



COMPREHENSION IN READING MASTERY

The booklet, *The Research Base for Reading Mastery*, describes how the Reading Mastery program incorporates all aspects of reading instruction that have been proven to be essential for literacy acquisition by children in the elementary grades. A large portion of the booklet covers the teaching of comprehension (Section IV, pages 17-26). Reading Mastery addresses the full range of comprehension skills that ensure students can extract relevant meaning from text.

These skills include:

- vocabulary acquisition
- literal comprehension skills
- interpretive comprehension skills
- reasoning skills, such as deductions
- identifying the main idea of a passage
- outlining the main idea and supporting details
- identifying contradictions, sarcasms and other literary elements

The next section in the booklet reviews the evidence base for Reading Mastery, including the program's effect on students' comprehension.

The skills listed above are just the broad categories of comprehension skills taught in Reading Mastery. There are many subtypes that are addressed in the different levels of the program. As an example, the following is a list of the types of comprehension questions integrated into the Reading Mastery Signature Edition Grade 5 program:

- Access Prior Knowledge
- Author's Point of View
- Author's Purpose
- Cause/Effect
- Charts/Graphs/Diagrams/Visual Aids
- Classify and Categorize
- Compare/Contrast
- Determine Character Emotions, Motivation
- Drawing Conclusions
- Drawing Inferences
- Fact and Opinion
- Hypothesizing
- Main Idea
- Making Connections
- Making Deductions
- Making Judgments
- Narrative Elements
- Noting Details
- Predict
- Reality/Fantasy
- Recall Facts/Rules
- Retell
- Sequence
- Steps in a Process
- Story Structure
- Summarize
- Understanding Dialogue
- Using Context to Confirm Meaning(s)
- Visualize



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Comprehension questions appear frequently in every story in the program and are accompanied by writing assignments in the upper grade levels that require students to apply the comprehension skills they've acquired.

In his synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses, Hattie (2009) supports the assertion that comprehension is a skill successfully taught in Direct Instruction and is required in application by students: "One of the common criticisms is that Direct Instruction works with very low-level or specific skills, and with lower ability and the youngest students. These are not the findings from the meta-analyses. The effects of Direct Instruction are similar...for high-level comprehension ($d=0.54$)....The messages of these meta-analyses on Direct Instruction underline the power of stating the learning intentions and success criteria, and then engaging students in moving towards these."

For more information on comprehension instruction in the Reading Mastery program, contact the National Institute for Direct Instruction at the number or email address below.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London and New York: Routledge.

See also: Stockard, J. (2010). Promoting reading achievement and countering the "fourth-grade slump": The impact of Direct Instruction on reading achievement in fifth grade. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 15, 218-240.