Do you ever wonder how you will possibly teach everything you need to in one day?

Most teachers today feel overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the amount of curriculum they have to cover. Overwhelmed by the fact that no matter what you do, there never seems to be enough time in the school day. You begin each day with carefully laid plans and the best of intentions. But, inevitably, the end of the day comes, you review your lesson plans and you shake your head in frustration wondering how you will ever fit it all in.

That’s where Reading Comprehension Lessons comes in. Imagine walking into your classroom and knowing that, without a doubt, you will be able to provide your students instruction in all areas of the reading curriculum.

When you use our resources, you can be sure that you target phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension – all of which have been identified by the National Reading Panel as essential to effective literacy instruction.

One of the best ways to do this is to select an anchor text. An anchor text is a book that you repeatedly read with your students but have different purpose for reading each time you read the text. As a result, the students become very familiar with the characters, plot, etc. and are able to study the text, focusing on the essential skills necessary to improve reading achievement. In this way, all learning and practice with new strategies becomes anchored to specific texts.

You can select an anchor text from our lesson plan library and take advantage of the following resources: (http://ReadingComprehensionLessons.com/lesson-plans)

- **Thinking through Reading** lesson plans and use them to teach your students how to use reading comprehension strategies
- **Fantastic Phonics & Word Study** lesson plan and use it to introduce the text as well as teach readers an important phonics / word study skill supported by the text
- **Vocabulary Connections Resource Package** to introduce or review key vocabulary from the text
- **Text Innovations** to support creative writing about reading
- **Running Records** to assess a student’s oral reading fluency to determine individual reading levels
- **Reader’s Notebook Printables** to encourage students to write about their reading

So, let’s get you started.
Take a deep breath because we’ve got you and your reading block covered!

**NOTE:** Resources may vary based on book title. Please check our website (http://ReadingComprehensionLessons.com) for an up to date list of lesson plans and resources
Using Thinking through Reading in Your Classroom

Thinking through Reading is a series of Reading Comprehension Strategy Lesson Plans.

Each of our lesson plans uses a trade book as a springboard for instruction. We have carefully aligned strategy lessons with books that offer plenty of opportunity for readers to explicitly practice each reading strategy.

You should read the book to you students once before using the Thinking through Reading comprehension strategy lesson plans. By exposing students to the text prior to introducing comprehension strategies, you increase their ability to focus on using the strategy rather than on the characters, events and other story elements.

The Thinking through Reading lesson plans found on ReadingComprehensionLessons.com have been written based on proven best practices for literacy instruction and literacy acquisition.

Each reading comprehension lesson plan provides an opportunity for readers to
- Build their vocabulary
- Improve fluency
- Improve comprehension
- Improve verbal communication
- Write about their reading

When children have an opportunity to engage with text in multiple ways, comprehension improves because the reader is activating multiple parts of their brain to fully engage with the text.

Thinking through Reading Lesson Plans are Available for the Following Reading Comprehension Strategies:

- Retelling
- Asking Questions
- Making Connections
- Identifying the Author’s Message
- Making Predictions
- Determining Importance
- Making Inferences
- Understanding Text Structure
- Visualizing
- Synthesizing

Use the following Step-by-Step Approach to Thinking through Reading or refer to “Thinking through Reading and the Minilesson” when using the lesson plans.
## A Step by Step Guide to Using the Thinking through Reading Lesson Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1:</th>
<th>Begin by reading the summary. The summary is intended to focus the reader and provide a preview of the book. The summary also works to activate prior knowledge so that the reader can begin to predict and anticipate the story. Younger readers (Kindergarten – Second Grade) may want to preview the book by looking at the pictures before reading.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td>Tell the students to think about the summary, the title of the book and look at the picture on the front cover. Read each question and allow the students to talk about what they already know. If the child does not have a lot of prior knowledge on the subject of the book, briefly discuss each question together. Then spend some time becoming familiar with the new words and vocabulary on the back of the strategy card. These words listed in the “Important Words to Know and Understand” box have been selected to help the students achieve high levels of comprehension and to further develop their vocabulary. As you read the book, look for the words and discuss their importance in the text. You might also want to add on to the definitions provided on the card to give the reader ownership over the word. Ask the students to tell you what the word means to them. Next, read the entire book from beginning to end. Then, put the book down and move on to step 2 on the following day. You can extend the lesson by using the vocabulary flash cards if desired.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3:</td>
<td>Before reading the book for the second time, read the rationale behind the specific strategy to the students. This sets the purpose for the day’s reading. The first read through of the book gave the students an opportunity to become familiar with the story before beginning to practice the comprehension strategy. Now that the students are familiar with the book, and the story, they can focus on the strategy work to further their understanding of the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4:</td>
<td>Begin to read the book for the second time, stopping at the pages indicated on the strategy card. Follow the directions listed for each page to begin thinking through reading.</td>
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<td>Step 5:</td>
<td>Upon completing the book for the second time, the students should think about how they used the strategy. They should silently answer the questions listed on the strategy card in their mind. This allows the students time to process and think about their reading before verbally communicating their thoughts. In other words, this step teaches the students to think before they speak.</td>
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<td>Step 6:</td>
<td>Now is the time for you and the students to talk about the book and the specific comprehension strategy. Ask the students to share what they were thinking in response to the questions in step 5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 7:</td>
<td>All readers reflect on their reading. Now is the time for the students to think about themselves as a reader. They should reflect on how they grew as a reader through using the strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8:</td>
<td>Now is the time for the students to go back into the book and do some independent work with the strategy. Each strategy card will direct the students to complete some specific work with the accompanying Reader’s Notebook entry. After the students have completed the work in their Reader’s Notebook, you should check to make sure that they understand the strategy. The quality of the students’ work will let you know whether or not you should revisit the Thinking Through Reading strategy together or move on to the next strategy card for that particular book.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Using a Minilesson Format to Deliver Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction

The Thinking through Reading Lesson Plans can be used to teach students how to effectively use reading comprehension strategies in a whole group learning environment, in a small group, and individually as a one-on-one experience.

One highly effective way to deliver reading comprehension instruction is through the use of mini lessons.

A mini lesson, by definition should be mini. In other words, a mini lesson should last no longer than 5-7 minutes. The read aloud is an ideal place to use mini lessons because you can use an anchor text to introduce a reading strategy in a very short period of time.

The key to an effective mini lesson is explicit, intentional instruction.

It is important that you introduce the anchor text prior to the mini lesson. An anchor text is a book that you repeatedly read with your students but have a different purpose for reading each time you read the text. As a result, the students become very familiar and comfortable with the characters, plot, etc. and are able to focus on specific strategies to improve comprehension. In this way, all learning and practice with new strategies becomes anchored to specific texts.

Deliver your mini lesson using the following steps as a guide. Remember to keep your instructional language to a minimum. The goal is define a very clear purpose for reading for your students.
Connect

State your teaching point. Tell the students why today’s work is important to them as readers and connect today’s work to previous learning. For example, you might say:

“Today we are going to re-read The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. While reading we are going to work on identifying the author’s message. It is important for readers to think about the author’s message in order to determine the theme and purpose of the book. When an author decides to write a book, it is usually because they want to share information or a story with readers.”

Teach

Show the students how a reader goes about identifying the author’s message. Select a specific place in the text where the author provides the reader with a message. Guide the students as they work with you to identify the author’s message. Invite the students to discuss the author’s message: What do they think the author is trying to say? What evidence do they have to support the author’s message?

Because you have already read the book, you and your students can focus solely on comprehension strategy work. It is unnecessary to read the entire book during the mini lesson.

Active Engagement

Move onto another page in the book where the author’s message is revealed. Ask students to turn and talk with a partner about the author’s message. Allow 2-4 the students to share their thinking with the class.

Link

Restate the importance of the teaching point. Remind students that they should use this strategy today and every day from now on. Provide students with an opportunity to try the strategy during independent reading or during small group/guided reading. Allow students to write about their reading using the reader’s notebook printables included with your lesson plan.
Using Vocabulary Connections in Your Classroom

Vocabulary Connections is a series or vocabulary activities intended to be used as a supplement to the Thinking through Reading lesson plans. Each of the Vocabulary Connections resource packages uses specific vocabulary from trade books found in our lesson plan library.

Vocabulary instruction provides readers with the foundation necessary to successfully comprehend text. When you provide students with multiple opportunities to interact with new words, you support vocabulary growth, which in turn, strengthens oral reading fluency and comprehension.

In order for readers to successfully develop their vocabularies, they must have the opportunity to have multiple and varied encounters with words. That’s why each of our Vocabulary Connections resource packages provide students with an opportunity to read new words, write new words, play games with the new words, discover the new words within text, and talk with other readers about the new words.

Each of our Vocabulary Connections resource packages includes the following:

- Word/Picture Sorting Cards
- Word/Definition Sorting Cards
- Student Directions for Using the Sorting Cards to Play Games that Support Additional Interaction with Vocabulary Words
- Context Clue Activity
- Word Web Activity
- Book Vocabulary Word List

We recommend that you use the Sorting Cards to support vocabulary growth in the following ways:

- Flash Cards
- Vocabulary Fish
- Vocabulary Memory Match
- Invite Students to Draw Connections Between Words. For example, ask them to sort the cards according to different attributes (ie: color/emotion/nouns/etc. words within the group of vocabulary words)
Using Running Records in Your Classroom

Running records are an excellent assessment tool for determining student reading levels. Running records work well because they allow teachers to observe a student’s reading behaviors in real time. Running records require students to orally read 100 words from a specific text. It is best if the text is semi-familiar to the student, meaning they have either read the text or have had the text read aloud to them. As a result or using a familiar text and a running record, teachers are able to make instructional decisions on the spot in order to deliver highly targeted instruction. Running records will provide you with a snapshot of a student’s ability to comprehend a text as well as their level of oral reading fluency.

When readers engage with text, they employ three cuing systems to make meaning of the text. Through observing a child’s use of these systems, teachers can determine what type of instruction is needed in order to differentiate your instruction. In short, running records will give you a very clear picture of your students as readers and help you effectively support the reading development of all your students.

**Three Cuing Systems Necessary for Effective Reading:**

1. **Meaning – Does it make sense?**

   When readers attend to meaning they consider the following:

   - Story Sense
   - Prior Knowledge
   - Text
   - Illustrations
Reading Comprehension Lessons
A Note for the Teacher

If readers are able to decode words and read fluently with intonation, chances are they are using meaning cues. A reader cannot use voice inflection if they do not comprehend the text. In other words, in order for a reader to change his or voice in a way that reflects what is happening in the story, they must attend to the illustrations, and the sequence of events or character description to know whether or not it is appropriate to read the words quickly, slowly, or with inflections. If a student reads in monotone, it may be a sign that he or she is not making meaning while reading. As a result, you may want to provide that child with reading comprehension support.

2. Structure – Does it sound right?

When readers attend to structure they consider the following:

- Natural Language
- Knowledge of English
- Grammatical Patterns
- Language Structures

If readers are able to decode words with high levels of accuracy and read fluently, chances are they have a secure understanding of how our language works. When children make mistakes while reading, they tend to do one of two things. They both blow right past the mistake and continue reading or they go back and try the word again. When readers fail to notice their mistakes, they are exhibiting a failure to make meaning and understand structure. When children notice their mistakes and try to fix them, they exhibit their ability to attend to the meaning of the text. In other words, if a child does not know they have made a mistake while reading, they do not comprehend what they are reading and need support in both meaning and structure. But, if a child goes back and tries words again, chances are they will benefit from support that builds vocabulary, phonetic awareness.
3. Visual – Does it look right?

When readers attend to visual cues they consider the following:

- Sounds and Symbols
- Analogies
- Print Conventions (directionality, words/spaces, letters, beginnings/endings, punctuation)

Again, if readers are able to decode words with high levels of accuracy and read fluently, chances are they have a secure understanding of how our language works and what it looks like when printed on a page. If readers make mistakes while reading, and are unable to self-correct their mistakes, chances are they need additional support making connections between new words and words they already know in order to improve oral reading fluency and accuracy. If readers are unable to determine whether or not the words they say when reading look right, you might try providing them with additional phonics and word study support.