

# SUPPORTING RESEARCH



STARS™ Series



## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE READING SUCCESS

- PROVIDES INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR 12 READING STRATEGIES
- USES A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO ACHIEVE READING SUCCESS
- PREPARES STUDENTS FOR ASSESSMENT IN READING COMPREHENSION





# STARS™ Series

*Strategies to Achieve Reading Success*

A Research-based Reading Program

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Republished in Australia by



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Code: HBC084  
1109

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Printed in Australia



## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

**Strategies to Achieve Reading Success (STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series)** is the instructional portion of a reading program that spans from diagnosis to assessment. The objectives of the **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series** are to provide targeted instruction and practice to students learning key reading strategies and to broaden student proficiency in error analysis. The **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series** provides a balanced learning experience with targeted instruction of reading strategies along with the goal of achieving reading comprehension. Students read and cull relevant information from reading passages and graphic aids. This information is then used to respond to questions based on the lesson's strategy and theme. Books B–H cover 12 strategies. Book A covers 8 strategies. Through the **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series**, students build on their capacity to analyze, reason, and communicate ideas effectively by answering questions in a variety of contexts and situations. The organizational design of the **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series** is grounded in several areas of research and English-language instruction.

## STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series

### Scaffolded Instruction

Modeled

Guided

Independent

*Scaffolded instruction is a hallmark of effective reading-comprehension 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, p. 27).*

## HOW IS STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE READING SUCCESS ORGANISED?

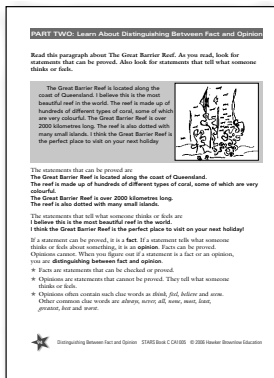
Each book in the **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series** has five parts to each strategy lesson. Each part of a lesson is organized by scaffolded instructional strategies. Scaffolded instruction is the organizational framework of the program.

Scaffolded instruction benefits all types of students, including English-language learners (ELL). “Scaffolded instruction optimizes student learning by providing a supportive environment while facilitating student independence” (ERIC Document, 2002). The **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series** guides students through the learning process from prior-knowledge activation, modeled/direct instruction with peer learning, text-guided instruction, and finally to independent work.

### **PART ONE: Think About the Strategy**

#### Prior Knowledge Activation

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). Through the **STARST<sup>TM</sup> Series**, students learn to bring their prior knowledge to the forefront of their conscious mind. Part One: Think About the Strategy begins by cueing students to reflect upon their already-established



*Part Two: Learn About section Modeled/Direct Instruction*



*Students of all abilities benefit from direct communication and interaction with peers.*

**Work with a Partner**  
 Students are paired with a partner to discuss the activity at the bottom of the page. Student pairs take turns talking about some of the words they have used or heard that have a meaning different from their usual meaning. Students share as many examples of figurative language as they can think of. When students have finished the activity, have student pairs volunteer to share their examples with the class. You may choose to use students' examples to create sentences that would be a literal expression of the same thought and repeating the figurative expression students shared. Discuss which sentence is more interesting or helps to create a picture in the listener's mind.

**How Do You Understand Figurative Language? Page 117**  
 Students use their prior knowledge base to practice the strategy.

*Teachers receive instructional guidance for the Work with a Partner portion of each lesson.*

content knowledge. Students then demonstrate the mastery of their knowledge by answering several open-ended questions. "Several studies of second-language speakers and reading comprehension indicate that prior and existing cultural experiences are extremely important in comprehending text" (Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979). Students reinforce their prior-knowledge activation by discussing their responses with a peer.

**PART TWO: Learning About the Strategy Modeled/Direct Instruction**

Students' exposure to the lesson's reading strategy continues with Part Two: Learn About the Strategy. Part Two begins with an instructional page. Here the reading strategy is modeled and directly instructed. "In direct instruction, the teacher explicitly explains, defines, informs, leads, and models...and it works well" (Lehr & Osborn, 1994, p. 260). Students are asked to read and think about the information surrounding the reading strategy. This direct instruction is followed by the lesson's learning objectives, which reinforce the key information about each reading strategy. Students then apply their newfound knowledge to two selected-response problems. Once again students interact with a peer to discuss their responses and to determine how they arrived at their responses.

**Peer Learning**

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** aids 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 exercise. 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). This scaffolded learning experience prepares students for the upcoming independent work they will encounter in the rest of the strategy lesson.

*"Increase Interaction . . . [A] number of strategies have been developed that increase students' opportunities to use their language skills in direct communication. These include cooperative learning, study buddies, project-based learning, and one-to-one teacher/student interactions" (Reed & Railsback, 2003, p. 21).*

**PART THREE: Check Your Understanding**

Remember: Facts can be proved, but opinions cannot be proved.

- To find out if a statement is a fact, ask yourself, "Can the statement be proved?"
- To find out if a statement is an opinion, ask yourself, "Does this statement tell other someone thinks or feels?"
- Look for clue words that signal an opinion, such as think, feel, believe, or hope.

Read the student choices for each question. Read why each answer choice is correct or not correct.

3. Which of these statements tells what someone thinks or feels?

- My name is Isaac and I am from Ghana.
- The answer is not correct because this statement is a fact. It can be proved that this is the boy's name and country.
- In Ghana, many people fish in Lake Volta.
- The answer is not correct because this statement is a fact. It can be proved by watching or observing the lake, that many people fish there.
- But my father fishes in the Atlantic Ocean.
- The answer is not correct because this statement is a fact. It can be proved by watching or observing Jerry's father, that they fishes in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Fish is the most delicious food!
- The answer is correct because it tells how Jerry feels about the taste of fish. This statement cannot be proved.

4. Which of these statements can be proved?

- I am the happiest boy in Ghana.
- The answer is not correct because it cannot be proved that Isaac is the happiest boy in Ghana. What likely other boys are so happy, or happy, than he is not certain.
- It is much better to have a boat with a motor.
- The answer is not correct because it cannot be proved. The statement tells how Isaac felt about which kind of boat is better. But likely, other people have different ideas about what kind of boat is better.
- Lake Volta is a very large lake in the eastern part of Ghana.
- The answer is correct because it can be proved. The size of the lake is a fact.
- I think you do not know very much about Ghana.
- The answer is not correct because it cannot be proved. Isaac has to know how much the reader of the story knows about Ghana. The clue word think signals that this statement is an opinion, not a fact.

©2008 Hawker Brownlow Education Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

*Text-guided instruction is provided for each strategy.*

*Researchers from the American Educational Research Association recommend that ELL students receive lots of practice reading to increase word recognition and comprehension.*

**PART FIVE: Prepare for a Test**

- A test question about distinguishing between fact and opinion may ask how to identify which of the statements is fact or an opinion.
- To recognize a fact, read each answer choice and ask yourself, "Can this statement be proved?" If you think it can be proved, it is a fact.
- To recognize an opinion, read each answer choice and ask yourself, "Does this statement tell other someone thinks or feels?" If you think it is an opinion, you can also look at the answer choices for clue words that signal an opinion.

Read this editorial that appeared in a student newspaper. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 15 and 16.

**Students Need Lunchtime Break**

Sometimes you see about the school lunchroom area. For weeks, many students have been misbehaving at lunch. As a result, all students have lost their lunchtime break. It's not just the students who behave well are also getting punished. Students need a break. We can't let our classroom mess of the day. We need to go outside and have some time to be free from our studies. We do have an outdoor area near the library. But this is not enough. From one opinion that makes should not be misbehaving at lunch. But punishing all students is not the answer. The students who are causing the problem will accept responsibility when they are punished separately. Students and teachers must work together to solve this problem.

**Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion**

15. Which of these is a fact from the article?

- Students need a break.
- But punishing all students is not the answer.
- All students have lost their lunchtime break.
- Something must be done about the school lunchroom area.

**Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion**

16. Which of these tells what someone thinks or feels?

- For weeks, many students have been misbehaving at lunch.
- It's not fair that students who behave well are also getting punished.
- We are in our classroom most of the day.
- We do have a nice minute recess in the morning.

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*Independent Practice*

**PART THREE: Check Your Understanding**  
**Text-guided Instruction**

In this guided-practice section, students assimilate new learning by applying guided practice to a new reading selection. Students become more responsible for their learning. Students work independently with the aid of text-guided instruction. They begin by reviewing the lesson's learning objectives. Students then experience text-guided instruction as they respond to the reading-strategy questions that follow the reading selection. This guided practice provides experience with the strategy and gives students a feeling of control over the strategy before they work with a group or independently. As an offshoot of the think-aloud reading strategy, guided practice also makes explicit the reasoning for each answer choice.

**PART FOUR: Learn More About the Strategy**  
**Strategy Extension**

This section 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 application by answering four additional selected-response questions. Students continue the lesson by reading a new related selection and applying the newly learned reading strategy to four more questions.

**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 "Reported patterns include that 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).

When students reach Part Five: Prepare for a Test, they work independently much as they do in a testing situation. 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

<p><b>Finding Main Idea</b></p> <p>13. The best title for the article is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ "1492: An Important Year"</li> <li>Ⓑ "The Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam"</li> <li>Ⓒ "The Discovery of Christopher Columbus"</li> <li>Ⓓ "How Jewish People Came to the United States"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recognizing Cause and Effect</b></p> <p>16. The Jews did not go to Holland because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ they recently discovered diamonds.</li> <li>Ⓑ there was a storm in the Caribbean Sea.</li> <li>Ⓒ the king and queen would not let them.</li> <li>Ⓓ they thought New Amsterdam would be a better place to live.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Recalling Facts and Details</b></p> <p>14. When a storm forced them to stop in Jamaica, the Jews had been sailing to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Spain.</li> <li>Ⓑ Portugal.</li> <li>Ⓒ Brazil.</li> <li>Ⓓ Holland.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comparing and Contrasting</b></p> <p>17. How were Brazil and Spain alike?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Both countries have the same time.</li> <li>Ⓑ The people of both countries spoke the same language.</li> <li>Ⓒ Both countries could Jewish people to leave.</li> <li>Ⓓ Both countries are ruled by kings and queens.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Understanding Sequence</b></p> <p>15. These Jews show some things that happened in the article.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>They sailed to Jamaica.</td> <td>They sailed to Brazil.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>They sailed to Spain.</td> <td>They sailed to Holland.</td> </tr> </table> <p>What happens in the correct order?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ Jewish passengers arrive in New Amsterdam.</li> <li>Ⓑ The king and queen pass a new law for Brazil.</li> <li>Ⓒ Some Jews leave Portugal for Brazil.</li> <li>Ⓓ Columbus sailed across the Atlantic.</li> </ul>	They sailed to Jamaica.	They sailed to Brazil.	They sailed to Spain.	They sailed to Holland.	<p><b>Making Predictions</b></p> <p>18. What probably happened to the Jewish people who came to New Amsterdam?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ⓐ They soon left to return to Brazil.</li> <li>Ⓑ A new law was passed that forced them to leave.</li> <li>Ⓒ They stayed and were joined by other Jewish families.</li> <li>Ⓓ They returned to Spain after the king and queen no longer ruled.</li> </ul>
They sailed to Jamaica.	They sailed to Brazil.				
They sailed to Spain.	They sailed to Holland.				

*The Final Review offers additional independent practice, along with practice in test-taking.*

*The National Reading Panel concluded that teacher education not only improves instructional methods, but "this improvement leads directly to higher achievement on the part of their students" (NICHD, 2000, p. 5-14).*

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 and in the Final Review portion of the text.

**Summary of the Five Parts**

The **STARS™ Series** offers an effective learning experience that provides comprehensive content coverage coupled with test-preparation practice. Many other researchers have documented the above teaching strategies as effective. Researchers also list these principles: cueing prior knowledge, scaffolded instruction, modeled and guided practice, and immediate feedback as effective methods. Along with these principles, current research supports the **STARS™ Series** as an effective instructional tool.

**HOW DOES STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE READING SUCCESS HELP TEACHERS PREPARE TO TEACH THE READING STRATEGIES?**

"A prepared teacher knows what to teach, how to teach and has command of the subject matter being taught" (U. S. Department of Education, 2005). **Strategies to Achieve Reading Success** helps teachers to be well-prepared through several features that offer reading strategy support in the teacher guide.

**UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIES**

- Finding Main Idea**  
The main idea of a reading passage is a statement that tells what the passage is mostly about. Questions about main idea might ask you to find what a passage is mostly about or to find the main idea. Questions might also ask you to choose the best title for a passage. When answering a question about main idea, all you need to know is the main idea of the passage. There are three types of main ideas.
- Recalling Facts and Details**  
Facts and details are specific information that is found in a reading passage. Questions about facts and details might ask you to find a fact or detail in a reading passage or to find the answer.
- Understanding Sequence**  
Sometimes a passage is told in order or sequence. Different things happen at one time, and then another thing happens. Questions about sequence often contain key words such as first, then, after, and before.
- Recognizing Cause and Effect**  
A cause is something that happens. An effect is something that happens because of the cause. Read the sentence: "I forgot to set my alarm clock, so I was late for school." The effect of forgetting to set the alarm clock is being late for school. Questions about cause and effect usually begin with the words why, what happened or because.
- Comparing and Contrasting**  
A comparison is when you compare two things or ideas or different. This is often done by using words such as like, similar, and alike. Questions about comparing often contain key words such as like, similar, and alike.
- Making Predictions**  
A prediction is something you think will happen in the future. Questions about predictions often ask you to predict what will happen next. You will not find the answer to these questions in the passage. But there are clues you can use from the passage to make a good guess about what might happen next.

- Finding Word Meaning in Context**  
A word's meaning can change when it is used in a different context. The meaning of a word in a reading passage is often different from its meaning in a dictionary. Questions about word meaning often ask you to find the meaning of a word in a reading passage. You can use the context clues in the passage to find the meaning of a word. There are three types of context clues: definition, synonym, and antonym.
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences**  
When you read, your mind often fills in with things you know. The author doesn't always tell you everything. For example, you might read that a character is smiling. You know that a smile is a happy expression. You can draw a conclusion by the author's use of the word "smiling" that the character is happy. You can make an inference by the author's use of the word "smiling" that the character is happy. Questions about drawing conclusions often contain key words such as infer, conclude, and guess.
- Understanding Between Fact and Opinion**  
A fact is something that is true and can be proved. An opinion is a statement that someone believes is true but cannot be proved. Questions about fact and opinion often contain key words such as fact, opinion, and prove.
- Identifying Author's Purpose**  
Questions about author's purpose ask you why the author wrote the passage. Most authors write for one of three reasons: to provide (make someone) know something, to give information, or to persuade (make someone) do something. You can use the clues in the passage to find the author's purpose. You can remember these three reasons by remembering F.I.C. – F for facts, I for information, and C for convince.
- Interpreting Figurative Language**  
Figurative language is when you use words in a way that is different from their usual meaning. For example, someone who has had a soccer game might say "I killed my team." This is an example of figurative language. You would not use the word "kill" to mean "I killed my team." Questions about figurative language often contain key words such as metaphor, simile, and personification.
- Understanding Between Real and Made-believe**  
Some things are real and some things are made-believe. Questions about real and made-believe often ask you to find things that could happen or things that could not happen. These questions often contain the key words could and might happen or could not happen.

- 1. Understanding the Strategies** – Background information of each reading strategy and its application are discussed.
- 2. Suggestions for Students Having Difficulty** – Teachers receive instructional support for students who are having difficulty mastering the reading strategies. Learning Objectives is a tool that is designed to provide supplemental information about the reading strategies.
- 3. Annotated Suggested Lesson Plan** – Teachers are provided with possible procedures and responses for each lesson.


## HOW DO THE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES SUPPORT LEARNERS, INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

### IS ELL INSTRUCTION RELEVANT TO YOUR CLASSROOM?

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 1 in 12 students receive special assistance to learn English.
- The population of English-language learners has grown over 86% since 1992, while general K-12 enrollment has grown only 11%.

**PART TWO: Learn About Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences**

Read this story about a girl named Anna. As you read, try to figure out why the crowd is cheering at the end of the story.



Today was the day of the big gymnastics competition. It was Anna's turn on the balance beam. For months, Anna had been practicing her routine. Her practice was one thing. There were hundreds of people here. Anna wanted her family sitting in the stands. They gave her an encouraging wave. Anna got on the balance beam. Everything was going so well - her split, her forward roll and her cartwheel. Near the last flip Anna could hear the crowd cheer. The hours of practice had been worth it.

This story does not tell you why the crowd was cheering. It does, however, give you details that help you figure out why this happened.

**Everything was going so well.**

**The hours of practice had been worth it.**

These details help you figure out the girl's back flip was successful. Her routine started well. When she was done, she felt that the practice had been worth it. You probably know from your own experiences that by practicing something, you learn to do it better. You probably also know that people cheer when something goes well.


Information is not always clearly stated in a reading passage. You must figure out some information on your own. Whenever you figure out something that is not told in a reading passage, you are **drawing a conclusion** or **making an inference**.

- Pay attention to the details in a reading passage. You can use these details to figure out information that is not clearly stated.
- Use the details from the reading passage and what you know from your own life to draw a conclusion or to make an inference.

★ Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences ©2005 Benchmark Education Company, Inc.

*Students receive explicit reading strategy instructions through a definition, a reading model, and stated learning objectives for the reading strategy.*

The Great Barrier Reef is located along the coast of Queensland. I believe this is the most beautiful reef in the world. The reef is made up of hundreds of different types of coral, some of which are very colorful. The Great Barrier Reef is over 2000 kilometers long. The reef is also dotted with many small islands. I think the Great Barrier Reef is the perfect place to visit on your next holiday.



*Students encounter brief, well-organized texts when being introduced to a new strategy.*

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 (Grigg, Daane, Jin, & Campbell, 2003), which excludes children with the lowest levels of English proficiency from testing, only 44% of Latino fourth graders scored at or above the 'basic' level, in comparison to 75% of Anglo students. Only 15% of Latino fourth graders scored at 'proficient' or better compared to 41% of Anglos" (Slavin & Cheung, 2003, p. 1).

While ELL students 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, p. 30).

The **STARS™ Series** is a program that is comprehensive in its use of effective learning and teaching strategies for on-level and struggling readers: explicit instruction, graphic organizers, and theme-based instruction.

### Explicit Instruction

Students receive explicit reading-strategy instructions through a definition, a reading model, and stated learning objectives for the reading strategy.

The **STARS™ Series** uses explicit instruction in the teaching of the reading strategies. The explicit instruction occurs in 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).

"The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students (modeling and careful scaffolding is key)" (Abadiano & Turner, 2003, p. 76). Through Part Two: Learn About the Strategy, students receive explicit instruction consisting of a definition, a short example passage, and learning objectives for the reading strategy.

**How Do You Find Sequence?**  
You can find the order in which things happen in a story by thinking about the beginning, the middle and the ending. You can also look for words that tell about sequence. Some of these words are *first, next and then*. Read the passage below.

Yesterday, Mark had a fire drill at school. The bell rang and all of the students jumped out of their seats. Then their teacher told them to form a line. Next, they all walked outside.

Think about the order in which things happen in the story. Let's find the sequence. Look at the chart below.

Mark had a fire drill at school.

The bell rang and all of the students jumped out of their seats.

Their teacher told them to form a line.

They all walked outside.

The chart tells the order in which things happen in the story.

You just found sequence!

STAR5 Book C COVER © 2009 Hawker Brownlow Education Understanding Sequence

*The STARS™ Series engages students with the text through graphic organizers that help students organize the ideas and information of a text.*

**How Do You Find Author's Purpose?**  
Every reading passage is written for a reason. When you read, ask yourself, "What does the author want me to know?" Your answer will help you figure out the author's purpose. Read the passage below. See if you can figure out the author's purpose.

I named my pet hamster Peach because she is orange and white. Peach has black eyes that look like tiny beads. Sometimes she keeps food in her cheeks. This makes her look full out. Peach looks happy with her huge cheeks and small body.

Think about what the author wants you to know. Let's find the author's purpose. First, let's narrow down the choices in the chart below. Check 'yes' or 'no' for each choice. You can check 'yes' only once.

What does the passage do?	Yes	No	If 'yes', when is it to answer?
Does the passage mostly try to make you laugh or teach an important lesson?			the author's purpose is to entertain.
Does the passage mostly tell how to do or make something?			the author's purpose is to explain.
Does the passage mostly try to get you to do or buy something?			the author's purpose is to persuade.
Does the passage mostly give details about a particular person, place or thing?			the author's purpose is to describe.

\* Write the choice that has a check mark next to 'yes'.

You just found the author's purpose!

STAR5 Book C COVER © 2009 Hawker Brownlow Education Identifying Author's Purpose

*Identifying Author's Purpose Chart*

Additionally, the **STARS™ Series** is a perfect vehicle for readers because it does not overwhelm students with the presentation of information. ". . . [B]rief, well-organized, tightly written texts are used to introduce the strategy, because readers are more capable of using the strategy initially with 'small segments of well-organized text that contain explicit ideas and relations' " (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1996, p. 615). In Part Two: Learn About the Strategy, students initially experience the reading strategy in a short paragraph, usually three to seven sentences long. The learning objectives listed at the end of the page are a point of reference for students to use while attending to lessons. The learning objectives are consistently placed in each book of the series. Struggling or novice readers usually skip or gloss over text features, which are valuable comprehension tools. With repeated exposure and external prompting by the teacher, students learn to pay attention to the text feature.

**Graphic Organizers**

"Graphic organizers are visual displays that help learners comprehend and retain textually important information. 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 encountered in the text are related, and where they can find specific information to support more important ideas" (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 399). The **STARS™ Series** uses graphic organizers in Part One: Think About the Strategy as a visual aid to teach the reading strategy. Each lesson's graphic organizer explicitly illustrates the organizational structure of the reading selection in order to show how a text's ideas are related. This instructional approach benefits ELL students because the graphic organizers provide a method of accessing the reading selection. Graphic organizers present a concrete, visual representation of the reading selection. Gray and Fleischman (2004) recommend engaging ELL students through the following suggestion: "Use visual aids. Present classroom content and information whenever possible in a way that engages students—by using graphic organizers, tables, charts, outlines, and graphs, for example. Encourage students to use these tools to present information" (p. 85). In the STARS™ Series, students become engaged by completing the partially filled-in graphic organizers. This scaffolded activity provides the additional support ELL students may need in order to comprehend a reading selection.

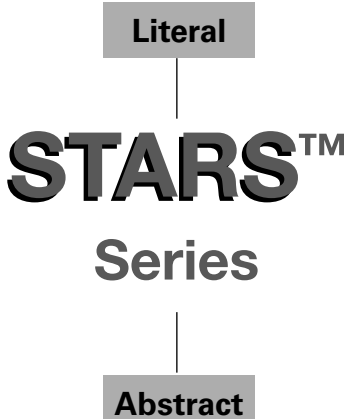


Read this article about the first space-shuttle mission. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 15 and 16.

Read this folktale from Africa. Then answer questions about the folktale. Choose the best answer for Numbers 15 and 16.

Read this article about travel in a land full of snow and ice. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 15 and 16.

*Science, social studies, and literary themes are carried throughout each student book.*



### Theme-based Instruction

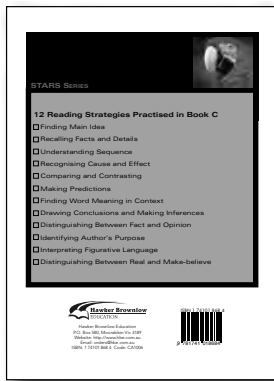
Theme-based instruction is particularly effective in the primary grades and for ELL students. Researchers Bergeron, Wermuth, Rhodes, and Rudenga (1996) summarized that “Proponents contend that theme-based, integrated learning experiences engage young children in meaningful and functional literacy events (Neuman & Roskos, 1993), focus on real-life experiences by providing socially interactive settings (Strickland & Morrow, 1990) and provide an organizational framework for language acquisition (Pike, Compain, & Mumper, 1994)” (p. 142). The STARSTM Series has the potential for theme-based instruction because of the varied social studies, science, and literary themes. Because of these themes, students will experience the effectiveness of each reading strategy in a variety of settings and will see the usefulness of each strategy beyond the classroom experience.

### WHY DOES STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE READING SUCCESS CONCENTRATE ON THESE 12 READING STRATEGIES?

The **STARSTM Series** provides practice with these 12 reading strategies because these are the core reading tools students need in order to make sense of what they are reading.

“ . . . [M]any students have demonstrated difficulties with skills that are central to reading comprehension (i.e., identifying main topics, significant supporting information, and relations between a text’s main topics)” (Seidenberg, 1989). The reading skills of Finding Main Idea, Recalling Facts and Details, Understanding Sequence, Recognizing Cause and Effect, Comparing and Contrasting, Making Predictions, Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences, Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion, and Identifying Author’s Purpose, may be difficult for some students to master because the thinking processes involved in applying the strategies are abstract in nature. These reading skills represent the unseen text structure of a reading passage. “When students are shown how to see relationships among concepts and bits of essential information, they are in a better position to respond to meaning and to distinguish important from less important ideas” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 393). The **STARSTM Series** instructs and reinforces the text structures that students encounter in and outside of school.

The reading strategies Finding Word Meaning in Context, Interpreting Figurative Language, and Summarizing are direct tools readers can actively use to comprehend reading selections. These reading strategies are needed because of the difficulty students have with different styles of language. The National



*The STARS™ Series offers comprehensive coverage of 12 reading strategies in books B–H. Book A covers 8 strategies.*

Reading Panel, 2000, recommends that “In much the same way that multiple exposures are important, the context in which a word is learned is critical” (4-25). In Palmer and Brooks, 2004, “[M]any readers struggle to interpret figurative language when it is encountered in text. This inability to interpret figurative language leads to a breakdown in text comprehension, which in turn can frustrate readers and discourage them from continuing the reading task, and can cause a delay in later language development and literacy attainment (Nippold, Hegel, Uhden, & Bustamante, 1998).” Summarizing is a powerful reading strategy because it forces students to think about and recall important information in a reading selection and to express it in a clear, concise manner. Foos (1995) presents a foundational statement as to why summarizing is an effective reading strategy: “Several researchers have found that students who are asked to summarize text while studying for a recall test perform better than students who use other study techniques” (p. 89). The **STARS™ Series** is a cohesive instructional program that offers students multiple opportunities to learn and practice 12 major reading strategies.

## SUMMARY

The **STARS™ Series** is an instructional program that is solidly grounded in areas of important 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. With the **STARS™ Series**, 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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