

CARS & STARS Plus: An Overview

CARS & STARS Plus is a comprehensive reading program spanning 10 levels, P–H. Levels P and AA relate to pre-reading, are teacher-guided, and focus on listening and visual skills across 6 strategies. Level A covers 8 strategies and levels B–H, the core of the program, cover 12 strategies each.

The success of this program can be attributed to the following three major elements:

- Differentiation
- Explicit Teaching
- Data

The 5-Step Process to using CARS & STARS Plus in your Classroom

- 1. The Placement Book:** The CARS & STARS Plus program is based on reading comprehension ability, not year level. The Placement Book evaluations test individual student's comprehension levels and place them in the correct CARS & STARS Plus level. More than one level may be represented within the same class. The program was designed with this in mind, making it possible to teach multiple levels within the one class.

Note: If a student is placed in level A in CARS Plus, they should also be placed in Level A in STARS Plus. See the STARS Plus Teacher Guide for more information.

Conducting the Placement Test: The Placement Test is best conducted at either the end of the school year or at the beginning of the following year. Go to www.hbe.com.au and click on the 'CARS & STARS Plus' button. Download the Placement Book or complete the online version, located in the left sidebar menu.

- Choose a level with text appropriate to your student's year level. As a general starting point, Level P correlates with Prep/Foundation and Level H with Year 9.
- Have your student complete the chosen level placement test. From Level A onwards, students must be able to read the text independently. If they are unable to do so, move them to the teacher-guided reading levels AA or P.
- When your student achieves 6–10 correct, they are in the correct level. If they get 11 or more correct, place them on the level above. If a student gets fewer than 5 correct, place them on the level below. If in doubt, move the student down a level. The student will remain on this level for the whole year and therefore should not be stretched beyond their abilities.

- 2. Diagnose with CARS Plus:**

- Administer the 5 Pretests in the CARS Plus Series to diagnose the needs of students in your class. Ideally complete one per day, as promptly as possible.

How to issue a Pretest

- Each Pretest is designed to take approximately 40 minutes to complete.
- For the first 30 minutes, have students read the test in the CARS Plus Student Book, answer the 12 multiple-choice questions and complete the answer sheet at the back of the book. Correct the students' answers verbally and have them record their correct results only in the Student Progress Chart (page 3). Leaving the incorrect answers blank provides a visual representation of the students' strengths and weaknesses.
- For the last 10 minutes, engage your class in feedback and discussion.
- Complete the remaining four Pretests.
- Once all five Pretests are completed, have students fill in Self-Assessment 1 at the back of their books and hand it to you with their answer bubble sheets. This will be used for planning.
- Using the students' Self-Assessment and answer sheets, complete your choice of Teacher Assessment 1–3 (for student discussion/goal setting or data recording), located in the CARS Plus Teacher Book. If using CARS & STARS Online: Assessment & Reports, enter data directly into the student test data page. STARS Plus instruction can begin in the next lesson.

- 3. Instruct with STARS Plus:** The STARS Plus Student Book lessons are cumulative and designed to be used from start to finish for each strategy. Refer to page 9 of the STARS Plus Teacher Book for a suggested lesson pacing chart and pages 12–23 for a sample lesson plan.

- 4. Benchmark/Progress monitoring:** Throughout the year, administer the five Benchmark tests in the CARS Plus Student book to monitor student progress. Each Benchmark test requires between 45–60 minutes to complete, correct and discuss. Benchmark tests do not need to be completed consecutively. They should be issued when you deem suitable, to identify students who are unable to grasp the strategy being taught. Use the Focus of Reading series to further assist these students.

5. Assess Mastery with CARS Plus Post Tests

- Upon completion of the STARS Plus lessons and Final Review, use the CARS Plus Student Book to administer the 5 Post Tests in the same way you administered the 5 Pretests.
- Have students complete Self-Assessment 2 and hand it to you with their answer sheet. Use these results to complete your choice of Teacher Assessment 1–3 (for student discussion/goal setting or data recording) in the CARS Plus Teacher Book, or if using CARS & STARS Online: Assessment & Reports, enter the data directly into the student test data page. Direct students to their Student Progress Chart so they can see an overview of their progress from Pretests to Benchmarks to Post Tests.

Further Resources and Extending the Program

CARS & STARS Online: Assessment and Reports

CARS & STARS Online is an online portal that produces detailed reports of student and class progress using the CARS Plus Pretest, Benchmarks and Post Test.

How to Use

On completion of the 5 CARS Pretests, enter student results into the software, giving immediate access to both student and class reports, depicting strengths and weaknesses by strategy. Enter student data on completion of the 5 Benchmarks and again upon completion of the 5 Post Tests. You are able to login at any time and print reports from the Pretest, Benchmarks or Post Test for an individual student or a class.

CARS & STARS Online software is subscription-based and available for purchase by class or by school. Student data is transferable, providing teachers with access to student history and data from the previous year(s).

For more information on CARS & STARS Online visit www.hb-digital.com.au

CARS & STARS Plus Posters

CARS & STARS Plus posters are a great addition to any classroom. These colourful, glossy posters highlight the 12 main reading strategies featured in CARS & STARS Plus and offer brief, clear summaries of each strategy along with hints on how to recognise each strategy, serving as a perfect quick reference guide for teachers and students.

The 12 main reading strategies in CARS & STARS are:

1. Finding the Main Idea
2. Recalling Facts and Details
3. Understanding Sequence
4. Recognising Cause and Effect
5. Comparing and Contrasting
6. Making Predictions
7. Finding Word Meaning in Context
8. Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences
9. Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion
10. Identifying Author's Purpose
11. Interpreting Figurative Language
12. Summarising

Visit www.hbe.com.au/series-cars-and-stars/posters.html to purchase.

Further Differentiation: Extensions and FOCUS Series

If Benchmarks or section reviews indicate your students are excelling, let them work through the Extensions in Reading resource, providing additional practice and opportunities to increase depth of understanding. If your students are struggling with a strategy, allow them to work through Focus on Reading, (one book for each level) focusing on a particular strategy at a time.

Visit www.hbe.com.au/series-cars-and-stars/extensions.html or www.hbe.com.au/series-cars-and-stars/focus-on-reading.html for more information.

Previous Version of CARS & STARS

The previous versions of CARS, STARS & CARS II cannot be used with the new Plus series. The Plus series includes new stories as well as updated versions of stories in the previous editions, making them a mismatch instructionally.

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