

## READING & METACOGNITION

Metacognition is the awareness of, and conscious control over, one's own understanding or lack of understanding while reading. Skilled readers have the ability to:

- focus attention on what is being read
- recognize the purpose of the reading
- comprehend the meaning of what is being read
- determine the important parts of the text being read
- summarize what has been read

Adult learners who are struggling with reading might be able to read the words of a text, but they may not be as able to understand what they are reading or the purpose of the reading. Learners with high metacognition are those who know when they understand a text, and are also aware of when they do not understand a text.

One of the primary goals of tutor instruction is to help learners become efficient and effective learners, and reading comprehension/metacognition is an important aspect in meeting this goal. Effective learning requires awareness of one's own understanding, as well as knowing what to do when one fails to understand. Strategies that tutors can use to build learners' metacognition are: 1.) focus the learner's attention on the main ideas of the reading; 2.) ask the learner questions about the reading to help them monitor the level of their own comprehension; and 3.) relate the learner's prior knowledge of the reading topic to the new information they are reading so a connection can be made.

## CONTEXT CUES

“Toggenburg does ready to kid this spring.”

Exact word meanings are often left out of oversimplified text, like the example sentence above. Context cues can be used to help learners understand the meanings of unfamiliar words and build metacognition. An important lesson to teach any learner working on reading and comprehension is that they do not need to know the meaning of every single word in a text in order to read and understand it. Learners can use the words that they do know as context clues, or comprehension cues, to decipher the meanings of the words that they do not know. During lessons, learners should skip over any words that they do not know, continue reading until the end of the sentence, and then try to understand the unknown words using the context of the sentence. Use the sentence below as an example:

"The gorkle took the maisly furkles to the blinto."

- Q. Who took the furkles to the blinto?
- A. The gorkle
- Q. Where did the furkles go?
- A. To the blinto
- Q. What kind of furkles were they?
- A. Maisly furkles
- Q. What are a gorkle, a furkle, and a blinto?

## READER'S FLOW CHART

### What am I reading?

A STORY	A TEXTBOOK OR INFORMATIVE ARTICLE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the <u>setting</u>?</li> <li>2. Who are the main <u>characters</u> and what are they like?</li> <li>3. What is the main character's <u>goal</u>?</li> <li>4. What <u>obstacles</u> stand in his or her way?</li> <li>5. What will the <u>outcome</u> be, and how will it come about?</li> <li>6. What <u>messages</u> about life is the author trying to communicate?</li> </ol>	<p><u>Preview and skim:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do I already know about the topic?</li> <li>2. What do I expect to learn from the reading?</li> <li>3. How is the reading organized?</li> <li>4. Use a graphic organizer to organize important information from the reading.</li> </ol> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where does the reading's information fit into my graphic organizer?</li> <li>2. Write down notes on important facts and themes found in the reading.</li> </ol> <p><u>Review and skim:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does my graphic organizer make sense?</li> <li>2. Have I missed anything important?</li> <li>3. Can I restate the main points in my own words?</li> </ol>

### Why am I reading this?

For my own pleasure.	To understand and to remember.
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## DUET READING

**Purpose:** To increase the learner's reading fluency and vocabulary by reading aloud *with* a tutor for practice.

**For:** Learners who have some reading ability but who are reading hesitantly or with low confidence.

**It Works:** A California study showed an average gain of 2.2 grade levels among learners with severe reading handicaps who received a total of 7½ hours of instruction in this method over a 6-week period.

## DUET METHODOLOGY

**Choose a Text:** Help your learner select something to read. The material should be on a topic of interest to the learner. The material may be a book, magazine, newspaper article, a pamphlet, or a brochure. It is also alright for the reading material to be *slightly* above your learner's reading level.

**Begin Together:** The tutor and learner should begin reading the selected text aloud together. The tutor reads at a normal speed, using expression and following punctuation, while the learner reads along trying to keep up with the tutor.

**Use Finger:** Tutors should move their finger beneath the lines of text being read. This helps the learner to keep up, practice reading from left to right, and practice bringing their eyes back to the beginning of each new line without losing their place.

**Keep Going:** The tutor should continue to read at a normal rate, even if the learner hesitates over a word or falls slightly behind. After a few sessions using this method, it will become easier for the learner to keep up, and they will begin looking ahead at coming words to keep from falling behind. If the learner stops completely, the tutor should also stop and give the learner a chance to rest, offer the learner encouragement, and begin again. For learners struggling with reading, spend at least 10 minutes at the end of each lesson using this method.

**No Questions:** Do not stop to explain the meaning of a word unless the learner requests it. Do not ask questions to see if the learner understands the reading. The material is to be used only as an oral reading exercise.

## GUIDED READING FORMAT

The guided reading format is used to help learners anticipate the content of a reading selection so that they will have a better idea of what the reading will be about. Originally described as the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review), the technique of previewing a reading can help learners associate what they already know about a topic with the new material that they are about to read. The steps for guided reading are as follows:

1. Study the title of the reading and develop an idea about what the reading will be about.
2. Review pictures and other visual representations that give clues about the content of the reading. Ask your learner to look at the visuals (if present) and guess what might be happening.
3. Teach your learner any major punctuation or vocabulary words found in the text before they begin reading. If your learner knows pronunciation and definitions of significant words, then the reading will be more successful for your learner.
4. Ask your learner to read the selection silently. After your learner has read the selection on their

own, give him/her the opportunity to ask questions about words or ideas which he/she didn't understand.

5. Ask general questions about the reading for feedback, and have your learner tell you in their own words what the selection is about:
  - What do you think will happen next? (predict)
  - What characters do you like or dislike?
  - What new information did you learn?
  - How did the author organize this information?
  - What is the author's purpose in writing this text?

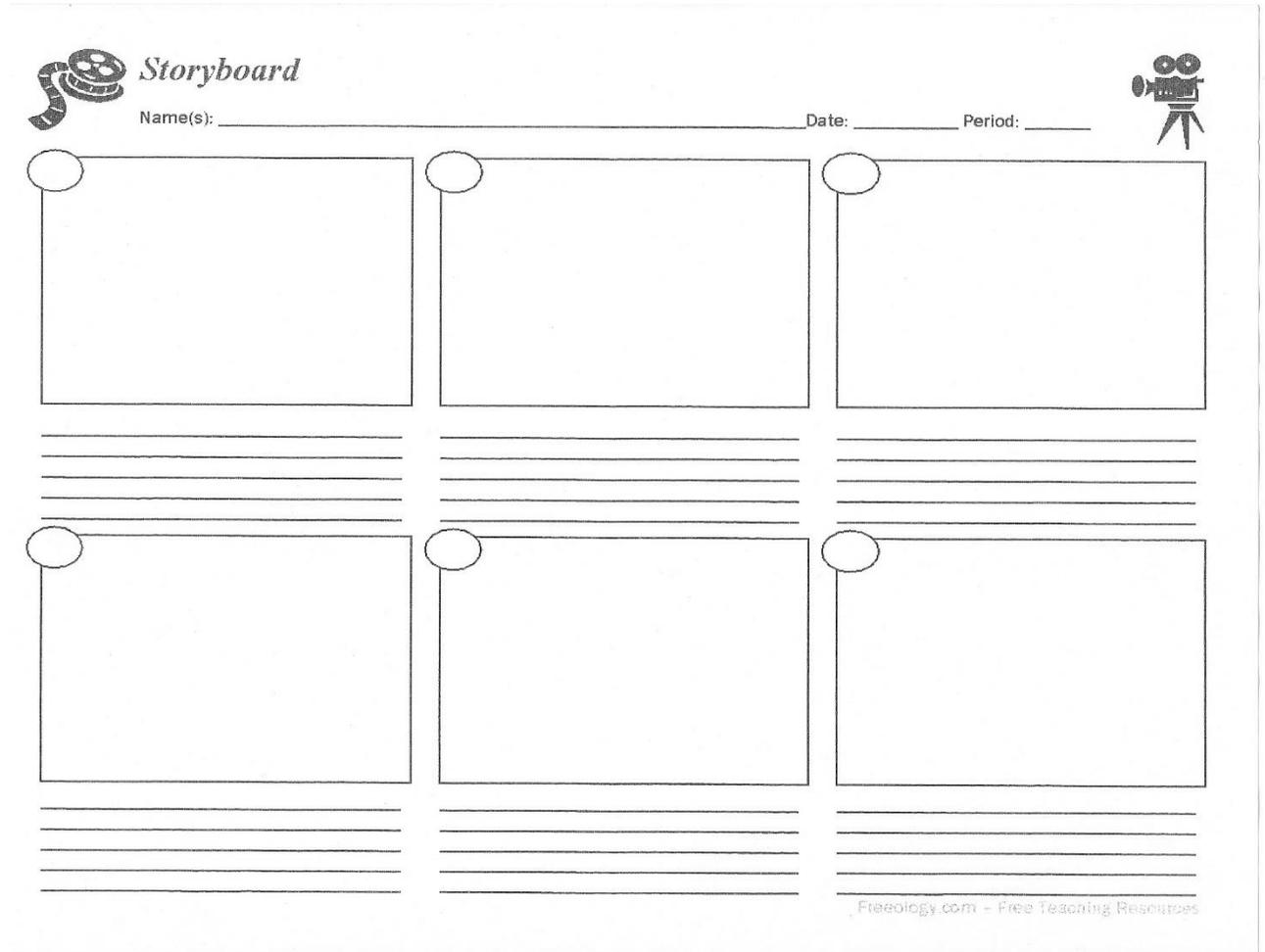
## **WRITING & READING**

Combining reading *and* writing adds strength to literacy instruction regardless of the skill level of the adult learner. Writing is a great opportunity for learners to apply what they know about language and practice reading at the same time. Writing can also be an exciting experience for learners because they have the opportunity to create and share their own ideas.

To help your learner begin the writing process, first encourage them to list all of the topics that they would like to write about. After your learner has chosen their favorite topic, have them brainstorm ideas of what to write. Your learner can then use their ideas to develop an outline, or use a **graphic organizer** to organize their writing. Once they have actually finished their writing, have them read over what they have written, and work with them on making any necessary revisions. Be sure to be encouraging, and avoid being overly critical, especially of learners who really struggle with spelling or punctuation.

## GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Graphic organizers are diagrams and charts that visually represent ideas and information. They are used to illustrate the structure of a written text, which can differ based on the purpose of the writing. For example, stories often introduce a setting, main and supporting characters, a problem, and a resolution to the problem (typically in this order). Learners may find **story boards** helpful in organizing and following the sequence of story events and characters mentioned:

A storyboard graphic organizer template. At the top left is a film reel icon and the word "Storyboard". At the top right is a camera icon. Below the title and icon are fields for "Name(s):", "Date:", and "Period:". The main area consists of six rectangular panels arranged in two rows of three. Each panel has a small circle in its top-left corner. Below each panel are three horizontal lines for writing. At the bottom right, there is a small text credit: "Freeology.com - Free Teaching Resources".

Nonfiction texts are usually organized around a sequence of chronological events such as historical texts, which often present events in order of occurrence. Articles can be organized to make a persuasive argument, where a main thesis is stated followed by supporting details. Articles can also be used to define or describe a certain topic, where the introduction of the topic is followed by a series of relevant information and examples. Graphic organizers can help learners become more familiar with common text structures and understand the flow of information and ideas within a particular text structure.

Graphic organizers are most often used when reviewing nonfiction texts, especially content-area texts pertaining to subjects such as science and social studies. For these types of texts, **KWL organizers** can be the most helpful for organizing information to be learned:

## KWL

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

**K**

(What I know)

**W**

(What I want to know)

**L**

(What I have learned)

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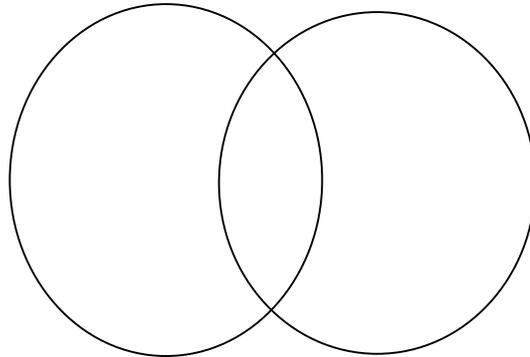
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**KWL organizers** are also used as indicators for what an adult learner already knows about a topic before reading the text, what they would like to gain from the reading, and what new information they have learned after having read the text. This process is helpful for ensuring that adult learners comprehend what they are reading, that learners are gaining new understandings from their reading lessons, and that they are capable of analyzing and summarizing information they need to learn.

Graphic organizers are also useful tools for adult learners who are comparing and contrasting different concepts and ideas. For this purpose, **Venn diagrams** are most helpful. An example of a Venn diagram can be found below:



To use a Venn diagram, first title each of the two circles based on the two different concepts/ideas to be compared and contrasted. Then, in the larger portions of each circle, list how each concept is different from the other and why. Where the two circles overlap, make a list of similarities between the two concepts. Venn diagrams are useful tools for helping adult learners recall facts and ideas discussed in texts.

### **JOURNALING EXERCISE**

Encouraging learners to keep daily or weekly journals is a great way to keep learners practicing their writing skills on a regular basis. Tutors may want to assign learners the task of keeping a journal as homework. If your learner feels comfortable sharing certain entries, then you can go over them during lessons and work on any recurring problems your learner may have with spelling, organization, grammar, or punctuation.

### **EXPLORATORY WRITING EXERCISE**

Adults engage in exploratory writing prior to reading a selected text. The learner should write for a specified period of time (about 10 minutes), describing their ideas about the topic/reading. Spelling and punctuation should be de-emphasized during exploratory writing exercises. After the learner reads the selected text, they can compare their exploratory writing to what they learned from the reading. This writing exercise reveals the adult learner's prior knowledge of a topic and is also used to enhance reading comprehension.

### **DICTIONARY EXERCISE**

1. The learner dictates a passage and the tutor prints it word for word on paper.
2. The learner and tutor read the passage out loud together (duet reading).
3. The tutor points to individual words in the passage for the learner to pronounce, spell, or

write on their own (develops sight vocabulary, phonics, and spelling).

4. The learner then tries reading the passage aloud without the tutor. The tutor may offer guidance as needed.
5. During the next tutor session, have your learner reread the same passage for review, or have them dictate a new one for more practice.

### **TRANSCRIPTION EXERCISE**

1. The learner dictates a passage that is recorded using a tape recorder, phone, computer, etc.
2. The tutor transcribes the passage and follows the same steps as the Dictation Method.
3. The goal is for the learner to eventually be able to transcribe his own recorded words with the tutor's help.

This exercise is for beginning to intermediate writers and is especially helpful for a learner whose first language is not English.

### **DIRECTED WRITING EXERCISE**

This exercise is for beginning writers. For this type of exercise, the tutor prepares a lesson in advance that will require the learner to perform some of the writing but not all. Examples include:

1. **Sentence Completions:** Have your learner complete a partially written sentence as s/he imagines it might conclude.  
Examples: When I think of my job I feel \_\_\_\_\_.  
The first thing that I do in the morning is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Lists:** Have your learners write five things about themselves; five favorite foods, five life experiences, etc.

### **FREEWITING EXERCISE**

In a freewriting exercise, the learner records his/her thoughts without stopping for a set period of time (usually no longer than 10 to 15 minutes). During this time, learners should keep their pens/pencils moving, not stopping to reread or correct. If the learner becomes stuck, he/she can simply repeat the last word they wrote until a new one comes to mind. Freewriting can be prompted by a suggestion of a topic or it can be left completely up to the learner. There are no mistakes in freewriting as long as the learner keeps writing.

For adult learners who have little experience with writing, or who are uncomfortable with it, freewriting is a great way to make writing seem less threatening and more familiar. For learners who struggle using a pen or pencil, freewriting is a creative and fun way to limber up the hand muscles. Freewriting also allows learners to develop the same natural fluency when writing that most adults have when speaking.

Grammatical and mechanical correctness have little value during freewriting, while creativity and imagination are encouraged. During freewriting exercises, the goal is to simply produce ten minutes of writing in order for the learner to practice and develop writing skills. This exercise is best suited for intermediate writers.

### **Freewriting Topics for Learners:**

1. Autobiography: Write down memories from childhood or of a particular experience in the past.
2. Question box: Write out answers to questions drawn at random from a box.
3. Letters to the Editor: Write an opinion about a particular public issue.
4. Photographs: Write a story about the activity and/or characters in a photograph.
5. Cartoon Captions: Cover up the captions of a cartoon strip and ask the learner to write their own captions for the frames.

### **BUILD-A-SENTENCE EXERCISE**

This exercise is for beginner writers and is great for adults who really struggle with reading and writing or are learning English as a second language.

- 1.) Give your learner a word, define it if necessary, and then print it on an index card.
- 2.) Have your learner pronounce the word a few times and then write it on a piece of paper.
- 3.) Have your learner say a short sentence using the word, and then write each word of the sentence your learner created on its own index card.
- 4.) Give the index cards to your learner and have them build their sentence using the cards.
- 5.) Turn all of the cards face down. Then, turn random cards over for the learner to study, pronounce, and write down on a piece of paper.
- 6.) Once your learner has become familiar with the writing and spelling of each of the words in the sentence, choose a new word for your learner and repeat the whole exercise.

## HANDWRITING GUIDE

For adult learners who have trouble with handwriting, or do not know the letters of the English language, this handwriting guide can be a useful tool. Have your adult learner copy each letter as instructed in the guide and practice until they can reproduce each letter easily.

### D'Nealian<sup>TM</sup> Manuscript Alphabet

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m*  
*n o p q r s t u v w x y z*  
*A B C D E F G H I J K L M*  
*N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z*

### D'Nealian<sup>TM</sup> Cursive Alphabet

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m*  
*n o p q r s t u v w x y z*  
*A B C D E F G H I*  
*J K L M N O P Q*  
*R S T U V W X Y Z*

### D'Nealian<sup>TM</sup> Numbers

*0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9*