Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

FCAT 8th Grade Reading:

A Staff Development Tool

Teaching Strategies

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Sunshine State Standards

The teaching strategies in this guide have been correlated to the following Sunshine State Standards.

Strand A - Reading
Standard 1 - The student uses the reading process effectively.

Benchmark - LA.A.1.3.2 The student uses a variety of strategies to analyze words and text, draw conclusions, use context and word structure clues, and recognize organizational patterns.

Strand A - Reading
Standard 2 - The student constructs meaning from a wide range of texts.

Benchmark - LA.A.2.2.7 The student recognizes the use of comparison and contrast in a text.
Benchmark - LA.A.2.3.1 The student determines the main idea or essential message in a text and identifies relevant details and facts and patterns of organization.
Benchmark - LA. A.2.3.2 The student identifies the author's purpose and/or point of view in a variety of texts and uses the information to construct meaning.
Benchmark - LA.A.2.3.5 The student locates, organizes, and interprets written information for a variety of purposes, including classroom research, collaborative decision making, and performing a school or real-world task.
Benchmark - LA.A.2.3.8 The student checks the validity and accuracy of information obtained from research, in such ways as differentiating fact and opinion, identifying strong vs. weak arguments, and recognizing that personal values influence the conclusions an author draws.

Strand E - Literature
Standard 2 - The student responds critically to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

**Benchmark - LA.E.2.2.1** The student recognizes cause-and-effect relationships in literary texts.
Benchmark - LA.E.2.3.1 The student understands how character and plot development, point of view, and tone are used in various selections to support a central conflict or story line.

Previewing

This strategy prepares students in their approach to reading content area textbooks, both strategically and independently.

The teacher will draw attention to the following features:

1. **Title** - This can be used to predict what the assigned text will be about, as well as to activate the students' prior knowledge.

2. **Introductions & Summaries** - Point out to the students that introductions and summaries are two places where important information can be found.

3. **Bold Print Headings** - Direct students' attention to headings and subheadings found in the text. Have students speculate about what information may be found under these headings, as well as anticipate what questions may be answered there.

4. **Graphic Aids** - Draw the students' attention to any charts, tables, graphs, or maps that may be used in the text. Explain that these graphic aids are valuable resources for summarizing important information found in the text.
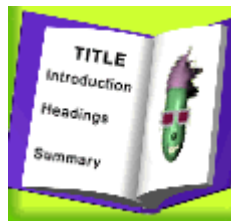
Reference
Vacca, J., & Vacca, R. (1996). Content area reading (5th ed.). New York: HarperCollins.

Question/Answer Relationship (QAR)

QAR is a questioning strategy that emphasizes that a relationship exists between the question, the text, and the background of the reader. In this strategy, students are taught to use four question/answer relationships (QAR's) to find the information they need to answer the question.

1. The teacher introduces QAR and explains the four types of question/answer relationships (QAR's).

2. The teacher models the QAR process by using a short reading passage. First read the story and questions to the students. Then identify which QAR's are evidenced through the questions given. Finally, answer questions and discuss.

3. The teacher practices identifying the QAR's with the class.

4. The teacher provides independent practice.

5. The teacher gradually increases the length and complexity of the texts used with QAR.

6. The students continue to use QAR throughout the year, across the curriculum in science, social studies, health, etc.

QAR Descriptors

Think & Search - The answer is in the selection, but students need to put together different pieces of information. The answer is found in more than one place. This is the most common QAR on the FCAT.

Right There - The answer is in the text and is usually easy to find. The information is found in one place. This QAR is seldom used on the FCAT.

Author & You - The answer is not explicitly stated in the text. They need to think about what they already know, what the author tells them in the text, and how it fits together. This QAR is not often used on the FCAT.

On My Own - The answer is not text-based. Students may be able to answer the question without reading the selection by using their own experiences and background knowledge. This QAR is not used on the FCAT.

Reference
Raphael, T. (1982). Question-answering strategies for children. The Reading Teacher, 36(2), 186-191.

Underlining for Comprehension

This strategy helps students reduce a lengthy passage into a comprehensible and manageable size by marking the text using a systematic technique. On the FCAT, students are allowed to write on the passages to be read. Therefore, if they have been trained to underline effectively, they may be able to increase their comprehension.

1. Introduce the strategy by giving the students key points.
   o read the entire text before marking
   o be very selective about what and how you mark
   o be quick
   o be neat

2. Teach the students a system they can use. Pauk (1974) suggests the following:
   o double lines underneath main ideas
   o single lines underneath supporting details
   o circle key words/terms
   o jot a brief summary in the side margin

3. Model this system continually in all the content areas and allow plenty of opportunities for independent practice with feedback.

Reference
Pauk, W. (1974). How to study in college (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Text Lookbacks

This strategy effectively teaches students to reinspect a text they have read in order to answer comprehension questions. A major focus of the FCAT is retrieving information and details from a selected passage. This three-day procedure will better prepare students to do this.

1. **Day 1** - The teacher provides explicit instruction focusing on the question: "Why should I look back?" Answer: "To find information and details I can't remember about the passage."

2. **Day 2** - The teacher provides explicit instruction focusing on: "When should I look back?" Answer: "When I can't remember what the author said, or when the question asks what I think."

3. **Day 3** - The teacher focuses instruction on: "Where should I look?" Answer: Students should practice skimming and other strategies for finding answers to specific questions.

Reference
Reis, R., & Leone.P. (1985). Teaching text lookbacks to mildly handicapped students. Journal of Reading, 28, 416-420.

Gist Strategy

This strategy teaches students to use prediction as a comprehension aid when reading expository text. The ability to predict what a passage will be about is often based on prior knowledge. Tapping this background knowledge can effectively increase the students' comprehension of the text to be read.

1. **Prereading** - Have the students predict the gist, or main point, of the text by scanning the page to get a feel for what it will be about. Record predictions about the topic on the board.

   Prompts - What do you think this text is going to be about? What makes you think so? What do you think it is going to tell us about our topic? What makes you think so?

2. **Reading** - Have the students read the assigned text.

   Prompts - Did you find evidence to support your prediction? What was it? Did you find evidence that doesn't support your prediction? What was it? At this point, do you want to change your prediction? Why or why not?

3. **Postreading** - Have the students think about what they have read and make a final revision of the gist statement. Discuss.

   Prompts - Do you want to make any changes about this topic? If yes, what changes and why? What have you learned from this reading?

4. After this strategy has been demonstrated a few times, the students should be able to respond without the prompts, thus internalizing the process for independent use.

Reference
Schuder, T., Clewell, S., & Jackson, N. (1989). Getting the gist of expository text. In K.D. Muth, (Ed.), Children's comprehension of text (pp.224-243). Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Using Context with Vocabulary

This strategy helps students build vocabulary using contextual clues.

1. The teacher selects a vocabulary word from a passage to be read by the students. The passage can be photocopied and distributed, or it can be made into an overhead transparency and projected onto a screen.

2. Introduce the strategy to be used when encountering an unknown word.
    o   **Look** - before, after, and at the word.
    o   **Reason** - connect what you know with what the author has written.
    o   **Predict** - what could the word possibly mean?
    o   **Resolve or Re-do** - decide whether you know enough, should try again, or consult a reference material or expert.

3. Discuss each step as you go through the process. Provide plenty of opportunities for independent practice. With time, this process should become automatic for them.

Reference
Blachowicz, C., & Zabroske, B. (1990). Context instruction: a metacognitive approach for at-risk readers. Journal of Reading, 33, 504-508.

Prediction-Association-Verification-Evaluation (PAVE) Procedure

This procedure encourages students to 1) predict a word's meaning within the context it appears, 2) consult a dictionary to find the correct meaning, and 3) re-evaluate their predictions. Vocabulary words addressed on the FCAT are also presented within context when a definition is required.

A PAVE Map

1. The teacher assigns a passage to be read by the students along with vocabulary words or phrases. As they encounter each of their vocabulary words, students complete a PAVE map.

2. The student writes the sentence in which the word appears.

3. The student writes the word again in isolation.

4. The student writes a sentence using the word to show an initial understanding of the word's meaning.

5. The student looks up the word in the dictionary and writes its definition.

6. The student compares the dictionary's definition with the sentence she or he wrote and, if necessary, writes a new sentence.

7. The student draws a visual representation of the word to help her/him remember its meaning.

Reference

Bannon, E., Fisher, P., Pozzi, L., & Wessel, D. (1990). Effective definitions for word learning. Journal of Reading, 34, 301-302.

Two-Column Notes for Informational Texts

This strategy helps students organize informational texts.

Key Words	Elaborations
Tree	Has a trunk with branches, leaves
Bush	Has many woody stems, leaves
Vine	Soft stem, lays on ground or wraps around objects
Herbs	Soft stem, leaves, flowers, (ex. weeds)

1. The teacher makes a transparency of a passage to be read.

2. The students take a piece of paper and fold it in half. The left column is labeled Key Words or Main Idea. The right column is labeled Elaborations.

3. The students write the key words or main idea in the left column as they read the passage.

4. The students elaborate on the key words or main idea in the right column.

5. Once completed, the students can use the two-column notes to test themselves.

Reference
Lapp, D., Flood, J., & Farnan, N. (1989). Content area reading and learning: Instructional strategies. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Problem-Solution Frame

This strategy effectively teaches students how to identify problem-solution text structure, and how to summarize this type of passage. The ability to summarize a passage is an important skill that is tested on the FCAT.

Problem-Solution Frame	
Problem	
Action	
Results	

1. Introduce the problem-solution frame.

2. Have the students complete the frame using a passage they have already read.

   Ex.
   Problem - could be something terrible, or a situation that someone wants changed
   Action - what is being done to solve the problem
   Results - what is the result of the action in trying to solve the problem

3. Summarize the passage by referring to the problem-solution frame and using the guidelines below.

   o Sentence 1 - Who had the problem and what is the problem?
   o Sentence 2 - What action was taken to solve the problem?
   o Sentence 3 - What happened as a result of the action?

Reference
Armbruster, B., Anderson, T., & Ostertag, J. (1987). Does text structure/summarization instruction facilitate learning from expository text? Reading Research Quarterly, 23, 331-346.

Explain-Model-Question-Activity (E-M-Q-A)

This strategy develops reading comprehension through explicit instruction.

1. **Explain** - Explain the process and why it is important, along with concrete examples on when to use it.

   Ex. "As you read this passage, think about what you already know about the solar system. This is something good readers do as they read, especially when lots of new information is being presented."

   Ex. "Sometimes when authors write, they leave out information they feel you may already know about the subject, or can figure out on your own. Therefore, there may be times when you will have to infer certain aspects of the text that are not explicitly stated."

2. **Model** - Model the thinking process being used with this strategy.

   Ex. "In the passage, the author describes the climate as 'bitter cold'. This made me think back to when it snowed here last December. Remember how cold it was? How it made you feel numb? I think that is the kind of cold he is talking about here."

3. **Question** - Have the students model their thinking strategies by asking them questions about the passage. Here you are focusing on the comprehension process, rather than the answer.

   Ex. "Susan, why did the author write this piece? What makes you think so?"

4. **Activity** - After plenty of practice, and modeling, have the students apply this strategy independently.

Reference
Roehler, L., & Duffy, G. (1986). Studying qualitative dimensions of instructional effectiveness. In J. Hoffman (Ed.), <u>Effective teaching of reading: Research and practice</u> (pp. 181-197). Newark, Del: International Reading Association.

Semantic Feature Analysis

This prereading strategy teaches vocabulary by activating prior knowledge, making predictions, and by classifying the new words by their features using a matrix.

	Carnivore	Bi-pedal	Herbivore	Walk on 4 legs
Stegosaurus				
T-Rex				
Apatosaurus				
Coelophysis				
Diplodocus				
Brachiosaurus				
Triceratops				

1. The teacher selects a list of words that have similarities and places them on the matrix in the left-hand column.

2. The teacher then writes features associated with these words across the top of the matrix, or asks the students to supply the features associated with these words.

3. The students complete the matrix by placing a check in the column if the word has that feature. Accept all predictions.

4. Once the matrix is complete and the students have discussed the reasons for their answers, the students should then read the assigned passage.

5. Students review the matrix for any necessary changes.

Reference
Anders, P., & Bos, C. (1986). Semantic feature analysis: An interactive strategy for vocabulary development and text comprehension. Journal of Reading, 29(7), 610-616.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers help students develop an awareness of the various structures found in informational texts to improve comprehension and recall. Graphic organizers are pictorial arrangements of ideas showing major ideas connected by supporting details through geometric shapes, lines, and arrows. Once students have been trained in the use of graphic organizers, and have an understanding of text structures, they can create their own as needed.

1. Choose a graphic organizer to use.

2. Read a text or complete a unit of study.

3. Complete the graphic organizer. The type of graphic organizer used will dictate how to complete it.

Here are some examples of graphic organizers.
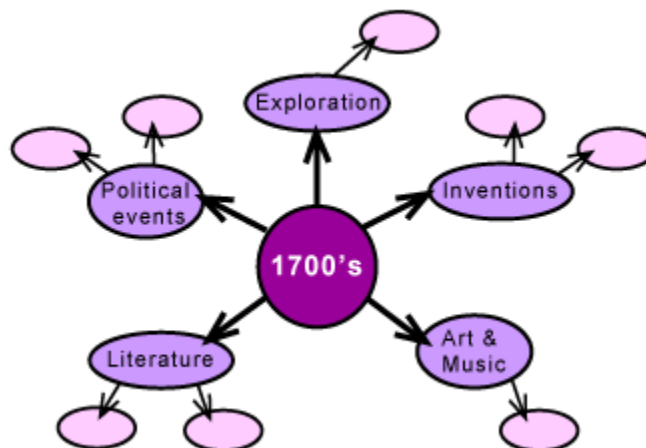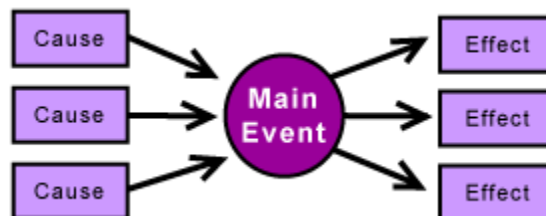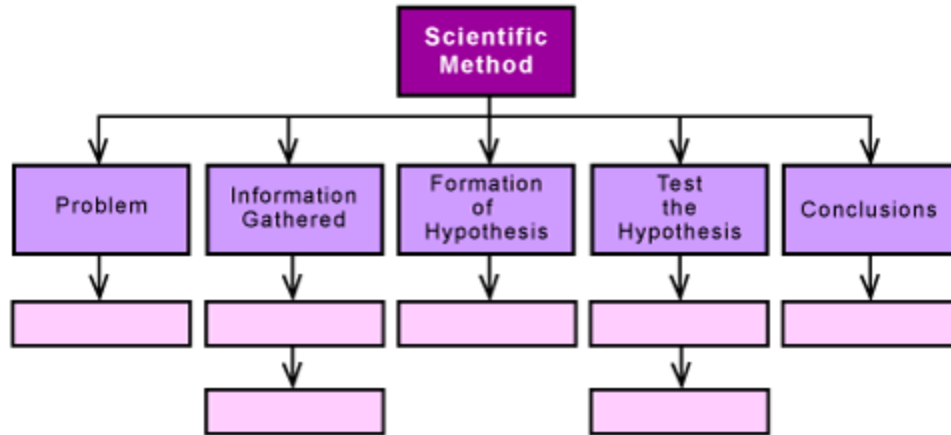
Observation/Proof Notes

This strategy allows students to make observations and support them through evidence from a text.

1. The students read an assigned chapter or complete a unit of study.

2. The students develop observations about what they have read. The observations are written in the left-hand column.

3. The students write supporting evidence for their observations in the right-hand column. The evidence must be derived from the text along with the page number for reference.

4. The students share their observation/proof notes with the class.

5. Extension- The students may use their observation/proof notes to create a written report.

Observation	Proof