Supporting Research

STARS® Series

The Supporting Research document for *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success* (*STARS® Series)* provides information related to **research-proven strategies and features** that lead toward meaningful **reading comprehension instruction** for each student.

This document is based on a literature review of academic monographs, journals, and reports by **content-area researchers and experts.**

The Supporting Research document also covers topics related to **best practices of classroom-based reading instruction.**
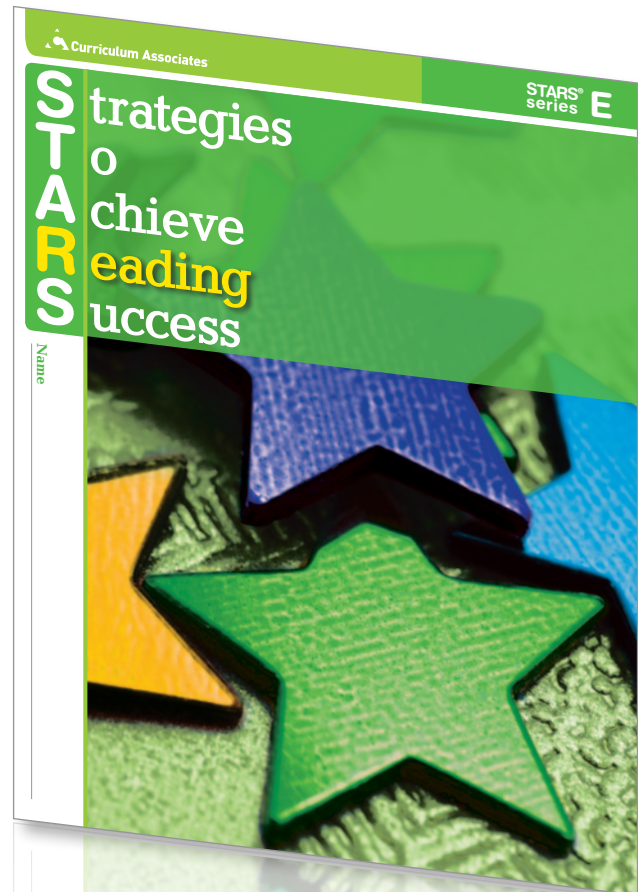
STARS® series E

Strategies
To
Achieve
Reading
Success

Name

Curriculum Associates

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Diagnose needs of the class by administering the Pretest

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What are the *CARS®* and *STARS® Series*?

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (**CARS® Series**) and *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success* (**STARS® Series**) are comprehensive resources that allow teachers to identify and teach essential reading comprehension strategies. As the diagram above indicates, the **CARS® Series** is the assessment component, and the **STARS® Series** is the instruction component.

CARS® Series

The **CARS® Series** is a diagnostic reading series that allows teachers to identify and assess a student's level of mastery for core reading strategies. It contains a Pretest, Benchmarks, and a Post Test. This ten-level series is designed for students in grades K through 8. The **CARS® Series** helps teachers place students in the companion **STARS® Series** for reading instruction and remediation.

STARS® Series

The **STARS® Series** is a prescriptive reading series that provides essential instruction in the same core reading strategies assessed in the **CARS® Series**. This tight alignment allows teachers to make instructional decisions quickly and easily based on students' results from the Pretest, Benchmarks, and Post Test in the **CARS® Series**.

Other major research-based best practices of the **STARS® Series** include:

- Core reading strategies
- Data-driven instruction
- Differentiated instruction
- Explicit instruction
- Graphic organizers
- Instructional support for English language learners
- Scaffolded instruction
- Standards-based assessment to guide instruction
- Teacher support

Research-based Best Practices

The *STARS® Series* is founded on research-based strategies and features that are designed to support students as they learn how to read for meaning. Many of the strategies and features are supported by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) and are presented in a quick-reference chart that begins on page 19.

Core Reading Strategies

From classroom teachers to the federal government, one of the most important educational goals is to build rooms full of independent, strategic readers. This is no simple task because reading is a complex process that requires students to use multiple thinking skills and processes in order to understand what they are reading (Adams, 1990; Beers, 2003; CCSSO/NGA, 2010; NICHD, 2000).

Researchers have proven that many skills, such as a student's vocabulary level, fluency rate, prior knowledge, and mastery of reading strategies, all play integrated and significant roles in the development of independent reading (CCSSO/NGA, 2010; NICHD, 2000). "Mastery of these foundational reading strategies allows students to engage in richer and deeper reading experiences" (Connor & Farr, 2009; Pearson Ed Group, 2010).

From Research to Application:

In this wide arena of reading skill-building, the *STARS® Series* focuses on students' mastery of core reading strategies so that students can connect to and understand what they are reading.

Each lesson focuses on one reading strategy. Cumulative review lessons and a final review lesson test for retention of the new strategies. These review lessons provide important feedback to the teacher before moving students to the next instructional lesson.

Core Reading Strategies

Book K

- Finding the Big Idea
- Finding Details
- Putting Things in Order
- Understanding What Happens and Why
- Making a Guess
- Figuring Things Out

Book AA

- Finding the Main Idea
- Finding Details
- Putting Ideas in Order
- Understanding What Happens and Why
- Making a Guess
- Figuring Things Out

Book A

- Finding Main Idea
- Recalling Facts and Details
- Understanding Sequence
- Recognizing Cause and Effect
- Making Predictions
- Finding Word Meaning in Context
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences
- Reading Pictures

Books B–C

- Finding Main Idea
- Recalling Facts and Details
- Understanding Sequence
- Recognizing Cause and Effect
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Making Predictions
- Finding Word Meaning in Context
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences
- Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion
- Identifying Author's Purpose
- Interpreting Figurative Language
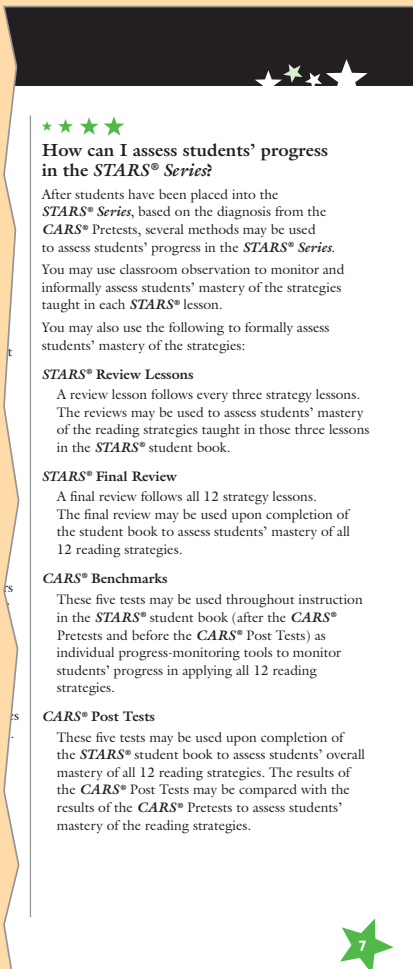- Distinguishing Between Real and Make-believe

Books D–H

- Finding Main Idea
- Recalling Facts and Details
- Understanding Sequence
- Recognizing Cause and Effect
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Making Predictions
- Finding Word Meaning in Context
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences
- Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion
- Identifying Author's Purpose
- Interpreting Figurative Language
- Summarizing

> "As districts and schools have looked for strategies to help raise achievement, the use of data to predict and enhance student performance has emerged as perhaps the dominant improvement strategy.
>
> *(U.S. Department of Education, 2010)*

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How can I assess students' progress in the *STARS® Series*?

After students have been placed into the *STARS® Series*, based on the diagnosis from the *CARS®* Pretests, several methods may be used to assess students' progress in the *STARS® Series*.

You may use classroom observation to monitor and informally assess students' mastery of the strategies taught in each *STARS®* lesson.

You may also use the following to formally assess students' mastery of the strategies:

STARS® **Review Lessons**
A review lesson follows every three strategy lessons. The reviews may be used to assess students' mastery of the reading strategies taught in those three lessons in the *STARS®* student book.

STARS® **Final Review**
A final review follows all 12 strategy lessons. The final review may be used upon completion of the student book to assess students' mastery of all 12 reading strategies.

CARS® **Benchmarks**
These five tests may be used throughout instruction in the *STARS®* student book (after the *CARS®* Pretests and before the *CARS®* Post Tests) as individual progress-monitoring tools to monitor students' progress in applying all 12 reading strategies.

CARS® **Post Tests**
These five tests may be used upon completion of the *STARS®* student book to assess students' overall mastery of all 12 reading strategies. The results of the *CARS®* Post Tests may be compared with the results of the *CARS®* Pretests to assess students' mastery of the reading strategies.

Teachers receive clear and explicit suggestions to monitor students' progress.

Data-driven Instruction

Researchers have thrown their full support behind the use of data-driven instruction (Education Commission of the States, 1992; International Reading Association, 2010; Trimble, Gay, & Matthews, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Data-driven instruction is an approach that benefits every student because it can provide teachers with the tools to differentiate and customize instruction for students.

Instructional decisions are based on the systematic collection of data concerning students' performance on a learning task. Currently, more and more reliance and emphasis is being given to data-driven instruction through the federal government.

Funding sources, such as the Race to the Top grants and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) renewal, aim to tie teachers, schools, and districts to students' performance on achievement tests. In response to this increased responsibility, districts are investing in data tracking systems to demonstrate accountability.

According to a January 2010 U.S. Department of Education report, 500 surveyed school districts revealed that they use data for multiple purposes:

- Over 99% of surveyed districts have data systems that track student demographics information.
- 64% of surveyed districts have electronic instructional/curriculum management systems. These are systems that guide teachers' instructional decisions.

While districts are moving toward electronic data management, there are still some existing obstacles for implementing electronic instructional management systems at the classroom level. Researchers (Morsy, Kieffer, & Snow, 2010; Pearson, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2010) have determined that teachers are limited in their use of electronic data due to a lack of time to analyze data and make instructional decisions, a lack of professional development in the use of electronic systems, and a lack of streamlined data to create meaningful and actionable results.

The **STARS® Series** is one solution for meeting the need for data to help teachers make instructional decisions at the classroom level.

From Research to Application:

Implementation of the **STARS® Series** is based on the results of the Pretest, Benchmarks, and the Post Test in the **CARS® Series**. The Teacher Guide for the **STARS® Series** provides easy-to-use suggestions for assessing students' progress in the **STARS® Series**. When the **STARS® Series** is used in conjunction with the **CARS® Series**, teachers are assured they are providing the most effective reading comprehension instruction.
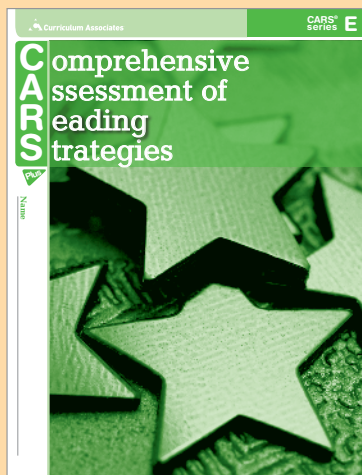
Student results from the CARS® Series *help drive instruction in the* STARS® Series.

Differentiated instruction is a hallmark of today's education reform movement.

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How can I provide differentiated instruction using the *STARS® Series*?

There are two easy ways to provide differentiated instruction in the classroom using the *STARS® Series*.

By Reading Strategy

Use the results from the Pretests in the *CARS® Series* to diagnose the individual needs of the students in your classroom.

Then use *STARS® Book E* to provide targeted instruction in one specific strategy or in several strategies to remediate areas that need improvement and/or reinforcement.

Or, you may wish to provide instruction using the entire *STARS® Book E* to build students' basic knowledge of all the reading strategies.

By Reading Level

Students in the same classroom are likely to be reading at different skill levels (below grade level, at grade level, or above grade level). You can use the leveled books in the *STARS® Series* (Books K–H) to meet this need.

To enable this type of differentiated instruction, the sequence of the strategies and the page numbers across the books in the *STARS® Series* are the same from lesson to lesson (with some exceptions in Books K–C). So all students in the classroom receive the same reading-strategy instruction but work with appropriately leveled reading passages.

For example, some fifth-grade students may work in the on-level Book E, which contains reading passages that don't extend beyond a fifth-grade reading level. At the same time, other students in the class may be assigned an above-level book, while other students may be assigned a below-level book.

Using the *CARS®* and *STARS® Series*

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is an instructional approach that allows students of varying abilities to learn the same content. It is also one of the foundational strengths of the response-to-intervention (RtI) model of instruction.

Current research on education reform featuring the RtI model of instruction and data-driven instruction all single out differentiated instruction as being a key element of success. Because of varying language abilities, English language learners (ELL) especially benefit from differentiated instruction.

" 'Multiple paths' does not mean that students are given free rein; it means that teachers must find that sweet spot between structure and choice that makes student learning possible. . . . By allowing options that accommodate different thinking patterns, teachers help all students not only achieve planned learning goals but also own these goals in a way that's all theirs" (Carolan & Guinn, 2007).

From Research to Application:

The *STARS® Series* provides explicit, detailed instructional suggestions for providing differentiated instruction. Teachers may differentiate their instruction either through reading strategies or through reading levels, which is a special benefit for struggling readers.

To allow for differentiated instruction by reading level, each level of the *STARS® Series* covers the same reading strategies in the same page order. Therefore, a struggling student may be able to receive the same reading-strategy instruction using a lower-level book as students who are using an on-level book.

Explicit Instruction

Today, a lot of attention is directed toward teaching students 21st century literacy skills (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010; Kamil et al., 2008; Torgesen et al., 2007). These literacy skills involve the development of higher-order thinking and reading comprehension. Some reading strategies that require higher-order thinking are: finding main idea and details (analyzing), understanding sequence, recognizing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, making predictions, and drawing conclusions and making inferences.

The use of explicit instruction is documented as one of the most effective ways of teaching these 21st century skills. According to the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), explicit instruction or direct explanation gives students "higher levels of awareness of specific reading strategies, as well as a greater awareness of the need to be strategic when reading" (pp. 4–122). The direct-explanation instructional approach coupled with these specific reading strategies makes the *STARS® Series* an effective program for teaching 21st century literacy skills.

Kamil et al. (2008) directly states that explicit instruction is a research-based instructional strategy that improves students' understanding of reading strategies. The chart on page 9 lists the actions these researchers recommend to implement explicit instruction of reading strategies, all of which are practiced in the *STARS® Series*.

> **Those students lagging furthest behind receive intensive courses that provide explicit instruction on critical reading and writing skills and strategies with ample opportunities for scaffolded practice. Such scaffolding allows for acceleration and helps struggling students to tackle rigorous work.**
>
> *(Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010)*

Student Book

Teacher Guide

Both teachers and students benefit from direct, explicit instruction.

How to Provide Explicit Instruction	The *STARS® Series* Provides Explicit Instruction
Carefully select the text to use when beginning to teach a given strategy.	Reading selections of varying length, theme, and genre enable effective application of each reading strategy.
Make sure that the text is at the appropriate reading level of students.	Teachers may differentiate instruction of the reading strategies by using an off-level book to meet students' needs.
Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that students are learning.	The *STARS® Series* provides practice through Guided Practice in each lesson, Review lessons, and the Final Review lesson.
Talk about comprehension strategies while teaching them.	Students work with a partner to discuss their work. Teachers talk with students throughout each lesson part (except Part Five).

The STARS® Series integrates explicit instruction to provide students with the strongest methods to achieve reading comprehension.

definition

graphic organizer

learning objectives

modeling of reading strategy

From Research to Application:

The *STARS® Series* uses explicit instruction through the use of a definition, a reading-strategy model, and learning objectives for each reading strategy. Prominent graphic organizers provide another mode of access to understanding a reading strategy, through graphic representation. The graphic organizer feature is particularly helpful to ELL students because the text demand is lessened for students.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers provide a visual representation of the organization of and the relationship between ideas and concepts in a reading passage or of the meaning of a word or phrase in the context of the reading passage. They are a means to stimulate students' interaction with the text, both on an idea level and on a word-meaning level. Researchers (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; NICHD, 2000; Vacca & Vacca, 2005) confirm that active interaction and engagement maximizes and deepens students' learning.

ELL students also benefit from the use of graphic organizers as a way to gain comprehension. "Graphic organizers facilitate ELLs' comprehension through visual illustrations of key terms, vocabulary, ideas, and the relationship among them" (Sigueza, 2005). A graphic organizer is a highly effective method for initiating student interaction with text and facilitating comprehension.

From Research to Application:

Part One of each lesson in the Student Book provides a graphic organizer to help present the reading strategy in a visual way. Students who are not able to easily internalize the newly learned reading strategy will benefit from this concrete and overt method of learning.

Additionally, provided in Part One of each lesson in the Teacher Guide, is a Tip describing how to complete the graphic organizer. Part Four of each lesson in the Teacher Guide contains a Reteaching activity. This activity uses the graphic organizer in a direct application of the reading strategy. Through the graphic organizer, students demonstrate their mastery of the reading strategy in a visual way.

Part One: Think About the Strategy

Graphic organizers offer overt and concrete ways to demonstrate comprehension.

Plural Forms of Regular Nouns

Explain to students that nouns name people, places, or things. Students can look at the endings of nouns to know how many.

Work with students to form the plurals of regular nouns. Write this sentence on the board: *I picked up the eraser.* Help students identify the noun *(eraser)* and how many *(one)*. Explain that to form the plural of a regular noun, you add either *s* or *es*. Then work together to form the plural *(erasers)* and tell how many *(more than one)*.

Next, write the words *box, bear,* and *feather* on the board. Work with students to form the plurals. Be sure to pronounce the words as you explain how each plural is formed *(boxes:* add *es; bears:* add *s; feathers:* add *s).*

Point out the regular plural noun *feathers* on student book page 8.

The ELL Support feature in the Teacher Guide helps ELL students with language concepts and eliminates some of the difficulties they face in understanding what they are reading.

Instructional Support for English Language Learners

Why are English language learners considered struggling readers? National test results explain why: Hispanic students as a whole, including English-proficient children in the second generation and beyond, score significantly lower in reading than other students. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007), all subcategories of readers improved their reading scores. However, this improvement translates to the fact that 67% of all students are reading at the Basic level or below. ELL students have not moved out of the Basic reporting category since 1997.

While ELLs face obvious challenges to improve their reading scores, research-based teaching instructions are available. "[W]ith allowances for the language issues themselves, effective reading instruction for English language learners may be similar to effective instruction for English-proficient children, whether the ELLs are first taught in their native language or in English" (Slavin & Cheung, 2003).

From Research to Application:

The *STARS® Series* is a program that is comprehensive in its use of effective learning and teaching strategies for on-level and struggling readers, and ELL students as well. Features particularly helpful to ELL students, such as explicit instruction, graphic organizers, peer learning, and theme-based instruction, are integrated throughout the *STARS® Series* and are discussed in this section and in the Quick-Reference Chart of Best Practices on page 19.

In addition, the *STARS® Series* features an explicit ELL instructional support feature called **ELL Support** that appears in each lesson plan in the Teacher Guide. This feature focuses on language arts concepts that present reading challenges to ELLs. Teachers may use this feature to help students understand confusing words or unclear usage.

Scaffolded Instruction

The *STARS® Series* is designed around the organizational framework of scaffolded instruction. Each lesson is organized into five parts; each lesson part is integrated with scaffolded instruction. Scaffolded instruction benefits all types of students, including ELLs. "Scaffolded instruction optimizes student learning by providing a supportive environment while facilitating student independence" (ERIC Document, 2002).

Books A–H in the *STARS® Series* have five parts for each strategy lesson. Each part of a lesson is organized by scaffolded instructional strategies. The *STARS® Series* guides students through the learning process, from prior-knowledge activation, to modeled and guided direct instruction with peer learning, to text-guided modeled and guided practice, and finally to independent work.

Part One: Think About the Strategy

Modeled Instruction

Activating prior knowledge helps readers relate their existing knowledge to the concepts in a text. Prior knowledge allows students to make unconscious inferences during reading. Students also try to figure out how the text they are reading relates to their personal prior knowledge (Pressley, 2002).

Part One: Think About the Strategy begins by cueing students to reflect upon their already-established content knowledge. Students then demonstrate their mastery of the knowledge by answering several open-ended questions.

Research (NICHD, 2000; Snow, 2002; Vacca & Vacca, 2005) has shown that both native English speakers and ELLs benefit from prior-knowledge activation in comprehending text. Students reinforce their prior-knowledge activation by discussing their responses with a peer.

STARS® Series
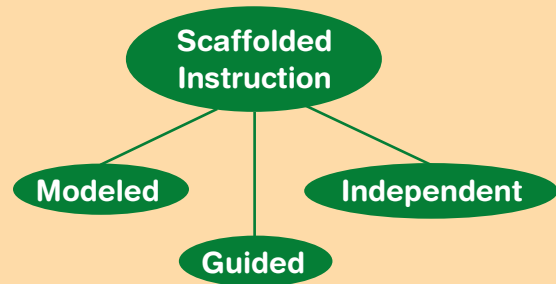
Scaffolded instruction is a hallmark of effective reading-comprehension instruction.

Modeled Instruction

> **All students, regardless of their proficiency in English, come to school with a valuable background of experience and knowledge on which teachers can capitalize.**
>
> *(Reed & Railsback, 2003)*

PART **TWO**: Learn About the Strategy

WHAT TO KNOW

The order in which things are done or events take place is called **sequence**. The steps for completing a set of directions often follow a sequence.

- Clue words such as *first, next, then, last, finally, before,* and *after* often tell you when things are done or events happen.
- Clues such as times of day, days of the week, months, seasons, and years tell when things happen.
- In a story without clue words, think about the beginning, the middle, and the ending to help you figure out sequence. In an article without clue words, think about the order in which things take place or how things are done.

Read this article that describes an art project. As you read, think about the order of the steps to complete the project.

Making a Collage

Ms. Shurtleff was explaining a new project to her fifth-grade art students. "We'll be making a design out of pasted pictures or scraps of paper or fabric," she said. "It's called a collage."

"First," Ms. Shurtleff instructed, "... gather your materials. You'll need ... background. You'll also need magazine ... of cloth. You can also use small obje...

"Third," she continued, "cut out p... your theme. Next, add materials that ... texture. Then move the pieces around ... design you want. Last, glue the piece...

The order of the steps to complete the colla...

First, think of a theme for your collage.

Second, gather your materials.

Third, cut out pictures and words from mag...

Next, add materials that will give your colla...

Then move the pieces around on the posterb...

Last, glue the pieces to the poster board to ...

26   Understanding Sequence

Read this story about a clever trick. As you read, think about what happens first, second, and so on. Then answer the questions.

The Mind Reader

Abe told his friend Corey that he could read minds and was ready to prove his power. First, Abe spread out nine magazines on the floor. He then arranged the magazines in three rows of three magazines each.

Abe's sister Sandra, who knew how to perform the trick, acted as his assistant. She placed a blindfold over Abe's eyes. Next, she turned him around so that his back faced Corey. Abe then asked his friend to touch one of the magazines.

After Corey made his choice, Abe turned around and removed his blindfold. He told Corey to concentrate on the correct magazine, but not to look directly at it.

With a measuring stick, Sandra pointed to the bottom right corner of the first magazine in the top row. "Is it this one?" she asked Abe. Abe answered, "No." Sandra continued to point to magazines, from the top row to the bottom row. Each time, she asked, "Is this the one?" Each time, Abe shook his head "No." Finally, when the pointer touched the last magazine in the bottom row, Abe nodded his head and said, "Yes, that's the one."

Corey was astounded. He wondered how Abe had figured out that the correct magazine was at the bottom right.

1. What did Abe do first?
   Ⓐ He put on a blindfold.
   Ⓑ He placed nine magazines on the floor.
   Ⓒ He asked Corey to touch a magazine.
   Ⓓ He nodded his head.

2. In the story, which clue word tells what Abe did last?
   Ⓐ first
   Ⓑ then
   Ⓒ next
   Ⓓ finally

Work with a Partner

- Talk about your answers to the questions.
- Tell why you chose your answers.
- Then talk about what you have learned so far about understanding sequence.

Understanding Sequence   27

Guided Instruction

Work with a Partner

- Talk about your answers to the questions.
- Tell why you chose your answers.
- Then talk about what you have learned so far about understanding sequence.

Cooperative Learning

Part Two: Learn About the Strategy
Guided Instruction

Students' exposure to the lesson's reading strategy continues with **Part Two: Learn About the Strategy**. Part Two begins with the teacher guiding students through using the strategy in context and identifying text evidence. The teacher then provides guidance as needed as students read a passage and answer questions on their own. "Many students, particularly low-performing students, learn more quickly from a clear, concise explanation of what to do and how to do it" (Carnine, 2010). After students apply their newfound knowledge to two selected-response questions, they once more interact with a peer to discuss their responses and determine how they arrived at their responses.

English language learners face unique challenges in the reading classroom when they must explain their thought processes either in writing or in discourse. The *STARS® Series* can aid ELL students by pairing them up with another student.

Students work together in Part One and Part Two of each strategy lesson through the Work with a Partner activity. This one-to-one interaction aids ELL students when they are having difficulty comprehending a word or phrase and when expressing themselves. Students also reinforce what they have learned by sharing and discussing their work.

Also, when students work with peers who are in various stages of mastering a task, mutual reasoning and conflict resolution are likely to occur, which, in turn, facilitate learning (Mevarech & Light, 1992; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007). This scaffolded learning experience prepares students for the upcoming independent work they will encounter in the rest of the strategy lesson.

Part Three: Check Your Understanding
Modeled Practice

Part Three: Check Your Understanding allows students to assimilate new learning by applying it to a new reading selection. Students become more responsible for their learning.

They begin by reviewing the lesson's learning objectives. Students then experience modeled practice as they respond to the reading-strategy questions that follow the reading selection. In a think-aloud format, Part Three makes explicit the reasoning for choosing or not choosing each answer choice.

This modeled practice provides experience with the strategy and gives students a feeling of control over the strategy before they work with a group or independently.

Modeled Practice

Part Four: Build on What You Have Learned
Guided Practice

Part Four: Build on What You Have Learned provides students with an additional connection to the primary reading strategy taught in the lesson. Students take on more responsibility for their learning as they move from direct instruction to more independent application by reading a selection and answering four selected-response questions. Students continue the lesson by reading a second selection and applying the newly learned reading strategy to four more questions.

Guided Practice

Independent Practice and Test-taking Practice

Part Five: Prepare for a Test
Independent Practice

A true measure of success is when a student becomes an independent learner. The instructional goal of developing a class of independent learners is valued because "high-achieving students prefer independent study and are significantly more self-motivated, persistent, responsible, teacher and adult motivated, and prefer tactile rather than auditory instruction. They also strongly prefer self-direction, flexibility, and options as well as a minimum of structure and lecture" (Collinson, 2000).

In **Part Five: Prepare for a Test**, students read test-taking strategies and then proceed to a reading selection. Teaching test-taking strategies and providing practice for test taking is a value-added feature of the *STARS® Series*.

Gulek (2003) discusses the several benefits researchers have found about test preparation. Adequate and appropriate test preparation plays an important role in helping students demonstrate their knowledge and skills in high-stakes testing situations.

Norton and Park (1996) found a significant relationship between test preparation and academic performance. Chittooran and Miles (2001) also concluded that "adequate test preparation significantly improves student attitudes toward test taking and, hence, actual performance on high-stakes tests" (p. 42).

The *STARS® Series* offers additional practice with test preparation in each Review lesson as well as the Final Review.

Standards-based Assessment to Guide Instruction

Standards-based assessment is the direct assessment of curriculum-based standards of learning. The mastery of curriculum standards has been a long-standing goal of individual states and has been gaining significant federal support since the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001.

Recently, a state and federal initiative called the Common Core Standards has taken root (CSSO/NGA, 2010). This initiative furthers the push towards standards-based instruction. This close alignment between assessment and instruction maximizes each student's ability to become an independent reader.

From Research to Application:

The *STARS® Series* is a direct application of standards-based assessment that matches both state and national standards. Each book provides instruction with core reading strategies that are tested on both state and national assessments.

Additionally, state-specific versions of the *STARS® Series* offer correlations of the lessons to state standards. The correlations are in the student book as well so that students are cognizant of their learning goals.

Practice with standards-based core reading strategies is reinforced through multiple review lessons.

Teacher Support

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) renewal, along with the Race to the Top funding, requires that teachers be well-prepared for their classroom. "A prepared teacher knows what to teach, how to teach, and has command of the subject matter being taught" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As a result of the use of data-management systems that tie student performance to teacher evaluation, teachers are now being held even more accountable for their teaching impact. In light of this increased emphasis on teacher effectiveness, the *STARS® Series* has increased its instructional-support features. These features are useful for the teacher who is teaching both English-speaking students and ELL students.

Teacher Guide Lesson Part	Feature	Purpose	Research Says . . .
Introduction	Getting Started	**Scripted text** supports teachers in helping students transition into and prepare for the new reading-strategy lesson.	"To improve poor comprehension, researchers have used instructional scripts that provide students with essential background knowledge, key concepts, and vocabulary." (Snow, 2002)
Introduction	ELL Support	Covers **language concepts** that may challenge students	Researchers state that one of the best practices for teaching ELL students is to model standard pronunciation and grammar. (Mohr & Mohr, 2007)
Introduction	Genre Focus	Provides key characteristics of **genres**, connecting students to literary features of lesson passages	"Contemporary language arts standards call for students, at all ages, to read authentic literature across genres (e.g., novels, memoirs, interviews) and to write in various genres. . . . All of these opportunities provide potentially powerful contexts in which students can learn to interpret text and can learn how to learn from text." (Snow, 2002)
Part One through Part Five	At-a-Glance and Step-by-Step	The At-a-Glance feature provides a quick overview of each part of the lesson. The Step-by-Step feature provides explicit directions that teachers may choose to use to guide students through each part of the lesson. This feature also includes tips for implementing **accountable discourse and text interaction**.	"In accountable discourse, students take one another's remarks seriously and respond directly to them. They must be able to back up their statements with evidence." (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2007)
Part One through Part Five	Tips	Each tip offers **teaching support** that directly relates to the activities on the student book page.	"Preparing teachers who have the skills and knowledge to help America's students achieve their full potential is a national effort that requires a strong partnership among institutions of higher education; elementary and secondary schools; governments at the state, local, and federal levels, and private industry." (U.S. Department of Education, 2009)

(continues)

Teacher Guide Lesson Part	Feature	Purpose	Research Says . . .
Part Three	Teacher's Corner	Provides the teacher with additional information about the reading strategy	"The reauthorization proposal supported by the 2011 request would ask States and LEAs to set clear standards for effective teaching and to design evaluation systems that fairly and rigorously differentiate between teachers on the basis of effectiveness." (U.S. Department of Education, 2010)
Part Four	Reteaching	Reinforces and deepens students' learning by using a **graphic organizer** to visually depict and verify the correct answer to a strategy-based question	"Graphic organizers can provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text." (Adler, 2004)
Part Five	Connecting with Literature	Invites students to apply the strategy to **authentic literature** through a Book Share	"Aesthetic responses to literature can be elicited by allowing students to choose books to read and their responses, to relate associations and feelings, and to extend the text." (Buss & Karnowski, 2003)
Features of a *STARS*® Lesson	Management Tips	Offers **classroom-management** and instructional suggestions to make instruction **effective for small-group instruction and other scenarios**	"By allowing options that accommodate different thinking patterns, teachers help all students not only achieve planned learning goals but also own these goals in a way that's all theirs." (Carolan & Guinn, 2007)
State-Specific Editions	Correlations Summary	Lists the specific strategies and skills in a **state's standards** that are supported by each *STARS*® lesson	"Standards-based instruction allows teachers and students to be on the same page by specifying how teachers and students will meet their education goals, including specific concepts, order, or instructional materials." (NREL, 2005)

A description of these teacher-support features can be found on pages 12–23 in the Teacher Guide of Books A–H and on pages 12–16 of Books K and AA. With this enhanced support for teaching the core reading strategies in the *STARS*® *Series*, students' mastery of these strategies is greatly improved.

Quick-Reference Chart of Best Practices

This series uses . . .	Example	Research says . . .
Answer Analysis for Students As a part of guided instruction, students receive immediate feedback about their answer choices and read the reasoning behind correct and incorrect answers.	**SB:** Books K and AA • Included in teacher and student discussions **SB:** Books A–H • In each lesson, Part Three: Check Your Understanding	Research (Pashler et al., 2007) has shown that when students receive direct instruction about the reasons why an answer is correct or incorrect, they demonstrate long-term retention and understanding of newly learned content.
Authentic Discourse A learning strategy that enhances students' understanding of newly learned concepts through group conversations. This strategy is especially helpful to ELLs because they are not hindered by printed language structures.	**SB:** Books AA–H In each lesson, Part Two: Guided Instruction, Work with a Partner feature	"Talking to others about ideas and work is fundamental to learning." (Resnick, 2010)
Cooperative Learning Students work together in pairs or small groups to attain their individual goals.	**SB:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Work with a Partner feature	"Having peers instruct or interact over the use of reading strategies leads to an increase in the learning of the strategies, promotes intellectual discussion and increases reading comprehension." (NICHD, 2000, pp. 4–45)
Differentiated Instruction Students of varying abilities learn the same content using different instructional approaches.	**SB:** Books C–H • In each lesson, Part One through Part Five, modeled, guided, and independent practice and instruction **TG:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Part One through Part Five, teachers are given paired and whole-group instruction options	"'Multiple paths' does not mean that students are given free rein; it means that teachers must find that sweet spot between structure and choice that makes student learning possible. . . . By allowing options that accommodate different thinking patterns, teachers help all students not only achieve planned learning goals but also own these goals in a way that's all theirs." (Carolan & Guinn, 2007, p. 45)
Direct Instruction Lesson plans include explicit step-by-step instruction of reading and learning strategies as well as lesson objectives.	**SB:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Part Two: Learn About the Strategy	"Direct instruction is appropriate instruction for all learners, all five components of reading, and in all settings (whole group, small group, and one-on-one)." (FCRR, 2006)
ELL Accommodations English language learners are a large part of today's classrooms. These students need extra support and scaffolding while learning new information. Some teaching strategies that have been proven to be effective for ELL students are: graphic organizers, explicit instruction, scaffolded instruction, shared reading, and theme-based instruction.	**SB:** Books A–H • In each lesson, graphic organizers, explicit instruction, scaffolded instruction, shared reading, and theme-based reading passages are key ELL instructional accommodations. **TG:** Books A–H • See section entitled, "What instructional features in the **STARS® Series** can be helpful for students, especially ELL students?" • Introduction, ELL Support	"In virtually every part of the country, middle and high schools are now seeing expanding enrollments of students whose primary language is not English. Rising numbers of immigrants, other demographic trends, and the demands of an increasingly global economy make it clear that the nation can no longer afford to ignore the pressing needs of the ELLs in its middle and high schools who are struggling with reading, writing, and oral discourse in a new language." (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007)

(continues)

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This series uses . . .	Example	Research says . . .
Explicit Instruction Students receive explicit instruction of each reading strategy consisting of a definition, a short example passage, and learning objectives.	**SB:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Part Two: Learn About the Strategy	Researchers Manset-Williamson and Nelson (2005) explain, "Explicit instruction involves the overt, teacher-directed instruction of strategies, including direct explanation, modeling, and guided practice in the application of strategies" (p. 62).
Genre Instruction Students receive instruction of genre properties of reading passages which aids in both their recall and comprehension of the passages.	**TG:** Books C–H • In each lesson, Introduction, Genre Focus	"The instruction of the content and organization of stories thus improves comprehension of stories as measured by the ability of the reader to answer questions and recall what was read. This improvement is more marked for less able readers." (NICHD, 2000, pp. 4–45)
Graphic Organizers Graphic organizers are visual displays that help learners comprehend and retain textually important information.	**SB:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Part One: Think About the Strategy **TG:** Books K and AA • Refer to Part One: Skill Development section • In each lesson, Part Four: Build on What You Have Learned, Reteaching feature	"When students learn how to use and construct graphic organizers, they are in control of a study strategy that allows them to identify what parts of a text are important, how the ideas and concepts are related, and where they can find specific information to support more important ideas." (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 399)
Listening Comprehension Development and mastery of listening comprehension on the meaning level is one of the first stepping stones in learning how to read.	**Series:** • Book K uses listening activities and a selected few reading activities to teach reading strategies. • Books AA–H use both listening and reading activities, including the "shared reading" strategy to teach reading strategies.	"Teachers should emphasize text comprehension from the beginning, rather than waiting until students have mastered "the basics" of reading. Instruction at all grade levels can benefit from showing students how reading is a process of making sense out of text, or constructing meaning." (Armbruster & Lehr, 2001)
Multiple-strategy Instruction Students are taught that more than one cognitive strategy may be used to gain meaning from text. Strategies such as comparing and contrasting and making predictions work together to make text meaningful.	**SB:** Books C–H • After every third lesson, and at the end of each book, Review and Final Review sections	"Skilled reading involves the coordinated use of several cognitive strategies. Readers can learn and flexibly coordinate these strategies to construct meaning from text." (NICHD, 2000, pp. 4–77)
Prior-knowledge Activation These are learning activities that stimulate knowledge that comes from previous experiences.	**SB:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Part One: Think About the Strategy **TG:** Book K • In Part One: Skill Development section • Lesson Opener, Getting Started section	"Several meta-analyses and reviews of the research have found that direct, explicit instruction in such specific strategies as summarizing, identifying text structure and visual clues, calling on prior knowledge, and using graphic organizers improves students' reading comprehension." (Biancarosa, 2005)

(continued)

This series uses . . .	Example	Research says . . .
Reading-strategy Instruction Explicit and direct instruction of each core reading strategy occurs in order to gain meaning from text.	**Series:** • Books K and AA introduce 6 core reading strategies. • Book A introduces 8 core reading strategies. • Books B–H introduce 12 core reading strategies. **TG:** • Understanding the Strategies • Teacher's Corner	Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris (2008) explain that reading strategies are "deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode texts, understand words, and construct meanings." (p. 368)
Scaffolded Instruction An instructional strategy in which gradual withdrawal of support occurs through modeled, guided, and independent instruction and practice.	**SB:** Books AA–H • Part One: Think About the Strategy (Modeled Instruction) • Part Two: Learn About the Strategy (Guided Instruction) • Part Three: Check Your Understanding (Modeled Practice) • Part Four: Build on What You Have Learned (Guided Practice) • Part Five: Prepare for a Test (Independent Practice)	"There is virtually universal agreement that scaffolding plays an essential and vital role in fostering comprehension." (Clark & Graves, 2005)
Shared Reading This is a reading activity where a teacher reads a story while students look at the text being read and follow along.	**Series:** • Book K has several activities where students read silently as the teacher reads orally. • Book AA uses shared reading as one of its core teaching strategies.	Routman (2000) lists several benefits of shared reading, especially for ELL students. Shared reading teaches multiple reading strategies; provides supportive context for reading; and helps children participate as readers. (p. 34)
Test-taking Practice Selected-response and constructed-response test questions are often used on state and national standardized tests.	**SB:** • Books A–H, in each lesson, Part Five: Prepare for a Test • Books A–H, Review and Final Reviews	Supon (2004) cites that researchers have determined that "Students of all levels of academic achievement and intellectual abilities can be affected by test anxiety."
Text Interaction This is an active reading strategy students may use to visibly apply reading strategies to text.	**TG:** Books AA–H • In each lesson, Part Two: Guided Instruction, Tip feature	"It is necessary to have simple, clear links between the real-world interactions, the main conceptual framework, and the knowledge goals being pursued." (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004, p. 62)
Theme-based Instruction Theme-based instruction integrates instruction of language and concepts with real-world scenarios and with cross-curricular subjects, such as social studies, science, and literature.	**SB:** • In each lesson, the reading passages have social studies, science, or literary themes. **TG:** • Books K–H, Introduction Books A–H, Genre Focus • Books K–H, Connecting with Literature	Bergeron, Wermuth, and Rudenga (1996) summarized that "Theme-based, integrated learning experiences engage young children in meaningful and functional literacy events, focus on real-life experiences by providing socially interactive settings, and provide an organizational framework for language acquisition."

Summary

The *STARS® Series* is an instructional program that is solidly grounded in areas of reading research.

- Scaffolded strategy-based instruction serves as the organizational framework, while metacognitive strategies foster student self-monitoring and self-assessment.

- The lessons are carefully planned and sequenced to promote individual understanding and application of reading strategies.

- Students build on their capacity to analyze, reason, and communicate ideas effectively by applying specified reading strategies in a variety of contexts.

- The *STARS® Series* is a comprehensive reading program designed to meet a broad spectrum of individual needs in the classroom.

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