Day 2 ELA I Sessions

Grades 4-5
**Student Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where does this student excel?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home language?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language minority?*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading/literacy level and ability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
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<td>Interaction with Peers</td>
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<td>Writing ability</td>
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<td>Additional background</td>
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<td>Concerns</td>
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</table>

*The subgroup of the language minority population does not speak, understand, read, or write the dominant language well enough to participate effectively in an English-only classroom. They are referred to as “minorities” not just because they are not a numerical majority in the population (although they may be locally) but because they often wield little influence or power within the country. American Indians, for example, are sometimes considered language minorities even if they speak only English because their history includes a non-English language and repressive language and cultural policies by the US federal government, so that their current use of English was impacted by that history.*
The Progression of Reading Comprehension
P. David Pearson and David Liben

The question of how to foster reading comprehension is of central importance to education. Reading competence is strongly associated with K–12 academic success and with success in college and careers. As students advance through school and enter college and the workforce, the reading tasks they face typically become more demanding and the texts they read more complex in terms of both concepts and language.

It is useful to first address the question of what such development actually means so that we might more effectively help students develop their reading comprehension ability. To characterize that development, we must unpack and elaborate four key constructs and their tightly intertwined roles in reading comprehension:

1. Developing and maintaining a standard for coherence for evaluating our models of meaning
2. Employing cognitive strategies to repair comprehension when it breaks down
3. Building models of what we think texts say and mean
4. Using knowledge to propel and assess comprehension

In general, students make progress in comprehension as they travel through school. They can read and understand increasingly complex texts, and they can demonstrate their understanding by engaging in increasingly sophisticated thinking about the ideas they encounter in text. If we set aside for the moment the vital role that text itself plays, the ability to comprehend depends on two critical variables the reader brings to the task—knowledge and cognitive strategies. The knowledge that drives comprehension includes general world knowledge, knowledge from topics within specific disciplines, and knowledge about the nature of language, including the genres and conventions of written text.

When comprehension occurs optimally, it is driven by readers’ knowledge and their highly automated processing skills; readers know that a text they are reading “makes sense” when their interpretation of the text (the model of meaning they are building for that text) is consistent with what they know to be true about the world and what they just read a moment ago. In this state of more or less automatic processing, reading and comprehension seem smooth and effortless. But when their standard for coherence is not met—when the text stops making sense to them—readers must take stock, reconsider options, and look for ways to achieve the coherence they seek. The processes they invoke when things don’t make sense are what we call cognitive or comprehension strategies. These strategies are a set of deliberate mental procedures (corrective or “fix-up” routines) that students invoke when they sense that comprehension has broken down. In order for comprehension to grow sufficiently to meet increasing demands placed upon their reading skill, students must continue to develop both knowledge and comprehension strategies throughout their schooling. Both are necessary; neither is sufficient in itself.

A standard for coherence: Comprehension as ongoing monitoring

A key part of this ongoing comprehension process is maintaining a consistent standard for coherence. The term standard for coherence refers to a “reader’s criteria or general sense of the importance of forming a coherent representation, especially of how different parts of a text are related to one another” (Magliano et al, in McNamara, 2007, p.121) and how the text maps onto a reader’s prior knowledge. As text becomes more complex and as tasks become more demanding, students must develop and maintain an increasingly wide and rigorous standard for coherence if comprehension is to develop apace. The skilled reader monitors comprehension in accordance with this robust standard for coherence. When recognized, violations of the standard—inconsistency among the parts of a text, ambiguity about word meanings, or conflict with existing knowledge—call forth strategies needed to overcome these impediments. Thus, developing a high standard for coherence, learning to monitor comprehension actively, and learning to respond with appropriate corrective strategies all hold a central position in developing comprehension. Generally, these strategies include some mix of paraphrasing and self-explanation, rereading generating questions, analyzing and using the structure of the text, visualizing, drawing bridging and elaborative inferences, close reading (this may itself overlap with and include a variety of strategies), and summarizing (including the use of graphic organizers to depict one’s emerging understanding). Let’s take a peek at some of these and how they come into play.
Cognitive strategies: repairing comprehension when it breaks down

Students need to learn how to match the right strategy to the right text and task. Thus, although strategies may be introduced singularly, instruction needs to move quickly to an emphasis on developing a “tool kit” of strategies from which they can pull the right strategy for a given text and task. However, if students are not presented with a variety of text types and tasks, the full panoply of these strategies will likely not emerge evenly, and breadth of comprehension will suffer. This, in fact, often happens in elementary schools, where most reading instruction centers on narrative text, with the net effect that they enter middle school ill-prepared to meet the challenge of informational texts in science, social studies, and mathematics. This situation has begun to change, albeit slowly.

Many of these strategies involve making inferences. Older and more proficient comprehenders make more inferences than younger or less proficient readers. However, students who are younger or less proficient can make the same sorts of inferences as their counterparts when directly prompted. So the issue here may be that skilled readers expect to understand what they read. They have a high coherence standard, and when they are confused, they start to do more vigilant monitoring of their understanding. Their less proficient peers are not as accustomed to understanding what they read, and don’t therefore always do the work to insure comprehension. This may be the factor that separates the two types of students, rather than relative ability in making inferences.

If students maintain a high standard for coherence and continue to monitor comprehension, their once-effortful strategies over time will be transformed into skills—that is, less effortful, more automatic, and more likely to be retained. Therefore, the transition from effortful strategy to automatic skill is another aspect of progress of comprehension. It should be kept in mind that more demanding tasks or texts will require reversion to more effortful strategic reading, beginning the transition anew. Over time, this cycle of conscious effort transforming to automatic habit scaffolds the emergence of highly proficient readers.

Just as breadth of comprehension develops with breadth of texts and tasks, depth of comprehension develops as students read, with instructional support, a progression of increasingly demanding texts requiring active use of strategies, including making inferences, as well as more profound and multidimensional tasks.

Models: Building levels of representation

Another key part of the comprehension process is model building. In fact, it can be (and has been) plausibly argued that comprehension is nothing but building representations (models) of the meaning of text. One key level of meaning is what Kintsch has dubbed the textbase. It involves an accurate reading of the text for the purpose of getting the key ideas (what psychologists call propositions) into working memory. It also involves using knowledge of language and text to make all the local inferences required to connect the sentences to one another (e.g., inferring that the pronoun she refers to the woman just mentioned in the preceding sentence). It is what the common core standards refer to when the demand is made to “read closely to determine what the text says explicitly (reading standard 1).” A second level of representation is the situation model—that coherent mental representation of the events, actions, and conditions in the text that represents the integration of the textbase with relevant prior knowledge from long-term memory. To develop satisfactory situation models (ones that meet the standard for coherence already outlined), readers must successfully integrate information from the textbase (the words, sentences, and paragraphs) with available and relevant prior knowledge retrieved from long-term memory and fold it all into their emerging models of the meaning of the text.

Constructing a situation model is central to reading comprehension. It is the mechanism that allows readers to integrate what they already know with what they read in the service of building new knowledge structures in response to reading. These new structures feed back into memory where readers use them to reinforce, modify, or replace those currently stored in memory. Just as knowledge drives comprehension, so does comprehension provide the reader with new knowledge to modify the existing knowledge structures in long-term memory. In other words, knowledge begets comprehension begets knowledge in just the sort of beneficial cycle we would like students to experience.
Central to the development of any satisfactory situation model are the inferences a reader must employ in order to fill in what the textbase leaves undefined, uncertain, or ambiguous. For example, the statement “Despite repeated efforts, cloud seeding over deserts has failed to produce rain” requires a skilled reader the logical inference that clouds, at least under some circumstances, are capable of producing rain. At a simpler level, a first-grader reading the sentence “Henry dug a hole” will infer that Henry used a shovel—unless, of course, there is something in the text to block such an inference, such as an earlier statement that Henry had no tools or that Henry is a dog, and assuming that the young student knows what a shovel is.

Skilled readers have two advantages over less skilled readers when it comes to model building. One is greater facility with text processing and the other is more knowledge. Thus, skilled readers are more readily able to integrate broader arrays of relevant elements from the textbase and to bring wider and deeper knowledge to the task of constructing a situation model.

**Knowledge: Propelling and assessing comprehension**

Finally, we focus on what has already emerged as a critical factor in this whole process—knowledge. Development of comprehension requires knowledge as well as procedural tools (skills and strategies). Background knowledge influences comprehension, especially the understanding of expository text. It plays a key role in the construction of the two critical representational models, the textbase and the situation model. As suggested earlier, virtually all forms of knowledge boost comprehension of text, but these in particular are crucial:

- **General world knowledge**
  This is knowledge of all of the mundane things that make everyday life manageable.

- **Knowledge of relations among people**
  This is particularly relevant to understanding literature since most literature focuses on themes that involve the stuff of human experience.

- **Disciplinary knowledge**
  This is knowledge of how ideas are organized and how arguments are made in various disciplines. This is the stuff of academic discourse. Also included in disciplinary knowledge is knowledge of the particular topics that comprise the disciplines (e.g., character development in literature, photosynthesis in biology, or the structure of revolutions in history). Knowledge of specific topics is especially important for reading informational texts, and the wider and deeper this knowledge the deeper and more precise our comprehension.

- **Knowledge of language**
  This includes, of course, the all-important aspects of printed language, including knowledge of the cipher—how letters map onto sound—as well as the conventions of writing and the most common rhetorical structures.

As important as knowledge is to the development of comprehension, active strategic reading is equally important. Nowhere has this been better demonstrated than in the work of Cain and her colleagues who show that even when less able readers possessed knowledge of a topic equal to that of skilled readers (in this case, knowledge of an artificial world for which all readers had been taught to the same criterion level of knowledge), better readers were still able to draw inferences that the less able readers could not. In the cloud seeding example above, a student reading about the persistent failure of cloud seeding over a period of decades might also infer that there are no known methods to produce rain from clouds. Similarly, in the earlier example about Henry digging the hole, a first-grade student reading that water came from the hole Henry dug could infer that at least in some locations water can be found underground. These inferences would not be available to students struggling just to establish a rudimentary textbase.

**A Word about word knowledge**

Knowledge of words themselves is also important to the development of skilled reading—not just because reading obviously involves words but also because words are windows into our knowledge; words name our ideas. Word knowledge entails many codes—phonological, orthographic, morphological, and semantic—but it is the semantic aspect of word knowledge that is most central to comprehension. As Walter Kintsch puts it, “Vocabulary growth is not just a question of knowing a word, but knowing the right things about it (nuances
of meaning in different contexts). We don’t learn words; we learn semantic networks.” That is, we learn words in a web of relationships to other words. A progression of comprehension therefore entails expansion of that network—learning more words, learning more about those words, learning what other words and ideas those words are like and unlike, and experiencing those words in enough settings and contexts to begin to differentiate the various definitions of any given word.

Strengthening what is known about each word, however, involves more than the word’s meanings. Knowing a word indeed means knowing as much as possible about it semantically, but also phonologically, morphologically, and orthographically. The greater students’ knowledge in each of these areas, the greater their reading comprehension and the greater their ability to learn new words rapidly and to retain them.

Before entering college students learn about five thousand words a year. Even if a smaller figure that bases its count on unique roots alone is used, it is clear that most words inevitably must be learned in the context of reading rather than through direct instruction. The deeper and wider students’ knowledge of words, the more efficient and effective their learning of new words and the better their general reading comprehension.

Knowledge of words, like knowledge more generally, bears a reciprocal relationship to comprehension: knowledge of words begets comprehension, and comprehension, in turn, begets new knowledge of words.

A final word
Four key constructs—a standard for coherence, strategies, model building, and knowledge—are the infrastructure of comprehension. Together, they form a tightly woven framework, with each element necessary for the development of the others. These elements all work together to produce and refine greater knowledge of words, the world, disciplines, and language. This enhanced knowledge yields greater comprehension, which fuels the ability to comprehend increasingly challenging text in the future. If all these elements are in place, actively reinforcing one another, comprehension will progress appropriately across the grades.
Notes for the Progression of Reading Comprehension

A standard for coherence: Comprehension as ongoing monitoring


Cognitive strategies: repairing comprehension when it breaks down


### Models: Building levels of representation


**Knowledge: Propelling and assessing comprehension**


Nowhere has this been better demonstrated than in the work of Cain et al (2001)


**A Word about word knowledge**


The greater students' knowledge in each of these areas, the greater their reading comprehension: Perfetti, C.A, & Hart, L. (2001). The lexical bases of comprehension skill. In D. Gorfien (Ed.), *On the consequences of...*


Framing the Day Part 3: Sitting with Synthesis

Taking into consideration “The Progression of Reading Comprehension,” the Shifts for ELA (included), “Both And” from yesterday, and the CCSS for Reading and Language, take 10 minutes to craft a written answer to the following question:

How does each text contribute to a shared idea?

Identify an idea common to all texts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT STRUCTURE</th>
<th>Exceedingly Complex</th>
<th>Very Complex</th>
<th>Moderately Complex</th>
<th>Slightly Complex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Is intricate with regard to such elements as point of view, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail</td>
<td>May include subplots, time shifts and more complex characters</td>
<td>May have two or more storylines and occasionally be difficult to predict</td>
<td>Is clear, chronological or easy to predict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Graphics:</td>
<td>If used, illustrations or graphics are essential for understanding the meaning of the text</td>
<td>If used, illustrations or graphics support or extend the meaning of the text</td>
<td>If used, a range of illustrations or graphics support selected parts of the text</td>
<td>If used, either illustrations directly support and assist in interpreting the text or are not necessary to understanding the meaning of the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| LANGUAGE FEATURES | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conventionality: | Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language | Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language | Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning | Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand |
| Vocabulary: | Complex, generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading | Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic | Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic | Contemporary, familiar, conversational language |
| Sentence Structure: | Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases; sentences often contain multiple concepts | Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words | Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions | Mainly simple sentences |

| MEANING | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Meaning: | Multiple competing levels of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text | Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text | Multiple levels of meaning clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety | One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text |

| KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Life Experiences: | Explores complex, sophisticated or abstract themes; experiences portrayed are distinctly different from the common reader | Explores themes of varying levels of complexity or abstraction; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers | Explores several themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers | Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers |
| Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: | Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements | Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements | Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements | No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements |
# Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

## INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Text Author</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceedingly Complex</th>
<th>Very Complex</th>
<th>Moderately Complex</th>
<th>Slightly Complex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXT STRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Organization:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections between an extensive range of ideas, processes or events are deep, intricate and often ambiguous; organization is intricate or discipline-specific</td>
<td>Connections between an expanded range of ideas, processes or events are often implicit or subtle; organization may contain multiple pathways or exhibit some discipline-specific traits</td>
<td>Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential or chronological</td>
<td>Connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is chronological, sequential or easy to predict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Features: If used, are essential in understanding content</td>
<td>Text Features: If used, directly enhance the reader's understanding of content</td>
<td>Text Features: If used, enhance the reader's understanding of content</td>
<td>Text Features: If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential to understanding content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Graphics: If used, intricate, extensive graphics, tables, charts, etc., are extensive and integral to making meaning of the text; may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text</td>
<td>Use of Graphics: If used, graphics, tables, charts, etc. support or are integral to understanding the text</td>
<td>Use of Graphics: If used, graphic, pictures, tables, and charts, etc. are mostly supplementary to understanding the text</td>
<td>Use of Graphics: If used, graphic, pictures, tables, and charts, etc. are simple and unnecessary to understanding the text but they may support and assist readers in understanding the written text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **LANGUAGE FEATURES** |             |                    |                  |
| Conventionality:     |             |                    |                  |
| Dense and complex; contains considerable abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language | Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language | Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning | Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand |
| Vocabulary: Complex, generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading | Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic | Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely overly academic | Contemporary, familiar, conversational language |
| Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases and transition words; sentences often contains multiple concepts | Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words | Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions | Mainly simple sentences |

| **PURPOSE** |             |                    |                  |
| Purpose:     |             |                    |                  |
| Subtle and intricate, difficult to determine; includes many theoretical or abstract elements | Implicit or subtle but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical or abstract than concrete | Implied but easy to identify based upon context or source | Explicitly stated, clear, concrete, narrowly focused |

| **KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS** |             |                    |                  |
| Subject Matter Knowledge: Relies on extensive levels of discipline-specific or theoretical knowledge; includes a range of challenging abstract concepts | Subject Matter Knowledge: Relies on moderate levels of discipline-specific or theoretical knowledge; includes a mix of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts | Subject Matter Knowledge: Relies on common practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; includes a mix of simple and more complicated, abstract ideas | Subject Matter Knowledge: Relies on everyday, practical knowledge; includes simple, concrete ideas |
| Intertextuality: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc. | Intertextuality: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc. | Intertextuality: Few references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc | Intertextuality: No references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc. |


How has this diagram helped you develop Standards Aligned questions for texts that you work with? Can you describe a time where you have used it?

OR

How do you see this diagram helping you develop Standards Aligned questions for texts that you work with? Do you have any particular texts you are thinking of using this to support?
Birth of the Haudenosaunee

By Dehowahda·dih - Bradley Powless

Eel Clan, Onondaga Nation

Journey of the Peacemaker

Over a thousand years ago on the shores of Onondaga Lake, in present day central New York, democracy was born. The Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and the Mohawk people had been warring against each other and there was great bloodshed. These five nations had forgotten their ways and their actions saddened the Creator.

The Creator sent a messenger to the people so that the five nations could live in peace. His name was the Peacemaker.

The Peacemaker carried powerful words of peace to the five nations. He traveled in a canoe of white stone to show that his words are true.

One of the first to join the Peacemaker’s vision was an Onondaga named Hiawatha. Hiawatha was in mourning with the death of his daughters. The Peacemaker used Hiawatha’s purple and white wampum strings to clear his mind to think clearly again. Together they traveled to the other nations persuading them to put down their weapons of war.

The Peacemaker then sought out the most evil people of the five nations. He knew that for peace to endure, these men needed to be turned into good-minded leaders.

The Peacemaker had already successfully convinced the Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, and Senecas to join the Great Peace; however an Onondaga named Tadodaho stopped the completion of the vision. He was the most evil person of the time. Tadodaho was so evil that his body was twisted and snakes grew from his head.

The Peacemaker gathered all of the chiefs. They traveled together to convince him to join the peace. Only then did Tadodaho accept the Peacemaker's message and his special duty of caretaker of the council fire of the
Haudenosaunee. His body and hair straightened and he became the last of the fifty chiefs. The five nations were united at last!

The Peacemaker showed them that one nation can be easily broken, like a single arrow; but five nations bound together, like five arrows, will become strong. The Peacemaker further symbolized this union of peace by selecting the white pine tree. The tree’s pine needles are also bundled into groups of five to remind us of the Great Peace. The Peacemaker uprooted a great white pine tree leaving a great hole. Everyone then buried their hatchets of war and replanted the tree. The Peacemaker placed an eagle on top of the Tree of Peace. The eagle is there to warn the Haudenosaunee of any dangers to this Great Peace.

A wampum belt made of purple and white clam shells was created to record the event. Four squares (starting from the east) representing the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga and Seneca Nations with the Great Peace Tree (representing the Onondaga) in the center. This became known as the Hiawatha Belt which showed the union of the five Nations.

Coming Together

The Onondaga Nation is a sovereign nation with its own government. This began when the Peacemaker replanted the Great Tree of Peace. It has been in existence for countless centuries.

The entire Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-sho-ne) has fifty Hoyane (Ho-ya-nay) or chiefs among the five nations. The Hoyane are all considered equal. To show that they are leaders, the Peacemaker places the antlers of the deer on the Gustoweh (Gus-to-wah) or headdress of every Hoyane. When in council, every chief has an equal responsibility and equal say in the matters of the Haudenosaunee.

The Peacemaker envisioned the chiefs holding arms in a large circle. Inside the circle are the laws and customs of our people. It is the responsibility of the Hoyanet to protect the people within the circle and to look forward Seven Generations to the future in making decisions.

At Onondaga, there are fourteen Hoyane, including Tadodaho. Each chief works with his female counterpart, the Clan Mother. In council they are the voice of the people of their clan.

The council is divided into three benches or groups. Each bench must work together on decisions for the nation. When a decision by council has been agreed upon by all three benches, it comes with the backing of
all of the chiefs in agreement. It is said that the Council is “Of One Mind”. There is no voting.

Since that first meeting with the Peacemaker, the Onondaga Nation Chiefs and Clan Mothers continue to govern by the ways given by the Peacemaker. This makes the Haudenosaunee and the Onondaga Nation the oldest continuous democratic government in North America.
Creating Questions for Close Analytic Reading Exemplars: A Brief Guide

• Think about what you think is the most important learning to be drawn from the text. Note this as raw material for the culminating assignment and the focus point for other activities to build toward.

• Determine the key ideas of the text. Create a series of questions structured to bring the reader to an understanding of these.

• Locate the most powerful academic words in the text and integrate questions and discussions that explore their role into the set of questions above.

• Take stock of what standards are being addressed in the series of questions above. Then decide if any other standards are suited to being a focus for this text. If so, form questions that exercise those standards.

• Consider if there are any other academic words that students would profit from focusing on. Build discussion planning or additional questions to focus attention on them.

• Find the sections of the text that will present the greatest difficulty and craft questions that support students in mastering these sections. These could be sections with difficult syntax, particularly dense information, and tricky transitions or places that offer a variety of possible inferences.

• Develop a culminating activity around the idea or learning identified in #1. A good task should reflect mastery of one or more of the standards, involve writing, and be structured to be done by students independently.
Developing a Sequence of Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Comments/Questions for Redesign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards aligned: questions have a clear connection to stated standards, or are in service of a standard</td>
<td>Question 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text specific/dependent: questions require students to read the text to be answered; students do not rely on background knowledge to answer questions; inferences are grounded in text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|        | Organization: questions demonstrate scaffolding to move learners along a continuum; questions allow movement from comprehension to meaning-making  
- Consider structure  
- Consider language  
- Consider prior knowledge gleaned from text | | | | |
|        | Clarity: questions are clearly written and avoid unnecessary language that causes confusion in understanding; questions are answerable | | | | |
A Propensity for Density

The language used in complex texts differs enough from the English familiar to most students that it constitutes a barrier to understanding when they first encounter it in the texts they read in school. This becomes critical in the fourth grade and beyond when the texts children read take on a different pedagogical function...

...To communicate complex ideas and information calls for the lexical and grammatical resources of mature discourse – students must master these if they are to succeed in school and career.

From “Understanding Language: What does text complexity mean for English Language Learners and Language Minority Students” Lily Wong Filmore, Charles Filmore
Syntax Definition (1818)

“Syntax is a word which comes from the Greek. It means, in that language, the joining of several things together; and, as used by grammarians, it means those principles and rules which teach us how to put words together so as to form sentences. It means, in short, sentence-making. Having been taught by the rules of Etymology what are the relationships of words, how words grow out of each other, how they are varied in their letters in order to correspond with the variation in the circumstances to which they apply. Syntax will teach you how to give all your words their proper situations or places, when you come to put them together into sentences.”

William Cobbett, A Grammar of the English Language in a Series of Letters: Intended for The Use of Schools and of Young Persons in General, but More Especially for the Use of Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices, and Plough-Boys, 1818

My Definition:
Using the “Juicy Sentence” to Help Students Access Complex Text

Chris Hayes

The juicy sentence is a strategy developed by Lily Wong Fillmore, specifically to address the needs of ELL’s and accessing complex text. But, I have found it to be a useful tool for all students. The juicy sentence provides the opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of the text by breaking apart a complex sentence. Through this close look at the sentence, many aspects of language can be taught in context. Here is my version of how the juicy sentence can be used in a classroom:

● After engaging the students in a close read using an exemplar, a BAP lesson, a RAP lesson, or even a class read-aloud, I choose a sentence worthy of our time which may include: vocabulary worth investigating further, complex structure, language features that match grade level language standards, etc.

● I write the sentence on the board and ask the students to copy the sentence verbatim. Then the students are instructed to write what they think the sentence means. We then discuss the meaning of the sentence, which will usually lead to a deeper discussion of how that sentence relates to the story we had read. I also take this opportunity to discuss any vocabulary and the use of context clues to determine the meaning (other instructional opportunities may come up for vocabulary – word replacement, etc.)

● Then I have the students write about “anything else they notice” about the sentence. This is difficult at first, as they need some modeling as to what this means. This is when I really go into the language standards – circling verbs and discussing tense, circling words with affixes and discussing meanings, base words, etc., circling punctuation and discussing purpose, etc... The grade level language standards really drive this learning.

● The last part I ask the students to do is to rewrite the sentence using the same structure as the author. For example, if the sentence uses quotations, the students will include the same quotations. If the sentence is a compound sentence, the students will write a compound sentence. The topic does not have to mimic the original sentence, and actually, I think it shows a deeper understanding when it doesn’t.
Here is an example from a fifth grade story found in Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s, Katie’s Trunk:

*My breath got caught somewhere midst my stomach and chest, and I could not get it back.*

This sentence gives the opportunity to discuss how the sentence relates to the overall meaning of the story, to determine the meaning of *midst* using context clues, to teach about compound sentence structures, and verb endings. Another version of how to use a juicy sentence is described in the article found on this website:


After using the juicy sentence to examine syntax, you can take this instruction further. Judith Hochman uses kernel and complex sentences to expand students’ understanding of syntax in her book *Teaching Basic Writing Skills*. A kernel is when a sentence is broken apart into the smallest sentence possible (Volcanoes erupt). The complex sentence expands a kernel into a more detailed, complex sentence. You can begin this understanding by tearing the juicy sentence into a kernel, and expanding it using the student’s own language. Then this learning can be connected to sentence expansion with the students’ personal writing. Hochman’s book also gives specific examples to learning other aspects of language from the sentence level to full essay writing, with applications from K-6th grades.

More information about Lily Wong Fillmore’s work can be found in this article: (http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL_0.pdf)
Language Standards

**Knowledge of Language:**
4.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:**
4.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
4.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
4.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., *wildlife, conservation*, and *endangered* when discussing animal preservation).
Deconstruction Exercise I

Over a thousand years ago on the shores of Onondaga Lake, in present-day central New York, democracy was born.

1. Copy the sentence.

2. Write, “I think this sentence means________________.”

3. Write other things that you notice.

4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author’s structure.
Deconstruction Exercise II

The Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and the Mohawk people had been warring against each other, and there was great bloodshed.

1. Copy the sentence.

2. Write, “I think this sentence means ______________.”

3. Write other things that you notice.

4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author’s structure.
Grammar and Comprehension

Scaffolding Student Interpretation of Complex Text

Dr. Timothy Shanahan, retrieved from shanahanonliteracy.com, June 17, 2015

I’m a fourth grade special education teacher in NYC. Our school has acquired a new reading/writing program and has discontinued a grammar program we’ve used for several years. In the new program the grammar component is virtually non-existent. On a gut level I feel that students are struggling with test questions, even math ones, due to lack of practice/knowledge of grammar. They simply don’t understand what the questions are asking. I was wondering what your opinion/research shows as far as the relationship between grammar instruction and reading comprehension. Do you have any preference as far as grammar programs/teaching methodologies go?

Great question. There is a lot of evidence showing the importance of grammar in reading comprehension. Studies over the years have shown a clear relationship between syntactic or grammatical sophistication and reading comprehension; that is, as students learn to employ more complex sentences in their oral and written language, their ability to make sense of what they read increases, too.

Also, readability measures are able to predict how well students will comprehend particular texts on the basis of only two variables: vocabulary sophistication and grammatical complexity. At least for the Lexile formula, grammar is much more heavily weighted than vocabulary. This means that the text factor that is most predictive of comprehensibility is how complicated the sentences are grammatically.

There are also experimental studies that show that there are ways that grammar can be taught formally that improve reading comprehension. For example, teaching students to combine sentences seems to improve how well students understand what they read. Clearly, it makes sense to guide students to understand how sentences work.

Studies of metacognition and theories of reading comprehension suggest the importance of students having a language of grammar (knowing the difference between a noun and a verb for example), and common sense would suggest that it makes sense to help students to unpack sentences that confuse them.
That doesn’t necessarily justify a lot of grammar worksheets and the like, but it does argue for teaching students about sentences as they meet them. For example, look at the following sentence from Nikki Giovanni:

“The women of Montgomery, both young and older, would come in with their fancy holiday dresses that needed adjustments or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch—a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive.”

It is a long sentence (44 words), and it has lots of embedding (witness the author’s use of 2 commas and an em-dash). I surmise many students would struggle to make sense of this sentence primarily because of the complex grammar. How would you deal with this?

First, I would have the students read this page from Giovanni’s Rosa and one of the questions I would ask would be, “What did the women of Montgomery do?” Perhaps I’d find that the students weren’t as perplexed as I assumed in which case I’d move on. But let’s imagine that they couldn’t answer my question... then I’d show them how to break this sentence down.

For example, I would point out that the phrase between the commas, “both young and older,” adds an idea but that I want to set it aside for now. That would simplify the sentence a bit:

“The women of Montgomery would come in with their fancy holiday dresses that needed adjustments or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch—a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive.”

Even with such a simple change, I bet more kids would understand it better, but maybe not. Let’s go further:

As with the commas, the word “that” (which shows up twice here) signals the inclusion of a separate or additional idea, and as a reader that is another point of attack that I can use in trying to interpret this sentence. And the word “or” is another good place to separate these additional ideas.

Let’s slice the sentence at the first “that” and the first “or:”

“The women of Montgomery would come in with their fancy holiday dresses”

“that needed adjustments”
"or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch—a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive."

Obviously, we could keep breaking this one down, but again, many kids would get it at this point: The women were bringing in their fancy dresses... Which women? The young and the old. Which fancy dresses? The ones that needed adjustments. What other kinds of outfits did they bring in? Sunday suits and blouses. Which suits and blouses? The ones that needed just a touch—something that would make them look festive.

The point of this kind of exchange would not be to teach grammar per se, but to help students to untangle complex grammar so that they could independently make sense of what they read. Frankly, few of our children know what to do when they confront this kind of text complexity. Kids who know something about sentences and parts of speech will be at an advantage, but they still will not necessarily be able to interpret a sentence from that alone. This kind of scaffolded analysis is aimed at both untangling the meaning of this sentence and in giving students some tools for unpacking such sentences when they are on their own.

Your reading program should provide some instruction in grammar, and it should provide you with some support in providing students with instruction in parts of speech, sentence combining, and/or the kinds of scaffolding demonstrated here. It is pure romanticism that assumes that children will just figure this kind of thing out without any explicit instruction (and it is even more foolish to assume that English language learners will intuit these things without more direct support).