

What Type of Reader Are You?

Describe your experiences with reading:

What do you like to read?

How does your reading change based upon what you are reading?

Check the category below that best describes your reading habits.

- Blank Stare Readers** These readers lack awareness of how they think when they read and don't apply strategies for comprehension appropriately, if at all. They just read and either get it or don't, depending upon what they are reading. If they don't get it, they either keep reading until they finish (often daydreaming) or put the material down without understanding why they can't comprehend it.
- Head-scratching Readers** These are readers who realize when meaning has broken down or confusion has set in but they may not be able to fix the problem. They know the insurance policy they have to read doesn't make sense, for example, but they don't know what to do to comprehend it.
- Tuned-In Readers** These are readers who interact with the text and use good reading strategies, such as visualizing, making predictions, synthesizing ideas, asking questions, or stopping and thinking about what they have read to enhance understanding and acquire knowledge. They are able to monitor and repair meaning.
- Reflective Readers** These readers are strategic about their thinking and are able to apply strategies flexibly depending on the text or their own purposes for reading. They reflect on their thinking, and cognitively revise their use of strategies based upon need. They also analyze the text, figure out the author's intended meaning, and make decisions based upon what they have read.

Checklist for Metacognition

1. When you read, do you interact with the text?
 - Do you sometimes have a conversation with the author while you are reading?
 - Do you mentally agree, disagree or argue with the text while reading?
 - Do you *think* about what you are reading?
 - Do you believe you have a right to question what you are reading?

2. When you read, do you create a visual image in your head when you read?
 - Do you form pictures of what is being described in the text?
 - Do you have a mental “video camera” creating and recording pictures while you are reading?
 - Do you predict what may happen next?

3. As you read, do you become distracted or daydream?
 - Do you sometimes lose track of what you are reading?
 - Do you often find that you have read long pieces of text without even being aware that you are reading?
 - Does reading about something cause you to daydream about another event you may have experienced, perhaps even related to what you are reading?
 - Do you forget what you read minutes after you read it?

4. Have you found that you have difficulty comprehending, even if you read well orally?
 - Do you keep going even if you don’t “get it”?
 - Do you know when what you are reading doesn’t make sense?

 - Do you stop and ask for help if you get stuck? (is this the same as the first one?)
 - Do you pay attention to vocabulary you may not know and try to figure out meanings of new words?

Strategies Used by Proficient Readers

Proficient Readers:

- Make connections between prior knowledge and the text
- Ask questions
- Visualize
- Draw inferences
- Determine important ideas
- Synthesize

Tim O'Brien's President's Lecture

Shortly after midnight we moved into the ambush site outside My Khe. The whole platoon was there, spread out in the dense brush along the trail, and for five hours nothing at all happened. We were working in two-man teams-one man on guard while the other slept, switching off every two hours-and I remember it was still dark when Kiowa shook me awake for the final watch. The night was foggy and hot. For the first few moments I felt lost, not sure about directions, groping for my helmet and weapon. I reached out and found three grenades and lined them up in front of me; the pins had already been straightened for quick throwing. And then for maybe half an hour I kneeled there and waited. Very gradually, in tiny slivers, dawn began to break through the fog, and from my position in the brush I could see ten or fifteen meters up the trail. The mosquitoes were fierce. I remember slapping at them, wondering if I should wake up Kiowa and go get some repellent, then thinking it was a bad idea, then looking up and seeing the young man come out of the morning fog. He wore black clothing and rubber sandals and a gray ammunition belt. His shoulders were slightly stooped, his head cocked to the side as if listening for something. He seemed at ease. He carried his weapon in one hand, muzzle down, moving without any hurry up the center of the trail. There was no sound at all - none that I can remember. In a way, it seemed, he was part of the morning fog, or my own imagination, but there was also the reality of what was happening in my stomach. I had already pulled the pin on a grenade. I had come up to a crouch. It was entirely automatic. I did not hate the young man; I did not see him as the enemy; I did not ponder issues of morality or politics or justice. I crouched and kept my head low. I tried to swallow whatever was rising from my stomach, which tasted like lemonade, something fruity and sour. I was terrified. There were no thoughts about killing.

The grenade was to make him go away-just evaporate-and leaned back and felt my head go empty and then felt it fill up again. I had already thrown the grenade before telling myself to throw it. It was gone. The brush was thick and I had to lob it high, not aiming, and I remember the grenade seeming to freeze above me for an instant, as if a camera had clicked, and I remember ducking down and holding my breath and seeing little wisps of fog rise from the earth. The grenade bounced once and rolled across the trail. I did not hear it, but there must've been a sound, because the young man dropped his weapon and began to run, just two or three quick steps. Then he looked down at the grenade, turned to his right, and tried to cover his head but never did. It occurred to me then that he was about to die. I wanted to warn him. The grenade made a popping noise - not loud, not what you'd expect. Just a pop, and there was a puff of dust and smoke and the young man seemed to jerk upward as if pulled by invisible wires. He fell on his back. His rubber sandals had been blown off. He lay at the center of the trail, his right leg bent beneath him, his one eye shut, his other eye a huge star-shaped hole.

For me, it was not a matter of live or die. There was no real peril. Almost certainly the young man would have passed me by. And it will always be that way.

Later, I remember, Kiowa tried to tell me that the man would've died anyway. He told me that it was a good kill, that I was a soldier and this was a war, that I should shape up and stop staring, that I should ask myself what the dead man would've done if things were reversed.

But you see, none of it mattered. The words, or language, far too complicated. All I could do was gape at the fact of the young man's body.

Even now, three decades later, I haven't finished sorting it out. Sometimes I forgive myself, other times I don't. In the ordinary hours of life I try not to think about it, but now and then, when I'm reading a newspaper or just sitting alone in a room, I'll look up and see the young man coming out of the morning fog. I'll watch him walk toward me, his shoulders slightly stooped, his head cocked to the side, and he'll pass within a few yards of me and suddenly smile at some secret thought and then continue up the trail to where it bends back into the fog.

Activating and Building Background Knowledge

- Use picture books, poetry, or magazine/newspaper articles to set the stage for a new topic.
- Allow students to spend 5 minutes in groups discussing anything related to the topic. Ask them to chart what they would like to know.
- Use the Carousel Strategy: Write different questions about the topic on large chart paper and hang them on the walls around the room. In groups, have students go from chart to chart jotting answers to questions as they activate prior knowledge.
- Brainstorm. Have students list everything they know about the topic and record on whiteboards. Accept all answers. Confirm or revise knowledge during reading.
- Bring in a guest speaker knowledgeable about the topic to create interest and provide necessary background.
- Assign students to report on various aspects of the topic prior to beginning the unit.
- Use anticipation or prediction guides.
- Have students “walk through” chapters prior to reading and review headings in bold (turning them into questions to answer later). They should also note vocabulary words in bold, illustrations and graphs.
- Use the KWL Chart (What I Know/What I Want to Know/What I have Learned) or a variation of it.
- If students already know the information in the chapter, consider skipping it!

The Draft Horse

By Robert Frost

With a lantern that wouldn't burn
In too frail a buggy we drove
Behind too heavy a horse
Through a pitch-dark limitless grove,
And a man came out of the trees
And took our horse by the head
And reaching back to his ribs
Deliberately stabbed him dead.
The ponderous beast went down
With a crack of a broken shaft.
And the night drew through the trees
In one long invidious draft.
The most unquestioning pair
That ever accepted fate
And the least disposed to ascribe
Any more than we had to hate,
We assumed that the man himself
Or someone he had to obey
Wanted us to get down
And walk the rest of the way.

Visualization

- Allows readers to create mental images from words in the text
- Enhances meaning with mental imagery
- Links past experience to the words and ideas in the text
- Enables readers to place themselves in the story
- Strengthens a reader's relationship to the text
- Stimulates imaginative thinking
- Heightens engagement with the text
- Brings joy to reading

Reading Aloud: A Practice for All Ages

Reading aloud to your students each day is a valuable practice. Modeling skills that good readers possess (such as visualizing, clarifying, and asking questions) is a powerful way to reinforce the processes essential to increased comprehension.

Fiction and Nonfiction with passages that evoke strong visual scenes.

- *First Part Last* by Angela Johnson
- *Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold
- *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon
- *The Messenger* by Lois Lowry
- *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom
- *Hoot* by Carl Hiassen
- *Angela's Ashes*, Frank McCort
- *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer
- *Seabiscuit: An American Legend* by Laura Hillenbrand
- *Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind* by Suzanne Fisher Staples

Expository texts

- Articles from newspapers
- Short-takes from weekly news magazines
- Web-based information

What's Important?

Fact from Text	Why is it Important?









Thomas Jefferson's Ten Rules for the Good Life


















1. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
2. Never trouble another for what you can do yourself.
3. Never spend your money before you have it.
4. Never buy what you do not want because it is cheap; it will never be dear to you.
5. Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst, and cold.
6. Never repent of having eaten too little.
7. Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.
8. Don't let the evils which have never happened cost you pain.
9. Always take things by their smooth handle.
10. When angry, count to ten before you speak; if very angry, count to one hundred.

Synthesize This

Help students learn to synthesize by providing them with the following tips for synthesizing and deepening comprehension.

-  Stop often and think about what you are reading.
-  Determine how you can apply what you are reading to your life.
-  Ask often, “Is this an important idea?”.
-  Form opinions as you read. Decide if you agree or disagree with the information presented.
-  Try to construct bigger ideas from what you are reading—like fitting pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together to form a whole.
-  Discuss what you are reading with someone else to garner a different perspective.
-  Write down important ideas and see if you can determine how they fit together.
-  Imagine beyond the text.

Comprehension Rules!

-  Make lots of connections to yourself, other texts, or the outside world
-  Predict what is coming next
-  Ask questions as you read
-  Visualize by forming pictures in your mind as you read
-  Determine what is important from what is not
-  Clarify the author's purpose
-  Read between the lines
-  Stop when you encounter a new word and find the meaning
-  Discuss what you are reading with someone else
-  When the text is confusing, stop reading and ask for help or reread
-  Think about how individual ideas fit together to create a whole
-  Be creative as you read. How will you use the information?
-  Be aware of yourself as a reader. Know when you become frustrated or you get it!
-  Find something to read that you enjoy.
-  Read *something* each day.