Reading to Understand:
Children’s Books to Use with Comprehension Strategies

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This bibliography was developed for the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board (ECB) for their Into the Book reading comprehension project. It maps selected children’s books to each of the eight comprehension strategies outlined in the project:

- Using prior knowledge
- Making connections
- Questioning
- Visualizing
- Inferring
- Summarizing
- Evaluating
- Synthesizing

A final category, “Using Strategies Together,” suggests longer or more complex texts that demand readers to integrate various comprehension strategies.

The goal in creating this bibliography was to identify 12-15 titles for each strategy. But most books here will lend themselves to application across the strategies. The focus in choosing books was to find engaging titles that would meet a range of reading and listening abilities, and that would reflect the diversity of classrooms, communities and the world today. The book selections for every strategy include picture book stories and nonfiction for early elementary-age children. Some strategy sections also include poetry, wordless books, and/or chapter books.

For more information about ECB’s Reading Comprehension Project, go to http://ecb.org/reading/

Using Prior Knowledge

Readers use what they already know (or think they know) before, during and after reading to clarify their understanding (or misunderstanding) of the text.


Arnosky, Jim. All about Rattlesnakes. Scholastic, 1997. 28 pages


**Making Connections**

Readers relate the text to personal experiences, to information from other texts, and to information about the world to enhance understanding of self, text and life. (Most of the books below naturally lend themselves to text-to-self connections. The books have been organized to suggest thematic text-to-text connections, although several lend themselves to use in multiple categories.)

Theme: Family


Jenkins, Emily. *Five Creatures*. Illustrated by Tomek Bogacki. Scholastic, 2001. 32 pages


Theme: School


**Theme: Friendship**


**Questioning**

Readers ask questions about the text, and about the author and/or illustrator’s intentions, seeking information to clarify and extend their thinking before, during and after reading.


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**Visualizing**

Readers create images in their mind that reflect or represent the ideas in the text to enhance understanding.


Wetterer, Margaret K. and Charles M. *The Snow Walker*. Illustrated by Mary O’Keefe Young. Carolrhoda, 1996. 56 pages
Inferring

Readers think about and search the text and art, and sometimes use personal knowledge, to construct meaning beyond what is literally stated.


McKissack, Patricia. *Ma Dear’s Aprons*. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Atheneum, 1997. 32 pages


Young, Ed. *Seven Blind Mice*. Philomel, 1992. 40 pages


Summarizing

Readers identify key elements and condense important information into their own words during and after reading to solidify meaning.


Blake, Robert J. *Togo*. Philomel, 2002. 40 pages

Cooper, Elisha. *Ice Cream*. Greenwillow, 2002, 40 pages


**Evaluating**

"Readers explain their responses to or understandings of a text based on stated criteria (e.g., Would you want a friend to read this? Why or why not?)"


Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los meros meros remateros*. Children’s Book Press, 2002. 32 pages


**Synthesizing**

*Readers create original insights, perspectives and understandings by reflecting on the text, and by merging elements from the text with their own way of understanding information and the world around them.*


Wong, Janet S. *Apple Pie 4th of July*. Illustrated by Margaret Chodos-Irvine. Harcourt, 2002. 32 pages

**Using the Strategies Together**

Readers combine the eight strategies as needed to come to a fuller understanding of the text.


Williams, Vera B. *Scooter*. Greenwillow, 1993. 147 pages
Megan Schliesman is a librarian at the Cooperative Children’s Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The CCBC is a noncirculating collection of children’s and young adult literature for adults. The library serves the UW-Madison campus, and librarians and teachers across Wisconsin.

This bibliography was created in consultation with Marta Bechtol and Peggy Garties of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board.

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