

Resource 1

Defining Skilled Reading

Simple View of Reading

Word Recognition x Language Comprehension = Reading Comprehension

Scarborough's Reading Rope

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

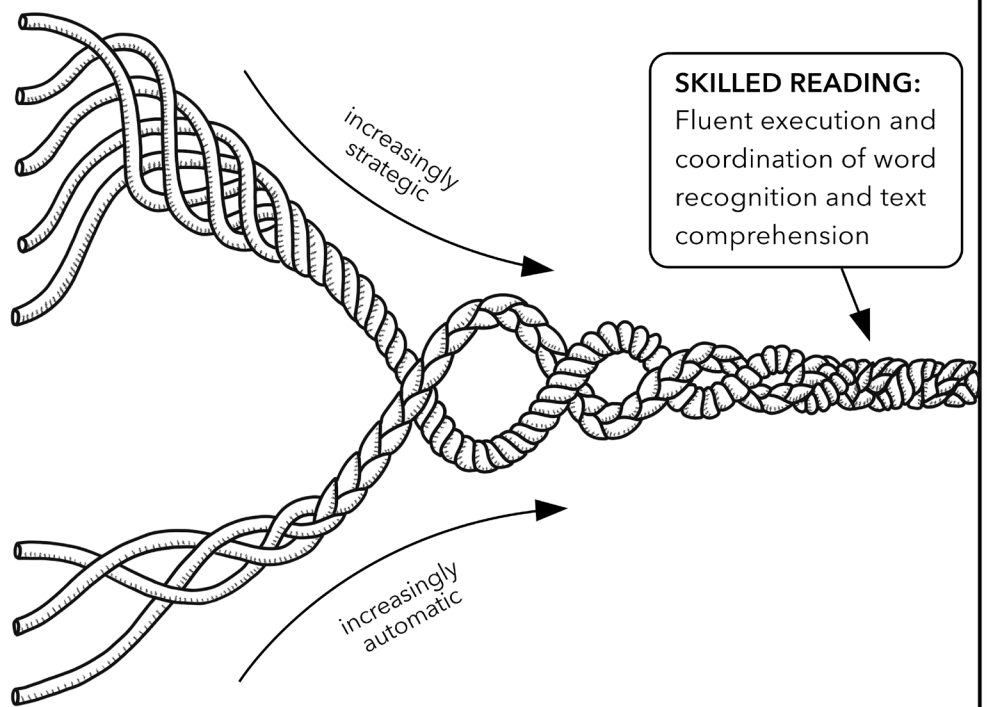
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING (alphabetic principle,
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)



Scarborough, Hollis S. "Connecting Early Language and Literacy to Later Reading (Dis)Abilities: Evidence, Theory, and Practice." In *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, edited by Susan B. Neuman and David K. Dickinson, 97–110. The Guilford Press, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Resource 2

Text Comprehension Experience Notes

Use this handout to read each text and note your responses during the text comprehension experience.

Language Comprehension Strands

Background knowledge includes what a reader already knows about a topic.

Vocabulary refers to the reader's knowledge of words and their meanings.

Language structures include one's awareness of syntax—or sentence structure—and semantics, or the meanings and relationships between words.

Verbal reasoning refers to the reader's ability to draw inferences from text, to understand the meaning when words are used literally or figuratively, and to connect ideas across a text.

Literacy knowledge includes both foundational concepts of print, such as that text moves from left to right or that the parts of a book often include a cover and table of contents, and an understanding of different genres and their purposes and structures.

Resource 3

Text Excerpt

Passage 1

It's nigh on spring
before that Book Woman
can stop to visit a spell.
And Mama makes a gift—
the only precious thing she can—
her recipe for berry pie,
which is the best grub earthly.
“Not much, I know,
for all your trouble,”
Mama says,
and then her voice
goes low with pride,
“and for making
two readers outta one.”

—Henson, *That Book Woman*

Resource 4

Horse-Riding Librarians Were the Great Depression's Bookmobiles

1. Read the passage.

The Pack Horse Library initiative, which sent librarians deep into Appalachia, was one of the New Deal's most unique plans. The project, as implemented by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), distributed reading material to the people who lived in the craggy, 10,000-square-mile portion of eastern Kentucky. The state already trailed its neighbors in electricity and highways. And during the Depression, food, education and economic opportunity were even scarcer for Appalachians.

They also lacked books: In 1930, up to 31 percent of people in eastern Kentucky couldn't read. Residents wanted to learn, notes historian Donald C. Boyd. Coal and railroads, poised to industrialize eastern Kentucky, loomed large in the minds of many Appalachians who were ready to take part in the hoped prosperity that would bring. "Workers viewed the sudden economic changes as a threat to their survival and literacy as a means of escape from a vicious economic trap," writes Boyd.

McGraw, Eliza. "Horse-Riding Librarians Were the Great Depression's Bookmobiles," *Smithsonian Magazine*, 21 June 2017, smithsonianmag.com/history/horse-riding-librarians-were-great-depression-bookmobiles-180963786.

2. How does this passage add to your schema about packhorse librarians?

Resource 5

Text Experience Reflection

Reflect on your experience comprehending the excerpt from *That Book Woman*. How did each Language Comprehension strand contribute to your understanding of passage 1?

Resource 6

School Reform Institute Definitions

- **Surface Comprehension** [is] “fueled by an expectation that reading is about completing tasks; students do not complete a mental model of the text—their understanding is restricted to literal understanding with no focus on inferences, evaluation, or synthesis.”
- **Robust Comprehension** “...indicates deep comprehension of the text, fueled by an expectation that reading is about understanding; students develop a complete mental model of the text that includes both literal and inferential understanding.”

School Reform Institute, *Beyond the Surface: Leveraging High-Quality Instructional Materials for Robust Reading Comprehension*. 2026, 2.

Resource 7

Considering Comprehension Data

Read through the list of challenges that you may observe in students' language comprehension.

Background Knowledge

Students who lack background knowledge may

- struggle to understand concepts in the text,
- be unable to answer basic recall or in-the-text questions,
- express misconceptions about the topic,
- connect ideas in the text to irrelevant personal knowledge or experiences, or
- struggle to summarize the text.

Vocabulary Knowledge

Students lacking vocabulary knowledge may

- be unable to answer basic recall or in-the-text questions,
- have difficulty connecting ideas within the text,
- not recognize the meanings of words in print,
- struggle to identify the correct pronunciation for a word,
- struggle to connect an accurately decoded word to a known word, or
- use less-precise vocabulary to retell or describe the text.

Language Structures

Students struggling with language structures may

- be unable to answer basic recall or in-the-text questions,
- be unable to explain the purpose of different punctuation marks,
- struggle to connect or recall ideas across a complex or compound sentence,
- be unable to connect a pronoun to the noun it refers to, or
- have difficulty with phrasing or expression.

Verbal Reasoning

Students who need additional support with processing or thinking about ideas in a text may

- struggle to connect two ideas presented close together in a text,
- not be able to compare or contrast concepts presented in a text,
- struggle to restate the main idea or key details from the text,
- find it difficult to write about the text without sentence frames,
- struggle to make inferences from the text,
- demonstrate other struggles with vocabulary or background knowledge, or
- cannot connect a graphic or illustration to the text.

Literacy Knowledge

Students who need additional support with applying their literacy knowledge may

- not be able to explain how they know a book is a fiction text,
- not be able to explain how they know a text is a nonfiction text,
- struggle to identify setting, characters, problem, or resolution in a fiction text,
- have difficulty identifying the organization of a nonfiction text,
- be unable to identify a heading, subheading, or caption, or
- skip over graphics, maps, charts, or images.

Resource 8

Supports for Comprehension Challenges

In addition to challenges strategically applying each strand of the Reading Rope to deepen comprehension of a text, students may also face challenges that are specific to the text, the task, or as a reader. This resource provides ideas for responding to these types of possible challenges and points to specific elements that can be useful in meeting these specific needs.

Supports for Text Challenges

- Study the text to ensure you have the text content.
- Frontload content, vocabulary, and/or skills with multilingual learners or learners with language-based disabilities.
- Activate students' prior knowledge (e.g., remind them of relevant knowledge built in earlier modules or grade levels or of narrative elements or text features that they have previously encountered).
- Preview the text genre.
- Pre-teach or provide a glossary or reference with key text vocabulary.
- Have students visualize aspects of the text.
- Have students read aloud and/or act out aspects of the text.
- Have students deconstruct key sentences from the text.
- Reread to students or have students reread certain portions of the text.
- Have students return to the text to justify their answers

Other:

Supports for Task Challenges

- Share a clear learning purpose for reading tasks.
- Provide clear and concise directions for reading tasks.
- Segment larger tasks into smaller steps.
- Provide sentence frames for oral communication or writing tasks.

Other:

Supports for Reader Strategies and Skills Challenges

- Model strategies (e.g., using morphology to define new words, deconstructing sentences, making inferences).
- Engage in brief guided practice before having students engage independently.
- Provide students with specific feedback on their application of strategies.
- Have students regularly reflect on strategy usage.
- Use wait time.

Other:

Supports for Reader Social-Emotional Needs and Challenges

- Build a supportive classroom culture around norms of respect and curiosity. Have students reflect on or reinforce when students follow norms. Intervene when they do not.
- Respond neutrally when students share what they notice and wonder to avoid students thinking that there are right/wrong answers.
- Have students share in pairs before doing so in the whole group.
- Have students add ideas via sticky notes.
- Provide positive feedback with regard to the amount and diversity of what students notice and wonder to emphasize the importance of being careful readers.
- Encourage students to keep noticing and wondering after the lesson. Continue adding to a chart.

Other:

Resource 9

Text Complexity Analysis

That Book Woman

Heather Henson; Illustrated by David Small

Description:

This narrative picture book tells the story of a hardworking young boy named Cal who lives in the rural Appalachian Mountains in the 1930s. Cal initially thinks that he does not like to read, but a persistent packhorse librarian continues to deliver books, impressing him with her bravery. With the help of his younger sister, Cal learns to read and discovers his love for books.

Complexity Rating

QUALITATIVE	Meaning/Purpose The story subtly conveys themes of personal change and the power of reading as the main character’s appreciation for books grows over time.
	Structure The story’s organization is clear and chronological. The story communicates the passing of time through the changing seasons shown in the pictures and the changing chores on the rural homestead. This text includes an author’s note that provides additional background information about packhorse librarians.
	Language The author uses many unfamiliar words with a heavy use of vocabulary in an Appalachian dialect (e.g., <i>a-twixt</i>, <i>britches</i>, <i>’course</i>). Some figurative language is not explained through illustrations.
	Knowledge Demands Readers will benefit from some understanding of the larger economic and historical setting of this story, such as living in a one-room home or living without a vehicle. Readers would benefit from some understanding of everyday life in a rural area.
QUANTITATIVE	Lexile® measure: AD920L

Reader and Task Considerations

This text is read aloud to students.

Students use this text to build knowledge of how some people accessed books and learned to read. The dynamic characters in *That Book Woman* provide students with the opportunity to identify and analyze story elements, specifically characters. This instructional focus on characters helps students develop a character for their narrative assessment. After the first reading, students watch a video about packhorse librarians that addresses some of the knowledge demands of this text.

The dialect may pose challenges for students to determine what is happening in the text. Depending on student familiarity with this dialect, teachers may want to model how students can infer meaning. This book offers students a chance to connect with Cal's motivation for learning to read—a motivation that the author implies but does not explicitly state.

Rationale for Placement

Text Order: 5 of 8

This text adds to students' knowledge of books by introducing the idea of librarians and how they provide access to books. Students watch Cal grow to appreciate the value of reading after a packhorse librarian delivers books to his home in the Kentucky hills. This text models how to include characters in a narrative, which is a skill students will apply to narrative writing throughout the module. The introduction to librarians sets the stage for more learning about libraries in the next text in the module, *Tomás and the Library Lady*.

Text Title

Author; Illustrator (if applicable)

Description:

(Brief summary of the text — setting, main character(s), central conflict or arc, and how it resolves.)

Complexity Rating

QUALITATIVE

Meaning/Purpose

(Central theme(s) or purpose of the text and how they are conveyed.)

Structure

(Text organization—chronological, non-linear, use of illustrations/text features, etc.)

Language

(Vocabulary demands, figurative language, dialect, sentence complexity.)

Knowledge Demands

(Background knowledge readers need—historical, cultural, or experiential.)

QUANTITATIVE

Lexile® measure:

Reader and Task Considerations

(Note whether this text is read aloud or read independently. Describe how students will use this text—skills or standards practiced, connections to writing tasks, supports provided (videos, read-alouds, discussions), and any anticipated challenges.)

Rationale for Placement

(Note the text order and explain why this text is placed here in the module sequence—what it builds on from prior texts and how it prepares students for what comes next.)

Text Order: of