



TEACHING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES, PART I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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Teaching Comprehension Strategies, Part I: Introduction and Overview



Think back to your school days: did your teacher show you *how* to make sense of what you read? For most people, the answer would be “no”.

After reading a text, your teachers might have *asked* you what it meant and told you whether your response was right or wrong. They might have tagged students who didn’t understand what they read as “poor readers” and asked them to “read again” or “pay more attention”. Or they might have simply *explained* the meaning of the text without showing you how they arrived at that understanding.

Things have not changed very much since you were in school — similar practices seem to be prevalent in most Indian classrooms even today (Menon et al., 2017, Sah, 2009, as cited in Sinha, 2018). While teachers use these approaches with good intent, these don’t improve students’ comprehension skills much. At best, students might understand the specific text discussed. But without teaching the “how-to” of comprehension, these practices don’t help students make sense of *new* texts. Worse still, students might become passive and entirely dependent on the teacher for comprehension (Sinha, 2018).

What does this “how-to” involve? Research conducted in the United States has demonstrated that people who comprehend texts well (“good readers”) use several *strategies* to actively construct meaning as they read (Pressley, 2001). For example, they set goals for reading a

text, preview the text before reading it, make predictions about the upcoming text, associate new information in the text to what they already know, and so on¹. On the other hand, younger or less-skilled readers don't use these strategies, or they don't use them consistently. Hence, they are unable to understand texts well.

It is easier for a teacher to “explain” the meaning of a text to students. Menon et al. (2017) documented teachers painstakingly explaining the meaning of passages, sentence by sentence to their students. Despite these efforts, students were not able to independently make sense of texts they read.

In teaching comprehension strategies, teachers don't explain the text at all to the students; they show them ways to make sense of the text for themselves. This is far more effective in the long run than explaining texts. Research has demonstrated that comprehension strategies can be taught to all students. Even children who are not naturally good at meaning-making can learn how to learn, so long as we show them how.

To summarise, rather than assume that your students will pick up meaning making on their own, or that you need to explain the meaning of texts to them, you could teach them comprehension strategies. With direct teaching and multiple opportunities for guided practice, students can successfully learn to use these strategies and improve their comprehension.

A couple of important points before we proceed. Many teachers believe that children should be asked to focus on meaning-making only after they have learned to read *aksharas* and words. However, children are natural meaning-makers and are trying to make sense, from the earliest grades, of the stories and books you read out to them. Hence, it is important to focus on teaching comprehension from the early grades in a way that is suited to your students' level. It is also very important to teach comprehension as one part of a rich, balanced, comprehensive approach to early literacy in the classroom².

¹Illustration at the top by James Yang in American Educator's Spring 2012 issue. Retrieved from: <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Rosenshine.pdf>

² Read ELI's practitioner brief on comprehensive literacy here: http://eli.tiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Comprehensive_Literacy_Practitioner_Brief_12_PDF.pdf

ELI has put together two practitioner briefs on teaching comprehension strategies. Part I will provide an introduction and overview, while Part II will discuss how to conduct Think Alouds, in particular. This brief is Part I of the two-part series. It is further divided into two sections. Part A explains the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Duke & Pearson, 2009). Part B describes four important comprehension strategies, and provides activities teachers can use or adapt in classrooms. We conclude Part B with a table of suggested book titles which can be used by teachers in the Indian context to teach various comprehension strategies.

Part A: The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Comprehension strategies cannot be learned overnight, or by simply telling students to them. Teachers need to model the strategy, then guide students in how to use it, before expecting them to use it on their own. Duke and Pearson (2009) have described this as the Gradual Release of Responsibility model of comprehension instruction.

There are four identifiable aspects to this process (see Table 1).

Table 1

Introducing and Practising Comprehension Strategies

First	<p>Modelling the Strategy</p> <p>Teachers should introduce the strategy clearly to students and demonstrate its use. For example, a teacher could introduce students to the strategy of predicting, and could model it by asking questions like: “What do you think the story is about?”, “What do you think will happen next?”; or “How do you think the story will end?”</p>
Second	<p>Collaborative Use of Strategy</p> <p>After the strategy has been introduced and modelled, teachers and students should use it together. For example, during a read aloud, the teacher could encourage students to use a strategy she has already introduced in their reading. She could invite volunteers to identify critical points of the story where predictions would have been helpful to meaning-making.</p>

<p>Third</p>	<p>Guided Practice</p> <p>Even when students have understood the idea of using comprehension strategies, and are willing to use it, they need to be guided in the use of specific strategies when they read independently. Prompting students in learning when and where to use specific strategies is a long-term effort, and will need to be revisited over and over again. For example, consider a child struggling with reading a non-fiction text packed with information. The teacher could remind the child about strategies she has demonstrated, like summarising. She could help the child make predictions, ask questions. If the child were reading independently, the teacher could ask the child to mark the text with a pencil, adding questions marks where clarifications are needed, or underlining key words or phrases that will help them summarise the text.</p>
<p>Fourth</p>	<p>Independent Use of Strategy</p> <p>Over time, students will begin to use strategies independently. At this point, the teacher’s role is to observe the students and, if needed, to step in again to guide or model until students become confident in their use of the strategy.</p>

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model described in Table 1.

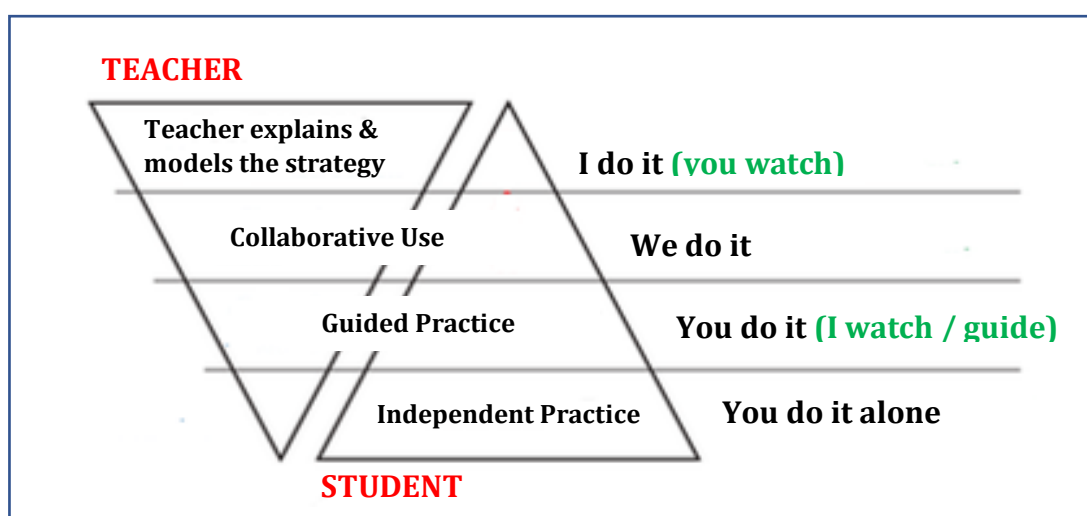


Figure 1. The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model for teaching comprehension. Adapted from www.literacycompanion.weebly.com

Part B: Strategies and Activities

This section will introduce you to a selection of four comprehension strategies that you could teach in the classroom. These are:

- Activating Prior Knowledge
- Prediction
- Visual Representation
- Summarising

Two other strategies, think aloud and questioning, will be taken up as separate briefs by ELI. The strategies described here are far from comprehensive. We have picked them because they can be easily and widely used to aid comprehension in classrooms. Once teachers understand the purpose and process of using these comprehension strategies, they can read up on others as needed³.

Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge refers to what a person *already knows*. Readers are in a position to make better sense of what they read when they bring what they already know about a topic to the text. No text can explain or describe everything that a reader needs to know to understand it.

Consider the sentence, “The village bazaar was crowded and smelled of hot samosas, and unwashed sweat.” The sentence might evoke a rich imagery for some of us. But what if the sentence is read by someone who has never seen a village bazaar, or someone who doesn’t know what a samosa is, or how it smells while being fried. Would they be able to make the same sense of the text that someone with rich prior knowledge does?

The more you know about a topic, the more you bring to the text, and therefore, the more you take away from it. Good readers continuously activate and monitor their prior knowledge while reading, whereas poorer readers often don’t. It is not just that poor readers may have read less widely, and therefore may have less prior knowledge on varied topics than good readers do.

³ For a more detailed description of comprehension strategies and activities see Duke & Pearson (2009) and Ellery (2009).

Even when they know something about a topic, poorer readers are less likely to refer to what they already know when they read a new text about it.

Therefore, teachers need to constantly model how they bring prior knowledge to texts that they are reading, and must teach students to monitor their use of prior knowledge. To teach students to use prior knowledge, teachers should use books easily relatable to the students, where the reader has multiple opportunities to bring in her experiences and knowledge to the text. Refer to Table 4 for suggestions of books which can be used to model activating prior knowledge in classrooms.

Let's see how this can be done through the book *The Sea in a Bucket* (Eklavya, 2013; see Figure 2). This book attempts to tell the reader from where and how water comes into our homes. Since water is used in all households, everyone can relate to book. Before reading the book, the teacher could have conversations that try to build on the child's prior knowledge, by asking questions such as:

- What do you use water for?
- Where does the water in your house come from?
- Does the water in your house and school come from the same place?

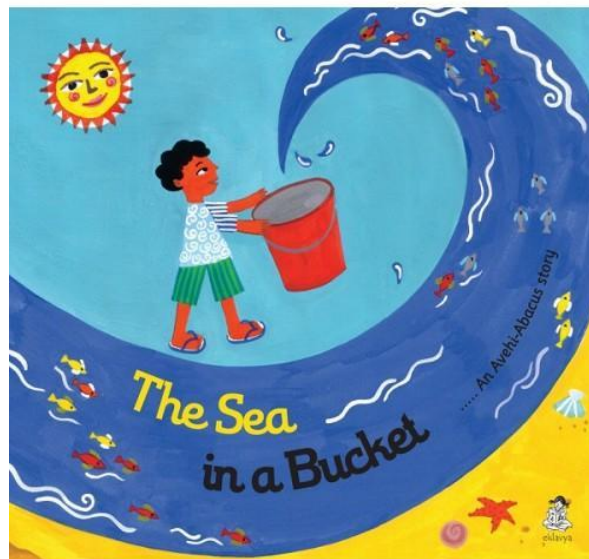


Figure 2. *The Sea in a Bucket... An Avehi Abacus Story.* Eklavya Publications, 2013.

What has the teacher done here? By raising these questions, she has alerted the readers to and engaged with the primary topic of the book. Children may be at different points in learning

about the water cycle and about how water is made accessible for their use. Some may have heard about the process of evaporation and condensation, others may make guesses about water coming into their homes from the nearest lakes, while still others may not have given it much thought earlier, but are now curious. Most importantly in their engagement with the text, they are now not just passive recipients of what's written in it, but are also actively drawing from their thoughts, knowledge and questions.

Likewise, the teacher could stop at various points while reading the text, and ask students to relate prior knowledge to what they are reading. *Remember – prior knowledge can be brought in throughout the reading of the text – not just before reading it.*

Activities

- a. *Idea web*: Introduce the main idea of a text before reading it. Ask children to write the main idea at the centre of a page. Around the main idea, ask them to write things they know, or can think of, in relation to it.

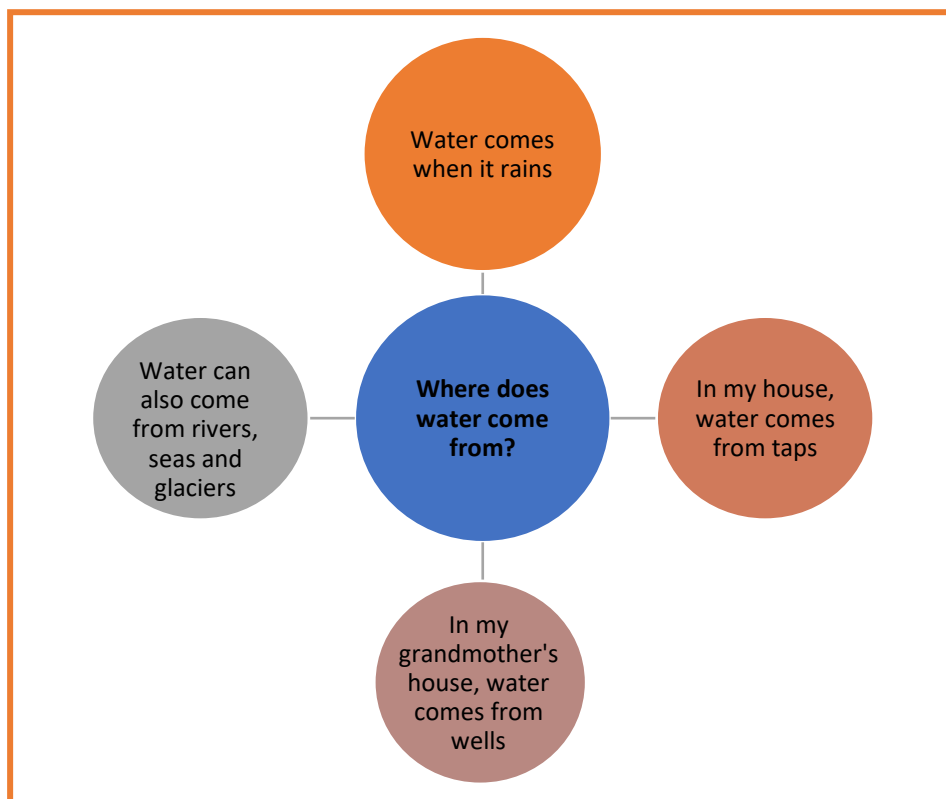


Figure 3. An idea web.

- b. *Idea sketch*: Figure 4 depicts different uses of water in the child's surroundings. After a brief description of this picture, the teacher could ask students to draw the sources and uses of water in their surroundings.



Figure 4. Uses of water. **Image Courtesy:** *The Sea in a Bucket, An Avehi Abacus Story.* Eklavya Publications, 2013.

- c. *Picture walk*: In a picture walk, readers narrate the story of a book by going over the pictures. Since the reader has to make meaning through the pictures, there is space to bring in one's prior knowledge and interpretation. While this works very well for wordless picture books, it can also be done for illustrated books with text. However, don't pick books for which previewing can ruin the surprise or suspense of the story. *Mor Dungri* by Jugnoo Prakashan (see Figure 5) is an excellent book for picture walk. A book about peacocks, it uses beautiful illustrations which don't just support the text but make it come alive. The detailing gives the reader generous cues about the text and the context, in this case about peacocks and life in Rajasthan.



Figure 5. *Mor Dungri.* Author & Illustrator: Sunita, Jugnoo Prakashan, 2018.

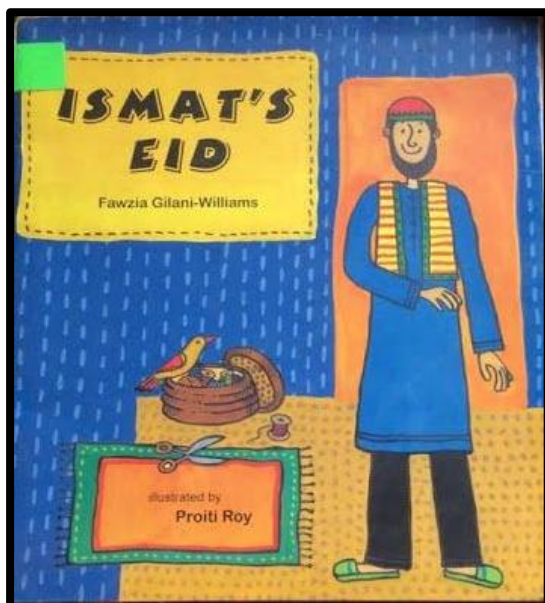
Prediction

Prediction refers to informed guesses we make about a book, such as: What this book about? Where is it set? What will happen next? Good readers constantly make guesses *before* and *during* their reading. These guesses are based on *cues* given by different elements such as the cover, illustrations, headings and genre.

Why is this important? When we make predictions, we are engaged with the book, and are paying attention to the cues provided by it. This attention leads to stronger meaning making, positioning us as active participants in the reading process.

To teach prediction, it is important to select texts that give rich cues to the reader through titles, illustrations, sub-headings, character traits and plot. Refer to Table 4 for suggestions of books which can be used to teach prediction as a strategy in classrooms.

Let's look at the book *Ismat's Eid* (Fawzia Gilani Williams, Tulika Publishers, 2007) to understand this better. *Ismat's Eid* is the story of a man finds that the trousers he has bought to wear on Eid are too long. After requesting various family members to shorten it for him, and being refused because they are too busy with preparations for the festival, he alters it himself. Following this, and unknown to each other, each member of his family also alters the length of his trousers, leaving him with a very short pair of trousers to wear on Eid!



One way to make predictions is by *previewing* the text. Previewing involves looking at the text *before* beginning to read it. For example, when we look at the cover, the title tells us that the book could be about Eid. The cover the spools of thread and pair of scissors in the illustration tell us that it also probably has something to do with sewing (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Cover-page of *Ismat's Eid*. Author: Gilani Williams, Illustrator: Proiti Roy, Tulika Publishers, 2007.

The teacher can help children build the habit of scanning the *cover page* (title and illustrations) of a book to make predictions. But cover pages or titles are not the only places where we can get hints about the text. Readers could also preview illustrations in the rest of the book in picture books or illustrated books; they could scan *headings* and *sub-headings* for non-fiction pieces; and they could scan *chapter names* for chapter books.

In addition to previewing, good readers also predict *while reading* a text. In *Ismat's Eid* (see Figure 7), they could use the repetitive elements of the text to predict what will happen next. For example, after Ismat's trousers have been sewn four times, the reader is already prepared for what is to come.

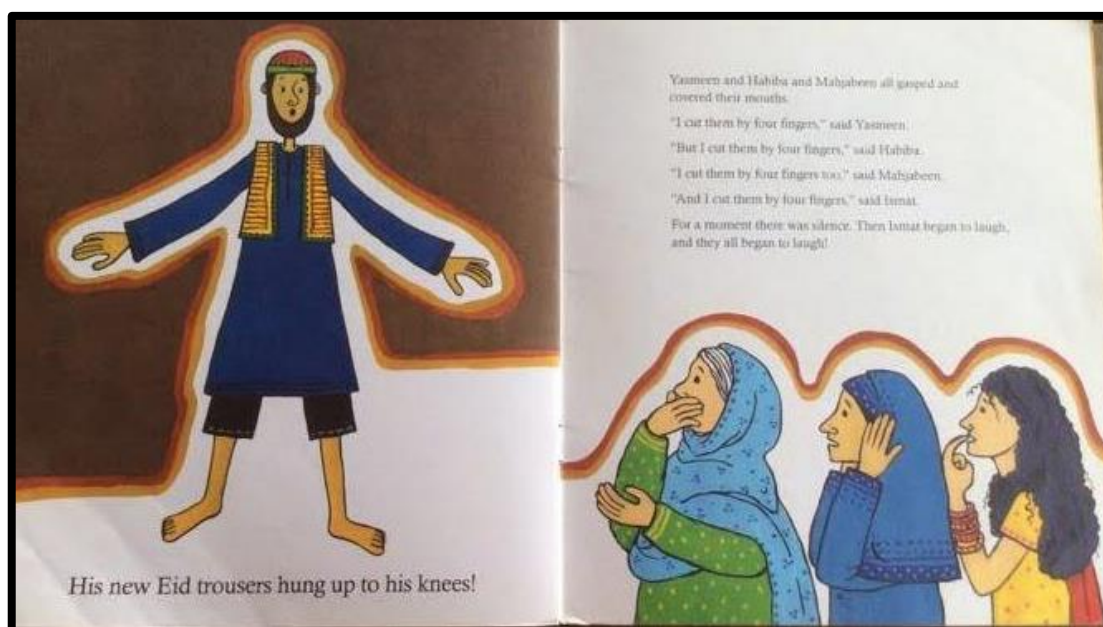


Figure 7. Ismat's trousers after it has been folded four times and stitched.

In other kinds of texts, different aspects be conducive to making predictions; a turn in the plot or setting might be an excellent point to stop at and make a prediction. Prediction is, therefore, an extremely important strategy for meaning-making. The engagement with the book during prediction pulls the reader deeper into the process, strengthening comprehension.

Activities

- d. *Group prediction activities:* Divide children into two groups. Ask students in the first group to ask prediction questions based on the title, cover or illustrations. Ask students in the second group to answer these questions.

In *Ismat's Eid*, the cover page could raise questions such as:

- What is this story about?
- Why are there threads and scissors on the floor?
- Is Ismat a tailor?
- What has Eid got to do with the story?

Similarly, questions that can be invited while reading:

- Will Ismat's family like his gifts?
- What does his family do?
- Now that the trousers are so short, do you think Ismat will be able to wear them?

As the story unfolds, the group can go back and see if their predictions were accurate. *It should be noted that the practice of making predictions should be started and demonstrated by the teacher over a period of time.*

- e. *Find your book*: Divide students into groups of ten. Give each student a slip of paper with a book description. Spread the ten books described in the notes on the floor. Ask students to find their books by matching the description with the cover.

For example, for *Ismat's Eid* the description can be, "A man is excited about a festival, but troubled about his clothes!" After they select and read a book, ask them if they chose the right one.

- f. *Two-column sheet*: Readers can maintain a two-column sheet as they start a text. The left-hand side can be labelled "predictions made". Here students can record their predictions for the story at different points in their reading. Label the right-hand side "what actually happened". Here students record what they found out as the story unveiled itself. Figure 8 (on the following page) provides an example of a two-column sheet.

- g. *Text Impressions*: Before students begin reading, encourage them to preview the book, chapter names and pictures. This would lead them to form some idea about the book. Ask them to record these impressions in a journal or notebook. Later, as they read, they can be encouraged to confirm the accuracy of their impressions.

Predictions Made	What Actually happened
<p>Ismat will have to shorten the trousers on his own as everybody is busy with other tasks</p>	<p>Ismat had to shorten the trousers himself, however when his family found the time they stitched it for him too.</p>
<p>Now that the trousers are so short, Ismat won't be able to wear them for Eid</p>	<p>Ismat's family acted quickly and mended the trousers again so that he could wear it for Eid.</p>

Figure 8. Example of a two-column sheet.

Visual Representation

Ideas and information in texts can be represented visually to aid comprehension. Dense texts contain a lot of information that can make them difficult to comprehend. Sometimes, even if we understand the ideas in a text, we may not be able to remember or present them to someone else. Visual representation can be used in a variety of ways that aid unpacking, understanding and representing the ideas in a text. We can use them, for example, to make comparisons, to summarise a text, to denote cause-effect relationships, to show timelines, or to represent processes in non-fiction texts. Charts created in classrooms to depict the water cycle, food chain, maps of countries, river routes, and graphs are all examples of visual representations.

Visual strategies are best used *after* reading a text, or during the reading. Non-fiction informational texts can be an excellent starting point for understanding the visual representation strategy. We can also use visual tools to understand and represent the flow of story, character, theme and plot better in fiction. See Table 4 for suggestions of books which can be used to model and teach visual strategies in classrooms.

Activities

- a. *Story maps*: Students can be asked to create story maps to describe the sequence of events in a story. Stories can be broken down to a beginning, middle and end, and students can represent them this way in the maps. For example, Figure 9 shows a story map for *Ismat's Eid*.

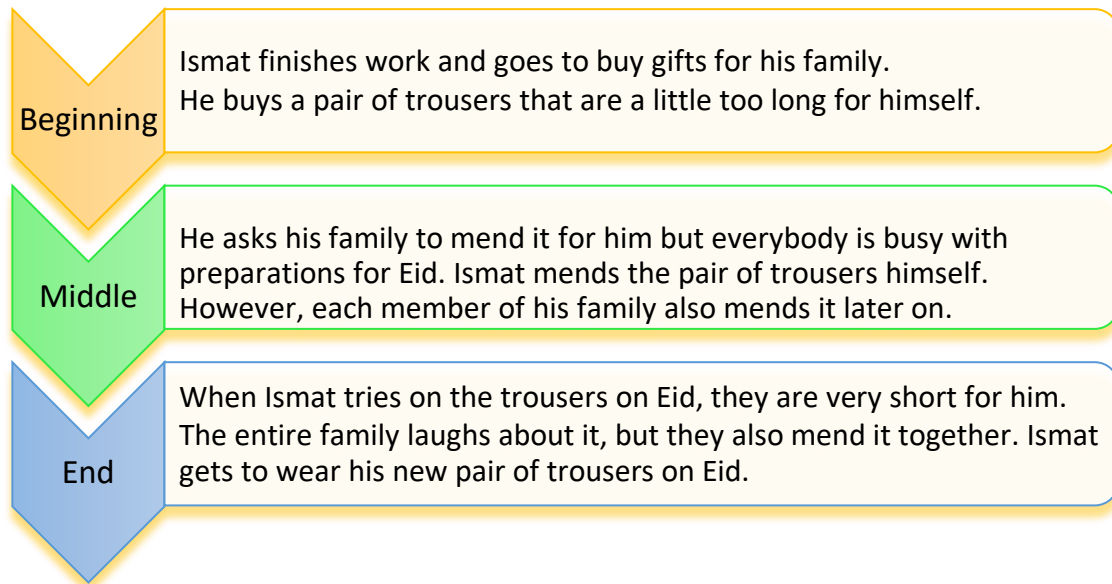


Figure 9. Example of a story map and flowchart.

- b. *Comparison chart*: Using a two-column sheet, students can compare two stories, characters, text structures, and more. Figure 10 presents an example of a comparison between the two texts we have been discussing – *Ismat's Eid* and *The Sea in a Bucket*.

Ismat's Eid	The Sea in a Bucket
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is piece of fiction • This is a picture book • The central ideas are about a festival, family and bonding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a non-fiction book • This is also a picture book • The central idea is about conserving water

Figure 10. Example of comparison chart.

- c. *Ideas-details charts*: Students can be taught to distinguish between the main ideas of a text from its supporting details. Often students recount *all* the ideas in the text when asked to summarize it because they are not able to distinguish the most salient ideas from the less salient ones. Also, they are not able to clearly see that some ideas support other ideas. Using this strategy would help them in distinguishing the various ideas (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Table 2 provides an example.

Table 2

Sample of an ideas-details chart

Ismat's Eid Ideas-Details Chart	
Ideas	Details
Ismat is a simple and hardworking man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the first page, we see that Ismat has had a long day. Despite this, he goes to buy gifts for his family. • Later in the story, he works at altering his pants.
Eid is an important festival for this family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ismat goes to buy gifts for family. • There are delicious dishes being cooked, such as, sheerkorma, biryani and samosa.
There is love amongst the members of Ismat's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ismat thinks of buying everyone something new for Eid. • Every member of the family helps alter Ismat's pants. • They then help alter it again, when they discover that it is too short.

- d. *Character web*: Teach children to create character webs. This involves writing traits describing the main character and supporting these with evidence from the story.

Figure 11 provides an example of a character web for *Ismat's Eid*.

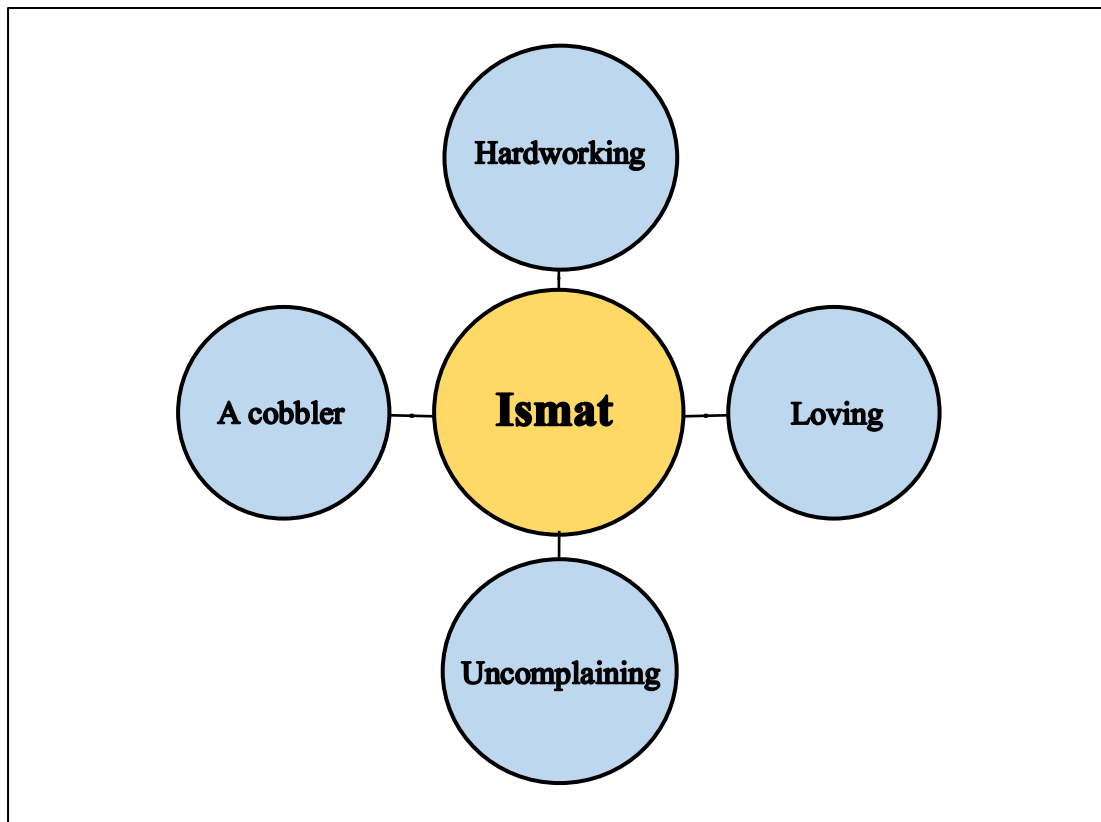


Figure 11. Example of a character web.

Evidence for the traits mentioned in the character web:

- **Cobbler:** This is mentioned in the text and illustration on the first page.
- **Hard working:** Throughout the book, Ismat is seen working, first as a cobbler, then buying gifts, then folding his pants.
- **Loving:** He buys thoughtful gifts for his family.
- **Uncomplaining:** He does not complain when he does not get help to alter his trousers.

- e. *Relation chart*: A relation chart is an excellent tool to use in classrooms. They are especially useful in depicting processes, cycles and other relationships in non-fiction texts. For example, in *The Sea a Bucket*, a relation chart can be made to depict the flow of water from seas to buckets (see Figure 13).

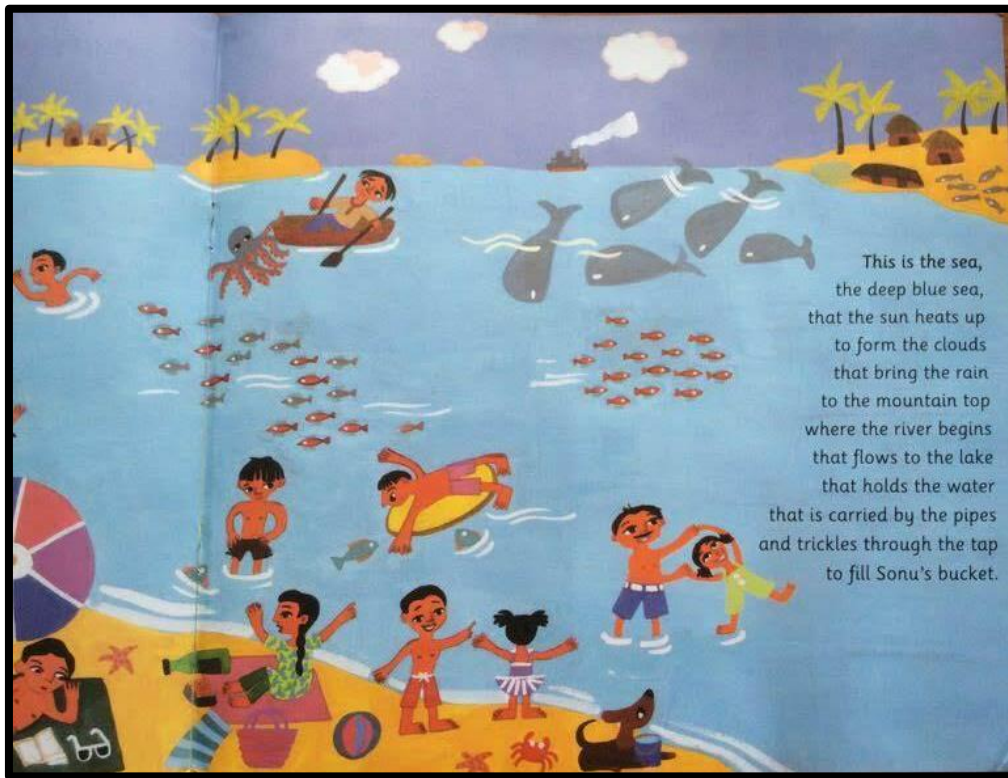


Figure 12. Flow of water from the sea to the bucket. **Image Courtesy:** *The Sea in a Bucket... An Avehi Abacus Story*, Eklavya Publications, 2013

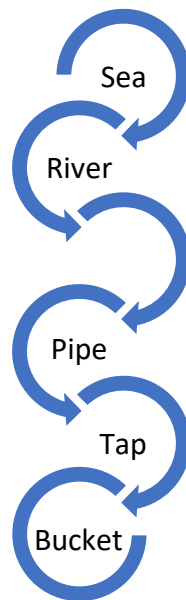


Figure 13. A relation chart depicting flow of water from the sea into the bucket.

Summarising

Children often enjoy reading a book, but when they are asked to summarise it for someone else, they end up re-telling the story or narrative. While re-telling is often nice, it is important for readers to be able to pull out the most relevant and essential details from the less relevant ones, and to summarise the key points briefly. This is more difficult than it sounds because many students cannot discern the more relevant details from the less relevant ones. Therefore, children should be taught to summarise texts, which involves two things:

1. The ability to distinguish between more and less important information
2. The ability to re-state this information in briefly (Duke & Pearson, 2009)

Summarising is always done after reading a text. While summaries can be created for many kinds of text, they are most useful for information-heavy non-fiction texts. Table 4 suggests books which can be used for teaching summarising as a comprehension strategy.

Activities

- a. *Paragraph summaries*: Instead of waiting until they finish reading the entire texts, students can be encouraged to generate summaries at the end of paragraphs or sections. Making paragraph summaries ensures that students monitor their understanding as they read; and it prepares them better to create whole-text summaries. To prepare paragraph summaries, they can raise and answer questions such as those shown in Table 3. Figure 14 is the paragraph being summarised.



Figure 14. Movement of water from lakes to taps. **Image Courtesy:** *The Sea in a Bucket... An Avehi Abacus Story*, Eklavya Publications, 2013.

Table 3

Sample of paragraph notes

Questions	Answers
What is the central idea of this paragraph?	Flow of water from lakes to the bucket
Which facts in this paragraph are important to remember?	Places the water flows through
What can be deleted or shortened?	All the joining phrases and sentences
Paragraph Summary: <i>Water is carried from the lake to the bucket through pipes and taps.</i>	

- b. *Plot summaries*: While reading, ask students to put down summaries in a two-column table. In the column on the left, ask them to record the main ideas of the text, while on the one on the right tell them to put down supporting evidence for the ideas (see Table 2). They can use these notes to write a summary of the story. Here is an example of plot summary, based on the ideas-details chart of Table 2.

Story: Ismat's Eid

Plot Summary: *Ismat's Eid is the story of Ismat and his family preparing for Eid. A day before the festival, Ismat finishes work and buy gifts for his family. He also buys himself a pair of trousers that are too long. Ismat asks his family if they can alter the trousers for him. Since all of them are busy with preparations for Eid, Ismat sews the trousers himself. Later on, unknown to each other, each member of his family alters the trousers. So, on Eid, Ismat's trousers are really short. Everyone has a good laugh. Then, together, alter the trousers again so Ismat can wear it.*

- c. *One-line summary*: In one-line summaries, students summarise a text in a single line. They can use the GIST procedure for this (Cunningham 1982). Readers label main ideas in each paragraph. For example, in *The Sea in a Bucket*, each new page brings in a new idea. So readers' recordings could look something like this:

Tap
Pipe
Lake

River
Sea

Where does water come from in the bucket?

Readers can now use these main ideas to write a gist of the story in not more than 15-20 words.

Story: The Sea in a Bucket

GIST: *This book follows the journey of water from the sea to the bucket, through rivers, lakes, pipes and taps.*

- d. *One-minute book-talk:* The one-minute book talk is an oral summarising activity. After children read a book, ask them to make a one-minute presentation about the book. Within this minute, they should give the group a gist of the book. Help students form the gist by giving them specific prompts such as:

- This book is about _____. It's been written by _____.
- It is set in _____.
- It give details about _____ , _____ , _____.
- It starts with _____ , then moves to _____ and finally ends at _____.
- I liked/did not like the book because _____.

Book Suggestions for Teaching Comprehension Strategies

We close this brief with Table X which provides interested readers with a suggested list of books that can be used to teach comprehension strategies in classrooms. *This is only an indicative, and not an exhaustive list of either strategies or of books* In fact, several of these books can actually be used to teach multiple strategies. For example, throughout the handout we have used *Ismat's Eid* to demonstrate the teaching of various strategies. Books suggested

here belong to a range of genres and reading levels. Teachers should select books appropriately keeping their own contexts and students' reading level in mind!

Table 4³*Suggested Books for Teaching Comprehension Strategies*

Comprehension Strategy	Description	Suggested Books for Teaching Strategies
Connecting with Prior Knowledge	Select books that students can strongly relate with, and contribute to, by drawing from their experiences. The list of books will vary greatly depending on the background contexts of your students!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Going Home (Author: Rukmini Banerjee, Illustrator: Santosh Pujari & Ketan Raut; Pratham Books, 2009) 2. Aunt Jui's Baby (Madhuri Purandare, Pratham Books, 2012) 3. Pranav ka School me Pehla Din (Author: Nandini Nayar, Illustrator: Dilip Chinchalker; Eklavya, 2010) 4. Going to a Market (Meera Tendolkar, Pratham Books, 2012)
Questioning	Books through which students can be taught to monitor comprehension through raising explicit and inferential questions about content.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Payal Kho Gayi (Author: Various, Illustrator: Kanak Shashi, Muskaan, 2015) 2. Didi Didi Cheezein Upar Kyun Nahi Girti Hain? (Author: Roopa Pai, Illustrator: Greystroke, Pratham Books, 2005) (Two other books in this series)

³ Most of the books suggested here are available in multiple languages.

	Books that can be used to teach students to raise critical questions, the answers to which cannot be found in the text.	<p>3. Khichadi... Ek Lok Katha (Eklavya, 2007)</p> <p>1. Bhediye ko Dusht Kyun Kehte Hain (Author & illustrator: Quentin Greban, Eklavya, 2017)</p> <p>2. Guthli has Wings (Author & illustrator: Kanak Shashi, Muskaan 2019)</p> <p>3. Bhimrao Ambedkar: The Boy Who Asked Why. (Author: Sowmya Rajendran, Illustrator: Satwik Gade, Tulika Publishers, 2018)</p>
Prediction	Books that provide strong cues to the reader are best for modelling this strategy.	<p>1. Ashraf ka Udankhatola (Author: Fatima Akilu, Illustrator: Mustafa Bulama, Eklavya, 2012)</p> <p>2. The Hundred and Thirty Seventh leg (Madhuri Purandare, Pratham Books, 2015)</p> <p>3. Harold ki Baingani Pencil (Crockett Johnson, Translation & Illustration: Arvind Gupta, Bhartiye Gyan Vigyan Samiti, 2007)</p> <p>Wordless Picture Books</p> <p>4. Jab main Moti ko Ghar Laayi (Proiti Roy, Jugnoo Prakashan, 2018)</p> <p>5. Busy Ants (Pulak Biswas, National Book Trust, 2013)</p>

		6. Amma Kahan Hain (Author: Nandini Nayar, Illustrator: Srividya Natrajan, Tulika Publishers, 2010)
Visual Strategy	Books that can be used to teach visual representations of plots.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mukand and Riaz (Author & illustrator: Nina Sabnani, Tulika Publishers, 2010) 2. Kali and the Rat Snake (Author: Zai Whitaker, Illustrator: Srividya Natarajan, Tulika Publishers, 2012) 3. Amma Sabki Pyaari Amma (Shankar, Children's Book Trust, 1968)
	Books that can be used to teach visual representations of character traits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ismat's Eid (Author: Fawzia Gilani Williams, Illustrator: Proiti Roy, Tulika, 2007) 2. Catch that Cat (Author: Tharini Viswanath, Illustrator: Nancy Raj, Tulika Publishers, 2013) 3. Kyun Kyun Ladki (Author: Mahashweta Devi, Illustrator: Kanyika Kini, Tulika, 2003)
	Non-fiction books that can be used to teach visual strategies for content representation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Dance of the Flamingo (Author: Anita Mani, Photographer: Vijay Jumar Sethi, Pratham Books, 2016) 2. Turtle Story (Author: Kartik Shanker, Illustrator: Maya Ramaswamy, Pratham Books, 2005)

Summarising	Books that are dense or content heavy are best for teaching summarizing strategy.	<p>Non-Fiction Books</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The House that Sonabai built (Author: Vishaka Chanchani, Photographer: Stephen P. Huyler, Tulika Publishers, 2017) 2. Dinaben and the Lions of Gir (Meera Sriram & Praba Ram, Tulika Publishers, 2010) 3. The Tale of a Toilet (Author: Veena Prasad, Illustrator: Greystroke, Pratham Books, 2017) <p>Fiction Books</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Bumboo... The Donkey who would not Budge (Author: Sujata Padmanabhan, Illustrator: Madhuvanti Anantharajan, Eklavya, 2015) 5. Mohini aur Bhasmasur (Shanta Rameshwar Rao, National Book Trust, 2014).
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Conclusion

Many students do not spontaneously use strategies that help them comprehend what they are reading well. Rather than checking their understanding of the text after the reading is completed, or explaining the text to students, it is important to teach them how to use comprehension strategies before, during and after reading.

This brief has been written with the objective of providing an overview of how we can use comprehension strategies effectively in classrooms. It is important that we tell children clearly why and how comprehension strategies should be used. These strategies should be first modelled by teachers for the students, and the responsibility for using it should be released gradually to the students.

Part B of this brief describes four comprehension strategies: prediction, summarising, visual strategies and activating prior knowledge. There are several other useful strategies, and we encourage you to find out more about them for yourselves.

Part II of this brief will give readers a more in-depth view on how to model strategies for students using the think-aloud format.

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