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Reading For Meaning: Tutoring Elementary Students to Enhance Comprehension

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This article provides tutors with proven techniques for helping students acquire comprehension skills and strategies. In addition to building background knowledge about comprehension, it looks at six comprehension strategies and activities that support each strategy.

In this article:

- **What is comprehension?**
- **What are the comprehension strategies?**
- **Activating prior knowledge**
- **Answering and generating questions**
- **Making and verifying predictions**
- **Using mental imagery and visualization**
- **Monitoring comprehension**
- **Recognizing story structure**
- **Conclusion**

Imagine three different children reading the following page from the popular story, *M & M and the Bad News Babies*, by Pat Ross.

Mandy put a pink sea castle into the fish tank. Mimi added six yellow stones that glowed in the dark. The friends M and M had been fixing up the old fish tank all week. "Now all we need are the fish," said Mimi. "But fish cost money," said Mandy.

Think about what the following readers did to understand this passage.

Reader 1: Mark is familiar with other stories about the two friends M and M by Pat Ross and already knows that this story is an adventure about two girls named Mandy and Mimi. With this knowledge, he made a connection between what he already knows about the book series and this story. Mark knows that the author gives clues about the girls' adventures in the title, so he predicted that the two girls would try to earn money to buy fish for their fish tank and that their attempts will result in mishap. Finally, he ended by asking himself, "What kind of trouble will Mandy and Mimi get into in this story?" and turned the page to read more.

Reader 2: Lizzy is not familiar with other stories about M and M. Instead of making a text-to-text connection, she quickly previewed the text and activated her prior knowledge about fish tanks. Lizzy made a text-to-self connection between her prior knowledge and the information in the story. She knows that people put different things in their fish tanks to decorate them and that fish cost

