Guided Reading Prompts
for Fictional Text
that Help Build Understanding During Small Group Instruction

Story Structure
Use these prompts to help students understand foundational information.

- What is the title of this text? Who is the author?
- Is this book fiction or nonfiction? How do you know?
- What is the genre of this story? How do you know?
- Who is telling the story?
- Who are the main/secondary characters? Why are they important to the story?
- Could the characters exist in real life?
- Where/when does the story take place? How do you know?
- How does the story begin/end?
- In order, what are the major events in the story?
- What is the problem/conflict in this story? How is it resolved?

Author’s Purpose
Use these to help students understand the story from the author’s perspective.

- Why did the author write this story/passage/book?
- Was the author trying to persuade, inform, or entertain you?
- What message did the author want you to get?
- Why did the author choose that setting?
- Was _______ a good title for the story? Why or why not?
- What did the author do to help you visualize the story?

Summarizing Prompts
Use these to help students understand the most important parts of the story.

- What is the main idea/gist of the story?
- Tell me what happened in the story.
- What were the most important parts of the story?
- What was the turning point of the story?
- What do you think the author wants you to know after reading?
Making Predictions
Before reading, use these prompts help students think about what they are reading before they begin.

- Think about the title/genre/author/pictures/setting. What do you think the story/book will be about? What makes you think that?
- What challenges do you think the characters might face?
- What clues from the text helped you make your prediction?
- What information from your own life helped you make your prediction?
- How do you think the story might end? Why do you think that?
- Were your predictions right? How do you know?
- Do you want to change your prediction know that you have read the story?

Self-Monitoring Prompts
Use these prompts to help students realize when they are reading incorrectly or not understanding the story.

- Does that word/sentence/paragraph sound right?
- Does that word/sentence/paragraph make sense?
- Look at the picture. Does it fit with what you just read?
- How does what you just read fit with what you know?
- What do you need to do to help you understand the text?
- Do you need to go back to reread?
- Do you want to read on to see if it makes sense?
- What would make sense there?
- Why did you stop reading?
- What did you notice? (after student stops or pauses while reading)
- What part of the story confused you?
- Were there parts of the story you didn’t understand?
- What are you still wondering?
- What reading strategies did you use to help you understand?

Making Connections
Use these prompts to help students gain understanding by bridging their own experiences to the text.

- What does this paragraph/story/character remind you of?
- How does what you know about ______ (genre) help you understand this story?
- Have you read another story with similar characters/setting/ending?
- How did this story make you feel? What other books/events from your life have made you feel that way?
- What lessons did you learn that you can use in your own life?

Inferring Prompts
Use these prompts to help students move beyond the text to understand what the author is implying.

- What is the message/lesson of this story?
- What can you figure out that the author didn’t put in words?
- What is the mood/tone of the story?
- Why did the author choose that setting?
- How was the setting important to the story?
- Why do you think the character _______?
- How did the character feel when ______? How did you know that?
- What do the character’s actions/choices tell you about him/her?
- When the character said______ what did he/she really mean?

Asking Questions
Use these prompts to help students think about what they still want to know.

- What questions do you still have?
- What would you like to ask the author/one of the characters?
- What would you like to know more about?
- If you reread the book/story/passage what would you be trying to understand or figure out?