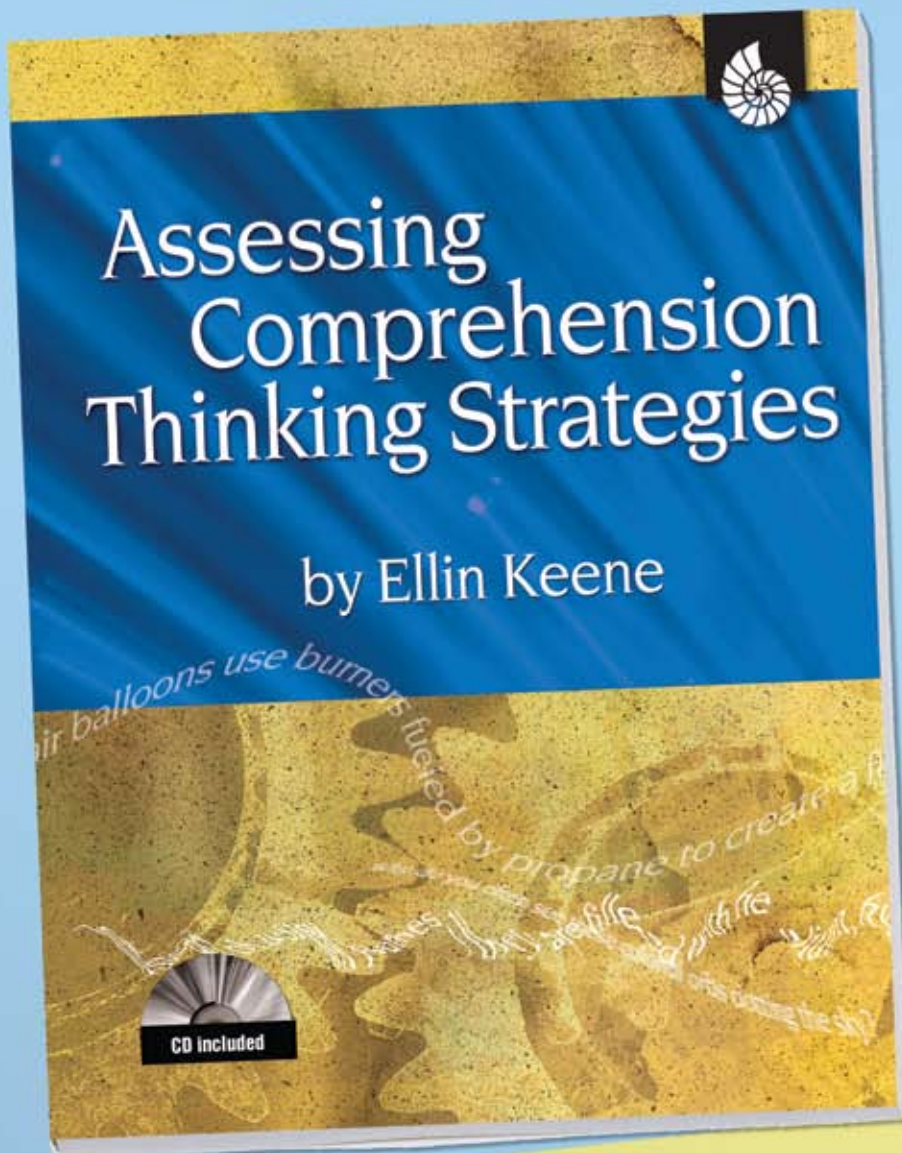


# Book Study Guide *for*



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# Introduction

This guide is designed to be used with the book *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* to help teachers monitor and document how students think while they read. This book not only helps teachers see if a strategy helps a student's comprehension; it also helps students understand *how* the strategy works. When a student can describe his or her own thought process, that is true comprehension.

## Overview of Book Study Guide

This guide is designed as a companion to *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies*. It offers suggestions for professional learning communities and individuals who want to derive the maximum benefit from the professional book. The activities in this guide encourage the reader to delve deeper into the content, experience the assessments, and make a practical plan to use the assessments to improve student learning.

This guide provides engaging activities that can be used during a large group professional development session, in a smaller professional learning community, or as an individual. All of the activities are flexible enough to be covered in one session by assigning groups to each section and having them share their findings, or by spreading them out over a series of days with whole-group participation. The exercises may be adapted to suit your specific professional development situation.

## Overview of Core Book

*Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* offers carefully designed assessments to help teachers get into the heads of their students. Most assessments ask students to recall and retell, but few activities require them to talk about their thinking. This book provides teachers with a tool to assess students' thinking strategies during reading.

*Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* provides leveled-reading passages, oral and written assessment tools, and scoring rubrics. The rubrics can be used to chart progress—each point of growth (1–5) represents a 20% growth over the pre-test. Growth can be communicated to parents or translated into grades. Also included is a CD that contains all the passages and assessments for easy reproduction.

Spend some time previewing *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies*. Look at the front and back covers, read the table of contents, and flip through the reading passages and the assessments. If you are working with a group, discuss what you think this book is about. Make predictions about your learning expectations.

# Introduction *(cont.)*



## Preview Activity

Ask teachers to participate in a survey to inventory the different strategies they use when reading for pleasure versus reading for a directed purpose. On a sheet of chart paper, label two columns, “Read for Pleasure” and “Read for Directed Purpose.” Ask participants to write the following comments on sticky notes and then place them in the appropriate column:

- I choose what I read.
- I draw conclusions, make predictions, and form opinions while I read.
- I stop when I don’t understand.
- I discuss what I’ve read with others.
- I summarize what I’ve read.
- I have a purpose for reading.
- My prior knowledge influences my reading.
- I use visualization.
- I think about text features and story elements.

Once all of the participants have placed their notes on the chart, evaluate how comprehension strategies are used differently when reading for different reasons. Prompt groups to discuss their responses to these questions. Allow several minutes for teachers to talk with one another. Then invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the whole group.

Look at the four “Types of Readers” described on pages 17–18 of *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies*. Which strategies would be most useful to each type of reader? Write down at least one comprehension strategy you would prescribe for each type.

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Close this part of the session by posing the following question: What does assessment mean to you? If appropriate, invite volunteers to share their responses with the whole group. Initiate a brief discussion about the importance of assessing student thinking. While it is important to assess what students know, it is equally important to assess how students use comprehension thinking strategies to help themselves. This will require a shift in thinking for many teachers. Spend as much time as needed to address misunderstandings and to discuss the challenges and benefits of these kinds of assessments.

# The “Thinking Aloud” and “Using Schema” Assessments



## Preview Activity

Review the “Correlation to Standards” section (pages 13–15) and the “Research” section (pages 16–19) of *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies*. Identify two or three standards that are challenging for your students. In your group, define and discuss “Strategic Reading” (page 16).

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## Read and Reply

Choose a passage from pages 20–51 of the *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* book. (For a detailed description of how to use the passages, refer to page 11.) You may also choose to use your own leveled reading passage. In your group or on your own, complete the assessments for “Thinking Aloud” and “Using Schema.” You may respond in the book or in your own journal or blog.



## Apply It: Group

Write the following questions on chart paper or an overhead transparency:

- Why are these two assessments so important?
- At what point in your curriculum could you perform these assessments?
- How would the results of these assessments inform and influence your teaching?

Ask the group to share their thoughts and chart them for everyone to see.



# The “Inferring” and “Asking Questions” Assessments



## Preview Activity

With your group or on your own, answer the following questions:

- Describe the difference between predicting and inferring:

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- What should a student pay attention to while reading to make good predictions or substantial inferences?

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- Why are forming inferences, making predictions, and asking questions good reading comprehension strategies?

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# The “Inferring” and “Asking Questions” Assessments *(cont.)*



## Read and Reply

Choose a passage from the *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* book (for a detailed description of how to use the passages, refer to page 11). You may also choose to use your own leveled reading passage. In your group or on your own, complete the assessments for “Inferring” (pages 58–59) and “Asking Questions” (pages 61–62). You may respond in the book or in your own journal or blog. Study the rubrics on pages 60 and 63 and score your responses.



## Apply It: Group

Look at the rubrics carefully. What is the difference between a score of three and a score of five on each rubric? On a piece of chart paper or in your own journal, write down four specific skills that would need to be taught to improve a student’s score from a three to a five for each strategy.



## Documentation and Evidence

**Recommendation:** Encourage students as they read through the curriculum to post their questions on a special bulletin board. Use student questions to guide instruction and as a foundation for building a co-constructed rubric. Take pictures of the board and use them to show how student-led inquiry builds on the strengths, interests, and needs of all students to establish high expectations for learning.



## Reflection

Why are inferring and questioning important for building critical thinking skills? Are there ways to specifically transfer these skills to other content areas?

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# The “Determining Importance in Text” and “Setting a Purpose for Reading” Assessments



## Preview Activity

On a sheet of chart paper, create one half of an analogy: “Lesson” is to “Objective” as... . Work with the members of your group to define each term and to create an appropriate analogy. Compare your definitions with those of other participants, and discuss how the terms are interdependent. Do you think your students connect each lesson to a bigger idea? Why or why not?

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## Read and Reply

Choose a passage from the *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* book, pages 20–51. (For a detailed description of how to use the passages, refer to page 11). You may also choose to use your own leveled reading passage. In your group or on your own, complete the assessments for “Determining Importance in Text” (pages 64–65) and “Setting a Purpose for Reading” (pages 67–68). You may respond in the book or in your own journal or blog.



## Apply It: Group

Create two sets of notecards. Label one set with different content areas, such as Science, History, Language Arts, or Mathematics. Label the other set with specific topics, such as Dogs, The Solar System, Fresh Water Lakes, or King Arthur. Place both sets of cards face down. Each participant pulls a card from each stack and describes the topic he or she chose as if he or she were in one of the content-area classes. After each participant has had a turn, he or she can trade content-area cards and describe three new

# The “Determining Importance in Text” and “Setting a Purpose for Reading” Assessments *(cont.)*



## Apply It: Group *(cont.)*

things about their topics. In a journal or on chart paper, list responses to the following questions:

- How did you decide which details mattered?
- Did you choose different details for each content area?
- If the content area was hidden from the rest of the group members, could they have guessed it from the details you chose?

Ask the group to share their thoughts. What are the implications for your classroom?



## Documentation and Evidence

**Recommendation:** At the beginning of a new unit of study, post the standard or objective of each lesson as you teach. Ask students to write in their own journals how the objective of each daily lesson supports the standard. Use student journal entries to demonstrate that your students are aware of standards.



## Reflection

How do you make sure students see the big picture about what you are teaching? How can your students help themselves find a reason to read? How does this strategy tie in with preparation for high stakes testing and essay writing?

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# The “Monitoring Comprehension” and “Visualizing” Assessments



## Preview Activity

Identify three roadblocks students face when reading a difficult text. Brainstorm a list of problem-solving strategies that students can try when attempting to overcome their difficulties.

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Next, list the titles of at least three well-known books that have been made into movies. Ask the group to discuss the difference between the books and the movies. Does seeing the movie aid comprehension, or do movies interfere with the viewer’s own imagination?

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## Read and Reply

Choose a passage from the *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* book, pages 20–51. (For a detailed description of how to use the passages, refer to page 11.) You may also choose to use your own leveled reading passage. In your group or on your own, complete the assessments for “Monitoring Comprehension” (pages 70–71), and “Visualizing” (pages 73–74). You may respond in the book or in your own journal or blog.

# The “Monitoring Comprehension” and “Visualizing” Assessments *(cont.)*



## Apply It: Group

Review the “Monitoring Comprehension” rubric (page 72). To score a five, students should be able to use a variety of strategies flexibly. Work with the members of your professional learning community to create a checklist for students of problem-solving strategies that they could employ when reading difficult text.

Create another checklist that reinforces visualization strategies, such as using sensory and emotional images to help paint pictures in their minds. Post both checklists in the classroom and model how to use them through a think-aloud presentation.



## Documentation and Evidence

**Recommendation:** Create an assignment that asks students to represent something they have read using a different medium, such as a musical representation of a poem or a multimedia presentation of a story. They could even write a creative short story about a science or math topic. Submit student work as evidence of using technology, or use one of these assignments as a culminating project to demonstrate your students’ understanding of themes.



## Reflection

What are the warning signs that a student has lost his or her way in a text? How can you help a student identify when and where he or she lost his or her place? How can you model what to do to re-engage?

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# The “Synthesizing and Retelling” and “Text Structure/Structural Patterns” Assessments



## Preview Activity

Brainstorm a list of some common examples of summarizing or retelling with which your students may be familiar, such as movie reviews or a book’s back cover. What is the difference between listing a sequence of events and identifying key themes?

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Next, work with your group or on your own to compare the body of an email or a text message to a formal letter in both format and content. Similarly, how does a poem compare to a story or a comic strip? Ask the group to discuss the differences between these types of texts.



## Read and Reply

Choose a passage from the *Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies* book, pages 20–51. (For a detailed description of how to use the passages, refer to page 11). You may also choose to use your own leveled reading passage. In your group or on your own, complete the assessments for “Synthesizing and Retelling” (pages 76–77) and “Text Structure/Structural Patterns” (pages 80–81). You may respond in the book or in your own journal or blog.

# The “Synthesizing and Retelling” and “Text Structure/Structural Patterns” Assessments *(cont.)*



## Apply It: Group

Work with your professional learning community to create a Sequence Map that describes the evacuation plan at your school site. Include at least five steps. Write an explanation that references the sequence but also conveys a deeper understanding about the rationale behind the evacuation plan. Repeat this exercise with your students and post the evacuation plan in your classroom.



## Apply It: Individual

Examine the structural elements of one of the school’s textbooks or of the student planner. Use a two-column chart: in the left column, note any elements that stand out, such as special fonts, illustrations, headings, figures, and so on; in the right column, explain what each element signifies to the reader. For instance, bold words may signify specific vocabulary terms. Repeat this exercise with your students to help them familiarize themselves with their textbooks and to show them how to use its resources.



## Documentation and Evidence

**Recommendation:** Introduce a variety of graphic organizers to help students identify key elements of text and to map their own thinking process as they read for understanding. Their organizers can demonstrate how they use visual cues as a tool for comprehension.



## Reflection

Did you notice anything new about a textbook from looking at its structural elements? How does this strategy empower students to take responsibility for their own learning?

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