

TEACHER GUIDE **F**

# FOCUS **on**

UNDERSTANDING  
SEQUENCE



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# INTRODUCTION

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## What is the **FOCUS** series?

*FOCUS* is a reading-strategy practice series. Each student book in the series provides brief instruction and concentrated practice for students in one targeted Reading Strategy. *FOCUS* also allows students the opportunity for self-assessment of their performance. It allows teachers the opportunity to identify and assess a student's level of mastery.

### 6 Reading Strategies featured in the *FOCUS* series:

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

The *FOCUS* series spans 8 reading levels (1.0–8.9). The reading passages in each book are designed so that the book can be used by all students performing at that reading level. The reading passages in each book progress from low to high along that reading level range.

Book	Reading Level
Book A	1.0–1.9
Book B	2.0–2.9
Book C	3.0–3.9
Book D	4.0–4.9
Book E	5.0–5.9
Book F	6.0–6.9
Book G	7.0–7.9
Book H	8.0–8.9

## What is Understanding Sequence, the Reading Strategy featured in this *FOCUS* book?

Sequence is the order in which things happen or the order in which things are done. Something happens first, then something else happens, then something else, and so on. Clue words such as *first, next, then, last, finally, before* and *after* may tell the order in which things happen. Words that indicate time may also tell the sequence. Such words can tell the time of day, the day of the week, the month, the year, the season, and so on. Some time words are *yesterday, noon, at sunrise, Friday, December, 1997, last night, winter* and *morning*. Numbers (1, 2, 3, and so on) may also indicate sequence, especially in a set of directions, such as game rules or a recipe.

## What is in each student book?

There are 48 student books in the *FOCUS* series. There is one student book for each of the 6 Reading Strategies, at each of the 8 reading levels. Each student book contains:

- *To the Student*  
This introduces the program and should be read and discussed with students to make sure they understand what they are to do in the book.
- *Table of Contents*
- *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 this teacher guide.
- *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.
- *20 Lessons (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.

- *Tracking Chart*  
Students use this chart for noting their completion of and performance in each lesson.
- *Self-Assessments*  
These five forms allow students the opportunity for self-assessment of their performance.
- *Answer Form*  
Students may use this form to record their answers to the eighty selected-response questions and to indicate that they have answered each of the twenty constructed-response writing questions.

## 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
- a completed Answer Form for the eighty selected-response questions in the student book
- Answers for the eighty selected-response questions, plus sample answers for the twenty constructed-response writing questions in the student book

## How should I use the Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher?

These pages contain a facsimile of the Learn About on pages 2–3 of the student book, along with extended information about the Reading Strategy, which you can use as a basis for in-depth discussion to make sure students understand the strategy and how to use it for better reading comprehension.

## Where do students record their answers?

Students should fill in their answers to the selected-response questions on the Answer Form on page 53 of the student book. If students use the Answer Form, they may detach it from the book. Alternatively, students may fill in the correct answers directly on the student book page.

Students should write their answers to the constructed-response questions directly on the lines provided in the student book. Students who use the Answer Form for the selected-response questions should fill in the circle on the Answer Form to show that they have answered the constructed-response question, which is the fifth question in each lesson.

# READING STRATEGY TIPS FOR THE TEACHER

The clue words *first*, *second*, *third* and *last* tell the order in which Alice did the four things in the Learn About passage.

In fiction stories, the events making up the plot are often presented in the order, or sequence, in which they actually happen. Sometimes, however, the literary device called flashback is used to take a story to a time in the past – to a character’s childhood or to a life-altering past event, for example. Also, stories often have subplots, which may include simultaneous sequence threads (events happening at the same time to different people or in different places, for example). In plays, sequence may be revealed through stage directions, as well as through what the characters say. In cartoons, sequence is often revealed through the order of the illustrations, as well as through dialogue. Understanding how sequence is used to order events helps avoid confusion in reading various genres.

Nonfiction selections such as articles and reports usually present events in logical sequential order. To understand an aspect of nature, for example, it’s important to know the order in which the parts of the process take place. Knowing the order of events helps you to understand the formation of an earthquake or a tsunami, the behaviour of various plants or animals, the water cycle on earth, or the transmission of genetic traits from one generation to the next, for example.

## Learn About Understanding Sequence

Sequence is the *order* in which *events happen* or the order in which *things are done*.

Often when you read, something happens *first*. Then something else happens *next*. Then another thing happens, and so on.

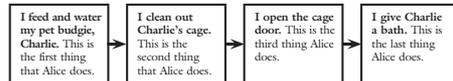
Read this passage to find out what a young woman named Alice does *first*, *second*, and so on.

The *first* thing I do when I get home from school every day is to feed and water my pet budgie, Charlie. Charlie always needs more birdseed and water. He also likes fresh grass and a little lettuce. Sometimes I give him a small apple or carrot, too.

*Second*, I clean out Charlie’s cage. I’ve become pretty good at this task and can accomplish it quickly. I remove all the old newspaper from the bottom of his cage and replace it with fresh newspaper. I just have to be careful that I use newspapers that my parents have finished reading. Once I put the sports page in Charlie’s cage before my father had finished reading about his favourite football team’s last-quarter heroics. That definitely wasn’t good.

*Third*, I open the cage door so that Charlie can climb out of his cage. He likes to fly around the room for a few minutes to stretch his wings and get some exercise.

*Last*, I give Charlie a bath. He has a tiny plastic bathtub that I fill with warm water and put in the bottom of his cage. Charlie loves to splash around in this water and I think bathing is his favourite activity of the day.



The boxes above are like a time line that shows what Alice does each day when she gets home from school.

Sequence is the order in which things happen or are done.

*Helga hesitated going into town because she wanted to avoid the scorn of the townspeople.*

(There is no specific sequence of events.)

*Helga walked slowly toward town and looked around. Then when she was sure the street was empty, she proceeded.*

(The final event in the sequence of events is signalled by the word *then*.)

To understand the sequence in a passage, think about what happens or what is done first, second, third, fourth, and so on.

**Clue words** such as *first, next, then, last, finally, before* and *after* may tell you the order in which things happen.

In the passage about Alice's budgie, the word *first* is used to tell you what Alice does first when she gets home from school. What other clue words tell about the sequence of events in the passage? The clue words *second, third* and *last* are used.

Words that indicate **time** may also signal sequence. Such words can tell the time of day, the day of the week, the month, the year, the season, and so on. Some **time words** are *yesterday, noon, at sunrise, Friday, December, 1997, last night, winter* and *morning*. For example:

My brother was born in 2004. In July 2005, he turned one year old. Since my cousins were on holiday at the time, we postponed a small family get-together (I'd hardly call it a birthday party) until the autumn. On 6 September at 1 p.m., the party promptly started. There was just one little problem: the birthday boy was taking a nap. That didn't stop us, however. We celebrated without him.

You will also find clue words in a set of directions, such as a recipe or the rules for playing a game. These words signal a sequence of steps, from the beginning to the end of the task. Numbers (1, 2, 3 and so on) are often used to show the sequence of steps to follow in a set of directions.

If you don't see clue words, you can still figure out the sequence in a passage. Just ask yourself what happens or is done first, next and, so on.

**remember!**

Sequence is the order in which events happen or the order in which things are done.

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Sequence is very important in a set of directions. If you didn't know what to do first, next, and so on, you wouldn't be able to play the newest game, fix your mountain bike or find your way to the concert, for example.

Do you already know what it's like to try to use a new mobile phone, computer or software program without following the steps in the instructions?

**Clue Words:** "Authors often showcase text patterns by giving readers clues or signals to help them figure out the structure being used. . . . A signal may be a word or a phrase that helps the reader follow the writer's thoughts." (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 398).

Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2005). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

**Definitions:** "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).

Abadiano, H. R., & Turner, J. (2003). The RAND report: Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 39(2), 74-79.

Sometimes a sequence has clue words, but sometimes it doesn't.

*Sharlene took a deep breath, and then she stepped confidently onto the ice.* (clue word *then*)

*Sharlene took a deep breath and stepped confidently onto the ice.* (no clue word)