

<u>What is Strategic Reading?</u>
<u>Reading Workshop</u>
<u>Using Subject Area Reading Materials</u>
<u>Making the Most of Heterogeneous Grouping</u>
<u>Role of the Reading Specialist</u>
Resource Sheets

WHAT IS STRATEGIC READING?

Strategic readers actively construct meaning as they read, interacting with the text. They set purposes for reading, select methods of accomplishing these purposes, monitor and repair their own comprehension as they read, and evaluate the completed task. A strategic reader constructs, examines, and extends meaning before, during, and after reading for a variety of texts.

"Teachers who understand that reading is a strategic process establish environments that provide opportunities for children to learn language and learn about language while they are using language for real purposes."
(Halliday)

There are a number of differences between strategic readers and poor readers during all phases of the reading process.

How Do Strategic Readers Differ from Poor Readers?

<p>1. Before Reading, Strategic Readers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up their own background knowledge about reading and the topic 	<p>Poor Readers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start reading without thinking about the process of reading or the topic.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set purposes for reading. • Determine methods for reading, according to their purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not know why they are reading but merely view the task as "ground to cover."
<p>2. During Reading, Strategic Readers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give their complete attention to the reading task • Check their own understanding constantly • Monitor their reading comprehension and do it so often that it becomes automatic • Stop to use a fix-up strategy when they do not understand • Use semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues to construct meanings of unfamiliar words • Synthesize during reading • Ask questions • Talk to themselves during reading 	<p>Poor Readers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not eliminate distractions from reading • Do not know whether they understand • Do not recognize when comprehension has broken down • Seldom use fix-up strategies to improve comprehension • Skip or ignore meanings of unfamiliar but crucial words • Do not integrate text with prior knowledge • Read without reflecting on meaning or text organization.
<p>3. After Reading, Strategic Readers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide if they have achieved their goals for reading • Evaluate their understanding of what was read • Summarize the major ideas • Seek additional information from outside sources • Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant ideas • Paraphrase the text what they have learned. 	<p>Poor Readers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not know what they have read • Do not follow reading with comprehension self-check • Rely exclusively on the author's words • Do not go beyond a surface examination of the text. • Apply no conscious strategies to help them remember

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on and personalize the text• Critically examine the text• Integrate new understandings and prior knowledge.• Use study strategies to retain new knowledge. | |
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What is the Strategic Process?

A good, strategic reader constructs, examines, and extends meaning before, during, and after reading. The teacher of strategic reading continually introduces, models, explains, reinforces, helps students apply, and evaluates reading strategies as students read various texts for diverse purposes. Thus, the teacher of strategic reading develops and follows an organized plan in promoting student growth in use of the strategies. See "Strategies of Effective Readers," Teacher Resource Sheet IVa, for a summary of strategies.

What Are the Steps Teachers Should Follow in Planning and Providing Strategic Reading Instruction?*

A. Setting the Stage

1. Identify the strategy to be taught.
2. Discuss the reasons why it is being taught.
3. Explain the steps of the strategy.
4. Display the steps of strategy.

B. Modeling and Direct Instruction

5. Teach the strategy in an appropriate context.
6. Provide opportunities for whole-group work, collaborative group work, and individual work.

7. Reflect with students on what was done and why.
8. Discuss with students strategic applications within and across the curriculum.

C. Guiding Practice

9. Review the steps of the strategy with the students.
10. Establish criteria for effective use of the strategy.
11. Use the strategy in a variety of contexts and with a variety of texts.
12. Reflect with the students on their growing competency with the strategy.

D. Encouraging Independent Application

13. Return to the strategy whenever applicable.
14. Provide opportunities for students to use the strategy independently in self-selected materials.
15. Encourage personal adaptations of the strategy to fit particular texts, contents, and personal styles.
16. Monitor the students' expertise and independent application of the strategy.
17. Require and enable students to assess their own growth in strategic behaviors through instructional portfolio assessment.
18. Monitor the gradual reduction of teacher support needed by individuals.
19. In-service team members on strategy procedures and applications.

What Are Some Methods for Teaching Reading Strategies?

- **BEFORE-READING** activities should emphasize methods of merging reader, text, and content --enabling students to set appropriate reading purposes, recall related prior knowledge, preview and predict what the text will be about, and select reading methods to suit their purposes and the text. Included in these considerations may be readers' decisions to expand their background knowledge through related discussion, exploration of key concepts, or related reading.
- **DURING-READING** activities should enable students to monitor their comprehension through a variety of strategies and experience and acquire diverse fix-up strategies to improve their understanding where necessary.
- **AFTER-READING** activities should teach students to review their understanding of text, relate new ideas to their background knowledge, revisit the text to clarify and extend meanings, make responsible interpretations and criticisms of ideas from the text, revise their thinking, apply the information to other texts and disciplines, and remember crucial learnings for future application.

What Are Some Techniques for Teaching Before-Reading Strategies?

- Before reading, strategic readers:
- **PREVIEW** the text by looking at the title, the pictures, and the print in order to evoke relevant thoughts and memories
- **BUILD BACKGROUND** by activating appropriate prior knowledge through self-questioning about what they already know about the topic (or story), the vocabulary, and the form in which the topic (or story) is presented
- **SET PURPOSES** for reading by asking questions about what they want to learn during the reading process.

Three techniques prove valuable for teaching before-reading strategies:

Think-Alouds

A think-aloud is a procedure in which students or teachers simply think out loud as they work through a procedure. Think-alouds may be used before, during, or after reading by teachers to model new strategies. After demonstrating new strategies through the think-aloud, teachers should structure activities where students may practice, likewise using the think-aloud technique with new text and working with a partner. Think-alouds are useful also after reading as an assessment device in a reading conference: Students read a text aloud and say what they think as they read, making audible the comprehension strategies they employ.

When using a think-aloud to teach before-reading strategies, the teacher verbalizes the thought processes used by effective readers in order to set a purpose for reading, to preview the text, to recall prior knowledge, and to make predictions. For example, the teacher might model a think-aloud in the following way to demonstrate how to set a purpose for reading the autobiography of Anne Frank:

- Hold up the autobiography *Anne Frank* .
- Read the cover and internal blurbs to the children, interjecting such comments as, "I've always wanted to learn more about the Holocaust, but I know it will be sad," or "Can you believe that a sixteen year old could keep a diary about these experiences? It makes my diary look silly."
- Read the copyright page and dedication, making comments aloud such as, "This book was first published in 1947. I wasn't even born yet."
- After previewing the book, predict aloud what might happen in the book or give a reason for wanting to read the book: "I'm going to read this to find out if she lives through it."
- Direct the students to work in pairs to practice the same procedure with novels of their own choice.

Previewing

Previewing is a strategy to motivate students to read. The teacher might consider the following suggestions:

- Recall and consider prior personal experiences that are relevant to the text.
- Build the necessary background knowledge for the text.
- Review textual elements that aid in later composition (cover blurbs, dedication, and copyright information).
- Read about or contact the author.
- Establish an organizational framework (chapter construction and length, prologue and epilogue, explanation of terms, etc.).
- Predict the novel events.
- Reflect on personal purposes for reading text.

Example:

When previewing *December Stillness* by Mary Downing Hahn, for example, the teacher might share a map of Vietnam and briefly explain the conflict and controversy of Vietnam. The teacher might read *The Wall* (a large picture book with reminiscences of the war and visits to the wall) by Sally Lopes to the students. The students might share their experiences with Vietnam veterans and then examine the textual elements of *December Stillness* in order to predict novel events. After reading the front and back covers, copyright page, and dedication, the students use a visual organizer to predict novel events. The teacher might then save the organizer for later review and give a copy to each student, asking each to record a personal purpose for reading the novel on the prediction sheet.

What Are Some Techniques for Teaching During-Reading Strategies?

During reading, strategic readers:

- a. **CHECK UNDERSTANDING** of the text by paraphrasing the author's words.
- b. **MONITOR COMPREHENSION** and **USE FIX-UP STRATEGIES**: use the cueing systems to figure out unknown words and imaging, imagining, inferencing, and predicting.

c. **INTEGRATE** new concepts with existing knowledge; continually revise purposes for reading.

What Teaching Techniques Help Students Learn Self-Monitoring Strategies?

Self-monitoring is the active awareness strategic readers have of their own understanding and control over that understanding while reading. It enables readers to measure their comprehension and take steps to enhance it. When students become conscious of their thinking and comprehension, they can deliberately apply different fix-up strategies when comprehension breaks down. A major goal of reading instruction is to expose students to equip them with productive self-monitoring strategies. Several of the following techniques are useful to this end.

Self-Questioning

Self-Questioning is technique in which students generate story-specific questions about the important elements of a text as they read in order to better integrate prior knowledge with the text and the reading context. Story elements whose meanings are extended by self-questioning might include the main character, goals, obstacles, outcomes, and themes of the story. Students move from a general question to a story-specific question. The generated questions may be used for group response and discussion. They may also be used with explanatory materials.

Teachers may implement the self-questioning technique in the classroom using the following steps:

1. The teacher models general questioning techniques for the students.
2. The teacher models how to generate text-specific questions based on the general questions while reading a text.
3. The teacher and students generate questions about a text together.
4. After all story elements have been covered, the students generate their own story-specific questions.

The following general-questions (GQ) and story-specific questions (SQ) for *The Outsiders*, by S. E. Hinton, show how this process may be applied in the classroom.

	GQ: Who is the leading character?
Character	SQ: Is this story more about the Socs or the Greasers?
	GQ: What is the leading character trying to accomplish?
Goal	SQ: What is Ponyboy trying to do in this story?
	GQ: What obstacles does the leading character encounter?
Obstacles	SQ: How do the Socs cause problems for Johnny?
	GQ: Does the leading character reach his or her goal?
Outcome	SQ: Is Ponyboy able to resolve the gang and family conflicts he
	GQ: faces in the book?
Theme	SQ: What is the author saying to us about life in this story?
	What did I learn about solving conflicts from reading <u>The Outsiders</u> .

Think Alouds

Think-alouds, as defined earlier, remove the cloak of mystery surrounding the comprehension process as teachers and students verbalize their own thoughts while reading orally. A think-aloud may include the following steps:

1. The teacher selects a passage to read aloud that poses comprehension problems for readers, for example, complex or difficult concepts, contradictions, ambiguities, or unknown words. The teacher is careful the passage includes specific section where comprehension breaks down in order to model with students ways to deal with each.

2. The teacher reads the passage aloud and thinks out loud about the problems encountered, reflecting how he or she monitors understanding of the text and makes decisions to remedy comprehension problems. The students observe the teacher's modeling silently, noting the monitoring of comprehension. The teacher should include the following considerations during think-alouds:

- a. Make predictions (develop hypotheses): for example, "From the title, I predict that this section will tell how fishermen used to catch whales In this next part, I think we'll find out why the man flew into the hurricane I think this is a description of a computer game."
 - b. Describe the pictures imagined from the information given: for example, "As I read, I see this scene in my mind: The car is on a dark, probably narrow road; there are no other cars around"
 - c. Make analogies (linking prior knowledge to new information in the text): for example, "This is like a time we had a flat tire while driving to Boston. We were worried and had to walk three miles for help "
 - d. Verbalize confusing points (monitoring ongoing comprehension): for example, "This just doesn't make sense This is different from what I had expected."
 - e. Demonstrate "fix-up" strategies (correcting lagging comprehension): for example, "That is not clear; I'd better reread Maybe I'll read ahead to see if it gets clearer I'd better change my picture of the story This is a new word to me, and it seems crucial to the meaning of the essay; I'd better try to figure it out what it means here "
3. The teacher leads a debriefing discussion in which students summarize what the teacher did and why. They focus on the choices made by the teacher and the reasons and outcomes of those choices.
 4. The teacher helps the students generate a list of steps or strategies readers may use to monitor comprehension and repair it. The class adds to this list throughout the year as new strategies emerge.
 5. The teacher structures a small-group or paired activity in which students take turns practicing think-alouds with difficult reading materials.
 6. The teacher uses the think-aloud technique frequently with various materials to reinforce during -reading strategies, encouraging students to use it when reading independently to enhance their own comprehension.

7. The teacher uses the think-aloud technique as an informal and formal assessment tool in student conferences: with familiar texts to help students apply monitoring and fix-up strategies when their comprehension has failed and with unfamiliar texts to help students assess their own growth in during-reading strategies.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers provide the means for students to collect and see interrelationships in various elements of a text. Graphic organizers of various forms are available and can be adapted to many reading purposes. Their uses include story maps, plot or character flowcharts, timelines, pyramid designs, outlines, feature analysis charts, and semantic or chapter mapping charts. Such visual organizers support before, during, and after reading strategies, but, when used during the reading process, they provide exceptional methods for students to monitor their own understanding.

Visualizing*

Visualizing is the process of forming appropriate mental pictures based on a text to assist understanding. For example, in reading the Arthur Conan Doyle story, "The Adventure of the Red-Headed League," readers must imagine accurately the layout of buildings as described by the narrator, Dr. Watson, in order to solve the mystery before Sherlock Holmes or even appreciate the solution when it is provided at the end of the story. As student readers grow, so will their abilities to imagine the scenes, characters, and actions of stories.

They need concrete activities to help them develop this skill. The following techniques may help students' skills grow in this area:

1. When reading material where comprehension requires visualization, select a brief excerpt and use it to model a new strategy. Begin with simple descriptions and proceed to more complex ones as student capabilities improve.
2. Read the selected description aloud, stopping as details are added to have students describe, draw, or diagram (depending on the nature of the description) what they imagine from the description.

3. Have students evaluate their imagined or drawn descriptions by comparing them with each other and with the text.

4. Discuss strategies students may use while reading to improve their own visualization. Have them consider which strategies are most useful for various kinds of descriptions. For example, students may choose to sketch maps of the scene of the crime in the Sherlock Holmes story to help them follow the plot; they may draw a floor plan to help them imagine the location of clues at the scene of a crime; and they may sketch a stick figure or "gingerbread man" to help them record and pay attention to important details of a person's appearance as described by the detective.

5. Use imagistic poems especially short ones, such as haikuto have students picture and appreciate visual descriptions. Ask students to describe what a poet is observing when describing a scene or object.

*(*Teachers should note that this technique is to be used with particular passages only and not, for example, to have the students take "imaginary journeys." This latter form of visualization is associated with New Age philosophy and is inappropriate in the classroom.)*

What Teaching Techniques Help Students Learn Fix-Up Strategies?

Good readers use fix-up strategies when the meaning is lost in a reading. When necessary, they integrate semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues to construct meanings for unknown words. Often, however, self-monitoring uncovers comprehension break-downs beyond the word level. To teach fix-up strategies for comprehension at this level, teachers must help students generate and post for future reference a list of strategies to use when comprehension breaks down for any reason. As students discover new fix-up strategies, they should discuss and add them to the list. Oral reading by the teacher or students provides an opportunity to monitor reading and apply fix-up strategies:

A class list may include, but not be limited to, the following fix-up strategies:

- Skip a difficult word and read on.
- Use sentence and paragraph context to explain new terms.
- Reread a difficult section of text.

- Read further on in the text.
- Ask a friend for help in understanding a term or section.
- Use a reference book to define or explain difficult terms.
- Look at the word parts if the problem involves only one word.
- Locate and read less difficult material dealing with the same concept.
- Look for hands-on material that will clarify the concepts.
- Consult an expert.

[This list is not exhaustive. Teachers are encouraged to share additional fix-up strategies for future curriculum revisions.]

What Are Some Techniques for Teaching After-Reading Strategies?

After reading, strategic readers:

- SUMMARIZE** what they have read by retelling the plot of the story or the main idea of the text.
- INTERPRET** and **EVALUATE** the ideas contained in the text.
- MAKE APPLICATIONS** of the ideas in the text to unique situations, extending the ideas to broader perspectives.
- USE STUDY STRATEGIES** for notetaking, locating, and remembering to improve content -area learning.

Teachers may use several techniques to present, model, and help students apply after-reading strategies:

Summarizing

Summarizing fosters understanding and remembering as well as develops interpretations of texts. Proficiency in summarizing involves steps that grow in complexity and that require varying degrees of practice. The following summarizing procedures include suggestions from the basic to complex:

1. Delete trivial information.
2. Delete redundant information.
3. Generate general terms to encompass groups of less important ideas (for example, food for cereal, pizza, hot dogs, etc.).

4. Locate topic sentences and other key statements and use them in the summary when appropriate.

5. Compose statements of main ideas when none appear in the text.

Introduce the strategy with small passages and increase the amount as students increase their skills. Allow students to practice orally, as well as in writing. An excerpt from *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen lends itself well to the summarization strategy.

There was a sleeping bag which he hung to dry over his shelter roof on the outside and foam sleeping pad. An aluminum cook set with four little pots and two frying pans; it actually even had fork and knife and spoon. A waterproof container with matches and two small butane lighters. A sheath knife with a compass in the handle. As if a compass would help him, he thought, smiling. A first-aid kit with bandages and tubes of antiseptic paste and small scissors. A cap that said CESSNA across the front in large letters. Why a cap? he wondered. It was adjustable and he put it on immediately. A fishing kit with four coils of line, a dozen small lures, and hooks and sinkers.

Refer to the procedural steps as they are applied to the passage.

1. The names of the individual items included do not need to be cited.

2. There is no redundant material in the passage.

3. Blanket term: sleeping bag, foam sleeping pad, aluminum cook set, waterproof container, butane lighter, sheath knife with a compass, first-aid kit, fishing kit, are all survival tools.

4. Since most of the passage is a listed description, it includes no topic sentence.

5. Created summary sentence: Brian describes and reacts to the survival kit.

Retelling

Retelling differs from summarization. While the latter requires a telescoping of information to produce a condensed representation, the former demands an elaboration in which the teller recalls and even recreates a story and its effect. Teachers use retelling as a tool to diagnose and to increase student comprehension and to help students recognize textual organization and retain information from texts. Used by students, it increases the development of interpretive understanding. There are four general forms of this procedure, asking students to retell selections in their own words.

- **Oral-To-Oral Retelling:** The student listens to a selection and retells it orally. This approach may be most appropriate with fables or folktales.
- **Oral-To-Written Retelling:** The student listens to a selection but retells it in writing. A difficult chapter of a "whole class" novel might be read aloud and then retold individually.
- **Reading-To-Oral Retelling:** The student reads a selection silently and retells it orally. This is a diagnostic component of many published informal reading inventories.
- **Reading-To-Written Retelling:** The student reads a selection silently and retells it in writing. This method is easily practiced in a Reading Workshop environment.

Response Journals

Response journals are places where students reflect on their readings independently, with the teacher, or with other students. Journals allow students to take control of their own learning. In journals students respond to what they have experienced and learned, how it relates to them personally, how they learned it, how they used it, what still needs to be learned and clarified, as well as other things. Once students are aware of their own learning, they become able to select, implement, and evaluate strategies that are effective for them. Reading journals in particular enable students to see what sorts of responses they make (that is, to inspect the stances from which they respond), to reflect on their own reading and on literature, and to set goals for their own reading growth.

Teachers who include response journals in their reading classes should be careful to structure the experience to ensure that it is productive. They may

require student to make entries before, during, or after reading.

Generally, they should require brief entries at first, and then be sure to integrate the writings with other important class activities. At key points, students should share entries with the class, the teacher, or another student. Everyone must understand that response journals, unlike diaries, should include only thoughts that the student writer is willing to share with the teacher or class.

By sharing their entries, students have the opportunity to clarify and reinforce what they are learning about their thinking and about literature. Peers learn new strategies and when to use them. The teacher observes which strategies students are using and uses this information to plan daily instruction. Journal entries should never be corrected or graded for content. Teacher-student discussion about the entries, however, is crucial.

When introducing response journals, teachers should explain that they are places for students to record their thoughts in order to become better readers. Entries could include attempted reading strategies, reading problems, things students feel they do well as readers, questions they have about themselves as readers, when they may apply a strategy in the future, and what made them attempt a particular strategy. Students should also respond to what they read by reflecting, first on that which seems important to them, and then on such considerations as plot, literary technique, and author's purpose. Response journals will only be effective if the teacher continually demonstrates the many ways that the journals can be used.

The teacher may use prompts to help students get started or lead a brainstorming session that produces a list of possible questions or topics for response. Examples might include the following topics:

For Process

- What do I notice about my reading?
- Is this reading easy for me? Why?
- Is this reading hard for me? Why?
- Next time I read, I will try to
- Something I do better now than before is
- A reading strategy I used is
- I used this reading strategy because
- A reading problem I have is

- What do I want to be able to do as a reader?

For Content

- What do I notice about the plot?
- Do I enjoy the author's style? Why?
- Is this plot well constructed?
- Does the language of my material add to my understanding? In what ways?

Teachers should encourage students to add other topics to the chart or delete some on an ongoing basis. After students are comfortable using response journals, they will start to make notations about their thinking on their own. Be sure that their response journals are readily available while they are reading and that there are opportunities to discuss their entries. More information about response journals and their use can be found in the Reading Workshop section of this guide.

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal Teaching is another technique that teaches the strategy of summarization. It provides stopping places for students as they read to construct, examine, and extend meaning. The student or teacher can break text into logical subsections, usually determined by the natural transitions in the text.

Reciprocal Teaching involves four stages in which students and teachers take turns being the teacher and eliciting responses from students. Teachers should follow these steps in introducing Reciprocal Teaching:

1. Summarize the section in a sentence or paragraph (if necessary for longer passages).
2. Ask a high-level question or two to get at what is important.
3. Identify a difficult part of the text and clarify it by explaining, giving examples, or drawing analogies.
4. Predict what the next paragraph or segment will discuss.

The teacher should begin a Reciprocal Teaching activity by modeling each of the stages and maintaining a dialogue with the students until they are comfortable with each step.

The most difficult part of this technique is the clarification of difficult text. Students must apply many fix-up strategies in order to explain to others text that was difficult for them. Teacher modeling is an important part of this phase of the technique.

The following example from *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare shows how the Reciprocal Teaching technique can be used in the classroom.

1. Assign a section to the students that deals with the historic aspects of the novel. Read the section aloud to the students, modeling the summarization strategy.
2. Say, "This section discusses the problems that the men of Connecticut were having with England's control of their lives and their desire for self-government."
3. Ask, "Why did the revolutionaries even agree to meet with the King's men?" or "What clues did the text provide for the events that unfolded in the smoke-filled room?"
4. Explain the difficulty of this section by comparing the *Connecticut Charter's* symbolism and importance with that of the *Constitution*.
5. Finally, have students predict the outcome of the meeting related to the progress toward colonial independence.

This book provides numerous opportunities for students to practice Reciprocal Teaching in collaborative groups and individually as the strategy becomes automatic.

READING WORKSHOP

Students learn how to read by reading. Reading Workshop creates a literary environment with the three prerequisites for reading growth identified by

Nancy Atwell, the originator of Reading Workshop: time, engagement, and response. During Reading Workshop students acquire reading strategies to construct, extend, and revise meaning as they read a variety of texts for purposes which they choose and control. Dialogue journals and conferences with the teacher and other students enable readers to arrive at initial understandings, make inferences, and respond personally and critically to texts as they integrate reading and writing skills.

As a minimum, a Reading Workshop requires the following materials: a well-stocked and growing classroom library; a reading response journal kept by each student; a teacher mailbox and class box where students store their journals; and lists of all types of books (commercially and student-prepared).

Reading workshop offers the following benefits to students:

- Students of every ability level become readers when given their choice of materials.
- Students who choose texts become more fluent readers, increasing both rate and comprehension.
- Response to texts in a variety of forms fosters communication between student and teacher and among students.
- Responses provide a time for readers to reflect on reading and to collaborate with others in order to construct, extend, and revise meaning.

What Are the Components of Reading Workshop?

The concept of Reading Workshop was developed by Nancie Atwell. Many of the ideas presented in this guide are adaptations of her technique. Reading Workshop is a highly individualized method of teaching reading. There are as many ways run a workshop as there are teaching styles. Reading Workshop can be a year-long pursuit or a three-week unit; workshop days may be continuous or intermittent. The approach requires a particular kind of teacher, so it is not appropriate for all teachers. Contrary to common opinions, Reading Workshop demands a highly structured classroom. Most students in the classroom will be reading different materials because of the premise of Reading Workshop. This individuality presents class management issues with which a workshop teacher must deal. For these reasons, the Reading Workshop is not a requirement of the middle school reading program, although teachers who wish to use it are encouraged to do so.

At the same time, the diverse needs of students in the classroom may be met through Reading Workshop. Students not only read different texts, but they also read on a variety of independent levels and for just as many purposes. Reading Workshop may be integrated into any reading program as part of a school wide, grade level, or class reading program.

The main components of Reading Workshop include Literary Warm-Up, Mini-Lesson, Self -Selected Reading and Response, and Conferencing.

1. **Literary Warm-Up** (5 minutes) This is the time when teachers and students share new discoveries about reading or books. Many interests peak during this time. It can be an informal time as children come into the room. If a truly literary environment exists in the room, students will enter and leave talking about books. Teachers can also "sell" books to students during this time.

When "selling" books, the teacher displays one or more books and tells some interesting facts about the book or author which will entice the students to read it. A "sale" is made when a student chooses a book and signs it out from the school or classroom library. It is desirable for the teacher to have read a variety of books from which the students will choose; however, not every book "sold" must be read by the teacher. The media specialist, book reviews, and student opinions are valuable resources. Other students actually represent the best "salespersons" and, as the school year progresses, they take over much of this portion of Reading Workshop.

2. **Mini-Lesson** (5 - 10 minutes) Mini-lessons are short, teacher-initiated, whole-group instructional sessions for constructing, extending, and revising meaning. The teacher may introduce or reinforce strategies and prepare students to read new books successfully and independently. Many mini-lessons are procedural in nature, but flexibility is an important aspect as well. As teachers observe students' needs during reading and conference time, or during discussions within the literary warm-up, ideas for mini-lessons may arise. Mini-lessons may serve the following purposes:

- Establish the philosophy of, and materials needed for, Reading Workshop. See "Sample Letter Introducing Reading Workshop," Teacher Resource Sheet IVb .
- Assess pre- and post-workshop reading interests. See "Reading Interest

Survey," Student Resource Sheet IVc.

- Establish rules for Reading Workshop. See "Rules for Using Reading Workshop Time," Student Resource Sheet IVd.
- Create and rate objectives for Reading Workshop See "Reading Workshop Objectives," Student Resource Sheet IVe.
- Establish the importance of the journal and its use during Reading Workshop. See "Sample Letter Introducing Journals," Teacher Resource Sheet IVf .
- Brainstorm ways to build the classroom library.
- Brainstorm methods of selecting a book.
- Differentiate among the kinds of talk about books to be found in journal entries, for example, the stances from which strategic readers respond to texts.
- Comparison of good and poor journal entries. Do not use class examples of poor entries.
- Share thoughtful class journal entries with the writer's permission.
- Model writing entries in dialogue journals.
- Explore the literary concepts of setting, characterization, plot, theme, conflict, mood, figures of speech, etc.
- Explore authors' uses of powerful dialogue in writing.
- Share new and favorite authors using an "interesting facts" rather than a biographical approach.
- Examine strong leads and endings.
- Share favorite lines, images, phrases, etc.
- Compare one author's style with another's.

- Introduce, model, or extend before-, during-, and after-reading strategies.
- Explore the process of book publishing.
- Model and complete contracts for reading. See "Contract for Reading Workshop," Student Resource Sheet IVg.
- Brainstorm an A-Z list of character traits and choose several that apply to self-selected materials.
- Explore the causes of slow reading and instruct students in fix-up strategies that they can practice as they read.
- Demonstrate how to adjust reading rates according to reading purposes.
- Examine reading rates and appropriateness of each related to reading purpose.
- List titles and authors by genre and form of material.
- Establish attack strategies for unknown words.
- Create a list of "Books I Read this Year" on a bulletin board or a computer database.
- Create a list of "Books I Want to Read."
- Visualize an oral selection and then a self-selected reading.
- Watch videotapes of presentations by authors of young adult fiction.
- Include students in planning and implementing reading portfolios. (See the assessment section of this guide for further details.)

3. **Self-Selected Reading and Response** (remainder of the period) During self-selected reading (SSR), students may choose to be involved in one or more activities. The choices depend on the needs of the students, goals established during mini-lessons, and the desire of the reader to respond in written or oral form to a text. Students complete most readings silently, but paired or group reading is a possibility. During this time students must read,

respond to reading, or update personal reading records. The teacher should communicate the importance of reading by setting an example: The teacher should spend part of each SSR time reading for pleasure or another purpose. During the rest of the period, teachers respond to journal entries and conference with readers.

Components of Self-Selected Reading and Response:

a. **Journal entries** should be written purposefully by both students and teachers. They should not be busywork. Students' journal writing should improve their learning and attitudes. Sample purposes for using journals include:

- Making students more thoughtful about books and the reading and writing processes
- Raising student engagement with reading, writing, and thinking
- Making students' thinking and learning visible
- Providing a source book of ideas for writing and discussion
- Promoting self-evaluation of the reading process
- Relating the content of the mini-lesson to the self-selected reading.

b. The style of journal entries should be thoughtful and conversational. Students should know that others may read their work. This is not a private diary. In the back of the journal, students should keep a dated list of books read and those they want to read. Students make dated entries in their journals, starting in the front. The emphasis is on meaning and thought. Journal entries are not finished work for publication. There are several types of journal entries which can be included in the classroom program. Students should label the type of entry before they begin to write.

- **Response Journals** - After reading, students write responses to what they have heard or read. It is important that the teacher model types of responses. In order to write a quality response, students need enough time to organize their thoughts and then write. Responses may reflect any one of the stances in preparation for later discussion. (Refer to the "After Reading Strategies" section for additional information about

Response Journals.) Indeed, one of the goals for using journals in the reading classroom must be to encourage students to increase the quality and quantity of their responses to literature from all four reading stances, as specified in the program goals. For this reason, teachers should plan regular opportunities for students to evaluate the stances their journal entries take so that they may set goals for improving their responses.

- **Personal Journals** - These are optional components of student journals. In these types of entries, students may write freely on any subject. They write only for themselves, and their entries are neither read nor evaluated. Using a personal journal allows students the opportunity to explore personal ideas on paper. This free flow of ideas motivates many students to write and encourages risk-taking. (Teachers should be careful to distinguish this type of journal from a diary; personal journals are still school activities, and teachers should caution students not to write anything about which they would be embarrassed.)
- **Dialogue Journals** - Dialogue journals are conversations about books and reading between a student and the teacher or between two students. With this variation of the response journal, students receive responses to what they have written and reinforcement for their developing interpretations of literature. In dialogue journals students write and the teacher or a peer responds to each entry by commenting, by asking a question, or by encouraging the writer to elaborate on a response. Again, dialogue journals should not be graded, although the teacher should evaluate the process of journaling, perhaps through periodic checklists. No correction of the student writing should be done; the teacher should only model and praise effective responses. (Refer to the "Reading Workshop" section for additional information on dialogue journals.)
- **Learning Logs** - Learning logs provide students with an opportunity to reflect on what they are learning, how they have learned it, how they apply knowledge, and what they still need to learn. These entries frequently address program or individual goals, strategies, and the reading process in general. They may be prompted by teacher-designed questions or open-ended statements and serve as excellent entrées into evaluative conferences.

4. **Individual reading conferences** should be held with each student as regularly as possible.

The student and teacher listen to one another or they read, react, reinforce strategies, ask questions, and evaluate progress toward old goals and set new ones. The teacher should establish rapport, share, listen, comment, encourage, and guide during these conferences. Conferences may include more formal assessments, such as informal reading inventories, attitude surveys, or structured student retellings or think-alouds.

What is the Role of Assessment in Reading Workshop?

Assessment within Reading Workshop can take a variety of formal and informal shapes, but each should reflect the individual goals set by the student and those established by the MSDE and the Howard County Public School System (as reflected in this program's outcomes and goals). Since students are reading self-selected materials, Reading Workshop does not lend itself to whole-class testing as an evaluative technique. Rather, growth indicators provide assessment tools and these are exhibited over time in reading fluency, speed, risk-taking, personal involvement, recognition of good writing and what authors do, making use of prior knowledge, predicting, critiquing, establishing criteria for selecting, and purposeful selection of books, etc. Additional ideas for assessment and diagnosis are found in that section of this guide.

Since the engagement of the students in the reading process determines the success of Reading Workshop, much of the responsibility for assessment must rest with the students as they evaluate progress toward old goals and set new ones for themselves under the teacher's careful guidance. Much information is gathered as teachers listen to students during conferences and examine their journal entries. There are several student-centered means of evaluating reading growth in Reading Workshop.

- Have students set realistic goals for themselves through learning contracts. See Resource Sheet IVg. Assess performance based on agreed-upon evidence of goal attainment.
- Require students to keep dated logs (see Resource Sheet IIIh) of daily reading, and assess them during conferences based on previously publicized expectations.

- Have students rate workshop objectives as a pre- and post-workshop activity and assess their responses for growth.
- Direct students to use a Reading Wheel (see "Readers' Workshop Reading Wheel," Student Resource Sheet IVh) to keep track of genres and forms of text as they read. Assessment could be based on the willingness of students to take risks by trying new genres or forms of literature. Students could also read several works within one genre or form for a more in-depth exploration. Goals for this area should be monitored and set in individual conferences.
- Have students choose a favorite journal response and polish it for portfolio inclusion and assessment.
- Let parents and students make a list of observed growth indicators.
- Ask students to write and send letters to authors, reflecting the depth of their insight and their response to literary craft.
- Assess student preparedness and motivation with a materials-check (self-selected text, required journal entries, and an up-to-date list of books read and those which the student wants to read).