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Using the *CARS Plus* and *STARS Plus Series*

CARS Plus Series

Diagnose needs of the class by administering 5 Pretests

Benchmark during instruction to monitor progress, using 5 longer tests

Assess mastery by administering 5 Post Tests



STARS Plus Series

Instruct the class in 1 to 6 strategies, based on students' needs (differentiate instruction using Books P–H)



What are the *CARS Plus* and *STARS Plus Series*?

The *CARS Plus* and *STARS Plus Series* are a comprehensive resource that allows you to identify and teach essential reading comprehension strategies. As the diagram above indicates, the *CARS Plus Series* is the assessment component and the *STARS Plus Series* is the instruction component.

CARS Plus Series

The *CARS Plus Series* is a diagnostic reading series that allows you to identify and assess a student's level of mastery for each of 6 reading strategies. It contains Pretests, Benchmarks and Post Tests. This ten-level series is designed for students in years P to 8. The *CARS Plus Series* helps teachers place students in the companion *STARS Plus Series* for reading instruction and remediation.

STARS Plus Series

The *STARS Plus Series* is a prescriptive reading series that provides essential instruction in the same 6 reading strategies as the diagnostic *CARS Plus Series*. This ten-level series is also designed for students in years P to 8. The *STARS Plus Series* provides precise instruction in and practice with the strategies students need to master in order to achieve reading success.

Book AA in both the *CARS* and *STARS Plus Series* features the following 6 reading strategies:

- Finding Main Idea
- Finding Details
- Putting Ideas in Order
- Understanding What Happens and Why
- Making a Guess
- Figuring Things Out



How do I get started with the *CARS Plus* and *STARS Plus Series*?

As shown in the diagram on page 4, the *CARS Plus Series* is used to diagnose the needs of the class, monitor students' progress and assess students' mastery of the strategies. The *STARS Plus Series* is used to instruct the class in targeted reading strategies, based on the diagnosis from the *CARS Plus Series*.

To get started, use the following steps:

1. Diagnose

Administer the five pretests in the *CARS Plus Series* to diagnose the needs of the students in your class. (See the *CARS Plus* teacher guide for additional information.)

2. Instruct

Based on the results of the *CARS Plus* diagnosis, assign specific strategy lessons in the *STARS Plus Series* to remediate areas that need improvement and reinforcement. Or, you may have students complete an entire *STARS Plus* student book in order to build and reinforce students' basic knowledge of reading strategies. (See pages 7 and 10–11 for information about differentiating instruction.)

3. Benchmark

Use the five Benchmarks in the *CARS Plus Series* and the Review Lessons in the *STARS Plus Series* (see page 6) to monitor students' progress.

4. Assess

Use the five Post Tests in the *CARS Plus Series* and the Final Review in the *STARS Plus Series* (see page 6) to assess mastery of the strategies taught in the *STARS Plus Series*.



Why do the *CARS Plus* and *STARS Plus Series* concentrate on 6 reading strategies?

The reading strategies in these series were based on reviews of the following:

- Current research on reading comprehension
- Gaps in basal or core reading programs

The strategies in both series cover a range of areas that lead to success in reading comprehension:

- Literal comprehension
- Inferential comprehension
- Text structure and organisational patterns
- Vocabulary and concept development
- Metacognitive strategies

Practice in these reading strategies leads to success on tests as well as improves students' overall reading comprehension.



How do researchers define the relationship between skills and strategies?

According to Regie Routman (2000), strategies are the thinking, problem-solving processes that the learner deliberately initiates, incorporates and applies to construct meaning. At this point, the reading strategies become instinctively incorporated into one's reading.

According to Afflerbach et al. (2008), when a reading strategy becomes effortless and automatic, the strategy has become a skill. Reading skills operate without the reader's deliberate control or conscious awareness.

Quick-reference Chart:



What is in the *STARS Plus* student book?

Strategy Lessons

Each student book contains 6 strategy lessons, one lesson for each reading strategy. Each ten-page lesson provides instruction and practice in the targeted reading strategy. Students look at pictures and/or read passages and answer strategy-based selected-response (multiple-choice) questions.

The strategy lessons are scaffolded, providing a gradual release of support. Each lesson moves from modelled instruction to guided instruction to modelled practice to guided practice to independent practice. (See Features of a *STARS Plus* Lesson on pages 12–16 for more information about the strategy lessons.)

Review Lessons

A two-page review lesson follows every two strategy lessons. Students answer 6 questions that focus on the target reading strategies in the two previous lessons.

Final Review

An eight-page final review gives practice in the 6 reading strategies. Students answer 24 selected-response questions that focus on all the reading strategies in the book.



What is in the *STARS Plus* teacher guide?

Overview

Information about using the *CARS Plus* and *STARS Plus Series* and the Classroom Reading System, including:

- Suggested Pacing Chart
- Features of a *STARS Plus* Lesson
- Research Summary
- Reproducible Strategy Bookmarks

Lesson Plans

Ten-page guides for each *STARS Plus* student-book lesson, including a facsimile of each student-book page with correct answers, and these special features:

- Introductory Activity
- Understanding the Strategy
- Connecting with Literature



How can I provide differentiated instruction using the *STARS Plus Series*?

There are two easy ways to provide differentiated instruction in the classroom using the *STARS Plus Series*.

By Reading Strategy

Use the results from the Pretests in the *CARS Plus Series* to diagnose the individual needs of the students in your classroom.

Then use *STARS Plus Book AA* to provide targeted instruction in one specific strategy or in several strategies to remediate areas that need improvement and/or reinforcement.

Or, you may wish to provide instruction using the entire *STARS Plus Book AA* to build students' basic knowledge of all the reading strategies.

By Reading Level

Students in the same classroom are likely to be reading at different skill levels (below year level, at year level or above year level). You can use the levelled books in the *STARS Plus Series* (Books P–H) to meet this need.

To enable this type of differentiated instruction, the sequence of the strategies and the page numbers across the books in the *STARS Plus Series* are the same from lesson to lesson (with some exceptions in Books P–C). So all students in the classroom receive the same reading-strategy instruction but work with appropriately levelled reading passages.

For example, some year one students may work in Book AA, which contains reading passages that don't extend beyond a year one reading level. At the same time, other students in the class may be assigned Book A, while other students may be assigned Book P.



How can I assess students' progress in the *STARS Plus Series*?

After students have been placed into the *STARS Plus Series*, based on the diagnosis from the *CARS Plus* Pretests, several methods may be used to assess students' progress in the *STARS Plus Series*.

You may use classroom observation to monitor and informally assess students' mastery of the strategies taught in each *STARS Plus* lesson.

You may also use the following to formally assess students' mastery of the strategies:

STARS Plus Review Lessons

A review lesson follows every two strategy lessons. The reviews may be used to assess students' mastery of the reading strategies taught in those two lessons in the *STARS Plus* student book.

STARS Plus Final Review

A final review follows all 6 strategy lessons. The final review may be used upon completion of the student book to assess students' mastery of all 6 reading strategies.

CARS Plus Benchmarks

These five tests may be used throughout instruction in the *STARS Plus* student book (after the *CARS Plus* Pretests and before the *CARS Plus* Post Tests) as individual progress-monitoring tools to monitor students' progress in applying all 6 reading strategies.

CARS Plus Post Tests

These five tests may be used upon completion of the *STARS Plus* student book to assess students' overall mastery of all 6 reading strategies. The results of the *CARS Plus* Post Tests may be compared with the results of the *CARS Plus* Pretests to assess students' mastery of the reading strategies.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- The main idea in a picture shows what the picture is mostly or mainly about.
- Every picture has a main idea.

AT A GLANCE

Students will practise what they have learned so far. They will continue to match main idea concepts with pictures.

STEP BY STEP

Page 8

On the board, write the bulleted skills above for students to refer to as Part Three continues.

Before beginning, be sure each student has a student book open to page 8.

SAY: We are going to practise more with main idea and pictures. Look at the words in the box at the top of the page. Listen as I read them aloud:

The baby crawls.


Find the picture that shows this main idea. Circle the letter of the correct answer.


Pause to allow students time to consider their answer.


Discuss and correct the responses. C is the correct answer.

PART THREE: Check Your Understanding ★★☆☆

The baby crawls.

A 

B 

C 

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STEP BY STEP

Page 9

SAY: Turn to page 9.

Pause to make sure all students have their books open to page 9.

SAY: Look at the picture at the top of the page. Then put your finger on the number 3, next to the picture.

Follow along as I read the question and the answer choices:

3. What is the main idea of the picture?

A The rabbit eats a carrot.

B The rabbit sees a cat.

C The rabbit digs a hole.

Pause to allow students time to consider their answer.

SAY: Now look at the picture near the middle of the page. Put your finger on the number 4, next to the picture. Follow along as I read the question and the answer choices:

4. What is the main idea of the picture?

A Tom mows the grass.

B Tom opens the door.

C Tom rakes the leaves.


Pause to allow students time to consider their answer.

Discuss and correct the responses.

Number 1: A The rabbit eats a carrot.


Number 2: C Tom rakes the leaves.

Reinforce any concepts that are not fully understood before going on to Part Four.



3. What is the main idea of the picture?


- A The rabbit eats a carrot.
- B The rabbit sees a cat.
- C The rabbit digs a hole.



4. What is the main idea of the picture?

- A Tom mows the grass.
- B Tom opens the door.
- C Tom rakes the leaves.

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SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Details in a picture show *who* or *what* the picture is about.
- Details in a picture show *what* is happening in the picture.
- Details in a picture often show *where* something is happening.

AT A GLANCE

Students practise what they have learned so far.

STEP BY STEP

Page 18

Main idea concepts are reinforced through details that tell more about the main idea. Students practise with details that tell about who, what and where.

On the board, write the bulleted skills above for students to refer to as Part Three continues.

Before beginning, be sure each student has a student book open to page 18.

SAY: Put your finger on the directions at the top of the page. Follow along as I read the directions aloud: Look at the picture.

Pause to allow students time to study the picture.

SAY: The main idea of the picture is: A boy cries.

Now put your finger on the number 3. Follow along as I read the question and the answer choices:

- 3. The boy lost his**
A friend.
B balloon.
C money.

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Pause to allow students time to consider their answer. You may choose to elicit student responses before going on to discuss and correct.

SAY: The correct answer is B. The details in the picture show that the balloon is floating away from the boy. The details also show that the boy is crying. Together, these details tell you that the boy is crying because he lost his balloon.

PART THREE: Check Your Understanding

Look at the picture.



3. The boy lost his
A friend.
 B balloon.
C money.

18

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UNDERSTANDING WHAT HAPPENS AND WHY

★ ★ ★ ★ GETTING STARTED

Introductory Activity: Direct the students to think about their own examples of cause and effect. Ask students to think of something that has happened to them as well as *why* it happened. (*My bike tyre went flat because I rode over a nail.*) Choose students to share their examples. Write two headings on the board: *What Happens* and *Why*. As students share their examples, put the effect under the *What Happens* heading and the cause under *Why* to reinforce the concept of cause and effect.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- There is a reason for everything that happens.
- Everything that happens has two parts: *what* happened and *why* it happened.

AT A GLANCE

Students are introduced to the concept of cause and effect through pictures that show what happens and why.

STEP BY STEP

Page 36

Explain to students that there is a reason for everything that happens. For example, our stomachs growl because we are hungry. We yawn because we are tired. We wear coats in winter because it is cold outside.

On the board, write the bulleted skills above for students to refer to as Part One continues.

Work with a Partner

Before beginning, be sure each student has a student book open to page 36. Also, assign each student a partner to work with in Part One.

SAY: We are going to talk about what happens and why.

Put your finger on the picture of the pencil near the top of the page. Follow along as I read the directions aloud: Draw what a flower looks like when it gets enough water.

Lesson 4

Understanding What Happens and Why

PART ONE: Think About the Strategy

✎ Draw what a flower looks like when it does not get enough water.

Students draw a flower that gets enough water.



✎ Draw what a flower looks like when it does get enough water.

Students draw a flower that does not get enough water.



Work with a Partner

36

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Pause to allow students time to draw their picture. The picture does not have to be precise.

SAY: Look at your picture. What does your picture show?

Have students describe to the class what they've drawn, such as a flower that stands upright in full bloom, and so forth. Reinforce the concept of what happened and why by pointing out what happened (*the flower stands upright or is in full bloom*) and why (*because it got enough water*). Emphasise the word *because* when discussing the "why".

SAY: Now put your finger on the picture of the pencil near the middle of the page. Follow along as I read the directions aloud:

Draw what a flower looks like when it does not get enough water.

Pause to allow students time to draw their picture. The picture does not have to be precise.

SAY: Turn to page 37.

Pause to make sure all students have their books open to page 37.

SAY: Find the picture at the top of the page. The picture shows what happened to Jim and why. What happened to Jim? There was a pull on Jim's fishing line. Why did this happen? Look at the picture. The picture shows why this happened.

Pause to allow students time to study the picture.

SAY: Now find the question near the middle of the page. Follow along as I read the question and the answer choices:

Why was there a pull on Jim's fishing line?

A Jim caught some seaweed.

B Jim caught a big fish.

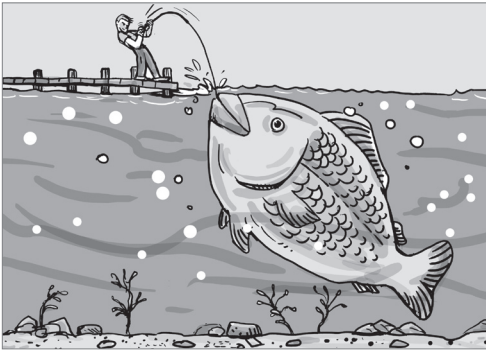
C Jim's line got stuck in the rocks.

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Pause to allow students time to consider their answer. You may choose to elicit student responses before going on to discuss and correct.

SAY: The correct answer is B. This picture shows a big fish on the end of Jim's fishing line. This is why there was a pull on his line. *What* happened? There was a pull on Jim's fishing line. *Why* did this happen? Jim caught a big fish.

Reinforce any concepts that are not fully understood before going on to Part Two.



Why was there a pull on Jim's fishing line?

- A Jim caught some seaweed.
- B Jim caught a big fish.
- C Jim's line got stuck in the rocks.

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SAY: Look at your picture. What does your picture show?

Have students describe to the class what they've drawn, such as a flower that is drooping, a flower that is losing its petals or leaves, and so forth. Reinforce the concept of what happened and why by pointing out what happened (*the flower is drooping or losing its leaves*) and why it happened (*because it did not get enough water*). Emphasise the word *because* when discussing the "why" to introduce an important clue word that often signals cause and effect.

SAY: Now work with your partner. Think about your own examples of what happened and why, such as "I did not go to school because I was sick." Share your examples with your partner.

Pause to allow students time to work with their partners.