

# Comprehension

## **Teacher Use:**

**Comprehension refers to the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning. In other words, there are two challenges: Figuring out how print represents words (accurately and efficiently--extracting), at the same time formulating a representation of the information being presented (building new meaning and integrating new and old information--constructing meaning). (Snow & Sweet, 2003, p. 1.)**

**Active Reading Strategy: Annotating texts means writing comments or marking pages as you read. Annotating can help you find and remember key information, ask questions you might have, underline tricky vocabulary words to figure out, identify key themes, or find evidence.**

**Students should practice this strategy to deepen their understanding of the text they are reading. Teachers should model this strategy as much as possible to help students to build annotating skills. Consider using multiple texts and various genres to assist in teaching this skill.**

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## **Annotating Guide:**

**What should I do when I annotate, or write comments?**

- **Write comments about something that happens (EX: "I think this happened because\_\_\_\_," "I think this means\_\_\_\_," "I think this is important because of \_\_\_\_\_")**
- **Ask a question you might have (EX: "Why did the character do that?," "What is the author trying to tell me?, "Why is this important?," "What does this word mean?")**
- **Circle, underline or highlight unknown words or phrases**
- **Circle, underline, or highlight key concepts or quotes**
- **Use arrows or brackets to connect key ideas**

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## **Annotating Guide:**

**What specific things might be important to mark or highlight?**

- **Imagery (when the author uses descriptive language that helps me to better see, feel, hear, taste, or smell something described in the story or paragraph)**
- **Character traits (does a section of the story or paragraph describe something important about how the character or person acts, looks, etc.)**
- **Similes (comparisons using like/as: "Shannon is like a mother grizzly bear, very protective of her children.") or Metaphors (comparisons, often using is, such as: "Life is beautiful")**
- **Personification (when human behaviors are applied to animals, such as: "The geese laughed merrily").**
- **Themes (Does something that happens provide a hint to an important point this story or author is trying to get me to realize specific?)**

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## **Annotating Guide:**

How can I mark up the text?

- **Highlight or underline**
- **Draw brackets ( ), [ ]**
- **Draw arrows to connect key information**
- **Write a thought or a question in the margin**
- **Use asterisks (\*) to mark something important**

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## **Annotating Guide:**

**Practice Annotating a Short Text With a Partner or Teacher**

- **Pick a short text**
- **Read it and mark it up, write questions/notes as you go**
- **Discuss your mark ups with a partner. Each partner should explain why they underlined, highlighted or marked what they did. Each partner should explain any questions or comments they wrote.**
- **After sharing comments, work with your partner to come up with three questions.**
- **Literal question: Ask a question about something the text says or tells clearly (Sample Question: How did the character react when they were bullied?). Have your partner answer the question.**
- **Inference question: Ask a question about something the text may not say or tell clearly (Sample Question: What is the theme of this story?). Have your partner answer the question.**
- **Connecting Question: Ask a question about how this story may connect to your life, the world, or other books/stories you have read (Sample Question: How is this story important or relevant to what is happening in the world today?)**