

Glossary of Comprehension Terms & Concepts

RAND model (2002)	The RAND Model (2002) is a simple but all-encompassing conceptual model used in a report by the RAND Study Group that suggests that comprehension occurs as a consequence of the interaction of the person who is reading, the text that is being read, the specific task the reader is trying to accomplish, and the circumstances under which the reading is done (the context). (Moats, 2010)
NRP recommended strategies (2000)	The National Reading Panel (2000) report identified 6 specific strategies that were most effective in supporting comprehension and recommended that they be used in combination. These strategies include: self-monitoring, using graphic & semantic organizers, actively generating questions, using mental imagery (visualizing), retelling and summarizing, and answering questions.
IES Report recommended strategies (2010)	The Institute of Education Science (2010) report suggested six evidence-based strategies for improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade. These strategies include: activate prior knowledge, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, clarifying, and
Comprehension Products	Comprehension products are the visible, overt results of comprehension processes (i.e., verbal responses to questions, summaries of main ideas, etc.).
Schema	Schema is a mental web of facts and ideas on a specific topic that is automatically activated during reading or is constructed during reading.
Text Complexity	Text complexity is the inherent difficulty of reading and comprehending text combined with consideration of reader and task variables.
Reader (RAND)	The reader brings to the act of reading his or her cognitive capabilities (attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, visualization); motivation (a purpose for reading, interest in the content, self-efficacy as a reader); knowledge (vocabulary and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of comprehension strategies); and experiences.
Text (RAND)	The text comprises not only the words we read, but also the underlying knowledge structures or meanings that the words and sentences represent.
Activity/Purpose (RAND)	The activity/purpose is what the reader is assigned or intends to do with the text. The nature of the reading task can affect comprehension.
Scarborough's Rope Model	Scarborough's Rope Model (2001) emphasizes that fluent reading for meaning depends on successful mastery of a number of subskills within the word-recognition and language comprehension domains.
Simple View of Reading	The Simple View of Reading (1986) is a powerful but simple concept that reading comprehension is the product of printed word recognition (decoding) and higher-level thinking processes (language comprehension).

Mental Model	A mental model is an image, visualization, conceptualization, or representation of meaning held in the reader's mind that is the basis of comprehension and built upon for deeper comprehension.
Literal representation	Literal representations are directly derived from the text.
Semantic representation	Semantic representations are meaning-based and refer to information constructed from background, syntactic and semantic cues, and vocabulary.
Situational representation	Situational model refers to the integration of information from literal and semantic representations.
Proposition	A proposition is an idea formed during interactions with text which leads to the mental model.
Connectionist architecture	Connectionist architecture assumes that comprehension involves the activation of information. Activation sources are often represented as layers in a network of nodes (words and concepts) and links (the connections between the nodes).
Spreading activation	Spreading activation is the notion that activation of one concept triggers activation in another.
Automatic unconscious processing	Automatic unconscious processing is the notion that information is available automatically and retrieved unconsciously.
Discourse focus	Discourse focus assumes that the reader focuses attention and this focus changes as new information is inputted.
Convergence and contrast satisfaction	Convergence and contrast satisfaction is the notion that activation of concepts and ideas triggers other activities, but the mental model is constrained by these competing concepts, the relationship between them, and information available from long term memory.
Mapping	Mapping is a general term to describe the process that occurs when information input gets connected to prior context. Mapping fosters continuity of thought. When it fails is when the reader must generate an inference.
Text-based inferencing	Text-based inferencing refers to making inferences that establish connections within the text.
Memory constraints	Comprehension models generally assume that working memory capacity is limited (and unchanging). Some models represent working memory and long-term memory as separate. Other models represent a long-term working memory where information is readily available. Average processing speed for literal information is 400 milliseconds; for inferential information ???
Surface code	Surface code refers to the literal word and phrase meanings in a text.
Text-based code	Text-based code refers to the underlying meaning that the words refer to.
Meaning-based	Meaning-based refers to the underlying meanings intended by the words in the text; information constructed from background, syntactic and semantic cues, and vocabulary.
Proposition	Proposition is an idea formed during interactions with the text which leads to the mental model.

Working memory	Working memory is a cognitive system with a limited capacity that is responsible for temporarily holding information available for processing. It holds certain items for assembling while other items are being retrieved for assimilation.
Long-term memory	Long-term memory is a system for permanently storing, managing, and retrieving information for later use. Items of information stored as long-term memory may be available for a lifetime.
Coherence	Coherence refers to how well the ideas (meaning) in a text are connected and flow. It is based on semantic relationships within the text.
Cohesion	Cohesion refers to the way text is “tied together” through grammatical and linguistic devices (e.g., sentence structure, connective and transitional words, etc.).
Text categories	Text can be classified into two text categories : fiction (imaginative narration) and non-fiction (factual information).
Literary Text structures	Literary texts are designed to entertain and enlighten. They include structures such as, plot, characters, setting, point of view, goal, and theme.
Informational Text structures	Informational texts explain or give factual information. They include structures such as, description, sequence, comparison, cause & effect, problem/solution, and argument.
Text forms (see also Genres)	Text forms can be classified into two categories: Literary (fiction story elements) and Informational (non-fiction text structures).
Genres (see also Text forms)	Genres are categories used to classify literary works, usually by format or structure.
Subgenres	Subgenres refer to categories that are subdivisions of larger genres.
Fantasy (subgenre)	Fantasy is any text that contains unrealistic settings, or magic, often set in a medieval universe, or possibly involving mythical beings or supernatural forms as a primary element of the plot, theme, or setting.
Folklore (subgenre)	A folk tale is a story or type of legend originating and traditional among a particular people or folk, especially one forming part of the oral
Tall Tale (subgenre)	A tall tale is a story with unbelievable elements, related as if it were true and factual.
Historical Fiction (subgenre)	Historical fiction is a literary work that is set in the past and sometimes borrows true characteristics of the time period in which it is set.
Historical Non-fiction (subgenre)	Historical non-fiction is a literary work about the past, comprised of works of narrative prose dealing with or offering opinions or conjectures upon facts and reality.
Biography (subgenre)	A biography is a written account of another person's life.
Autobiography (subgenre)	An autobiography is a written account of a person's life written by that person.
Poetry (subgenre)	Poetry is a literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm.

Drama (subgenre)	Drama is a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or to tell a story, usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance.
Blog (subgenre)	Blog is a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style.
Documentary (subgenre)	A documentary is a production (usually movie or television), which is based on or recreates an actual event, era, life story, etc., that purports to be factually accurate and contains no fictional elements.
Speech (subgenre)	Speech is a formal address or discourse delivered to an audience.
Science Fiction (subgenre)	Science fiction is a story based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space or time travel and life on other planets.
Mythology (subgenre)	Mythology refers to fictional stories, traditions, or beliefs associated with a particular group or the history of an event, arising naturally or deliberately fostered.
Legend (subgenre)	A legend is a non-historical or unverifiable story handed down by tradition from earlier times and popularly accepted as historical.
Fable (subgenre)	A fable is a short tale to teach a moral lesson, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters.
Realistic fiction (subgenre)	Realistic fiction consists of stories that could have actually occurred to people or animals in a believable setting. These stories resemble real life, and fictional characters within these stories react similarly to real people.
Informational Writing (subgenre)	Informational writing is a type of nonfiction writing that conveys information about something, which means it is factual. Many examples of informational writing can be found in newspapers, almanacs, and reference books. Informational text is often organized so the reader can easily and quickly find information.
Persuasive writing (subgenre)	Persuasive writing presents reasons and examples to influence action or thought. Effective persuasive writing requires a writer to state clearly an opinion and to supply reasons and specific examples that support the opinion. Persuasive writing is used to present a logical argument from a particular point of view.
Anaphore	Anaphore , from the Greek anaphora meaning to "carrying back," is a rhetorical device that consists of repeating a sequence of words at the beginnings of neighboring clauses as a way to add emphasis.
Antecedent	Antecedent is a word that is referenced again in text by use of a pronoun or other descriptor.
Transitional word	A transitional word links ideas within text by indicating sequence, time, location, more information, a shift in direction, or conclusion.
Readability formula	Readability formula is a calculated measure of text that aligns it to an academic grade level based on norms.
Purpose	The purpose for reading determines how the reader approaches the reading task. It involves the flexible combination of component skills of reading comprehension.

Surface interactions	Surface interactions involve verbatim representations of the text (literal).
Text-based interactions	Text-based interactions occur when the reader goes beyond the literal comprehension to use the explicit text and their own prior knowledge to construct meaning.
Word consciousness	Word consciousness is the awareness of word choice, word characteristics, and word structure, as well as an intrinsic interest in knowing about words
Self-monitoring	Self-monitoring is the conscious awareness of the progress of the text, marked by rereading and reflection on features of the text, to facilitate comprehension.
Background Knowledge	Background knowledge is the relevant set of information the reader knows about a specific topic.
General Knowledge	General knowledge is the total set of information a reader brings to the reading experience.
Vocabulary	Vocabulary is the collection of word meanings in an individual's mental dictionary (lexicon).
Verbal Reasoning	Verbal reasoning is expressing with words our understanding of concepts framed in words. It is constructive thinking.
Language Structures (see also Text Structures and Sentence Structures)	Language structures are the semantic and syntactic properties of oral and written expression.
Sentence structures	Sentence structures refer to the syntax of a sentence and how words, phrases, and clauses can be sequenced.
Literacy Knowledge	Literary knowledge begins with the most basic concepts of print, knowing to read from left to right and top to bottom and also includes an understanding of categories (genre & subgenre) and types of writing--this includes text structures—but also types and purposes for writing.
Decoding	Decoding is the ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences.
Word Recognition	Word recognition is the instant recognition of a word in print.
Phonological awareness	Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language, as well as phonemes. Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness.
Prior knowledge	Prior knowledge is the knowing that stems from previous experience.
4-Part Processor	The 4-Part Processor (1986) explains the mental activities that work proficiently and interactively during skilled reading
Phonological processor	Phonological processor is a neural network in the brain that is specialized for speech-sound perception.
Orthographic processor	Orthographic processor is a neural network in the brain that is responsible for perceiving, storing, and retrieving letter sequences in words.
Meaning processor	Meaning processor is a neural network in the brain that attaches meaning to words that have been heard or decoded.

Context processor	Context processor is a neural network in the brain that is responsible for interpreting sentences or ideas in which a word is embedded.
Academic words	Academic words appear in all sorts of texts and are highly generalizable. They often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things (e.g., "saunter" for "walk"). They are not unique to a particular discipline.
Domain-specific words	Domain-specific words include lower frequency words and phrases that appear in content area textbooks. They support background knowledge for comprehension.
Literary terms	Literacy terms are words specific to our teaching of early literacy skills.
Degrees of Knowing a Word	Degrees of knowing a word include several dimensions. These include: recognizing the word, knowing the word, owning and using the word.
Meaning map	Meaning map refers to a graphic that helps activate the reader's meaning network for certain topics. Such a network represents associations between active and related concepts.
Tier 1 words	Tier 1 words are basic, common vocabulary children learn early that are critical to the comprehension of written material.
Tier 2 words	Tier 2 words are high-frequency words that are more sophisticated than basic words and can be applied across many contexts and experiences. They are words for which students have a concept and can use a basic word to define. These are the words that should be taught in-depth.
Tier 3 words	Tier 3 words are low-occurrence words that are critical to understanding a specific domain. These words may be particular to certain topics and should be instructed as the need arises.
Part of speech (in depth of word knowledge)	Part of speech refers to any of the grammatical classes into which words have traditionally been categorized, such as noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.
Etymology/Word origin (in depth of word knowledge)	Etymology/word origin refers to the history and development of the structures and meanings of words.
Multiple meanings (in depth of word knowledge)	Multiple meanings refers to the fact that many words have more than one meaning and/or more than one use.
Pronunciation (in depth of word knowledge)	Pronunciation is the act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability.
Spelling (in depth of word knowledge)	Spelling is the process of representing language by means of a writing system, or orthography.
Synonyms (in depth of word knowledge)	Synonyms are words that mean the same as other words.
Antonyms (in depth of word knowledge)	Antonyms are words that are opposite in meaning from other words.
Pragmatics (in depth of word knowledge)	Pragmatics involves the choices of language people make in social interaction and of the effects of these choices on others.
Idiom (in depth of word knowledge)	Idiom is an expression that does not mean what it literally says.

Metaphor (in depth of word knowledge)	Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a comparison is implied by analogy but is not stated.
Breadth of Word Knowledge	Breadth of knowledge refers to the quantity of words for which a student may have some level of knowledge.
Depth of Word Knowledge	Depth of knowledge refers to the degree to which a student knows a word.
Graphic organizers	Graphic organizers are visual and graphic displays that depict the relationships between facts, terms, and/or ideas within a learning task.
Intuitive analysis	Intuitive analysis relies on knowledge. It occurs rapidly, is useful for quick judgments, often lacks explicit evidence, and is not effective when experience is lacking.
Analytical analysis	Analytical analysis relies on logic. It occurs more slowly than intuitive analysis, requires intentional thought, uses evidence to inform conclusion, and compensates for lack of experience.
Inferencing (text-connecting, knowledge-based, elaborative)	Text-connecting inferences involve linking text-based ideas together to create a new idea. This type of inferencing is attempting to make sense of what is specifically written in the text and reconcile differences. Knowledge-based inferences rely on the activation of a "mediating idea" from the reader's own world-knowledge in his long-term memory and connecting it to the current text. Elaborative inferences embellish and amplify. These inferences rely on accessibility of knowledge but may not lead to better comprehension.
Concepts of print	Concepts of print is a global term that includes concepts related to conventions, purpose, and functions of print.
Directionality (in Concepts of Print)	Directionality is a subcategory of concepts of print that involves knowing front and back, top to bottom, left to right, and return sweep.