



Ready Reference Form

Goal: Comprehension	Strategy: Check for Understanding
Definition	A comprehension strategy that teaches children to stop frequently and check, or monitor, whether they understand what they are reading. This typically is a quick summary of what they've read, starting with "who" and "what."
Why Children Need This Strategy	Often as beginning readers, children are so aware of reading accurately that they forget to take time and think about what they are reading, checking to see whether they understand the text. Advanced readers can develop the habit of reading through text without monitoring whether they were unaware of the Check for Understanding strategy as beginning readers.
Secret to Success	Knowing when we read that we must think about the story and realize what the author is trying to tell us or what we are learning from the book. Readers stop frequently to check for understanding or to ask who and what.
How We Teach It	<p>This vital strategy is not only one of the first we introduce, but also one we model each and every day of the school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Modeling during our read-aloud we stop periodically and say, "Let me see if I remember what I just read. I am going to start by thinking of who the story was about and what happened." ◆ We continue to stop periodically and talk through the "who" and "what," usually about three or four times during each read-aloud. ◆ After two or three times of modeling this for students, we start asking them to answer the "who" and the "what" through "listen and talk," asking one student to do it for the whole class and then expecting children to do it on their own. <p>Language we use:</p> <p>"Stop often to check for understanding before you read any further." "Who did you just read about and what just happened?" "How often did you stop to check for understanding? After each sentence, after each paragraph, at the end of each page?" "Was your brain talking to you while you read?" "Are you finding you are understanding what you are reading?" "What do you do if you don't remember?"</p>
Troubleshooting	<p>We had a parent cut out large check marks, approximately 7 inches long, from balsa wood. Often we provide these check marks to students as a reminder to stop and check for understanding. They work particularly well when partners are reading together and working on Check for Understanding. The person listening to his or her partner read has the job of holding the check mark. When the reader comes to the end of a page or paragraph, the check-mark holder checks for understanding what the reader just read. On one side of the check marks we write, "Check for Understanding" and on the other side, "Who and what."</p> <p>For examples of a whole-group and individual conference using this strategy, see pages 30, 70, and 72.</p>