



Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies

by Ellin Keene



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Introduction

The assessments and rubrics in this book, developed by Ellin Keene with significant help from Anne Goudvis, co-author of *Strategies that Work* and with input from teachers and other staff developers, comprise an extensive reading comprehension assessment tool that examines how students think when they read. Teachers finally have a way to document a student's thinking process and score it, using procedures and methods that monitor growth in understanding.

How to Use This Book

Teachers can use the assessments in this book in a variety of ways. The “Thinking Aloud” assessment should always be given before using any of the other assessments, as it was designed to be an introduction to the others. Teachers may choose one of the options below to use the assessments in this book:

- ➡ Working with students one-on-one and having students read silently and complete each strategy assessment orally or in writing
- ➡ Working with students one-on-one and having students listen to or read aloud the text and then responding orally or in writing
- ➡ Working with students one-on-one and giving each strategy assessment as a pre- or post-strategy study assessment
- ➡ Working with small or large groups and having students complete a written assessment for all strategies using the provided leveled text or self-selected text
- ➡ Working with small or large groups and having students complete a written assessment as for one strategy as a pre- or post-strategy study assessment
- ➡ Working with small groups of students, reading a high-level text aloud to them, and having students complete a written assessment

Depending on the age of the student, administering the complete assessment takes between 20–45 minutes. Of course, choosing to use just one or a few strategies will take less time. The above scenarios can be divided into two categories of assessment—to inform instruction (formative assessment or screening assessment) or to assess learning (summative assessment).



To the Zoo

It was field trip day. Miss Ray was taking her class to the zoo. She got to school early to get the name tags ready.

In the morning the children came into the room. Miss Ray handed out the name tags. "Everyone choose a partner," she said. "Then we'll get on the bus!"

The children got on the bus and sat in a seat with their partners. Parents joined the class to help. The bus was noisy! They sang songs and talked about the animals they hoped they would see.

When the bus arrived at the zoo, Miss Ray said, "We will all stay together and follow the path to see the animals."

After they saw many different animals, Miss Ray said, "It's time to go back to school!" The class climbed back on the bus. This time, there were not many sounds on the bus, except the sounds of snoring!



The Treasure Hunt

The neighborhood treasure hunt was about to start. Everyone was at the starting point and had his or her instructions. Ming and her family were fifth in line in their car, behind their other neighbors. The loud and shrill whistle sounded, and the cars took off.

Ming quickly looked at the list and decided it wasn't that long. First on the list was a basket full of flowers. They drove around the neighborhood looking everywhere. When they turned the last corner, Ming spotted a magenta basket of almost-dead flowers at the end of someone's driveway, which meant they got 50 points!

The next item on the list was a stray shoe. They headed through back roads and alleys toward the grocery store. Her father pointed out a tennis shoe that was lying on the road by a dumpster. Ming was excited; they now had 50 more points!

Now for the third item on the list—a discarded barbecue grill. That wasn't too hard—it was the end of the barbecue season. They soon had 50 more points when they saw an old, rusty grill in a vacant lot.

There are two more items to go—an electric sign with burned-out bulbs on a store and a red convertible. They found the sporty red convertible when they passed the car dealership. Fifty points for Ming's family! One more to go and only 15 minutes in which to find it and get back to the starting point. Ming's dad smiled at her as he turned the car around and headed toward home. Ming was worried and wondered why he was heading home. Then she remembered that two blocks from their house was an electronics repair shop. She saw it and noticed that the "o" on the sign was dark. Ming shouted, "Score!" Everything on the list was accounted for, so the family headed to the finish line. It had been a great day of family fun with the neighborhood treasure hunt!



Monitoring Comprehension: Oral Assessment

Directions: Read the following instructions to the student. Record the student's responses below each question/statement.

- A. What problems did you have while you (or I) were reading this text? Did you have more difficulty reading the words or understanding the ideas? When you are reading at other times, what kinds of problems do you usually have?

- B. What did you do to solve any problems you had? How do you usually solve the problems you have when you read?

- C. How do you know when you understand a text? What would you tell another student to try if he or she has trouble understanding?

- D. Choose one of the questions below to ask the student:

- We have just talked about the problems you have while reading and the ways in which you solve them. What is important to know when you have a problem while you are reading and (restate student's response)?
- What are the different choices you can make to try to solve that problem?
- What would you tell another reader who might not realize when a text doesn't make sense?



Determining Importance in Text: Written Assessment

Directions: Answer some questions about what you think about while you read.

Use the space below each question to write your answer.

- A. Are there some parts of this text that are more important than the others? Which ones? Why do you think they are the most important?

- B. What do you think the author thinks is most important so far in this text? What signals or clues did the author use to make you think that was important?

- C. Choose one of the questions below to answer:

- You have just written about ideas, themes, words, pictures, and other parts of the text. How does thinking about the more important parts help you to understand the text better?
- Do you think or do anything while you are reading that helps you remember the important parts?
- Do you ever have trouble remembering what is important after you read? How do you solve that problem?



Inferring: Rubric

Directions:

Use this rubric to record the student's scores on each set of questions. Circle the number corresponding to the statement that best reflects the student's response. Consider all three questions when scoring the student.

1	No response/inference.
2	Attempts a prediction or conclusion that is inaccurate or unsubstantiated with text information.
3	Draws conclusions or makes predictions that are consistent with text or schema.
4	Draws conclusions and/or makes predictions and can explain the source of the conclusion or prediction in text.
5	Develops predictions, interpretations, and/or conclusions about the text that include connections between the text and the reader's background knowledge, ideas, or beliefs that enhance the overall meaning of the text and make it more memorable to the reader. Discusses why/how inferences help him or her understand better.

Observation Notes:
