

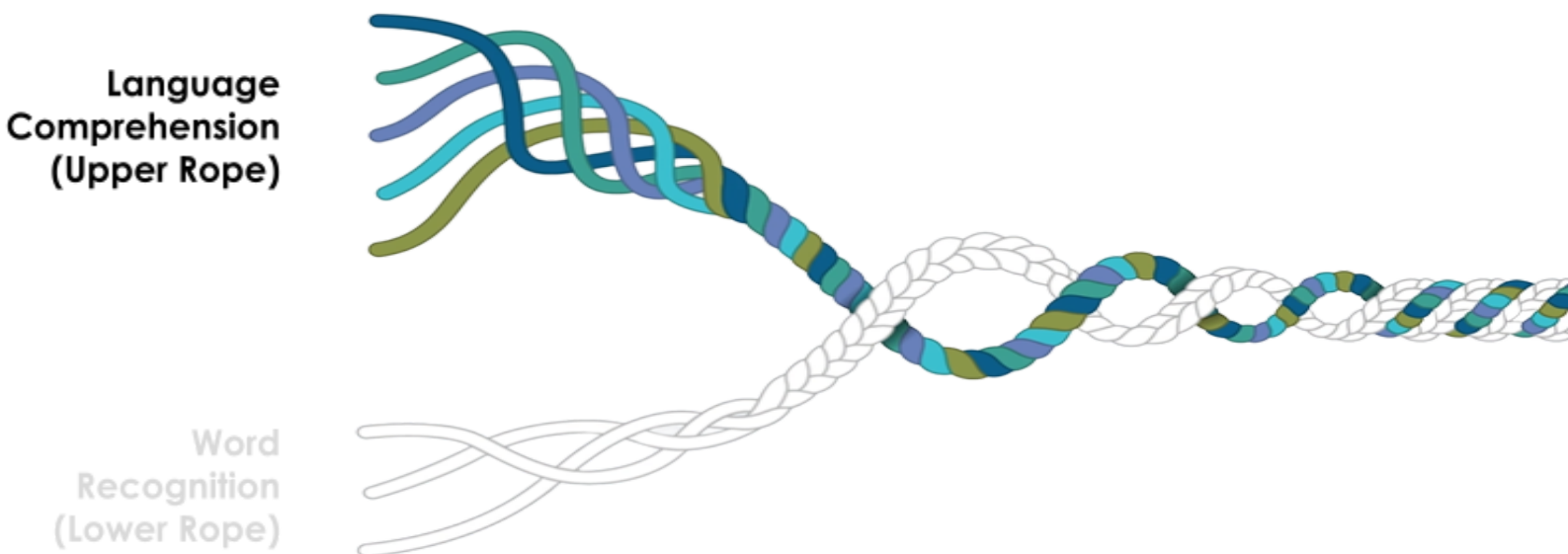
Elementary Language Arts Spotlight: How to Support Your Student at Home with Language Arts Science of Reading-The Reading Rope

Teaching all strands of the Reading Rope together helps your child develop better reading skills. As your child makes connections between the different strands they will become stronger in individual areas and even stronger when woven together.



Each strand is equally important

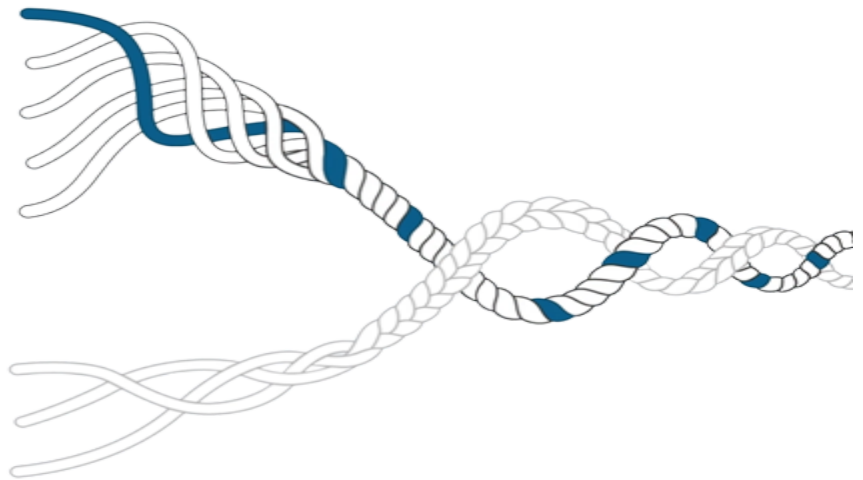
Science of Reading—Upper Rope Skills



Background Knowledge

What is Background Knowledge?

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE



Background Knowledge is all of the previous facts, concepts, beliefs, and experiences that we as readers bring to the table as we read a text. Background knowledge allows readers to make strategic inferences about the author's meaning without a lot of effort. It's the velcro to which new knowledge sticks, providing the familiarity that is crucial for making connections and creating new knowledge.

Knowledge provides the foundation for higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. The more knowledge a reader has about a topic, the more space they have to think more deeply about what they are reading. Building strong, strategic stores of background knowledge creates an efficient path to critical thinking.

Background Knowledge

At Home Suggestions/Activities

Teach words in categories: Categories of objects begin to develop concepts, and the use of generic nouns (fruit) has been shown to be highly related to language and vocabulary development. For example, “I’m going to say the following words: strawberries, bananas, papayas, pineapples. They all are a type of... (fruit).”

Encourage topic-focused wide reading: Encourage children to identify an interest and read as many books as they can on one topic. What you find is that children will develop a deeper knowledge and expertise on a topic. These interests will drive children to read more and support building background knowledge.

Embrace multimedia: Videos are certainly no replacement for real-life experiences, however multimedia can often provide a wealth of information that we could only wish to experience firsthand. Further, it can introduce children to important words and concepts in a highly motivating way and build a shared knowledge base among all of your students.

Plan family field trips: Experiences are the most compelling ways to build knowledge. There is nothing more thrilling than watching children engage in learning through direct experiences. Visit different places in the community together, such as the grocery store, bakery, library, park, forest, concert hall, or zoo, and talk about what they see, hear, smell, and taste.

Vocabulary

What is Vocabulary?

VOCABULARY



Vocabulary is the knowledge of the meaning of words in a text and, like background knowledge, it is a prominent predictor of reading comprehension. The more deeply a reader knows a word, the more likely it will be understood when they hear it or read it. How many words a reader can recognize, how deeply they understand those words, and how precisely they can use them all contribute to a strong vocabulary.

Children will only be able to communicate what their vocabulary allows. It is important to equip students with a wide vocabulary for a variety of reasons. First and most importantly, the more words a student knows, the better they'll be able to communicate with others. Another important reason to build students' vocabulary is that it allows them to access higher-level texts. The more words a student knows, the more text they will be able to read, and in turn, comprehend.

Vocabulary

At Home Suggestions/Activities

Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. We can identify four types of vocabulary:

Listening vocabulary: the words we need to know to understand what we hear

Speaking vocabulary: the words we use when we speak

Reading vocabulary: the words we need to know to understand what we read

Writing vocabulary: the words we use in writing

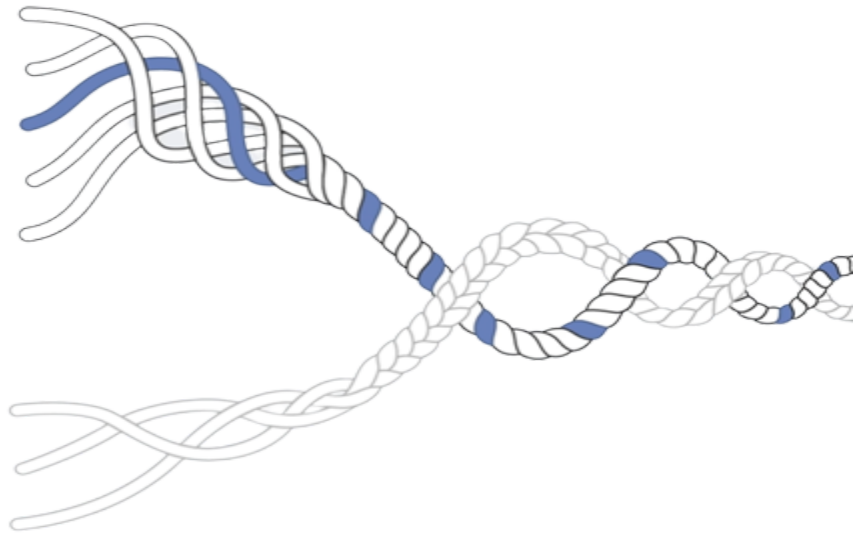
Exposure: The best method for expanding students' vocabulary is through exposure. When students have access to a wide variety and large number of words that are challenging, their vocabulary grows. Simple exposure is the most natural and convenient method for building a strong vocabulary.

Explicitly Teach Words: There are high-leverage words that students in each grade level are expected to know and be able to define when they come across them in text. Students should have multiple opportunities to practice newly learned words both in spoken and written contexts.

Language Structures

What are Language Structures?

**LANGUAGE
STRUCTURES**



Language structure is the relationship between the words and sentences in a text. It is how our language is organized. Understanding and applying grammatical rules helps students comprehend and construct sentences, enhancing their ability to make meaning from text.

Syntax - The arrangement of words in a phrase or sentence. The English language has patterns and rules for the way we order our words. It also has some flexibility and variety in acceptable patterns, and even then, speakers and writers are allowed some leeway with these patterns.

Semantics - In linguistics, semantics is the study of the meanings of morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences. Knowledge of the meaning of a text is essential to reading.

Language Structures

At Home Suggestions/Activities

English has a lot of rules for the patterns and order of words, known as syntax. Semantics refers to how words and phrases combine to create meaning and how an author's word choice affects that meaning. When children have better knowledge of words, phrases, and sentences, and how they work together this can help support their comprehension.

Examples of Syntax in a Sentence:

- The boy jumped *happily*.
- The boy *happily* jumped.
- *Happily*, the boy jumped.

By rearranging just one word in the sentence, a varied syntax is formed. Each is grammatically correct and an acceptable English language form.

Read Books Aloud: Reading books with children helps them gain knowledge. Books often include words that children won't hear in everyday conversation. The language of books is different from the language of conversation. There is also a greater variety of sentence structures in books. Reading books aloud to children is one of the most important things we can do to help improve comprehension.

Verbal Reasoning

What is Verbal Reasoning?

**VERBAL
REASONING**



Verbal reasoning is the ability to comprehend, reason, and problem solve using concepts expressed through words. It includes abilities such as making inferences, understanding metaphors, sequencing, and predicting.

Good readers think about what they are reading. Developing strong reading comprehension includes developing students' expectation that what they read should make sense.

Verbal reasoning strand refers to a reader's ability to think about a text and infer meaning from what is explicitly and implicitly stated. To do so, readers must engage in processes such as

- making logical inferences,
- integrating ideas within and across texts
- interpreting abstract language

Verbal Reasoning

At Home Suggestions/Activities

Verbal reasoning is the ability to understand language beyond the words spoken. Verbal reasoning requires readers to go beyond what they read so they can make sense of a text and more deeply understand a topic. Understanding figurative language is important and helps readers to reason with the meaning of text while they read.

What is a Figure of Speech? A figure of speech is something that is used to convey a more deep or intense meaning. It is a phrase made up of two or more words that can add effect to the meaning of something and is used in a non-literal sense. When using literal speech, the words and sentences explain what is happening literally, or in other words, what is happening in reality. When we use a figure of speech to explain a situation, the words and sentences become nonliteral and do not convey what is actually happening but rather give a feeling as to what is happening.

What are some common figures of speech?

Metaphor: a comparison between two unlike things without using “like” or “as”

Simile: a comparison between two unlike things using “like” or “as”

Personification: attributing human characteristics to non-human entities

Hyperbole: exaggeration for effect

Irony: a statement implying its opposite for effect

Reading a variety of texts that have different examples of figurative language can help students practice this important skill.

Literacy Knowledge

What is Literacy Knowledge?

LITERACY
KNOWLEDGE



Literacy knowledge is an understanding of how the text is organized and for what purpose. It includes knowledge of early print concepts, such as the difference between letters, words, punctuation, and directionality. It also refers to knowledge of various structures or genres and knowing what reading strategies to use for different types of texts.

Print Concepts - letters vs. words, 1:1 correspondence, reading left-to-right and top-to-bottom, spaces between written words, letter order matters, etc.

Genres of Literature – different types of books or stories defined by special characteristics

Literacy Knowledge

At Home Suggestions/Activities

When children have knowledge of literacy concepts, it means that they have a foundation in all of the elements that make up conventional ways of reading, writing, and speaking.

- modeling voice-to-print matching while reading aloud
- explicitly demonstrating left-to-right directionality of print while reading aloud
- pointing out the text on the page while reading aloud
- expose students to a wide variety of text types (novels, informational texts, graphic fiction, newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, etc.)
- model using text features, and have them go on “text feature scavenger hunts”
- use graphic organizers to “map” text
- compare texts in English with texts in other languages that do not follow the same directionality of text (like Arabic or Hebrew)
- give children plenty of opportunities to discuss what they notice about the way a variety of texts are organized