



# Reading Counts

## Tutoring For Reading Comprehension- 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grades

Ellen Westerling  
Team Leader - Dansville Schools

Comprehension is the process of making meaning from written text. In essence, this is what reading is all about! Research has taught us how to support struggling and developing readers to become more proficient and take control of their own reading comprehension (Armbruster et al., 2001).

This is the goal of America Reads! By helping students help themselves, we are empowering them to access the true reason for reading – gaining information.

There have been many strategies that have been researched for reading comprehension. However, the majority are geared for elementary grades. The SQ4R strategy (English Works at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC), on the other hand, is appropriate for fifth and sixth grade students. Each letter is described as follows:

- **S**urvey: Have students look at pictures, photos, maps, bold print, captions, and headings to help them form an idea of the topic and purpose of the written text.

*continued on page 2*



Kim Dunham with Ayse Edizer at Geneseo Central

## A Teacher's Perspective

**Katherine Ilardo**  
Team Leader - Mt. Morris Central

The following is an interview with Carol Weitzel, a reading teacher at Mt. Morris Central.

*What's your favorite thing about the America Reads Program?*  
**It's nice having someone to work with and to get a fresh opinion on the students I have. It's also great how excited the students are at having the tutors come every week. They get more motivated to stay after and work on their assignments.**

*What one thing about the program would you change?*  
**Sometimes I am worried that I don't do things with the tutors that is exclusively reading, and I am not sure exactly what tasks I can ask them to do for me. I want to make sure they are getting the most out of the program as well, and sometimes that is difficult.**

*How did you find out about the program?*  
**One of the PTA parents heard about the program from her work, and she told the head reading teacher about it at the PTA meeting. The reading teacher was very interested, so she went to an America Reads meeting at Geneseo.**

*Have you seen direct improvement in the students since this program was established at Mt. Morris?*  
**Yes! Also there has been a big change in attitude in the students since they are working more one on one with the tutors. Before the program, they would reach their frustration level and give up. Now they are more willing to take on difficult tasks. Plus it's nice being able to split up the groups of students, because they get to spend more individual time practicing reading.**

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## Reading Comprehension

- **Question:** Have students pretend they are interviewing the author(s) of the written text. Based upon what they surveyed, have students formulate what questions they want to ask the author(s)? Write their questions next to the pictures, photos, maps, bold print, captions, and headings (or on a separate sheet of paper).
- **Read:** Have your students read the text. Use a pencil or pen to mark the text (Do not use a highlight marker!). Write, underline, star, or flag vocabulary words or ideas that they think are important.
- **Respond:** As you read, try to find the answers to the questions they asked. Remember, as you read, you might ask more questions. Be sure to write the answers down.
- **Review:** When finished reading, review the written text. Can the students answer the questions that they asked? Do they understand everything about the written text? If the author(s) were sitting next to them, what other questions would they ask?
- **Reflect:** Close the text. Think about what they have read. Discuss the main points with someone. Do they agree or disagree with the author(s)? What surprised them about the written text? What did they find to be interesting? What did they find to be confusing? What did they learn?

All steps in this strategy must be modeled aloud by the tutor. If you have a student or students who struggle with new concepts, focus only on one or two steps at a time. Tell the classroom teacher about the strategy and ask if s/he would monitor the student's progress while you are not there. The student will feel more confident in their reading comprehension the more consistently you use this strategy. By teaching students reading comprehension skills during tutoring sessions, we are giving them the keys to a successful literate future!

References:

<http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/reading/sq4r.html>

<http://www.nwrel.org/learns/tutor/win2002/part5.html>

## Saying Goodbye

**Joelle DeMarco**

Team Leader - Avon Central

It's that time of year when you have to say "Good-bye" to all of your tutees. To help make things run a little smoother, here are a few tips that you should follow:

- Make sure that the children know in advance when their last tutoring session is. They'll need a chance to absorb and prepare for the transition.
- Begin to review with your students all that they have learned and return any of their work that you still have.
- Set aside a bit of time during sessions to reflect on various events from your time together and your students' accomplishments.
- Try not to feel distressed if students withdraw some, or act out a bit. This is a normal response to separation.
- Acknowledge that endings are sometimes sad, and try to talk about it with your students. It is important for you to model positive ways for dealing with loss.

Finally, here are some fun and creative ways to say "Good-bye" to your students:

- Bring in some of the books you used at the beginning for your students to re-read. Your students may be amazed at how easy they are now, and you can celebrate their growth.
- Give students any reading or math games that you created together, so that they can keep them and use them on their own.
- Buy a special book to present to your students on a topic of interest. Make sure you sign the inside with an inspirational message.
- Create a scrapbook together of any artifacts you've collected throughout the experience. These may include sample writings, journal reflections, drawings, photos, or lists of books read, etc.
- Give your students self-addressed, stamped postcards for them to write to you over the summer. Make sure that you have their addresses and make the commitment to write.
- Write a short letter with your students that you will mail to them in 6 months with well-wishes. Also, invite your students to write a letter to himself/herself, asking "What would you like to say to yourself in \_\_\_\_ grade? What advice do you want to give the future you?" Take both sealed letters and make a note of when you will send them to your students.

(Adapted from Nancy Henry at LEARNS)

# Summer Activities and Ideas

## Math



Allison Leckinger  
Team Leader - Livonia Schools

### Grades K-3

**Counting--** From the time your child is very young, count everything. When you empty a grocery bag, count the number of apples. Count the number of stairs to your home. Let your child pick a letter of the alphabet and then count how many times it appears on one page of a newspaper or magazine. Have your child count the number of stop signs or traffic lights between your home and the park. Go on a family bike ride and count the number of dogs you see along the way. While on a long car trip pick one thing to count along the way such as animals or gas stations.

**Laundry Math--**Sharpen skills by doing a necessary household job. Ask your youngster to sort laundry--before or after washing. How many socks? How many sheets? You may find a lost sock as well.

- Put things into groups. When you do laundry, separate items of clothing: all the socks in one pile, shirts in another, and pants in another. Divide the socks by color and count the number of each.

### Grades 4-5

**On the Move--**Sharpen math skills on trips. Use even short trips around town. For example, at the gas station, ask your child how much gas you needed and the cost per gallon. On the highway, ask your children to read the signs and check the different speed limits. Then ask them to watch the speedometer readings and notice how fast or slow the car is going. Have your children estimate distances between cities and check the estimates on a road map.

**Newspaper Math--**Use the weather section to check temperatures across the nation and the world. This is good geography practice, too. Discuss baseball and football scores and averages on the sports pages. Who has the high scores? What are the percentages?

- Keep a running total of a favorite baseball player's batting average or calculate statistics from baseball or football cards.

**Budgeting--**In addition, teach children who have an allowance or regular spending money how to budget. Ask them to make a two-column list of expenses and income. Under expenses, they list what they spent for movies, lunches, etc. Then, have your children add all the expenses and subtract the total from the income. Ask them to think of ways to reduce their spending. If their income is more than their expenses, talk about a savings plan.

- Let your child watch you pay bills. Discuss expenses such as insurance, utilities and groceries.

## Reading

Kimberly Dunham  
Team Leader - Geneseo Central

There are many ways to keep children involved in reading over the summer vacation. Here are some suggestions that you can share with parents who want their kids to never stop learning.

1. Read with a goal in mind. Children can read 5-10 non-fiction books about animals they would see in the Rochester Zoo. When they have completed all of their books take them to the zoo to see first hand all they have read about.
2. Keep a summer scrapbook and journal with your child. Fill it with photos, admission stubs, brochures, as well as a journal written by your child.
3. Get your child a subscription to an age appropriate magazine that they will enjoy reading and exploring.
4. Find a pen pal for your child. The further away the pen pal, the more exciting it will be for your child. Encourage your child to keep all of the letters he/she gets in an envelope so they can be looked at often.
5. Read to your kids and have them read to you. Make reading a family experience.

### Summer Reading Suggestions

#### Preschool and Kindergarten

When Sophie Gets Angry...Really, Really Angry - by Molly Bang

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! - by Nancy L. Carlson

Wemberly Worried - by Kevin Henkes

Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten (series) - by Joseph Slate

#### First and Second Grades

Olivia - by Ian Falconer

Are We There Yet Daddy? - by Virginia Walters

The Rain Came Down - by David Shannon

#### Third Grade

Ramona's World - by Beverly Cleary

Junie B. Jones (series) - by Barbara Park

So You Want to be President - by Judith St. George

#### Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades

Bud, Not Buddy - by Christopher Paul Curtis

Holes - by Louis Sachar

James and the Giant Peach - by Roald Dahl

A Wrinkle in Time - by Madeline L'Engle

Redwall - by Brian Jacques

Hatchet - by Gary Paulsen



## Mathematical Importance in Preschool

Jillian Haller

Team Leader - Headstart/Preschool

Mathematics is an important part of a preschool curriculum. According to David Clements (2000), preschool children use mathematical ideas in everyday life and develop informal mathematical knowledge that is surprisingly complex and sophisticated (p. 1). Preschool mathematical instruction does not include drilling the children with numbers, word problems or addition and subtraction facts. Math is more than that. It is away of analyzing and critically thinking. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics describes five mathematical processes. These processes are problem solving, reasoning, communication, connecting, and representing (Copley, 2000, p.29). Throughout the year preschool children should have many opportunities to develop these processes.

Teachers and tutors can offer these opportunities in a variety of different ways. You should not expect a preschooler to sit still and listen passively to a math lesson. Since children at this age are more distractible and have a poor recall of list like facts, this type of math instruction would be very inappropriate for a preschooler. Instead, providing first hand, meaningful experiences will allow children to see and discover relationships, concepts, and strategies (Brendekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 113). These experiences could include reading meaningful counting books, playing with a variety of sizes of blocks, using pattern blocks, playing guessing games by giving the children clues, and allowing children to develop inquiry projects spontaneously out of their play. Teachers can encourage inquiry projects by allowing the children to have extended free play time and by asking questions that require investigation, such as, "I wonder how this could be changed?", "What do you think?", "What would happen if...?" (Copley, 2000, p. 37). These questions will scaffold and foster the children's thinking and give them practice using mathematical reasoning.

By giving children practice in developing these mathematical processes, we are not only encouraging positive dispositions for math, but we are also allowing the children to develop a way of thinking, communicating, and collaborating with others that will be beneficial to them for the rest of their lives.

### References

- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (Revised ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Copley, J. V. (2000). The young child and mathematics. Washington, D.C: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Clements, D. H. (2000). Mathematics in Preschool. Teaching Children Mathematics.
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### Counting Books for Young Children

- Anon, Mitsumasa. "Anno's Counting Book"
- Ehlert, Lois. "Fish Eyes: A Book You Can Count On"
- Hulme, Joy N., "Sea Sums"
- Pinczes, Elinor. "Arctic Fives Arrive"

## Coming this Fall....

The America Reads/Counts Committee at SUNY Geneseo is excited to be planning for our 3<sup>rd</sup> year! We have found the program to be greatly beneficial to our students and hope that our participating schools continue to enjoy and benefit from the collaboration. We are consistently looking for ways to improve the program and to assist the community whenever possible. Here are some new ideas that the committee is considering:

- America Reads in the summer - We are in the process of establishing a small summer program to assist local schools in their summer reading programs. We will start the program this summer (2002) and hope to expand it to more schools next summer.
- We are hoping to establish a parent and family outreach program this fall. This program would allow our tutors to work with parents during special workshops. The workshops will be designed to help parents learn how to encourage reading and math skills in their children and how they can use activities at home to help support what is being learned in school.
- America Counts has been a success this year, but the program remains small. We will be working to recruit more tutors for the math program for the fall semester.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for the program, please do not hesitate to contact us. We want to provide the best program possible for our participating schools!

Teachers: You don't need to wait until the fall to request tutors for next year. Be first in line with your requests by filling out a "Needs Assessment" form found at <http://ses.geneseo.edu>. Look under school information in the America Reads section. We'll be sending out hard copies in the fall.

**Thank you to all of our participating schools and teachers for making this a wonderful year!! We look forward to working with you in the fall!**

Questions or concerns about the America Reads or America Counts Programs? Please contact Andrea DiGiorgio at 245-5734 or Stephanie Dawson at 245-5893. General information can be found at our web site at <http://ses.geneseo.edu>

*Help wanted:* Tutors are needed for the summer and fall of 2002. Interested students should contact Andrea DiGiorgio at the above number or at [digiorgi@geneseo.edu](mailto:digiorgi@geneseo.edu).