GL3 – 6 READING STRATEGIES HANDBOOK

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GL3 Reading Teacher Text and Strategies

Front Cover
Title: The Nicolaus Copernicus Monument in Torun, the home town of astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)
Location: Torun, Poland
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The Rafiki GL 3 Reading Program

TEACHING A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

The Rafiki Schools reading program is phonics-based with an emphasis on fluency and comprehension from a biblical worldview. The overall purpose of teaching reading from a biblical worldview is to teach students how to think as Christians when reading. Thus, when any type of text is read, students will evaluate the content, characters, author's purpose, etc. in light of biblical standards. Teachers must consider how the work presents the five worldview categories of God, creation, humankind, the moral order, and humankind's purpose.

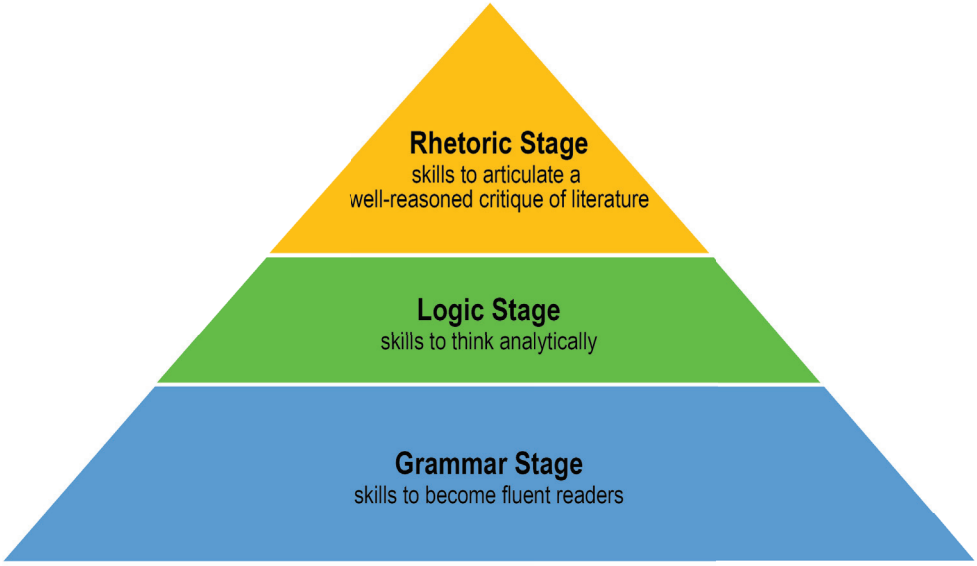
Learning to read literature from a biblical worldview is a critical skill for students. Analysis, however, must be done first by the teacher who, like a shepherd, goes before her flock of students. She finds the best way through the mountains of new ideas and valleys of misconceptions; she leads them across the rivers of difficult vocabulary and the deserts of unfamiliar semantics ; she protects them from ideological pitfalls and ethical predators. This is done primarily by thinking about how the work presents the five worldview categories. Teachers must evaluate the texts by asking and answering for themselves questions such as:

- Is God present in the story? If so, is he personal, active, powerful, purposeful? Is he impersonal, silent, weak, whimsical?
- How is creation presented? Is the world created and sustained by God? Is the world a product of evolution—self-made?
- Where do the laws of civilization originate? Are they given by God or by man?
- Who sets the standards for behavior and what happens when the standard is broken?
- Are humans presented and valued as being made in the image of God? Or are humans one with the animals and of no greater value or consequence than an animal?
- What determines a person's worth or value? Is it because he is God's creation or is it because of who he is, how he looks, what he can do, how much money and power he has?
- What is the purpose of humans in the story? Is it to glorify God? Or is it to be happy and live an authentic life of his or her own choosing?
- What happens when a person dies? Is there life after death?
- Is there an ultimate purpose for human existence? What is it?

Because students are taught literature from a biblical worldview, they are able to study texts grounded with non-biblical views and are to able appreciate the beautiful language and elegant writing these texts may offer. Literature choices in the Rafiki Reading Program, therefore, can and do include a variety of classic and contemporary Western (e.g., European and American) and African texts.

The teacher's role in the lower primary grades or the grammar stage is to give students the necessary skills to become fluent readers who can read for meaning. In middle and upper primary grades or logic stage, the teacher's role is to help students develop higher-level analytical thinking skills. At the rhetorical stage in secondary school literature classes,

the teacher's role is to help students develop necessary skills to articulate a well-reasoned critique of literature from a biblical standpoint.



It is the responsibility of the teacher to create a reading environment in which students excel in both aspects of the reading program—the national texts prescribed by the national Ministry of Education and the literature texts selected by Rafiki. The Foundation may in the future publish national readers for each of Rafiki's ten countries, but until such time, teachers should use the locally published texts and teach students the required vocabulary and cultural content.

Enhancing Skills Through Reading Literature

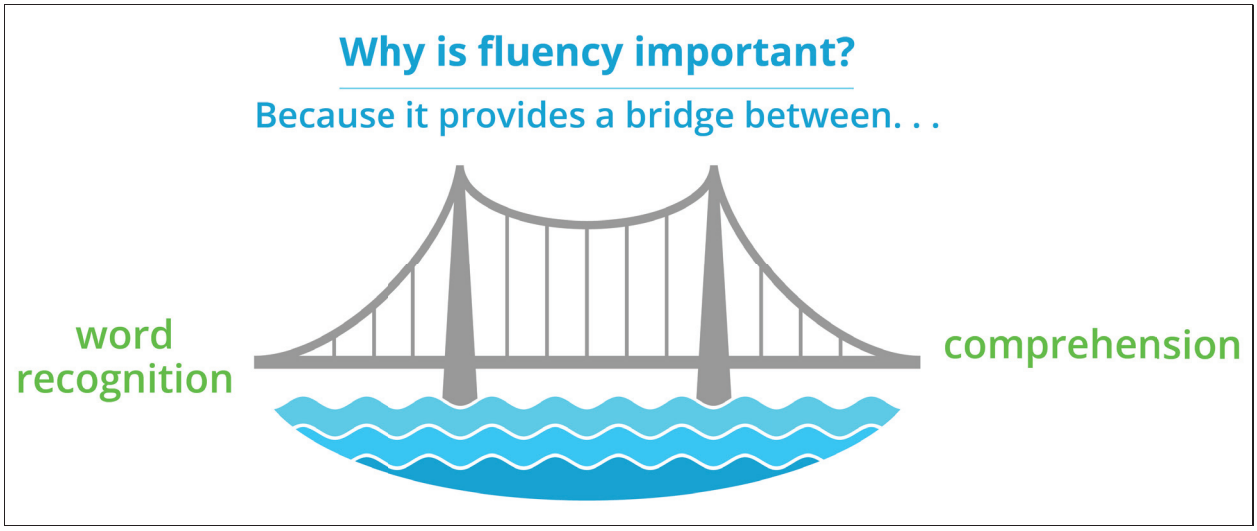
Through the literature texts selected by Rafiki, students will gain and expand five types of reading skills:

1. **Fluency—**students will be able to read aloud at a rate of at least 100 words per minute by grade three. They will increase their reading rates each year and will read with prosody and expression.
2. **Decoding—**students will continue to build on the decoding skills learned in kindergarten and grades one and two.
3. **Comprehension—**students will be able to understand the literal content knowledge and will be able to reason (deduce) and draw inferences from what they have read.
4. **Vocabulary—**students will enlarge their vocabulary and develop a deep meaning of individual words. They will acquire the skills needed to ascertain the meaning of future unknown words.
5. **Metacognition—**students will learn meta-cognitive skills such as self-monitoring (e.g., am I understanding what I am reading?), drawing on prior knowledge, visualizing, summarizing and retelling.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to develop fluency, expand decoding skills, and to select specific comprehension, vocabulary, and metacognitive strategies to teach in conjunction with specific literature texts.

GL 3 FLUENCY REVIEW

Fluency is the ability to read a book or passage accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they were speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding.



Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension; it provides the bridge between phonics and decoding and understanding the meaning of the text. Why? Fluency does this because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words; they can focus the bulk of their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the book and between the book they are reading and other books they have read. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus most of their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding what they are reading.

Fluency and Rate of Reading

By GL 3, children should read aloud at least 100 words per minute, with no more than three reading errors. Children should read aloud with expression, and they should be paying attention to punctuation and dialogue. If students read in monotone, robot fashion, they are probably not understanding the meaning of the text.

Building Fluency

There are two approaches to building fluent reading skills—silent reading and repeated, monitored oral reading (usually referred to as repeated readings). There is no research evidence that just having students read books silently increases fluency. However, one of the major differences between good and poor readers is the amount of time they spend reading. Many studies have found a strong correlation between reading ability and how much a student reads. On the basis of this evidence, teachers have long been encouraged to promote voluntary reading in the classroom. Teacher-education and reading-education literature often recommends in-class procedures for encouraging students to read on their own, such as Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) or Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R.).

Repeated readings, however, have been extensively researched and that approach has shown excellent results. In repeated, monitored oral readings, students read passages

aloud several times and receive guidance and feedback from the teacher. Students who are tutored with repeated readings become better readers. Repeated readings substantially improve word recognition, speed, and accuracy as well as fluency. This approach also improves reading comprehension. Repeated, monitored oral reading can help to improve the reading ability throughout the primary school years.

The techniques for repeated, monitored oral reading include:

- **Student-Adult Reading**: In student-adult reading, the student reads one-on-one with an adult. The adult can be the teacher, a mama, a classroom helper, or a tutor. The adult reads the text first, providing students with a model of fluent reading. Then the student reads the same passage to the adult with the adult providing assistance and encouragement. The student re-reads the passage until the reading is quite fluent. This should take approximately three to four re-readings.
- **Choral Reading**: In choral, or unison, reading, students read along as a group with you (or another fluent adult reader). Of course, to do so, students must be able to see the same text that you are reading. They might follow along as you read from a big book, or they might read from their own copy of the book you are reading. For choral reading, choose a book that is not too long and that you think is at the independent reading level of most students. Patterned or predictable books are particularly useful for choral reading, because their repetitious style invites students to join in. Begin by reading the book aloud as you model fluent reading. Then reread the book and invite students to join in as they recognize the words you are reading. Continue rereading the book, encouraging students to read along as they are able. Students should read the book with you three to five times total (though not necessarily on the same day). At this time, students should be able to read the text independently.
- **Partner Reading:** In partner reading, paired students take turns reading aloud to each other. For partner reading, more fluent readers can be paired with less fluent readers. The stronger reader reads a paragraph or page first, providing a model of fluent reading. Then the less fluent reader reads the same text aloud. The stronger student gives help with word recognition and provides feedback and encouragement to the less fluent partner. The less fluent partner rereads the passage until he or she can read it independently. Partner reading need not be done with a more and less fluent reader. In another form of partner reading, children who read at the same level are paired to reread a story that they have received instruction on during a teacher-guided part of the lesson. Two readers of equal ability can practice rereading after hearing the teacher read the passage.
- **Readers' Theatre**: In readers' theatre, students rehearse and perform a play for other students and/or adults. They read from scripts that have been derived from books that are rich in dialogue. Students play characters who speak lines or a narrator who shares necessary background information. Readers' theatre provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and to practice fluency. Readers' theatre also promotes cooperative interaction with peers and makes the reading task more fun.

Assessing Fluency

Informal Assessment

Teachers should assess fluency to ensure that students are making appropriate progress. The simplest way to do this is simply to listen to students read aloud and then make a judgment about their progress in fluency.

Formal Assessment

Teachers should also include more formal measures of fluency. The easiest way to formally assess fluency is to **take timed samples of students'** reading and to compare their performance (number of words read correctly per minute--WCPM) with established norms of reading fluency. These norms are:

- end of Grade 1 – at least 60 WCPM
- end of Grade 2 – at least 100 WCPM
- end of Grade 3 – at least 115 WCPM
- end of Grade 4 – at least 130 WCPM
- end of Grade 5 – at least 140 WCPM
- end of Grade 6 – at least 155 WCPM

GL 3 DECODING REVIEW

Decoding, if you recall, is the process of identifying words by attaching appropriate sounds to corresponding letters or letter sequences. In GL 3, teachers will continue phonics instruction as needed, but the focus will move to structural analysis, inflectional endings, derived forms, and syllabication.

Structural Analysis

Structural analysis is the careful analysis of a word to discover familiar elements (patterns and sequences) which may lead to gaining both the pronunciation and the meaning of that word. The human brain is good at detecting sequences and patterns. Therefore, young readers learn new words more easily by analyzing onset and rime than by attempting to make letter-phoneme correspondences. For example, it is easier for young readers to read *Sam, ham*, and *jam* when they recognize the rime *am* and add the onsets *s, h,* and *j.* When the rimes become longer than two letters, it is even easier for children because they see two parts instead of four or five. Take the *-ound* rime in *found, sound, round*, and *mound* as an example. *-Ound* is rather complicated to sound out as individual letters; however, if students know *-ound* as one sound, they merely add the onsets *f, s, r*, and *m* to create the four words.

Inflectional Endings

Inflectional endings in English are *s, es, ed, ing, er, est, t, self, selves*, and *en*. We use inflected forms to indicate person, tense, number, the possessive case, comparison, and the present and past participle. These are difficult concepts but they must be introduced in GL 3.

Inflected forms indicate person, tense, number, possessive case, comparison, and the present and past participle.

The teacher should point out the familiar elements of individual words and indicate the inflectional ending. For example, the word *eat* with inflectional endings can become *eating,* and *eaten*. From one word, the student can read two, three, or more words that are similarly inflected. Thus, the groundwork is laid for careful visual scrutiny of new words.

Grammatical Category	Inflection	Examples
Number	-s, -es	Flower ➔ Flowers Glass ➔ Glasses
Case	-'s, -', -s	Paul ➔ Paul's Francis ➔ Francis' It ➔ Its

Grammatical Category	Inflection	Examples
Case (Reflexive)	-self, -selves	Him ➔ Himself Them ➔ Themselves
Aspect (Progressive)	-ing	Run ➔ Running
Aspect (Perfect)	-en, -ed	Fall ➔ (Has) fallen Finish ➔ (Has) finished
Tense (Past)	-ed	Open ➔ Opened
Tense (Present)	-s	Open ➔ Opens
Degree of Comparison (Comparative)	-er	Smart ➔ Smarter
Degree of Comparison (Superlative)	-est	Smart ➔ Smartest

Derived Forms
Derived forms refer to words with **prefixes** and **suffixes**. Prefixes and suffixes are word parts that modify the meaning of a word by attaching to the beginning or end of a root word, respectively.

***suffix*:** letters at the end of a word that change what the word means (*ing* in cooking means an action someone is doing at the present time)
prefix: letters at the beginning of a word that change what the word means (*un* in unhappy means someone is not happy)

Prefixes and suffixes also have meanings of their own. When it is combined with a root word, the derived word may have a distinctly different meaning. For example, the prefix *un-* means *not*, so the word *happy* with the prefix *un-* attached becomes *unhappy* or *not happy*. Though the prefix changes the meaning of the word, the root word's meaning does not change.

Syllabication
Syllabication is dividing words into their pronounceable units, or syllables. Beginning in GL 3, students encounter an increasing number of polysyllabic words; many of these cannot be analyzed either structurally or phonetically. To get to the meaning of the word, the student must pronounce it, and, thus, must utilize syllabication. Teachers should prepare for this by training students to listen for word "parts" or syllables as she pronounces words for students. As words are added to speaking and listening vocabularies of students, training is given in detecting the accent in polysyllabic words. This is best done by slow and emphatic pronunciation of two-syllable words, pointing out that the accent sometimes falls on the first syllable, sometimes on the second syllable. Teachers should plan lessons to teach principles of syllabication (list of rules). Note that the GL 3 Spelling Teacher Text is written to reinforce phonics and syllabication rules.

Compound Words
Compound words are comprised of two or more known words, neither of which has changed form in the process, (i.e., airport, football, pancake, rainbow). Each word forms not only a visual element, but a meaning unit as well, and the combined form contains meaning elements of each of the individual components. When the student understands the composition of the compound word, she is ready to analyze new compounds as she meets

them. she may find that she knows both words and the pronunciation and meaning of the compound are clear; on the other hand, she may not know one part of the compound but can figure out the word based just on that. See the list of Common Compound Words in the Resource Folder, Lesson 9.

GL 3 COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES REVIEW

This section extends the topic of building comprehension by focusing on the role of asking a variety of good questions. Asking questions is one of the simplest ways to determine whether a child understands what he or she has read. But what kind of questions should be asked? Read the following descriptions of the types of questions a teacher might ask students. As you read, think about how these relate to the categories listed in the New Bloom's Taxonomy. For example, literal recall sounds like the remember level of Bloom's while deduction sounds like it might fall within either the analyze or evaluate level.

Literal Recall (the answers will be found stated directed in the text)

1. Details (who, what, where, when, how, why)
2. Paraphrasing and Summarizing
3. Main Ideas
4. Sequences
5. Comparisons (of characters, of decisions, with other stories, etc.)
6. Cause and Effect Relationships
7. Character Traits

Literal recall represents factual (stated) information contained in the passages. Answers to who, what, when, where, how and why questions are usually stated explicitly in the passages, and their recall is therefore considered literal. The successful recall of answers to these questions means that students have recalled or comprehended important information from passages. Students can be required to go back to the text and locate precisely where the answers to questions are located.

Deduction and Inferential Recall (the answers will not be found stated directly in the text; the reader must infer the answers from what was read)

1. Supporting Details
2. Main Ideas
3. Sequences
4. Comparisons
5. Cause and Effect Relationships
6. Character Traits
7. Predictions
8. Deductions

Exact information is sometimes **not stated explicitly**, but answers can be either deduced or inferred from the facts that are presented. **Deductions** are made based upon knowledge of a general rule and followed logically from that rule. For example, after reading a passage that first presents general information on lions during drought season and then presents information on a particular lion, readers could deduce that the particular lion would act

in a certain way during drought season. Sometimes the general rule or premise is stated explicitly in the text, while other times readers may need to possess the appropriate prior knowledge in order to know the general rule. In either case, once the general rule is known, a specific instance or fact usually can be deduced based on the knowledge and application of that rule. Teachers can assist students in identifying specific rules and in deducing the correct but not explicitly stated information.

Another type of information that is not explicitly stated in texts is called **inferential information.** Inferential comprehension is made by taking all of the specifically stated facts into consideration and then using that information to infer the answer. A question like "How did Mary feel?" is an inferential question. In order to answer the question effectively, readers must refer back to specifically stated facts and details, such as "the bore hole was dry" and "the cattle were thirsty," in order to know that Mary was disappointed and worried, not happy and excited. Teachers can assist students in recognizing inferential questions and in locating the specific facts that will aid them in inferring the correct answer based upon the facts provided.

Prediction
This strategy involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making informed predictions. Good readers use predicting as a way to connect their existing knowledge to new information from a text to get meaning from what they read. Teachers can train students to use prediction by asking questions before and during read alouds or repeated readings. Before reading, students may use what they know about an author to predict what a text will be about. The title of a text may trigger memories of texts with similar content, allowing them to predict the content of the new text. During reading, good readers may make predictions about what is going to happen next, or what ideas or evidence the author will present to support an argument. They tend to evaluate these predictions continuously, and revise any prediction that is not confirmed by the reading.

Evaluation and Judgment
Focusing on evaluation and judgment is an important strategy for helping students dig deeper into the meaning of the author. Learning to separate fact from opinion, weighing the adequacy of a claim or the validity of a statement, or accessing the worth of a text are important comprehension skills students will need as they matriculate in school. Teachers can ask questions about whether something is fact or opinion; they can ask if there is adequate evidence or if something is worthy, desirable, or acceptable.

1. Fact or Opinion
2. Adequacy of Validity
3. Appropriateness
4. Worth, Desirability, or Acceptability

Appreciation
Classical teachers are committed to teaching all that is good, true, and beautiful, and so it is appropriate to spend time on engaging children's emotional response to a text. Asking questions about how they identify with a specific character can help a child express the concerns, hopes, fears, and questions he or she might be experiencing. Allowing time to enjoy the written language as it is read aloud is also an important way to cultivate a love for all that is beautiful. This is why it is important to read classics that offer high quality writing and language. Finally, leading children to understand the idea of imagery—of Aslan as the powerful lion, or of the spell cast over the land of Narnia by the evil White Witch—is another way to deepen a child's enjoyment of literature. Linking characters, settings, and events with

the underlying symbolic meaning can open up a new world to children who are transitioning from the stage of concrete operational thinking to formal operational thinking.

1. Emotional Response to Content
2. Identification with Characters
3. Reactions to Language
4. Imagery

Visualizing
This involves the ability of readers to make mental images of a text as a way to understand processes or events they encounter during reading. This ability can be an indication that a reader understands a text. Some research suggests that readers who visualize as they read are better able to recall what they have read than are those who do not visualize.

Visualizing is especially valuable when it is applied to narrative texts. In reading narratives, readers often can develop a clear understanding of what is happening by visualizing the setting, characters, or actions in the plot. However, visualizing can also be applied to the reading of expository texts, with readers visualizing steps in a process or stages in an event or creating an image to help them remember some abstract concept or important name.

Paraphrasing and summarizing. Paraphrasing is restating in one's own words what was just read. It can be used for words, sentences, paragraphs, or entire stories. Summarizing is similar to paraphrasing. The critical aspect of both is for the student to restate in their own words what they have just read. Summarization strategies can involve students asking themselves, "Who or what is the passage about?" and "What happened in the passage?" Teachers should plan lessons on specific summarization skills such as deleting unnecessary information, finding a higher-order term to describe a list of actions or items, and identifying or inventing a topic sentence.

Sequencing events. This skill is best used near the end of a story. It is especially helpful when the chronological order of events is important to remember. In the initial stages of learning sequencing, instruction make take the form of requiring students to identify which of two events happened first. Later, students would be required to produce a listing of events in the order in which they occurred.

Main ideas. Main ideas of sentences, paragraphs and stories need to be identified and produced by students. A main idea is a condensed one- or two-sentence version of the paragraph. When students are asked to generate the best title of a passage, they are being required to name a main idea. Typically, this skill is the first step required prior to summarizing entire passages. It should be taught directly. Initially, students may be required to select the best main idea from several choices. After this is mastered, students can be required to produce the main idea from illustrations. Instruction can then proceed to requiring students to identify and produce main ideas, first from sentences, then from paragraphs and increasingly from larger reading selections.

In Summary
Some comprehension skills may be applied to a single paragraph (e.g., what happened to Rocco? How did she respond?), to a chapter, or to an entire book. Teachers may need to use different teaching strategies for each. Also note that not all comprehension skills can (or should) be taught with each literature text. Skills may be taught before, during, or after reading the text. Below is a guide of which skills might be taught at each phrase of the reading process.

Before Reading**	During Reading	After Reading
Examine the Text	Summarize Key Issues	Summarize, paraphrase
Preview Organization	Determine main ideas	Integrate information
Examine charts, illustrations	Organize main ideas, elements	Concisely summarize
Mobilize Prior Knowledge	Make Predictions	Determine main ideas
Examine/think about content	Generate hypotheses	Confirm/refute predictions and hypotheses
Examine/think about vocabulary	Refine Predictions	Answer questions
Determine Purpose	Clarify Hypotheses	Apply learning
Select strategies	Confirm hypotheses	Study information
Generate questions	Refute hypotheses	Rehearse information
	Appreciate—emotional response, identification, language, imagery	Appreciate—emotional response, identification, language, imagery

**** Strategies used before reading are the most critical.** Before students begin reading, the teacher should activate their prior knowledge related to the content of what is to be read. This prepares the student for learning new material, helps ground new information in their current understanding, gives interest and motivation to reading, and makes the new information more meaningful and thus better understood and remembered.

As teachers select comprehension skills to be taught as part of the literature units, they must remember that these skills will be taught and used throughout the child's lifespan. They will be revisited each year in school and expected to be used with greater fluency and independence. It is the teacher's responsibility to decide when and how to teach each skill. Below are suggestions for how to teach each one.

GL 3 VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies. Word Identification was taught in Lesson 3, and you might consider reviewing that material before going further.

The National Council for Reading Instruction found the following components as important for an effective vocabulary program:

a. Wide or extensive independent reading is important to expand word knowledge.
b. Instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts containing those words is critical.
c. Instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and word consciousness and word-play activities motivate and enhance learning.
d. Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important.
e. Learning in rich contexts is valuable for vocabulary learning. This is done by not just focusing on the dictionary definition but by finding synonyms and antonyms for

the word, the part of speech, classification, comparison, real-life examples, graphic version, and acting it out.

f. Vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks.

g. Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary.

h. Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning.

i. Dependence on a single vocabulary instructional method will not result in optimal learning.

Children must learn that meaning is demanded when they read. If they are allowed to say words glibly, with no attention given to their very special meanings, they are expending fruitless energies. Consequently, in the initial experiences which the child has with reading, he or she should be guided to discover what, why, when, where, and how that are conveyed by the words on the pages. The student should be encouraged to inquire into meanings of the words he reads and to use those words in his speaking and his writing.

Word Walls

What Is A Word Wall?

A word wall is a collection of words which are displayed in large visible letters on a wall, bulletin board, or other display surface in a classroom. The word wall is designed to be an interactive tool for students and contains an array of words that can be used during writing and reading.

Why Use Them?

- They provide a permanent model for high frequency words
- They help students see patterns and relationship in words, thus building phonics and spelling skills
- They provide reference support for children during reading and writing activities.

How to Use Them

- Make words accessible by putting them where every student can see them. They should be written in large black letters using a variety of background colors to distinguish easily confused words.
- Teachers and students should work together to determine which words should go on the word wall. Try to include words that children use most commonly in their writing. Words should be added gradually — a general guideline is five words per week.
- Use the word wall daily to practice words, incorporating a variety of activities such as chanting, snapping, cheering, clapping, tracing, word guessing games as well as writing them.
- Provide enough practice so that words are read and spelled automatically and make sure that words from the wall are always spelled correctly in the children's daily writing.
- New information should be added on a regular basis.
- Use content-area material from the curriculum rather than randomly selected words.
- Word walls should be referred to often so students come to understand and see their relevance.

Homonyms, Homographs, and Homophones

Frequently the young child is content to relate the meaning of a word with a particular context or incident, and to him the meaning is limited. Each time he meets the word in a new context, however, his concept can and should broaden. Some words, called *homonyms* (from the Greek meaning "same name"), sound exactly alike but differ in meaning. For example, *principal/principle* or *rain/reign/rein* or *no/know* are homonyms. The term *homonym* is often used as a blanket term encompassing both homophones and homographs. Homophones (from the Greek meaning "same sound") are words that are pronounced the same but differ in meaning, origin, and often spelling. For example, *knew/ new* or *meat/meet* are homophones. Homographs (from the Greek meaning "same writing") are words that have the same spelling but differ in origin, meaning and sometimes pronunciation (e.g., *bear* used as a verb meaning to carry or to endure, and *bear* used as a noun).

Summary of Homonyms, Homophones, and Homographs

Homonyms

Words that sound the same and are sometimes spelled the same but differ in meaning.

accept/except; bare/bear; board/bored; brake/break; cite/sight, site; hole/whole

Homophones	**Homographs**
Words that are pronounced the same but differ in meaning and often spelling.	Words that have the same spelling but differ in meaning and sometimes pronunciation.
forth/fourth; its/it's; lessen/lesson; right/rite/write; who's/whose	*bear(v)/bear(n); tear(v)/tear(n); spruce(v)/spruce(n); sewer(v)/sewer(n)*

Contextual Clues

When dealing with homonyms, it is the *context* of the sentence that is all important. For example, the homographs minute, wind, read, and tear are spelled the same but they are pronounced differently and carry different meanings in different contexts. Read the following sentences aloud to get a first-hand understanding of the confusion that can come with homographs if a student is not paying attention to the context.

- The **minute** hand on the clock was broken.
- The **minute** glove was too small for the giant.
- I love to feel the soft **wind** in my face.
- Do not forget to **wind** the clock or you will be late for school.
- You need to **read** two chapters this evening.
- I **read** that book last summer.
- A **tear** began to roll down the little girl's cheek as she said goodbye to her mother.
- You might **tear** the book if you are not careful.

Only when homonyms are used in *context* can you know the correct pronunciation and intended meaning. For new readers this can present many difficulties. Even the simplest words in English may have both general and specific significance depending upon the reader's experiences. For example, consider the word **train**. This word has several meanings that are dependent upon the context of the sentence.

I rode the **train** to town. (transportation)

Mama gave me a **train** for my birthday. (toy)

Her lace **train** billowed behind her. (clothing)

We must **train** each man for the job. (give instructions and experience)

I always **train** my roses on trellises. (bring into shape or position)

A **train** of red ants crossed our path. (line or succession)

Train your eyes on the front sight. (bring to bear)

To a small child, the word train denotes either the means of transportation or a toy. Using it in a different context can easily confuse a young reader.

There are many words with multiple meanings. Another example is the simple word *run*. The word *run* could be used as a verb—"Run as fast as you can!" It can be used as a noun—"The girls laughed as they raced down the ski run." It can be used as a root for a number of others words—*runner, runny, running*. In each of these examples, run has a different meaning. Struggling readers may recognize the word when it stands by itself but they have a problem recognizing *runner* and *runny* in a word list. An adept teacher will be alert to the variety of meanings and expand the child's concept of the word.

Many words have multiple meanings (as has just been demonstrated with the word train) depending upon the context. Context, if you recall, refers to the parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning. It can also refer to the circumstances that form the setting of an event, a statement, or an idea. The circumstances can inform the reader how a word or phrase can be fully understood and assessed. Without contextual clues such as rhetorical knowledge, schemas, and pictures, a young reader can become easily confused. Often there are other words in the sentence that suggest or hint what a word means. For example, consider the following sentence about schemas.

> *Because schemas offer a tightly organized set of facts about a topic, they can help interpret new situations, fill in the gaps, and draw inferences.*

A reader not fully understanding the meaning of the word schema, can, by examining the other words in the sentence, gain a clearer idea of what it means. Schemas are a *tightly organized set of facts about a topic*. Students should be encouraged to try and decide the correct definition of the word themselves, if at all possible, by examining the contextual clues in the sentence. See if you can use the contextual clues in the following sentences to define the words *context* and *clues*.

Sentence 1: The context of this story, that is, all the words in it, makes it difficult to understand.

What does the word context mean? Give a simple definition based upon the sentence.[1]

Sentence 2: I really need clues or hints from other words to help me understand what it is all about.

What does the word clues mean? Give a simple definition based upon the sentence.[2]

GL 3 METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Metacognition includes students' knowledge and beliefs about their own cognitive processes. For example, it includes

- Reflecting on the nature of thinking and learning
- Knowing the limits of one's own learning and memory capabilities
- Knowing what learning tasks one can realistically accomplish within a certain time

1 Sentence 1: Context means all the words in the story.

2 Sentence 2: Clues means hints from other words. A clue is a hint.

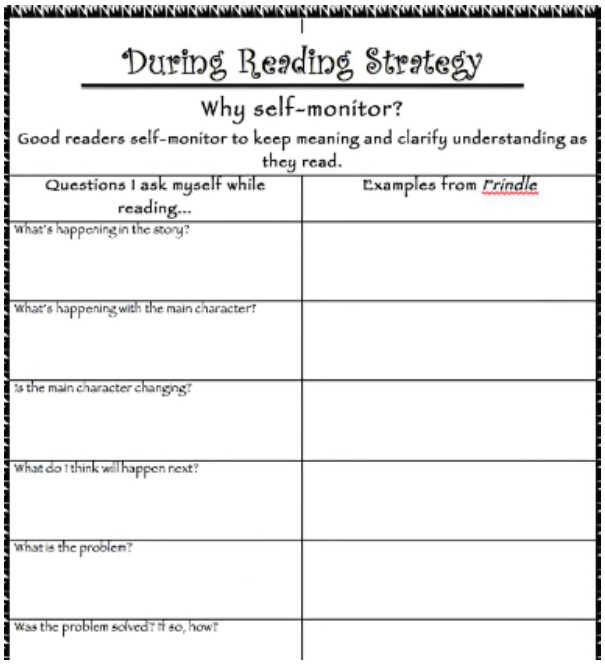
period

- Knowing which learning strategies are effective and which are not
- Planning a reasonable approach to a learning task
- Monitoring one's own knowledge and comprehension
- Using effective strategies to learn and remember new material such as
    - > Identifying important information
    - > Taking notes
    - > Retrieving relevant prior knowledge
    - > Organizing information through concept maps and graphic organizers
    - > Intentional elaboration
    - > Creating summaries

Poor readers lack metacognitive strategies. Therefore, good teachers should not only teach appropriate reading strategies, but also teach metacognitive techniques that help students decide how and when to use them. One way to enhance students' metacognition is for teachers to use a "**think aloud**" to demonstrate her metacognitive process as she monitors her own reading. For example, when reading a passage on a famous leader, (e.g., Jomo Kenyatta, Nelson Mandela, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson), the teacher might comment, "It says here that he had very little schooling. That does not seem right. It seems like he should have had more education in order to become president. I need to reread to see how old he was when he began and finished school in order to confirm this fact." The teacher then invites the students to read with similar awareness when they encounter a puzzling fact. Teachers can ask questions to guide students through this reflective process. Eventually, students will use metacognitive strategies independently to monitor their reading processes and comprehension.

Another simple strategy involves **self-questioning**. Good readers ask questions to themselves before, during, and after reading in order to make sense of the passage. Asking questions allows for active reading and for interacting with the text. It gives the student purpose for reading. It helps readers make predictions, confirm hypotheses, and clarify difficult vocabulary or challenging semantics and syntax. To begin with, teachers can train students to use the five W questions—who, what, where, why, when—and then graduate to questions that focus on parts of the dramatic structure—the setting, characters, rising action, climax, resolution, etc.

To become more proficient at self-questioning, students can initially use a self-monitoring sheet and either tick off or write down the answers. Ultimately, when students consistently and accurately self-question, the monitoring sheets are phased out. The purpose of a self-monitoring checklist for reading comprehension is not to make sure students understand everything; rather, it is to ensure that they know when their comprehension is misfiring so that they can reread, try a new strategy, or ask for help.

GL 1-2 Self-Monitoring Sheet	GL 3 Self-Monitoring Sheet
	

Another simple example of a self-questioning strategy is teaching students to ask themselves the question, "What did I just read?" after reading a paragraph. If students are able to answer the question, they can proceed with reading the next paragraph. However, if they cannot accurately restate what they read, they are required to go back and reread the passage until they are able to restate what was read.

GL 3 GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Using Graphic Organizers to Teach Reading Strategies
The following section highlights how to teach various reading strategies by using graphic organizers. Blank graphic organizers are provided as well as completed examples. The examples are based on books used in GL 3 literature program.

In this next section ten examples of graphic organizers are given. They are:

- Inference/Drawing conclusions
- Character study
- Sequencing
- Cause and Effect
- Venn Diagram
- Character Frame
- Fact and opinion

- Story map and Story Mountain
- Timeline
- Main Idea

Inference/Drawing Conclusions

Explain that making inferences is something that the students do every day.

If they hear tires screech and a big crash, they assume (infer) there has been a car accident.

If father is a farmer and goes to work each morning in his **work clothes** and one Tuesday morning he comes out of the house in his **Sunday suit**, you will infer that he is not going to the farm to work.

These inferences are based on prior knowledge, or what you already know because of things that have happened before.

Example: *A Chair for My Mother*

What the author says about something:

1. Sometimes my mama is laughing when she comes home from work.
2. Grandma saves on shopping and puts all the money into the jar.
3. Their house was on fire, Mama yelled, "Where's Mother?" I yelled, "Where's grandma?"
4. Mama wouldn't let me sit in the chair while we drove home.

What I already know:

1. People often laugh when they are happy.
2. People who love their family will usually make sacrifices, if needed.
3. People who put other people before possessions are mostly loving, caring people
4. People sometimes make unpopular rules to protect those they love.

What I can infer about these people in this story:

1. Mother is probably a happy person.
2. Grandma loves her family.
3. Mother and daughter love and care for grandma.
4. Mother loves and protects her daughter.