

# FOCUS

## Reading Comprehension series

This 48-book research-based series covers six strategies – one per title at each of the eight reading levels (A–H):

- **Understanding Main Idea and Details \***
- **Understanding Sequence \***
- **Recognising Cause and Effect \***
- **Comparing and Contrasting \***
- **Making Predictions \***
- **Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences \***

### How does this series fit in with the CARS/STARS program?

Brief instruction and concentrated practice reinforce targeted strategies for CARS, STARS and CARS II students needing extra practice.

### Who is FOCUS for?

FOCUS is a series designed to help:

- on-level readers who need repeated practice and reinforcement of targeted strategies
- concentrated instruction
- individual reading skills
- struggling readers practise comprehending what they have read. The program focuses on the higher-order reading strategies that struggling readers need extensive help with.

### What strategies are targeted?

The program solidifies comprehension with review and practice in six key reading strategies. \*

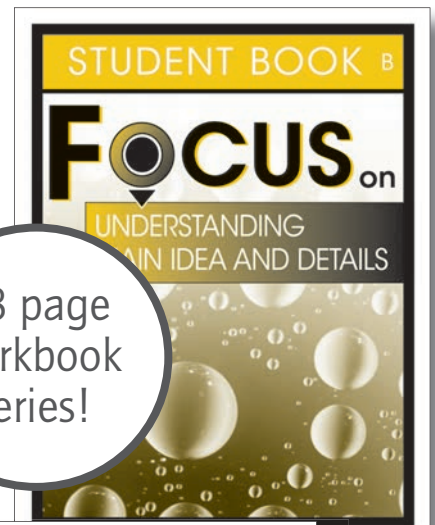
### When should I begin using FOCUS in the classroom?

The FOCUS series is designed for flexibility and can be used at any time to provide concentrated practice in 6 targeted Reading Strategies, at 8 different reading levels.

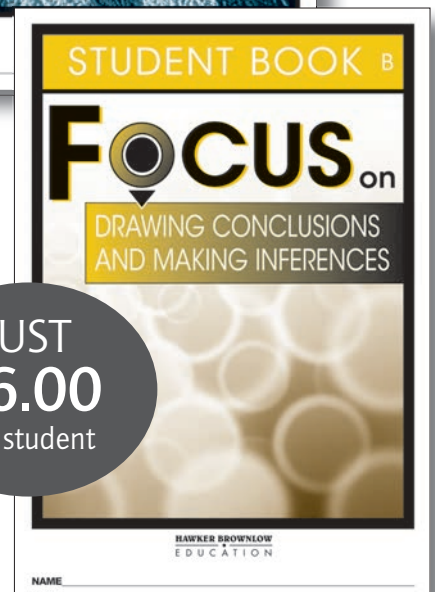
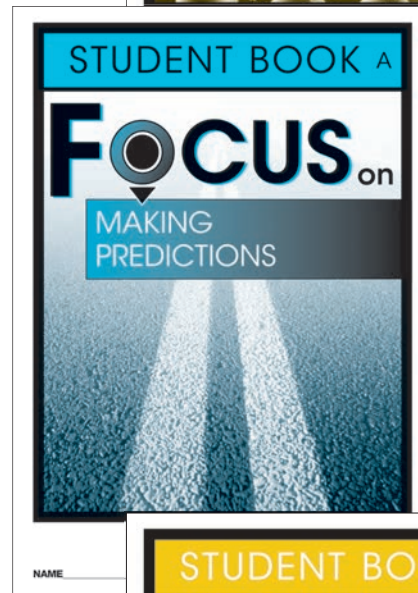
### Research Connection

"The general finding is that when readers are given cognitive strategy instruction, they make significant gains on measures of reading comprehension over students trained with conventional instruction procedures"

– *National Reading Panel*



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## Learn about Modelled Practice

These two pages provide basic instruction and modelling in the **understanding** and **application** of the Reading Strategy. The **Learn About** should be read and discussed with students to make sure they understand the Reading Strategy. Additional tips for helping students understand and use the Reading Strategy are included in the **Reading Strategy Tips** for the Teacher on pages 12–13 of the teacher guide.

The FOCUS Series employs scaffolded instruction:

- “Learn About”: the strategy is modelled
- the lesson preview is guided
- the 20 lessons are independent

### Learn About


**Understanding Main Idea and Details**

The **main idea** is the most important idea in a passage, or piece of writing. The main idea tells what the passage is *mostly about*. Every passage has a main idea. Each paragraph in a passage also has a main idea.

**Details** are pieces of information that *tell about* the main idea. Details explain the main idea. They tell who, what, when, where, why or how. Details can describe a person, place or thing. Details can tell about the order in which events happen. Details can also explain how to do something.

Read this passage. Find the main idea and the details that tell more about the main idea.

Our dog, Muffin, is very talented. When Muffin was a puppy, she went to a special school. There she learned to come when called. A few months later, my brother taught her to roll over on command. Just yesterday, I taught Muffin to shake paws. It took her only 15 minutes. What a smart dog she is!



**Main Idea**  
Our dog, Muffin, is very talented.


<b>Detail about main idea</b> She learned to come when called.	<b>Detail about main idea</b> She learned to roll over on command.	<b>Detail about main idea</b> She learned to shake paws.
-------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

The main idea of the passage about Muffin is that she is very talented. It is stated in the first sentence. A main idea may be stated in other parts of a passage, too. Or it may not be directly stated at all. If the main idea is not stated, ask yourself questions like these: “What is this passage mostly about? What is the most important idea?”

The details in the passage about Muffin explain why she is talented. They tell three things that she can do. She can come when called. She can roll over on command. She can shake paws.

The passage about Muffin has one paragraph. Other passages might have more than one paragraph. Still, the whole passage has a main idea. And each paragraph in the passage also has a main idea.

**Modelled Practice:** Introduces students to the strategies.



The main idea is what the passage is mostly about. Details are pieces of information that tell about the main idea.

FOCUS supplies a graphics organiser that represents the text structure specific to each reading strategy


## Lesson Preview Guided Practice

These two pages include a sample reading passage and two selected-response questions with explanations of why each of the eight answer choices is correct or not correct. The Lesson Preview should be read, worked through and discussed with students to make sure they understand how to answer strategy-based questions.

Students fill out a tracking chart to record completion of lessons and number of questions answered correctly. Five self-assessments help them measure their own performance and set goals.

### Lesson Preview

*Read this sample passage about blue whales. As you read, think about what the passage is mostly about. That is the main idea. Think about what the details tell about this main idea.*



#### Blue Whales

What is the largest animal ever to live on Earth? It's not an elephant. It's not a dinosaur. It's the blue whale. The blue whale is huge. The largest known blue whale was over 30 metres long. It probably weighed 145 tonnes, or 145,000 kilograms. Think of it this way. That is as long as two train carriages and as heavy as 30 elephants, or about 1600 human beings.

An animal that big must eat a lot. Strangely, the blue whale doesn't eat at all in the winter. In the summer, it eats three to four tonnes of food a day. It eats very small sea animals called krill.

You might wonder how a very large animal could catch enough very small animals to eat. Here is how the blue whale eats. It does not have teeth. Instead of teeth, it has something called baleen. The baleen hangs down from the whale's upper jaw. It is like a huge strainer. The whale takes a big gulp of sea water. The water is full of krill. Then the whale uses its huge tongue to push the water out of its mouth through the baleen. The krill stay in the whale's mouth. Then the whale swallows the krill.

**Look at the answer choices for each question. Read why each answer choice is correct or not correct.**

**1. What is the main idea of the passage?**

The blue whale does not eat in winter.

*This answer is not correct because it is not what the whole passage is mostly about. The passage also tells about other things about the size of the blue whale, what it eats and how it eats. This answer choice is a detail about the whale's eating habits.*

The blue whale is huge.

*This answer is correct because the whole passage has pieces of information, or details, that have something to do with the huge size of the blue whale.*

The blue whale eats a small animal called krill.

*This answer is not correct because it is a detail that tells only about the whale's eating habits. The whole passage is not just about the whale's eating habits. It is about other things, too.*

All big animals must eat a lot.

*This answer is not correct because the detail tells about all big animals, not just the blue whale. It is about big animals in general. The passage is mostly about the blue whale.*

**2. What do the details in the third paragraph tell mostly about?**

why the blue whale eats in summer

the weight of the blue whale

how the blue whale eats

what krill look like

how the blue whale eats

*This answer is correct because most of the details in the third paragraph tell about how the blue whale eats krill, using baleen.*

what krill look like

*This answer is not correct because no paragraph in the passage tells what krill look like.*

**Students learn why each answer choice is correct or not correct.**

**Guided Practice:** sample reading passage and selected-response questions.

## 20 Lesson Independent Practice

Each two-page lesson contains one reading passage, four strategy-based selected-response questions and one strategy-based constructed-response writing question. Reading Passages: The reading passages progress across the reading level. The passage genres include:

- **Fiction:** personal narrative, realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy fiction, mystery, folktale, fable, legend
- **Nonfiction:** report, article, interview, letter, postcard, book report, movie review, diary entry, journal entry, biography, textbook lesson, directions, instructions, recipe, invitation, announcement, experiment
- **Selected-response questions:** In each lesson, students apply the Reading Strategy to a reading passage and then choose the correct answers for four selected-response (multiple-choice) strategy-based questions. You should model how to answer these kinds of questions using information on the Lesson Preview pages.
- **Constructed-response writing questions:** In each lesson, students apply the Reading Strategy to a reading passage and then write a short response to a strategy-based question. You should model how to answer these kinds of questions by using one of the sample answers provided on pages 28–29 of this teacher guide.

### 20 Lesson Independent Practice


# Lesson 14

Passage genres are both fiction and nonfiction and include: personal narrative, realistic fiction, folktale, fable, legend, article, letter, book report, journal entry, biography, textbook lesson and instructions.

*Read these biographies of two writers. As you read, think about how the two writers are alike and how they are different. Look for clue words.*

*Answer these questions about the biographies.*

## The Lives of Two Australian Writers




Tim Winton and Nick Earls have many things in common. Both are Australian writers. Both have written books for young readers as well as adults.

Tim Winton was born in Perth in 1960. He still lives in Western Australia today. His father was a policeman. Tim used to enjoy listening to rock stories. But sometimes they scared him so much that he couldn't sleep. His grandmother lived in a tent out the back when he was a kid. He wanted to be a writer when he was a kid. His first book published when he was at school.

Tim Winton has written many books for adults and young readers. He has written books for Australian kids for the Lockie Leonard series about a boy who loves surfing and the outdoors. Tim Winton moved to Australia from Northern Ireland when he was eight years old. When he was growing up he wanted to be a cricketer or a rock star. It took him a while to find out that he wasn't very good at cricket. It took him a bit longer to work out that only knowing three guitar chords wasn't enough to be a rock star. He became a doctor for a little while instead. But he gave it all up because writing was more fun. He had his first book published when he was still a student.

Nick Earls often writes about normal people living in normal Australian suburbs. His gift is being able to see the funny side of daily life. His characters are usually smart but awkward young people finding their own place in the world. Adults as well as young people have read and loved his books.



*...then choose the correct answers for four selected-response (multiple choice) strategy-based questions...*

*... or write a short response to a strategy-based question.*

Comparing and Contrasting Book C CA10143 32 © 2006 Hawker Brownlow Education

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### What is in each teacher guide?

There are 48 teacher guides in the FOCUS series, one for each student book. Each teacher guide contains:

- suggested instructions for using the FOCUS series effectively in the classroom
- Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher, a facsimile of the Learn About on pages 2–3 of the student book, with tips for additional discussion related to understanding and using the Reading Strategy
- four reproducibles: three Teacher Assessments to be used for individual student assessment in the Reading Strategy and one Class or Group Performance Graph to be used for class or group assessment in the Reading Strategy
- summary of research that supports the FOCUS series

**Teacher Guides \$9.95 each**



## Management Software for FOCUS series – CD

Save time and effort with the optional Management System CD for the FOCUS Series. As students progress through the series, the teacher:

- creates reports by list and by graph of performance and progress
- reports progress for individual students and the entire class
- uses reports to communicate with parents



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## ORDER FORM

11-044-03

Understanding Main Idea and Details						
Student Books				Teacher Guides		
Book	Item #	Price (Pack of 5)	Qty	Item #	Price (each)	Qty
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B	CA10152	\$29.95 (Pack of 5)		CA101529	\$9.95	
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F	CA10266	\$29.95 (Pack of 5)		CA102669	\$9.95	
G	CA10267	\$29.95 (Pack of 5)		CA102679	\$9.95	
H	CA10268	\$29.95 (Pack of 5)		CA102689	\$9.95	

Understanding Sequence						
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## Focus Collection – SAVE 10%

### YEAR/READING LEVEL COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:

One pack of 5 Student Books and one Teacher Guide for each of the 6 strategy titles in your chosen level (A-H) Total of 30 Student Books and 6 Teacher Guides \$225.00

**An Example: Class Set A** – If ordering Class Set A you would receive

- Understanding Main Ideas and Details – 5 x Student A Books + 1 x Teacher A Guide
- Understanding Sequence – 5 x Student A Books + 1 x Teacher A Guide
- Recognising Cause and Effect – 5 x Student A Books + 1 x Teacher A Guide
- Comparing and Contrasting – 5 x Student A Books + 1 x Teacher A Guide
- Making Predictions – 5 x Student A Books + 1 x Teacher A Guide
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences – 5 x Student A Books + 1 x Teacher A Guide

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## Supporting Research Booklets

Focus on Reading Research Booklet	CAT025	F. O. C
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