Scaffolding Complex Text for English Learners

CABE 2018

Linda Diamond, President, CORE
Lauren Greenberg, Senior Adolescent
Literacy Specialist, CORE

ldiamond@corelearn.com
lgreenberg@corelearn.com

www.corelearn.com
www.wordintelligence.net

Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education®
Your Implementation Partner for Literacy and Math Achievement

English Language Development Guidelines

The following **recommendations** should be followed when teaching vocabulary, the use of native language, syntax and grammar, and language frames for English language learners (ELLs).

1. ELD instruction should explicitly teach forms of English (e.g., vocabulary, syntax, morphology, functions, and conventions). State we will learn how to teach syntax and grammar to support ELLs with complex sentences when we learn about how to deconstruct complex sentences.

2. ELD instruction should integrate meaning and communication to support explicit teaching of language. Students need to be immersed in learning language while learning content. ELD helps ELLs explicitly attend to language without compromising learning content. We will learn how language frames assist ELLs with asking and responding to questions so that they can interact with the content while learning language forms such as grammatical structure, pragmatic expression, and use of academic language.

3. Use of English during ELD instruction should be maximized; the primary language should be used strategically. Teachers should use cognates from student's native language when available, use brief explanations in home language, preview and review lesson content in the home language, and teach strategies and study skills in the home language and apply to academic content in English in order to take advantage of the knowledge already known in their home language.

4. ELD instruction should provide students with corrective feedback on language form. Teachers should provide grammar feedback when the primary focus is English language development. This guideline will be important to remember when we learn about how to teach grammar and syntax.

—Saunders, Goldenberg, and Marcelletti 2013

Planning Considerations for ELD Instruction

1. General Guidelines

Teachers should ask the following questions when planning lessons:

- What are the English language proficiency levels of my students?
- What ELD standards have my students mastered and which ones do they need to master?
- What language in the text might present challenges for my students?
- How will my students interact in meaningful ways to learn how English works?
- How can I ensure my students practice academic conversations?

2. Text Scaffolds

Text complexity should be considered when selecting the linguistic supports as well as what you know about the language proficiency level and background knowledge of your ELLs. When looking at text complexity, teachers need to consider components through an ELL lens and not just what would be complex for English-only students.

Consider the following **preteaching** supports:

- Academic vocabulary and language that needs to be taught
- Idioms ELLs may not know
- Cultural backgrounds that might be different
- Understanding the writer's perspectives
- Graphics
- Useful cognates

Some additional supports **during text reading** include the following:

- Modeling think-alouds with clear examples to build metacognition
- Providing examples of student work
- Bridging previous knowledge with new understandings
- Building schema/background
- Viewing a video
- Representing text in different genres (drama or dialogue, narrative, reports)

3. Using Native Language Cognates to Support Instruction

Here are some ways teachers can take advantage of the first language:

- Use cognates (words with shared meaning with common roots).
- Provide a brief explanation in the native language.
- Preview and review the lesson in the native language.
- Strategies for reading, writing, and study strategies can be taught in the native language. Students are then asked to apply these strategies to content presented in English.
- Pictures or images can often be used to show the meaning of a word.

4. Evidence of Learning

The activities assigned to students can act as assessments. Some examples of informal assessments are

- Completing graphic organizers
- Creating charts
- Creating timelines
- Writing journal entries
- Taking annotated notes
- Using language frames

Many of the ELD supports/scaffolds can also act as evidence of learning:

- Documentation of observing a student correctly using a sentence frame
- Completion of a study guide
- A graphic organizer showing comprehension
- A timeline created by the student showing comprehension of sequence of events
- Observation of the student(s) participating in academic conversations

5. Three Phases of Backward Planning

The three phases of backward planning include answering the following questions:

- What do we want students to learn (identified desired results)?
- How will students know when they have learned them (evidence of learning)?
- How will students go about learning them (design instruction)?

Other considerations include

- How a series of tasks progress over time
- How the procedures are scaffolded in a particular activity
- How to scaffold the collaborative process of interaction

—Walqui 2006

Determining Level of Text Complexity

Category	Elements of Text Complexity	Rating*
Levels of Meaning/ Purpose	• Complexity of ideas • Subtlety of author's tone	**Simple 1** | **Somewhat Complex 2** | **Complex 3** | **Very Complex 4** Single level of meaning ..... Multiple levels of meaning Explicitly stated purpose ..... Implicit purpose (hidden or obscure)
Structure	• Complexity of syntax • Familiarity of genre demands • Complexity of text coherence • Complexity of text organization	**Simple 1** | **Somewhat Complex 2** | **Complex 3** | **Very Complex 4** Simple ..... Complex Explicit ..... Implicit Conventional ..... Unconventional Events in chronological order ..... Out of chronological order Simple graphics ..... Sophisticated graphics Graphics unnecessary or supplementary ..... Graphics essential to understanding text
Language	• Complexity of vocabulary • Complexity of syntax • Sophistication of literary devices • Sophistication of data presentation devices	**Simple 1** | **Somewhat Complex 2** | **Complex 3** | **Very Complex 4** Literal ..... Figurative Clear ..... Ambiguous Contemporary, familiar ..... Archaic or unfamiliar Conversational ..... General academic and domain specific
Knowledge Demands	• Match of text/ reader prior knowledge	**Simple 1** | **Somewhat Complex 2** | **Complex 3** | **Very Complex 4** Simple themes ..... Complex, sophisticated themes Single themes ..... Multiple themes Single perspective ..... Multiple perspectives Perspective(s) like own ..... Perspective(s) unlike or in opposition to own Everyday knowledge ..... Cultural and literacy or discipline-specific knowledge useful or required

Albert Einstein Asks a Question

Albert Einstein Asks a Question

BY JOHN ROSS

Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany, in 1879. When he was five, he was sick in bed for a time. His father gave him a compass. "But why does the needle always point north?" asked the boy. "I don't know why," his dad confessed. Later, the young Einstein studied the subject and found out the answer. And he never stopped asking questions after that. "The most important thing is to keep asking questions," Einstein would always tell young people who wanted to become scientists.

Einstein did not do well in school. His teachers said he was slow to learn. "Albert will never amount to very much," said the principal. But Einstein's mind wasn't slow. It was really working much faster than the school principal could ever have imagined. He wanted to know how everything worked. He thought a lot about space and time. He thought a lot about energy. He thought about atoms and how all the energy inside them could explode outward. He thought about how light travels in waves. He wondered what would happen to a person if he or she traveled at the speed of light, and he guessed that person would never grow old.

Einstein's scientific theories forever changed our understanding of the world. He called his ideas "theories" or "thought experiments." He tested his experiments by making pictures in his mind and using his imagination like a laboratory. These thought experiments were so hard to explain that sometimes only a few people in the whole world could understand what Einstein was thinking. Einstein's most famous theory

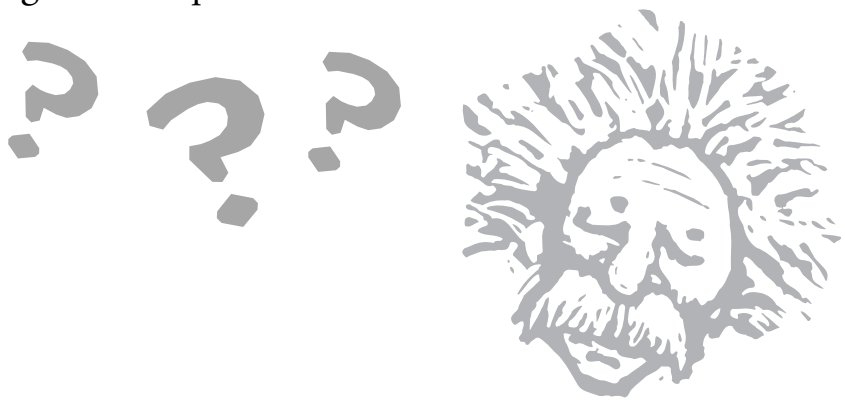
Albert Einstein Asks a Question

is the theory of relativity. This is how he explained the theory of relativity: "If you sit with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like only a minute. But if you sit on a hot stove for a minute, it seems like an hour. That's relativity."

In 1933, Albert Einstein fled Germany and went to the United States. From then until his death in 1955, he taught at Princeton University in New Jersey. There, he enjoyed sailing, playing the violin, putting together jigsaw puzzles, and building houses from playing cards. Einstein rode his bicycle everywhere; he thought driving was way too complicated.

When Einstein wanted to think, he often went for a walk. He usually wore a long overcoat and a black hat on top of his wild white hair (which was always uncombed). He would bring a notepad with him, to take notes on his "thought experiments." Sometimes he would get so lost in his own thoughts that he would get lost for real. Einstein would have to ask neighbors for directions home.

When this famous scientist died at the age of 76, he left his brain to science. Scientists wanted to see if it was different from the average human brain. Nothing unusual turned up—until quite recently. In June 1999, a research team from Canada announced that Einstein's brain is fifteen percent wider than normal in one particular area. This area seems to have something to do with mathematical thinking. Maybe having a wider area *caused* Einstein to be a math genius. Maybe having a wider area is the *result* of Einstein's being a math genius. Or maybe this larger area doesn't mean either of these things. Hmmm. Maybe it has to do with asking all those questions.



BMX Bikes

BMX Bikes

BMX bikes should have 20-inch wheels. The bolts should be tight. Take off any lights, and take off the kickstand.

Bike height is from 10 to 13 inches. A short bike can go fast, but your feet can hit the ground on turns. A tall bike has room for turns, but it jerks at top speed.

Choose the size of the wheelbase for the way you ride. Short is good for ramp riding and jumping. Long is good for going down hills.

Hot bikes are made for cool moves. To pop a wheelie, pump hard on the pedals. Shift your weight to the back of the seat. Pull up on the front wheel. It will lift the wheel off of the ground. You will be able to ride for a long way with your front wheel up high.

Vocabulary Organizer for Lesson Planning

Unfamiliar Words	Words to Preteach	Words to Discuss (after reading, defined in text)	Words to Define (at point of contact with synonym or phrase)	Words to Use in Context and/or Morphology
Tier 1 Words (Words ELLs or language improvised students will find challenging)				
Tier 2 Words (Meaning is necessary for comprehension of text, and students are likely to encounter these across a wide variety of domains)				
Tier 3 Words (Words specific to a content area or subject matter)				
Multiple Meanings/ Homophones				
Figurative				
Dialect or Antiquated				

Try It

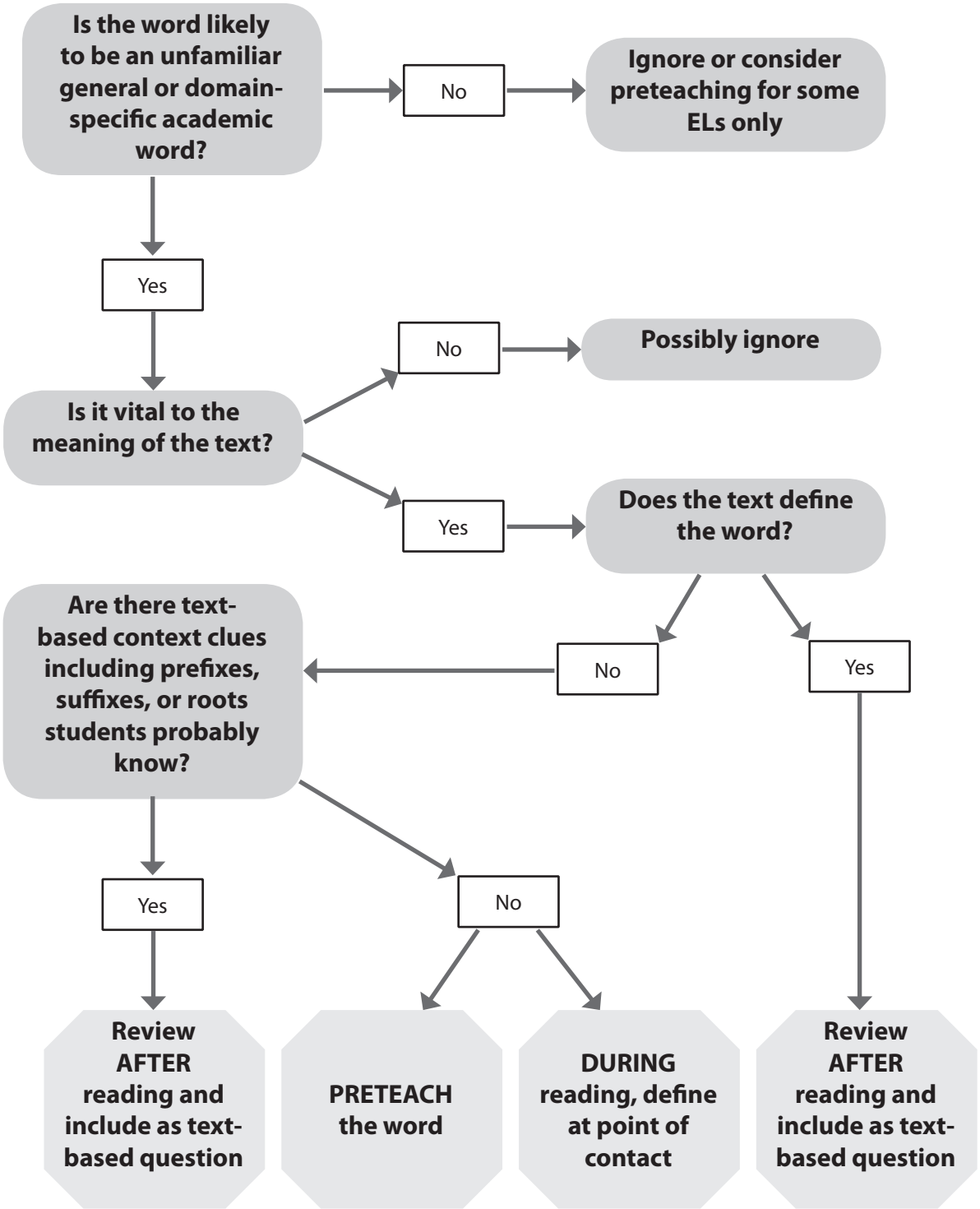
With a partner, use the Vocabulary Organizer for Lesson Planning template on the following page. Discuss how you might handle these words: *relative*, *explode*, *compass*, *relativity*, *rode*, *confessed*, *fled*, *light*, and *theories*, taken from "Albert Einstein Asks a Question."

Identify any other words you might select as being problematic for students. Discuss if you would preteach, discuss after reading, define at point of contact, or help students use context to acquire meaning.

Vocabulary Organizer for Lesson Planning

Unfamiliar Words	Words to Preteach	Words to Discuss (after reading, defined in text)	Words to Define (at point of contact with synonym or phrase)	Words to Use in Context and/or Morphology
Tier 1 Words (Words ELLs or language improvised students will find challenging)				
Tier 2 Words (Meaning is necessary for comprehension of text, and students are likely to encounter these across a wide variety of domains)				
Tier 3 Words (Words specific to a content area or subject matter)				
Multiple Meanings/ Homophones				
Figurative				
Dialect or Antiquated				

Flow Chart for Vocabulary Decision Making



Specific Word Instruction Routine

1. **Read and Pronounce the Word (30 seconds):** If possible, say the word in the native language. Print the word on the board and have students read and pronounce it.

   Say: Let's say the word together: *relative*. **Ask:** What is the word? (*relative*)

2. **Give a Student-Friendly Explanation (1 minute):** Explain the word's meaning in everyday language that is clear and accessible to students.

   Say: You can compare something that is relative to something else.

3. **Provide a Different Context (1 minute):** To ensure a clear, explicit concept of the word, develop a sentence with scaffolded questions. In your example, use the target word in a context that is similar to, but different from, the story context.

   For example, say: The worker told the person on the phone that the store was only two miles away. The mom replied, "It seems like 20 miles away when you are four years old and walking." The clerk responded, "It's all relative." **Then ask:** What is the worker thinking about the distance? What is the mom thinking about the distance?

4. **Engage Actively with the Word (1–2 minutes):** Provide playful opportunities for students to interact with the word and process its meaning right away. The following chart shows different ways to engage actively with words. Select one way in a given time frame.

Active Engagement with Words	
Questions	How would size be relative to a giant and a mouse?
Example or nonexample	Which one of these examples tell about how two things can be relative to each other? • A pro baseball player talking about the speed of the baseball and a person learning how to catch the ball for the first time • A mom eating a piece of chocolate cake and a dad eating a piece of chocolate cake
Finish the idea	Happiness is relative because . . .
Have you ever . . . ?	Can you describe a time when something seemed relative to you and someone else?
Choices	Give me a thumbs up if this can be something that is relative. Give me a thumbs down if it is something that wouldn't be relative. • Smell of a skunk to a skunk and person • The number of pennies to equal three cents • The size of a car to a person and to a mouse

—Adapted from *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* (Honig, Diamond, and Gutlohn 2013)

Specific Word Instruction Routine

Try It

Use specific word instruction with the word *explode*. If time permits, try teaching it in the allotted time frame.

1. Read and Pronounce the Word (native language and English) (30 seconds)	
2. Give a Student-Friendly Explanation (1 minute)	
3. Provide a Different Context (1 minute)	
4. Engage Actively with the Word (1–2 minutes)	

Using Word-Part Clues to Derive Word Meaning Routine

Step	Action	Example Word: *disagreement*
1	Look for the root word. What does it mean?	*agree* = to have the same opinion
2	Look for a prefix. What does it mean?	*dis* = not or opposite
3	Look for a suffix. What does it mean?	*ment* = state or quality of something
4	Put the meanings of the word parts together. What is the meaning of the whole word?	*dis* + *agree* + *ment* = state or quality of not having the same opinion

TYPES OF HELPFUL CONTEXT CLUES

Type	Description	Example Sentence
Definition	The author provides a direct definition of an unfamiliar word, right in the sentence. • SIGNAL WORDS: *is, are, means, refers to*	A conga is a barrel-shaped drum.
Appositive Definition	A type of definition clue. An appositive is a word or phrase that defines or explains an unfamiliar word that comes before it. • SIGNAL WORD: *or* • SIGNAL PUNCTUATION: set off by commas	At night you can see constellations, or groups of stars, in the sky.
Synonym	The author uses another word or phrase that is similar in meaning, or can be compared, to an unfamiliar word. • SIGNAL WORDS: *also, as, identical, like, likewise, resembling, same, similarly, too*	My dog Buck travels everywhere with me. My friend's canine buddy travels everywhere with him, too.
Antonym	The author uses another word or phrase that means about the opposite of, or is in contrast with, an unfamiliar word. • SIGNAL WORDS: *but, however, in contrast, instead of, on the other hand, though, unlike*	I thought the movie would be weird, but it turned out to be totally mundane.
Example	The author provides several words or ideas that are examples of an unfamiliar word. • SIGNAL WORDS: *for example, for instance, including, like, such as*	In science we are studying marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, and porpoises.
General	The author provides some nonspecific clues to the meaning of an unfamiliar word, often spread over several sentences.	Einstein rode his bike everywhere. He thought driving a car was way too complicated.

Based on Baumann et al. 2003, 2005.

Word Level Activity

Use the text on the following page, "The Greenhouse Effect." Read the text to determine words to teach. One person chooses each word type.

1. Identify words that have multiple word-parts (morphemes).
2. Identify words that have a different surface meaning than the text meaning.
3. Identify Tier 1 words.
4. Identify Tier 2 words.
5. Identify Tier 3 words.

Select instructional strategies to teach the identified words.

Instructional Strategy	Words
Advanced Vocabulary Organizer	
Specific Word Instruction Routine	
Using Word Parts to Determine Word Meaning	
Other	

Based on the instructional strategies you have selected, create one lesson.

The Greenhouse Effect

The greenhouse effect is the rise in temperature that Earth experiences because certain gases in the atmosphere trap energy from the sun that is reflected off Earth—energy that would otherwise escape back into outer space. Scientists now believe that the greenhouse effect is making Earth warmer, enough to drastically change the climate. An increase in global temperature of just one degree can impact rainfall patterns and sea levels. The rise in temperature can cause problems for plants, wildlife, and humans.

Water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), ozone (O_3), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are the "greenhouse gases" in our atmosphere. These types of gases behave much like the glass panes of a greenhouse. The glass lets in light but prevents heat from escaping, causing the greenhouse to heat up, much like the inside of a car parked in the sun on a hot day.

People are contributing to Earth's warming by increasing the CO_2 in the atmosphere. Trees, like all living things, are made mostly of carbon. When people burn forests, the carbon in trees is transformed into CO_2. Trees, like other plants, use photosynthesis to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. When people cut down forests, less carbon dioxide is converted into oxygen. People also increase CO_2 in the air by burning "fossil fuels." These fuels include gasoline used in cars, SUVs, and trucks and fuels like coal and natural gas used by power plants to create electricity. Whenever fossil fuels are burned, CO_2 is released into the air.

Sentence Frames

Sentence frames support the use of academic language. Sentence frames differ from sentence starters, as the goal for a frame is to produce a complete sentence with proper syntax, whereas sentence starters help begin the conversation. Both sentence starters and sentence frames help produce complex sentences using key vocabulary, functional words, and phrases. It is important that you know the language level of your students to encourage and challenge them with sentence frames and starters just about their language level. Signal words or transitional words (*however*, *therefore*, *on the other hand*) can help increase the complexity and should be taught and used based on the desired language level.

Steps to Preteach a Sentence Frame

1. Read the frame and introduce the language objective.
2. Specify the intended use of the vocabulary.
3. Teach the grammatical targets, such as the use of precise nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Provide a word bank if necessary.
4. Model how to use the sentence frame.
5. Teach students partner expectations.

Tips to Create a Sentence Frame

1. Think about the variety of ways you can respond to a prompt or explain a concept.
2. Remove the key words.
3. Think about the function of the key words in a sentence (noun, verbs, adjectives).
4. Write the sentence frame, leaving out words based on their function, and identify the function (noun, verb, adjective) of the word in small print below the blank line.

Example:

When comparing two items you might write the following:

The similarities between a/an _____and a/an _____ are they have _____ and _____.

(noun) (noun) (noun or adjective)

In this sentence, you will want to teach when to use *a* versus *an*, the subject is the noun, and the thing that is similar can be either an adjective, like a color, or a noun, like a body part.

To increase the complexity of the sentence, you can include different language functions or more advanced academic words.

Whereas _____ have _____, _____ have _____.

(nouns) (noun or adjective) (nouns) (noun or adjective)

Scaffolding Complex Sentences

Text may be difficult because of grammar, syntax, or cohesion. We can support students by guiding them to

- Interpret complex sentences through clause and phrase analysis
- Find the subject and verb in dense prose
- Understand complex punctuation
- Interpret pronoun references
- Deal with conjunctions

Lifting Sentences

- Break down complex sentences into a series of simple sentences.
- Support students in understanding the separate ideas in the sentence and how the ideas are interrelated.

Sentence Frames

- Create a form to replicate the structure of the sentence.
- Help students understand and use a particular type of text: cause/effect, list of details, etc.

Gentle Giant Octopus by Karen Wallace

Usually, the Giant octopus is reddish brown, but when it's hunting or hiding, it can change to become very dark or very pale within seconds.

Clause/Phrase	Break Apart	Simple Sentence	Sentence Frame
Usually the Giant octopus is reddish brown but when it's hunting or hiding it can change to become very dark or very pale within seconds	Usually the Giant octopus is reddish brown but when it's hunting or hiding it can change to become very dark or very pale within seconds	The octopus is usually a reddish brown. It [the octopus] can change color when it is hunting . . . it is hiding. The color of the octopus can change to become very dark … very pale. The octopus can change colors in a few seconds.	Usually, the _____ is _____, but when _____ or _____, it can _____.

Scaffolding Complex Sentences

Try It

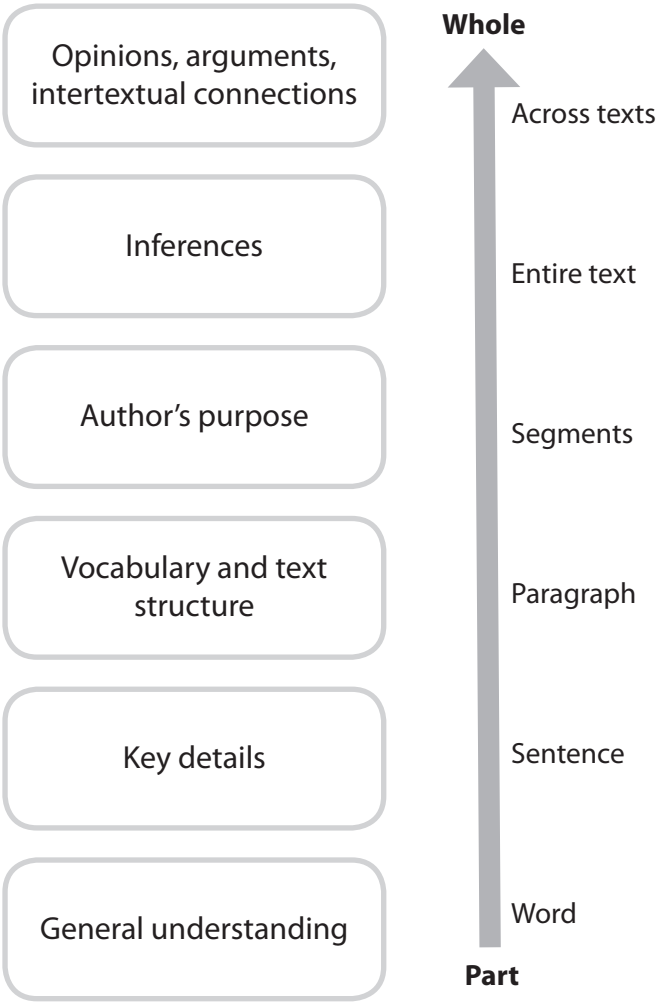
1. Deconstruct the following sentences.
2. Create sentence frames for students to create similar sentences for use in speech and/or writing.

"The storm surge raged up the bay, snatched the lighthouse from Whale Rock, hurled 20-ton boulders in the air, and, as the bay narrowed, rose higher and higher.

"An extra-high tide and a storm surge topped by wind-driven waves-when all this water broke over land, it crushed the houses of West-hampton Beach, swept the beaches of Rhode Island, and flooded Providence."

—Excerpt from *Hurricanes* (Lauber 1996)

Close Reading and Collaborative Conversation Stems



Sample Stems

General Understanding

- What is the selection/story about?
- Retell the . . .

Important Details

- Who, what, where, when, how questions

Vocabulary/Structure of the Text

- What does (word/phrase) mean?
- What text structure did the author use?

Author's Purpose Questions

- What/why did the author . . . ?

Inferences

- Questions where the answer is "author and me"

Opinions, Arguments, Connections

- How does this selection connect to . . . ?
- Compare (characters, themes, topics, versions of the same story)

Collaborative Conversation Stems

"I disagree with _____ about _____ because _____."

"I agree with _____ about _____ because _____."

"I think _____ because _____."

"In addition to what _____ said, I think _____."

Consider how you will teach these stems. Will you use an anchor chart?

Close Reading Activity

Questions I would ask on the first read:

Questions I would ask on the second read:

Questions I would ask on the third read:

How I would teach using collaborative conversation stems:

How will I make sure all students, including language proficient levels 1–3, participate?

Three Stages of Backward Planning

1. Identify Desired Results

- What will learners know, understand, and be able to do?
- What do learners already know? (Who will need additional support? Who will need extensions? What data will you use to determine supports and extensions?)

  What standards will be the focus for this unit? What are the subskills?

  What are the content targets? What are the language targets?

2. Evidence of Learning

- How will the learners know when they reach the goal?

  What assessments will you use?

3. Design Instruction

- What do I need to do in the classroom to ensure learners are successful?
- What ELD supports (visual supports, graphic supports, discussion supports, linguistic supports, and instructional supports) will I use?

English Language Desired Results

Indicators are a few examples of learning targets to support an English language learner from moving from one language level to the next. Age, grade level, and cognitive abilities should be considered when using this information. State English language development assessments should assist when selecting the domain and level as the language target.

Domain	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Listening	Point to stated pictures, words, and phrases Follow one-step oral directions Match oral statements to objects, figures, or illustrations	Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions Follow multistep oral directions Categorize or sequence oral information using pictures and objects	Draw conclusions from oral information Construct models based on oral discourse Make connections from oral discourse
Speaking	Name objects, people, and pictures Answer and ask who, what, where, when, which questions	Construct an opinion and support with evidence Participate in lengthy discussions Retell a story or event	Persuade and influence attitudes Express and defend points of view Synthesize a story or event
Reading	Point or match objects Locate and sort information Decode single syllable words Read word by word Identify basic vocabulary words	Sequence pictures, events, and processes Identify main ideas Summarize pictures, events, graphs, and stories Compare and contrast ideas and concepts Read multisyllabic words Read with fluency Use context clues and morphology to determine meaning of words	Explain pictures, events, and processes Justify ideas Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text, pictures, and graphs Synthesize information from multiple sources Read with fluency and expression Identify word families and parts of speech
Writing	Label objects, pictures, and diagrams Draw response to a prompt Produce phrases and short sentences Produce icons, symbols, words, and phrases to convey messages Organize thoughts and ideas using graphic organizers	Produce a well-constructed paragraph Compare and contrast information Summarize information from graphics or notes Edit and revise writing for basic grammar skills	Produce a well-constructed essay Produce written piece using multiple sources Synthesize information from graphic organizers, timelines, charts, and notes Edit and revise writing for sophisticated grammar skills

Notes

Notes