looked like?
2. What activity do you do that makes you feel happy?

The Dark Woods

The brothers arrived in the woods. Stew held the bike still as Kev got off and then put down the bike stand and got off himself.

'Well little brother,' Stew said. 'Sit by this tree while I get some fire wood'. Stew led Kev to a tree and waited while he sat leaning his back against the rough bark.

Kev listened as Stew's footsteps disappeared in the distance.

'I'll surprise Stew and gather some firewood too,' thought Kev as he stood up and with his arms outstretched in front of him. He started walking through the woods.

Sounds in the Silence

With his hands outstretched, Kev started walking through the forest. He felt the trees as he bumped into them, trying to remember what each felt like.

Suddenly he tripped and fell headlong over something protruding from the floor of the forest.

As he landed on the rough path, he rolled over, sat up and rubbed his shoulder. It stung like he had been attacked by a swarm of bees.

Painfully, he stood up. But what direction was he now facing? He put his hands out to feel the tree. Should it be on his right or his left? Is this the tree that he bumped into?

He stood and listened. He heard birds cheeping, leaves rustling and then a crack of a twig as something stepped on a branch.

'Who is there?' Kevin called out trying to keep his voice steady. 'Is that you Stew?'

The cracking which had stopped for a brief moment started again, quickly but going in the opposite direction.

'Stew, wait for me,' Kev called and he stumbled in the direction of the disappearing footsteps.

'Stew?' he called again, but this time as a whisper.

Connecting the dots

Thinking and discussing time

1. What do you know about woods? Is your knowledge from personal experience, other books or somewhere else?
2. Have you ever been lost? How did that feel? What did you do?
3. What things do you know of that could cause the cracking and rustling sounds in a forest?

Question time

Literal meaning

1. What happened to make Kev lose his sense of direction?

Inferential meaning

2. What do you think had happened to Kev's shoulder? Give evidence for your thoughts.

Personal meaning

3. How do you think Kev was feeling whispered his brother's name?

The Dark Woods

Kev needed the toilet. Maybe he could go behind a tree. He started feeling his way around the tree. Suddenly through his fear, he had the urge to laugh. If you are in a forest can you go behind a tree? Is there a front or a back?

And who was he hiding from?

At that thought the urge to laugh, left him.



A voice in the woods

'Where did you get to?' a voice thundered.
'There was a child. He fell. Quick let's get out of here before he becomes a real nuisance.'
'Did he see you? Would he be able to identify you?'
'I don't think so. I had this crash helmet on. Did you finish the job?'
'Yes, job's done and while you were off on your little jaunt with that fancy crash helmet, I found a car and a bike. I managed to get a few little 'souvenirs' of our forest day out. I also came across a nuisance - but I sorted her out!' Kev held his breath, trying not to make a sound. He assumed that they couldn't see him. He wished Stew was here.
The two voices grew quieter, then Kev heard a car door opening, then banging shut and an engine starting up. A flicker of recognition flew through his mind - but no - it couldn't be! The car drove off.
He listened for the sound of a bike engine. But heard none!

Monitoring

Thinking and Discussion time

1. As you read is there anything that you do not understand?
2. How has my understanding of the story changed as I have read it?
3. What are the important words in the text? Why?

Question time

Literal meaning

1. What was one of the men wearing on his head?

Inferential meaning

2. How do you know that the man didn't realise that Stew was blind?

Personal meaning

3. Have you ever been conscious about how loud your breathing is? When was that?

The Dark Wood

As Stew sat wondering what to do next, he realised that he needed to go to the toilet. He stood quietly not sure if he really was alone.
He felt for the tree and walked behind it for privacy. As he relieved himself, he suddenly burst out laughing.
Does a tree have a front or a back? Can you hide behind a tree in a forest?
The sound of his laughter suddenly made him feel strong and bold and best of all, the only sound he heard after he laughed was the sound of the birds in the tree above flying off.

What are you doing here?

For a while the only sound he heard was the ripple of chuckles that came from himself and the occasional bird singing.

Then.....

Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice.

'Help! Someone please help!'

Kev ran towards the voice.

'Where are you?' he called.

'Over here. Kev is that you?'

Kev kept running towards the voice.

'OK. Stop. You'll stand on me,' the voice called. 'Bend down and undo these knots.'

Kev followed the sound of the voice and reached down to explore the hands that rose to meet him.

He felt the ropes which bound the hands that he knew probably better than his own.

He tugged desperately at the knots, feeling his nails splinter as he tried to pull them apart.

'What are you doing here?' Kev asked.

'I wanted to know you were safe'. 'It turns out that you are more able to look after yourself than I am. Where is Stew?'

Predicting**Thinking and Discussion time**

1. Whose hands do you think they were and why were ropes tied around them?
2. Do you think that Kev is still in danger? Why?
3. Where do you think Stew is?

Question time**Literal meaning**

1. How do you know that it wasn't easy to untie the ropes?

Inferential meaning

2. Do you think that Kev had held his mother's hand before? Why?

Personal meaning

3. List as many feeling that Kev would have felt in this passage.

The Dark Woods

Kev's dark world felt as if it had grown darker. Somewhere out there was his brother. But the darkness seemed to close in and the silence between him and his mother echoed through his head.

How do you think the story ends?

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