

GRADES
1-6

WHOLE BOOK Comprehension

Everything you need to teach deep reading comprehension explicitly





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Thank you for joining me on this tour of Whole Book Comprehension. I'll guide you through my newest resource—from the real-world challenge that inspired it, to its instructional framework, to how it fits your curricular approach.





Dear Colleagues,

There has never been a more important moment to put whole books into children's hands—and to teach them how to read those books deeply and joyfully, with a teacher by their side.

The research is clear: students need whole books, and they need explicit support in how to read them. Holding a story in mind across weeks, tracking characters and themes, synthesizing chapters or sections of an informational text into a fuller understanding of a topic and sustaining attention and recovering when it wavers—these are skills that must be taught, not assumed.

That means skill and strategy instruction alongside vocabulary and knowledge building, and text-centered planning alongside assessment-informed responsiveness, grounded in the text itself.

Whole Book Comprehension, Grades 1–6 is my answer to that need: a low-prep, high-impact, research-based update to any literacy program or core curriculum. It helps students build engagement, stamina, and focus while developing the kind of deep comprehension that grows through sustained reading of real fiction and nonfiction whole books.

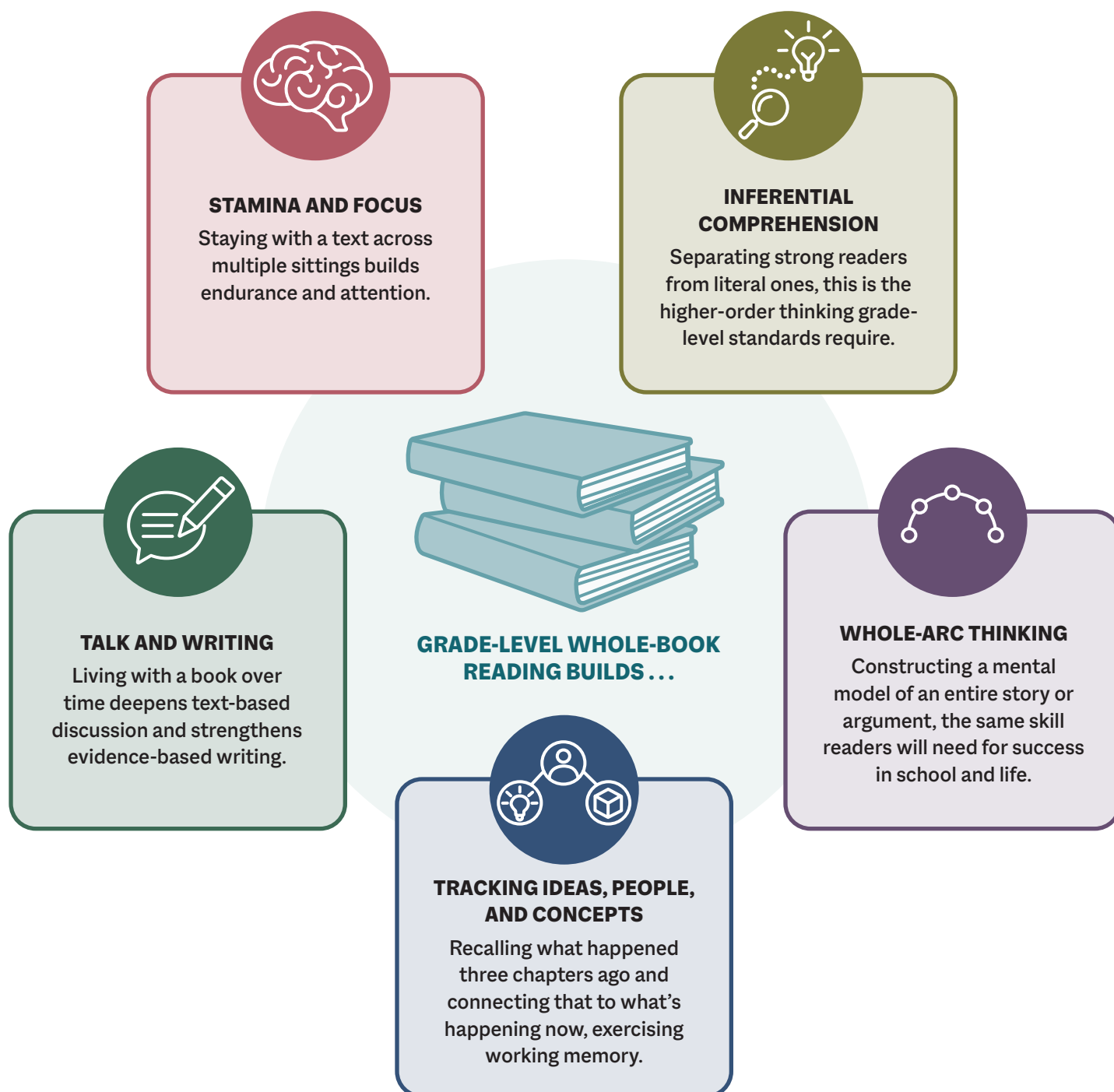
Designed to be used flexibly across the day and year—whole class or small group; in ELA, science, or social studies; for intervention or enrichment; for summer school or tutoring settings—each grade-level kit includes 8 grade-level fiction and nonfiction titles and all you need to teach them: multiple ready-to-use lesson plans, 32 book-specific rubrics, printable materials, 300+ research-based strategies, and a streamlined, practical teacher's guide.

My goal is for it to make your whole-text planning and instruction more efficient, explicit, and engaging.

—Jen

Why Teach With Whole Books?

Educators report, and national testing shows, that many students can't read at grade level with deep comprehension. That kind of comprehension is hard to build with excerpts and passages alone; students also need sustained practice with grade-level whole books. Whole book reading is a fundamentally different cognitive exercise, and one passages alone simply can't provide.





What the Research Says

- **8-16 months of reading growth in just 3 months.** That's the jump one study found when classrooms moved from excerpts to whole novels read at a sustained, supported pace.
- **Attention is the missing link.** Differences in sustained attention account for 35% of why some students comprehend better than others.
- **The brain adapts to what it practices.** Sustained reading builds the capacity for deep inference and analogical reasoning that skimming and scrolling do not.
- **The habit of going deep has to be built.** Habitual short-text reading is linked to reduced capacity and inclination for long-form reading, even in adults.

Sources: Westbrook, Sutherland, Oakhill & Sullivan, 2019; Westbrook, Oakhill & Sullivan, 2023 • Öksüz, Yaşartürk, et al., 2025 • Wolf, 2018 • Annisette & Lafreniere, 2017



Want to learn more about how whole books promote deep comprehension? **Read the blog post.**

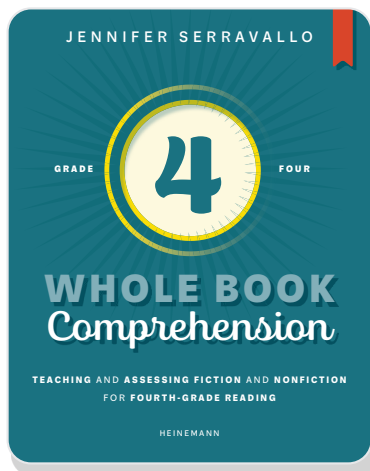


Introducing *Whole Book Comprehension*

Whole Book Comprehension, Grades 1-6, is a practical, research-based resource designed to update any core curriculum, helping students build engagement, stamina, and focus while developing the kind of deep comprehension that grows through sustained reading of real fiction and nonfiction.

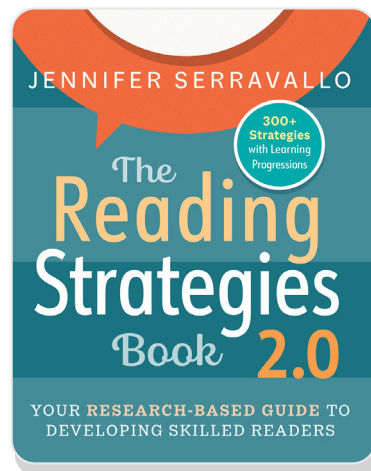
Each grade-level kit includes:

- A curated library of eight trade books: four fiction and four nonfiction
- A comprehensive teacher's guide: part professional book, part classroom resource, it outlines the research base and offers a large collection of ready-to-use lessons, rubrics, and book summaries
- A copy of *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0*: grounded in more than 700 research studies and referenced throughout the Guide
- Printable online resources that make prep quick and easy
- An online video library



TEACHER'S GUIDE

See page 16 for more information.

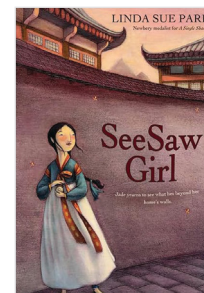
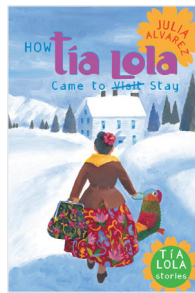
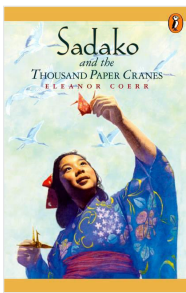
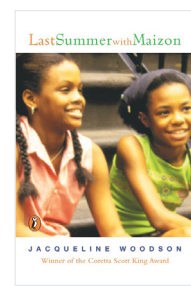
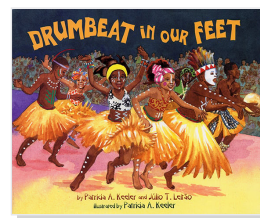
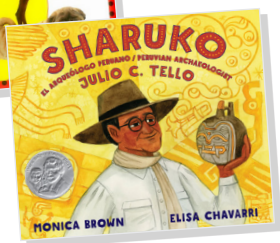


THE READING STRATEGIES BOOK 2.0

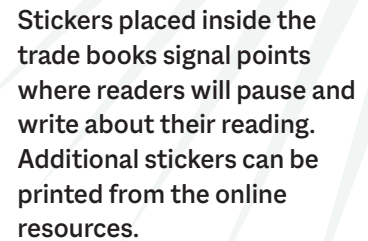
See page 26 for more information.

TRADE BOOKS

Each of the 6 grade-level kits has 8 celebrated grade-level trade books—4 fiction and 4 nonfiction.

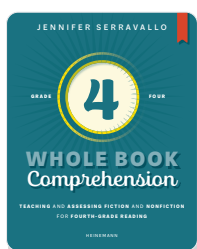


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Strategies, Vocabulary, and Knowledge-Building in Each Lesson

Skilled reading depends on comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and knowledge working together, which is why every comprehension lesson should include all three. Strategies are the how-tos: the thinking processes students use to make sense of text. Vocabulary gives them the words to understand what they read, and knowledge provides the background that lets new ideas connect and stick.



Last Summer with Maizon by Jacqueline Woodson

Summary

Eleven-year-old Margaret loves her parents and hanging out with her best friend, Maizon. They tell each other everything. Margaret looks up to Maizon, who always seems to know about the latest dance and fashion trends. But Maizon is often thoughtless. Even her grandmother admits she may be smart but doesn't always have common sense. Quiet and introspective, Margaret worries about her ill father, her hardworking mother, and whether Maizon will get accepted into a private boarding school far from Brooklyn. Even though Maizon is always loud and vocal, it is Margaret who dreams of being a writer and having her voice heard.

The girls often sit on the front stoop with the neighbors. Ms. Dell, an older woman with an unusual shade of blue eyes, has an ability to predict the future, including Margaret's upcoming loss. Hattie, Ms. Dell's nineteen-year-old daughter, writes poems that she says live inside her head, not on paper. These women listen to the girls and provide support and love.

But this is a summer of change for both girls. First, Margaret's father dies of a heart attack. The first person she calls is Maizon, who sits and talks with her, holding her hand as she cries. The girls talk about everyone who has lost someone in their lives—Hattie who lost her baby, Margaret who lost her father, Maizon whose mother died and father left.

After the funeral, the girls take refuge at Maizon's house, where Maizon's grandmother makes cinnamon rolls and offers comfort. Grandma, who is Native American, tells Maizon to be a good friend to Margaret. Death is hard and Margaret will be sad for a long time.

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BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE PLAN

Read the book summary and think about what your students already know versus what they'll need to know to comprehend the text.

CHOOSE VOCABULARY OR FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Review Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary words from the lesson's text. The words most critical to comprehension are circled.

SELECT COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Select one or more of four recommended research-based strategies from *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0*, included in the kit. Each is chosen based on the text's affordances and challenges. Short on time? Start with the circled strategy, which is the one most recommended for this lesson.

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr

Lesson 2: Chapter 2, Pages 15–20

VOCABULARY AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

ruined | 16 Buddhist | 18 dome | 18 victims | 18

WRITING ABOUT READING:

Prompt 2, Page 20: Describe the setting (time and place).

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES (From *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0*):

Plot and Setting: 5.6 Use Your Senses

This chapter is filled with sensory details about the setting, and many readers will likely have experienced attending festivals and carnivals. This strategy will help bring the time and place to life in their minds.

Character: 6.8 Study Talk and Actions as Windows into Traits and Feelings

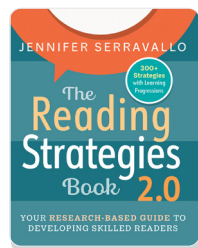
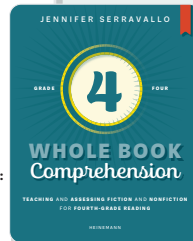
You might try this strategy on pages 16 through 18 when Sadako avoids looking at the photographs and tells her friend that she remembers what happened. Ask readers to consider not only what she says but how she says it.

Vocabulary and Figurative Language: 11.23 Picture It

On page 18 you'll find several examples of figurative language that reference the setting, so this strategy will be helpful to deepen readers' understanding of that time and place.

Themes and Ideas: 7.4 Learn from Character Changes

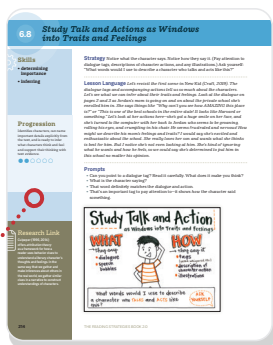
Readers can benefit from thinking about what the main character is beginning to learn in places where her feelings change. For example, on page 16 Sadako's feelings of excitement about Peace Day change to fear when she sees the photographs and when she sees the bomb victims on pages 18 and 20. Then, on page 20, she is pensive and thinks about the spider as having brought her good luck.



REVIEW THE STRATEGY

Turn to any strategy's page in *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* to use the sample lesson language, prompts, classroom chart, and/or teaching tips.

If you have time, scan the introduction and skill progression at the beginning of that strategy's chapter for helpful context.



Want to go deeper on teaching strategies, vocabulary, and knowledge in every lesson? **Read the blog post.**



Talking & Writing Instruction Deepen Understanding

Structured talk and short, frequent writing about reading strengthen comprehension, build cognitive skills, and grow language and vocabulary. But that only happens when students are explicitly taught how to build a discussion, choose what matters, and shape a response with purpose.

The Importance of Writing

Writing well about reading joins the thinking students do while reading with the ability to capture and grow that thinking through annotating, note-taking, and short jots. Writing about what you read clarifies your thinking and strengthens comprehension.

“

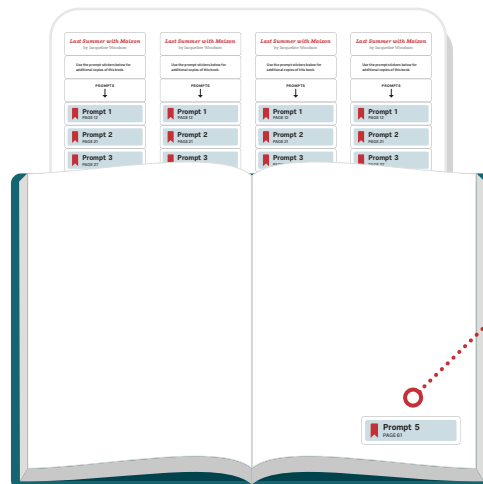
The kids are running, not walking to meet with me because they love the book and love talking about what they are reading.”

GINA DIGNON

Reading Interventionist
and Instructional Coach, CT

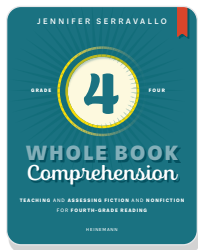
STUDENT RESPONSE FORMS

Response Forms let students practice writing about reading, in response to prompts that probe their understanding of plot, setting, characters, vocabulary, theme, main ideas, details, and text features.



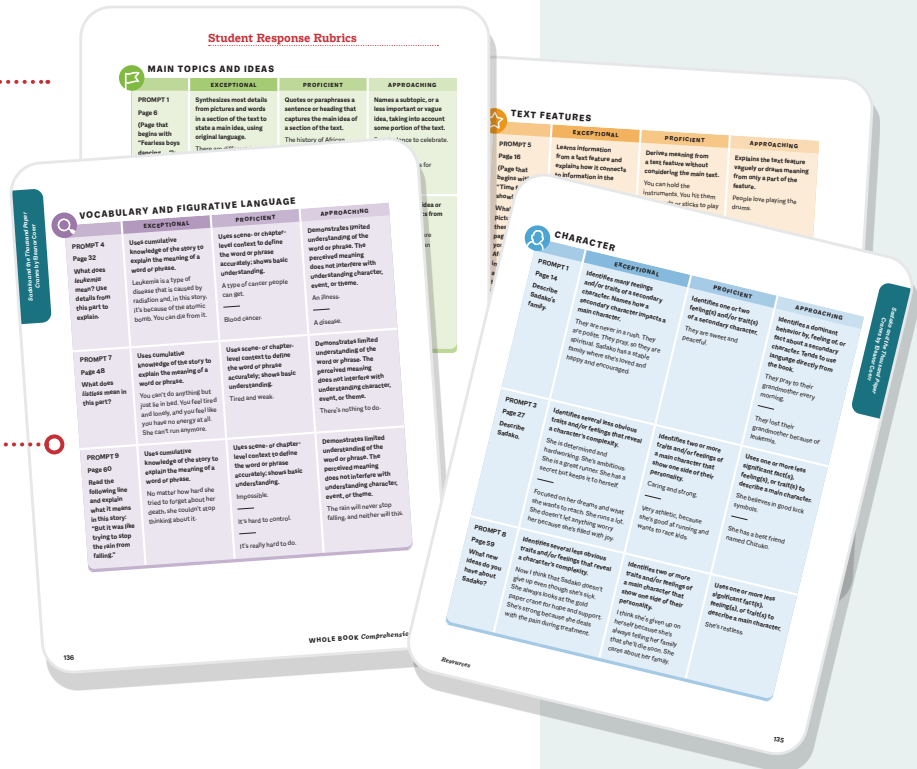
PROMPT STICKERS

Attach prompts to the book alerting students to stop and jot their thoughts on their Response Forms.



RESPONSE RUBRICS

Evaluate student responses and coach them to improve. Each rubric describes increasingly sophisticated response levels and includes authentic student exemplars for each.



The Importance of Conversation

Frequent conversation about a book—in pairs, groups, or as a whole class—builds comprehension, self-efficacy, and vocabulary. It also makes students' thinking visible, giving you a chance to teach listening and speaking skills and assess understanding.



LISTENING & SPEAKING STRATEGIES

Use the skill progression and the chapter of strategies in *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* to plan powerful partner, group, and whole-class conversation.





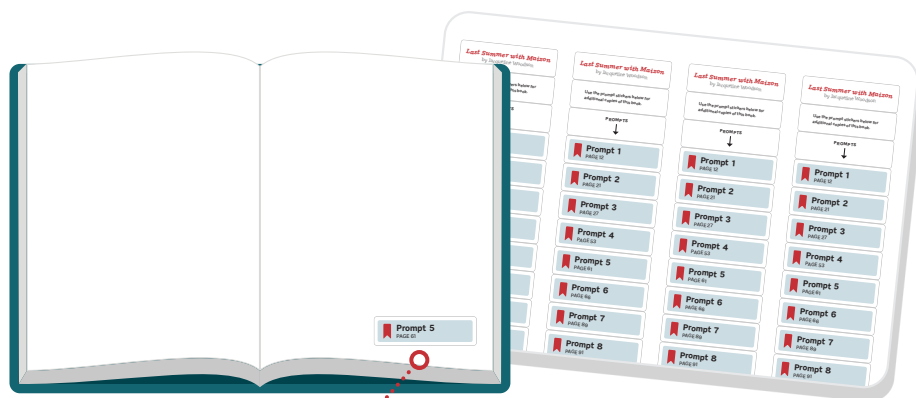
Assessing Student Comprehension

Chances are none of the assessments already on your calendar (computer-based, diagnostic, benchmark, standardized, or unit tests) show how well students comprehend a whole book as they read it. Assessment is built into every lesson. As students discuss the reading and write on the included Response Forms, you evaluate their responses using the Student Response Rubrics. You can also invite students to read the books independently, assess their responses across the whole book, and use what you learn to set goals and plan future instruction. Either way, you'll gain valuable insight into students' thinking and comprehension, along with actionable formative data to guide your teaching.

“

Students' self-reflection became more thoughtful and accurate because they had a clear understanding of what quality responses looked like.”

MELISSA SMITH
District Elementary
Literacy Coach, TX



READY-TO-GO LABELS for each book that flag opportunities to write about reading on individual Response Forms.

STUDENT RESPONSE FORMS provide a structured place to write about reading at key points in each book; one multipage form per title.

STUDENT RESPONSE RUBRICS

Each rubric is color-coded, marked with the same icons you'll see throughout the guide and Response Forms, and shows three levels of response.

For each prompt, you'll find bolded descriptors and a sample response.

Student Response Rubrics

PLOT AND SETTING

	EXCEPTIONAL	PROFICIENT	APPROACHING
PROMPT 1 Page 12 What problems is Margaret dealing with?	Identifies more than two of the story's problems or aspects of the main problem. Mentions internal and external aspects. Her father is sick and she's worried about him. Her best friend, Maizon, might leave Brooklyn and go to a boarding school in CT.	Identifies a main problem or two in the story, or a couple of aspects of a main problem. Mentions internal or external aspects. Her dad has to go to the hospital, and she has to look after her brother.	Identifies a minor problem, or an aspect of a main problem, using text and/or pictures, but inflates its significance, possibly using vague terms. She yells at her friend Maizon because she's upset.
PROMPT 5 Page 61 Think about how Margaret reacts to Maizon's news. Explain why she reacts this way.	Draws connections between multiple causes and effects, and demonstrates deep understanding of the scene. At first she's upset because her best friend is leaving and she's going through a hard time with losing her dad. But then I think she realizes what a great opportunity it is for her and she's hoping they can stay best friends.	Draws a connection between one cause and effect to understand the scene. She's been hoping and hoping that Maizon would get into Blue Hill, and she hears she did, so she's upset and worried about their friendship.	Demonstrates basic understanding of cause and effect. Typically

	EXCEPTIONAL	PROFICIENT	APPROACHING
PROMPT 2 Page 127 What does it mean when Margaret says "I'm not going to be like my father"?	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.

VOCABULARY AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

	EXCEPTIONAL	PROFICIENT	APPROACHING
PROMPT 3 Page 127 What does it mean when Margaret says "I'm not going to be like my father"?	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.

	EXCEPTIONAL	PROFICIENT	APPROACHING
PROMPT 4 Page 127 What does it mean when Margaret says "I'm not going to be like my father"?	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.	Interprets the meaning of the story to explain the meaning of a word or phrase. Margaret is going to be like her father, but she's not going to be like him. She's going to be like her mother, who was a strong woman and didn't let anyone tell her what to do.

GOAL SETTING FORMS

Tally results on the Goal-Setting Form to see at-a-glance where a student is strong and where they need support.

Use the If/Then chart on the second page of the form to spot patterns within and across students' responses and plan your next instructional steps.

Goal-Setting Form

Name: Anya
Date: 6/13

Last Summer with Maizon

by Jacqueline Woodson

Scoring Guide
E: Exceptional
P: Proficient
A: Approaching
I: Incomplete

FIRST: TALLY STUDENT RESULTS

- Refer to the student's scored Response Form.
- Check ✓ the appropriate white box (E, P, A, or I) below for each response.
- Tally each column to find the total number of E, P, A, and I responses.
- Record the overall tally below the chart.

Prompt	Page	Plot and Setting				Character				Vocabulary and Figurative Language				Themes and Ideas			
		E	P	A	I	E	P	A	I	E	P	A	I	E	P	A	I
1	12																
2	21																
3	21																
4	53																
5	61																
6	66																
7	89																
8	91																
9	117																
10	117																
Tally		2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Total number of responses: exceptional 3 / 10, proficient 6 / 10, approaching & incomplete 1 / 10
Total pages divided by minutes (from log): 117 ÷ 215 = 54 pp/min

NEXT: DECIDE ON GOALS

- On the next page, check the scenario or scenarios that best describe this student's performance.
- Reflect on the information in the last two columns to plan your teaching for the student.

SHARING GOALS WITH THE STUDENT

What goal or goals have you decided to focus on?
Themes + Ideas (Theme, social issues)

Which strategy or strategies will you introduce first? (See The Reading Strategies Book 2.0.)
Character work was so strong - learn on that. 7.2 7.5
7.3 7.7
7.4 7.10

How will you share the goal with the student (e.g., through a goal-setting conference, meeting with this student and others in a small group, informing them of the assessment results)?
inform

Now you are ready to set goals with this reader. See Chapter 5 in your teacher's guide for more information.

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Fits into Any Program, Instructional Setting, or Season

Whole Book Comprehension works whole-class, in small groups, or as an independent student activity. Use it for read-aloud, shared reading, close reading, independent reading, partner reading, or any combination. It complements any core program or curriculum; works across ELA, science, and social studies; and adapts to whatever the moment calls for: core instruction, intervention, enrichment, summer school, tutoring, or in-depth assessment.



AS A CENTRAL PILLAR OF THE CURRICULUM

Build entire units around the included texts, complementing them with related articles and short texts to create knowledge-rich, conceptually coherent text sets.



AS A PERIODIC DEEP DIVE

Pause the core reading program periodically to spend time fully immersed in a whole book, building stamina and comprehension skills shorter texts alone can't develop.

8 WAYS TO USE WHOLE BOOK COMPREHENSION



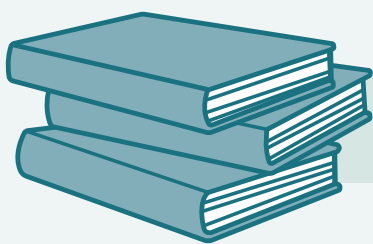
AS A BRIDGE TO CONTENT STUDIES

Nonfiction titles fit naturally into science and social studies, building the background knowledge that deepens comprehension, and the comprehension that deepens content knowledge.



AS A SMALL-GROUP OR BOOK CLUB RESOURCE

Group students by interest or skill need for small-group instruction or book clubs, with written responses sparking discussion and rotating, targeted support.





“The resources and processes included in Whole Book Comprehension will help teachers make informed instructional decisions and equip students with the strategies they need to better understand, think deeply about, and engage meaningfully with the books they read.”

NICOLE PENTORE

Literacy Specialist, CT



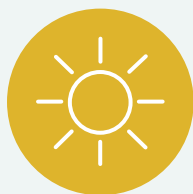
AS INTERVENTION OR ENRICHMENT SUPPORT

Ready-to-use, scaffolded lesson materials make this resource a natural fit for WIN time, flex periods, or any dedicated intervention block.



AS AN INDEPENDENT COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENT

Use the included texts as standalone assessments during independent work time, offering a critical window into what a student comprehends entirely on their own.



AS A SUMMER SCHOOL RESOURCE

The combination of joyful whole-book reading and explicit comprehension instruction makes this resource a strong fit for summer school and enrichment programs.



AS A TOOL FOR TUTORS

Rubrics and skill progressions guide individually tailored instructional decisions, saving planning time in one-on-one or small-group tutoring.

Inside the Teacher's Guide: Your Companion to Research and Practice

Every instructional decision in *Whole Book Comprehension* is grounded in research and made practical through a comprehensive Teacher's Guide. Learn the science behind knowledge, vocabulary, and strategy instruction, and gain practical guidance for evaluating text complexity, planning effective lessons, using formative assessment, and extending the work beyond the kit's 8 books. A resource section then puts it all within reach, with book-specific summaries, lesson-by-lesson vocabulary and strategy selections, rubrics to evaluate student writing about reading, and more.



RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS TO COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION

Get a clear overview of what the Science of Reading says about comprehension: the roles of knowledge, vocabulary, strategy instruction, executive skills, motivation, and whole books. See how the pieces fit together, so you can ground every instructional decision in evidence.

UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF GRADE-LEVEL BOOKS

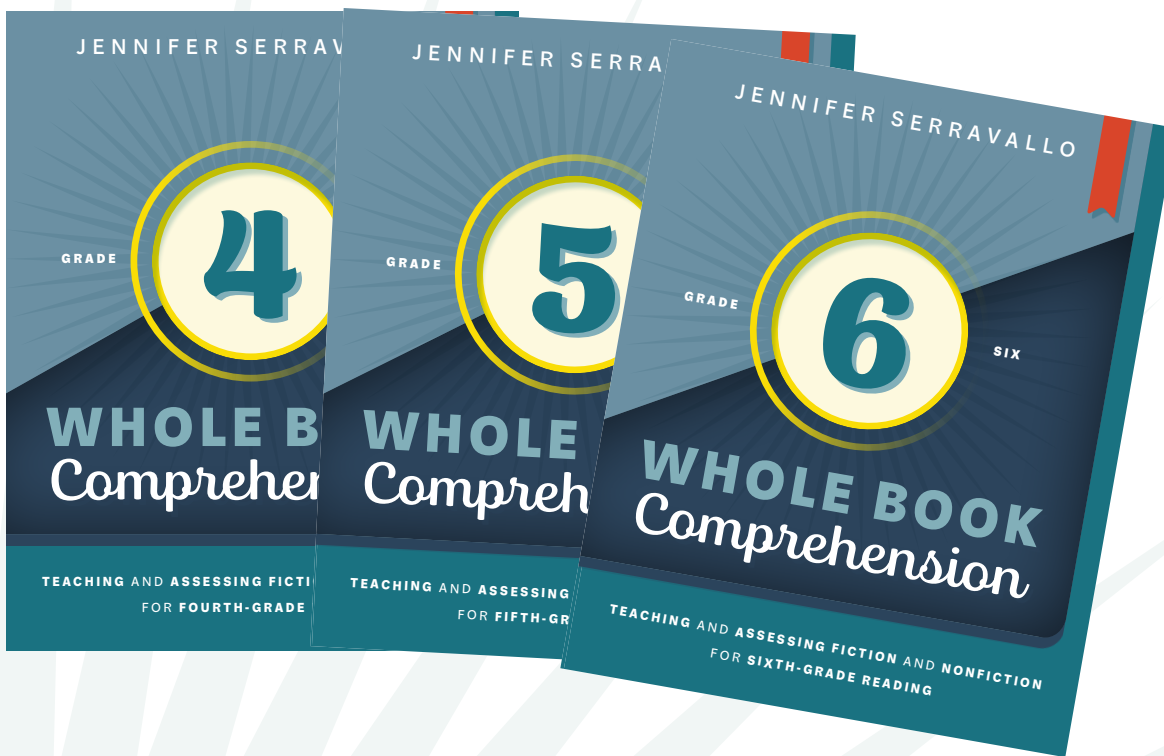
Explore text complexity at your grade level, why both quantitative and qualitative measures matter, and the research behind using grade-level texts. Preview what the eight featured books ask of students across comprehension goals, so you can anticipate challenges and target support.

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE LESSON DESIGN

Learn how to select books, choose between whole-class and small-group teaching, and design instruction that is text-centered and responsive, explicit and well scaffolded, engaging and explicit.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EVERY LESSON

Find book-specific summaries, rubrics, and lesson planning guidance, along with general grade-level rubrics and prompt stems aligned to goals and question types. Return to these resources, whether you are using the books for instruction or assessment.



ASSESSMENT GUIDES ONGOING INSTRUCTION

Explore how to administer assessments, evaluate student responses, set goals, and plan ongoing teaching based on what you learn.

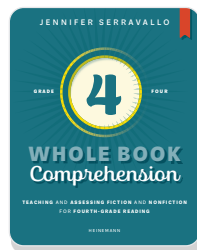
EXTEND TO ANY AND EVERY WHOLE BOOK

Learn how to select texts, craft prompts, choose vocabulary and strategies, and create your own whole-book comprehension lessons and assessments.

Ready-to-Go Lessons

Lessen your Workload

Every one of the 8 books in *Whole Book Comprehension* comes with multiple ready-to-go lessons, each including a summary, a lesson-specific Planning Form, printable Student Response Forms, and response rubrics. Everything you need to quickly plan a strong lesson has been prepared for you in the Teacher's Guide.



SUMMARY

Two-page summary provides a quick overview.



LESSONS PER GRADE

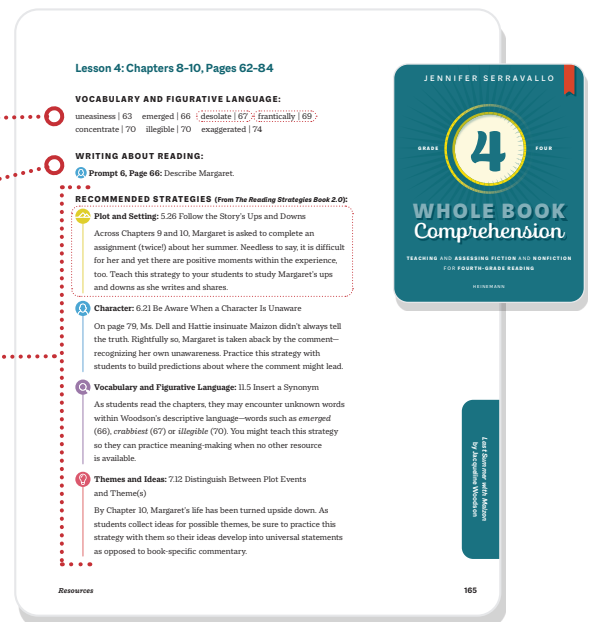
GRADE 1	29 lessons
GRADE 2	39 lessons
GRADE 3	45 lessons
GRADE 4	50 lessons
GRADE 5	53 lessons
GRADE 6	79 lessons

LESSON PLAN PAGES

Flags key vocabulary and figurative language.

Provides writing prompts tied to printable Response Forms.

Suggests four strategies based on the text's challenges and standards.





5-Step Lesson Planning Streamlines Prep

Great comprehension instruction is purposeful and built around both what a text demands and what students need. Working through five quick steps in order—background knowledge, vocabulary, writing, strategies, and conversation—yields a lesson that’s explicit, engaging, and effective. And it only takes about 10 minutes.

1 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Before teaching, consider what students already know and what they’ll need to know, since prior knowledge helps the brain connect, organize, and store new information, freeing up capacity for real thinking.

2 VOCABULARY

Choose which words are worth teaching: a mix of Tier 2 and Tier 3 words are recommended for your consideration.

3 WRITING ABOUT READING

The prompts are already done for you; you choose how to support students as they write. Then, use this writing to assess understanding and identify what to teach next.

Lesson Planning Form

Date(s) _____

Last Summer with Maizon by Jacqueline Woodson
LESSON 1: Chapters 1 and 2, Pages 1-21

Whole Class | Small Group (Circle one) If a group, student names: _____

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE PLAN

After reading the pages for this lesson, think about what concepts, information, and vocabulary the text assumes students know already, and what it helps them learn within the chapter. What will they likely need support with before or while reading the pages included in this lesson?

Notes: _____

VOCABULARY PLAN

Select which words you’ll teach, and jot a definition, synonyms, antonyms, or context you’ll use to teach the word. Consider whether you’ll give a quick definition before beginning the reading, teach a strategy to help them learn the word when you encounter it during reading, or simply “tuck in” a definition as you’re reading to not interrupt the flow. They are listed below in the order they appear in the text. The most recommended words are circled.

Choose: tremble | 3 **shriveled** | 3 **sauntered** | 8 identical | 8 declared | 9 halfheartedly | 14
descended | 21

Notes: _____

WRITING ABOUT READING PLAN

Writing about reading prompts are included below. Feel free to create additional prompts as you see fit, using prompt stems in the beginning of the Resources in the teacher’s guide. Decide how you’ll support student responses or if you’ll use them as an assessment.

 Prompt 1, Page 12: What problems is Margaret dealing with?

 Prompt 2, Page 21: Describe Maizon and the relationship she has with Margaret.

How will students respond? Independent assessment Independent writing and evaluate as a class Shared writing

Notes: _____

Remember to check the rubric in the Resources section of your teacher’s guide to evaluate their response. If many students answered incorrectly or within the “approaching” category, consider choosing a strategy to support this goal in the next lesson.

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Last Summer with Maizon by Jacqueline Woodson (continued)

STRATEGY AND PROMPTS PLAN

Choose one or more of the strategies below to teach during this lesson. If you aren't sure, my recommendation is circled. Turn to the corresponding strategy page in *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* for the strategy steps, prompts, and visual supports you can use during the lesson. Jot notes below about questions you'll ask, think-alouds you'll do, or prompts you'll give for students to stop and jot or turn and talk aligned to your selection.

- Choose:
- ☐ Plot and Setting: 5.20 Identify Internal and External Problems
 - ☒ Character: 6.5 Think About How the Character Is Feeling
 - ☐ Vocabulary and Figurative Language: 11.20 Use Mood as a Clue to Meaning
 - ☐ Themes and Ideas: 7.10 Find Theme Hints in Blurbs

Notes:

.....

.....

.....

CONVERSATION PLAN

Would you like to take time for a discussion during this lesson? If so, decide if students will discuss in pairs, groups, or as a whole class. See the strategies in Chapter 12 of *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* if your students would benefit from support with their speaking and listening skills before, during, or after their discussion.

How will students discuss? Pairs Groups Whole Class

Notes:

.....

.....

REFLECT

What did you learn today that will impact the next lesson? If you asked students to write about their reading using a prompt you created yourself, evaluate those responses using the grade-level rubrics (if you haven't already). If many students wrote incorrect or "approaching" level responses, you might choose to include a strategy for that goal in the next chapter's lesson. Think about the vocabulary and knowledge you assumed students would and would not know. Should you offer more or less support in the next chapter? Consider student engagement with the text, and allow that to inform what methods of teaching you choose. How did students do with the conversation (if you chose to have one)? Do you want to include conversation next time, and if so, with what strategies or supports?

Notes:

.....

.....

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Want to know more about
Jen's lesson-planning process?
Read the blog post.

4

STRATEGIES AND PROMPTS

Choose one or more strategies—four from *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* are recommended—to support students with the text's challenges. Jot notes about how to model the strategy and guide students.

5

CONVERSATION

Choose whether students will talk about the text in pairs, groups, or as a whole class, utilizing strategies for speaking and listening from *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0* that strengthen comprehension, community, and engagement.

REFLECTION

After each lesson, review students' writing and conversations to see what's working and what to plan for in future lessons.

Building Deep Comprehension with Whole Books: Fiction

With fiction comprehension, growth deepens when you pair sustained reading with scaffolded, explicit instruction. Readers need to track plot and setting, understand character, build vocabulary through rich book language, and pick up on theme.



Plot and Setting

Tracking plot and setting helps readers picture where a story takes place and see how events connect, giving them the story structure they need to predict, remember, and comprehend what they read.



Character

Characters are the actors connecting a story's events, and understanding them helps readers empathize, stay engaged, and connect what they read to their own lives—all elements that build deeper comprehension.



Vocabulary and Figurative Language

Vocabulary and figurative language are closely tied to comprehension, most of it learned through “book language,” richer and more complex than everyday speech.



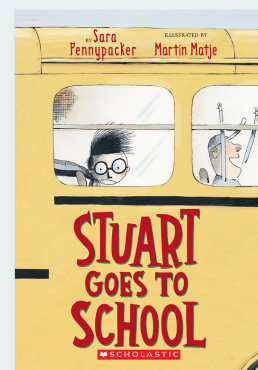
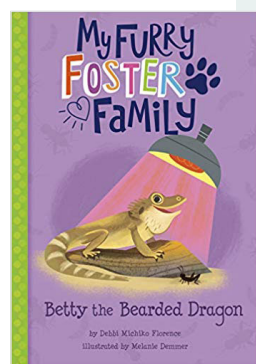
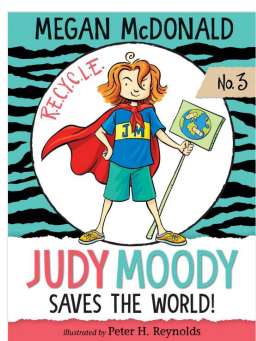
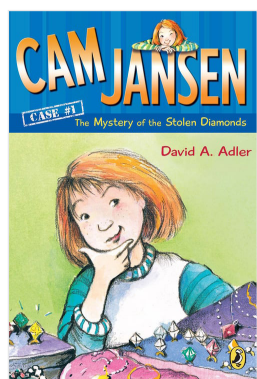
Themes and Ideas

Picking up on themes and ideas lets readers think beyond the literal text, where stories can help readers to make sense of the world, stir feeling, and challenge their own beliefs.

Each grade's resource includes 4 unique grade-level fiction books (and 4 nonfiction) that, together with the instructional materials included, help students develop deep comprehension. Below are featured titles from three of the six kits available for grades 1-6.

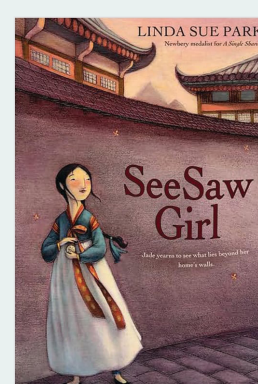
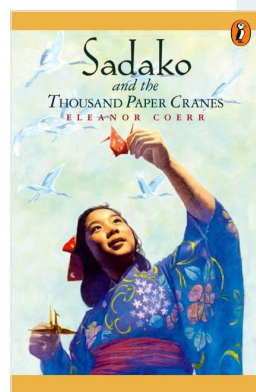
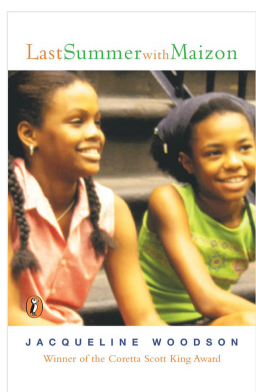
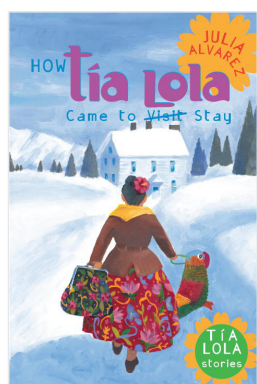
GRADE

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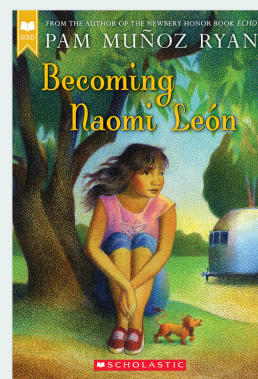
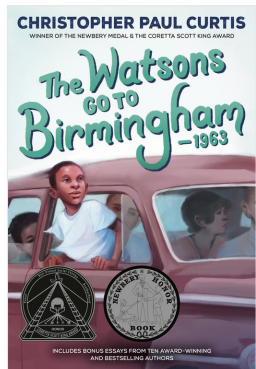
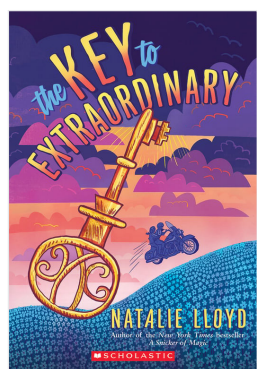
GRADE

4



GRADE

6



“

“The text kept students engaged by exploring a topic in depth rather than through isolated passages. This encourages curiosity, sustained interest, and a greater appreciation for learning through nonfiction texts.”

JENNIFER HARDWICK
5th Grade Teacher, TX

Building Deep Comprehension with Whole Books: Nonfiction

With nonfiction books, readers are invited to synthesize, analyze, draw conclusions, and more. Readers need to identify main topics and ideas, track key details, build vocabulary through rich book language, and navigate and connect text features.

Main Topics and Ideas

Identifying main topics and ideas helps readers synthesize and organize details into memorable categories, a skill that grows more complex as texts move from a clearly stated topic to ideas readers must infer.

Key Details

Distinguishing key details, the information tied to a text’s main idea, helps readers sort what matters most from what’s tangential, a skill that grows harder as texts get denser and more complex.

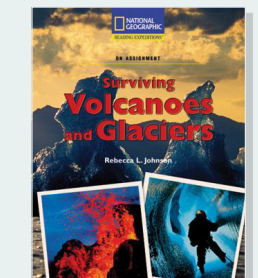
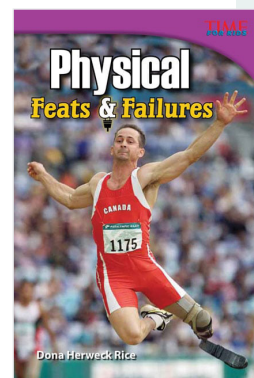
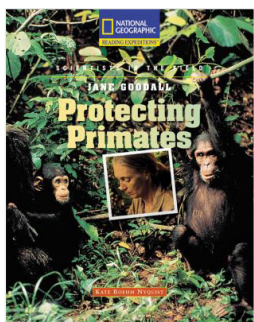
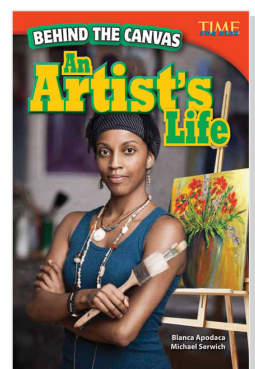
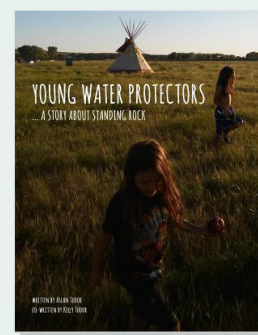
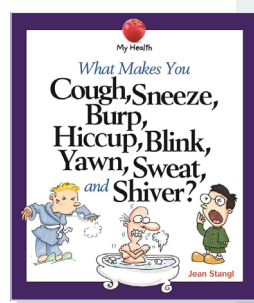
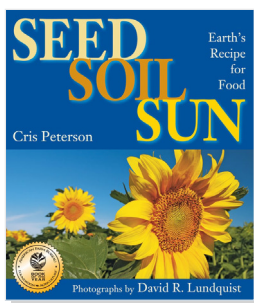
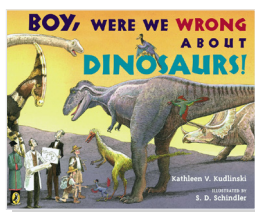
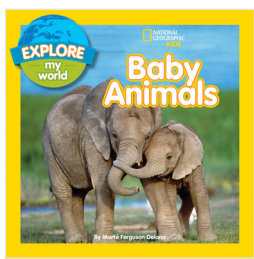
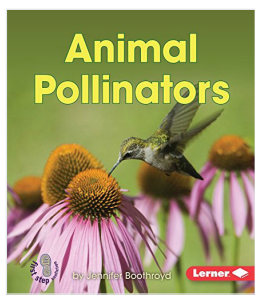
Vocabulary and Figurative Language

Vocabulary and figurative language are closely tied to comprehension, and nonfiction adds domain-specific, content vocabulary that readers need to build knowledge of a topic.

Text Features

Making sense of photographs, insets, sidebars, graphics, and headings, means connecting them to each other and the main text, a skill that grows harder as features become more plentiful and texts get denser.

Each grade's resource includes 4 unique, grade-level nonfiction (and 4 fiction) books that, together with the instructional materials included, help build deep comprehension. Below are featured titles from three of the six kits available for grades 1-6.



Animal Pollinators reproduced with permission from Lerner and Red Chair Press

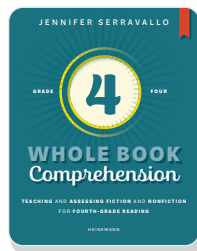
Strategies Help Learning Stick

“

The pairing of Whole Book Comprehension with The Reading Strategies Book 2.0 supports small-group instruction, with the ultimate goal of growing readers and helping kids transfer the strategies to their other reading.”

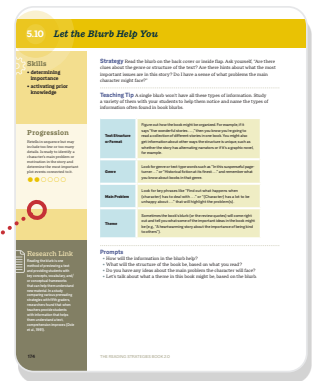
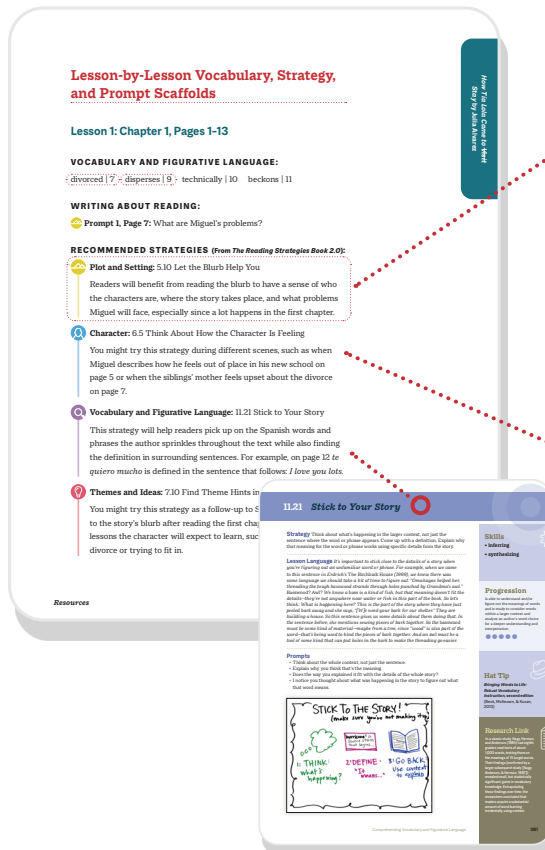
KRISTEN SEWELL
3rd Grade Teacher, NY

Strategies are critical components of every lesson, helping readers tackle challenges of grade-level texts. Each lesson includes four hand-picked strategies from *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0*, a ready-to-use resource backed by 700 peer-reviewed studies. Jen selected each strategy based on the text’s affordances and challenges, and highlighted the one she recommends most.

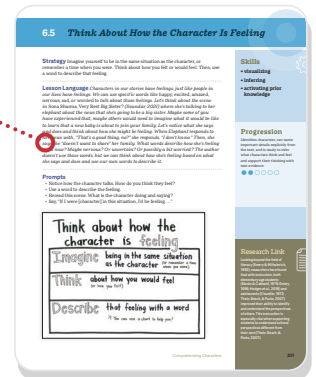


WHOLE BOOK COMPREHENSION TEACHER'S GUIDE

Every lesson in *Whole Book Comprehension* includes four hand-picked strategies to consider with book-specific teaching advice for each.



UNDERSTAND PLOT AND SETTING



THINK ABOUT CHARACTER

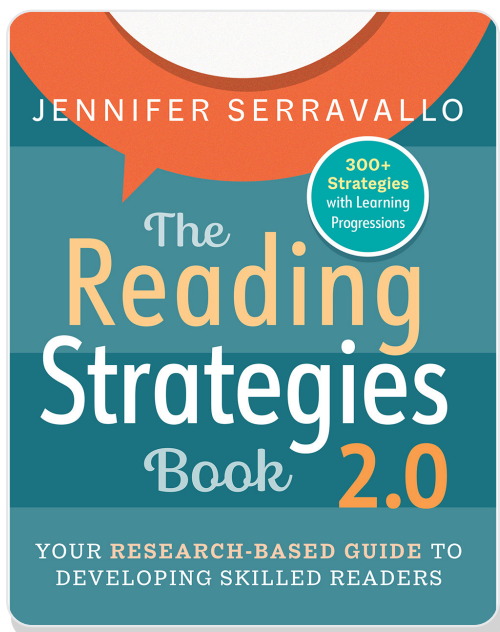
EXPLORE VOCABULARY AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE



What the Research Says About the Importance of Strategy Instruction

- **Works for every learner.** Strategy instruction has been shown to benefit all students, regardless of age, background, or learning disability.
- **Boosts more than comprehension.** Research links strategy instruction to gains in motivation, engagement, vocabulary, word-level reading, and fluency, not just comprehension.
- **Know-when matters as much as know-how.** Strategies work best when students also learn when to use them, and have some choice in how.
- **Builds the whole reader.** Research shows that cognitive, metacognitive, and management strategies each play a role in students' overall reading growth.

Sources: Berkeley, Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2010; Donker et al., 2014; Okkinga et al., 2018; Shanahan et al., 2010 • McBreen & Savage, 2021; Steacy et al., 2016; Wright & Cervetti, 2017; Samuelstuen & Bråten, 2005; Stevens, Walker & Vaughn, 2017 • Allen & Hancock, 2008; Mason, 2004 • Boekaerts, 1997; de Boer et al., 2018; Mayer, 2008; Pressley, 2002; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986



THE READING STRATEGIES BOOK 2.0 COMPANION

Turn to *The Reading Strategies Book 2.0*, included in each grade's comprehensive kit, for prompts, lesson language, research notes, teaching tips, and more.

7.10 Find Theme Hints in Blurbs

SKILLS • inferring • determining importance

Progression Can understand a story on a strand level using book-specific language and is ready to infer a lesson, often from a moment in the book or understand morals (as in fables) that are explicitly stated.

PROMPTS

- Read the blurb to identify some problems/obstacles the character will face in the story.
- You can think about what someone would learn from solving those problems.
- What do you think the character might learn from dealing with these problems?
- Now that you've read the story, what are you thinking now?

Research Link Exploring how middle school students select books, researchers found that half of the students referred to the blurb (Garcia & Bower, 1992). In another study, middle schoolers reported that book blurbs generally did a good job communicating plot events, providing them with information necessary to predict what the book would be about (Pewar et al., 1998).

STUDENT VISUALS

Read the BLURB to predict the THEME

Identify: What key is about figuring out who you really are and living on. (Red, White, and Whole) (LaRocca, 2021)

Text excerpt from *Red, White, and Whole* (LaRocca, 2021)

FIND THEME AND IDEAS

Title-Specific Materials Facilitate Planning & Student Response

Each of the eight titles in this kit comes with ready-to-print planning forms and student materials, so preparing for lessons is quick and streamlined. Blank forms make it easy for you to adapt the materials for additional whole books.

RESPONSE FORMS

One Response Form for each of the 8 books, each with 10-15 prompts, is included online. Print one copy for each student.

LESSON PLANNING FORMS

Available for every lesson for all eight books, Lesson Planning Forms guide you through the planning steps along with vocabulary and strategy suggestions.

LESSONS PER GRADE

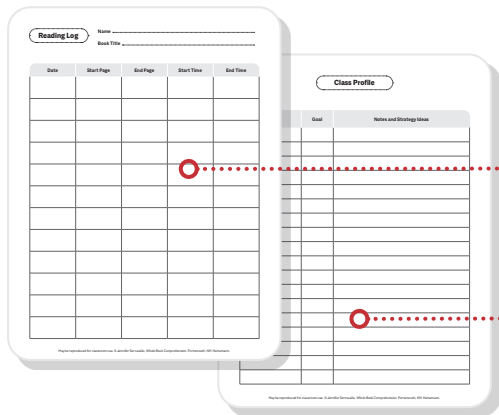
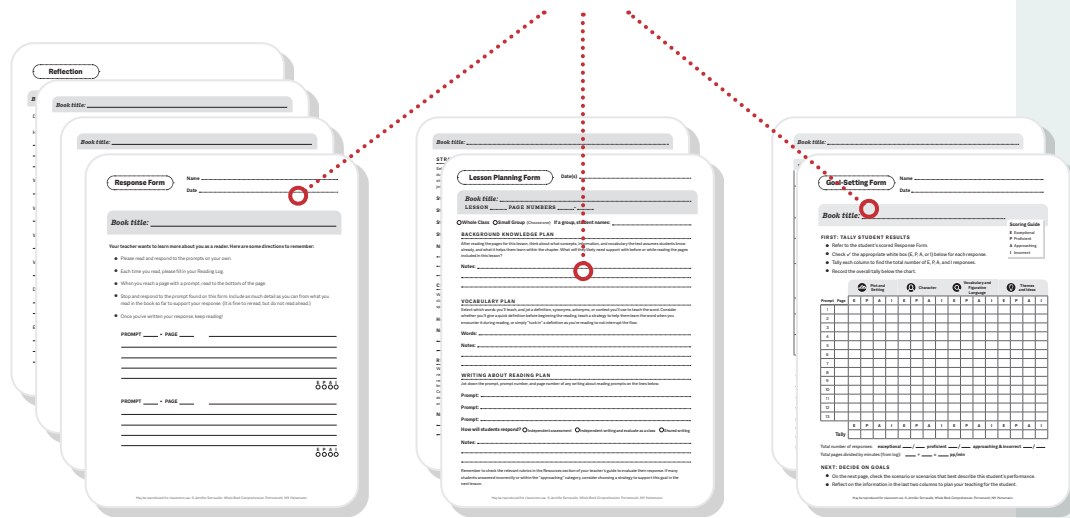
GRADE 1	29 lessons
GRADE 2	39 lessons
GRADE 3	45 lessons
GRADE 4	50 lessons
GRADE 5	53 lessons
GRADE 6	79 lessons

GOAL-SETTING FORM

One for each book, the Goal-Setting Form helps you compile assessment results and spot patterns in student responses, pointing you toward next instructional steps.

BLANK LESSON FORMS

Blank Response Forms, Lesson Planning Forms, and Goal-Setting Forms for you to adapt when you create lessons based on books you select.



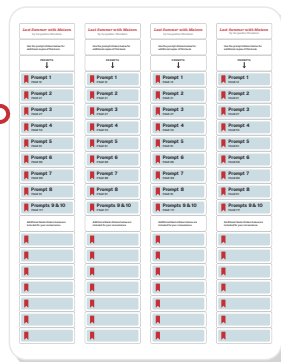
READING LOG AND CLASS PROFILE FORMS

Have students log start/end times and pages to track reading rate, using the blank Reading Log for any book.

A Class Profile Form helps you spot patterns for whole-class and small-group planning.

PROMPT STICKERS

A sheet of prompt stickers is included for up to four copies of each title. For additional copies, print more stickers from the online resources and affix them in minutes. (Kit includes one copy of each trade book.)



How-to Videos Guide You at Every Step

Every kit includes a library of how-to videos, watchable on any device. Watch Jen plan lessons—from her planning process to what she considers before a read-aloud, shared reading, close reading, or conversation/book club lesson. You can also see each of these lesson types taught in a real classroom at a range of grade levels.

Planning Videos



In a 10-minute video, Jen guides you through her 5-step lesson planning process as she builds a real lesson from start to finish. Along the way, she thinks out loud, sharing why she makes each choice, what she weighs, and how she adjusts for students. Each planning video is tailored to your specific grade level, so you'll come away with insights and strategies you can apply directly to your own classroom.

Classroom Lesson Videos

Watch Jen as she teaches whole-book reading lessons in various instructional settings.



4th Grade Whole-Class Conversation



5th Grade Goal Setting



4th Grade Read-Aloud



6th Grade Close Reading



1st Grade Shared Reading Lesson



3rd Grade Book Club

Ordering Grade-Level Kits

Kits

Whole Book Comprehension, Grade 1
ISBN: 979-8-202-26395-8

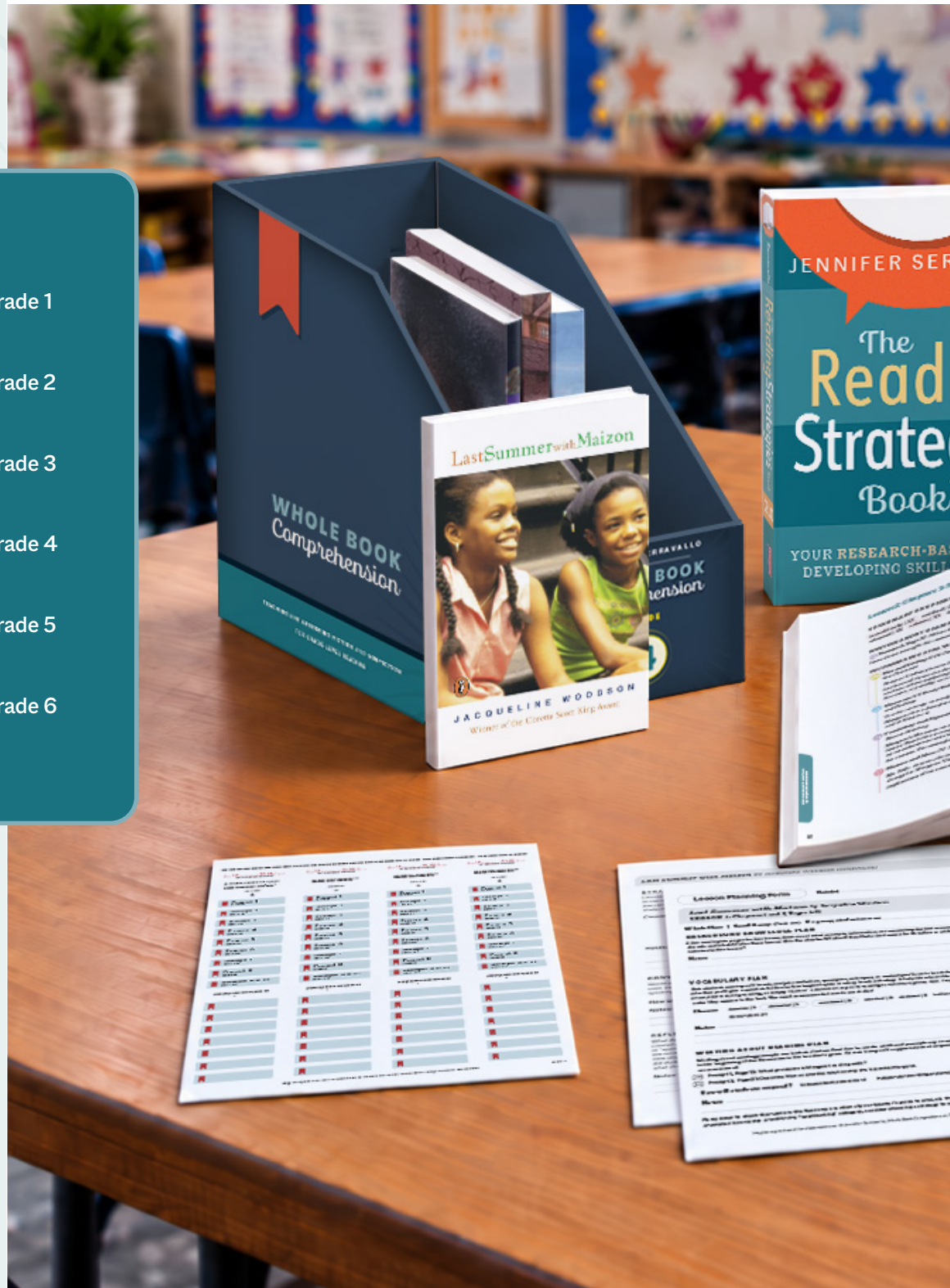
Whole Book Comprehension, Grade 2
ISBN 979-8-202-26396-5

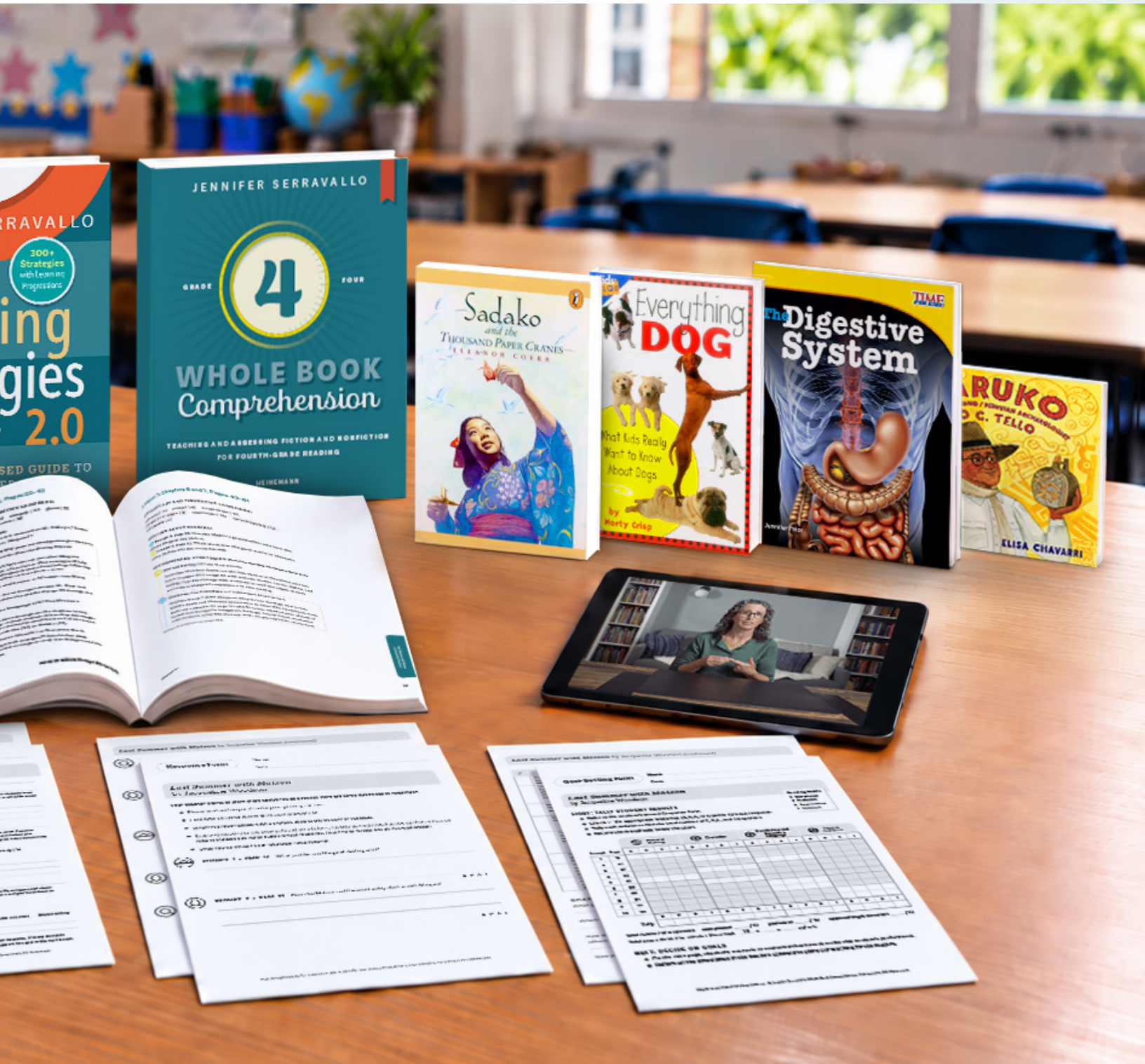
Whole Book Comprehension, Grade 3
ISBN 979-8-202-26397-2

Whole Book Comprehension, Grade 4
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Whole Book Comprehension, Grade 5
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Whole Book Comprehension, Grade 6
ISBN 979-8-202-26384-2





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Professional Learning with Jennifer Serravallo

Jen believes the best professional learning is hands-on, personalized, and grounded in the everyday realities of the classroom. She and her team of literacy experts offer customized PD packages to help you enhance reading and writing instruction in any K-12 classroom.

Learn more at

JenniferSerravallo.com/literacy-professional-development-services

