Reading for Meaning™
From Tom Snyder Productions®
Product Overview

Reading for Meaning is a software program for Grades 3-8 that improves reading comprehension through the use of authentic literature, lessons, and graphic organizers. The program provides students with a concrete process for comprehending text, organizing their ideas, and writing open-ended responses.

Instructional Content

Reading for Meaning focuses on five core topics found in reading comprehension curricula:

- Main idea
- Inference
- Sequence
- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect

Teachers and on-screen hosts explicitly teach and model these skills. Students have many opportunities to practice strategies during group discussions and by completing software-generated worksheets and graphic organizers. They build the concrete skills needed to move from reading text to writing about text.

Reading for Meaning’s learning objectives correlate to the IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts. Students learn to approach comprehension systematically and use this understanding to support their writing. By participating in the Reading for Meaning program, they:

- Become skilled using multiple comprehension skills within a wide array of literary genres, including excerpts from novels, poems, articles, biographies, and more.
- Read, analyze, discuss, and write about texts that reflect a range of genres, cultures, and time periods
- Develop critical thinking skills as they listen to and read the text, share their reflections in small groups, and respond to open-ended questions
- Organize the results of their group discussions using the graphic organizer tool
- Relate the use of each skill to everyday life and generalize its use to new reading situations
Instructional Design

Teachers can use **Reading for Meaning**, which is designed for students in Grades 3-8, in a variety of settings:

- Whole class with teacher-directed instruction and modeling
- Small groups, in which students work together to practice skills
- Individual student learning on the computer

Each **Reading for Meaning** topic contains seven whole-class lessons—an introductory modeling lesson and six literature lessons. Using a classroom computer, teachers can use the modeling lessons to teach comprehension skills and guide students through a structured four-step process. Students:

- Watch a short animation (KidCam) that introduces a reading comprehension skill
- Think about the skill in relation to the topic and organize their ideas using a graphic organizer
- Write a response to a comprehension question
- Complete a self-check exercise with a simple three-point rubric

Literature lessons give individual students or small groups of students an opportunity to practice the skill introduced in the modeling lesson. They read short, multi-genre literature excerpts, think about and discuss the text, complete a graphic organizer, write answers to three open-ended comprehension questions, and complete a three-point self-check exercise. Teachers have the option of teaching any of the literature lessons to the whole class, thereby reinforcing the skill and offering students opportunities for discussion.

**Reading for Meaning** contains a Lesson Plan Library that provides instruction to be used with teacher-provided literature commonly taught in Grades 3-8. In addition, students can use the software’s graphic organizer tool with any piece of literature they are reading.

Assessments

After watching a KidCam episode and completing a three-part writing exercise that tests their comprehension, students check their answers using a three-point rubric provided onscreen. They also self-check and rate their answers from the literature lesson worksheets. **Reading for Meaning** provides teachers with sample answers for student worksheets that are part of the Lesson Plan Library.

Motivation and Engagement

The KidCam animated episodes contain onscreen, conversational hosts that engage students while they learn. The hosts introduce and model comprehension skills in a way that children can readily understand. This provides them with an excellent foundation for skills building, success, and increased confidence. **Reading for Meaning**’s literature selections provide students with high-interest topics in a variety of genres, including news article, fiction excerpt, poetry, myth, and biography.
Intervention Strategies

*Reading for Meaning* provides all students with the tools they need to become strong readers, ones who interact with the text, synthesize meaning from it, and demonstrate their understanding through written responses. To accommodate students who have varying abilities, the program’s 30 literature lessons are divided into three levels of difficulty. *Reading for Meaning* encourages teachers to review the reading material and comprehension questions in advance to determine which lessons are most appropriate for their students. In addition, the program provides teachers with rough placement guidelines:

- Level 1: recommended for Grades 3 and 4
- Level 2: recommended for Grades 5 and 6
- Level 3: recommended for Grades 7 and 8

Classmates support each other during group discussions as they share their reflections about the reading passages. The software provides a tool, the Random Picker, to help teachers choose individual students and small-groups of students for meaningful discussions.

Home-School Connection

Students in the *Reading for Meaning* program learn critical thinking and comprehension skills that they can use with any reading materials, including those they choose to read at home. In addition, students can take their completed worksheets and graphic organizers home and use them as springboards for family discussions.

Professional Development

*Reading for Meaning* provides teachers with instructional strategies to teach main idea, inference, sequence, cause/effect, and compare/contrast comprehension skills. The software can generate reproducible worksheets and graphic organizer templates to maximize student learning. Worksheets contain reading, thinking, group-discussion, and writing activities.

*Tom Snyder Productions* offers a full-day training to teach educators how to effectively integrate *Reading for Meaning* into the curriculum. The workshop provides a step-by-step walkthrough and examples of how teachers have used the software with their students. This customizable training can include large- and small-group discussions, hands-on activities, modeling of lessons, and time for reflection.

In addition to software implementation training, *Tom Snyder Productions* offers a variety of customizable on-site workshops that provide teachers with strategies for successful application of technology in the classroom. These include:

- Weaving Technology into Your Reading Curriculum
- Critical Thinking, Cooperative Learning, and Technology
- Using Technology to Meet State Standards
- Integrating Technology into Your Curriculum Area