

Decoding Practice

This supplement to *Corrective Reading* is a resource that will help teachers prepare students for standardized assessments and reinforce what students have learned in *Corrective Reading*. The skills and language featured in this supplement reflect the content of *Corrective Reading* and are presented in the format of popular standardized tests.

The supplement is organized in a 9/1 pattern. For lessons 1 through 9, a one-page activity is provided to review the various decoding and vocabulary skills taught in the lesson. For lesson 10, the activity is a simulation of a standardized test comprehension assessment, with a two-page reading passage followed by ten questions. The questions include eight multiple-choice items, one short-response item, and one extended-response item. This pattern is repeated throughout the book, so each group of nine one-page activities is followed by a longer activity that includes a reading passage and comprehension questions. The answer key for the multiple-choice items can be found at the end of this book.

Duplicate each activity page and distribute them to the students. We recommend that you use each activity immediately after the completion of a *Corrective Reading* lesson. The review activity will give students the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned in a new way. It will also familiarize students with the format of a standardized assessment.

This type of distributed practice, occurring throughout the school year, has long been recognized as the most effective way for students to acquire new skills and reinforce existing skills. Simulate the testing situation as closely as possible so that students will be comfortable taking a test. Even good students experience some test anxiety, and this simulation will help them do their best when they take a test.

Because students who are using *Corrective Reading* most often have reading difficulties, you may choose to modify the activities in one of several ways. The suggestions on this and the following pages can be used with students of varying reading abilities.

For Students Who Can't Read

A relatively small number of students with whom you work may not be able to read English at all or read so poorly that they cannot complete the activities independently. For these students, the best strategy is to read the questions and answer choices out loud, as well as the passages in the tenth-lesson activities. The students should attempt to follow along silently. Allow the students to answer the questions orally. If time permits, encourage the students to explain why they have chosen an answer.

As students improve their reading ability even marginally, they can begin to read some answer choices on their own. This is especially true of the one-page activities early in the book. Have the students read the answer choices orally BEFORE you read the questions. Confirm that they have read the answer choices correctly and then read the question out loud. The students can answer the questions either orally or on the duplicated page. This approach provides a review of critical skills while building students' confidence in their reading ability.

Gradually increase the amount of reading that students are expected to do. Choose simple questions and have them read the questions out loud. Provide whatever assistance is necessary for them to pronounce words correctly. Be sure they understand the question and answer choices, then allow them to choose the answer they think is correct. This strategy is especially effective with the one-page activities because the questions review the content of the lessons.

As students become more comfortable, diminish the amount of support you provide by having them limit the answer choices to just one item on a page. Gradually increase the amount of text the student is expected to read, but carefully evaluate the effectiveness of the practice.

Periodically, and with increasing frequency, increase the amount of independent work the student is expected to do. Read the passage, questions, and answer choices out loud while the students follow along silently. Have the students answer the items independently AFTER you have read all of them. This independent work may be completed in school or as a homework assignment.

Struggling readers can often benefit from "supported reading." Have the students work with an aide, a peer tutor, or in a small group. Students can take turns reading the passage and the questions, and the aide, peer, or other group members can provide help when a student makes enough errors so that the meaning of the passage, questions, or answer choices begins to suffer. Supported reading is an ideal way to help students progress toward independent reading.

For Students Who Can Read

Even students who can read should receive at least some support in the early stages of using this supplement. This support will help to build students' confidence, familiarize them with the format of a standardized test, and allow them to apply the skills they have learned in *Corrective Reading*.

Begin by reading just the questions out loud, and in the case of the tenth lessons, the passage. The students can read the answer choices on their own and choose the answer independently. You may provide assistance for questions that most of the students might find challenging.

As students become more confident readers, allow them to read the questions and answer choices on their own. It is a good idea to have the students answer questions one at a time and review the answers as a group after each question. This strategy minimizes frustration and provides students with feedback immediately after they have completed an item. You should periodically check students' understanding of questions by asking them to explain to you what the questions mean. You should still read the passages out loud while students follow along silently.

When students can complete the one-page activities on their own, they should be encouraged to read the passages independently. A good way to initiate this practice is to have the students read the passage and then review its contents as a group activity. After this review, students can answer the questions on their own. Eventually, students should be able to read the passage, questions, and answer choices on their own.

In all cases, whenever students seem frustrated, revert back to providing as much support as they need. It is more important that students feel comfortable with the process of completing questions in the standardized test format than reading independently with complete understanding. Even students who are capable readers may not perform as well as they might on a test because of anxiety. By making them comfortable with the format of a standardized test as their reading skills improve, it is likely that the goal of reading independently with complete understanding will be achieved while students' test-taking skills are being improved.

Whenever students are completing either the one-page or passage-based activities independently, walk around the room and provide them with some test-taking tips. They include:

- reading a question and the answer choices carefully
- referring to a passage to answer questions
- skipping difficult items and coming back to them later
- eliminating answer choices the student knows are wrong
- taking the best guess when unsure of the answer

After the students have completed the items, review them as a class activity. Encourage the students to discuss the strategies they used to choose an answer. Be sure to explain why the incorrect answer choices are wrong. If students are unable to express their ideas appropriately for the short- and extended-response items, have them explain their answers orally. As an option, you may choose to have an aide or more accomplished student transcribe the students' answers then revise them as a small group activity.

The point of recording students' responses is to improve their thinking skills, enhance their ability to recall the elements of a story, and teach them how to respond appropriately to the kind of prompt they will encounter on a writing assessment. Even though standardized writing assessments typically involve first-draft writing, using this modified writing process approach helps students learn the critical elements that will lead to their success on a writing assessment. Pages 4 and 5 contain instructional recommendations for completing extended-response questions and writing tasks.

Scoring Rubrics for Extended-Response Reading Items

Reading Short Response

2 points: The student has a complete understanding of the reading concept underlying the task. The student’s response is accurate, complete, and fulfills all the requirements of the task. Adequate support is included, examples are provided, and the response is based on the text. Any elaboration beyond the text is relevant to the writing task.

1 point: The student has partial understanding of the reading concept underlying the task. The student’s response includes information that is essentially correct and text-based, but the information is too general or too simplistic. Support is minimal, examples are minimal, and the response is only slightly based on the text.

0 points: The student has either failed to respond to the task or the response is inaccurate, confused, irrelevant, or off-topic.

Reading Long Response

4 points: The student has a complete understanding of the reading concept underlying the task. The student’s response is accurate, complete, and fulfills all the requirements of the task. Adequate support is included, examples are provided, and the response is based on the text. Any elaboration beyond the text is relevant to the writing task.

3 points: The student has an understanding of the reading concept underlying the task. The response is accurate and fulfills all the requirements of the task. The support, examples, or details are either incomplete or marginally based on the text. There is no elaboration beyond the text or it is irrelevant to the writing task.

2 points: The student has partial understanding of the reading concept underlying the task. The response is essentially correct, but it is too general or simplistic. The support, examples, or details are incomplete or omitted. There is no elaboration beyond the text.

1 point: The student has limited understanding of the reading concept underlying the task. The response is incomplete or somewhat inaccurate. The support, examples, or details are barely acceptable or omitted.

0 points: The student has either failed to respond to the task or the response is inaccurate, confused, irrelevant, or off-topic.

Instructional Recommendations for Extended-Response

Reading Items

The short- and long-response items in this book assess students' understanding of the question and the content of the reading passage as well as their writing skills. These items measure students' first-draft writing skills, so the methods they should use to complete the items are a little different from the methods they might be accustomed to using in the classroom.

- Encourage students to read the prompts carefully. As an instructional practice, you may want to review the prompts in this book with the students before allowing them to write their answers. Be sure students understand the task before beginning to write.
- Remind students to refer to the reading passage for the information they should use to write their answers.
- Teach students how to plan their writing before they begin to write. They should read the question, think about it, refer to the passage to formulate their answer, and then begin to write.
- Even though neatness, mechanics, and related writing skills are not specified in the rubric, it is difficult for even trained raters to ignore these characteristics. When students complete the activities in this supplement, encourage them to work carefully and write accurately.
- Show students how to begin their extended response by paraphrasing the question. This paraphrasing will remind them what the task is and show the rater that the student is attending to the task. This paraphrasing can serve as a topic sentence that should then be supported by details from the story.

The scoring rubrics on page 4 highlight the critical elements raters are looking for on student work. One of the best ways to help students attend to these elements is to use the rubrics as part of the process students use to evaluate their everyday writing.

The two greatest problems students encounter with on-demand writing is focusing on the topic and thinking of enough to say. Both of these skills can be developed by having students prewrite “orally” in response to the extended response prompts. As a group activity, have students discuss various ways to approach a specified writing task and the information they should include. This oral exercise is an important precursor to subvocalizing—talking to oneself—before undertaking a writing task. If students can learn to organize their thoughts and develop content orally, it is relatively easy to transfer this skill to the writing situation. This oral prewriting activity helps students stay on-task and develop their thinking so they can create a more complete response.