

Facilitator's Packet for Using the Reading Scoring Guide: Level 3 In-Depth Scoring For Content Area Teachers



This packet contains the following:

- Facilitator's Agenda
- PowerPoint Slides with Facilitator's notes
- Handouts included in Participant Packet

Information provided by Oregon Department of Education
Office of Assessment and Information Services
Updated for 2011-12

This page is
intentionally left blank.

**Using the Reading Scoring Guide
Facilitator's Agenda – In-Depth Scoring Training – Level 3
For Content Area Teachers
Time: 3 – 3.5 hours**

5 – 10 minutes	1. Welcome and Introductions • May be done by the host or by the presenter. • Focus on making participants feel welcome and let them know what to expect • Take care of any housekeeping details • Handout: Participant's Packet
10 - 12 minutes Small Group Discussion (or whole group if workshop number is small)	2. Small group discussion – Choose one of the questions below or one of your own. • What are the most important reading skills for students to have in your content area? • What kinds of reading tasks are people in careers related to your content area required to do on the job? What kinds of reading skills do they need to do these successfully? Materials: Easels with chart paper, white board, document camera or small groups report out verbally.
15 - 20 minutes	3. Begin Level 3 Reading Work Sample and Scoring Guide PowerPoint presentation • Go through Slides 1 – 6 which identify goals, sources for information on Adolescent Literacy and basic concepts of Adolescent Literacy – (make connections to comments in report out from previous small group discussions especially on Slide 4) • (Option) Use handout “Key Concepts for Content Teachers” for a short discussion activity. One approach would be to do a “jigsaw,” dividing the group into 4 smaller groups (or pairs) and asking each to read one of the key concepts and report out to the group, including how this concept might be implemented in their courses. Materials: Laptop with PowerPoint & projector
5 - 10 minutes	4. Slides 7 - 9: Review of requirements for reading work samples • Participants have heard this information in Level 1 & 2 trainings, so this is just a reminder Materials: Laptop with PowerPoint & projector

5 - 10 minutes	5. Slides 10 - 13 Review reading traits: Demonstrate Understanding, Develop an Interpretation, & Analyze Text. Examine Scoring Guide closely for each trait. Have participants highlight key words, especially at the 3 and 4 level score points Materials: Highlighters for participants
1.5 – 2 hours	6. Slide 14 Begin Scoring Session – Use Facilitator’s Guide to Leading Scoring of Student Papers as well as commentary to assist with this activity.
BREAK	7. <i>Be sure to take a break about half way through the scoring session to allow participants to stretch, use the restroom, etc.</i>
	8. Slides 15 – 19 Contain examples of student responses. Facilitator’s guide will help you incorporate these into the training session.
5 minutes	9. Slides 20 – 21 Return focus to work sample issues by reviewing the uses of work samples/ scoring guides for instruction, formative assessment, summative assessment (all were covered in Level 2 Training)
15 - 20 minutes	10. Slides 22 – 25 Introduces information about the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technology. Use handouts in packet on CCSS for Literacy and Changes in Text Complexity. • (Option) Use handout “Tips for increasing reading comprehension for college students” as a group discussion activity, providing 5 minutes for the participants to read the article and then leading a discussion on how teachers already do some of these things and how they could incorporate new ideas from the article. • Participants have handouts in their packets to correspond with this information
~10 minutes	11. Slides 26 & 27 Provide Resources and information about future training opportunities. In the area of reading, the ability to select appropriate reading material and develop questions that elicit responses that can be scored using the scoring guide is essential! This is covered in Level 4 training.
	12. Encourage participants to consider using some of the practice Work Samples on the ODE web page or to write questions like the ones in the sample student work to use with an upcoming reading activity in their classrooms.
Total = 3 – 3.5 hours	
	<i>Participant Packet:</i> • <i>PowerPoint handouts to take notes</i> • <i>Various handouts</i> <i>Student Work Packet:</i> • <i>10 student papers to score</i> • <i>Portrait Version of Scoring Guide</i> • <i>Practice Score Sheet</i>

2011-12 State Scoring Guide Professional Development: Assessing the Essential Skill of Reading

Level 3 – In-Depth Training for Content Area Teachers

Information provided by
Oregon Department of Education
2011-12



This PowerPoint presentation is intended to be used as part of a 2.5 to 3 hour in-depth training session. This version is focused toward content area teachers and emphasizes using Reading Work Samples in their classrooms. Ideally, participants should have attended an introductory training session previously, although that is not mandatory.

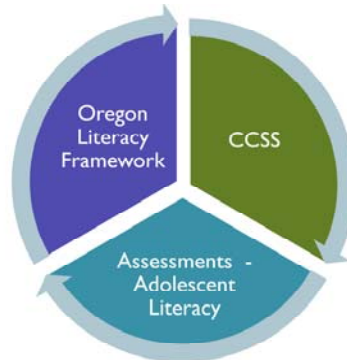
Goals Participants will



- Understand current information about Adolescent Literacy Instruction and Assessment
- Be able to apply the Official Reading Scoring Guide to Student Work accurately
- Be aware of Common Core State Standards for Literacy in the Content areas.
- Know about resources & further professional development available

Goals for the training session

Information Sources



- Oregon Literacy Framework
- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in Science, Social Studies and Technical Subjects
- Assessments to Guide Adolescent Literacy Instruction (Center on Instruction)

These are the three key documents used as rationale and direction for this workshop. The direct ties to the Reading Scoring Guide are very clear and make continued (and increased) use of the scoring guide a beneficial exercise for teachers and students in all subject areas.

What is Adolescent Academic Literacy?



Photo by Randy L. Rasmussen The Oregonian

The ability to
construct
meaning in
content-area
texts and
literature
including the
following:

From Assessments to Guide Adolescent Literacy Instruction by Center on Instruction. The full document is available at <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Assessment%20Guide.pdf>

Ability to

- Make inferences
- Learn new vocabulary from context
- Link ideas across texts
- Identify & summarize important ideas
- Read for initial understanding and think about meaning in order to make inferences or draw conclusions



Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, et al., 2007

*Assessments to Guide Adolescent
Literacy Instruction*

Center on Instruction

Important reading skills – these skills will help students deepen their understanding of content area material they are asked to read.



Three Goals for Adolescent Literacy Instruction

1. To increase overall levels of **reading proficiency**
2. To help students meet **increasingly difficult standards** in middle and high school.
3. To **assist students who are reading below grade-level** to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to reach high school standards.

Assessments to Guide Adolescent
Literacy Instruction
Center on Instruction

There is evidence that current average reading levels of students graduating from high school are not sufficient to meet post-secondary literacy demands, both in many workplace settings and at community colleges and universities (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Williamson, 2004). More about lack of reading skills among high school graduates will appear later in this workshop.

Demonstrating Proficiency in Reading

1. OAKS Reading/Literature Assessment

Score of 236

2. Other Options

ACT or PLAN	18
WorkKeys	5
Compass	81
Asset	42
Accuplacer	86
SAT/PSAT	440/44
AP & IB	various

This should be information participants have seen before in earlier workshops. It is just a reminder of the options for demonstrating proficiency: 1. OAKS assessment and 2. other standardized assessments, with required scores. Some of these may be helpful to some students, but more are likely to benefit from the next option: Reading Work Samples

On March 11, 2011 the State Board of Education adopted additional tests and scores for proficiency in the Essential Skill of Reading. They are listed below:

AP English Literature & Composition, AP Macroeconomics, AP Microeconomics, AP Psychology, AP United States History, AP World History, AP European History, AP United States Government & Politics, AP Comparative Government & Politics

All AP tests require a score of 3 or higher to meet proficiency requirements for the Essential Skill of Reading.

IB English Language , IB History of Americas, IB History of Europe, IB 20th Century Topics, IB Economics, IB Psychology, IB Social Anthropology

All IB tests require a score of 4 or higher to meet proficiency requirements for the Essential Skill of Reading.

Local Work Sample

Reading Work Sample scored
using Official State Scoring Guide

- Two Reading Work Samples Required
- Students must earn a score of 12 or higher on each work sample



Option 3 -- Reading Work Samples and the requirements

Reading Work Samples

Reading work samples may provide the opportunity that some students need to show their reading skills.

Reading work samples are an effective strategy to help students comprehend content information more thoroughly.



All students can benefit from learning to explain their reading and using the scoring guide. Some students may increase their proficiency as a result of work samples and the scoring guide which may lead to meeting the standard using work samples or increasing their scores on the OAKS test to meet the standard. Strategies used in reading work samples will carry over into students' post secondary plans.

Official Scoring Guide Traits

- Demonstrate understanding
- Develop an interpretation
- Analyze text



This is a review opportunity. Have participants use highlighters to mark key words and phrases as you go through each trait in the next set of slides. Use the Facilitator's Suggestions for Leading Student Scoring to help you lead the discussion.

Remember, there are 2 versions of the Scoring Guide, one to be used with Informational text and one to be used with Literary text. The Informational version is provided for this workshop. (Demonstrate Understanding and Develop an Interpretation are the same whether the selection is informational or literary. Analyze Text differs between the two types of reading selections, which is why there are two scoring guides.)

Demonstrate Understanding

“Getting the gist”

- Main ideas, relevant details, sequence of events, relationships among ideas, facts/opinions
- Literal Comprehension



Overview of Demonstrate Understanding. This trait is focused on literal comprehension. Students demonstrate understanding by explaining things like main ideas, details, fact versus opinion, etc.

Develop an Interpretation

“Reading between the lines”

- Unstated main ideas/themes
- Inferences, interpretations, conclusions, generalizations, and predictions
- Inferential Comprehension



Overview of Develop an Interpretation. This trait focuses on deriving meaning by inference. Students demonstrate this trait by explaining how they came up with an interpretation, generalization, inference, etc.

Analyze Text — Informational

“Looking at the author’s craft”



- Author’s purpose, ideas and reasoning
- Writer’s Strategies
- Textual evidence

Overview of Analyze Text. For informational text, students are asked to analyze the author’s purpose and reasoning and the use of various stylistic techniques. The focus is always on the effect of the author’s decisions on the impact of the writing. Students must give specific examples from the text.



The next activity will be scoring **10** student papers. The PowerPoint presentation should be paused during the scoring session and training. Refer to the Facilitator's Packet for guidance in leading participants through the scoring activity.



Demonstrate Understanding

1. ***This article is about kids from the western U.S. competing in a robotics team representing their school. Each team of high schoolers must design their own robot and compete against others. This article also gets the message across that we need to work together all the time to solve our problems.***
2. ***It's kind of like being a "good sport." Everyone is helping everyone and cheering on everyone. An example of this is when Eric and Ian were helping the Spokane team so they could compete.***

Information in Facilitator's Guide to Leading the Scoring Session.

These are examples of responses to "Robotics" that are at a score level of 4.

Develop an Interpretation

3.) From Venn diagram:

<i>Athletic sports</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Robotics competitions</i>
<i>Doing whatever it takes to put your competition at a disadvantage</i>	<i>Trying to beat your Competition</i>	<i>Helping your competition</i>
<i>Physical conditioning</i>	<i>Trying to get better</i>	<i>Mental conditioning</i>
<i>Mostly female or male, not mixed</i>	<i>Working as a team</i>	<i>Mixed gender</i>
<i>Most teams the same size</i>	<i>Traveling to face Opponents</i>	<i>Different sized teams</i>
	<i>Playoff system</i>	
	<i>Rely on teammates</i>	

Instructions are included in Facilitator's Guide to Leading the Scoring Session.

This is an example of some responses that different students made to Question #3. All reflect level 4 interpretation.

Develop an Interpretation

4.) *I think she likes the concept but not fierce competition and the emotions that come with it. “but we took out the bad part...” “...the trying to crush your opponent”*

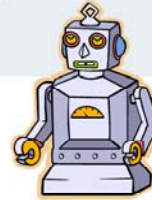


Info in facilitator's packet. Another example of level 4 Develop an Interpretation

Analyze Text: Informational

Question 5

<i>Text from article</i>	<i>How it makes the writing effective</i>
<i>“just as the modern workplace does”</i>	<i>Shows how it will be preparing you for how things will be used when you’re older working a real job</i>
<i>“Robots battle for supremacy in Portland this weekend”</i>	<i>Makes the role of the robots more exciting</i>



Directions in facilitator’s packet. Examples of level 4 responses

Analyze Text: Informational

6.) The author makes the robot competition more exciting by calling it a battle. The word battle makes people think about fighting which is more exciting than how they later explain that they will be “moving soccer sized balls into their opponents trailers.” He also uses people who he knows will have nothing but good things to say about the subject like Erica Smith did.



Information in Facilitator's Packet: Example of 4 level response to Analyze Text



How do Work Samples fit into the big picture?

Intro to talking about using the scoring guide in classrooms for multiple purposes and the importance of increased literacy skills for our students.



Multiple Uses for the Scoring Guide

▪ **Instructional Tool**

- Makes targets explicit to students
- Opportunities to show students models from website or other examples

▪ **Formative & Interim Assessments**

- Inform instructional strategies
- Provide data on student progress

▪ **Classroom/ Summative Assessment**

- End of unit, course, etc. or Essential Skills

Teachers can use Reading Work Samples to determine student progress throughout their courses or on a planned schedule. They do not have to assign all parts of the work sample or score all elements – for example, after a lesson on text analysis, having students respond to only questions on text analysis would be an appropriate use of the scoring guide. As students become increasingly familiar with the Scoring Guide, (student language version was provided in Intro Level 2 workshop and is available on ODE website) they will better understand what good readers do and how to demonstrate those skills so a rater can see the student's proficiency.

- ❑ What are the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in Science, Social Studies & Technical Subjects?
- ❑ How do they fit in with reading work samples and the scoring guide?



Teachers should be aware of the new Common Core State Standards. Many districts are beginning curriculum alignment to the standards.

In the participant packet is a handout listing the literacy standards for reading in the content areas for High School. Standards listed under Key Ideas and Details link to Demonstrate Understanding and Develop Interpretation, while Craft and Structure relate to Analyze Text.

Changes in Text Complexity Requirements

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile Ranges	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCSS expectations
K-1	N/A	N/A
2-3	450-725	450-790
4-5	645-845	770-980
6-8	860-1010	955-1155
9-10	960-1115	1080-1305
11-CCR	1070-1220	1215-1355

An important change in the CCSS is the level of text complexity students are expected to be able to read independently. Note that the current target score for reading work sample text (1070) is at the low end of current 11th grade expectations. In the new CCSS expectations, 1070 is below expected reading level for grade 9, and well below expectations for grades 11 – College & Career Ready. This chart is also in Participant's Packet.

College Remediation Needs

- **1/3** of high school graduates need remedial reading classes in college.
- **42%** of high school graduates need remedial reading in community colleges
- Costs for remedial education post high school are nearly **\$3.7** billion annually



Handout in participant packet gives further information about this problem.



Three Challenges Educators Must Address

- 1) the need for fundamental change in attitudes and instructional practices,
- 2) the need to resolve tensions between teachers and administrators about the types of formative assessments each prefer, and
- 3) the need to change educators' attitudes and beliefs about indicators of student success.

All will require new thinking about the purposes of assessment, student abilities, and teaching methods; attention to new instructional resources; and the development of new assessment and pedagogical skills.

*Assessments to Guide Adolescent
Literacy Instruction, pg 4*

For content area teachers, the CCSS require attention to reading and writing (Literacy) in content classes. Using reading work samples to determine students ability to comprehend and interpret content information and including the concepts from the reading scoring guide will not only meet some of those standards, but will help students with the content in current classes and their ability to understand content text in college, community college, post-secondary training, the military or the work force. Bu fundamental change is required!

Resources

Oregon Literacy Framework: Assessment Section

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2834>

Work Samples

www.ode.state.or.us/go/worksamples

Oregon Data Project:

<http://www.oregondatapoint.org/>

Assessment of Essential Skills Toolkit:

<http://assessment.oregonk-12.net/>

Common Core State Standards for Oregon:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2860>

Here are some sites for reading assessment resources. The go/worksamples address does not work as a link, but if you type /go/worksamples in the address line of your browser on the ODE homepage following www.ode.state.or.us, it will take you directly to a page of information on work samples. You can also use the search feature and type in worksamples as one word. Many resources are available in the Resources and Promising Practices section for Reading Work Samples and more are added frequently.

Oregon Data Project provides training in establishing assessment systems and analyzing data, as well as in the specific Essential Skills of Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

The Assessment of Essential Skills Toolkit provides a step by step approach to designing a district assessment system geared to students meeting diploma requirements. The Common Core State Standards for Oregon provides a lot of information and resources for teachers in making the transition to the new standards and upcoming SMARTER-Balanced assessments.

Future Reading Work Sample Trainings

- Introduction to the Reading Scoring Guide
 - Dates:
- Reading Work Sample Task Development
 - Dates:

Contact Information:



Photo courtesy of The Statesman Journal

Fill in any workshop dates you have scheduled and your contact information here. Hopefully, participants in Level 3 workshops will have attended the introduction (level 2) workshop – but they may recommend it to colleagues. Level 4, Work Sample Task Development, will help them use their content material to assess students ability to read and comprehend it.

This page is
intentionally left blank.

Key Concepts for Content Area Teachers

from *Assessments to Guide Adolescent Literacy Instruction*, Center on Instruction

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Assessment%20Guide.pdf>

In our view, academic literacy in adolescents is strongly embedded in content, and it is the essential responsibility of all content-area teachers to provide instruction that enhances their students' ability to comprehend texts within their content area (Torgesen et al., 2007). As content-area teachers more fully assume these responsibilities, their instruction should enable students to comprehend texts more deeply and think about the content. Students' ability to comprehend and think about texts within the standards based, year-end outcome tests in literacy should also improve. Although no one may be specifically assigned to help most students meet literacy standards in middle and high school, it is actually the responsibility of all teachers to work toward improving adolescents' literacy skills, not only English/language arts teachers or reading teachers.

(page 8)

McMillan (2007) defines formative assessment in a way that suggests that differences among formative assessments are not necessarily dichotomous, but rather may exist along a continuum. He suggests (p. 4) that one can tell whether "true" formative assessment is happening by looking for three key things:

1. The extent to which assessments are embedded within instruction;
2. The extent to which additional instructional strategies are employed; and
3. The extent of student engagement and learning.

(page 20)

An important idea in the literature on classroom-based formative assessments is that the frequent assessment-feedback-new performance cycle can actually help students become more independent, self-regulated learners. (Marshall, 2007).

(page 37)

Most of the teachers in the higher performing schools shared and discussed with students rubrics for evaluating performance; they also incorporated them into their ongoing instructional activities as a way to help their students develop an understanding of the components that contribute to a higher score (more complete, more elaborated, more highly organized response). Use of the rubrics also helped students develop reflection and repair strategies relevant to their reading, writing, and oral presentation activities. (p. 868) Langer, 2001

(page 25)

**Reading Standards from Common Core State Standards for
Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects**

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

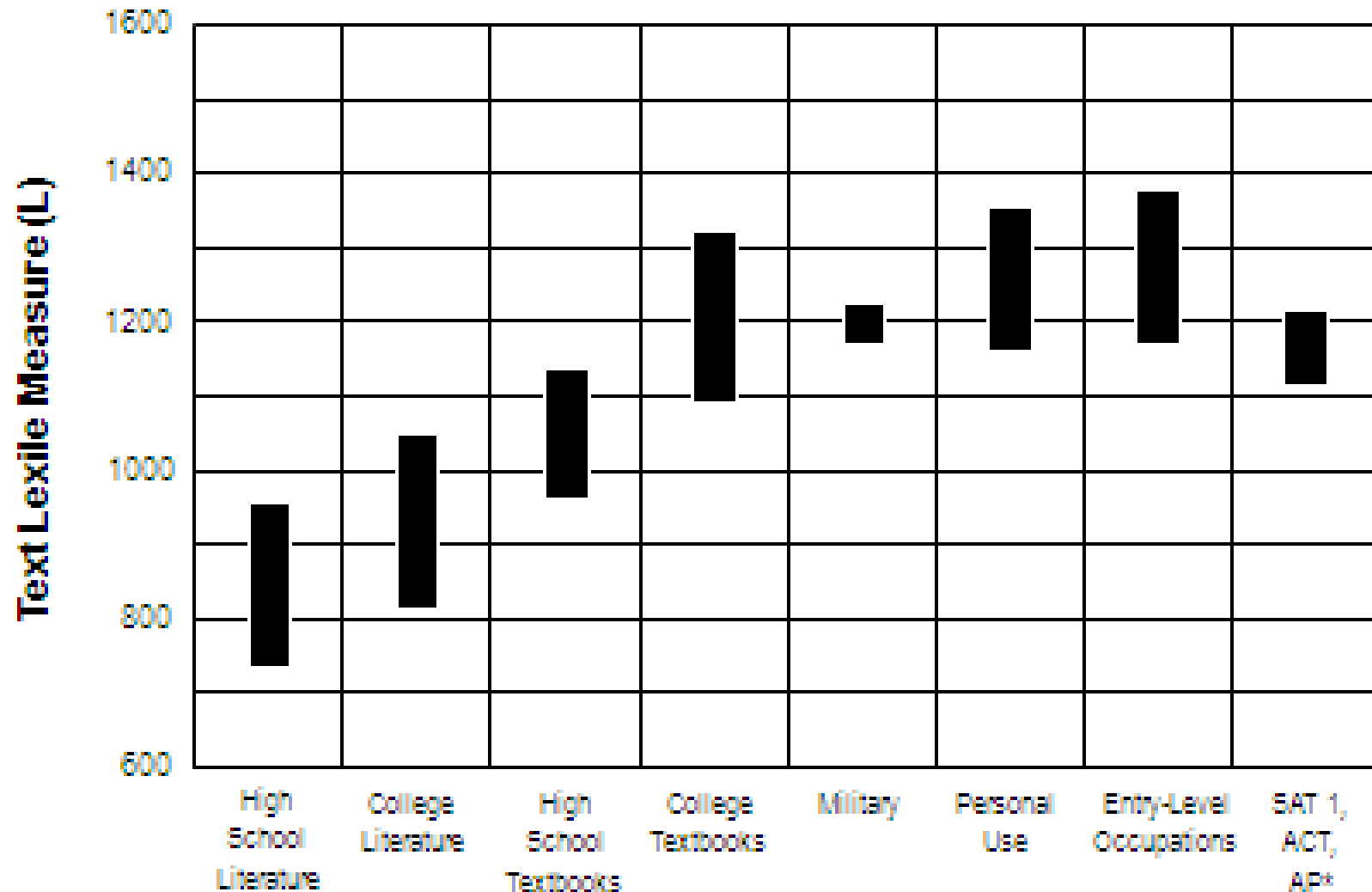
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Lexile Framework[®] for Reading Study

Summary of Text Lexile Measures

Interquartile Ranges Shown (25% - 75%)



This page is
intentionally left blank.

Changes to Text Complexity Expectations in Common Core State Standards Based on Lexile® Levels

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Common Core State Standards	Old Lexile® Ranges	Lexile® Ranges Aligned to College and Career Ready Expectations in CCSS
K–1	N/A	N/A
2–3	450–725	450–790
4–5	645–845	770–980
6–8	860–1010	955–1155
9–10	960–1115	1080–1305
11–CCR	1070–1220	1215–1355

<http://www.lexile.com/about-lexile/grade-equivalent/grade-equivalent-chart/>

This page is
intentionally left blank.

Facts about Post-Graduate Reading for High School Students

1. Nearly **1/3** of high school students who enter a 4 year college must take a **remedial reading** class. For **community college** students, that number rises to **42%**. (*US Department of Education*)
2. **\$3.7 billion** per year are lost due to students who **have not learned skills such as basic reading comprehension and fluency**. This includes \$1.4 billion to provide remedial education to students who have recently completed high school. The figure factors in nearly \$2.3 billion the economy loses because remedial reading students are more likely to drop out of college without a degree, thereby reducing their earning potential. (*Alliance for Excellent Education*)
3. A study by ACT in 2006 showed that **only about half of high school juniors and seniors** were ready for **college-level reading assignments in core subjects like math, history, science, and English**. (*ACT, Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading*)
4. **"A significant proportion of incoming college students have difficulty understanding the gist of academic writing at the college level.** It's a challenge for them to see writing from the inside out," says John Briggs, Associate Professor of English at UC Riverside and a member of the College Board SAT Reading Development Committee. "Students know about topic sentences and main ideas, but they don't understand the questions the writer is addressing and they don't have enough experience participating in academic conversations." (*Get Ready for College Reading* by GreatSchoolsStaff)
5. Grade Point Averages for Oregon University System students based on OAKS Reading Assessment status:

OAKS Reading Assessment	Not Met	Met	Exceeded
Overall college GPA	2.41	2.76	3.14
First composition course GPA	2.73	3.06	3.29
First arts & letters course GPA	2.59	2.96	3.28

Note: This does not include reading deficiencies for students who enter community college, other training programs, or go directly into the military or workforce.

This page is
intentionally left blank.

Tips for increasing reading comprehension for college students

by Ernest Capraro

College texts are packed with information, but are generally dry and difficult reading. College students are expected not only to read through the material (and stay awake while doing so), but also to understand it, remember it, and apply it in conjunction with every other topic they study. This is a daunting task, to be sure, but not impossible once you are reading actively.

Active reading is a strategy that increases comprehension greatly. As the name suggests, the reader becomes an active participant in the reading process (rather than the passive reader who simply reads through all the words.) In this case, active does not imply exercise or physical exertion, though if you feel your attention flagging, taking a break to go for a walk or jog can help you to refocus.

The active reader interrogates the text he/she is engaged in reading. Asking purposeful questions continually is key, as is seeking out the answers. (Asking "what on Earth are they talking about?" doesn't count.) Some of the questions are basic, things often taught in elementary school.

"What is the main idea?"

"What is the author's purpose in this paragraph/section?"

"How does this picture/diagram relate to the text?"

"How does this section relate to the previous one?"

"Why is this word bold or italicized?"

"What does this unfamiliar word actually mean in this situation?"

While the questions are not difficult, they arise constantly, and the temptation is to let them slide, unanswered. Doing so not only lessens comprehension, as the reader misses out on some of the content, but it also lessens retention. The process of seeking out the answers helps to clarify those points and to make them stick in the memory.

It is well known that new knowledge is retained to a much higher degree when it is relevant to prior knowledge. What this means is that while reading, it is important to consider how the material relates to past lessons in all subject areas. The reader can seek out similarities to things they already understand, either through direct relevance or metaphor. When something sounds familiar, stop and consider why that is. Consider whether the new information explains or elaborates on things only partially understood in the past. This process of relating new and old knowledge links the new material with existing memories, improving the chances of recalling it as well. With new facts linked to existing trains of thought, it also makes it easier to discuss new concepts, as the reader has relevant knowledge already connected to them, ready to elaborate.

As much as people may dislike it, writing also improves reading comprehension. Writing as a reading aid can take a variety of forms. At the simplest level, underlining or highlighting important concepts and passages in the text can help to emphasize them in the mind, as well as call attention to them when reviewing. A step up from this is to jot down notes in the margins. These notes can be reminders of earlier information that is relevant to the passage, a summary or explanation of a poorly worded passage, a question about the topic which is as yet unanswered, or a comparison to similar topics the reader is familiar with. These notes are good review points, but the act of writing them down also improves retention. (Studies have shown that people remember more of what they actually write down than that which they just read.) Note-taking can be taken further if done on separate paper where there is more room to write. Better yet, the reader can write down questions about the text while reading, leaving space, and then go back and answer those questions afterwards. Those questions that the reader cannot answer without looking at the text are the ones the reader needs to review by re-reading.

Although reading and writing are both learning techniques, teaching is an even better one. This may seem counterintuitive, as a person must know a topic before they can teach it, but the reality is that in order to teach or explain a topic, the teacher must organize their thoughts and be sure of their understanding of the material. The process encourages them to review explanations and helps to point out omissions or inconsistencies in what has been learned. Explaining a newly read passage to another person is an excellent way to promote one's own comprehension and retention.

Actively managing one's attitude is also key. A negative outlook ("I don't want to read this, blah") interferes with the ability to learn. Looking at it as a positive opportunity to improve oneself creates a much more receptive mind. It is okay to acknowledge that there are things that would be more fun to do. It is also okay to use those things to reward oneself for a successful session of reading. For some, a little mood music in the background can also be of benefit. Whatever the motivation, stay positive, and remain an active part of the reading process.



SECTION 2

FIVE ACADEMIC LITERACY RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the five areas of instructional focus and improvement recommended in *Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction* (Torgesen et al., 2007). Considered pivotal to improving adolescent literacy, these five recommendations are scientifically based. They succinctly delineate the instructional focus and improvements that content-area teachers can make to improve reading comprehension for adolescents. Implemented widely and effectively, they would likely lead to significant long-term improvement in adolescents' literacy abilities:

- strategy instruction,
- discussion-oriented instruction,
- high standards,
- motivational context, and
- strategies to teach essential content.

Recommendation 1: All teachers should provide explicit instruction and supportive practice in effective comprehension strategies throughout the school day.

Students engage in comprehension strategies to improve their understanding of the text or repair comprehension when it breaks down (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Comprehension strategies can include mental activities, conversations with others, or use of outside references. A few reading comprehension strategies applicable across content areas and genres have been studied broadly, such as graphic organizers and question generation (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). However, recent evidence suggests that some comprehension strategies are specific to a content area, and some are even course specific because they involve interpreting text, documenting evidence, or framing arguments unique to a given discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For example, comprehension research in science (Norris & Phillips, 1994), social studies (Mosborg, 2002; Perfetti, Britt, & Georgi, 1995),

and math (Leong & Jerred, 2001) shows that these areas demand distinctive reading and writing skills that foster comprehension and learning.

Common features critical to successful strategy instruction for adolescent readers include:

- discussions to help students become more aware of their own cognitive processes and set a purpose for using strategies;
- teacher modeling of explanations for why, how, and when to use a strategy;
- many meaningful opportunities for students to use strategies with feedback from the teacher, and;
- a gradual transfer of responsibility for implementing literacy strategies from teacher to student. (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 1996; Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998; Block, 1993; Lysynchuk, Pressley, & Vye, 1990; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, Alfassi, 2004)

Recommendation 2: Increase the amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of reading content.

Research establishes this important finding: rich discussions among small groups of students, or led by the teacher, can increase students' ability to think about and learn from text (Beck & McKeown, 2006). Increased, high quality discussion has also been cited as a way to increase student engagement in reading (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). When students engage in extended discussions of what they read, they improve their understanding and learning and, over time, improve reading comprehension (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003; Fall, Webb, & Chudowsky, 2000). Text discussions promote "the interaction and involvement with written language" that is essential to more sophisticated comprehension of complex material (Snow, 2002, p. 11). It capitalizes on the shared knowledge of the class while supporting students as they make inferences combining textual information with relevant background knowledge and experiences to form coherent mental representations of the text's overall meaning (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2008).

Implementing these instructional approaches for adolescents in middle and high school will likely require significant changes to the schedule and curriculum; time must be allotted for effective discussions to take place. Although the breadth of content may be affected, rich discussions about text



lead students to analyze what they read, think critically, and build conceptual understanding. The impact of these experiences extends beyond one lesson, ultimately supporting comprehension when students read text independently.

Recommendation 3: Set and maintain high standards for text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary.

Observational studies of high-achieving classrooms and teachers consistently support this recommendation (Good, 1987; Good & Brophy, 2002; Langer, 2001). State-level literacy leaders must identify accountability measures for literacy outcomes, and school-level literacy leaders must understand and implement these measures. Also, classroom teachers need to use instructional methods that support student growth toward meeting the literacy standards of the state, and of the NAEP. Without teacher acceptance, the state literacy standards will have minimal impact. To achieve these high literacy standards, evidenced-based instructional techniques, such as those recommended here, will be required.

Recommendation 4: Increase students' motivation and engagement with reading.

Students who are motivated to engage with and understand text will be more successful (Guthrie, et al., 2004; Snow, 2002; Wigfield, et al., 2008). Although research does not identify specific motivational techniques for particular types of students, the theoretical and empirical supports for increasing motivation are persuasive (Guthrie, Wigfield, & VonSecker, 2000; Guthrie et al., 2004; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004). Guthrie et al., (2004) recommend that teachers use the following techniques in concert:

- give students more choices of text and assignments to build their autonomy,
- create opportunities for students to interact with a focus on understanding text,
- provide a variety of interesting texts for students, and
- focus students on important and interesting learning goals.

Recommendation 5: Teach essential content knowledge so that all students master critical concepts.

Background knowledge plays an important part in reading comprehension and understanding content concepts (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Donovan & Bransford, 2005; National Assessment Governing Board, 2006; Hirsch, 2006). As students improve their knowledge in a specific area, their ability to understand the associated reading material also improves. Students' prior knowledge highly influences their ability to comprehend, think about, and learn new information from a newly-presented text. After all, readers create meaning from a text by integrating the new information with prior knowledge: in other words, they "construct new knowledge that is relevant to their individual experiences and situations" (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2008, p. 295). Therefore content-area teachers who use instructional routines that support students' understanding of content-area vocabulary, concepts, and facts will greatly improve students' ability to independently comprehend the reading material.

A final note. These five recommendations for content-area teachers are not meant to be considered as self-standing, fragmented, or appropriate for piecemeal implementation; rather, they should be used in a thoughtful, planned, systematic manner. This will require support for teachers through high-quality professional development.

Resources for Content Area Teachers

Bringing Literacy Strategies into Content Instruction

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/bringing-literacy-strategies-into-content-instruction>

Assessments to Guide Adolescent Literacy Instruction, Center on Instruction

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Assessment%20Guide.pdf>

The Oregon DATA Project (DATA = Direct Access to Student Achievement)

<http://www.oregondataproject.org/>

Resources for Reading Work Samples (and other subjects as well)

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=219>

Information on Assessment of Essential Skills

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=2042>

Information on Common Core State Standards for Oregon

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2860>