Explicit Instruction for Comprehension Skills and Strategies
Comprehension strategies are conscious plans—sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension.”
—National Reading Panel

Making Connections® provides educators with explicit, scaffolded instruction and high-interest student materials to help students become active, strategic readers—able to construct meaning as they read a wide range of narrative and informational texts.

In every level of Making Connections you will find:
✓ Opportunities for active reading
✓ Scaffolded instruction
✓ A blend of informational and narrative text
✓ Multiple, thematic texts for each skill
✓ Explicit instruction in both skills and strategies

Comprehension Skills
Each unit of Making Connections focuses on one comprehension skill, such as comparing and contrasting, identifying main idea, or differentiating between fact and opinion. The research-based strategy is the vehicle through which students will acquire, develop, and refine comprehension skills—requisite abilities that enable students to read a text with understanding.

Comprehension Strategies
In every Making Connections lesson, students practice and apply strategies to informational or narrative texts. The wrap-around Teacher’s Edition offers instructional support for each strategy:

**Before Reading**
- Skill focus
- Build background knowledge*
- Text structure & purpose*
- Text features

**During Reading**
- Comprehension monitoring*
- Question generating*
- Vocabulary*
- Cooperative learning*

**After Reading**
- Reread for fluency
- Graphic organizer*
- Question answering*
- Summarizing*

*Denotes a research-based strategy

Each unit culminates with a Comprehension Library reader that supports the independent application of skills and strategies.
Program Components

Student Books
High-interest informational and narrative reading selections are designed for active, strategic reading and identification of specific comprehension skills.

- Students interact with texts by marking challenging vocabulary and identifying comprehension skills
- Multiple, thematic reading passages for every skill give students ample practice
- Content area themes support curriculum standards with a variety of genres

Teacher’s Editions
Explicit instructional plans provide scaffolded instruction with point-of-use teacher strategies and techniques, as well as reproducible assessments. Instruction progresses from teacher modeling, to guiding, to coaching, to student independence.

Comprehension Library
One Comprehension Library book culminates each unit, allowing students to apply newly developed skills and strategies to longer texts. The library includes a balance of informational and narrative titles.

Accelerated Reader quizzes are available to help you keep track of reading progress. To find Making Connections quizzes visit arbookfind.com and search by title.
A Scaffolding Approach

Each Making Connections unit provides students with multiple opportunities to develop, practice, and master a specific comprehension skill.

Scaffolding
Beginning each unit, students receive support as they are introduced to a new skill. As proficiency increases, support is gradually removed and students take on more and more responsibility.

INDEPENDENT

MODELING

GUIDING

COACHING

PACING
4 weeks per unit (24-week schedule)

Week 1: Text 1
Week 2: Texts 2—3
Week 3: Texts 4—5 and Text Connections
Week 4: Text 6: Comprehension Library

For additional pacing options visit epsbooks.com/MC
• 18-week Schedule
• 30-week Schedule
• Extended Day Schedule
• Summer School Schedule
Text 1: Changing San Francisco

Text 1 Scaffold Level: Modeling

The teacher introduces and defines the skill, then reads Text 1 aloud to students as they follow along in their books. The teacher then models how to identify the target skill and apply comprehension strategies.

Before Reading strategies include direct explanation of the skill focus and activation of background knowledge, in addition to previewing the text by examining structure, focus, and features.

Think alouds are used to model strategies of comprehension monitoring and question generating, helping students mark the text.

A "✓" indicates a research-based strategy.

Teacher’s Edition includes a model version of Text 1 with student markings in reproducible format.

Focus Questions in Student Book set the purpose for reading and focus attention on the target skill.

Reduced facsimiles of student pages allow teachers to conveniently reference the texts.
During Reading strategies focus on Comprehension Monitoring. Students continuously gauge their understanding of the text by generating questions, connecting ideas, and applying vocabulary strategies.

ELL support is provided at point-of-use to make activities more meaningful to English Language Learners.

Students mark the text as the teacher invites them to raise questions about challenging words, phrases, or sentences, and to identify the skill. Instruction progresses from teacher modeling, to guiding, to coaching, to student independence.

Text 2: Golden Gate Bridge

Text 2 Scaffold Level: Guiding

The teacher and students read Text 2 aloud together. The teacher guides and assists students as they become more comfortable with the target skill, learning how and when to apply specific strategies.
Text 3: San Francisco Earthquake

Text 3 Scaffold Level: Coaching and Independent

For Text 3, the teacher determines students’ needs and has them read the text independently, in small groups, or with teacher support. Teacher assists students as necessary as they practice and apply the focus skills and strategies more independently.

Predictable sequence of strategies facilitates student independence.

Every rereading of the text is purposeful: here, students actively engage in marking the Student Book to identify key sequencing signal words and phrases.

Summarizing requires students to determine important ideas, condense them, and put them in their own words. By Text 3, students create a summary of what they have read with minimal teacher support.

After reading activities have students reread the text in pairs or small groups to increase speed and improve accuracy of word identification, expression, and phrasing.

A variety of graphic organizers—here a vertical timeline—provides students with alternative formats.
Text 4: Transportation in San Francisco
Text 5: Founding San Francisco

The fourth text is a brief, in-book assessment that encourages independent application of skills and strategies.

Text 4 reading and questions focus on the featured skill and multiple strategies developed throughout the unit.

The fifth text of every unit is a reproducible assessment that is located in the Teacher’s Edition.

A great tool for test preparation: Reading passages and multiple-choice test items support formats of many high-stakes assessments.

Assessment
Teacher Edition support includes activation of prior knowledge and summary of strategies used throughout unit.
**Text Connections**

*Text Connections* are culminating activities that provide students with opportunities to evaluate and integrate what they have learned in **Texts 1–5** to come to a deeper understanding of the content in each unit.

- Students learn cooperatively as they apply multiple comprehension strategies.
- Students make connections to their own lives through writing and discussion.
- Extension activities encourage students to conduct additional research on topics presented in the unit.
- **Text Connections** engage students in higher-order thinking skills such as Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.
Text 6: The Wallet in the Woods

Text 6 Scaffold Level: Independent

A Comprehension Library reader culminates each unit. Students apply the newly learned skill to a full-length text to further practice and reinforce the skill.

After-reading questions and a skill-specific graphic organizer on the inside back cover aid students in building meaning.

Level 3 includes 6 engaging chapter books which culminate each skill unit.

Teacher’s Edition notes support application of strategies before, during, and after reading the full-length library titles.

Students are encouraged to use reading journals to record titles, authors, and other information from the text.
Student Books 1 & 2

Every Student Book provides a blend of fiction and nonfiction text.
Focus questions help students concentrate on the unit’s focus skill and set a purpose for reading.

## UNIT 1
**Sequencing (San Francisco)**
- **Library Title**: The Wallet in the Woods

## UNIT 2
**Main Idea (Heroes)**
- **Library Title**: Roberto Clemente

## UNIT 3
**Compare & Contrast (United States & Australia)**
- **Library Title**: Animals in Disguise

## UNIT 4
**Predictions & Conclusions (Fables)**
- **Library Title**: Ready, Set, Puppy!

## UNIT 5
**Fact & Opinion (Environmental Issues)**
- **Library Title**: In Search of the Yeti

## UNIT 6
**Cause & Effect (Citizenship)**
- **Library Title**: Tom, Maker of Chairs
# Student Book 4

## Unit 3

### Comprehension

**Sophie and Stella**

**To:** Mom@Home.com  
**From:** Sophie@Home.com  
**Sent:** February 1, 2006  
**Subject:** Our train ride

Hi Mom,  

This is my first e-mail sent from a train! I’m using Dad’s laptop. The trip home to New York from Grandpa’s place in Boston takes about three and a half hours. This electric train can go 150 miles an hour. The train is so quiet that it’s hard to believe we’re going that fast. The ride is smooth, so it’s easy to walk around. The snowy landscape flashes by the window. Sometimes it feels like we’re flying. I met a girl my age and we went to the dining car together for a huge lunch. It was fun! We exchanged e-mail addresses. The seats are so comfortable and the ride so smooth, I’m going to take a nap now. It’s so warm and cozy, it will be almost like sleeping in my own bed!  

Love,

Stella

### Practice the Skill

**Compare and Contrast, To compare and contrast, figure out how things are alike and how they are different.**

**The New York Times**

February 1, 1906

Dear Mother,

I have arrived safely at Grandmother’s house in New York. The steam engine is a wonderful invention! It is hard to believe one can travel this far in less than a day. Boston seems so far away.

The noise on the train was alarming at first. I did not realize the engine would be so loud and the whistle would blow so often. The carriages shook so much I could feel my temper tantrum! Once I pouted my balance, I went exploring. Had to get outside to walk between the cars. The first sight of the winter wind made my eyes water! But it was lovely to see the scenery coming by.

Thank you for putting my three year old, Adam, aboard. The train was quite new, but she comforted us and even helped us to the station. When I woke up, we were already at the station. What a wonderful trip!

Yours lovingly,

Stella

### Vocabulary and Writing Activities

Vocabulary and writing activities extend comprehension beyond the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>STUDENT BOOK 4</th>
<th>COMPREHENSION</th>
<th>LIBRARY TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sequencing (How Is It done?)</td>
<td>Guimamadak the Great</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Idea (Inventions &amp; Inventors)</td>
<td>Mountain Biking Adventure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Compare &amp; Contrast (Getting from Here to There)</td>
<td>The Big Move</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Predictions &amp; Conclusions (In the Community)</td>
<td>Caleb Piper, Private Eye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fact &amp; Opinion (In the Ocean)</td>
<td>The Loch Ness Monster: Fact or Fiction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cause &amp; Effect (Life in the United States)</td>
<td>Glow Worms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graphic Organizers help students visualize and understand relationships among ideas or information in the text.
The variety of high-interest topics helps students increase knowledge in content areas such as social studies, geography, science, literature, and physical and health education.
Comprehension Library

Advancing vital reading comprehension skills is what the Making Connections® Comprehension Library is all about.

Engaging students with a balance of appealing informational and narrative titles, these readers help students build and apply the essential strategies and skills necessary for reading comprehension.

This multi-genre collection prepares students to analyze and interpret diverse narrative and informational materials encountered outside the classroom.

- Students build meaning through strategies such as prior knowledge activation, monitoring comprehension, activation of background knowledge, and comprehension monitoring.
- Nonfiction readers incorporate features such as indexes, glossaries, tables of content and captions.
- High-interest topics, colorful illustrations, and captivating photographs engage students.
- Titles from various levels may be used to differentiate instruction in classrooms with a range of learning needs.

See page 10 for COMPREHENSION LIBRARY information!