



Lessons for Improving the Comprehension of Middle School Students

Texas Center for Learning Disabilities

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Texas Center for Learning Disabilities

- Locations across four organizations:
 - University of Houston
 - The University of Texas at Austin
 - The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
 - St. Louis University
- Prime focus: Investigate the classification, intervention, and remediation of learning disabilities



TCLD Research (2012–2017)

- Classification, Definition, and Integration of Learning Disabilities Research
- Development of a Framework for Executive Functions in the Context of Reading Comprehension Skills and Difficulties
- Integrating Executive Functioning Into Remediation of Students With Learning Disabilities
- Neural Correlates of Reading Comprehension in Typical and Struggling Readers



TCLD Research (2006–2011)

- Classification
- Early Identification (grades 1–3)
- Remediation (grades 6–8)
- Magnetic Source Imaging



About

- Adapted from actual Tier 2 lessons implemented in TCLD research
- For use with struggling readers in grades 6–8
- Two novel units and a lesson planning guide currently available

www.texasldcenter.org/lesson-plans



Tier 2

Three phases of instruction:

- Phase I: Word study and fluency
- Phase II: Vocabulary and comprehension
- Phase III: Application of reading strategies to expository text



To Learn More About the Research

View our webinar on response to intervention with middle school students:

www.texasldcenter.org/videos/teaching-older-students-with-reading-difficulties-and-disabilities-how-do-w



Alignment With TEKS

- Learn important vocabulary
Texas Administrative Code [TAC] §110.18–110.20(b)(2)(A) and (B)
- Make predictions prior to reading and verify predictions after reading 19 TAC §110.17(b)(D)
- Access background knowledge prior to reading
19 TAC §110.17(b)(A)
- Read text through various formats (e.g., partner reading, choral reading) to learn and practice various reading comprehension strategies (e.g., main idea, summarization)
- Learn how to “get the gist” of a passage and entire chapter
19 TAC §110.17(b)(C) and (E)
- Learn how to generate Level 1, Right There and Level 2, Putting It Together questions
19 TAC §110.17(b)(B) and (C)



Lesson Plan Components

Before Reading

- Introduce new vocabulary
- Make predictions
- Build background knowledge

While Reading

- Read text (several options)
- Generate questions
- Get the gist

After Reading

- Review vocabulary
- Check comprehension
- Summarize
- Closure: Verify predictions and get the gist
- Extended reading (optional)



Instructional Delivery

Strategies explicitly taught:

- Introducing and modeling strategies
- Using think-alouds
- Providing multiple opportunities for guided practice
- Providing immediate, process-directed feedback
- Providing independent practice opportunities after mastery of strategy use



Before Reading: Introduce New Vocabulary

Two options:

- Five-step process
- Three-step process plus Frayer Model



Five-Step Process

1. Say the word. Have students repeat the word.
2. Tell students what the word means.
3. Tell students how the word is used in the story and explain.
4. Provide three to five examples of word used in other contexts.
5. Ask students to determine whether questions or scenarios are examples or nonexamples of the word.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Planning Template

Vocabulary word

bonded

Step 1: Say the word. Have students repeat the word.

Step 2: Tell students what the word means. (Write the definition.)

Being held or tied to a promise or an obligation

Step 3: Tell students how the word is used in the story and explain.

Children are bonded to a master and are obligated to work. Parents have promised the master that their children will work to pay back money that they owe.

Step 4: Give students three to five examples of the word being used in other contexts.

- *Early American colonists*
- *In some countries even today, people or their children are forced to work to pay back loans.*
- *Sometimes, entire families are bonded to a landlord and kept like slaves.*

Step 5: Ask students to determine whether questions or scenarios are examples or nonexamples of the vocabulary word.

- *A child is forced to work for a master for years to pay his parents' debt. Is this child bonded? (Yes)*
- *I borrowed \$100 from my dad, and I agreed to wash his car and mow the lawn for 2 months. Am I bonded? (No)*
- *A man is employed by a builder and works 12 hours a day building homes. Is he bonded? (No)*
- *A woman marries a man whose family works for a master; now she is forced to work for this master for years to help pay back the debt of her husband's family. Is she bonded? (Yes)*
- *A child helps his mother clean houses during the summer months when he is not in school. Is he bonded? (No)*



Three-Step Process, Plus Frayer Model

1. Say the word. Have students repeat the word.
 2. Tell students what the word means.
 3. Tell students how the word is used in the story and explain.
- Read passage.
 - Use Frayer Model.



Frayer Model Planning Template

Vocabulary word

precious

Definition

Of great worth or value

Characteristics

- *Valuable*
- *Priceless*
- *Irreplaceable*
- *Treasured*
- *Rare*

Examples

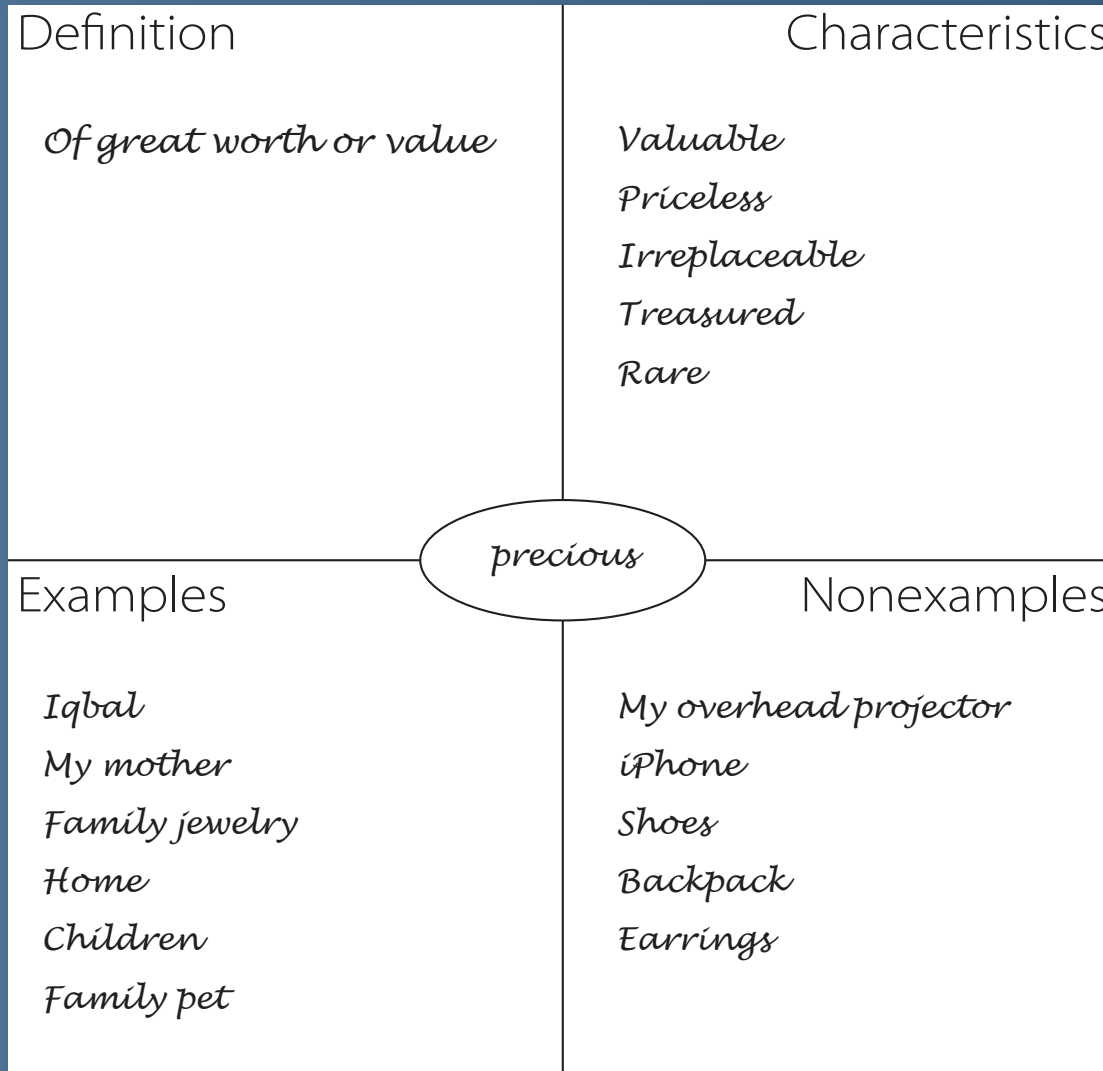
- *Iqbal*
- *My mother*
- *Family jewelry*
- *My home*
- *My children*
- *My pet*

Nonexamples

- *My overhead projector*
- *Shoes*
- *Backpack*
- *Earrings*



Frayer Model





Before Reading: Make Predictions

1. Students look at running list of gist statements.
2. Teacher and students read gist statement together.
3. Students write what they think will happen in the chapter.
4. Partners share predictions.



Before Reading: Build Background Knowledge

Various options for building students' background knowledge:

- Asking questions prior to reading, soliciting answers, engaging students in discussion
- Providing students with additional reading passages about a topic related to the novel
- Presenting students with basic facts and pictures of a foreign country or historical period in which a novel is set
- Expanding on a topic from a novel by presenting additional information and engaging in a learning activity

Active Participation Ideas for Different Types of Questions

Type of question	Active participation response
Yes/no	Thumbs-up or thumbs-down
Tell about a time...	Give students 30 seconds to think and then ask students to turn to their partner and tell about a time when... Have two groups share or share what you heard as you walked around.
Why do you think this chapter is...	Discuss with a partner
What character do you think will be...	Choral response



While Reading: Read Text

Teachers choose a reading format:

- Cloze read
- Choral read (repeated)
- Choral read (alternating)
- Partner read
- Silent read with frequent checks for understanding



While Reading: Generate Questions

- Level 1, Right There
- Level 2, Putting It Together
- Level 3, Making Connections

- Question levels are explicitly introduced, modeled, and practiced
- See sample scripts



Comprehension Strategy Planning

Question Level	Page	Paragraph
Level 1 questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right There questions: Questions that can be answered in one word or one sentence and can be found word for word in the text 		
Level 2 questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting It Together questions: Questions that require looking in more than one place in the text and putting information together to answer 		
Level 3 questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Connections questions: Questions that require thinking about what was just read, what the reader already knows, and how that information fits together to answer 		



Level 1—Right There

- Questions can be answered in one word or one sentence
- Answers can be found word-for-word in the text
 - > Who? > Where?
 - > What? > Why?
 - > When? > How?

Level 1—Examples

- What is the capital of Texas?
- Who was Jane Long?
- Where did the Mexican War begin?

Level 2—Putting It Together

- Questions can be answered by looking in the text
- Answers require one or more sentences
- To answer the questions, you have to look in more than one place and put information together
 - > Who? > Where?
 - > What? > Why?
 - > When? > How?

Level 2—Examples

- How did ranchers get their cattle to the markets?
- Describe the events leading to Texas joining the United States.
- Why was it harder for enslaved people to have a family life than plantation owners?

Level 3—Making Connections

- Questions cannot be answered by using text alone
- Answers require you to think about what you just read, what you already know, and how it fits together
 - > How is ____ like (similar to) ____ ?
 - > How is ____ different from ____ ?
 - > How is ____ related to ____ ?

Level 3—Examples

- Why is the Alamo important in Texas History
- How is the Texas Declaration of Independence similar to the United States Declaration of Independence?
- How is the Civil War different from the Mexican War?



While Reading: Get the Gist

- Strategy for teaching main idea:
 - Who or what the paragraph is about
 - The most important information about the “who” or “what”
 - The above elements combined in a statement that is 10 words or less
- Explicitly introduced, modeled, and practiced
- See sample scripts



After Reading: Review Vocabulary

Several options:

- Partner review
- Sentence review
- Examples and nonexamples
- Frayer Model
- What Word Fits? game



After Reading: Check Comprehension

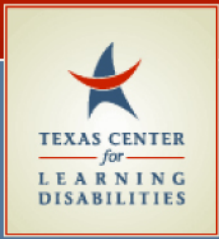
Does It Make Sense? activity:

- Provides students with an opportunity to read very short passages and identify when something doesn't make sense and why (fix-up strategy)
- Game is introduced and modeled before students play along with teacher



After Reading: Summarize

1. Identify the three most important events that occurred in the chapter. List them, in order, in the planning box.
2. Identify several important details about each event. List them, in sequential order, in the planning box.
3. Develop introductory and closing sentences.
4. Write the summary, using the information in the planning box.
5. Edit.



Planning Sheet

Introductory sentence
Important event
Detail
Detail
Detail
Detail
Important event
Detail
Detail
Detail
Detail
Important event
Detail
Detail
Detail
Detail
Closing sentence

Summarize Narrative Text Rubric

Question	Student or partner rating		Teacher rating	
Did the author include an introductory sentence?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Did the author focus on important events?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Did the author include important details?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Did the author combine details in some of the sentences?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Is the summary easy to understand?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Did the author correctly spell words, particularly the words found in the article?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Did the author correctly capitalize the first word in each sentence and the proper names of people, places, and things?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No
Did the author use correct punctuation, including a period at the end of each sentence?	Yes	Fix up	Yes	No



After Reading: Closure (Verify Predictions, Get the Gist)

- After reading, ask students to verify their predictions.
- Give partners 1 minute to discuss and then have a few students share.
- Have students create a gist statement for the entire chapter and write it in their student logs. Have some students share.
- Record the statement on the Get the Gist chart.



After Reading: Extended Reading

- Used to extend students' knowledge of a particular topic
- Provides a supplemental reading opportunity
- Vary in format and genre—biographies, newspaper articles, scientific reports...

Extended Reading Passage

Adapted from: Simkin, J. (2011). *Sarah Carpenter*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRcarpenter.htm>



¹I was born in Hare Street, Bethnal Green, London, in the year 1805. My father died when I was two years old, leaving two children, myself and Sarah my sister. My mother kept us both till I was about five years old, and then she took badly and was taken to the London Hospital. My sister and I were taken to the Bethnal Green Workhouse. My mother died and we stayed in the workhouse. We had good food, good beds and given liberty two or three times a week. We were taught to read and in every respect were treated kindly.

²The same year my mother died, I being between six and seven years of age, there came a man looking for a number of parish apprentices. We were all ordered to come into the board room, about forty of us. There were, I dare say, about twenty gentlemen seated at a table, with pens and paper before them. Our names were called out one by one. We were all standing before them in a row. My name was called and I stepped out in the middle of the room. They said, "Well John, you are a fine lad, would you like to go into the country?" I said "Yes sir."

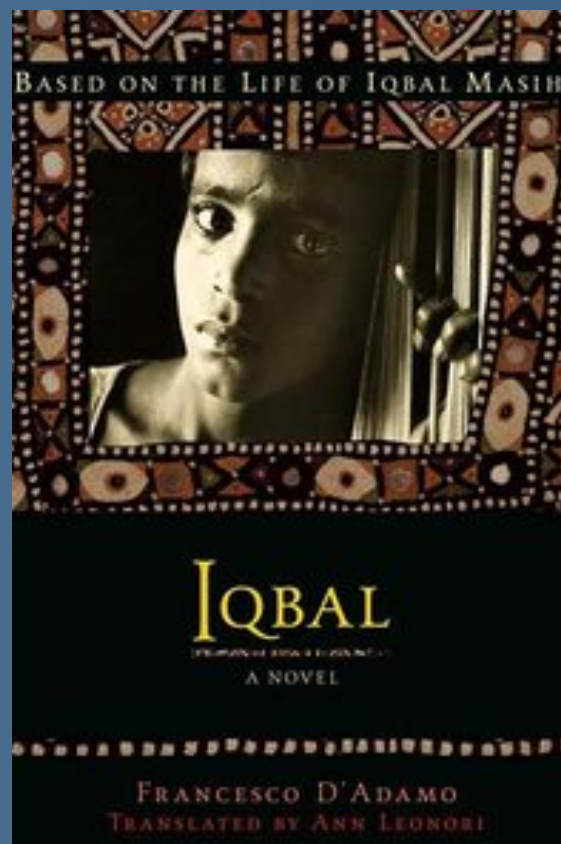


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EXAMPLE NOVEL UNIT LESSON PLAN



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Refer to Overview of Daily Activities:

[www.texasldcenter.org/files/lesson-plans/
u2_6-9.pdf](http://www.texasldcenter.org/files/lesson-plans/u2_6-9.pdf)



Scope and Sequence: Introduction

Day 1 (60 minutes):

- Introduce vocabulary
- Read the introduction
- Build background knowledge
- Preview elements of the novel



Scope and Sequence: Chapter 1

Day 1 (60 minutes):

- Introduce vocabulary
- Prediction
- Read the chapter: Generate Level 1 questions
- After reading: Does It Make Sense? game
- Closure: Verify predictions and get the gist



Scope and Sequence: Chapter 6

Day 1 (60 minutes):

- Introduce vocabulary
- Prediction
- Build background knowledge
- Read the chapter

Day 2 (50 minutes):

- Introduce and model Level 3 questions
- After reading: Does It Make Sense? game
- Closure: Verify predictions and get the gist
- Extended reading



Scope and Sequence: Chapter 11

Day 1 (60 minutes):

- Extended reading
- Prediction
- Read the chapter: Generate Level 1, 2, and 3 questions

Day 2 (50 minutes):

- Review vocabulary: Frayer Model
- After reading: Does It Make Sense? game
- Closure: Verify predictions and get the gist
- Extended reading



Scope and Sequence: Chapter 15

Day 1 (50 minutes):

- Prediction
- Read the chapter: Generate Level 1, 2, and 3 questions
- Review vocabulary: Frayer Model

Day 2 (45 minutes):

- Summarize narrative text
- Closure: Get the gist



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DEVELOPING YOUR OWN NOVEL UNIT LESSON PLANS



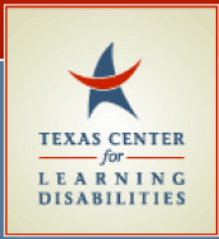
Consideration 1: Plan Vocabulary Instruction

- Select important vocabulary words for each chapter.
- Explicitly introduce new words:
 - Five-step process OR
 - Three-step process, plus Frayer Model
- When developing plans, remember to embed time for review of words (very important!).



Vocabulary Planning Template for Five-Step Process

Vocabulary word
Step 1: Say the word. Have students repeat the word.
Step 2: Tell students what the word means. (Write the definition.)
Step 3: Tell students how the word is used in the story and explain.
Step 4: Give students three to five examples of the word being used in other contexts.
Step 5: Ask students to determine whether questions or scenarios are examples or nonexamples of the vocabulary word.



Frayer Model Planning Template

Vocabulary word

Definition

Characteristics

-
-
-
-
-
-

Examples

-
-
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-
-
-

Nonexamples

-
-
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-



Consideration 2: Develop Activities to Build Background Knowledge

- What kind of information do students need to connect to the characters and fully understand their experiences?
- Geography
- Culture
- Time period
- Language/vocabulary



Consideration 3: Students' Familiarity With Reading Strategies

- Predictions
- Get the gist
- Generating questions
- Summarizing



Putting It All Together

- Develop a scope and sequence.
- Use templates at back of Lesson Planning Guide.
- Embed vocabulary, predictions, background knowledge activities, text reading formats, monitoring strategies, etc.
- Prepare teacher “scripts” if needed, student logs, and other student materials.
- Organize in binder, for example.



Assistance

- Refer to lesson plans and lesson planning guide on TCLD site.
- Check out the resources in our Professional Development section.
- If you need Word documents of lesson plan components or scripts, send an e-mail to TCLD here:
<http://www.texasldcenter.org/contact>
- Email Christy Murray:
christymurray@austin.utexas.edu



Q&A Forum

- Look for a link below the webinar where you can submit a question
- Answers will be emailed to you and possibly posted online