

## Teaching Children to Think While Reading

**Experts cite the need to teach children how to think as they read. The following activities promote this important capacity:**

*Shared Reading.* Teachers and students read predictable books together. Students pretend to read initially and gradually learn to recognize the words.

*Guided Reading.* Students read aloud but teachers step in and show them strategies when they are having difficulties or need to think about what they are reading.

*KWL.* Usually using informational text, students and teachers begin by sharing what the *Know* and what they *Want* to find out. After reading the text, they talk about what they have *Learned*.

*Graphic Organizers.* Teachers and students create webs by mapping out topics and subtopics in a piece of text or fill in feature matrices by listing different categories of items mentioned in the text.

*Story Maps.* Teachers and students create a map of the story's structure and components, containing categories to fill in, such as "characters," "setting," "problem," "solution," etc.

*Sticky Notes.* Students search for specific information in the text and mark them with sticky notes.

*Draw It/Act It Out.* Students draw pictures of what they read or act out stories.

*Listening/Reading Transfer.* Teachers stimulate students' thinking while reading aloud to them and then transfer those ways of thinking to reading.

*The "Oprah Winfrey" Strategy.* Teachers interview students talk show style as they pretend to be characters in the story they just read.

Source: Cunningham P.M. and Allington R.L. (1999). *Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write.*

**SECAC  
RSN  
SUPPLEMENT**

# **READING SUCCESS NETWORK IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**



## Continuum of Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing

*Experts stress that learning to read and write is not an act, but many steps on a developmental continuum. The following "success indicators" illustrate one possible way a district may describe grade-level goals for readers:*

### **Phase 1: Preschool Awareness and Exploration**

Children explore their environment and build the foundations for learning to read and write.

### **Phase 2: Kindergarten Experimental Reading and Writing**

Children develop basic concepts of print and begin to experiment with reading and writing.

### **Phase 3: First Grade Early Reading and Writing**

Children begin to read simple stories and can write about a topic that is meaningful to them.

### **Phase 4: Second Grade Transitional Reading and Writing**

Children begin to read more fluently and write using simple sentences and more complex sentences.

### **Phase 5: Third Grade Independent and Productive Reading and Writing**

Children continue to refine reading and writing for different uses and audiences.

### **Phase 6: Fourth Grade and Up Advanced Reading**

Children read with appropriate expression, locate materials appropriate to a topic and analyze text in a variety of genres.

*Source: Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children - A Joint Position Statement of the International Reading Association and The National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998.*

---

## Common Understanding: A Few Literacy Terms

*Literacy teams should make sure that everyone understands and agrees upon terminology used. Also, it is important to remember that experts may define some literacy terms in different ways. Here are a few terms that members of your team may encounter as they work together to study students' needs and strengths.*

*Comprehension:* Understanding and interpreting spoken or written text. Students' comprehension is aided by their knowledge of how language works. This knowledge is gained through speaking and listening, their working memory, their vocabularies, and their background knowledge of topics and concepts.

*Decoding:* The process of pronouncing a printed sequence of letters based on knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences.

*Fluency:* The ability to identify words automatically when reading.

*Phonemic Awareness:* The insight that a spoken word can be conceived as a sequence of syllables and phonemes (units of sounds). Phonemic awareness is a type of phonological awareness. Children exhibit phonemic awareness when they discern distinct phonemes in spoken words.

*Phonics:* Systematic instructional practices that emphasize how the sounds of speech are represented by letters.

*Phonological awareness:* A general ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from their meanings. Young children exhibit phonological awareness when they notice and correct speech errors, play with spoken words, and enjoy rhymes.

*Whole language:* A literature-based instructional approach. Whole language immerses children in a variety of literacy activities with a focus on comprehension. Technical skills, such as spelling and phonics, are learned in the context of reading and writing.

Source: Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S. and Griffin, P. Eds. (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children.*

---