



READING FIRST

NIE!

Phonemic Awareness

Phonics

Text Comprehension

Fluency

Vocabulary

*A Newspaper In
Education Teaching
Supplement*

*For
Reading First
No Child Left Behind
Act of 2001*



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Background Information For Teachers and NIE Coordinators

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the name given to the federal law designed to improve student achievement, is changing the culture of America's schools. The legislation is targeted to the nation's neediest youngsters, those who in the past have been left behind, never able to catch up academically with their more-advantaged peers. Though the legislation is complex, two important issues are key: (1) Reading is at the heart of all learning in or out of school; and (2) Children who enter school with strong language and pre-reading skills are more likely to learn to read well in the early grades and succeed in later years. In fact, research shows that it is never too early to start building language skills by talking with and reading to children. No Child Left Behind targets resources for early childhood education so that all youngsters get the right start. The goal is to have children—ALL children—reading on or above grade level by the end of the third grade.

“Students who use newspapers as a principal source material have better achievement scores in social studies, language arts and mathematics than their matched counterparts, who rely only on textbooks.”

Reading First is the part of the No Child Left Behind Act that focuses on improving reading instruction. This ambitious national initiative is designed to help every young child in every state become a successful reader. It is based on the expectation that instructional decisions for all students will be guided by the best available research. In recent years, scientific research has provided tremendous insight into exactly how children learn to read and the essential components for effective reading instruction. **Reading First** builds on this solid foundation of research.

Reading First funds have been administered to most of 50 states to shore up pre-reading and instructional reading skills among young children. Each state is responsible to administer the funds to programs that incorporate “scientifically-based methods of teaching reading.” These scientifically-based practices were recommended by the National Reading Panel (NRP) in 2000, its findings published after an exhaustive study summarizing research studies on reading since 1966. The NRP’s first report was called *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998.)

Recommendations of the National Reading Panel summarize scientifically-based reading strategies with most positive results in improving student reading proficiency. The research results were a composite of more than 100,000 studies. The research

- ▶ addressed achievement in one or more skills in reading;
- ▶ represented large populations of students;
- ▶ examined the effectiveness of approaches to see what worked best; and
- ▶ was regarded as high-quality data, meaning that scholars from the field of research approved the methods and treatment suggested.

Likewise, research on the effectiveness of Newspaper In Education programs is well-documented. There are many studies that show the positive effects of using newspaper-based instruction. With a good teacher and application of sound teaching practices, students can benefit immensely from newspaper-based instruction. Students develop a keen awareness of the world and their communities, and gain a positive effect on attitudes toward school, community and subject matter. Students who use newspapers as a principal source material have better achievement scores in social studies, language arts and mathematics than their matched counterparts, who rely only on textbooks. In one study, reading skills increased two grade levels for students who used newspapers compared to those using traditional methods. In another, reading scores were consistently higher for 12 to 18-year olds who used newspapers alone or with textbooks. In some cases, scores increased by as much as four grade levels. Newspaper use seems to improve verbal interactions, student motivation and behavior, vocabulary development and writing skills. Most of the studies examined populations of older students, in grades 4–12, but when newspapers are used in school, at-home newspaper reading is augmented.

Reading First, NIE! is a research-based curriculum supplement for teachers and NIE coordinators, but it contains also ideas for parents to use at home with their youngsters as well as information about national trends in reading instruction. The newspaper-based activities suggested are meant to supplement and enrich each of the five elements recommended by the National Reading Panel. Each activity is sequential, relying on the previous one. Each accomplishment becomes a building block for

the next. A newspaper can provide one of the most comprehensive resources to help a child become a reader. Once a child learns letter names and sounds, then sight words, he or she becomes more fluent and can move more quickly through text, accomplishing more difficult

reading tasks such as learning new vocabulary and understanding what is read. By learning systematically, the child “learns how to learn.”

Following the guidelines of Reading First, the five areas of reading proficiency critical for children to learn to read are:

1 Phonemic Awareness

This is a pre-reading skill; it is the ability to notice, think about and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Before children learn to read print, they must become aware of how sounds work in words. This includes identifying beginning, medial and ending sounds, hearing rhythm and rhymes, and understanding nuances in spoken words.

2 Phonics

This is the ability to understand the relationships between letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. Phonics instruction helps children understand the alphabetic principles of language. Phonics instruction must be explicit and direct.

3 Fluency

This is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. This occurs when readers read silently and recognize words automatically. Fluent readers read effortlessly; fluency is the bridge to reading comprehension.

4 Vocabulary

This means the words students must know to communicate effectively. This includes listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabulary.

5 Text Comprehension

This means understanding what is read. To truly comprehend text, reading must be purposeful and active. Children must know why they are reading, and have strategies for understanding as they move through text. Students must be able to self-monitor as they read. This is called metacognition, meaning that students are aware of what they do understand, can identify what they do not understand, and can use strategies to solve problems by themselves. Students must be able to

- a. identify where trouble occurs.
- b. restate a difficult passage in their own words.
- c. go back and forth through a passage to find meanings.

TEACHING

1

Phonemic Awareness With the Newspaper (pre-K-2)

Newspaper-based instruction can help children develop phonemic awareness. By reading to children from comics, serialized stories and special features, students begin to understand the connections between sounds and written language. This is especially helpful in modeling reading, and helping youngsters understand the reading process. Here are some ways to help a youngster develop Phonemic Awareness:

Using Newspaper Photos And Experience Charts

- ▶ Select newspaper pictures that tell a story.
- ▶ With children, cut out pictures and paste on large charts.
- ▶ Help the children make up a story about the picture, asking "What happened first? Next? At the end?" Write composite stories on experience charts.
- ▶ Help youngsters select interesting faces in the news and ask them to tell what feelings each face shows. Happy? Sad? Joyful? Silly? Funny? Scared? Write feeling words on experience charts.
- ▶ Engage children in conversation about each picture.

- ▶ Make up short sentences or sayings for each picture.
- ▶ Have children draw their own pictures, using words that describe the newspaper photos.
- ▶ "Read" newspaper pictures, asking children to fill in details from their imaginations.
- ▶ Write the story for the students on a large chart paper, to begin the association of pictures to printed words.
- ▶ Sing, recite poetry, read together

Using Newspaper Comics

- ▶ Begin by talking about names of comic characters and ask the children to identify their names and logos such as "Garfield," "Peanuts," "Family Circus."
- ▶ Ask children to select comic characters they like and read comics to them. Then ask him to "read them back to you."
- ▶ Encourage children to change the comic frames by making up their own dialogue.
- ▶ Cut and paste each comic on chart paper, writing the new stories for each child.
- ▶ Encourage children to make up their own comic characters, giving them names, drawing their pictures, and telling stories about them.

Using Newspaper Ads For Cut-and-Paste Activities

- ▶ Look through ad pages for toys and groceries that a child would like.
- ▶ Talk about items that appeal to children, asking children to notice colors, shapes, labels, logos and words.
- ▶ Help children begin to make the connections between ads and the words on their labels.
- ▶ From ads, have children cut words, logos and labels and tape onto similar furniture in the classroom. For instance, chair, table, door, desk, lamp, etc.
- ▶ Make good use of the clothing ads in a newspaper. Help children make associations by cutting and pasting items from a newspaper. “What clothes would you like to wear? Mommy? Baby?” Have each child cut out and paste down each item in a notebook.
- ▶ Help a child make a newspaper collage based on a theme such as spring time, winter holidays, school days, summer fun, etc.
- ▶ Encourage a child to count boxes, lines and columns, as developing number-sense is critical to reading.

TEACHING

Phonics With the Newspaper (pre-K-2)

There are many ways students may benefit from newspaper-based instruction in learning phonics. There are two basic things to remember when teaching phonics, i.e., new sound/symbol relationships to children: (1) phonics instruction must be **systematic** and **explicit**, and (2) a newspaper contains thousands of letters, words and symbols of our language. Newspapers provide an inexpensive resource, one that can be used to provide children with many opportunities for **practice**, while supplying a total kinesthetic experience.

Teachers might use newspapers to augment their system of teaching phonics. **Systematic and explicit** phonics instruction from the newspaper means organizing letter/ sound relationships into a logical sequence, then reinforcing with frequent practice. The order in which each letter/sound correspondence is learned depends upon the teacher's discretion, based upon what needs the children have immediately, AND the series of reading materials in use at a given school.

Generally, here are some ways to use the newspapers to augment and supplement phonics instruction in a lively manner. Begin with consonants and consonant sounds that children hear most frequently such as their first and last names.

Newspaper Name Charts

From the newspaper, ask children to cut out the letters from their first names from headlines, and to paste them vertically onto a large sheet of paper. For instance, "DAVID"

- D** Then, ask children to find pictures in the newspaper of items with the same sounds as the letters in their first names.
- A**
- V** Cut out the pictures and paste them on their individual name charts.
- I** Place their name charts around the room and have classmates begin to see others' names and letters that have similar beginning sounds. Repeat again with medial sounds, then focus on ending sounds.
- D** Next begin with blends such as sh, st, bl, fl, following the order from classroom reading series materials.

Big-Letter Days

For several weeks in a row on the day newspapers are used, select a “Newspaper Letter of the Day.” For example, if the letter “S” is the letter of the day, have children find as many words and pictures from a newspaper that begin with an **“SSS” sound**. Once all the individual consonant sounds are mastered, then move onto ending sounds, blends and digraphs, etc. Work on vowels in a similar way. Frequency of practice helps children learn, maintain and build a bank of letters and sounds. This practice will help students apply phonics principles as they read and write new words and sentences, and will lead to fluency in reading and writing. Here are some ideas for teaching Phonics from the newspaper:

Listening for Letter Sounds from the Newspaper

- ▶ Read a serialized story, a high-interest sports article or a comic strip with youngsters.
- ▶ Ask youngsters to listen for a certain letter sound and raise their hands each time they hear the spoken sound.
- ▶ Write all of the words and letters on a large sheet of chart paper.
- ▶ With children, talk together about a news photo.
- ▶ List words with the same sound repeating often to see how many times they hear the sound.
- ▶ Select a comic strip of interest to children.
- ▶ Read dialogue bubbles aloud to children first, then re-read, asking them to notice the beginning, middle and ending sounds of specific words. Chart words.
- ▶ Select names of comic characters in the newspaper, and study the beginning, middle and ending sounds again.
- ▶ Ask the children to write rhyming words—finding them in the newspaper or in the story. Chart words.
- ▶ Repeat activities with different newspaper photos, comics and words each day. Review chart words each day until children know all the words.

TEACHING

3

Reading Fluency with The Newspaper (Grades 3-5)

Newspapers provide many opportunities for children to read fluently. Sports pages and entertainment pages have information of interest to children of all age levels.

Fluency—Select several articles from the newspaper that are short, simple and interesting to children. Read each aloud with students, asking them to follow along silently.

- ▶ Ask students to read the article to each other, taking turns.
- ▶ Have students read the same article more quickly, and with great feeling.
- ▶ Select a different article from the newspaper and repeat the activity several times to build confidence.
- ▶ Each day read from the newspaper asking children to follow along.
- ▶ Then ask the children to read the same article silently.
- ▶ Next involve children in a choral reading.
- ▶ With the class, write a story rephrasing the main ideas and details of the news article.
- ▶ Read the new story to the class, and ask the children to read aloud as a group, then alone.
- ▶ Ask children to tell what differences they hear as the article is re-read.

- ▶ Have the children understand what fluency means.
- ▶ Next create a poem for choral reading using ideas from the newspaper.
- ▶ Ask children to create motions to go with a newspaper story.
- ▶ With children, create a game of charades by acting out headlines, pictures, comics or ads.
- ▶ In small table groups, ask students to change the ending of a comic strip or short article.
- ▶ Re-tell the comic or story to the class, comparing endings.
- ▶ Have children select a “Hero of the Day” from the newspaper.
- ▶ Allow children time to select someone they admire.
- ▶ Ask students what the person’s good qualities are, and write them on a chalk board or chart paper.
- ▶ Tell students to put themselves in the story, and ask them who they would be and what they would do to imitate their hero.
- ▶ Re-read the news story, adding the student’s name and deeds, and ask students to react to the differences from the original.

Vocabulary With the Newspaper

Newspapers provide a rich resource for learning new vocabulary words every day. Because newspapers are written for a general readership audience, many words may be challenging for young children. The newspaper can provide words for developing

- ▶ **A listening vocabulary**—words to understand what they hear.
- ▶ **A speaking vocabulary**—words children use when they speak.
- ▶ **A reading vocabulary**—words children understand in reading.
- ▶ **A writing vocabulary**—the words children use in writing.

Many NIE teachers assign children to have a special notebook (see p. 22) just for newspaper activities. Keeping a vocabulary section is a great way for students to learn new words, creating a “word bank,” for speaking, reading and writing. Here are three recommended ways to teach vocabulary:

1. Teach specific words before reading to help reading comprehension.

- ▶ Select a news story, a human interest feature or an editorial that has new words to enrich student learning.

- ▶ Introduce new words before reading the article, so that students will understand each word.
- ▶ Ask students to write new words in their notebooks.
- ▶ Read the article aloud to the children, or if they are able, have them read it independently.

2. Extend vocabulary instruction to promote active engagement “to maintain” new words.

- ▶ Encourage students to use their lists in writing original stories.
- ▶ Have children cut and paste new newspaper words into their notebooks.
- ▶ Have children draw their own symbols and cues to help them remember each word meaning.

3. Provide experiences of repeated exposure to vocabulary in many contexts.

- ▶ Have children keep a vocabulary count to see how their newspaper “word banks” are increasing each week.
- ▶ Ask children to notice and find newspaper vocabulary words in other text materials, on television and on the Internet.
- ▶ Continue to reinforce the use of the vocabulary notebook in writing.

Reading Comprehension With the Newspaper (Grades 3-5)

Understanding what is read IS reading comprehension; it is the reason for reading! Adults who develop a newspaper reading habit are **purposeful** and active readers. Teachers who use newspapers frequently are helping their students “read on purpose.” By letting children find pictures, maps, comics, graphs, articles and ads, children learn how to select from an array of interesting material.

Metacognition

To understand the world around them, it is helpful for children to know how they think and learn. Children become active, purposeful readers when they become “metacognitive,” being truly aware of their learning. A child must learn to

- ▶ explain why they are reading—the purpose, and
- ▶ how they can use the information read—the application, and
- ▶ how everyone has “background knowledge” to help.

For example, the teacher might say, “Turn today’s newspaper to the picture on the front page. Can you tell what the article will be about from the picture? What do you already know about this?” Listen to student responses and ask, “And, what else? And, what else?”

“Now let’s find out how each of us learns to read best. If we read something really interesting from the newspaper, we can learn how we learn!” The teacher gives the students time to be actively involved in selecting what they will read. “What did you select for today?”

“The article you chose to read is about a sports hero. Let’s read it together.”

- ▶ The teacher might read the article aloud, asking students to follow along.
- ▶ The teacher might ask, “Tell me what do you understand about this article?”
- ▶ What more do you need to know? How can you find out? Let’s read the article again.
- ▶ “Now, let’s write the main idea of the article in your newspaper journals.” Elicit responses from students.
- ▶ “What are some more facts to support the main idea?”
- ▶ “What did we just do together that helped you understand the article better?” Elicit

responses. Here are some things to do to understand how you learn best—after reading, ask yourself these questions:

- What is this article about?
- What do I understand about this article?
- What more can I learn?
- What’s the best way for me to learn more?
- Should I go back and re-read?
- Should I underline as I write?
- Do I need to write down some notes?
- Can I remember better if I underline key words and phrases?

The teacher might also ask the children if they have some of their own “clues to learning.” (metacognitive strategies) The teacher might ask,

- ▶ “What do you find most interesting about reading a newspaper?”
- ▶ “What is your favorite section? Why?”
- ▶ “What would you like to learn more about?”
- ▶ “What helps you understand new words?”
- ▶ “Do newspaper pictures help? Headlines? Why or Why not?”

TEXT FEATURE

Knowledge

Because a newspaper has a wide variety of text, pictures, symbols and graphics, it provides many opportunities for teaching reading comprehension strategies. To begin:

1. Teach the text features of the newspaper.

A classroom bulletin board illustrating each of these features will help youngsters learn how a newspaper is formatted, and what to look for on each page, and in each section.

- ▶ Front Page Features: Headline, Dateline, Byline, Outline, etc.
- ▶ Section Divisions
- ▶ Headline Above the Fold
- ▶ Sub-Headlines
- ▶ Jump Lines
- ▶ News Photos
- ▶ Index
- ▶ Editorial Page, Editorial Cartoon
- ▶ Letters to the Editor
- ▶ Op Ed- “Opposite-Editorial Page,” Opinion Pages
- ▶ Special Feature Pages
- ▶ Shopping Ads and Classified Ads
- ▶ Comics

2. Teach children to manage sections and pages of the newspaper.

- ▶ Separate newspaper into section bundles.
- ▶ Staple the corner of each for easy use.
- ▶ Have child write his/her name in the corner.

3. Show children how to cut news clippings and how to cut and paste them into their newspaper notebooks, adding drawings and special notes. (See p. 22) The newspaper journal may be kept in a special place and used especially on days when the newspapers are delivered to the classroom.

How to Understand Story Structures

Help students improve reading comprehension by understanding that there are different story structures within a newspaper. This includes identifying different types of newspaper writing, sometimes called “stories” by journalists.

What’s Hard News?

- ▶ Have children relate with just the facts an incident that happened at home last evening. The teacher may decide to use the sample in the following paragraph. It could be as simple as this example:
“My Mom called us in for dinner. We did not hear her at first. She had to use a special

whistle. As soon as we heard it, we ran home. But it was too late. Dinner had burned. My Mom and Dad were not happy about that. We had to eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches instead. Then we went to bed without watching TV.”

Explain that this type of reporting of an incident is hard news. This simple incident could answer Who? What? Where? When? Why? And how?

- ▶ Go to the newspaper and select a front-page story that will be interesting for the children. Read the story aloud with the children, asking them to mark the facts, and only the facts with highlighter pens. Go through the Who? What? Where? When? Why? And how? of the newspaper article.
- ▶ Explain that this is called hard news because it reports the facts without an opinion.

What’s Opinion?

Go back to the original hard news story the children told that had facts and only the facts. Now ask the children to re-tell the story, this time telling how they felt about the incident. It could be like this:

“My Mom called us in for dinner, at the most important part of our game. We did not hear her at first because she did not call loudly enough. Her special whistle is too piercing, and it hurt our ears. Though we wanted to continue our play, we ran to the house. It was really Mom’s fault the dinner had burned. It wasn’t fair that we had to go to bed without watching TV.”

Ask the children to tell which words in this telling are opinion words.

Explain that opinion is often reported as fact, but it is really a judgment, not really a fact.

- ▶ Go to the newspaper editorial page and select an article or letter that will be interesting for the children. Read the article aloud with the children, asking them to mark the opinion words.
- ▶ Explain that this is called “editorial or opinion” because it adds a judgment or personal bias to some of the facts.

What’s Analysis?

For children who are ready for this, explain that news analysis is often given to help readers make a judgment. News analysis is facts, opinions and judgments all together. Here’s a simple analysis of the same story:

“The children’s mother called them in for dinner at 6 p.m. Because she knew they were involved in a game, the mother knew they might not have ‘heard’ her call. The children had done this several times in the past two weeks. She used a special whistle only when she felt certain they were out of hearing range, or to alert them. She gave them more than 20 minutes, then heard them running to the house. Both parents thought the children needed to learn a lesson. No one in the household was happy that evening.”

- ▶ Now find an analysis of a current local situation and ask the children to determine how they know it is an analysis. Select a story that is interesting to the children. OR, for the more advanced, ask the children to write an analysis of an interesting article.
- ▶ Repeat this activity having children write their own hard news, opinion and analysis paragraphs in their newspaper notebooks.

How to Sequence Events

- ▶ Comic pages provide a great way to teach sequence of events. By laminating and cutting out comics, students can learn sequencing by putting them back in the correct order. They can also create a new story by changing the order.
- ▶ Read a newspaper article of interest for the sequence of events. Have children order the sequence by writing 1, 2, 3, etc. in red pen showing what happened first, second, next, etc.
- ▶ Repeat this with other newspaper articles.
- ▶ For more advanced students, ask them to keep track of a continuing news story of prominence. The student might keep a “sequence of events” related to world news in their newspaper notebooks.

How to Summarize

- ▶ Teachers can help students improve comprehension by teaching them to **summarize** newspaper articles and features. This helps them to determine what is important or unimportant in a passage.

Finding the Main Idea Through Headlines

- ▶ identify or generate main ideas,
- ▶ connect the main or central ideas,
- ▶ eliminate unnecessary information, and
- ▶ remember what they read.

How to Use Graphic Organizers

Good teachers understand how important it is for students to have graphic organizers to help them read, write, think and learn. A newspaper uses many graphic organizers to guide reading as well. The teacher can point out how these special “thinking frames” help reading. Here are some graphic organizers in a newspaper any day of the week:

Charts and Maps—Ask students to check the chart on the weather page to see what the high and low temperature are for their city, other cities in their state, and other cities and states in the United States.

- ▶ Repeat this activity frequently noticing more details on the weather chart, and change the questions from lesson to lesson to give the children experience in learning how to read charts.
- ▶ Have children select a different city and create a weather chart for that city over several newspaper days.
- ▶ Ask students to notice directions, north, south, east, and west on the weather map. Find their home city and determine the direction one must travel to reach other cities in your state.

- ▶ Ask students to write a paragraph describing what they would take in a suitcase to visit a northern city, such as New York.
- ▶ Have children create a map of their school, their neighborhood and their town.

Tables—Use the television programming pages to teach how to read a table. Ask the children to find their favorite evening television program. Show them to read vertically and horizontally to find the station letters, the time and channel numbers.

- ▶ Repeat this activity until the children understand how to read the television listings.
- ▶ Have children select their top 10 favorite TV shows and create their own television listing tables using information regarding times and stations from the newspaper.

Graphs—Find a bar graph representing a newspaper article and demonstrate how the graph helps understand what the text is about. Read the accompanying article, and re-visit the graph.

- ▶ Ask children to find articles about their favorite football teams in the sports pages. Have the children create their own graphs to track the wins/losses, yardage, downs, etc.
- ▶ Have the children update their Football Graphs each week.

Diagrams—Continue to use the sports pages to help children learn how diagrams help learning.

- ▶ Create a football field diagram on a large chart paper or chalkboard.
- ▶ Read an article about a recent football game, with the children, and as a group, create a diagram on the chart.
- ▶ Ask students to create football field diagrams in their newspaper notebooks. Have students notice diagram patterns and plays from week to week. Have children write summary sentences that explain the diagrams.
- ▶ Repeat similar activities with basketball, baseball, soccer, tennis, etc., depending upon the interest of the children and the sports covered in the newspaper.

How to Read and Interpret Comics and Cartoons

Newspapers provide opportunities for students to become critical thinkers while having fun. Begin by asking the children to turn to the comics pages, and select comics they like best.

- ▶ Have children read aloud the dialogue bubbles.
- ▶ Ask them to tell the main idea of the comic selected.
- ▶ Ask children to explain whether the comic strip is funny, silly or has a serious meaning.
- ▶ Ask children to explain how they would change the comic strip.
- ▶ With older newspapers, have children cut out

comic strips, leaving the characters and removing the bubbles. Tell children to create their own dialogue for each strip chosen.

- ▶ Have children share their new comic characters with their classmates.

Select editorial cartoons for the age appropriate of your students

Explain that this type of cartoon is not meant to be funny, but is a way to make a statement of opinion about someone in the news, a political figure, or an important event.

- ▶ Explain that cartoon characters are often “symbols,” meaning that they represent something other than themselves.
- ▶ Give the children examples of symbols such

as plus and minus signs (+,-), dollars and cents (\$,¢) and other common symbols. Ask them to tell more symbols they know: stop signs, Red Cross, etc.

- ▶ Then, go to the editorial cartoon and ask the children to answer these questions:
 - ▶ What is the main idea of this cartoon?
 - ▶ What are some symbols in this cartoon?
 - ▶ What is the opinion of the cartoonist?
 - ▶ Do you agree or disagree with the opinion in this cartoon?
 - ▶ Explain why or why not.
 - ▶ Ask children to create their own cartoons in their newspaper notebooks.

TEACHING

Question and Answer Relationships With the Newspaper

Teaching students to ask their own questions is an excellent way to have them become active readers. The Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? of newspaper articles can easily be transferred to personal reading experiences. Here are some sample questions teachers can ask:

- ▶ What is the purpose for reading this?
- ▶ What do you already know about this subject?
- ▶ What more do you hope to learn today?
- ▶ How will you monitor your reading?
- ▶ Will you ask questions?
- ▶ Will you underline words?
- ▶ Will you work with a partner?
- ▶ How will you solve problems when you don't know a word? When you do not understand the main idea? When you cannot retell what the story is about?

How to Answer Four Types Of Questions

Explain to the children that there are easy ways to answer different types of questions when reading from the newspaper. Here are some examples:

Right There Answers

- ▶ Ask children to select a newspaper article of interest. Read with them, or have them read it silently. The Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How? are usually **right there** in the article.
- ▶ Repeat this activity with different articles from different sections.
- ▶ Next, select an article and have the children highlight (with a highlighter pen) the facts, and underline the opinions in red ink.
- ▶ Then ask the children to list their facts and opinions in their newspaper notebooks.
- ▶ Have children write a sentence using the opinion words. How are opinion words different from fact words? Ask children to explain.

Think and Search Answers

- ▶ Now select an article of high interest from the sports pages, being sure the topic is of interest to the students.
- ▶ Working in pairs or threes for this activity, ask the children questions in which they have to put together other pieces of information to find the answer. For instance, they may have to

- ▶ look up some words in a dictionary,
- ▶ read through other articles on the page for the information,
- ▶ make inferences from the text based on their background knowledge.

Finding Answers in My Head (Using Background Knowledge)

- ▶ Ask children to find an article from the local section of the newspaper, one that has a photo of a place familiar to students such as a school, a library, a stadium, etc.
- ▶ Tell the children to share some facts they already know about the subject of the article.
- ▶ Have the children read the article silently, either alone or in a small group.
- ▶ Ask the children to explain what the writer of the article found most interesting. Now ask the children if they would write the article the same way, explaining why or why not.
- ▶ Explain to the children that they often already know the answers from their own life experience, and sometimes their own answers are the best ones!

Finding Answers on My Own

The teacher may want to give the children a chance to see how much they already know about a topic that is in the newspaper daily. For instance, children learn early about war, but few know what it means. In a whole group setting, ask children

- ▶ What do you know about war?
- ▶ What does it mean to be at war?
- ▶ Why do countries go to war with each other?
- ▶ Who makes the decisions about going to war?
- ▶ How do you feel about war?
- ▶ Do you know anyone who has been in a war?
- ▶ Why is it a very serious decision for a country to go to war?
- ▶ How would you advise our leaders if you could?
- ▶ How can you find out more about war?
- ▶ Who can you ask? Can you use the Internet?

Cooperative Learning

On newspaper day, many students enjoy working in pairs, teams and table groups, and best of all, **cooperative learning occurs**. This is an extremely effective, active way for youngsters to learn. Here are some ways children can benefit from the newspaper and working together.

Idea #1

- ▶ Assign a different section of the newspaper to each table group.
- ▶ Give each group specific articles to read.
- ▶ Allow for time to read and discuss.
- ▶ Have each table group discuss their articles with the whole class.

Idea #2

- ▶ Assign children to work in pairs.
- ▶ Each child should read one article and answer the Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How?
- ▶ Then share your article with your partner.
- ▶ Ask one partner to write a summary of one article and share it with the other.

Idea #3

- ▶ In pairs, assign children to read an article of interest about a hero figure.
- ▶ Have the children list the qualities of the hero that they wish to imitate.

- ▶ Then each pair of students should make a list of things they can do to be like their newspaper hero.

Idea #4

- ▶ Have children work in table groups using the entertainment or television section of the newspaper.
- ▶ Have children select a personality in the news and write a set of questions for interviewing the celebrity.
- ▶ Ask each table group to select one child to be the “star” and another to interview the star, asking the questions they created.

Reciprocal Teaching

Students learn effective comprehension strategies from the newspaper flexibly and in combination. For instance, through “reciprocal teaching” the teacher works with a small group of students to help them learn four strategies:

- ▶ asking questions about what they are reading, whether hard news, opinion, features, letters, classifieds, etc.;
- ▶ summarizing part of the article, being certain that students understand the gist of the article before going further;
- ▶ clarifying words and sentences they don’t understand as they are reading; and
- ▶ predicting what might occur next in a passage or newspaper article.

Summing It Up

According to the National Reading Panel, all reading instruction should be explicit, or direct. Research shows that explicit teaching techniques are necessary for all facets of reading instruction, but particularly for reading comprehension. The steps of explicit instruction include direct explanation, or teacher modeling, guided practice and application. When teaching any reading skill with the newspaper, the teacher must provide:

- ▶ a direct explanation of the various method in use with the newspaper, this might be done by reviewing what the new strategy is right after instruction;
- ▶ modeling, by using “think alouds,” while reading the newspaper;
- ▶ guided practice, by assisting students as they learn how and when to apply a new strategy; and
- ▶ application, by helping students practice the newspaper-based reading strategies until they can apply it independently.

This teachers’ guide provides ideas for you and your students to use when reading and learning from newspapers. Included in this guide is a letter for parents to help them understand in simple language state and federal initiatives related to reading instruction.



Dear Parents

All parents wish for their children to have the very best education, as success in learning is key to success in life. Educators and parents alike know that reading is at the heart of all learning, yet too many of our children cannot receive a good education because they have serious reading difficulties. **Reading First** is a program to ensure that every child, YOUR child, learns to read.

President Bush has asked national, state, school district and university experts to help us understand the best ways to help each child become a successful, independent reader. Each child must be able to “crack the code,” to learn how sounds form words, and how meaning is made from the way words are connected. We know the best ways to assess your child’s progress, and understand and the standards a good reading program should have.

We have learned much about how children learn to read, but we know that it will take all of us—parents, teachers, business and community partners working together to support **Reading First**. We have asked America’s newspapers to help us by providing you with information you can use at home with your children to help them become better readers. By reading, talking and thinking together with your child, you can become a teacher and learner yourself. One of the many benefits of reading a newspaper together is that you and your child can learn about everyday events happening in your community, your state and your world. We hope you will take the opportunity to open horizons of reading and learning for your child.

Best wishes,

Barbara Shapley, B.S., M.S. Ed.Consultant

A Special Note to Parents...

How Do Children Learn to Read?

1. Children must understand that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words. The recognition that words are made up of speech sounds is called phonemic awareness. One way children can show us that they have phonemic awareness is by recognizing which words in a set of words begin with the same sound. Parents can help a child recognize beginning sounds like those in “dog, dish, Dad, door, etc.”

You can help your child develop phonemic awareness by reading and talking to him about comics, photos and lively colors in a newspaper. Hold your child in your lap and read the newspaper aloud, then have the child “read” to you, making up stories, rhymes and songs.

2. Children must understand that there is a relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters and spellings that make up sounds in written language. This is called phonics. A good way to help your child is to play word games and sing songs with rhyming patterns, such as “hat, bat, cat, sat, etc...”

You can help your child understand how letters sound by pointing to letters in a newspaper headline, and having the child repeat sounds

of the words. You may want to help your child cut and paste letters from a newspaper to make up his or her name, labels, colors, titles and products.

3. Children must develop a vocabulary, a store of information about the meanings and pronunciations of words necessary for communication. There are four types of vocabulary—listening, speaking, reading and writing. To help children learn new words, use a variety of words and phrases and encourage children to use the new words themselves.

You can help your child develop a strong vocabulary by having him or her find new words as you read from comics, ads, features. Simple words like car, house, auto, sale, sports, football, basketball, baseball, can be found in a newspaper, cut out and pasted. Your child will be encouraged to learn this new vocabulary a little at a time. Help her keep track of all the new words learned from the newspaper.

4. Children must develop the ability to read words accurately and quickly. This is reading fluency, the link between recognizing a word and knowing what that word means at the same time. Reading aloud daily to children, and then having them read aloud daily to you is one way that you can help your child become a fluent reader.

Read comics aloud to your child. Ask him to tell you a story about the comic characters he likes. Write his story down for him. Keep an ongoing story journal from the comics. This helps develop fluency.

5. Children must learn ways to understand as they are reading, and the steps to take to make meaning for themselves.

Children learn the meanings of most words through the everyday experiences of conversations, by being read aloud to by adults, and by reading on their own. Beginning readers need a big spoken vocabulary so that they can understand the words they see in print.

Help children develop reading comprehension by having the newspaper serve as a print resource to complement images she sees on television. Even very young children can learn that there's more to the story when you read about it, than when you see it on television for a few "sound bites."

What is Meant by Assessment?

Many people think assessment means one thing—taking tests! And tests make many people uneasy. The primary educational purpose of testing is to help students learn by giving teachers, and students themselves, the information they need to plan for further learning.

Assessment is really built into everything we do, whether it is learning to walk, talk, read, speak a new language, sing, read music, dance—everything is assessed, usually self-assessed while we learn. We have to continuously know where

we are before we know where to go next.

In terms of reading progress, assessment is more a measure of evaluating how a child is progressing in order to know how to help the child with the next phase of learning. There are very specific types of assessments teachers must use to be sure that children learn to read. They are screening, diagnostic assessments and monitoring.

▶ Screening is a preliminary step necessary to find gaps in student knowledge and also to provide baseline information—a starting point from which to gauge progress. Those gaps in information must be filled before a student can gain confidence and be successful.

▶ Diagnostic assessment is a way to learn the specific skills students need to learn to improve their reading, and what strategies are needed to help them learn. Classroom time is well spent on assessment when it informs teachers of students' strengths and weaknesses, and helps them develop strategies to support those students.

▶ Monitoring is an ongoing part of the total teaching and learning process. The teacher uses monitoring as a refinement of all assessment processes, helping students track their own learning and make adjustments when necessary.

Scientific research in the teaching of reading shows which methods work best, especially when children are beginning to read, or when a new skill is introduced. It is critical for children to get a good start!

Here are some things you can do:

Visit your child's classroom and ask to observe a reading lesson.

Study the methods the teacher uses to teach a new reading skill.

- Does the method seem organized, systematic?
- Is the instruction clear?
- Are the children on task?
- Does the teacher provide specific instruction to children working in small groups?
- Are the children engaged, enjoying the lesson, participating?
- Do you see a variety of reading materials—books, magazines, newspapers in the room?
- Do you observe ways you can help your child at home?

Ideas for Creating An NIE Classroom

- ▶ Contact your local newspaper's NIE Professional.
- ▶ Order classroom sets of newspapers for a period of weeks, or for the whole school year.
- ▶ Ask your NIE Professional for help with teaching ideas, resources and curriculum materials.
- ▶ Select the day of the week when your local newspaper has the best features for your students.
- ▶ Keep an NIE bulletin board in your classroom with front-page features labeled for easy reference for your students.
- ▶ Have ready experience chart paper for newspaper story writing, and for mounting favorite clippings and cartoon.
- ▶ Make every day an NIE day by telling

students what's happening in the world, and connecting events to print.

- ▶ Ask parents to be involved partners in the NIE experience with their children.
- ▶ Emphasize that NIE day is a special day!

Creating a Newspaper Handbook

- ▶ Select an appropriate notebook style for the age and ability of your students. A three-ring binder is good for older children, and a separated notebook for younger children.
- ▶ Separate sections for hard news clips, opinion clips, maps and graphs, and student writing or newspaper journals.
- ▶ Keep special scissors, paste, markers, red pens, highlighters and crayons available for NIE day in a designated space to assure that students have materials to work with each newspaper day.
- ▶ Tell the students their notebooks will be kept for the whole year, semester, or period of weeks that the newspapers will be used.
- ▶ Provide children with continuous feedback for their notebooks, either by grading them periodically, or putting them on display for others to see.
- ▶ Have children write something for each NIE lesson to connect the reading and writing experience.
- ▶ Connect the notebooks to other forms of media, i.e., encourage children to cut and paste from magazines, journals and other text to augment their notebooks. They may want to add phonics pages, etc. as well.
- ▶ Talk about television and how news on television is similar or different from reading a newspaper.

The National Reading Panel

What Is the National Reading Panel?

In 1997, Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), along with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel on reading. The National Reading Panel (NRP) was asked by Congress to assess the status of research-based knowledge about reading, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. The panel was made up of 14 people, including leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, teachers, educational administrators and parents. The NRP met over a period of two years to discuss their findings and prepare the results in two reports and a video titled, “Teaching Children to Read.”

How Did the National Reading Panel Gather Information for its Study?

The Panel followed three paths for gathering information for its study. The first was to review a variety of public databases to determine what research had already been conducted on how children learn to read. The second was to gather information from the public about their needs and their understanding of reading research. The NRP accomplished this by

holding public regional hearings. The third was to consult with leading education organizations that had an interest in reading issues.

Participants in the hearings expressed several themes quite clearly. They noted the important role parents and others play in providing children with early experiences that foster reading development. They also highlighted the importance of identifying early which children are at risk for reading failure and intervening quickly to help them.

Participants also stressed the importance of **phonemic awareness**, as well as the need to combine a variety of reading approaches into teaching strategies. The instruction, they argued, should be scientifically based. For that reason, the participants urged the Panel to base its conclusions on experimental studies conducted according to rigorous scientific standards. In addition, participants highlighted the importance of professional development for teachers and the need to encourage more interactions between teachers and researchers. And finally, participants urged wide dissemination of the Panel's eventual findings. What research did the Panel review in developing its findings?

The Panel first reviewed public databases and found about 100,000 research studies on reading that had been published since 1966. Because it was not possible for the Panel to critically review all this research, panel

members decided to set criteria for which studies to include in their review.

The Panel began by first selecting research topics to examine that were central to the issues of learning how to read. The selection of topics was guided by the work of the National Research Council (NRC) Committee on *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The NRC Committee had identified and summarized research literature relevant to the critical skills, environments and early interactions that are important for gaining beginning reading skills.

Once it selected the topics for review, the Panel also decided how to choose which studies to include in its analysis. To ensure the quality of the work, the Panel agreed to base its conclusions only on studies that had appeared in English in a refereed journal. The Panel limited its review to studies that focused directly on children's reading development from preschool through Grade 12. The Panel also concentrated only on studies that were experimental or quasi-experimental in design. These studies had to include a sample size that was considered large enough to be useful, and the instructional procedures used in the studies had to be well defined.

What Research Topics Did The Panel Examine?

The Panel concentrated on the following areas: Alphabetic, including the issues of phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction;

Fluency; Comprehension, including vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation and comprehension strategies; Teacher Education and Reading Instruction; and Computer Technology and Reading Instruction.

What Did the Panel Conclude About Phonemic Awareness (PA)?

Scientific evidence shows that teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language (phonemes) helps them learn to read. This remains true under a variety of teaching conditions and with a variety of learners across a range of grade and age levels. The NRP concluded that teaching phonemic awareness to children significantly improves their reading when compared to instruction without any attention to phonemic awareness. Specifically, the results of experimental studies led the Panel to conclude that PA training led to improvement in students' phonemic awareness, reading and spelling.

What Did the Panel Conclude About Phonics Instruction?

The Panel determined that systematic phonics instruction leads to significant positive benefits for students in kindergarten through sixth grade and for children with difficulty learning to read. Kindergartners who receive systematic beginning phonics instruction read better and spell better than other children, and first graders are better able to decode and spell words. The students also show significant improvement in their ability to understand what

they read. Similarly, phonics instruction helps older children spell and decode text better, although their understanding does not necessarily improve.

What Is Reading Fluency?

Reading fluency is one of several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension, but is often neglected in the classroom. If children read out loud with speed, accuracy, and proper expression, they are more likely to comprehend and remember the material than if they read with difficulty and in an inefficient way. Two instructional approaches have typically been used to teach reading fluency. One, guided repeated oral reading, encourages students to read passages out loud with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from their teacher. The other, independent silent reading, encourages students to read silently on their own, inside and outside the classroom, with little guidance or feedback from their teachers.

What did the Panel conclude about reading fluency?

Reading practice is generally believed to improve fluency, and two instructional approaches are usually used to practice reading: guided repeated oral reading and independent silent reading. The Panel determined that guided repeated oral reading has a significant and positive impact on word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension for students of all ages. However, the Panel was unable to conclude that independent silent reading, as the only

type of reading instruction, improves reading fluency. More research is needed to understand the specific influences that independent silent reading practices have on reading fluency.

What Are the Components of Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension is very important to the development of children's reading skills and therefore to their ability to obtain an education. In carrying out its study of reading comprehension, the NRP noted three main themes in the research on the development of reading comprehension skills. First, reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that cannot be understood without a clear description of the role that vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction play in the understanding of what has been read. Second, comprehension is an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text (text comprehension instruction). Third, the preparation of teachers to better equip students to develop and apply reading comprehension strategies to enhance understanding is intimately linked to students' achievement in this area.

What Did the Panel Conclude About Reading Comprehension?

Vocabulary development has long been considered important for reading comprehension. The Panel concluded that vocabulary should be taught both directly and

indirectly. Repetition and seeing vocabulary words several times is also important. Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and the use of computer technology all help children develop larger vocabularies. A combination of methods, rather than a single teaching method, leads to the best learning.

As with vocabulary development, text comprehension is improved when teachers use a combination of reading comprehension techniques such as question answering, question generation and summarization. When students are able to use them successfully, they perform better in recall, answering questions, generating questions, and summarizing texts.

The Panel found that intensive professional development is necessary so that teachers can learn to use reading comprehension strategies effectively. Preferably, teachers should receive formal instruction on strategies to teach reading comprehension as early as preservice. More research is needed on a number of issues, including which components of teacher preparation are most effective.

What Did the Panel Conclude About Teacher Education and Reading Instruction?

The Panel determined that in-service professional development for teachers results in significantly higher achievement for their students. This is true for established as well as new teachers. More research is needed, however, to determine the best combinations

of inservice and preservice training, the appropriate length of each, and how teachers should be supported over the long term to improve student performance. The relationship between the development of standards and teacher education is an important gap in current knowledge.

What Did the Panel Determine About the Value of Computer Technology to Reading Instruction?

The research reviewed by the Panel was too limited to make any strong recommendations about the value of computer technology to reading instruction. However, all the studies indicate positive results, suggesting that using computer technology for reading instruction is very promising. For instance, the addition of speech to computer-presented text, the use of hypertext, and the use of computers as word processors all show promise.

What Do the Panel's Findings Mean to Parents?

Parents have long been considered critical to the development of their children's reading skills. Parents who read with their children can help get them interested in reading at an early age and help model good reading habits. Parents also have other important roles to play in supporting their children's reading development. The Panel's report highlights which teaching strategies have been proven effective and those that may not be effective. Parents who become familiar with the Panel's findings can become advocates for quality

reading instruction in their children's schools. In addition, those who become familiar with the Panel's findings can use this information to help them determine if their children are struggling and if they should be candidates for more individualized reading instruction. Parents can now rely on the Panel's findings as their source on reading instruction and use their understanding of the findings to identify other tools to help their children develop better reading skills.

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About the Author

The NAA Foundation gratefully recognizes Abitibi Consolidated as the national sponsor of this guide. Abitibi has long been a strong supporter of literacy programs through the use of the newspaper as a teaching tool.

Author Barbara Shapley is a lifelong educator. Her career in education spans four decades with services as a teacher in New York and Florida. She has taught at all grade levels. Her areas of expertise are reading, language arts, English and Humanities. She has also served as a consultant and adjunct professor at Florida State University.

In 1984 Shapley joined the Florida Department of Education as consultant for the state's Newspaper In Education programs. As state NIE consultant, she worked closely with Florida's NIE coordinators, conducted NIE workshops for teachers, wrote curriculum supplements for using newspaper-based instruction for all grade levels and subject areas, and served in an advisor capacity to the Newspaper Association of America Foundation Youth Services Committee.

Since her recent retirement, she has begun to write serial stories for newspapers. Her original series, "The Woodrow Tales," is about a pet therapy dog who teaches himself to read from newspapers. For more information, contact Barbara Shapley at bashapley@comcast.net or (850) 539-0895.