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# RESEARCH SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the research upon which *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II* is based.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

*Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II (CARS Series II)* is the assessment portion of a reading program that spans from diagnosis to assessment. This assessment tool identifies reading strategies that are understood, as well as those that need further study and reinforcement. The organisational design of the *CARS Series II* is grounded in several areas of research: reading comprehension, metacognition and self-assessment, and effectiveness of classroom assessment.

### The *CARS Series II* Concentrates on Twelve Reading Strategies

The *CARS Series II* provides practice with twelve reading strategies that 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, Recognising Cause and Effect, Comparing and Contrasting, Making Predictions, Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences, Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion, Distinguishing Between Real and Make-believe (Books B–C) 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. The reading strategies Finding Word Meaning in Context, Interpreting Figurative Language and Summarising (Books D–H) are direct tools readers can actively use to comprehend reading selections. Book A probes eight reading strategies. These reading strategies are essential because of the difficulty students experience with different styles of language. With *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II*, teachers gain a clear road map of reading instruction for each student.

### Metacognition and Self-assessment

Metacognitive training in reading is a very effective instructional technique. ‘Good readers often will reflect on what they have just read, perhaps evaluating the credibility of the material. . . . Monitoring also occurs at the conclusion of a reading. Thus, good readers can be aware of whether their understanding of the text is consistent with all the ideas expressed in it’ (Pressley, 2002, p. 297). The *CARS Series II* employs metacognitive questioning in the form of student self-assessment activities. The self-questioning in each student assessment brings to the forefront the student’s knowledge about a concept or strategy. They are sorting, organising and consolidating their thoughts about their reading performance through self-evaluation and monitoring.

### Effectiveness of Classroom Assessment

*Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II* is an assessment tool that helps teachers focus their reading instruction and helps students recognise the reading strategies that need improvement. Trimble, Gay and Mathews (2005) summarise current findings about the benefits of using assessments to guide instruction. ‘Black and William (1998) and Guskey (2003) have documented the use of classroom assessments to improve instruction. Both *Turning Points 2000* (Jackson & Davis, 2000) and the Southern Regional Education Board (2001) recommend using data from ongoing assessments and access to more data is now well defined’ (p. 26). *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II* offers teachers a flexible schedule in which to administer the assessments and record students’ performances. ‘In a standards-based classroom, assessment is an integral part of instruction and is aligned with the curriculum. The teacher collects evidence of the students’ knowledge, their ability to use that knowledge, and their disposition toward learning. Student performance is monitored to promote learning, to adjust instruction, and to report progress’ (Midgett, 2001).

# UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIES

- **Finding Main Idea**

The main idea of a reading passage is a sentence that tells what the passage is mostly about. Questions about main idea might ask you to find what a passage is *mostly about* or *mainly about*. The questions might also ask you to choose the best title for a passage. When answering a question about main idea, ask yourself, *What is the passage mostly about?* Then choose your answer.

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- **Recalling Facts and Details**

Every reading passage contains facts and details. The facts and details tell more about the main idea. Questions about facts and details ask you about something that was stated in the passage. To answer a question about a fact or detail, look back to the passage to find the answer.

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- **Understanding Sequence**

Sometimes, a passage is told in order, or sequence. Different things happen at the beginning, middle and ending of a passage. Questions about sequence ask you to remember and put events or details in order. Questions about sequence often contain key words such as *first, then, last, after* or *before*.

# LESSON 1

Read this article that tells about a popular form of entertainment. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 12.

## The Greatest Show on Earth

The circus has pleased audiences all over the world for over 2000 years. When most people think of the circus, images of clowns, popcorn and elephants come to mind. But the first circuses were very different from those of today.

The idea for the circus began in Europe and Asia. Many people enjoyed parties, games and animal hunts. They decided to combine these fun events into one. It is believed that the first such event was called the Circus Maximus.

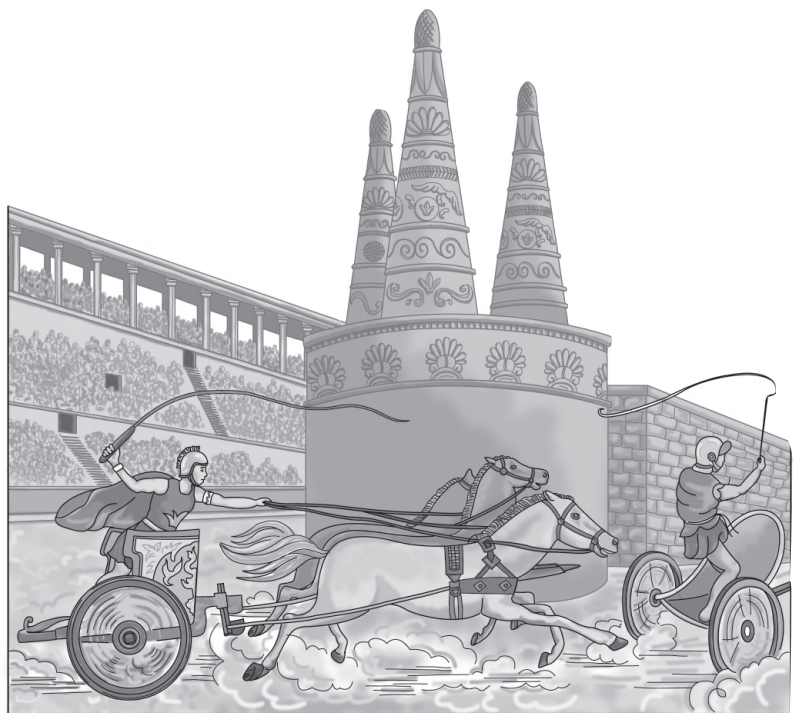
The Circus Maximus was actually the name of a building in Rome. People gathered there to be entertained. The building was shaped like a circle, had no roof, and could seat 200,000 people. The name Circus Maximus means 'large circle'.

Chariot races were the most popular event at the Circus Maximus. The chariots were open carts with two wheels. Chariots were drawn by horses. One or two riders stood in the cart and guided the horses. Between races, acrobats, horse riders and tightrope walkers performed for the crowd.

The Circus Maximus remained popular for many years. In time, however, people became bored with the circus.

Changes were then made to keep the crowds interested. Many events were replaced with new, exciting ones. Now the circus included animal acts and performers who could do tricks and stunts.

Hundreds of years later in England, Philip Astley created an indoor horse show. People came from all over England to see Astley's horses perform tricks. Astley soon decided that he needed more acts in his show. So he added tumblers, a clown and performers who did rope acts. Astley's circus quickly became popular. His circus travelled to other countries, including France and Russia.



# TEACHER ASSESSMENT 1

Complete this page after the student has completed Lessons 1–5.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assessing the Strategies

Students answer a question about each strategy once in each lesson, or a total of five times. Use the student's completed Answer Form to fill in the chart below. First, record the total number of correct responses for each strategy. Then record the percentage of correct responses for each strategy.

Strategy		Number of Correct Responses	Per cent Correct
Finding Main Idea	(MI)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Recalling Facts and Details	(FD)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Understanding Sequence	(US)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Recognising Cause and Effect	(CE)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Comparing and Contrasting	(CC)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Making Predictions	(MP)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Finding Word Meaning in Context	(WM)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences	(CI)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion	(FO)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Identifying Author's Purpose	(AP)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Interpreting Figurative Language	(FL)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Summarising	(SM)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %

# CLASS PERFORMANCE CHART

## Class Performance Chart

Next to each student's name, record the number of correct responses (out of 5) for each strategy. Then total the responses to determine the overall number of correct responses (out of 60) for each student.

### Reading Strategies

Student	MI	FD	US	CE	CC	MP	WM	CI	FO	AP	FL	SM	Total

**Comprehensive Assessment  
of Reading Strategies II, Book F  
Answer Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Key**

MI = Finding Main Idea  
FD = Recalling Facts and Details  
US = Understanding Sequence  
CE = Recognising Cause and Effect  
CC = Comparing and Contrasting  
MP = Making Predictions  
WM = Finding Word Meaning  
in Context  
CI = Drawing Conclusions and  
Making Inferences  
FO = Distinguishing Between Fact  
and Opinion  
AP = Identifying Author's Purpose  
FL = Interpreting Figurative  
Language  
SM = Summarising

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 1**

MI 1. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FD 2. (A) (B) (C) ●  
US 3. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CE 4. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CC 5. ● (B) (C) (D)  
MP 6. (A) (B) (C) ●  
WM 7. ● (B) (C) (D)  
CI 8. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FO 9. (A) ● (C) (D)  
AP 10. (A) (B) ● (D)  
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)  
SM 12. (A) ● (C) (D)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 3**

MI 1. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FD 2. (A) (B) ● (D)  
US 3. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CE 4. (A) (B) (C) ●  
CC 5. (A) (B) ● (D)  
MP 6. (A) (B) ● (D)  
WM 7. ● (B) (C) (D)  
CI 8. (A) (B) ● (D)  
FO 9. (A) ● (C) (D)  
AP 10. (A) (B) (C) ●  
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)  
SM 12. ● (B) (C) (D)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 2**

MI 1. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FD 2. (A) (B) ● (D)  
US 3. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CE 4. (A) (B) (C) ●  
CC 5. (A) (B) ● (D)  
MP 6. (A) (B) ● (D)  
WM 7. ● (B) (C) (D)  
CI 8. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FO 9. (A) ● (C) (D)  
AP 10. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)  
SM 12. ● (B) (C) (D)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 4**

MI 1. ● (B) (C) (D)  
FD 2. (A) (B) (C) ●  
US 3. (A) (B) ● (D)  
CE 4. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CC 5. (A) ● (C) (D)  
MP 6. (A) (B) ● (D)  
WM 7. (A) (B) ● (D)  
CI 8. (A) (B) (C) ●  
FO 9. ● (B) (C) (D)  
AP 10. (A) (B) ● (D)  
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)  
SM 12. (A) (B) ● (D)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 5**

MI 1. ● (B) (C) (D)  
FD 2. (A) ● (C) (D)  
US 3. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CE 4. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CC 5. (A) (B) ● (D)  
MP 6. ● (B) (C) (D)  
WM 7. (A) ● (C) (D)  
CI 8. (A) (B) ● (D)  
FO 9. (A) (B) ● (D)  
AP 10. (A) (B) (C) ●  
FL 11. (A) ● (C) (D)  
SM 12. (A) (B) ● (D)