

Narrative Reading Learning Progression

Grade 3

Grade 4

LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Orienting

I preview a book's title, cover, back blurb, and chapter titles so I can figure out the characters, the setting, and the main storyline (plot).



I preview to begin figuring out the characters, setting, and main storyline. I also use what I know about this kind of fiction to set me up to look for things that will probably be important (e.g., in historical fiction, I plan to learn about the time period; in mystery, I'm alert to clues).



Envisioning/ Predicting

I make a mental movie as I read. I imagine the setting, the characters, the events, and characters' reactions to them.

I predict what the main character will do, say, and think (and how the character will react to things) based on earlier parts of the text.

I can explain the reasons for my predictions.



I make a mental movie as I read, trying to experience the story as if it is real life.

I draw on earlier parts of the text to add to the details in my mental movie. That is, I draw on what I know about characters' traits and motivations, the setting, and the events to envision and predict. I also use what I know from real life about what these places tend to look and feel like.

I also base my predictions on my sense of how stories tend to go and can explain my reason for my predictions.



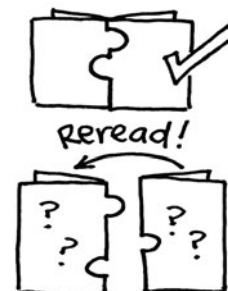
Monitoring for Sense

*Fitting the Pieces
Together*

I expect the story to make sense, and when it does not, I use fix-up strategies such as rereading and asking questions, including the 5 Ws. To regain my grip on the storyline, I recall the sequence of events, often trying to sort through what the main character really wants, the problems he or she confronts, and ways the character rises to those challenges.



I read, expecting the parts of the story to fit together in such a way that I can understand why things are happening. When things don't seem to fit—if they feel as if they come out of nowhere—I check to see if I missed something important.



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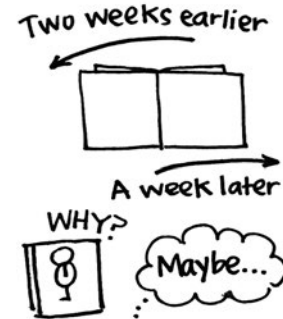
LITERAL COMPREHENSION

*Story Elements:
Time, Plot, Setting*

I keep track of what is happening and how much time goes by in a story. Is it one day? One week? One year?
I can tell where the story takes place.



As I read, I'm alert to the structure of a story, aware that it is not always told sequentially. I note sequence words (e.g., *Two weeks earlier . . . Thinking back, I remembered . . . or A week later . . .*) that clue me in to the presence of a backstory or gaps in time between scenes. I know that when the story goes backward, it is usually to give me important information.
I can tell when the setting changes.



Establishing Point of View

If a character is telling the story (in the "I" voice), I ask, "Who is telling this story?" "Who is the narrator?"
If this is not in the first person, I ask, "Who is the main character? Whose point of view am I hearing?"



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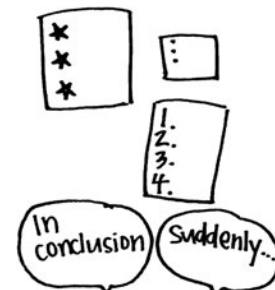


*Fluency
The sound of my voice*

I can read in my head and aloud in ways that help my listeners and me understand the story (e.g., changing my voice to show dialogue or a character's feelings).
The new work I'm doing now is that I can do this even when I'm reading longer sentences.



The way my voice sounds (whether in my head or out loud) is mostly based on what is going on in the story and on what each character is thinking, feeling, or experiencing. It might also be based on what I've learned about characters and the kind of people they are.



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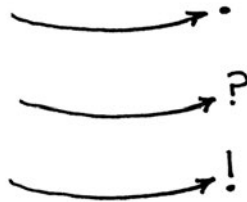
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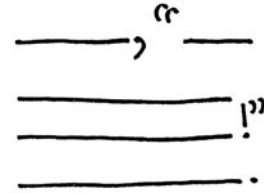
LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Punctuation and Sentence Complexity

When I read dialogue, I can make it sound like a character is really talking.
I use punctuation as a road signal that helps me know when to pause. I can do this with longer, more complex sentences now.



Punctuation steers my reading, but it is not something I have to think a lot about. However, when sentences are complex, the punctuation can help me figure out how to read them.



Word Work Word Solving

When I try to figure out the meaning of a tricky word or phrase, I read around the word, looking for clues to what it might mean.
I also look inside the word, relying on what I know about parts of words.
I know that authors play with words. I ask, "Could this word or phrase mean something funny or special (e.g., 'The path snakes . . .' or 'His eyes were glued to the clock . . .')?"



When I try to figure out the meaning of an unknown word or phrase, I read around it. I use clues from the story to help me think about whether the word is positive or negative and to notice whether there is an example later that can help me figure it out.
I use what I know about prefixes, suffixes, and root words.
When the author has used language in unusual ways—maybe describing one thing by comparing it to another—I figure out what the phrase probably means.

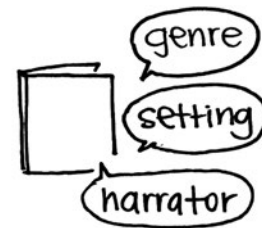


Building Vocabulary

When talking about a character, I reach for the more accurate word for a trait.



I not only use precise language to describe characters, I also use literary language—words like *genre*, *narrator*, *setting*, and so on—when talking about story elements.



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LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Retelling/
Summary/
Synthesis
Within Text

As I read a novel, I can think back over and briefly summarize the parts of the story that relate to what I'm reading.

When I finish a book, I can briefly summarize it in a way that shows what I know about the story and its story elements. I talk about the characters—their traits and wants—and recap especially important events using sequence words. Alternatively, I may talk about the problem and solution.

If the character learned a life lesson, I mention that, most likely at the end of my summary.



As I read a novel, I can think back over and briefly summarize the parts of the story that relate to what I'm reading.

When I finish a book, I can briefly summarize it in a way that shows knowledge of the important aspects of the story, including the story elements. I talk about the characters—their traits and wants—and recap important events using sequence and cause-effect words or using a problem-solution structure.

I talk about the big ideas/themes that the story teaches.



INTERPRETIVE READING

Inferring about
Characters and
Other Story
Elements
Character Traits

I can develop ideas (theories) about the kind of person a character is. I know this means talking about a character's traits (personality), and I'm careful not to confuse the way a character feels for a trait.

When a character makes a decision and does something, I can usually figure out why, based on what I know of the character and what happened earlier.



I keep in mind that characters are complicated. For example, I might think about how the character is different on the outside than the inside or in one part of the story or in one relationship than another.

I'm interested in what *really* drives a character to make the decisions or take the actions he or she takes. What does the character *really* want?

I know that a character's action will sometimes seem small (closing a door) but will actually signal a deeper meaning.



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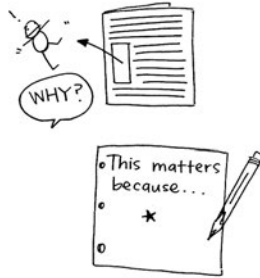
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INTERPRETIVE READING

Character Response/Change

I notice how a character changes across the story (for example, the character's feelings, traits, motivations, or behaviors might change).

I think about what key moment(s) in the story caused the character to change.



I notice how a character changes across the story. I think about many possible causes of these changes, including other story elements (the problem, the setting, other characters, and so on).

I know that what a character learns about life can often be the theme of a story.



Supporting Thinking with Text Evidence

I support my ideas with details from the text.

I support my ideas with details from several parts of the text.

I discuss how those details actually *do* support my ideas.

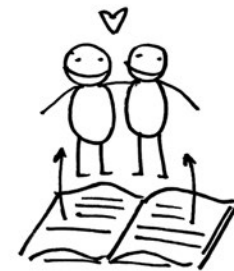
Determining Themes/Cohesion

At the end of a story, I can say a few sentences about the big life lesson (the theme) that a character has learned.



I read, asking, "What's this story really about?" and I come up with tentative ideas that I test as I read on. I have an internalized checklist of what makes a good interpretation—that the theme applies to most of the story, that it suggests a life lesson.

I know that often the theme becomes most clear at the end, but then I can look back and see the theme trace through other parts, such as times when a character makes a decision or realizes something big.



Supporting Thinking with Text Evidence

I can talk and write about parts of the story that support my thinking.

After deciding on a theme that is important to a story, I can look back on the story, finding textual details from across the text that support that theme.

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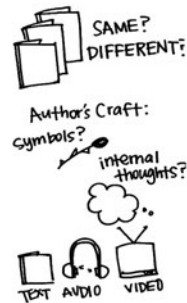
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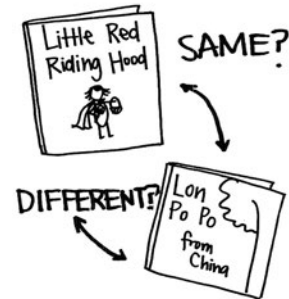
Comparing and Contrasting Story Elements and Themes

When I read books in a text set or series, I can talk about how the major events across the two books are similar or different. I can also talk about how other story elements are partly the same and partly different—like the characters, setting, or the life lessons (the themes).



I can discuss similarities and differences in stories, noticing theme. For example, “Is the theme similar but different? How is it developed differently?” (E.g., in one, a girl saves her friend, in another, the boy saves a dog, but both show that friendship takes risk.) I can also compare other aspects of the stories. I ask myself, “Do characters from the texts react in similar ways to an issue?”

I can compare and contrast two different versions of the same text (e.g., comparing the book and the movie version of a text).



Supporting Thinking with Text Evidence

I can give details from each book to explain my ideas.

I can support my thinking with exact details and examples from the text.

ANALYTIC READING

Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole

When asked to talk about the importance of a part of a story to the whole, I use what I know about story structure to name what part of the story it is: the setting? The problem? The problem?

I can also think about how the part is important to the whole story. If it is the setting, for example, I think “How is this particular setting important to the story?”



When asked, I can take one part or aspect of a story—an event, setting, minor character—and talk about the importance of it to the whole story. To do this, I use what I know about how one part of a story connects to another or to the whole story (e.g., a scene may explain a later choice a character makes or show that the character is changing; a setting creates a mood or explains the tension).



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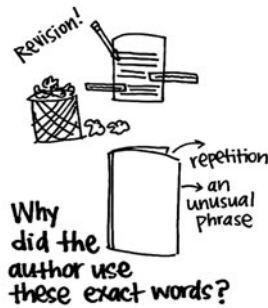
ANALYTIC READING

Analyzing Author's Craft

I know that just as I write different leads to a story, choosing the one that works best, authors do that, too. And just like I elaborate on the most important parts, authors also do that.

I notice when the author has done something that stands out—elaborated on a part, used an image or line repeatedly, used figurative language, begun or ended a text in an unusual way—and I think, “Why did the author do that?”

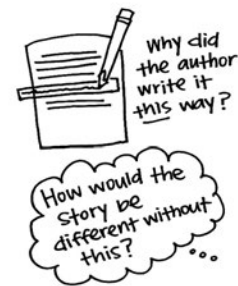
My answer shows that I think about how the author's choice supports something important to the story.



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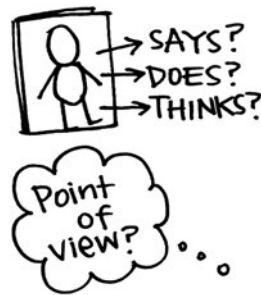
I might begin to think about what the author's words show (e.g., a character's traits or what a story is really about).



Analyzing Perspective

When asked about a character's perspective, I can talk about how the character feels about something important to the story (another character, the setting, an event).

I use what the character does, says, and thinks to support my ideas.



When asked about a character's perspective, I can talk about how the character feels about something important in the story (other characters, the setting, an event).

I use everything I know about the character's life experience (where he or she is from, what groups he or she belongs to) to explain why the character feels this way.



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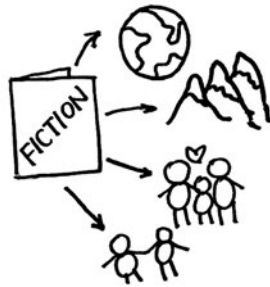
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ANALYTIC READING

Critical Reading *Growing Ideas*

When I read fiction, I get ideas and information about the world. I might be learning about places, growing ideas about families, or thinking about my friendships.



I can choose to let the story I'm reading spark ideas as I read.

Those ideas might be about the world, other people, a topic I read about, or the story itself. If appropriate, I develop my ideas by paying attention to the text. I use my ideas as a lens for rethinking or rereading.



Questioning the Text

I notice when characters' experiences don't match my own, and I think about how they are different.

I notice when something happens in a text that is not fair, and I think about why it is not fair and what could have happened instead.



As characters come to terms with issues, I know that the author is helping the reader to come to terms with these issues also. I read what an author writes, asking, "What is it you want me to think/feel?"

I also think about what an author wants me to think or feel, and I am willing to be critical. I ask myself, "Do I agree?"

