

Florida Center for Reading Research

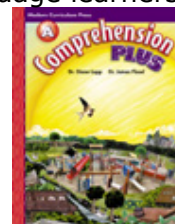
Comprehension Plus

What is Comprehension Plus?

Comprehension Plus is a supplemental comprehension program designed to provide first through sixth grade students with the skills and comprehension strategies they need to improve their reading comprehension. The goal of this comprehension program is for students to learn specific reading techniques that create a purpose for reading and a focus for monitoring their understanding of text. Teachers, or well-trained paraprofessionals, deliver the 30-minute lessons twice a week to large or small groups of students. During these lessons, teachers use an explicit instructional approach to explain and model the new skill, provide guided practice on a short passage, and encourage independent practice on a longer passage.

Instruction for *Comprehension Plus* follows a spiraled approach where specific comprehension strategies are taught, applied through reading and writing activities, and reviewed within and across all levels of the program. Each lesson consists of three parts: Teach, Practice, and Apply. In the "Teach" section of the lesson, the instructor follows the lesson objective and the "teaching tips" that connect the skill to its underlying purpose by explaining and modeling how to use the comprehension strategy. The teacher uses interactive activities to clarify concepts and guide the students in applying the new skill. In the "Practice" section of the lesson, new vocabulary related to the passages, new comprehension skills, and a review of several previously taught strategies are practiced through reading and answering questions about two different passages. A variety of practice formats (multiple choice, question and answer, written responses, and graphic organizers) help the student solidify their understanding of the skill. In the "Apply" section of the lesson, students are asked to utilize the comprehension strategy they have learned to interpret meaning as they read from a variety of genres, then apply the knowledge gained from the reading to produce different written assignments. Every lesson also includes a related phonics activity, strategies to help English Language learners, activities involving multiple modalities, and suggestions for a home-school connection.

Program materials consist of a Teacher's Guide and a Student Workbook for each of the six levels (A-F). Within each level, there are 24 to 34 lessons that encompass comprehension strategies, word study, research and study skills, and a reading-writing connection that corresponds to a reading level of 1.0 to 6.6. Clear, concise descriptions of the comprehension skills and a "Tip" box offering suggestions guide the student's as they apply the skills in the student workbooks. Comprehensive Teacher's Guides offer adequate support for teachers to fully understand and model the comprehension strategies. Also included in the Teacher's Guide are assessment tests to determine student placement in the program and to evaluate student progress at the end of every two lessons.



How is Comprehension Plus aligned with Reading First?

Comprehension Plus is a comprehension program that includes some elements of phonics and vocabulary; it is not intended to be a complete reading program. The comprehension strategies and the individual skill building techniques used to teach reading comprehension are based on the findings of current reading research. The instruction follows a hierarchical format with text and skills that progress from simple to complex. The intent is to minimize decoding demands as the students' skills and knowledge base evolve. While this presents a logical organizational structure, some inconsistencies exist. For example, in several lessons a skill is included in the review activity before it has been taught and student practice opportunities may not be sufficient to assure mastery of the skill.

In each lesson students are introduced to one of the following strategies: main idea, sequencing, story structure, cause and effect, fact and opinion, summarizing, predicting, and graphic organizers. Throughout the lesson, teachers monitor the students' understanding of the strategy as the students independently read two selections. Students are taught to use an active comprehension process while reading by visualizing the activity in the text and applying appropriate reading strategies. Prior to independent reading of the text, each lesson also includes an introduction of new vocabulary words (nouns as well as abstract foundational words), a short review of a related phonics element, and a preview of the passage. Students demonstrate their understanding of the new strategy by answering questions on a worksheet, applying the knowledge to a graphic organizer, and then to an independent writing activity. Cooperative learning experiences for students occur during the last part of the lesson. Additional review of the strategy is provided in subsequent lessons.

The delivery format and amount of professional development depends on the degree of program implementation. For maximum implementations, a *Comprehension Plus* consultant conducts a half-day training session on how to use the materials and how to integrate the program components with the existing core reading program. For smaller implementations, professional development can be customized through the sales representative or their Web-Ex training system that prepares an on-site school facilitator to train the teachers on the use of the program. A Precision Planner CD is available to help teachers develop lesson plans that integrate and align the skills in *Comprehension Plus* and other Pearson programs to seven *Basal Reading Programs*.

Research Support for Comprehension Plus



Comprehension Plus was published in 2002 and incorporates research-based practices according to the findings from the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) and Put Reading First (2001). Although the comprehension instruction used in the program is consistent with current research knowledge, no formal research studies regarding its efficacy have been conducted to date.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Comprehension Plus*:

- Instruction is explicit and incorporates the key comprehension strategies identified in the Report of the National Reading Panel.
- Fiction and non-fiction genres provide high interest, age-appropriate text in each lesson.

Weaknesses of *Comprehension Plus*:

- A comprehension skill is sometimes included in the review activity before it has been taught in a lesson.

Which Florida districts have schools that implement *Comprehension Plus*?

Broward	754-321-2600	Palm Beach	561-434-8200
Dade	305-995-1430	Polk	863-534-0521
Duval	904-390-2115	Seminole	407-320-0006
Monroe	305-293-1400		

For More Information

http://plgcatalog.pearson.com/program_multiple.cfm?site_id=12&discipline_id=807&subarea_id=978&program_id=256&view_feat=1

References

- Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., Kameenui, E.J. (1997). *Direct Instruction Reading*. (3rd ed.) Upper Saddle, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Washington, D.C.
- Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA). (2001). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Urbana, IL: Author

Lead Reviewer: Mary VanSciver, M.S.
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Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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