TCM
Teacher Created Materials

**Research-Based
Curriculum**

Fiction
Readers

The Joy of Reading

Whether it's at home or in the classroom, children respond strongly to stories. Advertisements, sports events, movies, and news programs all use stories to draw in audiences and convey important information. Because they have the power to engage readers, not just intellectually but also emotionally, stories make difficult content accessible, prepare children for new life experiences, and introduce readers to new people, places, and ideas.

Fiction is literature that stems from the imagination and includes genres such as mystery, adventure, fairy tales, and fantasy. Fiction can include facts, but the story is not true in its entirety. Facts are often exaggerated or manipulated to suit an author's intent for the story. Realistic fiction uses plausible characters and story lines that seem real, but the people do not really exist or the events narrated did not ever really take place. In addition, fiction is descriptive, elaborate, and designed to entertain. Fiction allows readers to make their own interpretations based on the text.

Each event in a story occurs in a logical order, and by the end, a conflict is resolved. Fiction promises a resolution in the end, and so the reader waits for resolution as the characters change, grow, and move on to new experiences. We are drawn to fiction because it resembles our lives. Fiction suggests our own stories will have meaning and a resolution in the end.
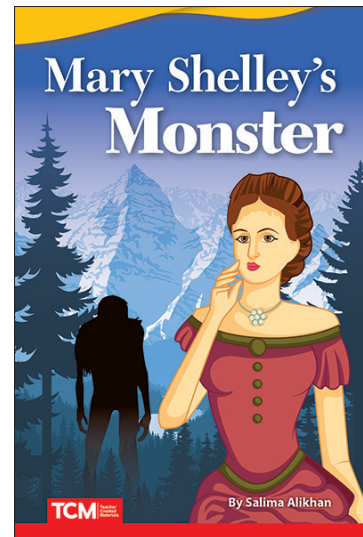
Fiction Readers — Research to Practice

Fiction Readers books welcomes students into fantastical, charming worlds of fiction stories. Each kit includes a variety of genres and characters guaranteed to entertain and excite students. These books are meant to be shared and giggled over. They spark gasps and wide-eyed wonder. With *Fiction Readers,* teachers and students share in the joy of reading.

The Importance of Reading Fiction

Recommending that children read "literary wholes" may seem like a contemporary criticism of basal programs, but this is actually advice from a 1908 work on the teaching of reading in the United States, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* by Edmund Burke Huey. Huey's observations highlight what every parent and teacher of young children knows—children love a good story. And the discussion that extends from the story is just as important. Speaking and listening are critical during preschool and primary grades, during which time oral discourse provides the primary context for learning. Numerous correlational studies indicate that frequent, high-quality reading experiences benefit preschoolers in vocabulary acquisition (Lawrence and Snow 2011). Older students experience new language structures and stretch their vocabularies to talk about new, even fantastical topics. Reading fiction provides rich opportunities for oral discourse development and vocabulary acquisition.

Reading fiction stimulates the imagination, promotes creative thinking, increases vocabulary, and improves writing skills. Readers visualize the characters and setting of a story. Researcher Keith Oatley (2009) states that fiction also encourages empathy by allowing readers to meet new characters and imagine what they might be feeling or thinking. A great story can bring people together and make differences more understandable.

Richard Allington (2003, 2006), when discussing struggling readers, writes that if students are to continue to develop as readers, they need to be readers. His guiding principle is: the more one reads, the better one reads. Teachers must help facilitate time, opportunity, and resources for reading widely in their classrooms.

The collection of books in *Fiction Readers* kits introduces students to a wide variety of fiction genres and text types. For the beginning reader, wordless books and books with highly integrated illustrations foster thoughtful picture reading and opportunities for rich discussions. More experienced readers enjoy strong narratives with creative illustrations.

Matching Text to Student

Carefully constructed books can do more than entertain students. By combining engaging stories and pictures with planned elements of complexity, authors create books that align well with instruction. The reading level of a book can be measured in several ways. Whether teachers use the TCM Reading Level, Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Level, or Lexile® Level, a number or letter can serve as a convenient shorthand to communicate the level of challenge a book is likely to present to a reader.

When matching a text to a student or group of students, qualitative and quantitative measures should be coupled with an understanding of the reader and the instructional purpose. For example, if the instructional goal is to teach an emergent reader to hear the initial sound /b/, the quantitatively difficult word butterfly (accompanied by a clear image) is appropriate, while the same word, used differently, might make a page of narrative text inaccessible to an emergent reader. Students' attitudes toward a text and their abilities to strategically read a text and retain all the information they need is tied to the difficulty level of the text.

The TCM Leveling System combines features of other major leveling systems. The measured traits include word and sentence length, sentence structure, and content appropriateness. Care is taken to ensure that leveling requirements do not impede upon the authenticity or creativity of the texts. Text readability is first accessed using quantitative tools, then qualitative considerations are assessed based on criteria set for each grade level.

Remi likes the ball.
She chases the ball.

She cannot get
the ball.

Mother Nature's Daughters

I am
Mother Nature.
I have daughters,
four of them,
Autumn,
Summer,
Winter,
Spring.

Long, long ago I
nicknamed them my
young seasonal sisters,
who season the
world
in their given time.

But now, now,
I shall ask them to find
themselves in a new season
so they may write anew
and understand new stories.

Fountas and Pinnell (2012) offer educators ten text characteristics with which to measure text difficulty. Adding complexity to one of these characteristics may increase the Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Level. Conversely, a text that is rigorous in one area but simple in another may have a lower Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Level.

Ten Characteristics Related to Text Complexity
1. Genre/Forms
2. Text Structure
3. Content
4. Themes and Ideas
5. Language and Literary Figures
6. Sentence Complexity
7. Vocabulary
8. Words
9. Illustrations
10. Book and Print Features (Fountas and Pinnell 2012)

Lexile® levels are measured with an algorithm that places greater emphasis on syntactic and semantic challenges presented by a text. Consequently, word choice and sentence structure influence the Lexile® level of a text.

Students should read daily and be given the tools to access text that pushes their abilities. Providing students with texts at an appropriate reading level is vital to their achievement.

Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Fiction Readers books are organized to provide increasingly complex reading experiences. Across the program, books range from wordless books that retell familiar stories to complex narratives with multiple storylines and layers of meaning.
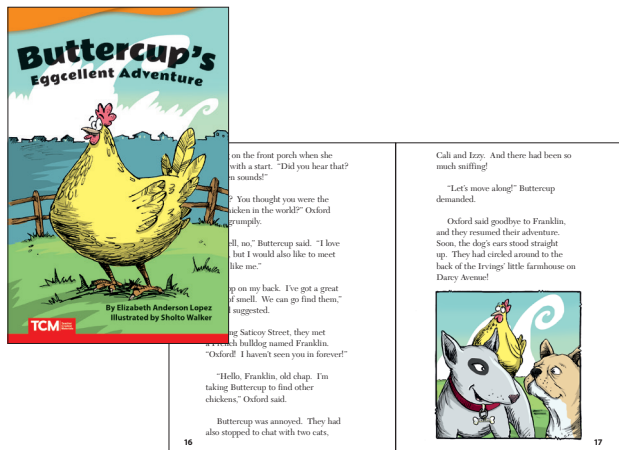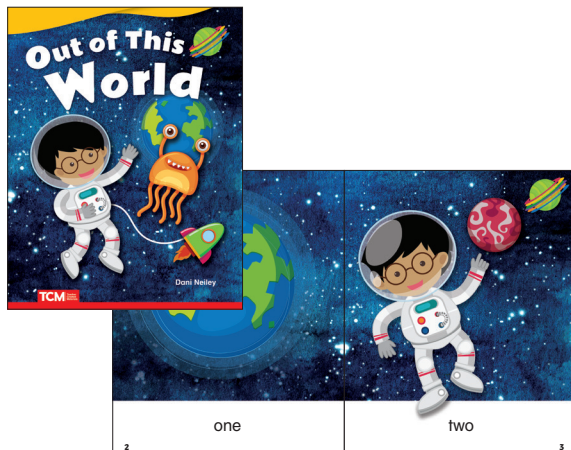
The Science of Reading Instruction

Teachers know there are many skills, abilities, and behaviors involved in learning to read, whether the books are storybooks, wordless picture books, or informational books. Laura M. Justice and Amy E. Sofka organize these skills into four categories: knowledge of how print is organized and used in books, the meaning of print as a form of communication, knowledge of the features and names of individual letters, and knowledge of words as units of print related to spoken language (2011, 11). A solid foundation in these areas is a strong indicator of how children will develop as competent readers.

Beginning readers build their decoding and comprehension skills so they can tackle increasingly complex stories, recognize a variety of characters and settings, master increasingly difficult vocabulary, and understand concepts such as the main idea or an author's purpose. The challenge for teachers is to identify and teach the stories that have a strong narrative as well as the print features that invite children to practice and master the skills required for competent reading.

Reading instruction systematically supports the development of reading skills and strategies. The scientific teacher observes students as they read and responds dynamically to create consistent, appropriate challenge, struggle, and growth. A balanced approach provides direct instruction in word study, reading comprehension, and writing in response to reading coupled with purposeful, varied practice.

Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Research-based, flexible lessons for each *Fiction Reader* book feature best practices for reading and word study instruction. Each lesson includes structured guided reading instruction, intentional comprehension instruction, and dynamic extension and practice options that support multiple instructional settings. At their fingertips, teachers have everything required to build an effective instructional block that meets the needs of their students.

Key Reading Skills

Experts generally agree on several essential components of reading development: the alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Paris 2011, 228). These foundational skills provide the base upon which students build literacy.

The Alphabetic Principle, Phonological Awareness, and Word Recognition

Recognizing that symbols (letters and combinations of letters) represent sounds is critical to early reading instruction. Phonological awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate individual phonemes (the smallest units of sound), generally develops during the preschool years. This lays the groundwork for decoding skills, such as being able to rhyme, comparing words (beginning, ending, and middle sounds), segmenting, and blending syllables. Practicing word-recognition skills increases fluency and comprehension.

Oral Reading Fluency

Skilled readers process text rapidly, reading words smoothly, accurately, almost effortlessly (Phillips and Torgesen 2006). Just how is this accomplished? Through practice. "The early development of reading accuracy is important because children must accurately practice the pronunciations of written words several times in order to form a representation of the words' orthography in memory that will allow the words to be recognized 'by sight' or 'at a single glance'" (106). Automatic recognition of these words is an important component of building true fluency.

Vocabulary Development

When children arrive at school, their vocabulary knowledge varies widely. Andrew Biemiller cites studies that underscore the role parents play during the preschool and primary years. Once in school, children with small vocabularies acquire new words about as well as those who arrived at school with large vocabularies (2006). In his work with grades kindergarten through two, Biemiller presented words in the "context sentence" method: stories were read, with questions following about a specific word in a sentence from the story. Biemiller's research suggests that having children discuss and explain word meanings in the context of a story accelerates vocabulary acquisition. This enhanced vocabulary readies students for reading informational books or more challenging texts (2006). In addition, we know children love to play with words. Some reading experts recommend we teach vocabulary by creating "more playful and conversational contexts for learning" (Harris, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek 2011, 60). Authentic literature excels at this.

Key Comprehension Strategies

While a reader's comprehension success is affected by the previously discussed skills, it is also dependent on the reader's ability to connect reading materials to his or her background experiences. In a review of various reports and studies, Cunningham and Zibulsky recommend that shared reading experiences include a variety of interactive experiences: discussing of vocabulary and pictures, having the child read aloud with the adult, and inviting responses through open-ended questions that draw upon general knowledge (2011, 397–399).

Students need a set of tools to employ as they make their way through a variety of texts. Experts agree that students benefit from explicit comprehension instruction using the "good reader strategies" (Duke 2005; Duke and Pearson 2002). As students explore reading, the following strategies arm them with the tools necessary for unlocking challenging texts, thinking critically, and discussing their understandings with others. The comprehension strategies include the following:

Establish a Purpose for Reading

Guiding a student to clearly establish a purpose for reading enhances motivation and helps the student choose how to interact with the text. It allows students to get their minds ready to read a particular type of text (Risko 2011). For example, the reader may choose a fast pace to find out what happened, or a more deliberate pace and stop to make mental images or predict character choices.

Generate Questions

Students who ask questions during reading stay engaged and experience deeper comprehension (National Reading Panel 2000). Questions help students infer and predict, wonder more about a topic, and challenge the author or text. Questioning the text forces students to dig deeper into the reading to come up with the answers.

Make and Confirm Predictions

Predicting what will happen next in a story requires a reader to draw upon background knowledge and make predictions in a focused way. Readers who actively make predictions and then confirm or adjust their predictions see the underlying structure of the story.

Summarize and Evaluate Details

Summarizing involves sorting main ideas and details and then putting them in a logical order. Overall comprehension and reading improves when students learn to summarize (Duke and Pearson 2002). Understanding theme and character in fiction helps them know what is important.

Synthesize Elements

Every text has multiple elements. The reader pulls information from the words and images. Corroborating details are added together to build broader ideas. The reader may also have the additional challenge of resolving conflicting details. An active reader weighs the details and combines them to create a cohesive understanding of the whole.

Make Connections

Proficient readers bring prior knowledge to a text and use schema to comprehend it (Ellery 2014). This allows readers to use their existing thoughts and memories to connect. Making *text-to-self, text-to-text,* and *text-to-world* connections help readers activate this knowledge.

Make Inferences

Good readers combine prior knowledge with clues from the text to infer deeper meanings as they read. Readers who infer are the strongest readers (Anderson and Pearson 1984). Inferring involves visualizing, thinking about, and asking questions about the characters' motives, feelings, themes, and the author's perspective or purpose. The answers to their questions are often inferred when students tie details together.

Make Mental Images

As students pull the words of a fiction story from the page, proficient readers translate the words into detailed mental images. They can "see" the characters and events in the story. This requires accessing relevant background knowledge and experiences to make the story full and complete.

Monitor Comprehension

Good readers keep track of meaning by employing a variety of effective comprehension monitoring strategies. These help them to know when they need to pause and clarify. Strategies include self-talk, rereading, reading on, asking questions, and stopping to summarize. When readers discuss strategies for monitoring comprehension, their reading improves (Allington 2011).

Gradual Release of Responsibility

For years, research has been conducted about the transfer from teacher instruction to student responsibility. While most teachers understand that the goal of instruction is to move students to a place of independence in their learning, the release of responsibility often happens too quickly, without adequate preparation.

The *I Do, We Do, You Do* model is one way of preparing students for learning independence. This model begins with teacher instruction, where the responsibility is primarily on you, with the goal of transferring knowledge to the student. The next step involves a transitional stage where you and students work together on a newly learned concept. This involves a task that is completed as a group. The last stage is the goal of the model, where students apply what they have learned independently.

Fisher and Frey (2008) outline a four-step model of gradual release of responsibility:

➤ It begins with a Focus Lesson taught by the teacher.

➤ The next stage is Guided Instruction, where students meet as a whole class or in small groups to continue work with the focus-lesson concept. This is an opportunity for teachers to guide students' thinking about the concept.

➤ Collaborative Tasks follow with an emphasis on student interaction as students further develop understanding.

➤ The last stage in the model is Independent Learning, where students apply the concept individually.

Both models emphasize social interaction. This is extremely important and is validated by the seminal work of Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky's theory (1981) focuses on the acquisition of mental functions through social interaction.

He asserted that new knowledge is internalized through involvement in social activities. The sociocultural theory, as a whole, emphasizes interrelatedness and interdependence of individual and social processes in development and learning.

Each *Fiction Readers* lesson supports the gradual release of responsibility through the following elements:

> ➤ short teacher scripts for effective modeling
> ➤ targeted prompts for guiding students to think deeply
> ➤ small-group and partner activities for collaborative practice
> ➤ "more support" and "less support" options to propel students toward independence
> ➤ engaging practice and application tasks to support independent success

Cultural Responsiveness

Whether teaching in a very diverse school setting or teaching with a homogenous population, cultural responsiveness is important in the classroom, especially as it applies to increasing academic literacy for all students (Hollie 2018). Culturally responsive teachers validate and affirm (VA) cultural and linguistic behaviors of all children. They also build and bridge (BB) children's behaviors to successfully meet expectations of mainstream school culture (Hollie 2018). Effective teachers use a variety of methods to increase the probability of reaching all children, no matter their race, gender, age, economic level, religion, orientation, or ethnic identity (Delpit 1995; Hammond 2015).

Culturally responsive teachers keep the following questions in mind when planning instruction:

> ➤ Is the activity validating and affirming to cultural behaviors of the children? If so, which behaviors in particular?
> ➤ Is the activity building and bridging children's cultural behaviors to school cultural behaviors? If so, which behaviors in particular?
> ➤ Is there a balance of activities throughout the lesson that both validate and affirm (VA) as well as build and bridge (BB)?

Research to Practice

Books included in *Fiction Readers* kits reflect the diversity found in classrooms. Also, the lessons were designed with space for students' and teachers' cultural and linguistic behaviors as well as mainstream school culture.

Differentiation

Today's classrooms are filled with students of varying backgrounds, reading abilities, levels of English proficiency, and learning styles. A teacher's ability to differentiate instruction and respond effectively to the needs of a variety of learners is critical to the success of any program (Henry and Pianta 2011). Two factors influence a teacher's ability to use a program: having instructional options that meet the needs of various students within the program and having the confidence and skill to modify the instruction based on those needs or when faced with a "teachable moment." *Fiction Readers* provides an abundance of opportunities for differentiated instruction.

Because children develop at varying rates and reading is a complex cognitive and physical process that requires attention to multiple tasks at once, no single approach to instruction will work for every child. Differentiation involves making adjustments in group size, modality, practice, rate, or learning environment to meet the needs of each learner.

Consider the following for successful differentiation for all learners:

> ➤ **Group Size:** Use small-group instruction to introduce and practice new skills. Learners have time to interact with you and peers, while teachers have opportunities for formative assessment.
>
> ➤ **Practice:** Extend time for guided and independent practice. The activities should be set up for self-selection by children, individual pacing, and differentiated in level of independence and variety.
>
> ➤ **Modality:** Use a multisensory approach. Children learn best and maintain cognitive focus when engaged in hand-on, active experiences.
>
> ➤ **Rate:** Adjust the rate at which new content is introduced. Students can dig into content multiple times, with different instructional focuses, as needed, before moving to new content.

Below-Grade-Level Students

Comprehension problems may stem from difficulty decoding and a lack of automaticity when reading (often found with poor sight-word-recognition skills). Non-fluent readers work so hard at reading that they are unable to allocate cognitive resources to comprehension (Williams and Pao 2011).

Other learners may read fluently but still struggle with comprehension (Jitendra and Gajria 2011, 198). "For students with [learning disabilities], it is crucial to teach directly how to construct the main idea and to emphasize metacognitive and strategic approaches to learning" (Jitendra and Gajria 2011, 200). Joanna P. Williams and Lisa S. Pao also emphasize the importance of addressing deeper levels of literature, going beyond plot into themes, imagery, and word choice (2011). Through thoughtful discussions and clear connections to students' lives, *Fiction Readers* focuses on deep comprehension skills while providing ample opportunities for fluency practice.

Above-Grade-Level Students

An important goal of teaching is the development of self-regulated learners who have the capacity to guide and monitor their own learning (Dorn and Soffos 2005). Students performing above grade level have the metacognitive abilities to apply new concepts and vocabulary to independent work quickly and effectively. Further, above-grade-level readers can use this foundation for reading increasingly complex narratives and informational text. Providing rich resources for reading helps inspire students to utilize and stretch their reading skills.

English Learners

Explicit teaching builds phonological awareness, phonics skills, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills in English Learners (ELs). Small-group instruction and cooperative learning contribute to successful learning. In addition to direct, explicit instruction, interactive teaching that uses techniques such as modeling and guided practice helps students master requisite skills more effectively (Goldenberg 2010). Research shows that instruction should be clear, focused, and systematic for best results (Goldenberg 2010). In classrooms where only English is spoken, Goldenberg suggests posting lists and schedules for references, using graphic organizers, providing additional practice opportunities, using redundant information (words and pictures), having other EL students summarize or clarify information, and adjusting instruction (such as rate and complexity of speech) (2010, 34).

Fiction Readers **Research to Practice**

Below-Grade-Level Students

Every lesson includes prompts that provide "more support" and "less support" to engage all students in discussions of the texts. The fluency instruction and practice options guide students to repeated reading without losing their engagement.

Above-Grade-Level Students

Each lesson offers open-ended questions and thought-provoking stories to prompt higher-order thinking around each book. Extension options, including content-area activities, encourage students to make broad connections.

English Learners

Reading and writing objectives are paired with a language objective. The instruction in high-frequency words, academic language related to the story, and multimodal elaborations on vocabulary are particularly suited to English learners. Audio of each book also provides a powerful model for fluency.

Guided Reading Instruction

Guided reading is a specific instructional model for reading instruction. It is delivered to small groups of students determined to have similar reading growth opportunities. The teacher chooses a book and instructional focus that best fits the group. Then, in a short, focused session, the teacher supports students as they read and discuss the book.
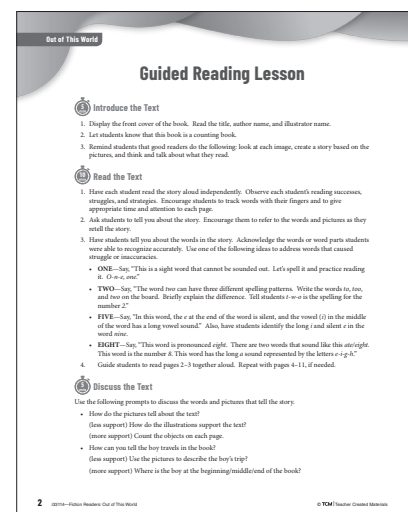
Key Features of Guided Reading

Grouping	Students should be grouped intentionally and should be flexible. Formal and informal assessments can be used to create a profile of each student's reading behaviors. Students with similar areas of need should be grouped to address that need, then regrouped when the instructional focus changes.
Book choice	It is important to match students with appropriately challenging books that maintain their interest. Teachers should consider not only the book level but the specific traits that make the book simple or complex. These traits should match the students' needs and the instructional focus.
Responsive instruction	Instruction is meant to be highly differentiated and tailored to the needs of flexibly grouped students. This model acknowledges the different backgrounds and varying strengths of students. After observing students' reading behaviors, craft instructional responses to scaffold student growth and encourage independence (Richardson 2016).
Student empowerment	While teachers are active and purposeful in the planning of guided reading lessons, during the lessons the students should do the work. You become a supportive coach—observing successes and appropriate struggles and providing prompts and mini-lessons when the struggle becomes unproductive.

Fiction Readers — Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction begins with a simple, 20-minute guided reading lesson.

Introduce the Text

Quickly and efficiently introduce the book and prepare students to read. In just five minutes, present the elements of the book cover, identify the genre and/or establish a purpose for reading, and review reading behavior.

Read the Text

Students read the story aloud independently. Observe as students explore the story, experience appropriate struggle, and apply strategies to draw meaning from the text.

After the story has been read once, prompt students to share their initial understandings of the story and their experiences with the act of reading. Respond with praise and problem-solving support. Lastly, guide the group through a targeted reread under your guidance.

Discuss the Text

For the last five minutes of the lesson, use targeted questions and prompts to lead students to consider the text again and build a more complete understanding of what they have read.
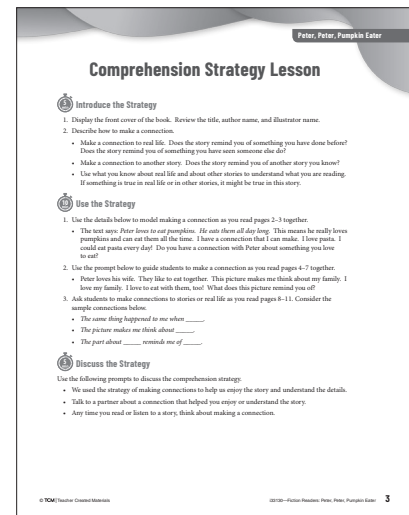
Comprehension Strategy Instruction

Students need a set of tools to employ as they make their way through a variety of challenging texts. Experts agree that students benefit from explicit comprehension instruction using the "good reader strategies" (Duke 2005; Duke and Pearson 2002). This explicit instruction includes defining the strategy, modeling the use of the strategy, providing prompts and feedback to guide students' use of the strategy, and discussing the use of the strategy.

Pearson and Gallagher (1983), in a report by the Center for the study of Reading, demonstrated how reading comprehension is best taught through a **Gradual Release of Responsibility** model. First, teachers explicitly tell students how to use a particular comprehension strategy. Then, teachers model this strategy, showing what good readers do to comprehend. Next, teachers guide students through the lesson, giving them more responsibility along the way. Finally, teachers release responsibility over application of the skill to students (providing additional support as needed).

Focusing on fewer strategies allows teachers and students to work with each strategy repeatedly and in the context of different texts. The result is deeper understanding of how and when to use each strategy.

Essential reading strategies for fiction texts are found across Reading and Language Arts strategies.

Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes a simple, 20-minute comprehension strategy lesson.

Introduce the Strategy

Quickly and efficiently, review the book, and introduce a key comprehension strategy. In just five minutes, define the strategy and its purpose.

Use the Strategy

Return to the story to model using the strategy to better understand the story. Students follow the model to use the strategy, with support, as they continue to reread the story.

Discuss the Strategy

For the last five minutes of the lesson, guide students to restate the strategy and to identify when and how they will use the strategy with other books and reading tasks.

Close Reading

Close reading is another powerful way to explore a familiar text. This is not the same as rereading. Instead, the students dive into a small component of the text. They use the mechanics of the text—sentence structure, word choice, language features—to deeply comprehend the author's work (Lapp et al. 2017).

According to Barbara Jones and her collegues (2014), effective close reading lessons have the following elements:

> ➤ commitment to re-reading a text for different purposes
> ➤ short, high-quality text (including excerpts from longer texts)
> ➤ appropriate scaffolds to support student's mean-making from the text
> ➤ text-dependent questions and prompts from the teacher
> ➤ culminating task that synthesizes key understandings

### Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes a close reading lesson. Teachers guide students to revisit a small section of text with a specific comprehension focus. Students use focused rereading, discussion, and annotations to dissect the author's work.

Fluency Instruction and Practice

Fluency is the ability to orally read text with accuracy (without error), automaticity (quick and accurate recognition, or decoding, of words and phrases), and prosody (appropriate expression). It includes being able to break words into meaningful phrases, known as *chunking*. Fluent oral reading allows students to focus on comprehension rather than on individual word reading. Fluency is important during reading for several reasons.

One of the top reasons is that fluent reading frees up cognitive space necessary for text comprehension and meaning making. In 1998, Reid Lyon stated that teachers should "consider that a reader has only so much attention and memory capacity. If beginning readers read the words in a laborious, inefficient manner, they cannot remember what they read, much less relate the ideas to their background knowledge. Thus, the ultimate goal of reading instruction—for children to understand and enjoy what they read—will not be achieved" (16).

A seminal research study by Timothy Rasinski (2003, 2006) over the years has focused on the importance of fluency to comprehension. As word reading becomes automatic, students become fluent and can focus on comprehension (Rasinski 2003). In order to engage in comprehension monitoring or self-questioning during reading, students need to be able to attend to what they are reading instead of spending time on struggling over high-frequency sight words or trying to decode words. Reading fluency provides students with the attention to text that they require in order to be successful with text comprehension.
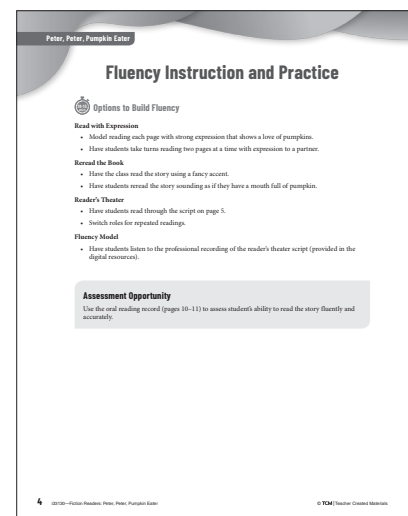
Explicit instruction in fluency can provide the necessary bridge between word identification and comprehension. A student's ability to comprehend written text has been proven to be directly influenced by their word recognition skills and their effortless fluent reading (Rasinski 2006). Fluency instruction is what allows teachers to move students from word calling to understanding. Fluency is the bridge between decoding and comprehension.

Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes four options for fluency instruction and practice.

Read with Expression

Define and model one aspect of expressive reading that fits well with the story. You may highlight the best way to read dialog or how a reader's cadence changes when reading long sentences. Students then read the book with strong expression to a partner or group.

Reread the Book

Pantomime actions, silly voices, or unusual audiences are used to entice students to practice reading the story aloud several times. Each reading will demonstrate increasing automaticity and accuracy.

Reader's Theater

Students work together to prepare a performance of the story. They read a script of the story several times, concluding in a performative read aloud.

Fluency Model

Students listen to the audio of the story, either alone as they follow along in the print book, or embedded in the Read-Along eBook.

Lesson Extensions

Beyond direct instruction in reading skills and reading strategies, students benefit from extended explorations of familiar, complex texts. This cultivates a curiosity and appreciation for words and author craft in addition to the enjoyment that stories provide.

Explicitly studying the words in a text connects what students learn in isolated phonics and spelling lessons to the real acts of reading. Coupling word study with reading-comprehension work builds students' word awareness. Sounding out a set of short e words is useful. Connecting words with the short e pattern to the text of an actual story is powerful.

Writing about a familiar text prompts students to think about the text in a new way. They return to the text to sort through details with a specific purpose. They notice things they may have overlooked when reading to follow the story or to understand vocabulary.
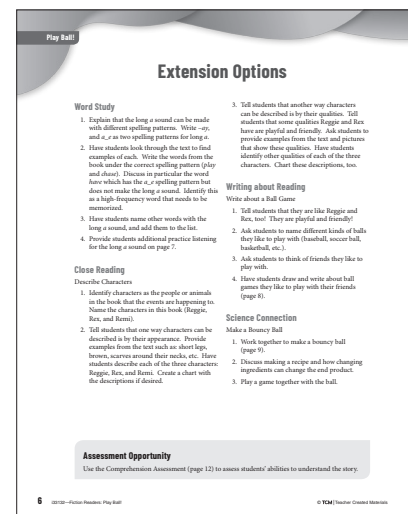
Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes options for extending each lesson.

Word Study

Focus on a word pattern that is found in the story and can be widely generalized to other texts students will encounter. In the lower levels of the program, instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, and basic decoding. In the upper levels, more sophisticated aspects of decoding are taught along with morphemes and vocabulary strategies. Each lesson includes a brief mini-lesson and student activity page.

Writing about Reading

The writing activity prompts students to write about what they have read. They are encouraged to draw upon the story and the discussions around the text to complete the activity. A reproducible activity page is included.

Content-Area Connection

The content-area connection links the topic and vocabulary from the story to mathematics, science, social studies, or art and movement. Most activities can be completed independently. A reproducible activity page is included.

Using Technology to Improve Reading

With the widespread use of technology in today's culture comes an increased interest in ways to help students experience reading in different contexts. When teachers incorporate technology into reading instruction, they make connections to the students' experiences outside of the school environment.

Students will benefit from using technology to support their reading in various classroom settings.

Whole-Class Instruction

Whole-class instruction is best suited for introducing a text to students or for teaching specific strategies. In this setting, every student engages with the same text at the same time. Projecting the Read-Along eBooks or the eBooks creates a large canvas for a shared literacy experience.

Small-Group Instruction

The eBooks and the Read-Along eBooks also provide support for teachers who want to work with a specific group of students on targeted word study or comprehension skills. Choosing to use the eBooks in this setting can greatly benefit instruction when compared to using individual print books only. Students and teachers can access multiple eBooks at their fingertips and be able to quickly open a selected page on their devices. The speed in accessing content limits transition time and fosters engagement.

Independent Practice

Students can engage independently with the eBooks to build fluency. They can navigate the books on their own at the click of a button or the tap of a screen. All students can use the audio and text-to-speech highlighting features of the Read-Along eBooks to listen to and reread the texts and improve their vocabulary, automaticity, and accuracy. This not only aids young readers but can also help English learners acquire basic skills as they see and hear the text at the same time. Visual cues can help with pacing and tracking. Research even supports the use of audio eBooks, indicating that English learners improve in the areas of fluency and spelling when they are able to hear the text read aloud as they are reading (Mostow et al. 2008).
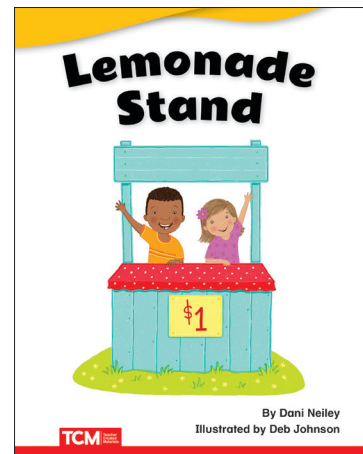
Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes digital resources for each book and lesson plan.

Audiobooks serve as a model of fluent reading. Students can listen to the audiobook while reading the physical book or the eBook.

EBooks are digital copies of the readers and lesson plans that can be viewed on any device and can be used with or without the audiobook. These digital books can be viewed using Adobe Acrobat or any browser, such as Chrome, Safari, or Firefox.

Read-Along eBooks combine audio recordings with digital copies of the books. As the audio plays, the text is highlighted word by word, making it easy for all students to follow along. Students can click or tap on any challenging word to hear it read again.

Lesson plans, student reproducibles, assessments, and the Family Tips booklet are provided digitally (as PDFs) and can be easily emailed, uploaded and shared through cloud services, such as Google Drive, or printed for student use.

Using Assessment to Guide Instruction

"Monitoring and record-keeping provide the critical information needed to make decisions about the student's future instruction" (National Center for Learning Disabilities 2006, 5). The ability to properly diagnose and monitor students' reading progress is imperative in reading intervention programs.

Noted researcher Yetta Goodman found that listening to a recording of oral reading with a student and discussing the student's errors with him or her is a good way to confirm your inferences about a student's skills and make the student aware of strategies he or she could be using (Goodman 1996). Hoffman and Rasinski (2004) also found that short oral reading assessments can be used to develop fluency. They state that students and teachers can make observations and reflect on and respond to the text during oral reading. Short fluency probes are also effective reading assessment measures (Rasinski 2003). Baker and Brown note, "if the child is aware of what is needed to perform effectively, then it is possible for him to take steps to meet the demands of a learning situation more adequately" (1980, 353–354).
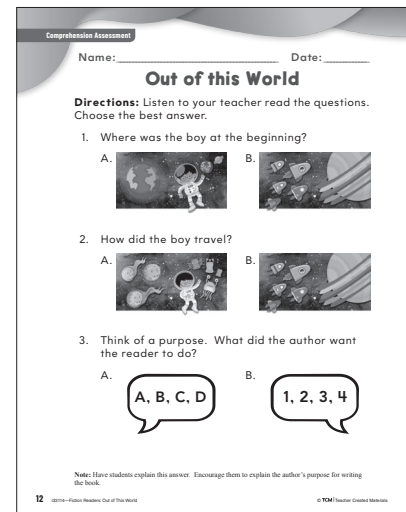
Formative Assessments

Teachers use formative assessments to monitor student progress and make good decisions about the kind of instruction their students need (Honig et al. 2000). Formative assessment is usually an ongoing process. Formative assessments can be administered in both formal and informal ways.

> **Formal assessment** methods, such as unit and chapter tests, provide teachers with information needed to make administrative decisions of grouping, promoting, and placing students in addition to suggesting any accommodations needed (Airasian 2005).
>
> **Informal assessment** methods, such as informal observation, classroom participation, activity sheets, and student questions (Airasian 2005), help teachers to pinpoint each student's specific strengths, weaknesses, and misconceptions. These methods can also help teachers get a detailed picture of the instructional needs of the class as a whole. This knowledge eliminates guesswork and increases instructional time because teachers don't spend time going over things that students already know. Multiple measures of learning are the most reliable and helpful for planning instruction.

Placement and Summative Assessments

According to Airasian, the purpose of summative assessment is "to judge the success of a process at its completion" (2005). It provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of concepts taught, which, in turn, also helps guide teacher's instructional planning. When paired with placement assessments, this type of assessment shows growth over time and helps set instructional goals to address students' needs. It also helps to determine how to reevaluate earlier strategies or steps that will therefore influence what follows on a student's academic or instructional path.

Fiction Readers Research to Practice

Fiction Readers offers multiple assessment opportunities for teachers to use before, during, and after reading to help with instructional decisions.

Formative Assessments—Formal

Oral Retelling Records: For wordless books, students are prompted to retell the story using the images for support. The Oral Retelling Record form and Retelling Checklist equip teachers to document student performance and measure growth over time.

Oral Reading Records: The text of each story is presented in an Oral Reading Record format. This assessment equips teachers to assess and record students' ability to read the story fluently and accurately.

Multiple-Choice Tests: The multiple-choice test for each book allows for an immediate measure of comprehension, providing data that can be used to adjust the focus and level of support in future lessons.

Formative Assessments—Informal

Teacher Observation: Teachers listen to students read aloud in every worded-book lesson and are prompted to respond to the reading successes and challenges they observe.

Discussion: Each lesson features multiple discussion opportunities. Students talk about their reading and their thinking.

Activity Pages: The accompanying activity pages also provide options for a quick assessment of student learning and can guide future instructional decisions.

Diagnostic and Summative Assessments

The Diagnostic and Summative Assessments for each kit are available digitally and can be used to determine students' skill levels at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

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