

⇒ [Curriculum & Instruction Resources](#)

⇒ [Content Reading & Writing Resources](#): A teacher resource page providing strategies to improve reading comprehension in all content areas

BEFORE-DURING-AFTER (BDA) Reading Strategies



What are BDAs???

Reading involves connecting new text to that which is already understood (prior knowledge). BDA strategies are used to get students to activate existing knowledge, thereby creating a mental framework to which new text, terms, ideas, etc. can be attached. This mental framework is begun before reading even begins, strengthened as students interact with the text during the reading, and reflected upon after reading as students incorporate what they have just read into their core knowledge. Key processes used throughout BDAs are [writing](#), conversation and reading.



Types of BDAs

Content Area BDAs

 [Before](#)

 [During](#)

 [After](#)



A note about writing: There are five (5) types of writing that need to be understood in the context of these BDA strategies. They are based on the work of Dr. John Collins at the Center for Effective Communication, 320 Main Street, P.O. Box 957, West Newbury, MA 01985.

Type 1: Capture Ideas –there is no correct answer; or, if there is a correct answer, it’s okay to guess. Students compose just one draft, which is NOT graded or edited; all that matters is length, focus, and that it is read aloud to someone.

Type 2: Respond Correctly – this writing makes a point and has a correct answer or correct content, e.g., a short answer to a quiz. Again, students compose just one draft, which is graded for content only.

Most of the Before (B) strategies employ Type 1 or 2 Writing.

Type 3: Edit for Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) – this writing is read aloud and reviewed by the author using guiding questions: Does it complete the assignment? Is it easy to read? Does it fulfill the focus correction areas for content and writing skills (the only elements being graded this time)? Again, just one draft.

Type 4: Peer Edit for Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) – this writing is Type 3 writing that has been read aloud and reviewed by another person. It leads to the completion of a second draft.

Type 5: Publish – this is writing that is publishable and could go outside the classroom without explanation or qualification. It involves multiple drafts.



B- Before (Pre-Reading)

WORD SPLASH: Students [write](#) a story using some familiar and unfamiliar words that are all found in the text. Some stories are shared aloud; any misunderstood or unknown words are then defined. A Word Splash activates prior knowledge about key vocabulary and concepts.

KEY WORDS: Students [write](#) an informational essay using new concept vocabulary; typically this is a way for students to describe what they already know about the terms before they actually read the text. It is a tool for activating prior knowledge and determining necessary instruction. A Key Words activity can be used again after a unit to demonstrate increased understanding.

PREWRITE QUESTIONS: Students survey the text and create questions they think the text was designed to answer. This sets a purpose for reading. (During reading, students should try to answer their questions).

STORY IMPRESSION: Students [write](#) a story using vocabulary words; appropriate for literature. A story impression is a prediction of a story; as students begin to do the actual reading, they have a schema in place to which new ideas from the text can be attached, corrected, or enhanced.

PICTURES: Students look at pictures/text box/sidebars and predict what text is about.

DO NOW: Students [write](#) their thoughts on a topic or question that relates specifically to text that will be read by students. "Do Now"s are typically done at the start of a class or lesson.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: Students [write](#) down thoughts, discuss with partner, and share meaningful ideas with class. Forces interaction and uncovers various perspectives and prior knowledge.

KWL CHART: Using a three-columned poster or page, students [write](#) what they "**k**"now or think they know about a topic, and then add any questions they "**w**"ant to have answered by the text. Return to the chart after reading to record what was "**l**"earned through the reading, and/or to correct any prior misconceptions.

I-SEARCH: An alternative to a research paper that allows students to [write](#) about a topic they are interested in.



D- During (Reading & Rereading)

RESPONSE SHEET: Students note key statements on the left and personal responses to them on the right; helps connect text to prior knowledge, and provides meaningful study guide later; based on Cornell note-taking method.

STICKY NOTES: Students use “post its” to write thoughts/notes and stick to a text on which writing is forbidden

TEXT RENDERING: An alternative to traditional highlighting of words or concepts that stand out; an interaction between reader and text.

REREADING: Students look back at the text to find support of an answer/opinion/position.

CHUNKING: Teacher breaks up reading passages into “chunks” (1 paragraph - 3 paragraphs)

DO NOW: Students write their thoughts on a topic or question that relates specifically to text that will be read by students.

PREWRITE QUESTIONS: Students answer the questions they composed prior to reading, and create additional questions that arise as they read the text.

LIT CIRCLES: An independent reading activity that prompts student-generated discussions on a chosen text. Students are active, rather than passive, users of text.

KWL Chart: Students return to the chart they created prior to reading to record what was learned through the reading, and/or to correct any prior misconceptions.



A - After (Post Reading)

EXPERT JIGSAW: An expert jigsaw breaks up a large text into smaller chunks. It allows the students to take leadership by teaching their peers what they’ve learned, but first gives them the confidence to do so by giving them time to consult with other students that read the same section of a given text.

REFLECTION: Students write about the new content or perspectives learned, and describe how the new learning relates to previous understanding and future actions.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: Students write down thoughts on a given subject, discuss with partner, and share with class. Forces interaction and uncovers various perspectives and comprehension.

WHIP: A text rendering activity that involves full student participation.

KWL Chart: Students return to the chart after reading to record what was learned through the reading, and/or to correct any prior misconceptions

I-Search: An alternative to a research paper that leads students to investigate a topic they are interested in without the worry of plagiarism and the overwhelming paper deluge.



Other Organizers

SKILLS JOURNAL: Divide paper into three columns: date, skills journal entry, & new learning (for corrections). The teacher dictates sentence and students do their best to write it correctly. Then they get one minute to 'cheat' = talk over with a friend. The correct sentence is written on the board/overhead, and students make corrections in third column.

DOCUMENT REVIEW: Put up student's work on overhead with permission; choose a middle one - (not a model). First, teacher and students must give positive feedback and then revise the paper using the FCA (focus correction skills; done by teacher on an overhead (becomes a model for revising process)).

PEER REVISING: The author and a partner sit side by side. The non-author reads the author's paper orally and either partner (or both) can make correction marks. This method capitalizes on the oral reading, which highlights mistakes, problems with sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, etc., more effectively than silent rereading. The partner is a tool, while the author maintains responsibility for making revisions.

Do Now:

What is it?

A Do Now is a quick question or thought-provoking statement that the students are asked to respond to within a given time (usually 3-5 minutes). The Do Now question can be written on the board, shown on an overhead or duplicated and passed out. The object is to engage students in writing their thoughts without the pressure of being correct and to focus the students on the concept that will be targeted in class that day.

How is it used?

"Do Now's" are most often used as "At the bell" activities to enable an efficient transition between hall time and class time, however they can be used to:

1. Introduce a new unit or the next concept in the unit
2. Quickly review a learned concept.
3. Get thoughts on paper for later discussion or reflection



Word Splash:

What is it?

Word Splash is a fun activity that also engages students in writing while providing motivation for reading by setting a clear purpose for reading.

How is it done?

1. First, select 7-10 key words or phrases from the given text; use words that are both familiar and unfamiliar to the students.
2. Dictate the words to the students so that they have to try to spell the words.
3. Have students write a short story of at least seven lines using all the words.
4. Give students a chance to share their stories with a partner; then select several students to read their story aloud.
5. Read the given text to see if any student-generated story was close to the text.



KWL Charts:

What is it?

A KWL Chart is a three-column chart that helps encompass the before-during-after components of reading a text selection.

K = What you **know** **W** = What you **w**ant to know **L** = What you've **l**earned

How is it done?

1. Create one as a class on the chalkboard or have students work individually on a template or a blank sheet of paper.
2. Create three columns labeled **K, W and L**.

3. A topic is introduced by name or title only.
4. Before reading some text, students complete the **K** column, listing everything they know about the given topic or title. This can be done silently or in unison, with teacher recording the ideas on the class chart.
5. Students are then to complete the **W** column, listing everything they might want to know about the given subject. This is done in unison at first; eventually students do this independently.
6. If done independently, have several students share their **K** and **W** columns aloud with the class before the text is read.
7. After reading the given text, have students complete the **L** column, listing everything they learned from their reading, especially paying attention to **W** questions that were answered by the text. Again, it is best to do this in unison the first few times. (The **L** column serves as a review of what was read and as notes to study later!)



What is it?

1. A quick around-the-room activity that ensures everyone's participation; done to share many different responses to an open-ended question **OR**
2. To complete a quick review of a concept (and find out if there are misconceptions or errors to clarify). A whip does not allow critical or corrective comments from either the teacher or other students that might dissuade students from sharing. It is a strategy for total participation and data gathering. It also provides weaker readers with other perspectives and models of text-based thinking

How is it done?

After reading, instruct students to answer aloud, going up and down each row, responding to a given question that connects to the text, e.g. "Which paragraph offered the best visual description of _____?" or "Read aloud the phrase that stood out in your mind". Often, the Whip question follows the text rendering, so students are revealing some of their during-reading thought processes.



Lit Circle:

What is it?

A Literature Circle is a student centered reading activity for a group of 4-6 students. Each member of a circle is assigned a role which helps guide the group discussion of the text they are all reading. Literature Circles provide an opportunity for students to control their own learning by sharing their thoughts, concerns and understanding of the events of the text. While it seems that Literature Circles are meant for Literature only, they can be used with various forms of text. Lit Circle guidelines and expectations should be modeled numerous times before expecting students to undertake this independently. This is one activity that will require an investment of time to see its full benefit. Teachers who expect it to work well the first time may be disappointed. It is a great idea to proceed with a colleague, so you can compare notes and encourage each other until it takes off.

Group Roles:

Discussion Director: Develops a list of 4 or 5 questions pertaining to a section of the text for the group to discuss. Questions should be divergent, higher-level of thinking, and open ended. The discussion director facilitates the conversations to ensure the "larger ideas" in the text are discussed.

Connector: Makes connections between the text the group is reading and the outside world. Connect situations from the text to happenings at school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other places, to other people or problems in the real world.

Vocabulary Enricher: Finds 5 to 8 especially important words in a given section of reading. Notes the page number, paragraph, word, and the definition for each word.

Summarizer: Prepares a brief summary of the given sections reading. Highlight the key points and main events.

How is it done?

1. Students choose their own reading materials
2. Small temporary groups are formed, based upon book choice (Different groups read different books)
3. Group roles are assigned and recorded by teacher (new roles can be added based on the number of students in each group)
4. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading

5. All group members record the information shared in the group at each meeting
6. Discussion topics come from the students
7. Group meetings aim to be open, natural conversations about books, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome
8. Students should rotate group roles with each new group
9. The teacher serves as a facilitator, not a group member or instructor
10. Assessment is done by teacher observation and student self-evaluation (Group projects would also be a great assessment)
11. When groups finish their chosen text, their responses are shared with the class, and new books are chosen and groups formed

For more information visit the [Education World website](#).



Expert Jigsaw Activity:



What is it?

An expert jigsaw breaks-up a large text into smaller pieces. It allows the students to become teachers but first gives them the confidence to do so by giving them time to consult with other students that read the same section of a given text.

How is it done?

1. Break a larger piece of text into smaller "chunks", each with enough content to cover an intact portion of the overall passage.
2. Various students are assigned to read the different sections of a text (all students will read a section, but only a few students read the same sections).
3. Readers use during-reading techniques, such as text rendering or response sheets to foster their individual comprehension.
4. The readers of the same portion of text form an "expert group", to discuss the main ideas and important points from the text.
5. One member from each of the "expert groups" is then grouped with one member from each of the other "expert groups".
6. Each "expert" then explains the main ideas and important points of his/her text chunk to the new group.

7. Each group shares aloud with the class all the information they received from the “experts” and teacher records on the board.
8. Clarify any misconceptions and add any missing information.



Key Word Activity:

What is it?

The Key Word activity is similar to the Word Splash Activity, however instead of writing a short story with the given key word, students are asked to put the words into an informative essay as if they are writing to share their knowledge about the key words with someone else.

How is it used?

1. First, select 7-10 key words from the given text that may challenge the students.
2. Have words on the board for students to copy down or give them a list.
3. Students are to write an informative paragraph(s) using all the key words provided.
4. Allow students to share their essay with a partner; then select a few students to read their paragraph(s) aloud.
5. Read the given text to see how accurate the essays were.



I-Search:

What is it?

An I-Search is a user-friendly research project that capitalizes on the students’ inquiry. Students begin with a broad-based, open-ended question that **THEY** want to explore. They then gather information in a variety of ways to find answers to their inquiry. Students reflect on their findings and report them by writing a paper on the information they’ve gathered. While I-search papers are similar to research papers they differ in that the procedures involve less material (e.g., note cards) and reduce the possibility of plagiarism. The students end up re-presenting what they’ve learned in a personalized, original text.

How is it done?

1. Students first must choose a topic based on a broad and open-ended question they have about something.
2. Students complete a list of questions they have about their chosen topic.
3. Research a variety of sources to discover the answers to their questions. (A KWL chart would be a helpful tool for organizing their I-search paper)
4. Students begin writing the first section of the I-search paper by describing how and why they chose their topic.
5. The second section of the I-search completes a description of the search process the student used to answer the questions about the topic. (What sources were used, and where were they found?)
6. The third section of the I-search paper includes what the students discover about their topic. (What did they learn? They state it in the first person, so that it is their personal explanation)
7. The final section incorporates any conclusions the students reach about their topic.

For More Information, read this [article](#).



Think-Pair-Share:



What is it?

The Think-Pair-Share activity is a cooperative learning tool.

How is it used?

1. Students are given a topic or open-ended question to think about, recording their thoughts on paper. The "Do Now" works well as a Think-Pair-Share activity.
2. Students are then paired up and asked to share their thoughts with a partner.
3. The partners are asked to create one concise statement combining both group members' thoughts.
4. The combined statements are shared with the class.



PREWRITE QUESTIONS:



What is it?

Survey textbook and create questions that will probably be answered by the text. As students read, they look for information that will answer their questions.

How is it used?

An alternative is for students to try to anticipate the questions that a teacher might ask if he/she were planning to assess the students' comprehension. Then students read to locate the answers to such possible test questions.



STORY IMPRESSION:

What is it?

The teacher chooses key words, phrases, or concepts from several chapters and lists them in the order in which they appear in the chapters. The list will normally consist of 10 to 15 items. Students should be given enough words to form an impression of the chapters but not so many that they are able to create entire episodes that they will encounter in reading.



PICTURES:

What is it?

Students look at pictures/text box/sidebars and predict what text is about



RESPONSE SHEET:

What is it?

Students note key statements on the left and personal responses to them on the right; helps connect text to prior knowledge, and provides meaningful study guide later.

STICKY NOTES:



What is it?

Students use “post its” to write thoughts/notes and stick to a text on which writing is forbidden. They can be removed and re-attached to a folder to record individual student “interactions” with text.

How is it used?

1. Students are given a stack (based on length of text) of sticky notes
2. Instruct students to summarize, question, jot down thoughts or ideas they are having about the text while reading. (The questions can be raised in class and answered then)
3. There is no right or wrong answer and assessment is solely based on the students’ participation in transacting with the text.
4. Sticky notes can be saved, attached to a sheet of paper or a folder, and used later as part of a study guide to recall what a given text was about.



TEXT RENDERING:



What is it?

A text rendering is a during reading activity that creates interaction between students and text.

How is it used?

Students are expected to mark their text in some way as they read, focusing on a few types of connections. If the text is duplicated on copy paper, they could write directly on their copy; however, if text is in a book that cannot be marked up, try to provide [sticky notes](#) as an alternative. At the end of the class period, the sticky notes can be removed and re-attached to a folder or other tracking sheet to record the students’ text renderings.

A typical text rendering might focus on three types of student-text interaction. Using a code to simplify the process, the student might be directed to place a check next to some statements with which he/she agrees; an exclamation point (!) next to text that appears to state the main idea, and a question mark (?) near text which confuses the reader. Of course, the teacher may request some different types of connections to be made, with appropriate

symbols, and with some students only one type of connection might be suggested at first until they become able to handle more than one.

During text rendering, a highlighter might be used to highlight the actual words that are connected to the symbol markings. Additionally, students can be encouraged to write marginal notations, if possible, to capture more of their thoughts as they read.

Following completion of the text rendering, it is important that students be given the chance to reflect on and share the connections they made. This can be done in numerous ways, but typically involve a [Think-Pair-Share](#) or a [Whip](#). If doing a Whip, it is best to ask students to simply read or restate the one statement that best captured the main idea. By hearing each student's response, no matter how many repetitions there are, the teacher can quickly determine how successful the reading went, how divergent the thinking was, and possible issues that have to be clarified before moving on, etc. Students are involved in a way that doesn't fault them for "wrong" answers, and may actually reinforce their effort or build up their understanding. At the very least, it puts the language of the text into an oral form, and weaker students begin to recognize the text as they look for and hear others read it.



REREADING:

What is it?

Students look back at the text to find support for an answer/opinion/position, or to find examples to contradict another's opinion/position.

How is it used?

1. Explain to students that "rereading" does not mean reading the entire passage again; instead, it is an effort to zero in or target specific text for its importance in defining or exemplifying key concepts. It may also be part of an I-search process to find additional supporting evidence.
2. In addition to ensuring that they are able to support their answer/opinion/position with information from the text, rereading can be used to practice students' ability to quickly locate information by using titles, headings, bold or italicized words etc.



CHUNKING:



What is it?

Breaking up reading passages into “chunks” (1 paragraph - 3 paragraphs)

How is it used?

Chunking is used with during reading activities, so that students can get some reading done under the supervision of the teacher, rather than after class. Chunking makes the reading task more manageable, especially for weaker readers, who might be discouraged by lengthy assignment. Chunking can be part of an overall B, D, A plan, where one chunk of text is used as a lead in to the next. It is important to break text into meaningful chunks, with some complete ideas. Otherwise, it serves no useful purpose toward comprehension. Thus, plan carefully.



REFLECTION:



What is it?

For new learning to go into memory, students need time to think about what they’ve just heard, done, saw, or read. Reflection activities usually ask students to [write](#) a few lines in a journal or other record, and often a prompt or guiding question will be used to target their reflection. It is not the same thing as free-writing, where anything goes; it is most useful if the reflection prompt is anticipated when the teacher is planning the lesson, and when its purpose is meant to connect new learning to prior knowledge. Reflection doesn’t always have to be shared, although it is sometimes affirming for students to discover that they are not alone in their perception, or conversely, that a classmate finds merit in their original thinking.

How is it used?

The teacher might set up a reflection page as a handout or a template for a journal. A question may be copied, or written on the board or overhead, which frames the focus of the reflection.

Students have a few minutes to think and write their reflections. Reflections are not used as a graded product, although points may need to be awarded at first to get students to take it seriously. The value of reflection is evident when it brings about an awareness of new learning; it also helps if there is an opportunity for the students to make use of their reflections in some future task, or when the teacher directs students to connect some reflections sequentially as part of a summarization activity.

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