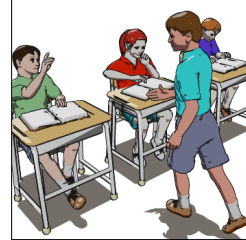


# Reciprocal Teaching: A Reading Comprehension Package

**Description:** The intervention package teaches students to use reading comprehension strategies independently, including text prediction, summarization, question generation, and clarification of unknown or unclear content.

For effective-teaching tips to use when introducing this strategy, consult the guidelines presented in “*Introducing Academic Strategies to Students: A Direct-Instruction Approach*”.



## Materials:

- Overhead transparencies of practice reading passages, transparency markers
- Student copies of *Be a Careful Reader!: Four Strategies to Better Understand What You Are Reading*, *Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet*, and practice reading passages (optional) or reading/text books

## Preparation:

- Prepare overheads of sample passages.

## Intervention Script:

1. Set aside at least four successive instructional days to introduce each of the following comprehension strategies: Day 1: prediction, Day 2: summarization (“list main ideas”), Day 3: question generation, Day 4: clarifying. As you introduce each strategy, “think aloud” as you apply the technique to a sample passage, write down responses on the *Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet*, and check for student understanding of key concepts.
2. After students have been introduced to the key strategies, the group is now ready to apply all four strategies from the *Reciprocal Teaching* package to a sample reading passage. For each strategy (prediction, summarization, question generation, clarifying), briefly review the technique. Then randomly select a student “instructor” to guide the group to apply the strategy and complete the relevant section of the *Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet*. (Be prepared to offer assistance to the student “instructor” as needed.) Give specific praise to students for appropriately using comprehension strategies.
3. As the group shows an increased mastery of the strategies, assign students to read text segments silently. Then take the students as a group through the four strategies, calling on different students to discuss how they applied the strategies to the passage.

4. Give students copies of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet and instruct them to read a passage silently without interruption. Prior to their starting, remind students to take time occasionally during reading to make predictions about the text, note main ideas, formulate key questions, and clarify unclear material.

**Tips:**

**Let students select Reciprocal Teaching passages.** Allow the group to vote for a preferred passage from among several possible choices. Choice often increases student motivation and investment.

**Start a 'Reciprocal Teaching' Tutoring Program.** Once students become proficient in using the Reciprocal Teaching package, consider assigning them as peer tutors to train other students to use Reciprocal Teaching Strategies.

**Troubleshooting:**

**While they participate in the large-group instruction, some students do not appear to use the comprehension strategies in their independent reading.** After independent reading assignments, pair students off to compare their completed Reciprocal Teaching worksheets. Have individuals in each student pair alternate in discussing how they applied the strategies. Walk around the room observing discussion. If you notice that a student has failed to complete his or her worksheet, pull him or her aside later for a private conference to discover what problems might be preventing the student from using these strategies.

**Students do not use the Reciprocal Teaching strategies across instructional settings.**

Let other teachers know that you have taught your students to use this package of comprehension strategies. Share copies of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet with your fellow instructors and invite them to use it. Share a copy of the worksheet with students' parents and encourage them to see that their child uses it for all reading assignments.

**References:**

Lysynchuk, L.M., Pressley, M., & Vye, N.J. (1990). Reciprocal teaching improves standardized reading comprehension performance in poor comprehenders. *The Elementary School Journal*, 90, 469-484.

## *Be a Careful Reader!: Four Strategies to Better Understand What You Are Reading*

When you are reading an article, book chapter, or story, you can use these four simple techniques to be sure that you fully understand the content.

**Prediction.** Before you begin to read the selection, look at the main title, scan the pages to read the major headings, and look at any illustrations. Based on these clues, try to *predict* what the article or story is about.

Now read the selection to see whether it turns out as you predicted! Stop at several points during your reading and ask yourself how closely the content of the actual story or article fit your initial prediction. How do the facts and information that you have read change your prediction about what you will find in the rest of the story or article?

**List Main ideas.** Stop after each paragraph or major section of the passage. Construct one or two complete sentences that sum up only the *most important* idea(s) that appear in the section. (Good summary sentences include key concepts or events but leave out less important details!)

Write these summary (main idea) sentences down and continue reading.

**Question Generation.** Look at the ideas that you have summarized as you read the passage. For each main idea listed, write down at least one *question* that the main idea will answer. Good questions should include words like “who,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “what”.

For example, if you are reading an article about the extinction of the dinosaurs, you might list the following main idea: “Most scientists now believe that the extinction of the dinosaurs was caused by a large meteor striking the earth.” You could then write this question: “What event do most scientists now believe caused the mass extinction of the dinosaurs?”

**Clarifying.** Sometimes in your reading you will run into words, phrases, or whole sentences that really don't make sense. Here are some ways that you can *clarify* the meaning of your reading before moving on:

*Unknown words.* If you come across a word whose meaning you do not know, read the sentences before and after it to see if they give you clues to the word's meaning. If the word is still unclear, look it up in a dictionary.

*Unclear phrases or sentences.* Reread the phrase or sentence carefully and try to understand it. If it contains words such as “them,” “it” or “they,” be sure that you know what nouns (persons, places, or things) to which these words refer.

If all else fails, ask another student or an adult to help you to clarify the meaning of a confusing word, phrase, or sentence.

# Reciprocal Teaching Strategies Worksheet (Adapted from Lysynchuk, Pressley, & Vye, 1990)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Reading Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Prediction.** Before you begin to read the selection, look at the main title, scan the pages to read the major headings, and look at any illustrations. Write down your *prediction about* what the story or article will cover:

\_\_\_\_\_

**List Main Ideas.** As you finish reading each *paragraph* or *key section* of the passage, summarize the main idea of that paragraph or section in one or two complete sentences. (Use the back of this sheet if needed.):

• **Main idea 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• **Main idea 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• **Main idea 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Generate Questions.** For each main idea listed, write down at least one *question* that the main idea will answer. Good questions should include words like “who”, “where”, “when”, “why”, and “what”.

• **Question 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• **Question 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• **Question 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Clarifying.** Copy down any words, phrases, or sentences in the passage that are unclear: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_