

# Introduction to Reading Literacy Strategies

---

Reading involves:

- decoding words and understanding the alphabetic code
- understanding vocabulary
- linking known knowledge with the knowledge in texts
- rechecking meaning and analysing information as it is being read and after it has been read
- categorising, building, changing, redefining and sharing knowledge
- gaining meaning from, responding to and making inferences from words and images in a variety of contexts
- transferring knowledge to new contexts and subjects
- understanding authors' viewpoints, purpose and intended audience
- critically analysing messages and information in a variety of literacy modes (visual literacy, multimodal texts) for a variety of purposes.

Understanding and gaining a meaningful message from texts, including multimodal and multi literacies, involves an interrelationship between reading, writing, listening and viewing (Brock, 1998; Turbill, 2000). As students attain skills in seeing patterns in words it is essential that they continue to develop their ability to engage in, react to, understand and comprehend both the explicit and implicit messages within the texts they read.

Specific skills in how to approach the written word need to be explicitly taught and contextually practised to:

- facilitate a higher degree of understanding
- develop close links between the meanings readers gain and the author's intentions.

This language knowledge is taught in conjunction with other knowledge and skills in balanced programs in all areas at:

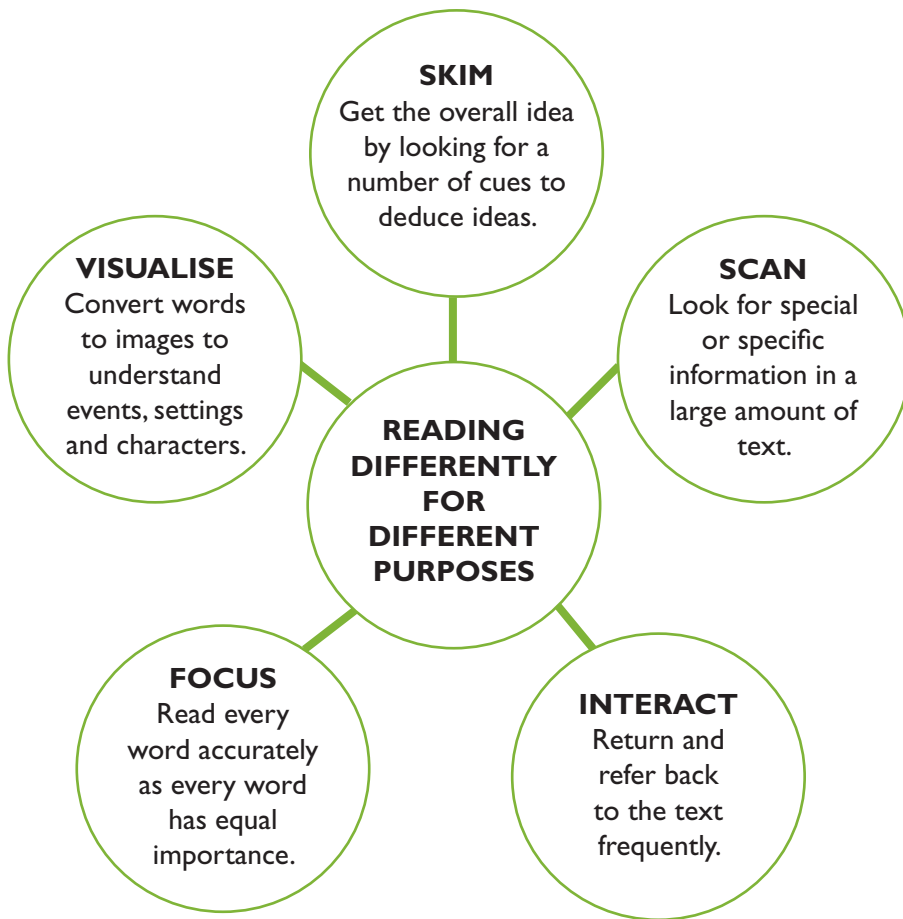
- word and sentence level which specifically deals with functional grammar, spelling and punctuation
- whole text level which focuses on text function, purpose, structure, ideas and textual grammar.

The skills involved to use and understand this language knowledge are assessed in both the reading and writing components of the NAPLAN.

## Using Knowledge to Understand Texts

There are many reasons and purposes for reading and many ways to read and gain meaning from texts. The purposes, reasons and types of texts vary and this affects the way readers seek and obtain information.

Readers may use one or combine different ways of reading as they read to seek and gain meaning from texts.



Reading beyond the surface level is a challenge for many students. The three-level guide devised by Herber (1978) and developed further by Morris and Stewart-Dore (1984) helps:

- students to think through the information in texts
- teachers to explicitly teach skills needed to obtain meaning from texts in a variety of contexts.

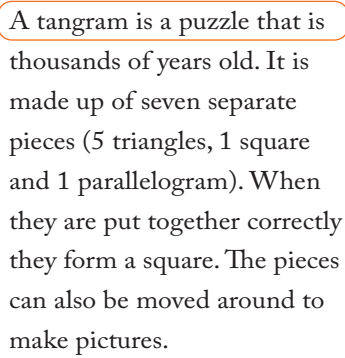
### **Literal Comprehension**

This is understanding information that is stated in the text or is 'right there'. The reader is reading *on the lines*.

It is also sometimes known as *here* comprehension.

In a test students may be asked to:

- locate information directly in text OR visual images
- locate information in a title, caption, heading or e-text
- locate information in one sentence that is directly stated in the text.



A tangram is a puzzle that is thousands of years old. It is made up of seven separate pieces (5 triangles, 1 square and 1 parallelogram). When they are put together correctly they form a square. The pieces can also be moved around to make pictures.

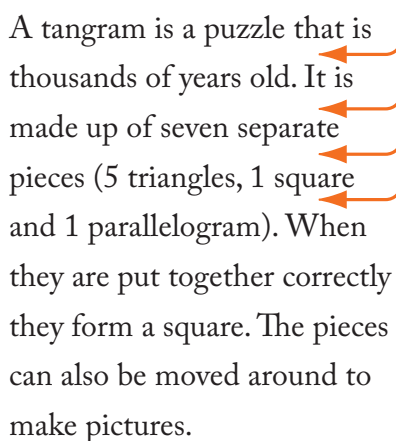
## Interpretive Comprehension

This is understanding that requires students to reflect on literal information, make links between information, identify relationships or draw inferences from information given in texts. The reader is reading *between the lines*.

It is also sometimes known as *hidden* comprehension.

When reading, students may be asked to:

- sequence events from a text
- extract information from a visual cue e.g. map, key for a map, diagram, photo, illustration
- connect information in a text and a visual image e.g. a diagram or illustration, titles, captions and headings to complete the answer completely
- make connections between information in consecutive sentences
- make connections in a text by using pronoun referencing
- connect and link information from several sentences that can be directly located in the text
- connect information using different vocabulary to explain concepts and ideas.



A tangram is a puzzle that is thousands of years old. It is made up of seven separate pieces (5 triangles, 1 square and 1 parallelogram). When they are put together correctly they form a square. The pieces can also be moved around to make pictures.

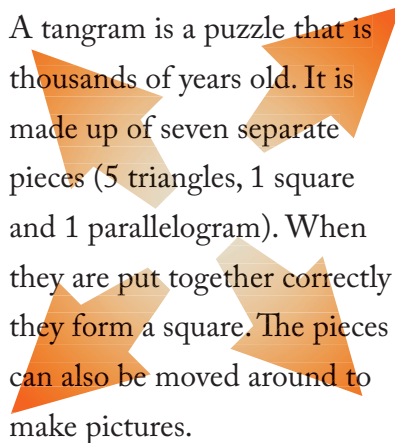
## Applied Comprehension – Evaluative

This understanding requires readers to apply and evaluate knowledge from multiple texts, within different areas of one text, or use their background knowledge about topics. Readers are required to read *beyond the lines*.

It is also known as *head* comprehension.

When reading students may be asked to:

- connect information across sentences, paragraphs, chapters
- infer the meaning of information in texts
- deduce main ideas, themes and concepts in texts
- use a range of strategies e.g. context cues to identify the meaning of unknown words
- identify the purpose and meaning of metaphorical language devices e.g. similes
- identify similar vocabulary meanings to link and connect ideas.



A tangram is a puzzle that is thousands of years old. It is made up of seven separate pieces (5 triangles, 1 square and 1 parallelogram). When they are put together correctly they form a square. The pieces can also be moved around to make pictures.

## Applied Comprehension – Critical

Critical analysis can be introduced in very early reading to understand the messages, themes and underlying plot of stories. It also assists students to deduce, create hypotheses and identify relationships that are not openly stated (Carnine, Silbert and Kameenui, 1997). This level of understanding texts increases in intensity, complexity and frequency in higher stages. It also requires students to move from one register to another across different subjects, learning areas and within different text types in one subject.

Developing critical understanding of factual texts often requires different language from that needed for critical analysis of narrative.

It involves the reader to read *deeper beyond the lines*.

It is also known as *head* comprehension.

Students need to use background knowledge and personal opinion to analyse the whole text – its structure, the meaning and purpose, connecting ideas and opinions – in order to critically analyse texts.

A tangram is a puzzle that is thousands of years old. It is made up of seven separate pieces (5 triangles, 1 square and 1 parallelogram). When they are put together correctly they form a square. The pieces can also be moved around to make pictures.

When reading, students may be asked to:

- identify the intended purpose of a specific part of a text
- identify the author's point of view or the reader response expected by the author
- identify their point of view and either defend or debate it against the author's.
- infer reasons for the author's use of persuasive language
- demonstrate an understanding of themes in texts and make critical analysis of them
- connect and make value judgements between the themes and plots of various texts
- select alternative titles or manipulate plots for different contexts
- Demonstrate an understanding of the characters' motives
- Analyse the use and purpose of layout features and text conventions
- Analyse imagery to assist in deducing meaning
- Identify the authoritative source of information, ideas, points of view and purpose, and how these can affect the validity of the content and/or position of the writer
- Identify the facts that are chosen, left out and changed to form texts for example a scientific argument supporting an idea or belief systems.

Students' comprehension is affected by:

