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FOR THE TEACHER

What is *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS Plus Series)*?

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies is a diagnostic reading series that allows you to identify and assess a student's level of mastery for each of 12 reading strategies (8 strategies in Book A, 6 strategies in Books P and AA).

This ten-level program is designed for students in years P to 8. *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies* helps teachers place students in *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success (STARS Plus Series)* for reading instruction and remediation.

What is in the *CARS Plus* student book?

- **Pretests**, **Benchmarks**, **Post Tests**
  Each of the 15 tests provides a reading passage and 12 selected-response questions in Books B–H, 8 selected-response questions in Book A and 6 selected-response questions in Books P and AA. The reading passages showcase a variety of literary genres. Each question focuses on a specific reading strategy. All of these tests assess the same strategies.

- **Self-assessment Forms**
  Students complete Self-assessment 1 after completing all 5 Pretests and Self-assessment 2 after completing all 5 Post Tests.

- **Answer Forms**
  Students use the Answer Forms to record their answers.

In *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies,* **Book A,** students practise the following 8 reading strategies:
- Finding Main Idea
- Recalling Facts and Details
- Understanding Sequence
- Recognising Cause and Effect
- Making Predictions
- Finding Word Meaning in Context
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences
- Reading Pictures

What is in the *CARS Plus* teacher guide?

- **Information for the Teacher**
  Suggestions and instructions for using *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies* effectively in the classroom.

- **Research Summary**
  A summary of the research that supports the *CARS Plus Series* is included in the teacher guide.

- **Understanding the Strategies**
  This four-page reproducible can be used with students as a skill-review summary. It can also be used to reinforce the strategies practised in the student book.

- **Teacher Assessments**
  Teachers complete the assessments after the students have completed all 5 Pretests and then again after all 5 Post Tests.

- **Class Performance Chart**
  This reproducible is for recording class results for the Pretests and Post Tests.

- **Completed Answer Forms**
  Teachers use the completed Answer Forms to easily correct the tests.

What is the difference between the Pretests, the Post Tests and the Benchmarks?

The 5 Pretests and the 5 Post Tests are designed to assess mastery. The length of the reading passages and the number of questions are the same in each of these ten tests. The passages in the Pretests and Post Tests are each one page, followed by one question for each strategy. Since each test contains only one strategy-specific question, it is important to administer all of the five Pretests in order to assess a student's overall performance and all of the five Post Tests to determine a student's overall progress. Administering multiple tests, and compiling the results, provides reliable information about each strategy.

The passages in the Benchmarks are two pages. The Benchmarks allow you to assess how well the students apply strategies to longer reading passages. The Benchmarks are meant to be used as individual progress-monitoring tools to monitor progress in applying multiple reading strategies to a passage.

When should I use the *CARS Plus Series* in the classroom?

Students complete the tests in the *CARS Plus Series* in the following manner:

- **Pretests:** To get accurate results, administer all 5 Pretests within a five-day period at the beginning of the school year.
- **Benchmarks:** The 5 Benchmarks are progress-monitoring tools and may be completed at any time after the Pretests and before the Post Tests. Space out the administration of the Benchmarks to best meet your classroom needs.
- **Post Tests:** To get accurate results, administer all 5 Post Tests within a five-day period.

How do I use the *CARS Plus Series* with the *STARS Plus Series*?

Because *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies* is a diagnostic tool, you can determine areas where an individual student needs improvement.

- **Pretests:** Use the results of the Pretests to identify areas of strength and weakness and to place students in *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success*, the instructional companion of the *CARS Plus Series*.
- **Benchmarks:** Use the Benchmarks to evaluate students' needs and monitor progress in applying multiple reading strategies to a passage.
- **Post Tests:** Use the Post Tests to assess mastery of the strategies taught in the *STARS Plus Series.*

How much time is required to complete *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies?*

- Each of the 5 Pretests and each of the 5 Post Tests require 45 minutes for completion, correction and discussion.
- Self-assessments 1 and 2 each require about 20 minutes for completion. Students should complete self-assessments no more than one or two days after completion of Pretests 1–5 and Post Tests 1–5.
- Each of the 5 Benchmarks requires 60 minutes for completion, correction and discussion.

You can adjust these suggested times as needed to accommodate your daily schedule of instruction.

Where do students record their answers?

Students must record their answers on the appropriate Answer Form that appears in the student book. The Answer Form for the Pretests is on page 51, Post Tests is on page 53 and Benchmarks is on page 55. Ask students to detach the form and fill in the personal-information section.

Next to each item number on the Answer Form is an abbreviation that identifies the strategy. Once you have a student's completed Answer Form, total the number of correct responses for each strategy. Then transfer these totals to the appropriate teacher assessment to begin the assessment process.

What is the correction procedure?

For the Pretests and Post Tests, correct the tests after students have completed all 5 tests. For the Benchmarks, correct each test immediately following its completion. For the best results, correct each test orally with students. Explain concepts that students may not fully understand. Discuss why correct answer choices are correct and why the remaining choices are not correct.

If possible, elicit from students their reasoning for choosing an incorrect answer. Incorrect answer choices often include a variety of misunderstandings about the question. Discussing why choices are correct and incorrect will help students review and clarify how they approached a particular strategy.

What forms of student assessment are featured in the *CARS Plus Series* and how do I use them?

In addition to the reading passages and strategy-based questions, *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies* contains two student self-assessments.

Student Assessments

Students become more successful in reading when they assess their own performance against known standards. Student self-assessment also helps teachers gain insight into a student's measure of performance. Difficulties that a student experiences are often revealed through self-assessment. Self-assessment focuses students on the process of *performance* rather than the *end result*.

For example, in the *CARS Plus* self-assessments, students see how well they recognise and apply reading strategies, rather than focus on how many responses are correct or incorrect. Therefore, the self-assessments become a valuable tool for both student and teacher.

There are 2 self-assessments in the student book. One student self-assessment is completed after all 5 Pretests and the second student self-assessment is completed after all 5 Post Tests.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS 1 AND 2
(pages 50 and 52 of student book)

Students complete Self-assessment 1 after Pretests 1–5 have been corrected and discussed. Arrange one-on-one conferencing to discuss students' responses to Self-assessment 1 before continuing with the Benchmarks. Help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide instruction for a specific strategy, if needed. Students complete Self-assessment 2 after Post Tests 1–5 have been corrected and discussed.

Answers to the questions on the self-assessment require thoughtful, written responses. The questions are carefully constructed to help students
- analyse their performance.
- determine areas in which they are experiencing difficulty.
- describe any difficulties they are having.
- rate their performance for completing the tests.

What forms of teacher assessment are featured in the *CARS Plus Series* and how do I use them?

Teacher Assessments

There are 3 teacher assessments. These 3 assessments are completed for each student after they have completed Pretests 1–5 and Post Tests 1–5.

Teacher Assessments help facilitate individualised instruction in the classroom. For example, by using the results of student assessments and your teacher assessments, reading groups are easily established for instruction with the *STARS Plus Series*. You will be able to determine how to organise student groups based on reading level and mastery over specific reading strategies.

The purposes of the teacher assessments are to
- identify an individual student's areas of strength and weakness when applying a reading strategy.
- determine in which specific areas, if any, remediation is needed.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT 1
(reproducible on page 11 of teacher guide)

This assessment is completed using the student's corrected Answer Form. This assessment reveals a student's performance for each of the reading strategies.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT 2
(reproducible on page 12 of teacher guide)

This assessment is completed using Teacher Assessment 1. Using the data from Teacher Assessment 1, you create a bar graph that provides a visual comparison of a student's level of mastery for each of the reading strategies.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT 3
(reproducible on page 13 of teacher guide)

This assessment is completed using Teacher Assessments 1 and 2. Using the data from these assessments, you are able to provide a review of a student's overall strengths and weaknesses, as well as provide an analysis of those areas that need improvement. This analysis allows you to document what action will be taken – remediation or further instruction – to help the student achieve mastery as well as document the student's progress after those steps have been taken.

What should I do with the completed student self-assessments, teacher assessments and the Answer Forms?

The completed student self-assessments, teacher assessments and the Answer Forms may be placed in the student's portfolio for review by reading specialists, administrators or another teacher. As a student works through *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies*, the portfolio allows teachers and parents to see the student's growth and performance over time.

How do I record results for the entire class on the Class Performance Chart?

After students have completed each Pretest and Post Test, record the number of correct responses to the strategy-based questions for your entire class on the reproducible Class Performance Chart, on page 14 of the teacher guide. Tick off the appropriate box to indicate if the chart represents data collected from Pretests 1–5 or Post Tests 1–5.

For each student, record the number of correct responses (out of 5) for each strategy. Then total the responses to determine the overall number of correct responses (out of 60 for Books B–H, out of 40 for Book A, out of 30 for Books P and AA) for each student. Using the Class Performance Chart in this way provides an opportunity to evaluate classroom progress over time.

What should I do if students are having difficulty understanding specific strategy questions?

You may want to pause and focus on the question types and strategies before students move on to the next lesson. Understanding the Strategies, on pages 7–10, is a useful reproducible tool for instructing students on how to answer a strategy-based question.

Make a copy of Understanding the Strategies for each student. Take the students, as a class, through a lesson they have already completed.

Read the reading passage aloud or enlist a student volunteer to read it. Then discuss each strategy-based question and the answer choices, referring to the strategy descriptions in Understanding the Strategies. As student volunteers answer each question, explain why an answer choice is correct, as well as why the remaining choices are not correct.

What is the *CARS Plus/STARS Plus/Extensions* Collection?

Step 1. Diagnose and Benchmark

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies allows you to identify and assess a student's level of mastery for each of 12 reading strategies in Books B–H, 8 strategies in Book A and 6 strategies in Books P and AA.

Step 2. Instruction

Strategies to Achieve Reading Success provides scaffolded instruction – modelled instruction, guided practice and independent practice – that supports student success with the strategies assessed in *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies*.

Step 3. Ensure Mastery for On-Level Students

Extensions in Reading Series reinforces, extends and applies concepts developed in *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success* with more sophisticated elements: graphic organisers, longer passages, paired selections and models.