# SRA Corrective Reading Series

SRA's **Corrective Reading** programs are divided into two strands: Decoding and Comprehension. Students can complete the programs in either a double-strand or a single-strand sequence.

In the double-strand sequence, students receive **two** full periods of instruction per day—one period in a Decoding program and one period in a Comprehension program.

In the single-strand sequence, students study just one program (Comprehension, for example) and receive **one** full period of instruction per day.

Each **Comprehension** level is independent of the others. Students may be placed at the beginning of one level and complete all the lessons in that level in either a single-strand or double-strand sequence.

## Development of Skills

The development of skills in the Comprehension programs progresses from comprehending oral language to comprehending written material. Skills are first taught in structured exercises that are tightly controlled by the teacher. Later, students are shown how to apply the skills independently to complex written materials.

The **Corrective Reading** series includes six Comprehension programs:

- Comprehension A (65 lessons)
- Comprehension A Fast Cycle (30 lessons)
- Comprehension B1 (60 lessons)
- Comprehension B1 Fast Cycle (35 lessons)
- Comprehension B2 (65 lessons)
- Comprehension C (140 lessons)

### Comprehension A

Students who place in **Comprehension A** do not understand the concepts underlying much of the material being taught in classrooms. They do not have well-developed recitation skills. They cannot repeat sentences they hear, so they have trouble retaining and answering questions about information that is presented. These students are often unable to comprehend what they read because they don't even understand the material when it is presented orally.

### Comprehension A Fast Cycle

Typically, older students who place in Comprehension A learn the skills presented in the program more quickly than younger students. **Comprehension A Fast Cycle** is designed to accommodate these older students. The program consists of 30 lessons (half the number of lessons in Comprehension A). A placement test provides procedures and criteria for placing students in Comprehension A Fast Cycle. As a rule, older students will do better in Fast Cycle than in regular Comprehension A.

### Comprehension B1

Students who place in **Comprehension B1** exhibit many of the deficiencies observed in students who place in Comprehension A. They lack some common basic information, such as how many months are in a year. They are also deficient in thinking operations. They have some trouble identifying how things are the same and completing deductions that involve the word *maybe*.

### Comprehension B1 Fast Cycle

Students who need some of the information and reviews presented in Comprehension B1 but are close to placing in Comprehension C do well in **Comprehension B1 Fast Cycle.** This program presents the same sequence of skills as Comprehension B1, but at an accelerated pace (35 lessons, compared to 60).

### Comprehension B2

Students can only enter **Comprehension B2** after completing Comprehension B1 or B1 Fast Cycle. The program continues and expands upon the skills presented in previous levels.

### Comprehension C

Students who place in **Comprehension C** have already learned many skills. They can draw conclusions from evidence, make inferences, and respond to specific instructions. Their primary deficiency is in using those skills independently.

## Comprehension Placement Tests

Reproducible copies of the *Corrective Reading* Comprehension Placement Tests and details on how to administer them appear in Appendix A at the end of this guide.

The placement procedure is designed so that students take two tests. The first (Test 1) is a screening test that requires written responses and is administered to the entire class or group.

Students who make **more than 7** errors on the screening test take another test (Test 2) that places them in Comprehension A, Comprehension A Fast Cycle, or Comprehension B1. Test 2 is an oral test that is individually administered.

Students who make **7 or fewer** errors on the screening test take another test (Test 3) that places them in Comprehension B1,

Comprehension B1 Fast Cycle, or Comprehension C. Test 3 requires written responses and is presented to the entire class or group.

The battery of placement tests also identifies students who perform either too low or too high for the *Corrective Reading* Comprehension programs.

## Progress Through the Comprehension Strand

The Comprehension programs are designed with a careful progression of skill development from level to level. There are five entry points:

1. Students who begin at Level A should complete Levels A and B1 during the school year.

2. Students who begin at Level A Fast Cycle may complete Level A Fast Cycle and Levels B1 and B2 during the school year.

3. Students who begin at Level B1 should complete Levels B1 and B2 during the school year.

4. Students who begin at Level B1 Fast Cycle should complete Level B1 Fast Cycle and Level B2 during the school year.

5. Students who begin at Level C should complete Level C and additional outside reading during the school year.

## Features of All Comprehension Levels

Each level of the Comprehension program incorporates features that have been demonstrated through research studies to be effective in improving student performance.

- Each level is a core program, not ancillary material. Each level contains all the material you need and provides students with all the practice they need to learn the skills.

- All words, skills, and strategies are taught through Direct Instruction. This approach is the most efficient for communicating with students, for evaluating their performance on a moment-to-moment basis, and for achieving student mastery. Students are not simply exposed to skills. Instead, skills are taught.

- Students are taught everything that is required for what they are to do later. Conversely, they are not taught skills that are not needed for later skill applications. The levels concentrate only on the necessary skills.

- Each level is based on cumulative skill development. Once a skill or strategy is taught, students receive practice in applying that skill until the end of the level. This type of cumulative development has been demonstrated by research studies to be the most effective method for teaching skills.

- Because of the cumulative development of skills, the difficulty of material increases gradually but steadily.

- Each level is divided into daily lessons that can usually be presented during a class period (35 to 55 minutes of teacher-directed work and independent student applications).

- All five levels of *Corrective Reading* Comprehension contain in-program Mastery Tests. These tests are criterion-referenced performance measures that provide detailed data on student progress. They also show students how their performance is improving as they progress through the program.

- Each level includes an effective management system. Students earn points for performance on each part of the daily lesson. Records of this performance may be used for awarding grades and documenting progress in specific skill areas.

- Each lesson specifies both teacher talk and student responses. The lessons are scripted. The scripts specify what you say and do, as well as appropriate student responses. The scripted lessons ensure that you will (a) use uniform wording, (b) present examples in a manner that communicates efficiently and effectively with students, and (c) be able to complete a lesson during a class period.

# Poor Comprehenders

The *Corrective Reading* Comprehension series is designed to help poor comprehenders. The specific tendencies of poor comprehenders suggest what a program must do to be effective.

Because students who are lacking in comprehension skills are often poor decoders, they typically do not follow instructions precisely. They have often been reinforced for raising their hand and asking the teacher questions. This strategy has served them in content areas, such as science and social studies, as well as in reading. As a result, they have not developed precision in following instructions that are presented orally or in writing.

Because of the way material they have studied has been sequenced, poor comprehenders also have a poor memory for information. Typically, they have never been required to learn information one day and then use it that day and from then on. The usual pattern has been for them to work with vocabulary or facts for only a lesson or two, after which the material disappears. The result is a poorly developed strategy for remembering information, particularly systems of information that contain related facts and rules.

Poor comprehenders also have weak statement-repetition skills, primarily because they have never practiced these skills. For instance, when they are told to repeat the

statement "Some of the people who live in America are illiterate," students may say, "Some people who live in America are ill," or some other inaccurate attempt. The lack of statement-repetition skills places these students at a great disadvantage when they try to read and retain information, even if they decode it correctly.

Often, poor comprehenders will vacillate from being guarded in believing what others tell them, to being gullible, because they lack the analytical skills required to process arguments. They may have strong feelings and prejudices, but they are unable to articulate the evidence that supports their beliefs or the conclusions that derive from the evidence. They are not practiced with flaws in arguments that present false analogies, improper deductions, or appeals that are inappropriate (such as arguing about a whole group from information about an individual).

Poor comprehenders also have a deficiency in vocabulary and common information. This deficit preempts them from constructing the appropriate schemata when reading about situations that assume basic information or vocabulary. They may understand the meaning of the word *colonial*, for instance, but not know the relationship of that word to *colony*.

Finally, poor comprehenders are not highly motivated students. For them, reading has been punishing. They often profess indifference: "I don't care if I learn that or not." But their actual behavior suggests that they care a great deal. When they learn to use new words such as *regulate* and *participate*, they feel proud.

Poor comprehenders' ineffective reading strategies and negative attitudes about reading become more ingrained as the students get older. Overcoming these obstacles requires a careful program, one that systematically replaces failed strategies with new ones and that provides lots and lots of practice.

In summary, the knowledge and skills of poor comprehenders are spotty. While poor comprehenders may exhibit intelligent behaviors when dealing with their peers, they are remarkably naive in dealing with academic content because they don't know what to attend to, what the content means, how to organize the content, how to relate it to other known facts and remember it, how to apply it to unique situations, and how to evaluate it in terms of consistency with other facts and rules.

## Comprehension Solutions

The problems of poor comprehenders suggest these solutions:

**The *Corrective Reading* Comprehension programs are designed to provide extensive practice in following directions.** The various activities presented in the Comprehension programs are designed so that students must attend to the instructions. In one lesson, the directions for an activity might be "Circle the verbs." In the next lesson, instructions for the same activity may be "Make a box around the verbs." The direct-instruction activities present directions that students cannot figure out from either the format of the activity or the context. Students, therefore, learn the strategy of reading carefully and attending to the details of the instructions. Also, students practice writing instructions so that they develop an appreciation of what information is needed to clearly convey the operation they are trying to describe.

**The programs provide practice in statement repetition.** Statement-repetition practice begins in Level A with tasks that don't involve reading. In later levels of the series, statement-repetition activities are increasingly related to statements students read. The emphasis on statement repetition not only makes students more facile in repeating statements (requiring only one or two attempts, compared to the many attempts

required early in the program), but repetition also helps reinforce the general strategy that students must be precise when dealing with statements they read or hear.

**The *Corrective Reading* series is designed so that whatever is taught is used.** In the Comprehension series, nothing goes away. Vocabulary that is introduced in vocabulary activities is integrated into other activities, such as following instructions, making analogies, completing deductions, and identifying flaws in arguments. Similarly, facts that are learned are integrated and applied to a wide range of tasks. This nonspiral approach to instruction demonstrates to students that they must develop strategies for retaining the information that is taught, and for relating it to other information. The format ensures that students will be able to learn, organize, and process whatever is taught. Mastery Tests within the series document to both teacher and students that the skills and information presented in the program are mastered.

**The series presents various analytical skills that can be applied to higher-order thinking tasks.** The Comprehension programs teach students how analogies work, how logical reasoning is applied to arguments, how conclusions depend on evidence, and how evidence can be evaluated for adequacy. Deductions are emphasized because basic arguments that affect everyday life are usually presented as deductions. The series also presents specific common fallacies (arguing from part to whole, arguing from whole to part, arguing from a false cause, arguing from limited choices). In addition, students learn how to identify contradictions, from simple ones to those that are inferred from facts students have learned. The focus of the series, in other words, is not simply on narrowly defined logical-reasoning skills, but on logical-reasoning skills as they apply to all aspects of reading.

**To compensate for the deficiencies in vocabulary and common information, the series introduces many new vocabulary words and "fact systems."** To compensate for students' deficiencies in common vocabulary and information, the Comprehension programs introduce many new vocabulary words and "fact systems" (groups of related facts). For example, students learn facts about body systems (skeletal, digestive, muscular, circulatory, respiratory); calendar information; animal classification (fish, amphibian, reptile, mammal, bird); and economics (supply and demand). These fact systems also provide a vehicle for teaching vocabulary. In addition, other new vocabulary is introduced in all levels. In levels B1 and B2, for instance, vocabulary is introduced in connection with parts of speech. Students first learn a verb, such as *select*, then its noun (*selection*) and adjective (*selective*). In Level C, students are taught how to infer the meanings of words from context. Note that all words, once introduced, appear in a range of activities—from following instructions to identifying contradictions.

**The series addresses the poor comprehender's low self-image.** The Comprehension programs also address the problem reader's poor self-image. The series is designed so that students can succeed in learning sophisticated skills (such as identifying the missing premise in an argument). Furthermore, a point system that is based on realistic performance goals ensures that the student who tries will succeed and will receive reinforcement for improved performance.

In summary, the Comprehension series uses a two-pronged approach. Each level teaches specific skills to replace the student's ineffective approach to comprehension. Each level also contains an effective management system that turns students on to reading. The approach **works.**