

Comprehension Lessons that are Accessible to AAC users without Sophisticated Systems

All reading and listening comprehension lessons should begin with a before reading activity that reviews important meaning vocabulary, preteaches two or three words that may be difficult to decode, and relates the content or task at hand to the student's background knowledge and experience. The final thing that should happen before reading is that a purpose should be set. [Note: While this step is important, the before reading time should be significantly shorter than the time actually spent reading or listening.]

Background Instruction	Purpose	Task
Make sure the student knows how to sequence. It is not a skill children learn without instruction. You could teach sequencing using every day schedules or the meals of the day. You'll need lots of examples and non-examples for the children to understand.	"You listen/read so that you can put the story events I've written on these sentence strips in the correct order. I'll read them to you before you begin." [sequencing]	The teacher writes the events on sentence strips. After reading, the student puts the strips in the correct order.
Begin by asking the child to generate words that could describe someone (using whatever vocabulary is available on the device not words programmed specifically for this activity). If the child does not have access to this type of vocabulary, simply introduce the child to 10-12 words that you have written on word cards. Ask the child to determine which words describe himself/herself. Then ask which words describe you or another important person. Model this process using the words and a third person if needed. Be sure to include both examples and non-examples.	"You listen/read so that you can show me which five of these words best describe the main character in the story." *also works with setting [characters and setting]	As the child generates words, the teacher writes them on word cards. After reading, the child sorts the cards into those that do describe the character (or setting) and those that don't.

<p>Begin by asking the child to generate words that could describe someone. If the child does not have access to this type of vocabulary, simply introduce the child to 10-12 words that you have written on word cards. Ask the child to show you the words that describe only himself/herself, only you, and both of you. As the child selects the words, you place them in the category the child indicates. Make sure the child understands this before going on.</p>	<p>“You listen/read so that you can compare and contrast the two main characters in the story. You’ll tell me which of these words describes only one and which words describes both characters”</p> <p>[compare/contrast]</p>	<p>The teacher has prepared word cards with words that could be used to describe any character (ideally, these would be words the student has generated using his/her device during the before reading background instruction). After reading, the teacher draws columns or a Venn diagram and the child indicates where each word belongs.</p>
<p>Use examples from the child’s life to teach him/her about cause and effect relationships. Some examples might be: (1) When you cry, someone comes running to help you. The cause is crying and the effect is getting help. (2) When there is a big snowstorm, schools and businesses are closed. The cause is the snow and the effect is closed schools. (3) When you go out in the rain without an umbrella, you get soaking wet. The cause is no umbrella, the effect is getting wet. You might choose to have two word cards, one says “cause” and one “effect.” Give the students they examples verbally and ask them to indicate which is the cause and which is the effect.</p>	<p>“You read/listen so that you can tell me the cause/effect relationship that occurs in this story. You’ll tell me which of the events I’ve written here best describes the effect (what happened) in the story. Then you can tell me which of the events I’ve written best describes the cause (what made it happen) of that event.”</p> <p>[cause-and-effect]</p>	<p>The teacher will write several short descriptions of events from the story. There should be more than the actual two that are the cause and effect, but not so many that it is too confusing for the student. The teacher will read these descriptions orally for the task that follows the reading. The goal should be for the child to accurately identify the events, not read the descriptions the teacher has written.</p>