

Metacognition

Definition: thinking about your thinking (Tompkins, 2003).

Task Analysis:

1. Connecting new information to former knowledge.
2. Selecting thinking strategies deliberately.
3. Planning, monitoring, and evaluation thinking processes (Blakey, 1990).

Steps Required:

1. Describe the strategy, its purpose, and when it can be used.
 - a. I am going to make a text to self connection. By making connections, I will gain greater understanding of the event or the characters involved in the event. Connections help bridge new knowledge with old knowledge. Studies show that proficient readers are constantly making connections. Connections nudge readers into thinking about bigger, more expansive issues beyond their own reality (Keene, Zimmermann, 1997).
2. Demonstrate the necessary tasks involved in using a strategy:
 - b. What must I do to make a connection?
To make text to self connections I need to:
 - identify events or character's traits, thoughts or feelings.
 - think of similar events that happened to me or examples of when I behaved or thought like the character.
 - explain awareness of deeper understanding after making the connection.
3. Monitor the process:
 - c. After making the connection ask:
 1. Does my connection make sense? .
 2. Did the event I used to make a connection parallel an event in the text?
 3. Was my trait, thought, or feeling similar to that of the character?
4. If it doesn't make sense, repeat the process.
5. If it does make sense, continue with the text.

It is vital that teachers model when the process works and when the process does not work. Teachers need to model monitoring and revising. Students need to realize that they can monitor their thinking and revise when necessary.

After modeling repeatedly, the teacher should:

- chart the steps that are required to apply a specific comprehension strategy.
- ask questions designed to help students think aloud.
- provide ample opportunities and time for guided practice.

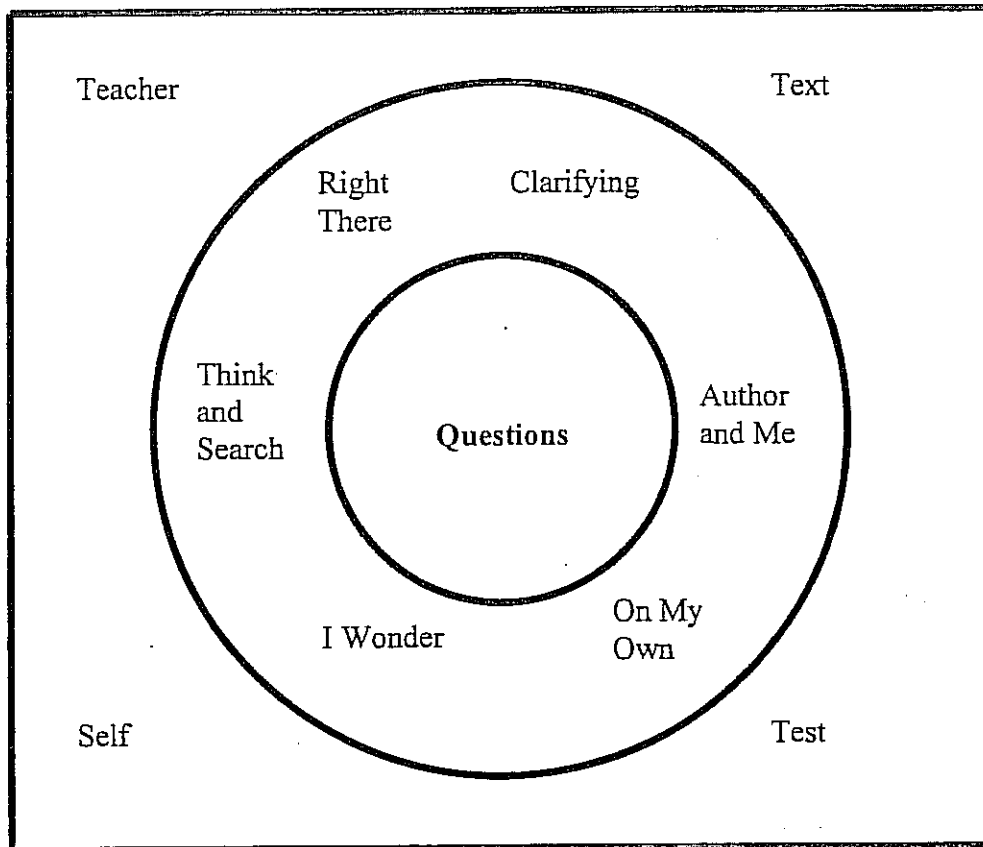
- use wait time.
- allow for pair share.
- ask follow up questions or use visual or verbal cues if necessary to remind students.
- promote student self-monitoring and evaluation of personal strategy use (Beckman, 2002).

Moving Toward Independence

- Independent use of metacognitive strategies develops gradually (Beckman, 2002).
- Students must be exposed to a great deal of modeling and must be provided many opportunities during guided practice to develop these strategies (Beckman, 2002).

Questioning

Definition: Questioning is a strategy that helps readers clarify confusions while reading as well as strengthen their understanding of text (LBUSD, 2000).



Task Analysis:

1. Students must be able to process (think about) what they are reading.
2. Students must be able to monitor their comprehension and identify when meaning breaks down.
3. Students must have the academic language necessary for the various comprehension skills.

Questioning can occur before, during, and after reading with students and teachers generating the questions. Teachers need to explicitly instruct students on the different types of questions: how to ask those questions, the thinking process involved in generating the questions, and in finding the answers to the various types of questions. For clarifying questions, students also need to know how to apply fix-up strategies when reading (LBUSD, 2002).

“Author and Me” Questions

“Author and Me” questions require students to use their knowledge of the text and their background knowledge to make an inference (Strickland, Ganske and Monroe 2001). Students will have greater success with answering “Author and Me” questions if they have had explicit instruction with the different types of inferences (see inference section). For this type of

question students must have adequate background knowledge and be capable of accessing it. Students need to be taught how to support their answers to these questions with information from the text and their own experiences.

Teachers must help students to understand that the answers to “Author and Me” questions are not found in the text. They are inferred from text clues and background knowledge. Teachers can help students to better understand this by presenting them with a variety of “Author and Me” questions. Students should first answer the question and then search for the answer in the text. When students have determined that they cannot find the answer in the text, teachers should help students to determine which portions of the text and what background knowledge helped them to answer the question.

A sample discussion might look something like this:

Teacher: “Why do you think that South Carolina’s code said that slaves could not hold meetings?”

Student: “If they have meetings with each other, the slaves might come up with a plan to escape.”

Teacher: “Can you put your finger on that answer in the text?”

Student: [Looking] “No, it’s not there.”

Teacher: “Why do you think they might come up with a plan if they could have meetings?”

Student: “It said that they were afraid that they would revolt.”

Teacher: “Good! That’s a text clue. Let’s see what else the text tells us. It tells us that these codes were in place to control the slaves. It also tells us that slaves could not have weapons and that slaveholders were not allowed to free their slaves. Now let’s think about what we know from our background knowledge. What do you know about slavery or meetings?”

Student: “Slaves were being held in captivity. Most times things that are held captive want to escape or will escape if given the chance. Also the lives of the slaves were miserable. People often run away when their lives are miserable.”

Teacher: “Good! Now, tell me what you know about meetings and how this connects the idea that the slaves might want to escape.”

Student: “When people get together they talk. If a group of people have a common goal like escaping, they might be able to plan how to do it during a meeting. I know that it is a lot easier to plan something with more people because there are more minds to think up ideas. The slave owners were probably afraid that meetings would give the slaves time to devise and carry out a plan to revolt or escape!”

(*Holt, United States History*, “The Southern Colonies,” 2006, pg. 41).

It is important to always guide students into thinking about what clues helped them to make their inferences. Teachers can facilitate this by having students record or orally dictate the text evidence and background knowledge that supports their inferences on an organizer.

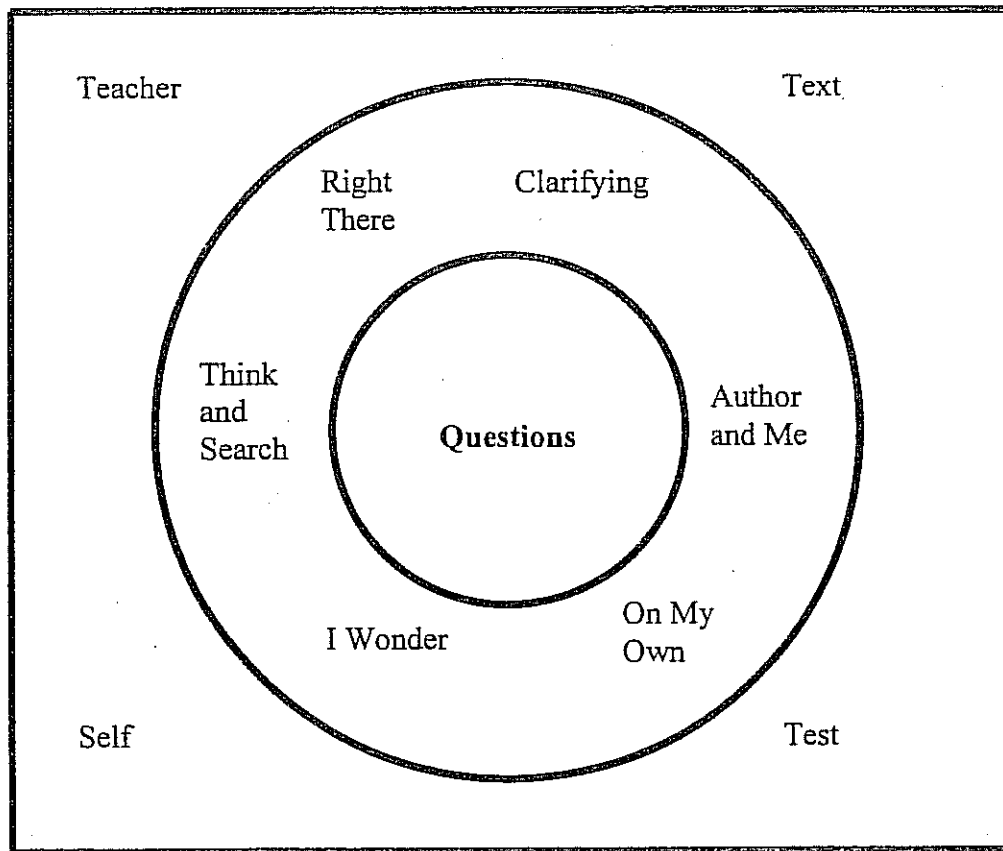
Once students are successful in making a variety of inferences, they will have a solid foundation of academic language to help them identify and generate these types of questions. Help students create a list of the types of words they expect to see in “Author and Me” questions. Then have students look at several “Author and Me” questions and identify other key words that indicate they will have to make an inference. Such words include: might, probably, could, best, possibly, etc. Have students use sample questions and the list to generate their own “Author and Me”

questions for a variety of texts. For primary students, teachers might generate the list for the students based on core materials and benchmark tests. They would then help students practice identifying those words in questions and eventually to write their own "Author and Me" questions.

Comprehension Skill	Question Stems
Character traits	Which of the following traits best represents the character? How do you know the character is _____? What trait does the character exhibit _____?
Cause and Effect	What caused _____ to _____? What was the result of _____? Why did _____? What was the outcome of _____? What was the reason for _____?
Author's Purpose	Why did the author...? How does the author...?
Predicting Outcomes	What might happen next? What will the character do? How will the character react to _____? What should happen? What could happen? What will probably occur? If the character does this _____ what could happen?
Drawing Conclusions	How do I know that...? Where do I think this is taking place...? Why do I believe that...? What do I already know about...that leads me to believe this? What can you conclude from...? What do you suppose...? From the passage you can tell....
Theme	What is the message? What is the moral? What is the theme? What is the big idea?
Main Idea	What is the best title? What is this mainly about? What is the summary? What is this mostly about?

Questioning

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Task Analysis:

1. Students must be able to process (think about) what they are reading.
2. Students must be able to monitor their comprehension and identify when meaning breaks down.
3. Students must have the academic language necessary for the various comprehension skills.

Questioning can occur before, during, and after reading with students and teachers generating the questions. Teachers need to explicitly instruct students on the different types of questions: how to ask those questions, the thinking process involved in generating the questions, and in finding the answers to the various types of questions. For clarifying questions, students also need to know how to apply fix-up strategies when reading.

“On My Own” Questions

“On My Own” questions are not essential for demonstrating understanding of the text. However when kids use “On My Own” questions during the “Into” stage of the reading process, they are able to access their background knowledge to help them build a better understanding while they read. These questions also build interest for students and help set a purpose for their reading.

“On My Own” questions also help students ask clarifying questions about their background knowledge and identify whether they need to strengthen it before reading to ensure greater comprehension.

To answer “On My Own” questions students must use their prior knowledge and previously learned skills. These questions often focus on personal opinions and word knowledge. They do not require students to read the text (Strickland, Ganske, and Monroe, 2001).

Teach students how to identify “On My Own” questions by providing them with various samples.

For example, How do you feel after looking at a sunset? Are spiders friendly? Do you like playing soccer? What is the word root for “territory?”

Help students to compare and contrast these questions with “Right There” and “Think and Search” questions. Help students to notice that these types of questions do not require them to read the text and can be answered based on their background knowledge. Next, provide students with several “On My Own” questions for various texts. Ask students to look at the questions and determine what background knowledge they need to answer the question and what that tells them about the text that they will be reading. Help students brainstorm a list of what they know about the topics revealed through the questions and discuss how this will help them to better comprehend the text.

On my own

“But what the heck, he’d give it a try. He returned inside and watched his mother make tortillas. He leaned against the kitchen counter, trying to work up the nerve to ask her for a guitar. Finally, he couldn’t hold back any longer.

‘Mom,’ he said, ‘I want a guitar for Christmas.’

She looked up from rolling tortillas. ‘Honey, a guitar costs a lot of money.’

‘How ‘bout for my birthday next year,’ he tried again.

‘I can’t promise,’ she said, turning back to her tortillas, ‘but we’ll see’ (*Holt, Interactive Reader, “No Guitar Blues,”* 2003, pg. 18).

For example:

Have you ever wanted something that you could not afford? Have you ever had to ask your parents for something? What things can a person do to get something that they really want? Has your mom ever made tortillas? What are some ways that you have persuaded your parents to get you what you want?

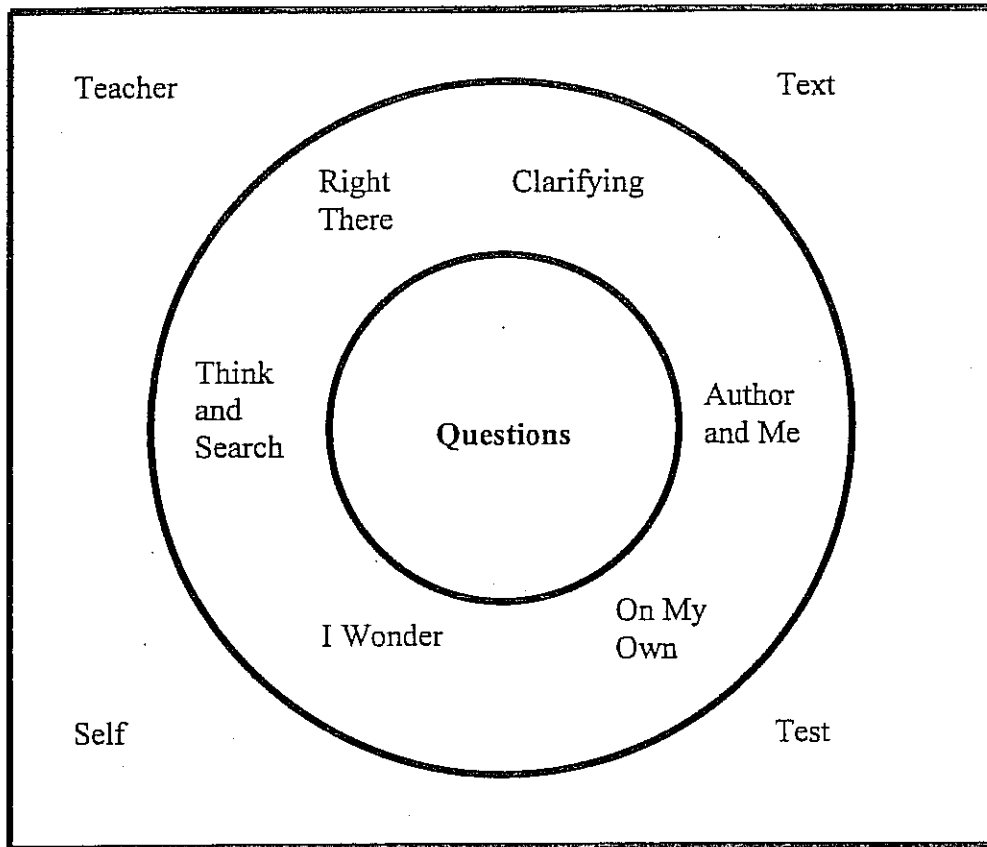
Take the time to help students who seem to be struggling with accessing their background knowledge to answer these types of questions. Remind students that identifying a lack of background knowledge is a form of monitoring comprehension and that they have an opportunity to apply “fix-up” strategies (Tompkins, 2003) before reading to build that background knowledge. Following this, provide students with copies of texts to read. Discuss in groups or as a class, how the “On My Own” questions helped them to better comprehend the text. Challenge students to write their own “On My Own” questions for texts across the curriculum. Guide students in creating questions that will best enable students to access background knowledge.

Question Answer Relationship (QAR)
(Strickland, Ganske, and Monroe, 2001)

Once students have been taught about the different types of questions, it is important to have them practice classifying questions they might see on tests or at the end of a unit of study. Begin with the students using test preparation materials. Have students first classify each question and identify the comprehension skill that will be used to answer the question. Next guide students as they use these questions to access their prior knowledge. Point out to the students that by reading the questions (and possible answers) that they can learn much about what they will read. Help students to then activate their own knowledge on the topic through what they learned from the questions. Explain that if they discover their background knowledge is lacking then they must seek out information on the topic before reading as a “fix-up” strategy. Discuss ways to build background knowledge if no reference materials are available such as in the case of standardized testing. After accessing prior knowledge, have students use the questions to help students attend to task while reading. Have students use post-its or “tags” to identify key pieces of information in the text that will help them answer the questions. Model how to use the information in the text to answer the questions. Point out to students the differences in thinking that are involved with the different types of questions and the relationships between the questions and their answers. Then help students to become proficient writing their own different types of questions. Continue to practice using questioning as a before, during, and after reading technique throughout the curriculum to foster comprehension (see attached).

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“I Wonder” Questions

“I Wonder” questions are similar to clarifying questions in that they require students to actively monitor their comprehension. These questions are most often generated by students while reading but can also be used as a means to set a purpose for reading. “I Wonder” questions help students process what they read (LBUSD, 2000). They are the things that students are curious

about when reading. In fictional texts “I Wonder” questions are most often questions that the students have about the direction that a story is taking or about the actions of the characters. In nonfiction texts, they are often about how and why things happen.

Discuss with students how good readers are constantly thinking as they read and that while they process the information contained in the text, curiosities can arise. Explain that these wonderments provide them with the opportunity to further their comprehension by peaking their interest in the text and therefore probing them to reread, continue reading, or even to seek more information beyond the text.

Use the think aloud approach to model for students how to make “I Wonder” questions with a variety of text. Use a “double-entry” journal format to record their wonderments during a shared reading. Begin by stopping students at the end of each paragraph and asking them to think of an “I Wonder” question. Have students share their questions in groups and ask for a few volunteers to share with the whole group. Record these on a large-scale version of the “double-entry” journal at the front of the room. Gradually increase the amount of the text depending on the ability of the students. Eventually require students to generate “I Wonder” questions independently while they read. This can be differentiated for students’ reading abilities with struggling readers stopping at the end of each paragraph and proficient readers recording “I Wonder” questions as they naturally arise.

“Orpheus went from place to place singing his songs of love and battle. One day he saw a beautiful girl in the crowd. He fell in love with her at once. He stopped playing and walked over to her.

‘What is your name?’ he asked.

‘I am called Eurydice,’ she said quietly.

‘I shall sing my next song for you,’ said Orpheus.

He picked up his lyre and sang a beautiful song. When Eurydice heard the song, she fell in love with the singer. For many days, Orpheus stayed in this place. No longer did he wish to go around the world singing. He wanted only to please Eurydice. Every day he sang her a new song of love” (*Holt, Interactive Reader, “Orpheus and the Underworld,”* 2003, pg. 38).

For example,

Page #	Wonderment
Pg. 38	I wonder what song he sang to woo her. I wonder if Eurydice already had a boyfriend. I wonder what it feels like to fall in love. I wonder if Orpheus will get bored staying only in one place.

Summarizing Fiction

Definition: students reduce text selection into a brief passage that states the essence of the original text (LBUSD, 2000).

Task Analysis: students have to understand how to determine importance in text (see Inference, Main Idea).

Once students can determine the main idea of paragraphs, they are ready to summarize fiction and non-fiction. To summarize fiction, students need to answer some very specific questions:

1. Who did what?
2. What happened?
3. What was the conflict?
4. What was the problem?
5. How was the problem resolved?

Students state the plot in one or two sentences and discern between relevant and irrelevant details (see Main Idea):

In *It's About Time*, Benny (**WHO**) reluctantly visits his grandparents and discovers he shares a lot in common with them (**DID WHAT?**)

In *Field Work*, the narrator learns to appreciate her parents who sacrifice their time to help her finish her work (**WHAT HAPPENED?**)

When students move from short stories to novels, they should be able to summarize each chapter in one or two sentences. Finally, as they get adept at summarizing, students can omit certain chapters and focus on key chapters that contain pivotal plot points to create a paragraph summary.

Before students can write paragraph summaries they must understand the concept of pivotal plot points, those points in the story that change its direction. Thus students should be able to identify the following:

1. Initiating Conflict
2. Rising Action
3. Climax
4. Falling Action
5. Resolution

Once students have determined these, they can utilize them to compose a summary that highlights the essence of text. Students can begin their paragraph with a nutshell statement about the plot and then use the preceding plot points as supporting details.

A summary of *The No-Guitar Blues* by Gary Soto:

Fausto needs money to get his own guitar and ends up disappointing himself. After seeing a cool guitar on television, Fausto asks his mother if she can buy him one, but learns that they don't

have enough money and as a result sets out to find a way to get the guitar himself. While attempting to earn money for the instrument, Fausto returns a lost dog and after lying about where he found it, gets a twenty dollar reward. Ridden with guilt, Fausto finally decides to donate the money to a church because being honest was far more important to him than having the guitar. To combat his depression at the realization that he will never have his guitar, Fausto spends all day playing soccer with his friends. In an exciting twist, Fausto returns home only to discover that his mother has found and gives to him, his grandfather's old guitar.

Summarizing Non-fiction

Definition: students reduce text selection into a brief passage that states the essence of the original text (LBUSD, 2000).

Task Analysis: students have to understand how to determine importance in text (see Inference, Main Idea).

Once students can determine the main idea of paragraphs, they are ready to summarize fiction and non-fiction.

In non-fiction, it is helpful to give students copies of text that they can highlight. When highlighting importance in non-fiction text, have students consider the following (Harvey, Goudvis, 2000, pg 120):

1. "Look carefully at the first and last line of each paragraph. Important information is often contained there.
2. Highlight only necessary words and phrases, not entire sentences.
3. Don't get thrown off by interesting details. Although they are fascinating, they often obscure important information.
4. Make notes in the margin to emphasize a pertinent highlighted word or phrase.
5. Note cue words. They are almost always followed by important information.
6. Pay attention to the vast array of non-fiction features (headings, subheading, diagrams, boldface and italic print, etc.) that signal importance.
7. Pay attention to surprising information. It might mean you are learning something new.
8. When finished, check to see that no more than half the paragraph is highlighted. As readers become more adept, one third of the paragraph is a good measure for highlighting."

Teachers need to model highlighting strategies using an overhead. Refer to main idea about determining importance at the word, sentence, and text levels. When teachers are modeling they should be asking out loud, "What words carry the meaning in this sentence?" "Which sentences capture the essence of the paragraph?" "Which words/sentences best help us to tell what this passage was all about?"

Depending on the grade level, students will summarize paragraph by paragraph or page by page. Have students state the main idea of the paragraph or the page. Students should write their summary statement on a response board or teacher should chart students' summary statements. Then have students discuss which statements best capture the essence of text. Students should be able to support why their statement is a valid summary and why others are not. Refer students to main idea lessons and the "arrow" exercise.

As they read longer text, teach students to stop periodically and summarize key points. The headings and sub headings in non-fiction text can be used as signals to stop and summarize information within those headings.

When students have successfully accomplished writing summary sentences for non-fiction, they can begin to use the highlighting activity, to compose non-fiction summary paragraphs. To do this, they would write a summary sentence and use the highlighted information as supporting details.

Example:

“How do you tell an *alligator from a crocodile?* (*main idea*) Look for teeth—but use binoculars and stay far away! **Alligators have broad, rounded snouts**, with only a **few teeth** visible when their mouths are shut. *In comparison*, **crocodiles have pointed snouts**, and you can see **most of their teeth**. *Both* alligators and crocodiles spend much of their days **resting in the sun or water**” (*compare and contrast text structure*) (*Science Explorer, Focus on Life Science, “Reptiles,”* 2001, pg. 459).

Summary

Because alligators and crocodiles have much in common, telling them apart is no easy task. Both alligators and crocodiles like to lay in the water and sun. Both also have snouts and mouths filled with many teeth. Alligators differ from crocodiles in that they have broad, rounded snouts and have few teeth showing when their mouths are closed. In contrast, a crocodile’s snout is pointed and they have many teeth showing when they have their mouths closed.