Comprehension

Teacher Use:

Comprehension refers to the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning. In other words, we recognize both challenges: Figuring out how print represents words, and engaging in the translation of print to sound accurately and efficiently (extracting), at the same time formulating a representation of the information being presented, which inevitably requires building new meanings and integrating new with old information (constructing meaning). Thus we use the words extracting and constructing to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension" (Snow & Sweet, 2003, p. 1).

Students need to learn that an author may write for many different purposes. You can introduce each one of these purposes and provide examples with mentor texts. Once students become more comfortable with the process, have them use the below graphic organizer for identifying the author's purpose. Some purposes for writing are outlined below:

-To inform: the author provides information about a specific topic
-To persuade: the author tries to make the reader believe something, do something, or consider a point of view
-To entertain: the author tells a story to amuse the reader
-To describe: the author tells how they feel about a person, experience, or trauma; the author recounts something that happened to them
-To explain: the author writes a series of steps to understand or follow

This resource can be used in whole group instruction, literacy stations, small group instruction, or for reading intervention.

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Directions:

Pick a text to read. Read the title and look at the picture on the cover of the text. Try to figure out the topic of the text and make a prediction about what the text will be about. Read the text carefully, asking yourself questions along the way about why the author wrote the text and what they may be trying to tell you. Fill out the below graphic organizer before, during and after reading.

Comprehension

Author's Purpose Chart		
Title of Text:		
Type of Text:		
Main Topic of Text:		
*Check off the author's purpose, selecting one of the below. Sometimes, multiple purposes apply to a text.		
To inform: the author provides information about a specific topic	**To persuade:** the author tries to make the reader believe something, do something, or consider a point of view	**To entertain:** the author tells a story to amuse the reader
[ ] **To describe:** the author tells how they feel about a person, experience, or trauma; the author recounts something that happened to them	[ ] **To explain:** the author writes a series of steps to understand or follow	
Evidence or Clue for Author's Purpose:	**Evidence or Clue for Author's Purpose:**	**Evidence or Clue for Author's Purpose:**