Proficient Readers and Writers . . .

determine what is important in text

Readers . . .

- identify key ideas or themes as they read

- distinguish important from unimportant information in relation to key ideas or themes in text. They can distinguish important information at the word, sentence and text level.

- utilize text structure and text features (such as bold or italicized print, figures and photographs) to help them distinguish important from unimportant information

- use their knowledge of important and relevant parts of text to prioritize in long term memory and synthesize text for others

Writers . . .

- observe their world and record what they believe is significant

- make decisions about the most important ideas to include in the pieces they write. They make decisions about the best genre and structure to communicate their ideas.

- reveal their biases by emphasizing some elements over others

- provide only essential detail to reveal the meaning and produce the effect desired

- delete information irrelevant to their larger purpose

Mathematicians . . .

- look for patterns and relationships
- identify and use key words to build an understanding of the problem
- gather text information from graphs, charts, and tables
- decide what information is relevant to a problem and what information is irrelevant

Researchers . . .

- evaluate and think critically about information
- sort and analyze information to better understand it
- make decisions about the quality and usefulness of information
- decide what's important to remember and what isn't
- choose the most effective reporting platform

DETERMINING WHAT'S IMPORTANT
RELEVANT/IRRELEVANT

WHY

Successful readers are able to determine relevant vs. irrelevant details when reading informational texts. Less successful readers tend to lump all details into the same together with each carrying the same importance and, therefore, all attended to with the same level of comprehension. Being able to sort important facts from the less important ones is a critical skill in developing deeper understanding of content area reading.

HOW

Invite readers to list as many facts/details from a piece of content text as they can recall.

After listing them, sort the facts/details into two piles: Relevant and Irrelevant based on the original purpose for reading (one either assigned for the readers or one developed by the readers themselves).

Discuss reasons why certain facts/details are relevant (because of the reading purposes) while others take up space in our memories without furthering our understanding of the text.

HOW ELSE

In order to take this discussion a step further, readers can be encouraged to sort the details they remember based on the details function or how it pertains to the main idea of the text (i.e., to extend, to clarify, to state exceptions, to give examples).

DETERMINING WHAT S IMPORTANT

Purpose:

Relevant	Irrelevant

DETERMINING WHAT S IMPORTANT

Main Idea:

Detail:

Function of Detail: Extend   Clarify

State Exceptions   Give Examples

from C. Buddy

SKIMMING AND SCANNING

WHY   When proficient readers utilize what they know about text structure and their own purposes for reading, they are able to read for meaning with a higher level of flexibility and effectiveness.

HOW   Skimming and Scanning are two techniques which allow readers to vary their reading rate. The techniques also allow readers to attend to only the most important information (as determined by the text s structure and content or by the reader s own purposes).

WHAT Skimming is the very rapid reading of whole text in order to grasp sense of the main ideas and some of the supporting details.

Skimming implies an intentionally lower attention to all the details of a text in exchange for a quick sense of the entire piece.

HOW   The student reads the first several paragraphs of the text to quickly grasp the idea of the content, the format, the use of informational language, etc.

As reading progresses, the reader reads only key sentences and phrases to grasp the main ideas and a few details.

Since the final paragraphs often summarize main ideas in texts, the reader reads them more carefully.

WHEN   During Reading

Scanning is the location of specific information in a text as quickly and accurately as possible.

HOW   The reader notes the format and arrangement of information.

The reader forms a mental image of the clue words or phrases s/he is seeking.

The reader s eyes float down the page to locate the clue words.

The reader reads the surrounding information to verify that the correct information has been located.

WHEN   During Reading

PERCEIVING PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION SIGNAL WORDS

WHY Many readers fail to read successfully because they fail to organize and use the information they read. Often, understanding that authors have an organizational pattern in mind when they write and recognizing this pattern can assist the reader in organizing and using the material. Most textbook authors give clues to the type of organizational pattern they are using.

WHAT Commonly used organizational pattern:
Enumeration (sequential): Listing and explaining facts and information. This is often given in the order of size or importance.
Time Order: Placing fact or events in sequence using reference to time.
Compare/Contrast: Pointing out similarities or differences among facts, people, events, concepts, etc.
Cause/Effect: Showing how facts, events, or concepts (effects) come into being because of other facts, events, or concepts (causes).
Problem/Solution: Describing a problem situation and the actions undertaken to solve it, creating positive results.

HOW Explain the types of organizational patterns and provide examples of each type.

Invite readers to brainstorm list of signal words which are clues to organizational patterns.

Provide readers with additional examples to read and identify organization patterns.

Have readers speculate about the different types of organizational patterns they might find in different content area texts (e.g., science cause/effect, history time order).

Encourage readers to utilize the patterns as cued by signal words as they read to help them organize the information for their own use.

from Bean, Baldwin Content Area Reading: An Integrated Approach

SIGNAL WORDS

<u>Enumeration</u> (sequential listing)	to begin with first secondly next then finally most important also for instance in fact for example another
<u>Time Order</u>	on (date) not long after now as before after when
<u>Compare/Contrast</u>	however but as well as on the other hand not only . . . but also either . . . or while although unless similarly yet vs.
<u>Cause/Effect</u>	because since therefore consequently as a result this led to so that nevertheless accordingly if . . . then thus
<u>Problem/Solution</u>	the problem the solution difficulty

from Vacca, Vacca <u>Content Area Reading</u>

TEXT FRAMES FOR DEVELOPING COMPREHENSION

WHO   Adaptable to a variety of reading levels.

WHY   The intent of text frames is to help children to develop independent
comprehension skills. They can be used to help children organize information
in order to identify important ideas, analyze characters and their problems,
make comparisons, summarize passage content, and learn to use text structure
to support comprehension.

WHAT   Any text which the group or student is reading.

HOW   Directed Teaching

1. After reading a text with a group of children, the teacher displays a text
    frame. Together the group decides on an answer to the first line after
    discussing possible responses.

2. The discussion moves to subsequent lines of the frames. The children are
    asked to think back to the first line and select bits of information that will
    make different lines related to one another.

3. The discussion continues in this manner to complete the frame. This
    should guide children to places in the stories where appropriate
    information can be found.

4. The goal is to get children to use text frames independently. Following
    this directed teaching, the children can fill in their own text frames in
    small groups, pairs, and/or independently. They may use any of the
    information shared during group discussion, silent reading, etc.

5. The children will eventually be able to independently complete text frames.
    These frames can be further used to organize information for a report or
    project. They can also be used for pre-reading prediction as well as for
    pre-writing brainstorming.

HOW ELSE Constructing the frames:

1. Read the text, determine the problem on which you want the children to
    focus (plot, setting, facts, sequence, cause/effect, etc.).

2. Sketch out a paragraph which focuses on the problem you chose.

3. Delete words, phrases and sentences except those which are needed to
    sustain the purpose of the paragraph.

4. Modify the frame to be used in a variety of situations.

Source: Fowler, Gerald L.   Developing comprehension skills in primary students through the
use of story frames.   Reading Teacher, November, 1982, pp. 176-179.

STORY SUMMARY WITH ONE CHARACTER INCLUDED

Our story is about _____.
_____ is an important character in our story.
_____ tried to _____
_____. The story ends when
_____.

IMPORTANT IDEA OR PLOT

In this story, the problem starts when _____
_____. After that, _____
_____.
Next, _____
_____. Then, _____
_____. The problem is finally solved
when _____.
The story ends _____.

SETTING

This story takes place _____.
I know this because the author uses the words "_____
_____."
Other clues that show when/where the story takes place are _____
_____.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

_____ is an important character in our story.
_____ is important because
_____. Once s/he
_____. Another time,
_____. I think that
_____ is _____
because _____.

CHARACTER COMPARISON

_____ and _____ are two characters
in our story. _____ is _____
_____ while _____ is
_____. For instance, _____
tries to _____ and _____
tries to _____. _____
learns a lesson when _____.

TEXT FRAMES

Problem-Solution Text Structure

_____ had a problem because _____
_____.
Therefore, _____
_____.
As a result, _____.

Problem = something bad; a situation that people would like to change   Action = what people do to try to solve the problem   Results = what happens as a result of the action; the effect or outcome of trying to solve the problem

Compare/Contrast Text Structure

Comparison
_____ and _____ are similar in several ways. Both
_____ and _____. _____
and _____ have similar _____. Finally, both
_____ and _____.

Contrast
_____ and _____ are different in several ways. First of all,
_____, while _____. Secondly,
_____. In addition, while _____,
_____. Finally, _____, while _____.

Sequence Text Structure
Here is how a _____ is made. First, _____.
Next, _____. Then, _____. Finally,
_____.

Cause and Effect Text Structure
Because of _____, _____.
_____ caused _____. Finally, due to
_____, _____. This explains why
_____.

Time Order Text Structure
The events leading up to _____ were:
First, _____.
Second, _____.
Third, _____.
Fourth, _____.
Finally, _____.

adapted from B. Armbruster, T. Anderson, J. Ostertag

TAG

TAG, the Textbook Activity Guide, facilitates active participation while reading content area materials. Created by Pat Hughes, Barb May and Carolyn Taylor of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, it engages students in a variety of activities such as discussing, drawing, writing, and demonstrating.

The following directions are recommended for designing a TAG activity:

Procedure

1. Section a portion of a textbook chapter that may be difficult for students. Decide upon the significant concepts and determine the appropriate task for each concept.

2. Develop strategy codes to encourage students to actively participate in learning. A sample code is:

    R = Read and retell this to your partner in your own words
    D = Read and discuss your personal opinion with your partner
    P = Predict with your partner
    W = Write an answer/response to this
    O = Organize this information by preparing a map, chart, or some kind of visual representation with your partner

3. Design a guide which reflects your course objectives and which is appropriate for the majority of students in your classroom.

Directions for using strategy:

1. Thoroughly explain, model, and demonstrate the strategy codes to students.

2. Assign each student a partner.

3. Monitor their progress.

4. After completion, engage the students in a discussion of the guide by asking them to show evidence which led them to their belief/answer.

A Sample TAG

Directions: Follow the strategy codes:

R = Read and retell this to your partner in your own words
D = Read and discuss your personal opinion with your partner
P = Predict with your partner
W = Write an answer/response to this
O = Organize this information by preparing a map, chart, or some kind of visual representation with your partner

Chapter 6:   Light

1.   **R** *(1st par.)*   Tell your partner what this paragraph says.

2.   **W** and **D** *(2nd and 3rd par.)*   Write your own definition of PHOTON and then discuss it with your partner.

3.   **R** *(4th, 5th, 6th par.)*   Tell each other what these three paragraphs say.

4.   **W** *(5th-8th par.)*   Write a 3-4 sentence summary of these four paragraphs.

5.   **R** *(9th and 10th par.)*   Explain diagram 5.5 to each other.

(From *Reading Review: Content Area Reading Program*, Pat Hughes, Barb May and Carolyn Taylor)