

# *COMPREHENSION SKILL CARDS*

The set of 18 ready-to-copy skill cards on the following pages will help you teach comprehension and critical thinking skills in any language or literature-based reading program.

The questions and activities on the cards are general, designed to fit any story a child is reading, regardless of the level. Each student can each choose a different book and still be able to discuss what they're reading with another student.

You can use the cards for:

- Mini-lessons on the specific skills
- Class discussion starters
- Response journal prompts for student writing
- Student assessment of skill development

The more your students use the comprehension skill cards, the more they'll strengthen their skills and develop as independent readers. They'll grow in their ability to comprehend and appreciate literature. Lastly, they'll become a community of readers, enthusiastically sharing their stories and ideas.

## *TIME AND PLACE*

Writers give clues about when and where a story takes place. Sometimes those clues are in the pictures. Sometimes you have to read the story and make good guesses.

Be a detective! Find out when and where your story takes place and write it down.  
Tell where you found your answers.

## *OPINIONS*

Sharing your opinions about the story helps you understand it- and yourself- better.

Think about the main character of the story. Why did you like or dislike him or her?

Did you like the way the story ended? Why or why not?

Did anything in the story surprise you? What? Why were you surprised?

If you were the writer, what might you change about the story?

## *SEQUENCE*

To understand a story, you need to know the order of events.

Write down five things that happened in the story.

Number them by the order in which they happened.

Write a paragraph putting the five happenings in order.

Use clue words or phrases such as "first", "next", "then", and "at last".

## ***VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT***

One of the best ways to learn new words is to discover them in a story, then use them in writing. Choose a new word from your story. Find out what the word means by:

Reading the whole page and guessing

Finding the word in a dictionary

Asking a friend

Write an original sentence with your new word. Teach the word to a friend. Add this word to your word list.

## ***COMPARING AND CONTRASTING: Part 1 of 2***

Comparing stories, characters, and thinking about how a story is like real life can show you how authors put their stories together.

What does the story have in common with other stories? (Think about the setting, characters, plot, ending, etc.)

Think about two stories. How are the stories alike? How are they different?

Which story did you like better? Why?

Which man character did you like better? Why?

## ***COMPARING AND CONTRASTING: Part 2 of 2***

Choose two characters from one story.

How are they alike?

How are they different?

What problems do the two characters have that are the same?

How are the feelings of the characters the same?

Has anything that happened in the story ever happened to you? What was it?

## ***MAIN IDEA***

Knowing the main idea of a story means you understand the characters and the plot. In one sentence, tell what the whole story is about. Answer some of these questions to help you:

Who is the story about?

What happens to the main character? When does it happen? Where does it happen? Why does it happen?

## ***CAUSE AND EFFECT: Part 1 of 2***

Small events in a story can make a difference in what happens later.

Describe an important event in your story..

Why did this happen? What happened next?

## ***CAUSE AND EFFECT: Part 2 of 2***

What one character does in a story often influences what another character does.

Read the first part of your story..

What does the main character think is important?

What does he or she do about it?

What event or person caused the character to do that or feel that way?

## ***AUTHOR'S STYLE***

Every writer has a style of writing. When we learn the author's style, we know what to expect from him or her. You can learn about that style by studying things like:

**The kinds of characters (animals, children, adults)**

**The kind of story (adventure, science fiction, real life)**

**The kind and amount of dialogue**

Describe the style of an author you like. Give examples from books you've read by that author.

## ***AUTHOR'S PURPOSE***

Sometimes authors write a story to teach you something. Sometimes they just want to entertain you. Sometimes they want to express an opinion. Or they may have another reason.

In one sentence, tell why the author wrote the story you read. Then, explain how you know this.

## ***TYPE OF LITERATURE***

There are many different types of literature. To tell what kind of book you are reading, look for clues. For example:

**Clues: talking animal or magic happenings = fantasy fiction**

**Clues: a story that could have happened = realistic fiction**

These are just two types of literature. Others include biography or autobiography, poetry and non-fiction. Decide what type of book you have and tell what clues helped you decide.

## ***FACTS AND OPINIONS***

Facts are statements you can prove. Few people argue about them. Opinions are statements that tell what someone thinks about something. Different people have different opinions and people often argue about their own opinions.

Write down some facts in your story.

Next to each fact, write your opinion (what you think) about the fact.

## ***CHARACTERS' MOTIVES***

A character's actions often tell you something about the character's thoughts and feelings.

Describe something a character did and then explain why he or she did it.

What might your character have been thinking and feeling?

## ***CHARACTERS' DEVELOPMENT***

What happens to characters in the story often causes them to change

Choose a character from your story.

Did your character change from the beginning to the end of the story?

How did he or she change? Why?

## ***INFERENCE***

Thinking a little about what you're going to read gives you a head start on the story. Before you begin reading the story, read the title and look at the pictures.

What do they tell you about the story?

Read the story.

When you're finished, think about the ending.

If the story continued, what do you think might happen? Why?

## ***DRAWING CONCLUSIONS***

Sometimes you have to "read between the lines" (look for hidden meanings) in a story to get the whole picture.

Draw a picture of your favorite character in the story.

Tell as much as you can about what kind of person the character is.

List things he or she did in the story.

Is he or she a nice person? Why or why not?

Would like to have this character as a friend? Why or why not?

## ***PREDICTING OUTCOMES***

One way good writers keep you interested in their stories is by giving clues about what's going to happen next.

Read part of the book.

Write down your guesses about what will happen.

List the clues that helped you make your guesses.

Read on to see if you were correct.