

*The*  
**Key**  
**Comprehension**  
**Routine** Second Edition

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**Keys to Literacy<sup>®</sup>**



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# Introduction

The Key Comprehension Routine is a combination of comprehension, writing and study strategies that helps students understand and learn content information. The routine helps teachers provide effective comprehension instruction using existing subject-area material.

This book is organized into four parts:

✱ **Part I: Overview of Comprehension Instruction**

Chapter 1 provides an overview of The Key Comprehension Routine and why content teachers benefit from using a strategy routine. The chapter reviews instructional practices including explicit instruction, gradual release of responsibility, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction. Chapter 2 presents a review of the research about effective comprehension instruction.

✱ **Part II: Essential Comprehension Skills**

Chapter 3 presents suggestions, techniques, and practice activities for teaching main idea skills. The chapter offers a sequence for teaching main ideas, from simple categorizing to paragraph-level main ideas – as well as finding main ideas in lengthy reading selections. Chapter 4 presents suggestions for the use of think alouds and text discussion to teach comprehension skills. Chapter 4 reviews how text structure at the sentence, paragraph, and full-text levels affects comprehension.

✱ **Part III: The Four Activities in The Key Comprehension Routine**

Here you will find a section for each of the Routine’s four activities: Top-Down Topic Webs, Two-Column Notes, Summary, and Question Generation. In addition to an explanation of each activity, these sections provide suggestions for the direct instruction of each strategy.

✱ **Part IV: Putting It All Together**

Chapter 5 provides suggestions for combining the four activities, as well as applying them to different content-specific material. Chapter 6 offers recommendations for school-wide implementation of The Key Comprehension Routine.

Finally, we have provided reproducible templates discussed throughout the book, classroom examples of The Key Comprehension Routine activities, and references.

The Key Comprehension Routine is based on the author’s work beginning in 1975 with thousands of students and teachers in schools throughout the country. The author developed main idea, note taking, and summarizing instruction methods and materials

during the 1970's and 1980's when she was working with struggling learners at the Landmark School in Massachusetts. During the 1990's and the first years of the new millennium, she worked with a number of public middle schools and high schools to develop a model for school-wide integration of comprehension strategy instruction in all content classes. The model, formerly named the Key Three Routine, is currently being used in classrooms throughout the United States.

### **Who Should Use This Book?**

This book is for educators who work with students in grades 4 – 12. Content classroom teachers will learn a systematic, easy-to-use model for incorporating comprehension strategy instruction using their existing content material, class work, and assignments. Specialists, such as reading teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, and reading paraprofessionals will learn a comprehension instruction model that they can support in inclusive classrooms and reinforce through supplemental instruction. Administrators will learn a flexible model for comprehension instruction that can be incorporated in individual classrooms, by grade-level or teams of teachers, and on a school-wide basis. Parents will also find The Key Comprehension Routine helpful as they assist their children with reading, homework, and test study.

## Keys to Literacy®



### About Keys to Literacy

**Keys to Literacy** is a professional development and consulting company specializing in comprehension and vocabulary instruction, content literacy instruction, adolescent literacy, and literacy planning.

#### What we do

We prepare schools and districts to improve student literacy and performance by training teachers on research-based literacy strategies to embed in their classroom instruction. Our instructional routines are based on the most current research and are recognized by teachers and administrators as fundamental, practical, concrete, useful, and effective.

Our professional development applies to all content areas and special education, and includes:

*The Key Comprehension Routine*

*The Key Vocabulary Routine*

*ANSWER Key to Open Response*

*Literacy Planning for Grades K-12*

**Our Key Comprehension and Key Vocabulary training** typically includes two initial days of teacher instruction by a Keys to Literacy trainer, or a hybrid combination of live and online training. These initial sessions are supplemented with a structured series of follow-up meetings, including small group coaching, guided practice, classroom modeling and observation. Schools are encouraged to choose building coaches who facilitate the implementation of the Key strategies and receive extra training to support their peer educators. We provide added support for these building coaches.

**We also offer classroom materials** to reinforce the strategies taught in *The Key Comprehension Routine* and *The Key Vocabulary Routine*. Implementation Portfolios are available for recording Key activities and to keep track of samples for future reference. Posters and laminated Student Guides give students easy to use tips to improve comprehension. In addition to our comprehension and vocabulary routines, we offer a one-day teacher workshop, *ANSWER Key to Open Response*, to help students perform better on standardized tests. Finally, we work with schools and districts to develop comprehensive literacy plans for grades K-12.

#### Who we are

Our staff of literacy experts has significant experience with K-12 literacy issues. We understand the reality of working in a school because we have been there as teachers and administrators. Our experience as educators has enabled us to develop instructional strategies that work because they are research-based, proven, practical, concrete, useful, and effective. We are dedicated educators who share a passion for improving student literacy skills by improving teacher strategies and instructional methods.

#### Contact Us

To learn more about Keys to Literacy, visit our website at [www.keystoliteracy.com](http://www.keystoliteracy.com), call 978-948-8511, or email us at [info@keystoliteracy.com](mailto:info@keystoliteracy.com).