



# The Other Reading Difficulty - Comprehension

The Reading Clinic Parent Workshops  
Spring 2010 Series  
Presenter: Lynne Baldwin

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

(from *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, by Lewis Carroll, 1872)





# Agenda

- How to think about reading comprehension
- Signs that my child is have difficulty comprehending
- What I can do to help my child with comprehension

# The Reading Pie

The National Reading Panel identified five components—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—as necessary for learning to read.

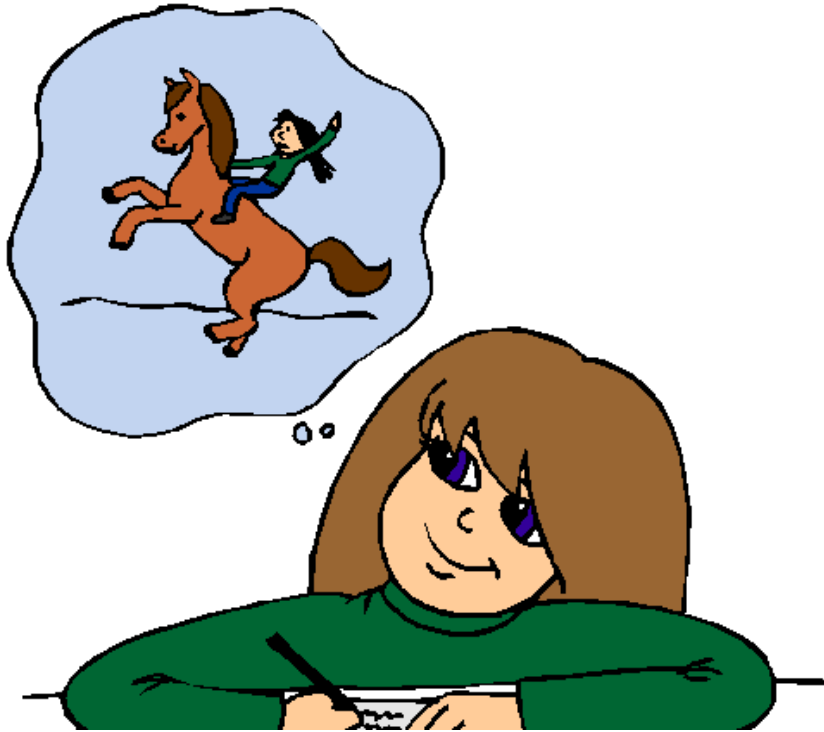


# What is Comprehension?

- 1) Take in information from book or listening
    - a) Some kids can comprehend by listening but not from a book or vice versa
  - 2) Process the information
    - a. Details, Sequence, Main Idea, HOTS
    - b. Change words to pictures (Dual coding)
  - 3) Express your understanding
    - a) Answer questions verbally or in writing
    - b) Some kids have strength in one but not the other
- 



# The Fundamental Skill



# What Good Readers Do

Good readers think actively as they read.

They use their experiences and knowledge of the world, vocabulary, language structure, and reading strategies to make sense of the text and know how to get the most out of it.

They know when they have problems with understanding  
And how to resolve these problems as they occur.

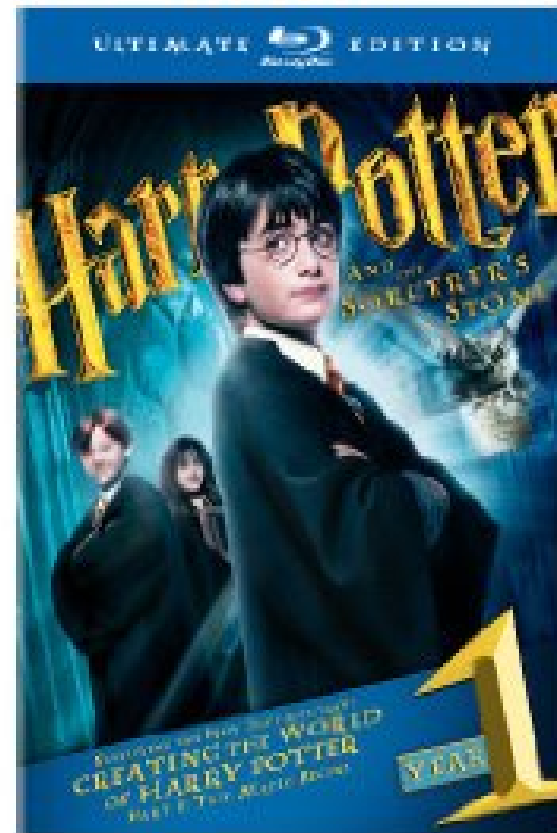
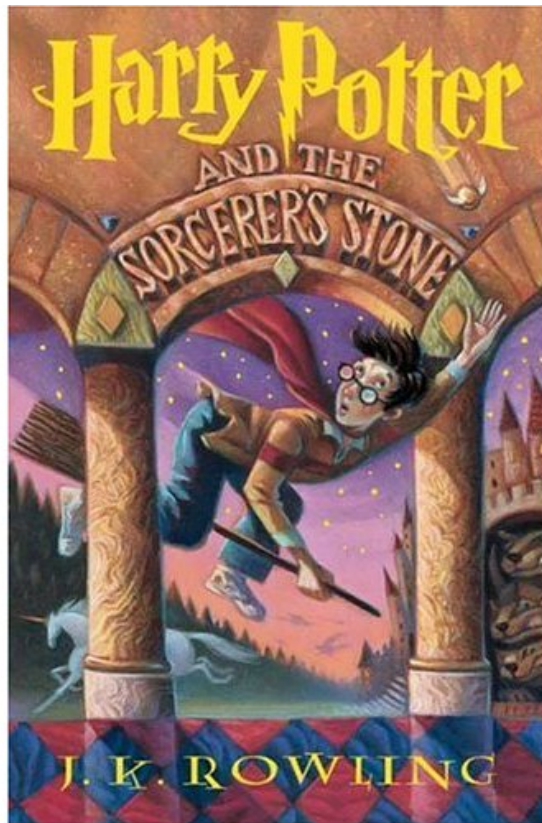
# Signs of Difficulty with Comprehension

- Your child tells you that she does not 'get' what a book is about
- You ask your child to summarize what a book she is reading is about and she struggles to do so – forgets key parts, does not get sequence of events right
- You ask your child about a character in book and your child cannot explain the character's thoughts or feelings
- You ask your child what she pictures about what she just read and she restates the text or tells you she does not have a picture in her head
- Your child's teacher says that your child often gets 'hung up' on details of what is being read and cannot figure out the main idea
- Your child's teachers says that your child brings up irrelevant information when asked to relate a story to something in her own life



# Creating Mind Movies

- Read the Book
- See the Movie



# Reading Aloud and Making Pictures

- Read with your child and model what a good reader does using a 'think aloud' technique when reading
- Ask '**what do you picture**' questions for your child to consider
- Prompt your child for basic 'elements' in making pictures (what, where, colors, movement, feeling)
- Help the child comprehend story elements
  - Overall story structure: have child describe a picture for the beginning, middle, and end of a story
  - Characters: have the child describe what she pictures for each character at different points in the story
  - Setting, have child describe what she pictures for time and place of the story



# Let's Practice

## The Lion and the Mouse (An Aesop's Fable)

Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him.

"Pardon, O King," cried the little Mouse: "forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?" The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go.

Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little Mouse.



# Let's Practice

What do you picture for the Lion? And what do you picture for the Mouse?

What do you picture for the place where the Lion and Mouse are?

What do you picture for the time of day the story happens?

What do you picture happening

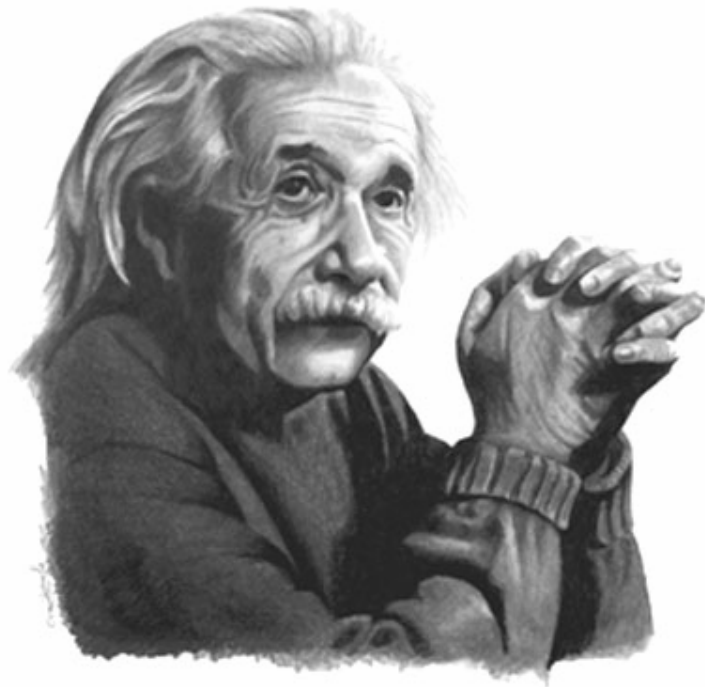
- at the beginning of the story
- in the middle of the story
- at the end of the story

What do you picture happening next after this story?

How about you draw a picture showing the happy ending of this story!



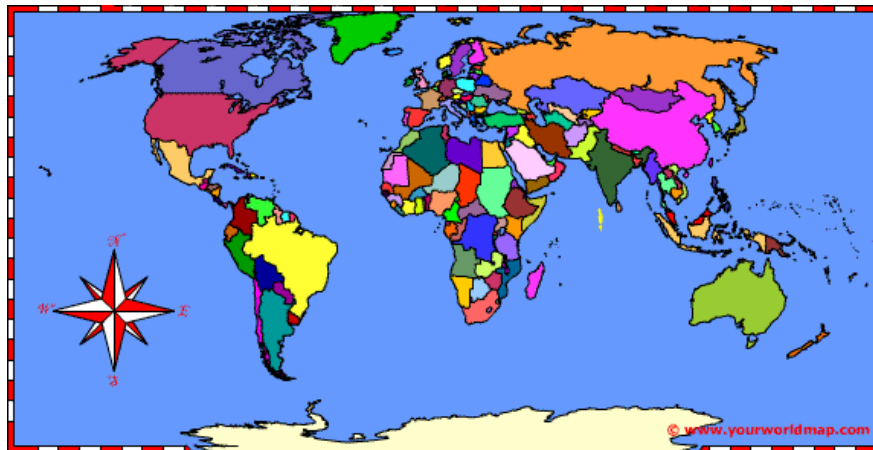
If I can't picture it, I can't understand it.



# Building Background Knowledge

## Telling Stories – narrative and informative

- Take a large map of the world or a part of the world and place on the wall in your child's room
- Pick a place to talk about and let the child ask questions about that place
- Have child draw pictures about the place (e.g., Amazon Rain Forest – jungle picture with animals of the rain forest)
- Put markers up as you move from one place to another over a period of days and weeks – show off the virtual world tour you and your child are taking!



# Building Background Knowledge

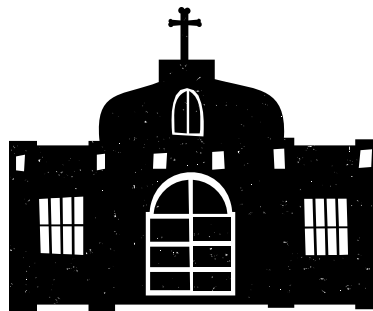
## Time Lines – big picture and little picture

- California history – 4 major time periods
- Each breaks down into smaller time lines
- Make connections between cause and effect

**Native Americans**



**Spanish Colony  
Missions**

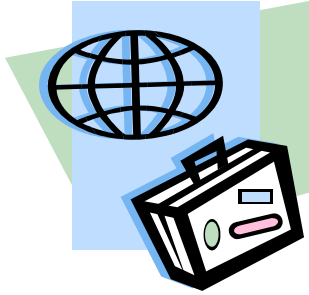


**Part of Mexico**



**Gold Rush  
Statehood**





World knowledge is an essential component of reading comprehension, because every text takes for granted the readers' familiarity with a whole range of unspoken and unwritten facts about the cultural and natural worlds.

- E. D. Hirsch, Jr.



# Summing up

- A child can read fluently yet not be comprehending well
- Comprehension is an active process to derive meaning from text and is tied to a child's developing language, vocabulary, and reading fluency skills as well as experiences
- A key technique that parents can use to help bolster their child's comprehension skills is help them make pictures in their heads of what they read
- Another key technique is to relate stories and information about the world. Go on a world tour and a tour through time



# For more information and activities

- Reading Rockets

<http://www.readingrockets.org/audience/parents>

Has information for parents and educators on reading research and on activities to promote skills for all aspects of learning and promoting reading

- readwritethink

<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/>

Sponsored by the International Reading Association in an effort to help parents in the critical teaching role they play with regard to their children learning to read

- KidsRead

This website is geared to children providing them with book reviews and fun activities and information to promote a love of books and reading



Thank you for your attention and participation!

