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Adolescents with Autism: Reading for Success!

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Adolescents with Autism: Reading for Success!

Tina K. Veale, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Midwestern University



Learner Outcomes for this Presentation

- As a result of this Continuing Education Activity, participants will be able to:
- 1) List five reading skills to target in adolescents with autism.
- 2) Describe two strategies that address text comprehension.
- 3) Describe two strategies that address improved oral reading.

What is Adolescent Literacy?

- “The ability to read, write, understand and interpret, and discuss multiple texts across multiple contexts.”
 - Read a variety of texts, print and digital (multimodal)
 - Author words and images in print and digital media.
 - Talk about texts with peers, teachers, members of their own community, and the world at large.
 - Interact with texts related to many different subjects, including those related to careers and technical skill development, and the visual and performing arts.
- International Reading Association (2012)

What is Adolescent Literacy?

- The student's capacity to apply reading knowledge and skills in key subject areas.
- Their ability to analyze, reason, and communicate effectively about what they have read.
- Their ability to pose, interpret, and solve problems in a variety of situations about which they have read.

International Reading Association. (2012)

Precursors of Adolescent Literacy

- The National Reading Panel (2000) identified the following components of effective reading instruction for beginning readers:
 - **Phonological awareness**
 - **Phonics**
 - **Sight word recognition**
 - **Fluency**
 - **Vocabulary**
 - **Text comprehension**
- **Oral language** is the basis for literacy development (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001) .

The Path to Skilled Reading

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background knowledge • Vocabulary • Language structures • Verbal reasoning • Literacy knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological awareness • Decoding • Sight word recognition |
|--|---|

**Skilled Reading =
Fluent execution +
Coordination of word recognition
and text recognition**

Scarborough (2001)

Adolescent Literacy Skills

- Activating prior knowledge of topic and text
- Predicting and questioning oneself about what has been read
- Making connections to one's own life, expanding world knowledge, and other texts
- Summarizing key ideas
- Synthesizing information from various sources
- Identifying, understanding, and remembering key vocabulary

Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, (1999)

Adolescent Literacy Skills

- Using text cues and features to recognize how a text is organized
- Organizing key information in notes, graphs, or charts.
- Search the Internet and other resources for related information.
- Monitoring and judging one's own understanding.
- Evaluating authors' ideas and perspectives.

Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, (1999)

Reading Outcomes in Autism

- Most students with autism demonstrate reading comprehension deficits (Kluth, 2010; Rosinski, 2002). They have difficulty understanding why reading is important, visualizing events described in text, separating the main ideas from the details, and making predictions.
- Reading skills align with intellectual ability (Mayes & Calhoun, 2003, 2008; Minshew, Goldstein, Taylor, & Seigel, 1994).

Reading Outcomes in Autism

- Most adolescents with autism demonstrate uneven academic attainment. Poor reading comprehension associated with severity of social-communication deficits was the most common pattern (Jones, Happe, Golden, Marsden, Tregay, Simonoff, Pickles, Baird & Charman, 2009).
- Oral language and word recognition were unique predictors of reading comprehension in adolescents with autism (Ricketts, Jones, Happe, & Charman, 2013).
- Social cognition is also necessary for reading comprehension in adolescents with autism (Ricketts, Jones, Happe, & Charman, 2013).

Can Adolescents with Autism Learn to Read?

- With individualized instruction that is aligned with the student's learning style, is goal oriented, and coupled with a motivational program, adolescents with autism can meet state-approved learning standards (Fleury et al., 2014).

General Teaching Tips for Adolescents with Autism

- Help the student stay organized to facilitate memory and organization.
- Improve understanding of abstract concepts through the use of analogies, pictures, etc.
- Explain rationale for behavior of characters in the stories, as the purpose may not be clear.
- Be sure the student understands words that may have multiple meanings, and figurative language forms (idioms, sarcasm, nicknames, etc.).

General Teaching Tips for Adolescents with Autism

- Explain feelings using words. Do not expect the student to understand by watching facial expressions—yours or the characters.
- Avoid verbal overload.
- Cue changes in routine before they happen. Remind the student again about 5 minutes in advance of the schedule change.
- Reward positive efforts as often as possible, but use age-appropriate strategies.
- Interrupt repetitive verbal behavior. Redirect the conversation.
- Partner with the family in educational efforts.

Moreno & McNeil (2000)

Where to Begin

- Deciding where to begin reading instruction for adolescents with autism may be based on:
 - Age
 - Developmental level, especially in language
 - Topics being targeted in classes at school
 - Personal interests



Set Some Goals

- Most goals will require intensive intervention to accomplish, so...be conservative in the number of reading objectives addressed at any one time.
- About half of the goals should be maintain learned skills. Practicing acquired skills increases motivation and extends generalization across topics/settings.
- Always address comprehension. Always.
- Be sure that reading is addressed across environments. Be sure.

Set a Schedule

- Intensity matters.
- Environment matters.
- Timing matters.
- Consistency matters.
- Motivation matters.

Get Going!

- Who will address the reading goals?
 - SLP
 - Other educators
 - Family members
- What will be read?
 - Delineate texts (narrative, expository)
 - Types of materials (books, assignment sheets, worksheets, exams)
- Delineate everyone's roles, goals, and schedule.

Rationale for Reading Intervention

- Make sure the reader knows why s/he is working on reading improvement. Discuss the benefits and remind the learner periodically.
 - To improve learning
 - To expand knowledge
 - To succeed in school
 - To be ready for post-secondary education
 - To be ready for job skills
 - To develop a life-long leisure activity

Phonological Awareness

- Name initial, middle, or ending sounds of key reading vocabulary words.
- Word families: List words that rhyme with key reading vocabulary words. List words that have a hidden word within their spelling.
- Practice saying words one sound at a time. Have someone else guess what word was deconstructed.
- Produce new words by adding, deleting, or changing sounds.

Phonics

- Highlight consonant sounds in yellow, vowel sounds in green. Sound out the unfamiliar word.
- Find all the words in the story that start with a consonant blend; sound the words out.
- List all words from a text that were unfamiliar. Practice sounding them out. Re-read the text.
- Write unfamiliar words on a card, cut each sound element apart. Sound out the word as you put the sounds back together.

Sight Word Recognition

- Review key vocabulary words prior to reading connected text. Read them several times from a list before reading the text.
- Point to words when given their definitions.
- Highlight words in connected text when words are stated.
- Count the number of key vocabulary words that are familiar sight words vs. the number that need to be sounded out. Compete with self to increase the number of sight words within a given text.

it	is	you
on	a	the
in	to	and

Vocabulary

- Scan text for unfamiliar words. Write words in a list.
- When two readers have scanned the new text, write five unfamiliar words on cards. Put them face-up in the middle of the table. Take turns picking words that you know and defining them for the other reader.
- Lay out two familiar word cards, and one unfamiliar word card. An adult gives the definition of the unfamiliar word aloud. The student identifies the unfamiliar word using fast-mapping.

Fluency

- Read in unison with adult.
- Share reading of text, taking turns one sentence or one paragraph at a time.
- Read same connected text over and over to improve accuracy, pace and intonation patterns.
- Read a familiar text to a peer.
- Perform a familiar story to younger children.

Text Comprehension

- **General strategies:**
 - Give extra time for students to answer comprehension questions.
 - Say and write the question for the student.
 - Ask the questions in a silly voice, or have a puppet ask the question (Williams, 1996).
 - Allow students to draw pictures, point, or use pantomime to answer instead of using words.
 - Change the reading content. Consider reading the student a book about a person with autism to spur interest in listening.

Text Comprehension

- **Priming:** Present new vocabulary or concepts about a week before the teacher introduces them in class.
- **Prior knowledge:** Before reading a text, discuss what the reader already knows about the topic. This will help him make meaningful connections when reading the text.
- **Build background knowledge:** If the student knows little about the topic, consider building background knowledge in advance of working with the text in class.
 - Brainstorm and write ideas on chart paper.
 - Share personal narratives on the topic in the book.
 - Ask questions about the topic.
 - Make connections to the student's special interests.
 - Examine other books on the topic. (Kluth, 2010)

Text Comprehension

- **Think alouds:** As teacher reads, he describes his own comprehension process aloud, discussing how he makes inferences, determines what information is important, and makes connections to his own knowledge. (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000)
- **Sentence revision:** Write a complex sentence from the text. Have someone else rewrite the sentence using a synonym. Highlight the words with the same meaning in the same color.
- **Dialogic reading and predicting:** Read text one paragraph at a time. Take turns asking one another yes-no or wh-questions about the content. Then try to predict what will happen next in the story, or what the author will write about next in the text.

Text Comprehension

- **Relating to Prior Knowledge:** The student asks herself how what she is reading relates to experiences she has had, or other books she has read. How is this text similar or different? Are the ideas related to those expressed by a different author?
- **Break it Down:** To decode test questions, first find the “do” statement (make a list; describe; compare), then highlight each other important part of the question. Discuss aloud what to do, mapping out a strategy if necessary before writing.

Text Comprehension

- **Cloze technique:** Read a longer selection of text. Present fill-in sentences for the students to complete to promote comprehension. This allows the student to show understanding, while only having to produce simple language to do so.
- **Anaphoric cueing:** Lay a transparency over the text. Highlight pronouns in the text, and then practice finding the referent for each. Circle the pronoun and its referent in the same color.

Text Comprehension

- **Drama:** Act out the book to enhance comprehension. Have actors ask and “answer” one another’s questions through dramatic acting.
- **Reciprocal teaching:** Students help each other to understand the text by engaging in a conversation. Four strategies are used: summarizing, asking questions, clarifying and predicting. (Palinscar & Brown, 1984)
- **Story Retelling:** Rather than answering questions about the story, reduce anxiety by allowing the student to retell the story to demonstrate comprehension.

Comprehension Monitoring

- Read a section of text. Pause to ask oneself a series of comprehension questions to determine when you can proceed with reading the text:
 - Is this section clear to me?
 - Are there key words or concepts I don’t understand?
 - If so, will re-reading help?
 - Will pictures or other visuals in the text help?
 - Will reading the next paragraph add clarity?
- Rate your overall comprehension on a 1-5 scale. Write the number in the margin of the book next to the section read.

Text Organization

- Before reading, look at the entire text.
 - Is this a story or an expository text?
 - Note how it is structured (chapters, sections).
 - What conventions are used to help the reader?
 - Bold text to indicate important words
 - Definitions
 - Pictures, illustrations, figures
 - Text boxes to highlight information that is important or related to the topic
 - Review sections
- Develop a strategy to read the text based upon its features.

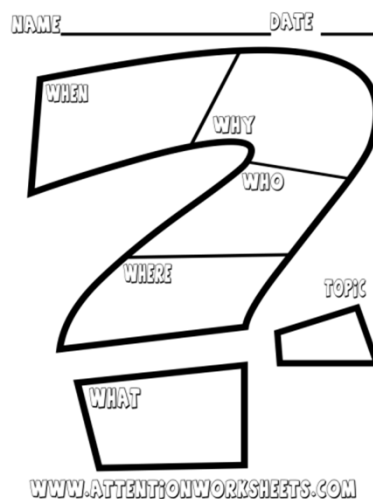
Searching for Information

- Internet searching: Enter key words or phrases to find related information using online databases.
- Glossary or dictionary: Use the book's glossary or a separate dictionary or thesaurus to look up word meanings or synonyms for unknown words.
- Email: Ask a friend specific questions about the text you are both reading.
- Related book: Look up the same topic and read about it in a different book.

Evaluation of Meaning

- Narratives
 - What happened in the story? Retell events in order.
 - How did the characters develop? Did you like them? Why or why not?
 - Did the story end the way you thought it would?
 - Can you think of another possible ending?
 - What might happen next if the story continued?
 - If you could add a character to this story, who would it be?
 - Could this story happen in real life or not? Why?

Graphic Organizers



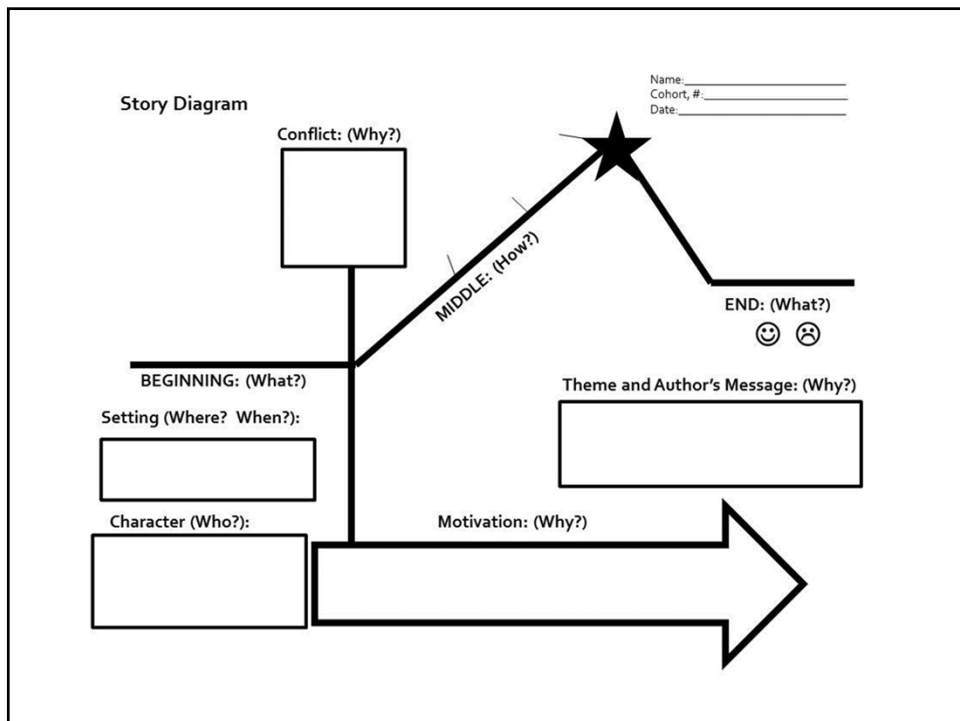
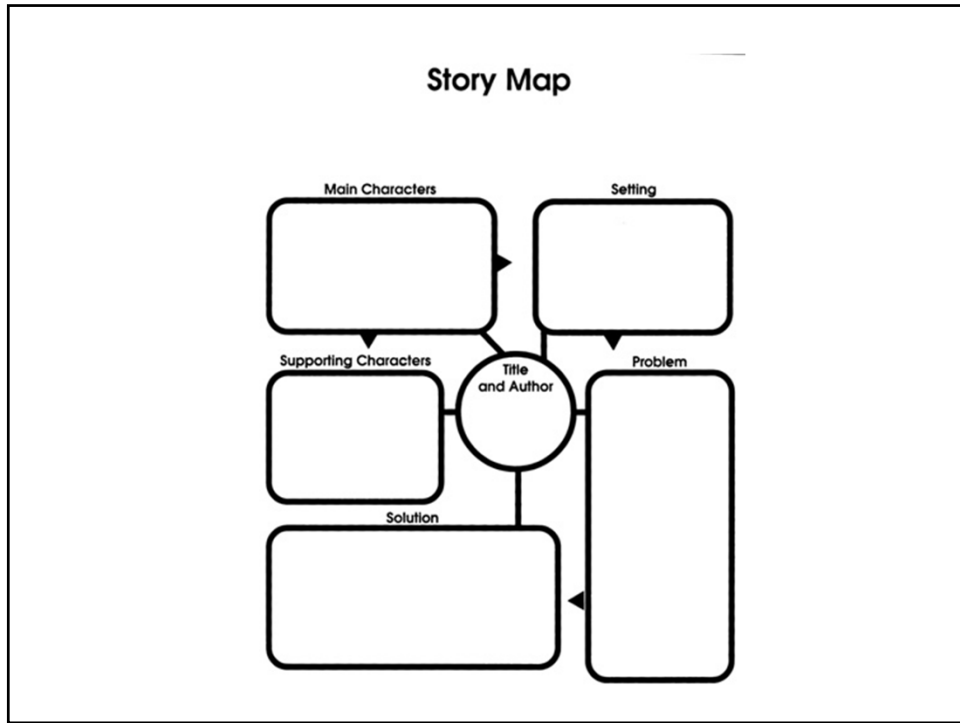
Name _____ Date _____

Put the subject in the center box. Answer the six questions.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Hamburger Paragraph
 Directions: Write a paragraph with 6-8 sentences.

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<h1 style="margin: 0;">WANTED</h1>		
Villain's Name: _____		
<u>Reward</u> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 3px double black; width: 150px; height: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<u>Clues Found at the Scene of the Crime</u> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
<u>Last Seen</u> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>		<u>Foot Print</u> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
<h2 style="margin: 0;">THE CRIME</h2> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div>		

Greek House

Summary and Persuasion

Topic

Name: _____

Cohort, #: _____

Date: _____

Main Idea (SW+H)

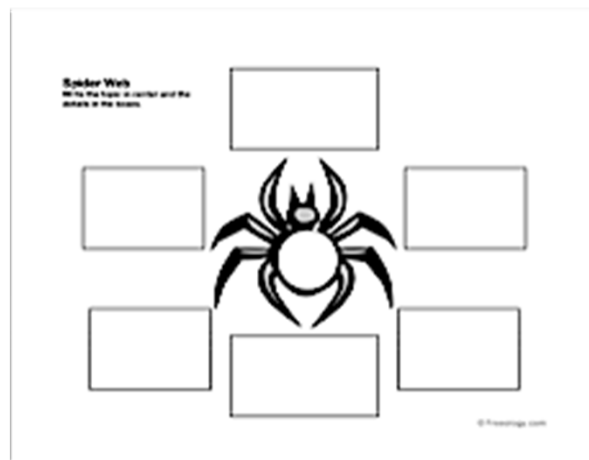
Supporting Details

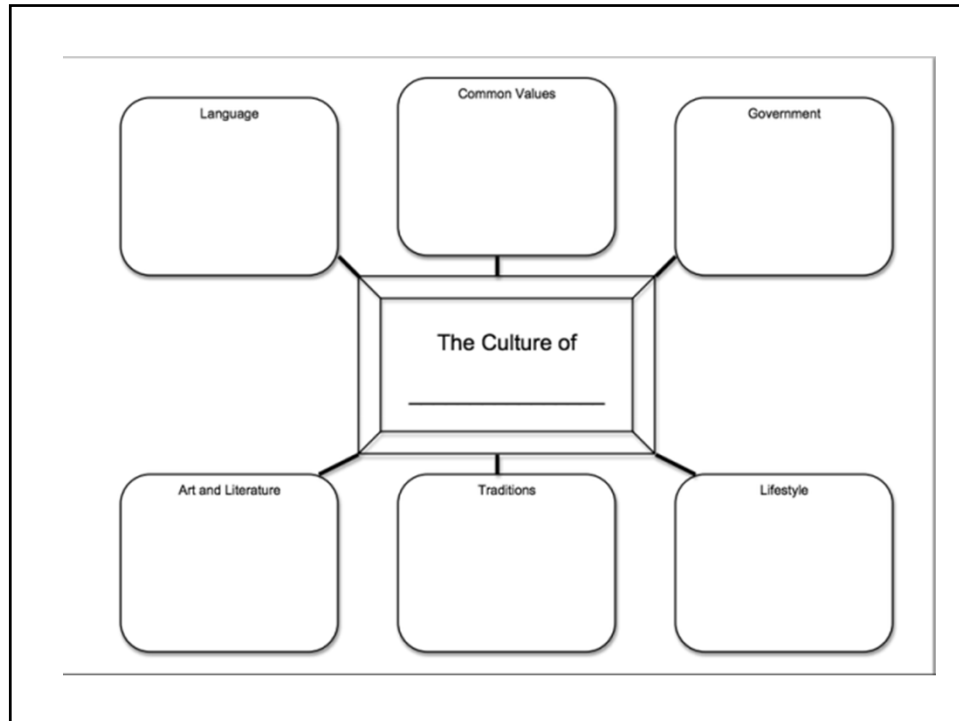
Underlying Meaning

Evaluation of Meaning

- Expository texts
 - What did you learn from this reading?
 - Name three new words you learned.
 - Tell three things you discovered.
 - What questions do you have about the topic?
 - What strategies helped you to understand better?

Graphic Organizers





Reading with Adolescents with Autism: A Summary

- Be sure to read:
 - Often—Everyday, multiple times per day
 - On a variety of topics
 - Aloud and silently
 - With comprehension
 - Favorite books for motivation; all others for learning
- Be sure to HAVE FUN READING!!

Presenter Contact Information

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Bibliography

- Attached to the presentation in a separate Word document, for your convenience.