

# ***The Reading Comprehension Blueprint: The Why, The What & The How!***

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June 11, 2022  
IDAFL*



**The science of reading includes  
more than word recognition!!!**



***Let's honor what we know and do while committing  
to continuing what is effective and to changing  
course when the science tells us we should.***

*Consider the context, create the conditions....*

# **The Reading Comprehension Blueprint**

***Why***

**Complexity of Comprehension**

***What***

**The Blueprint Components**

***How***

**Critical Contributors:**

**Sentence Comprehension & Background Knowledge**

**The complexity of  
comprehension-  
what's your mental  
model?**



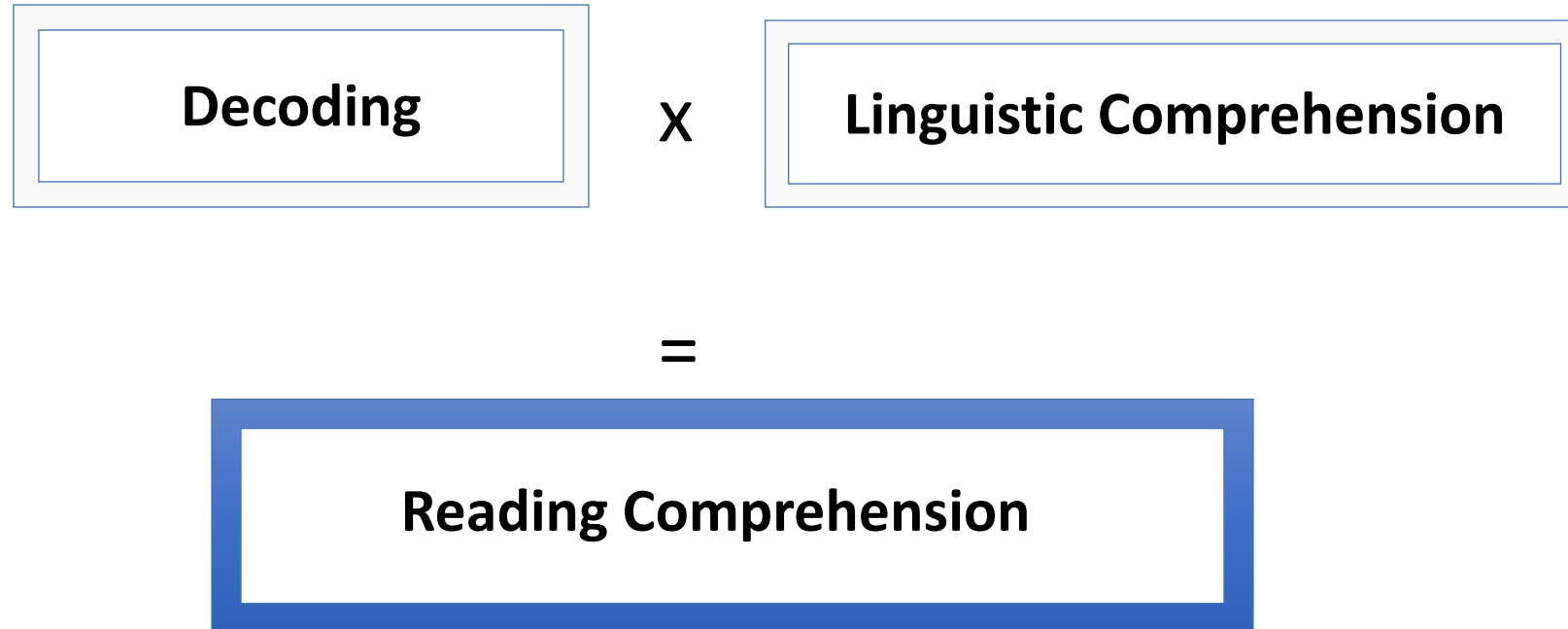
*Reading comprehension is not a single entity that can be explained by a unified cognitive model.*

*Instead, it is the orchestrated product of a set of linguistic and cognitive processes operating on text and interacting with background knowledge, features of the text, and the purpose and goals of the reading situation.*

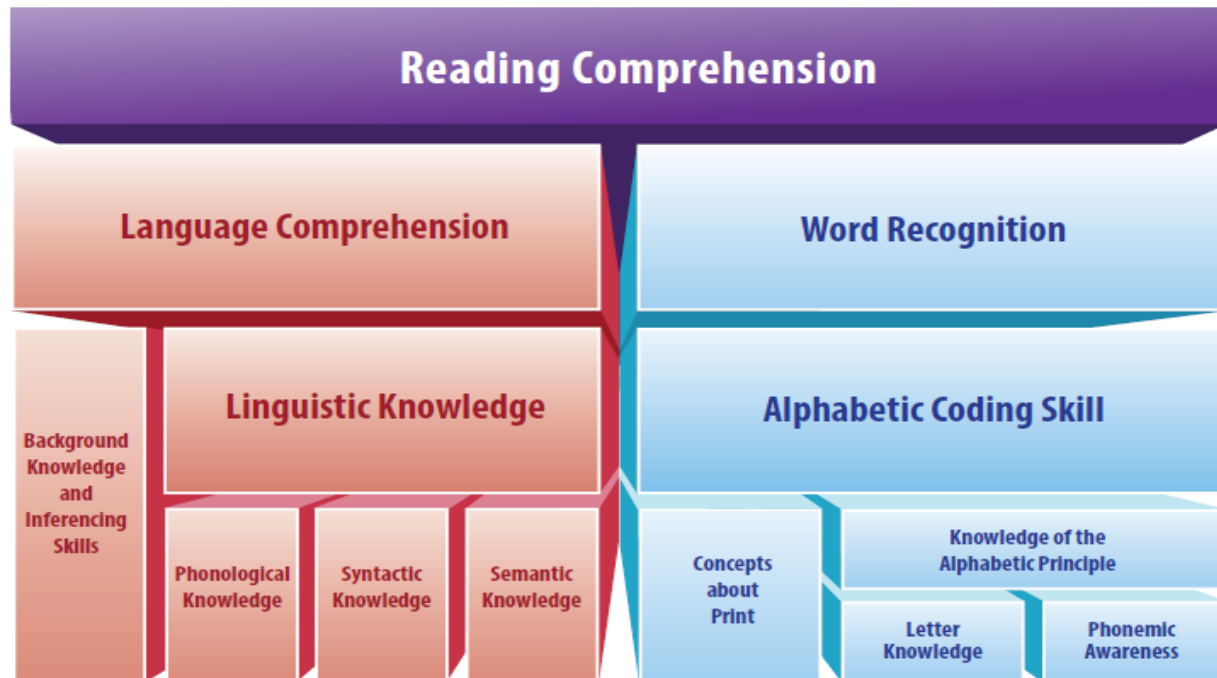
Castles et al, 2018

# Proficient Reading & The Simple View

Gough & Tunmer, 1986



## Cognitive Foundations of Reading

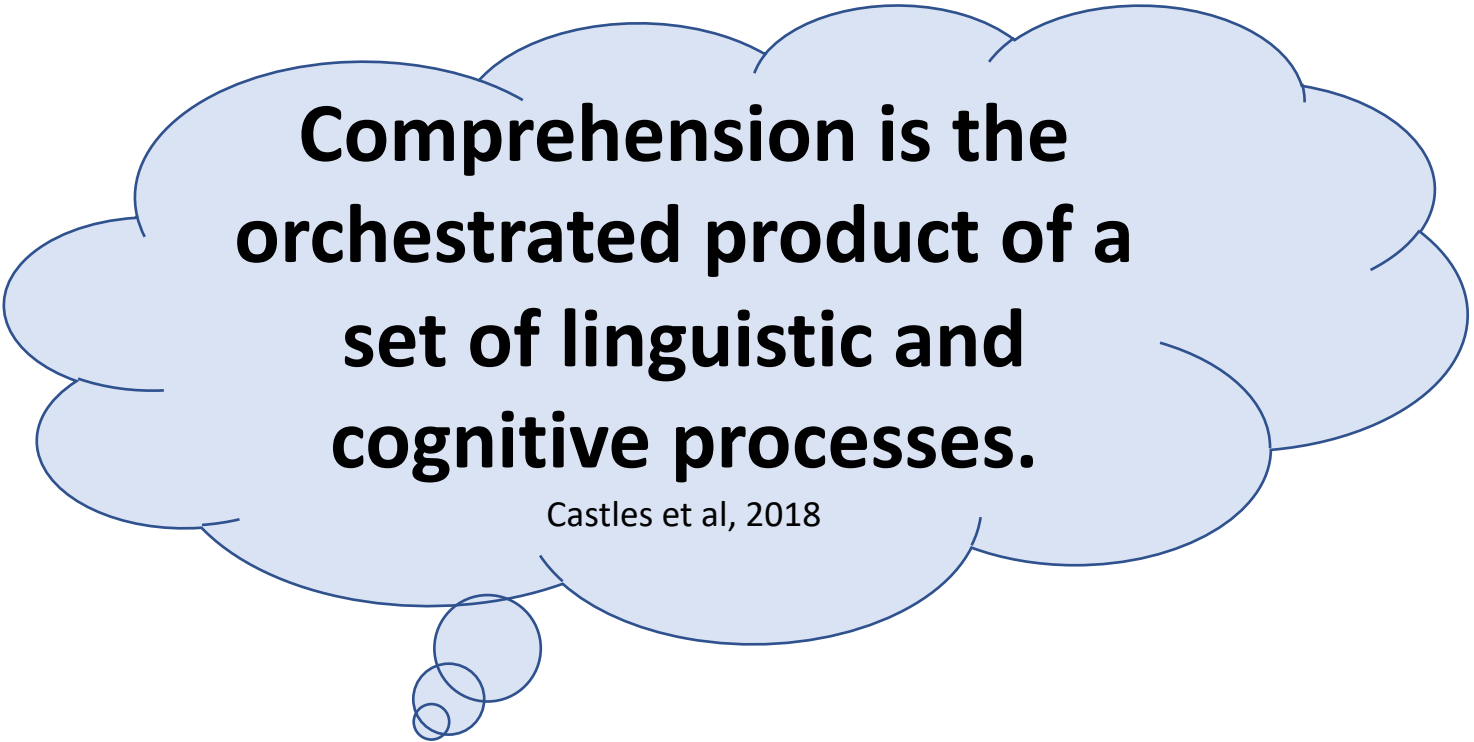


Cognitive Foundations for Reading Acquisition  
Hoover & Tunmer, 2020

*“The ultimate goal of reading is comprehension: for the reader to reconstruct the mental world of the writer. As skilled readers, this usually feels pretty effortless and comprehension flows naturally as we read along. This sense of ease is misleading, however, as it belies the complexity of what we do as we read, even when a text is simple and straightforward....*

Nation, 2019





**Comprehension is the  
orchestrated product of a  
set of linguistic and  
cognitive processes.**

Castles et al, 2018

**Is your instructional approach product focused,  
process focused or both?**

## Quick Check:

### Comprehension Products?

*indicators of what the reader knows  
and understands after reading is completed.*

### Comprehension Processes?

*The **ultimate** goal of comprehension or product is an **overall understanding** of text, a mental model, that is foundational to learning.*



Antonio-first grade  
*I am Enough*  
**What did you learn from the girl in this book?**

Jermaine-sixth grade  
*The Founding of American Democracy*  
**Why did the Founding Fathers have to compromise?**

Will-third grade  
*Dear Benjamin Banneker*  
**Was Benjamin an activist? Why or why not?**

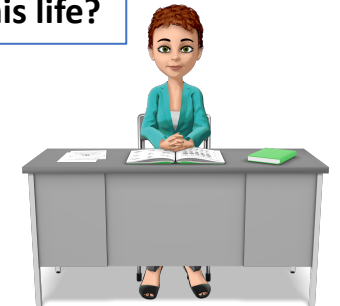
Elsa-seventh grade  
*A Long Walk to Water*  
**In what ways is this a story about survival?**



Kayla-fifth grade  
*The One & Only Ivan*  
**What did you learn about yourself from Ivan?**

Gerauldo-8th grade  
*Stalin: A Brutal Legacy*  
**Why was Stalin fearful for his life?**

**Standards**



# English Language Arts Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.



## Products

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

## Quick Check:

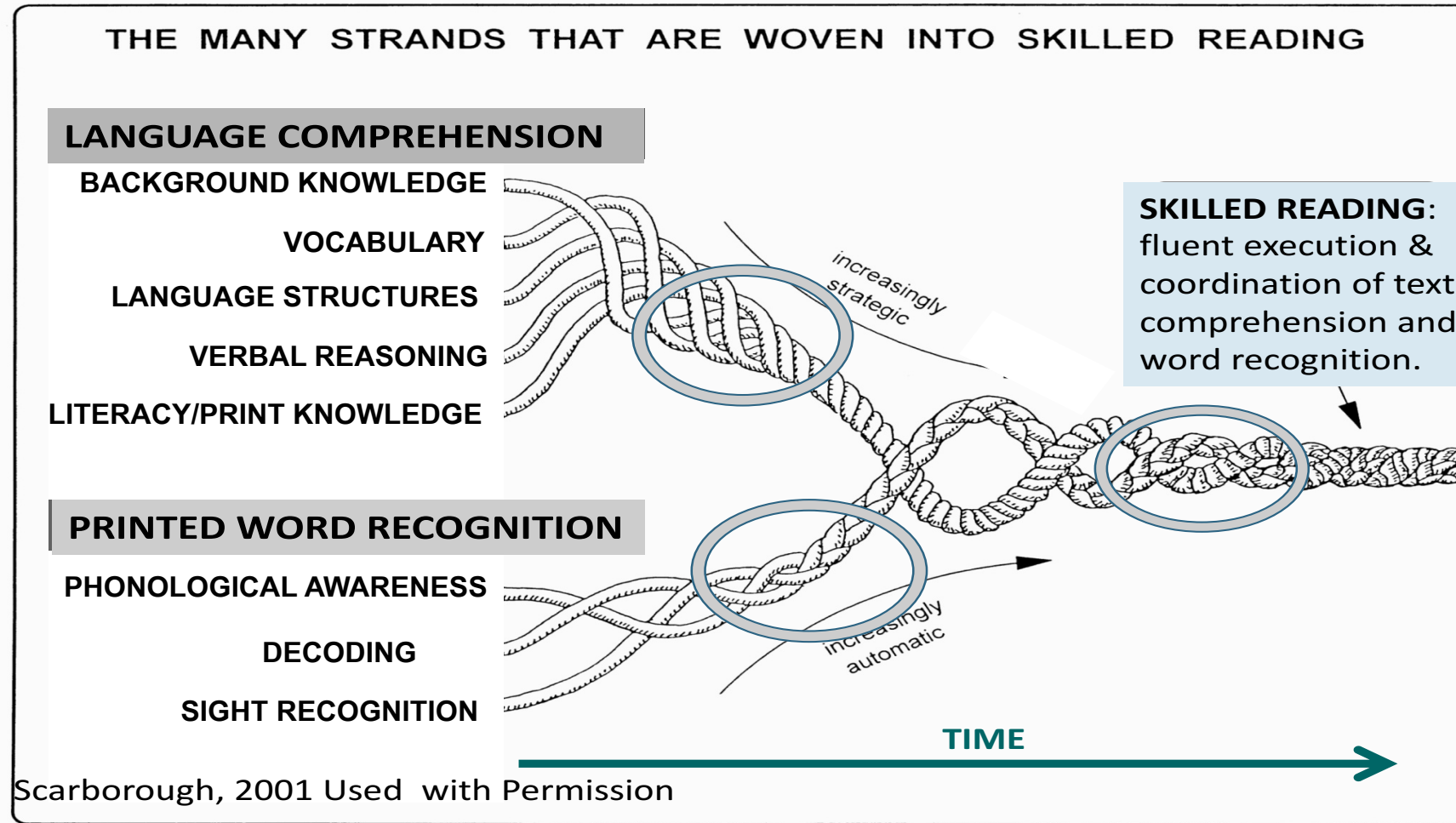
### Comprehension Products?

*indicators of what the reader knows  
and understands after reading is completed.*

### Comprehension Processes?

*those cognitive and language activities by  
which the reader arrives at those products.*

# The Language Processes & Skills



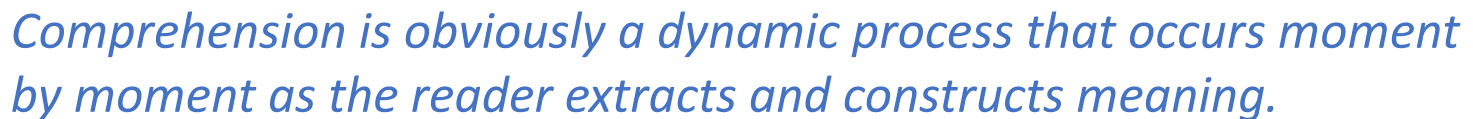
# Comprehension of written text involves processing language at many different levels...

*At the word level, the reader must decode individual words . . . **access meaning** of the words they hear or read.*

*At the sentence level, the comprehender needs to work out the **syntactic structure and sense of each sentence**. Simply deriving the meanings of individual words and sentences is insufficient.*

*In order to construct a mental model of the text, the comprehender needs to **integrate information from different sentences** to establish local coherence and to incorporate background knowledge and ideas (retrieved from long term memory) **to make sense of the details that are implicit within the text**.*

*Oakhill & Cain, 2007*





*Individuals with reading problems in reading comprehension that are not attributable to poor word recognition have comprehension problems that are general to language comprehension rather than specific to reading.*

Spencer, Quinn & Wagner, 2014

✓ *Integration and inference making-*

*the ability to integrate sentences within a text.*

*the ability to integrate information in the text with general knowledge.*

✓ *Comprehension monitoring.*

✓ *Knowledge and use of story structure.*

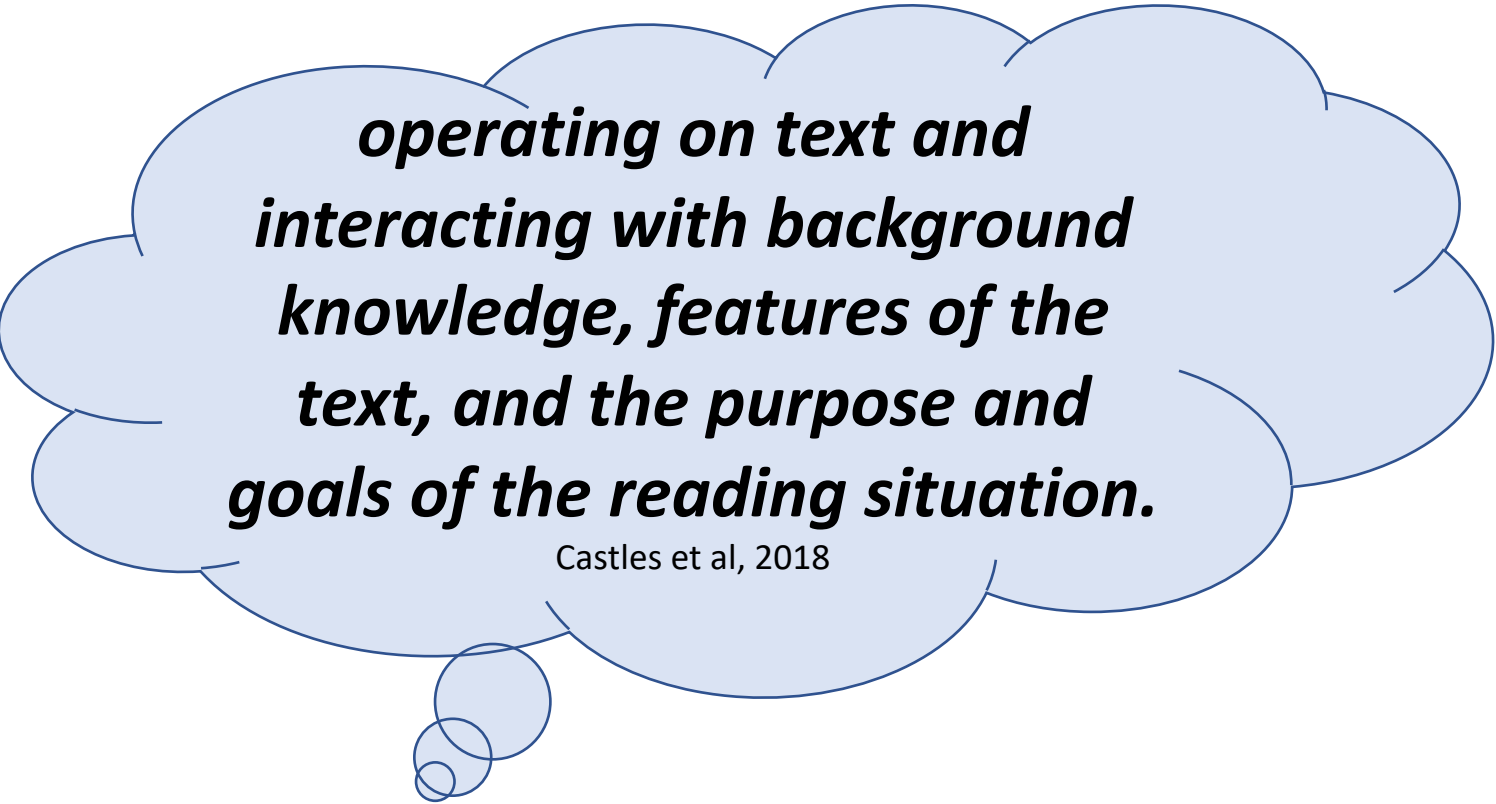
Cain, 2009

*...When a child is repeatedly unsuccessful in comprehending texts that he/she has read, this suggests reading difficulties at the processing level. These difficulties can manifest themselves in various ways: failure to recall the main points of a story, failure to answer literal and/or inferential questions, failure to complete the actual reading of the text, and so on.*

Kendeou et al, 2014

*Multiple assessment formats and practices focus on student outcomes or products. Determining effectiveness of instruction at classroom and system levels is important. It is educators' understanding of essential processes, however, that should provide direction for instruction and intervention for critical skills. Informed educators understand the difference as well as the importance of delivering instruction that focuses on developing necessary language and cognitive processes.*

Hennessey 2020



***operating on text and  
interacting with background  
knowledge, features of the  
text, and the purpose and  
goals of the reading situation.***

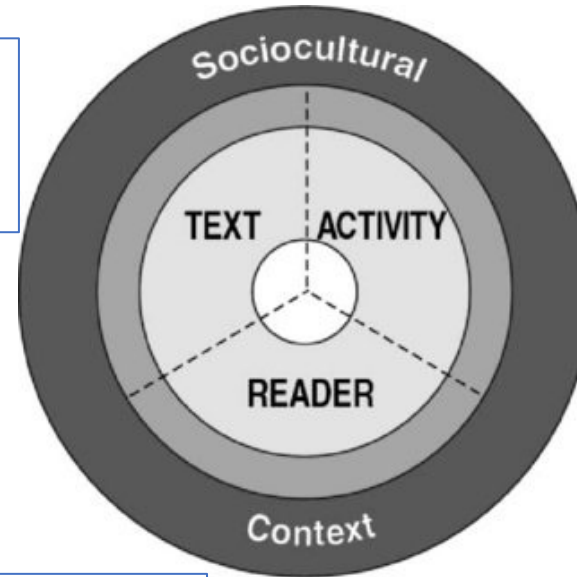
Castles et al, 2018

***What do you know about the role of the reader, text, task  
in comprehension?***

# The Rand Reading Study Group Report Heuristic, 2002

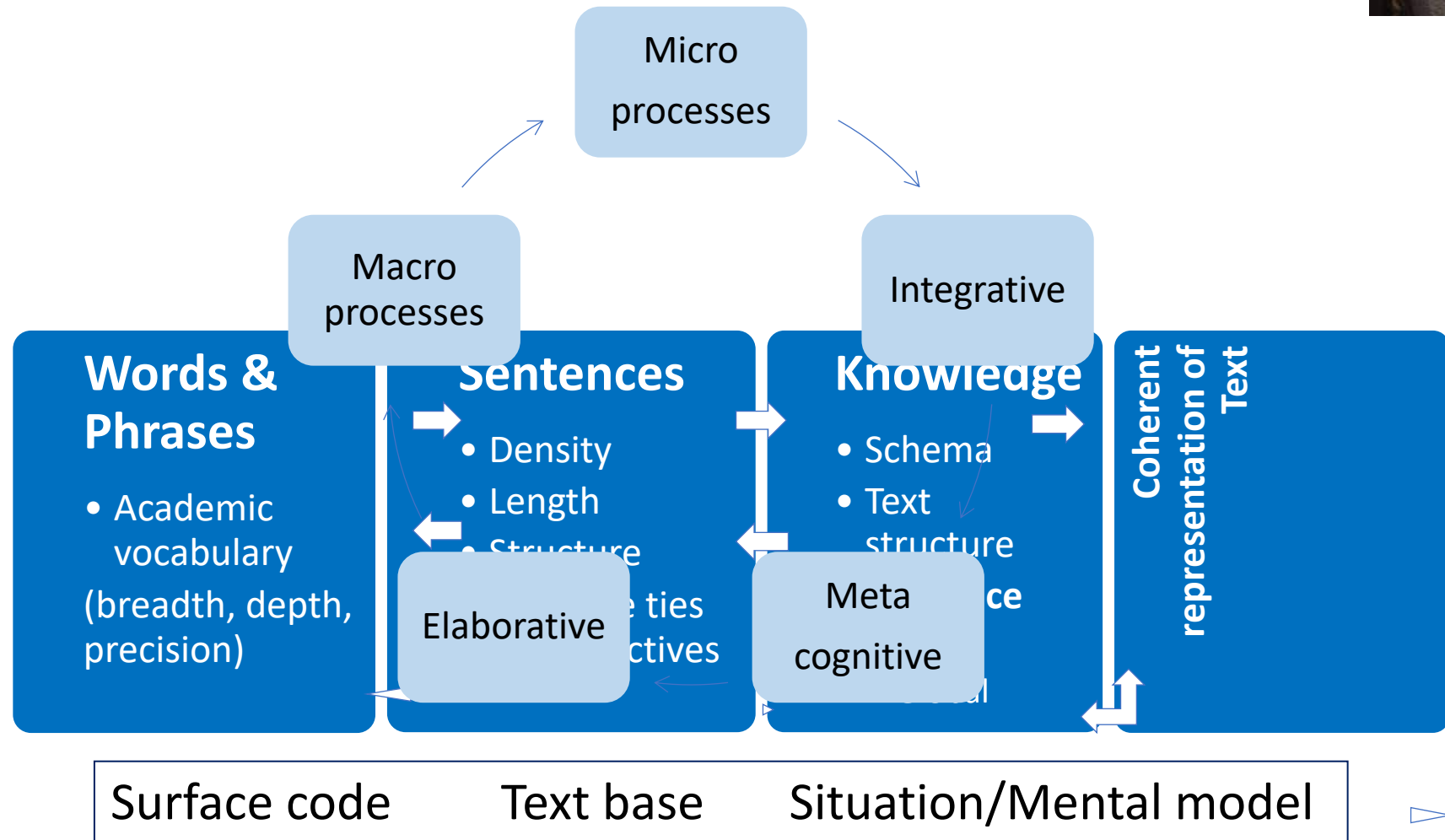
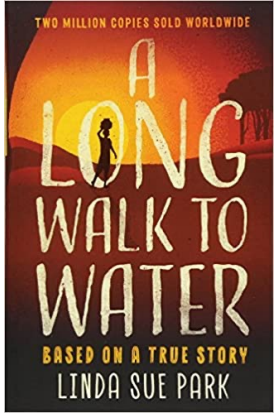
*Readers adjust to the purpose or task  
e.g. skimming versus studying.*

Text difficulty varies based on  
content, the vocabulary ,  
linguistic structure, and genre.



*Comprehenders bring varied cognitive  
capacities, levels of motivation, various  
types of knowledge.*

*Broad context includes the  
the classroom learning environment.*



*Skilled readers use both language and cognitive processes to integrate successive units of meaning at the surface and text base.*

*This is necessary for constructing a situation or mental model of the text.*

*The mental model is the reader's overall understanding of the situation expressed in the text. The reader stores this in memory and hopefully, accesses it for future application.*

*Reading comprehension is not a single entity that can be explained by a unified cognitive model.*

*Instead, it is the orchestrated product of a set of linguistic and cognitive processes operating on text and interacting with background knowledge, features of the text, and the purpose and goals of the reading situation.*

Castles et al, 2018

**The complexity of  
comprehension-  
what's your mental  
model?**





**Based on the science,  
what could a blueprint for  
comprehension instruction  
include?  
What are the  
components?**



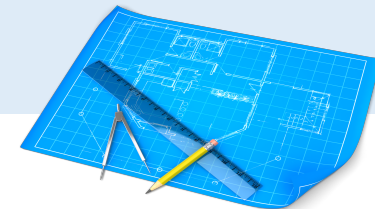
***Let's honor what we know and do while committing  
to continuing what is effective and to changing  
course when the science tells us we should.***

*Consider the context, create the conditions....*

# A Blueprint for Instruction

- A master plan, based in the science, that addresses both process and product demands.
- Organizes and scaffolds the teacher's preparation of a text for varied purposes.
- Calls for the use of evidence informed strategies and activities for process and product.
- Allows for flexibility based on text, the student and context.
- Acknowledges the metacognitive nature of teaching.

Hennessey, 2020



# Blueprint for Comprehension Instruction

## PREPARING FOR INSTRUCTION CRITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF TEXT

What do you want students to know and understand after reading the text? What are the critical concepts and understandings—big ideas you want your students to acquire?

## PURPOSE FOR READING TEXT

## TEXT READING VOCABULARY

What is the purpose for reading?  
Which ones will you incidentally-on-purpose  
use in expressive language activities?  
What word learning strategies?

## LANGUAGE STRUCTURES (Phrases, Clauses, Sentence Comprehension)

What language structures are difficult for your students?  
How and when will you teach students  
to work with these?

## KNOWLEDGE • Text Structure • Background Knowledge

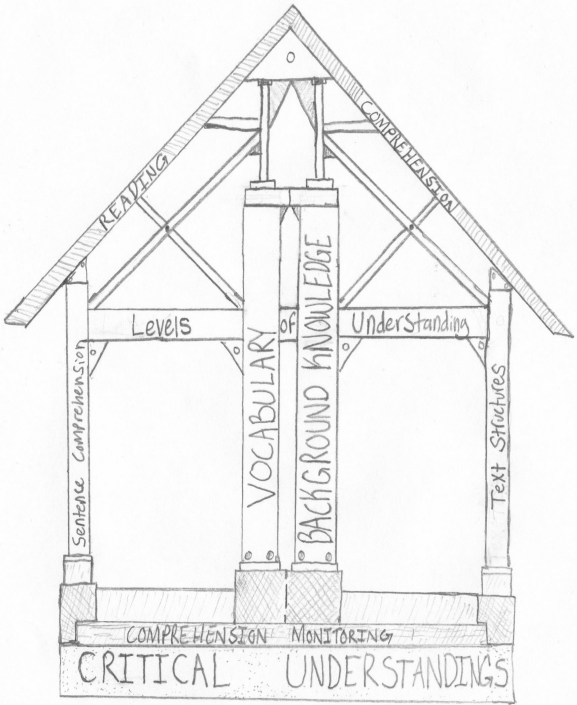
How will you teach students the purpose, features,  
and structure to use the structure to understand  
the text? How and when will you teach  
students to work with the text?

## LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING AND INFERENCE

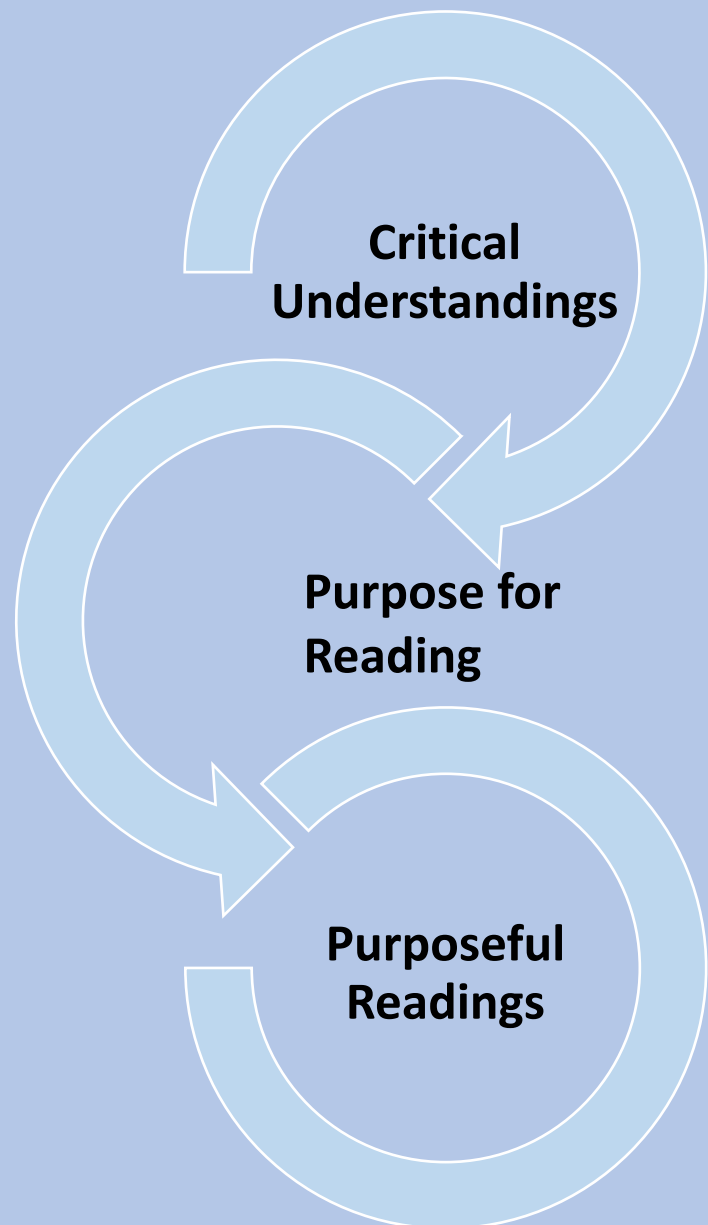
What levels of understanding, including the  
inference, will you directly teach students to use?

## EXPRESSION OF UNDERSTANDING

What strategies and activities will you use for students to demonstrate understanding at different levels,  
during and after reading?  
How will you support their oral and written expression of understanding?



Will Wagner 01/01/2020



# Preparing for Using the Blueprint

*What do you want your students to know and understand after reading text?*

*The big ideas-the critical understandings?*

*What are the content goals and objectives?*

*What are literacy skills goals and objectives?*

*What readings serve your purpose?*

Hennessy, 2020

*...a synthesis of what  
individuals should understand  
—not just know or do—  
as a result of reading/studying  
a particular content area.*

*...the thread that links units,  
lessons, and year to year  
teaching.*

*What is the essential knowledge base  
we want to develop within  
and across grades and disciplines?*

*Are there enduring concepts and  
understandings that we want  
our students to have?*

*What essential questions do  
we want our students to answer?*

**What do you want your students to  
know and understand?**

*Too often the emphasis of a reading lesson  
is so much on the reading skill or strategy  
that the opportunity to expand children's  
understanding of their world is lost...reading lessons  
need to have double outcomes-an improvement in  
reading ability and an increased knowledge about whatever was read.*

Shanahan, 2017

*Enduring or **critical understandings** refer to the **big ideas**, the important understandings, that we want students to 'get inside of' and retain after they've forgotten many of the details. . . . Enduring understandings go beyond discrete facts or skills, focus on **larger concepts, principles, or processes**.*

**Purpose: Literacy & Content Goals**

*There are two key and core goals in designing instruction for beginning readers. On one hand, we want to teach first graders to read print on their own. To this end, the earliest texts need to be easy enough to be penetrable by readers and to progress by some design to strengthen and expand [the] beginning reader's independence with print. On the other hand, we want to help young students to develop the language knowledge, literary appreciation and mode of thought to make reading that is productive and rewarding.*

Adams, 2009

## **Choosing Purposeful Readings**

*There is little excuse for not using reading materials that expose children to classical literature (e.g., fairy tales, Goodnight Moon, Where the Wild Things Are), or to rich content about geography, history, science, social science, and other subjects. Just because it is a reading lesson, there is no reason that the content of the texts one is practicing reading with can't be rich in information.*

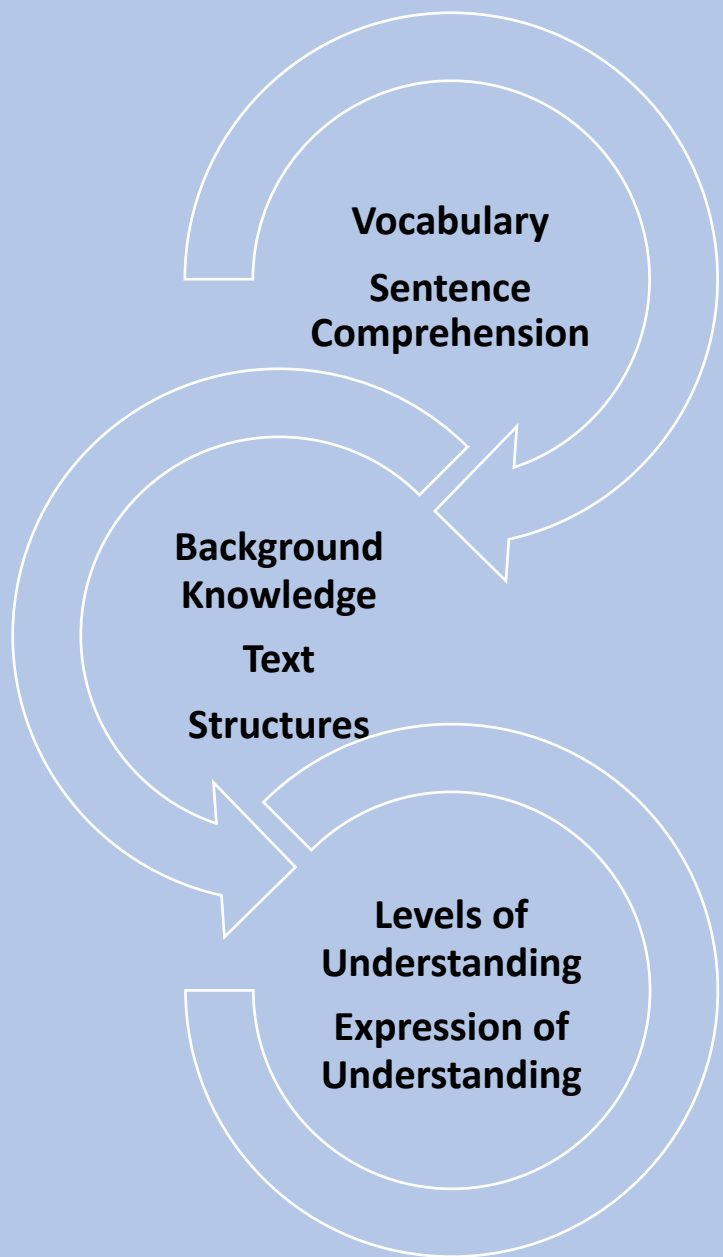
Shanahan, 2017



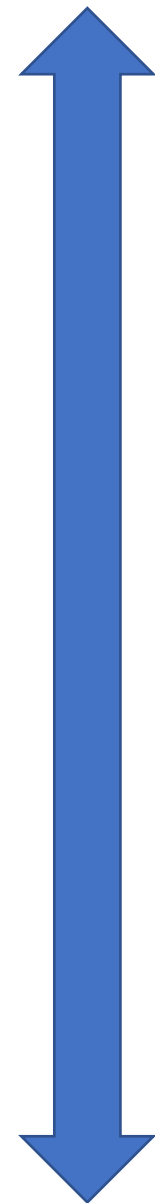
- ✓ *Do your readings support the development of knowledge?*
- ✓ *Do your readings provide opportunities to develop necessary language processes and skills?*
- ✓ *Do your texts provide opportunities to develop and apply academic language skills to text ?*
- ✓ *Do your readings represent different genre, disciplines, the interests and experiences of your readers, are culturally responsive?*
- ✓ *Have you considered access issues for struggling readers?*

Hennessy, 2020

**Quick Reflect: Purposeful Readings!**



*Before, During & After Instruction: Strategies & Activities*



*Comprehension Monitoring*

# Preparing for Text Reading



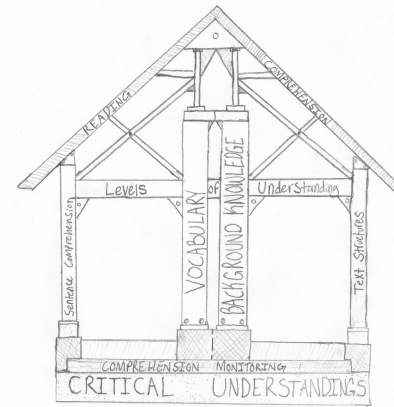
Before, During & After Instruction: Strategies & Activities

*Explicit Instruction:  
Structured, Systematic and  
Scaffolded.*

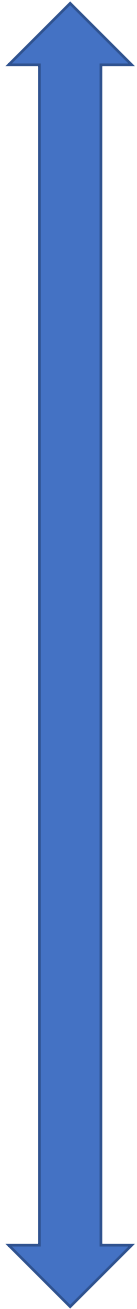
Archer & Hughes, 2011

*Whole Group, Small Group,  
Individual Instruction*

**Evidence based  
instructional routines,  
strategies and activities**



Comprehension Monitoring:  
Does the text make sense?



Why?	So, Fix It Up!
Word meaning	<i>Think about using your independent word learning strategies (dictionary, morphemes, context) to figure out what the word means.</i>
Sentence meaning	<i>Reread &amp; ask yourself:</i> <i>-where is the who or what and the do in the sentence?</i> <i>-what words are standing in for or substituting for important words in the sentences?</i>
Knowledge	<i>Think about what you know and make connections. Look up or ask for additional information about the topic.</i>
Paragraph/section meaning	<i>Reread the paragraph &amp; ask yourself:</i> <i>-what is this all about?</i>
Engagement	<i>Tell yourself to stop at the end of a section or page to:</i> <i>-summarize</i> <i>-annotate</i> <i>-visualize</i> <i>-question</i>

# Blueprint for Comprehension Instruction

## **PREPARING FOR INSTRUCTION** **CRITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF TEXT**

What do you want students to know and understand after reading the text? What are the critical concepts and understandings—big ideas you want your students to acquire?

## **PURPOSE FOR READING TEXT**

What are the content instructional goals and objectives?  
What are the literacy instructional goals and objectives?

## **TEXT READING** **VOCABULARY**

Which words will your students need to know? Which are worth knowing?  
Which ones will you intentionally target and directly teach? Which ones will you incidentally-on-purpose teach? How, when?  
Which words will you purposefully discuss, incorporate into expressive language activities?  
How and when will you teach and foster the use of independent word learning strategies?

## **LANGUAGE STRUCTURES** **(Phrases, Clauses, Sentence Comprehension)**

Are there phrases, clauses, sentence structures that may be difficult for your students?  
How and when will you directly teach sentence comprehension? How and when will you teach students to work with challenging sentences?  
How will you facilitate the integration of ideas within and between sentences, e.g., the use of cohesive ties and connectives? How and when will you teach students to work with these?

## **KNOWLEDGE** - Text Structure - Background Knowledge

How is the text organized? How and when will you directly teach students the purpose, features, and signal words of different genres? How will you teach students to use the structure to understand purpose? To organize and express their understanding?  
  
What background knowledge is critical to understanding the text? How and when will you teach students to access and build their knowledge and integrate it with the text?

## **LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING AND INFERENCE**

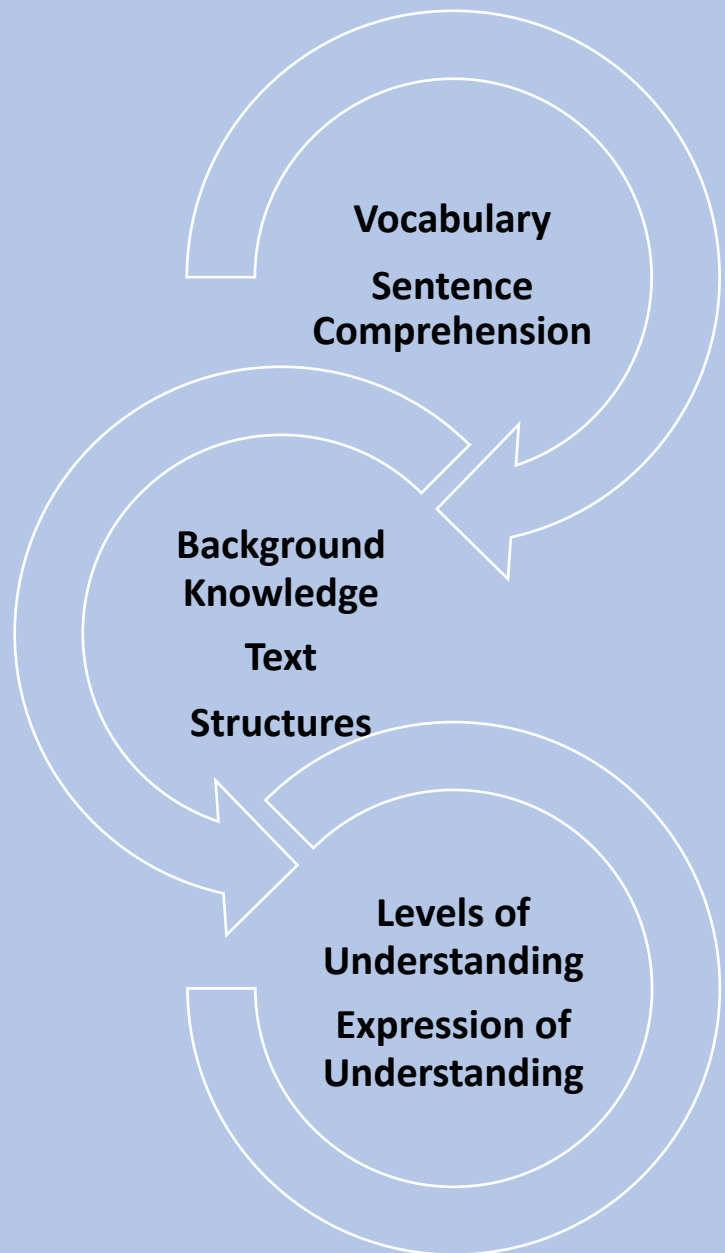
How will you teach students to construct meaning at different levels of understanding, including the surface code, textbase, and mental model of text? How will you directly teach students to use inference to integrate ideas and connect background knowledge to the text?  
How will you support your students' deep comprehension of text?

## **EXPRESSION OF UNDERSTANDING**

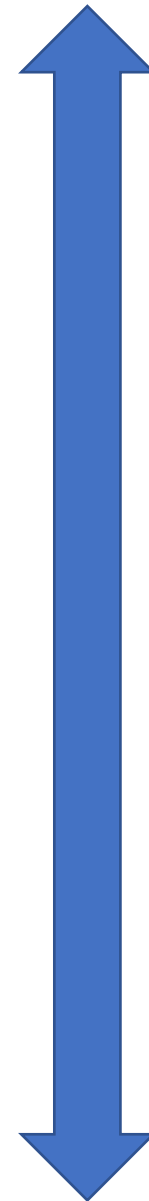
What strategies and activities will you use for students to demonstrate understanding at different levels of comprehension?

Before, During, and After Reading: Strategies and Activities

Comprehension Monitoring



Before, During & After Instruction: Strategies & Activities

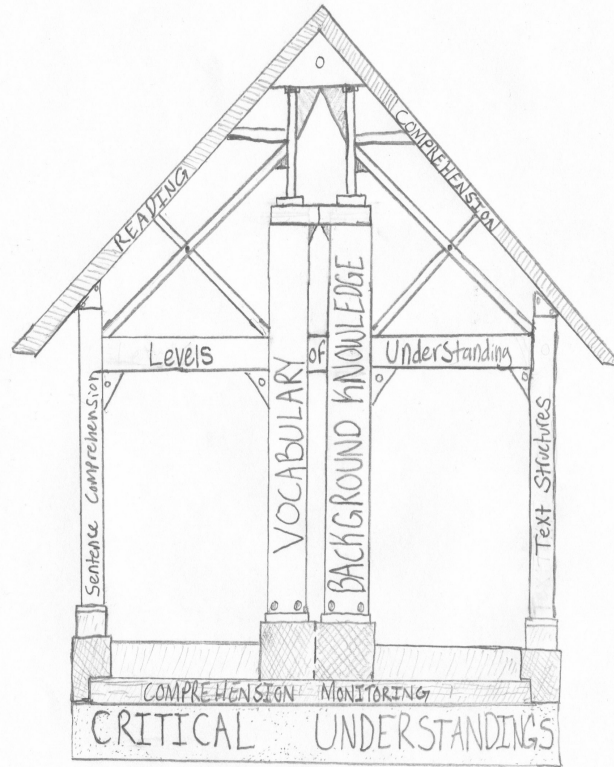


Comprehension Monitoring

# Preparing for Text Reading

*What critical competencies and instructional approaches, strategies, and activities do you consider in designing and delivering comprehension instruction?*



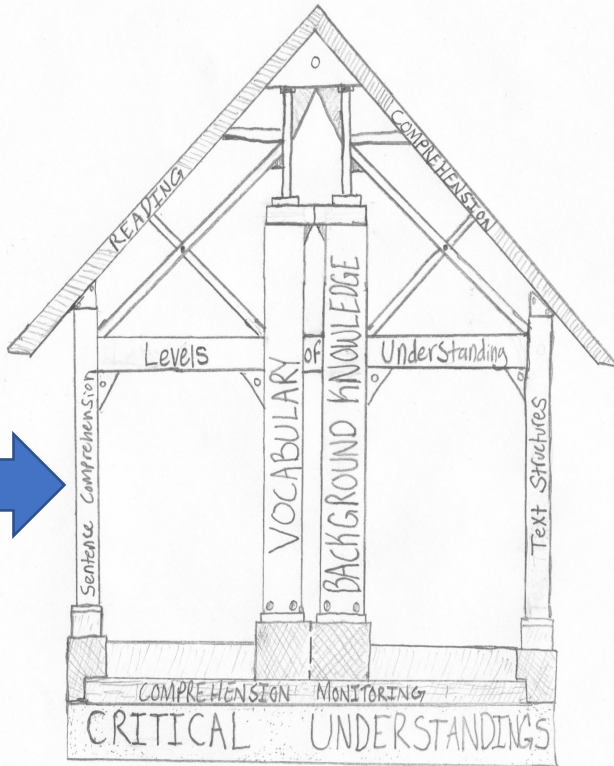


*Work in concert with each other!!!*

Will Wagner 01/01/2020

## Constructing the Comprehension House





*The sentence lies at the heart of communicating thought and meaning, whether whether you are the writer or the reader. The rules of our language, syntax and grammar, allow for the creation of an infinite number of sentences that serve as the “worker bees of text.”*

Scott, 2004

## The Comprehension House



## THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

### LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE  
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY  
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES  
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING  
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

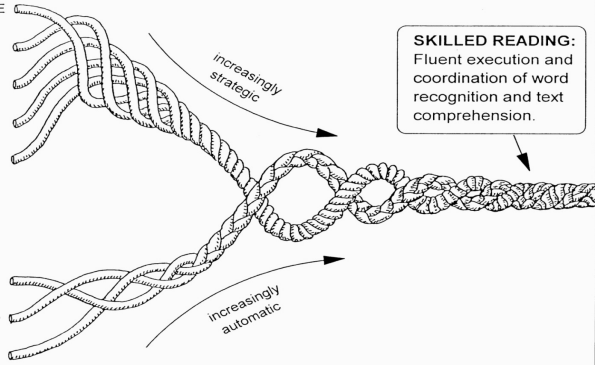
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE  
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

### WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS  
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING (alphabetic principle,  
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION  
(of familiar words)



# The Semantics-Syntax Connection

*When skilled readers come to text,  
they recognize and retrieve the meaning  
of individual words and work out the syntactic  
structure  
and sense of the sentence.*

Cain & Oakhill, 2009

# Syntax is a vehicle for conveying meaning...

*Comprehending sentences involves extracting the meaning of interconnected sets of propositions (ideas) that, in turn, depend on semantics and the syntax used within the text.*

*Syntax explicitly conveys information about how the word meanings should be integrated into a proposition so that the reader does not have to infer who did what to whom.*



*A sentence is...*

# The Blueprint & Sentence Comprehension

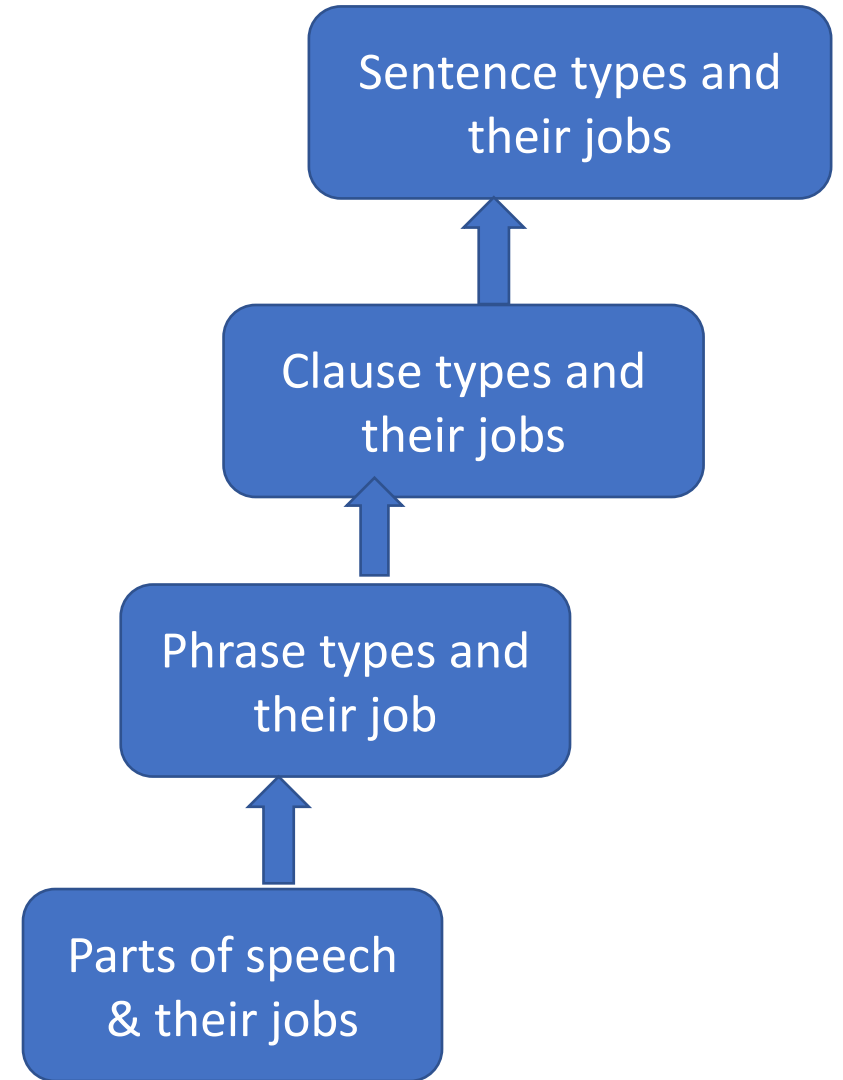
Are there parts of speech, phrases, clauses, sentence structures that may be difficult for your students?

How and when will you directly teach sentence comprehension?

How and when will you teach students to work with these structures?

How will you facilitate the integration of ideas e.g., the use of cohesive ideas and connectives? How and when will you teach students to work with these?

Hennessy, 2020



Intentional on Purpose (direct)	Incidental on Purpose (indirect)
<b>Grammar Based Deconstruction Activities</b> -Parts of Speech -Phrases & Clauses -Sentences	Reading Experiences -Shared Reading -Group & Independent reading -The Fluency Connection
<b>Sentence Based Activities</b> -Writing Connections -Sentence Combining & Expansion -Anagrams -Visual Representations Pictures Diagramming	Oral Language Experiences -Teacher Talk -Student Talk -Student Teacher Talk
<b>Cohesive Device Activities</b> -Cohesive ties -Connectives	The Writing Connection ©2019 Nancy Hennessy

# What is the function?

Question?

Directly Teach

Parts of Speech-Examples:

Pronoun-she

Noun-mummy

Verb-found

Adjective-powerful

Adverb-finally

Preposition-above

Conjunction-as

# Practice & Process: Role or Parts of Speech

Quick Sort:  
Word Cards & Structured  
Question Organizer

rights	colonists	presidential	government	allowed
democracy	solve	disagreed	compromises	equally
central	each	again	interprets	protect
carefully	balance	unfair	branch	federalism

The Founding of American Democracy

<i>Who/what?</i>	<i>Is/was doing?</i>	<i>Which one, what kind, how many?</i>	<i>When, where, how?</i>

Intentional on Purpose (direct)	Incidental on Purpose (indirect)
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<b>Cohesive Device Activities</b> -Cohesive ties -Connectives	The Writing Connection ©2019 Nancy Hennessy



# Practice & Process Writing Connections

The archaeologists discovered a mystery (where & when)?

The Founding Fathers had to compromise (why?)

Stalin controlled his people (how?)

Directly Teach & Scaffold with Simple, Compound, Complex Sentence Frames.

Intentional on Purpose (direct)	Incidental on Purpose (indirect)
<b>Grammar Based Deconstruction Activities</b> -Parts of Speech -Phrases & Clauses -Sentences	Reading Experiences -Shared Reading -Group & Independent reading -The Fluency Connection
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<b>Cohesive Device Activities</b> -Cohesive ties -Connectives	The Writing Connection ©2019 Nancy Hennessy

Cohesive ties-syntactic and semantic elements  
are necessary for bridging & integrating  
information within and between sentences  
and paragraphs.



Cohesive Ties



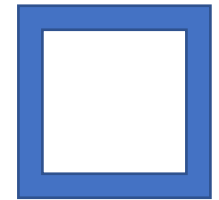
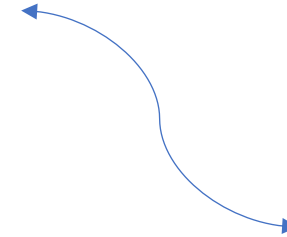
Connectives

Inference?

Types	The One & Only Ivan-Katherine Applegate
<b>Pronoun referents-author uses a pronoun to refers to a word found before or after in the text.</b>	People call <b>me</b> the Freeway Gorilla. The Ape at Exit 8. The One & Only Ivan, Silverback Gorilla. Those names are not <b>mine</b> . I am Ivan, just Ivan, the only Ivan.....
<b>Substitution/synonyms-author replaces a word or group of words in the text.</b>	People call the <b>Freeway Gorilla. The Ape</b> at Exit 8. <b>The One &amp; Only Ivan, Silverback Gorilla.</b> Those names are not mine. I am Ivan, just Ivan, the only Ivan.....
<b>Repetition-author repeats a noun or phrase in text.</b> <div data-bbox="588 883 1182 1021"> <b>Directly teach</b> </div>	People call <u>me</u> the Freeway Gorilla. The Ape at Exit 8. The One & Only Ivan, Silverback Gorilla. Those names are not <u>mine</u> . <u>I</u> am <b>Ivan</b> , just <b>Ivan</b> , the only <b>Ivan</b> .....
<b>Ellipsis- author omits one or more words</b> ©2020, Nancy Hennessy	You tell me-which ways are more fun....

## Instructional Routine

- ✓ *Identify targeted words and phrases in the text.*
- ✓ *Frame a question or task.*
- ✓ *Search for clues or connections.*
- ✓ *Make the connections visually or verbally.*



Cohesive Ties & Connectives

# Pronoun Referents

*Teacher identifies targeted word or phrase: 20 something woman.  
Teacher frames a question or task.  
Teacher searches for clues & makes the connection.*

*Where did this **20-something woman** fit in? Was she a queen? A high priestess? A warrior princess? One thing's for sure: This Moche VIP would have received star treatment. When visiting her people, servants would have carried her high above the crowds on a litter, a special platform reserved for only the most elite figures. Says anthropologist John Verano: "Her gold objects would have shimmered so brightly you could have seen them from miles away.*

**Model**

*Mystery of the Tattooed Mummy*

Kristen Rattini, National Geographic Kids

# Synonyms, Substitutions

*Teacher identifies targeted word or phrase: 20 something woman.  
Teacher frames a question or task.  
Teacher searches for clues & makes the connection.*

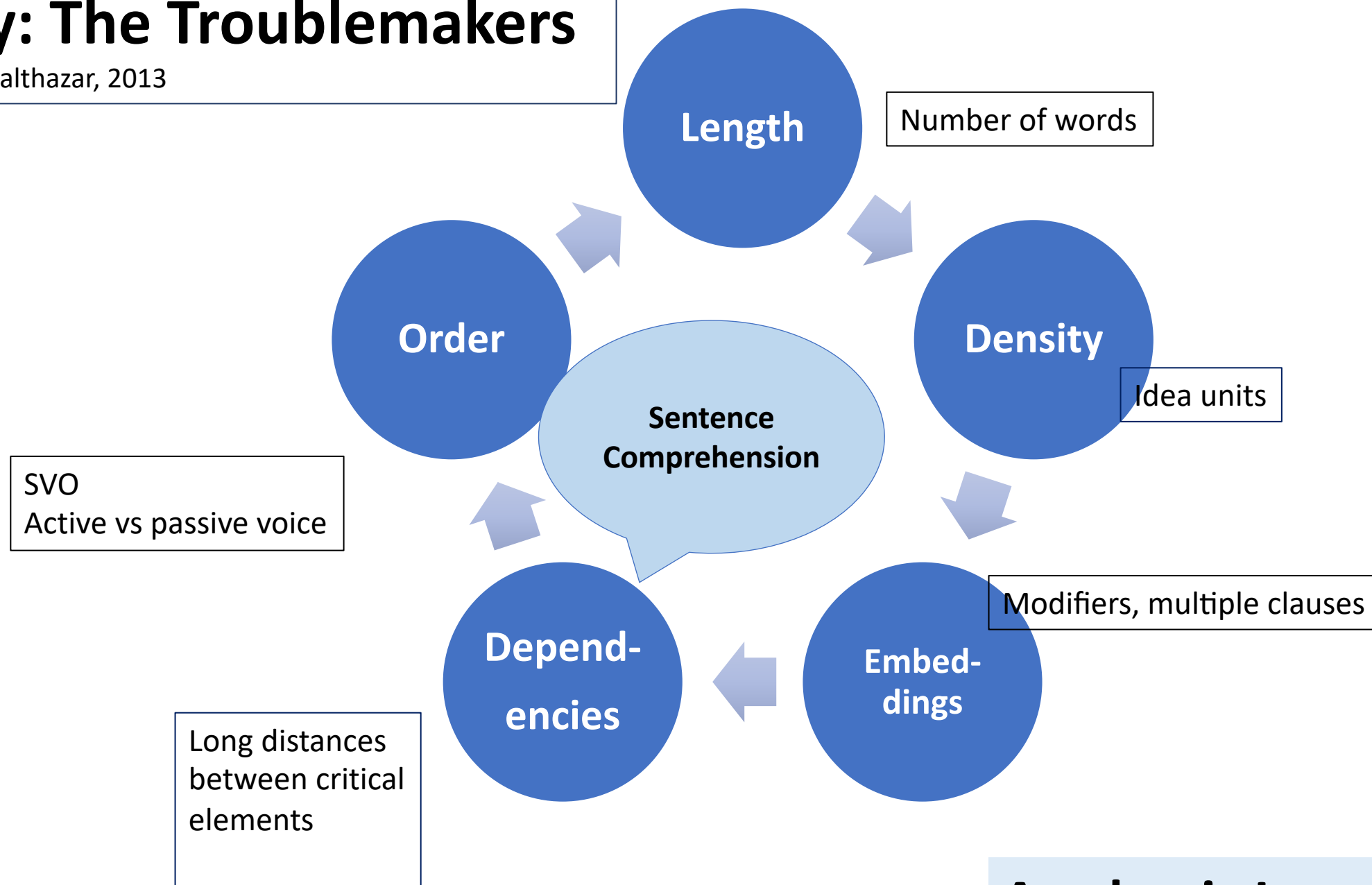
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*Mystery of the Tattooed Mummy*

Kristen Rattini, National Geographic Kids

# Why: The Troublemakers

Scott & Balthazar, 2013



**Academic Language**



1. *When the grasshopper found itself dying of hunger, it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer.*

*The Ant & The Grasshopper*

2. *As they unwrapped the bundled layers, hundreds of treasures were revealed, including gold nose rings and necklaces, sparkling crowns, and huge war clubs usually reserved for the Moche's greatest warriors.*

*The Mystery of the Tattooed Mummy*

3. *The Founding Fathers are a group of men who were key figures in initiating America's independence from Britain and establishing American government and early international relations.*

*The Founding of American Democracy*

4. *He already knew the lesson which is why he was letting his mind wander down the road ahead of his body.*

*The Long Walk to Water*

**Based on the science,  
what would your blueprint  
for comprehension  
instruction of your  
student's text include?**



Affirm

Acknowledge

Act

Appreciate



Our students have the right to read with meaning and we have a responsibility to teach them how. Learning is not just the work of our students but ours as well.

*Nancy Lewis Hennessy*

**CRITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS**

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