

# Select Texts to Purposely Support Comprehension Development

## Purpose

This document provides educators with information about a high-leverage, evidence-based practice recommended in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, [Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#).<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

**Selecting texts to purposely support comprehension development** is an evidence-based practice to help educators increase student achievement in critical foundational skills for early readers. Page 30 of the practice guide states:

There is no such thing as “one-size-fits-all” when it comes to selecting a text for teaching reading comprehension. The panel believes that early exposure to different types of text builds the capacity to understand the large variety of reading material that students will encounter as they move from grade to grade. Not only should teachers introduce students to a variety of texts, but teachers should also ensure that a selected text (1) is rich in depth of ideas and information, (2) has a level of difficulty commensurate with the students’ word-reading and comprehension skills, and (3) supports the purpose of the lesson...Specifically for younger students, the panel believes that all texts require students to make inferences or check their understanding, and students’ comprehension could always be enhanced by retelling elements of the text.

For more information about this practice guide, see the [AOE’s Annotated Guide](#), as well [Resources for Educators](#) on the WWC (including videos and instructional rubrics).

## ESSA Level of Evidence

ESSA levels of evidence are the result of a synthesis of current evidence-based research. Below is the level of evidence for this recommendation:

- **Tier 4 – Has Rationale (Minimal Evidence)**

See the [full practice guide](#) for more information about specific studies. For more information about levels of evidence, see the REL document [ESSA Tiers of Evidence: What You Need to Know](#).

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<sup>1</sup> [What Works Clearinghouse/IES Practice Guides](#) provide recommendations for educators of evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes. WWC/IES Practice Guides were developed by a panel of literacy experts based on reviews of research, practitioner experiences, and expert opinions.

## Contact Information:

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## How to Carry Out the Recommendation

Listed below are ways to [select texts to purposely support comprehension development](#). See the pages of the guide referenced next to each instructional practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

- Teach reading comprehension with multiple genres of text (31).
- Choose texts of high quality with richness and depth of ideas and information (31).
- Choose texts with word recognition and comprehension difficulty appropriate for the students' reading ability and the instructional activity (32).
- Use texts that support the purpose of instruction (32).

## Connections to Literacy Essential Practices

[Literacy Essentials](#) provide evidence- and research-based approaches educators can use to support early literacy. This resource was introduced to Vermont through work done with [Dr. Nell Duke](#) and includes classroom practices teachers can use daily to implement the recommendations in the WWC practice guides. See the page number referenced next to each Essential Practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

### [Literacy Essential Practices for Prekindergarten](#)

- **Essential Practice #1:** Intentional use of literacy artifacts in dramatic play and throughout the learning environment (3)
- **Essential Practice #2:** Read aloud with reference to print (3)
- **Essential Practice #3:** Interactive read-alouds with a comprehension and vocabulary focus (4)
- **Essential Practice #8:** Provision of abundant reading, listening, and viewing material in the classroom (6)
- **Essential Practice #9:** Ongoing observation and other forms of assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs their education (7)

### [Literacy Essential Practices for Grades K-3](#)

- **Essential Practice #2:** Read-alouds of age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital, including culturally relevant texts (3)
- **Essential Practice #7:** Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary and knowledge, including content and other cultural knowledge, throughout the day (6)
- **Essential Practice #8:** Abundant reading material in classroom and school libraries and reading opportunities in the classroom (7)
- **Essential Practice #9:** Ongoing observation and other forms of assessment of children's language and literacy development that informs their education (7)