LAW AND JUSTICE
TEACHER TOOLKIT: LITERACY

PART 1: READING COMPREHENSION

Throughout *Foundations in Law* and *Foundations in Criminal Justice*, students engage in inquiry by reading and writing about topics and issues relevant to professions in the legal and criminal justice systems. To carry out this inquiry, students need literacy strategies and tools to enable them to read materials from varied sources, such as news articles, legal papers, police reports, laws, and statutes. Students also learn to write for multiple purposes and audiences and compose writing for proposals, legal arguments, case briefs, research summaries, and other projects. Through these rigorous reading and writing activities, students develop cognitive skills that help them critically engage with a text. For example, as students identify relevant facts in readings, they also synthesize the information and make connections to broader questions about the meaning of *law* and *justice*.

Research shows that literacy skill development is more successful when strategies are routinely used to approach new texts and tasks. This encourages students to develop effective habits of mind and behaviors that direct them toward skillful reading. Based on our synthesis of adolescent literacy research, the following approaches are embedded in the Law and Justice curriculum

- Solving vocabulary problems as they arise during the reading process
- Connecting text to prior knowledge or to students' lives
- Engaging in critique and questioning about purpose, author, perspective, and audience
- Engaging in extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation (in small and large groups)
- Identifying evidence in reading to support ideas and understandings
- Enhancing comprehension by reinforcing more complex skills, such as inference and synthesis

In *Foundations in Law* and *Foundations in Criminal Justice,* teachers have an opportunity to practice literacy strategies with students in a real-world context. Students may be more motivated to learn and apply the strategies when they see their relevance to the workplace.

While scholars and teachers acknowledge that literacy instruction is necessary to make content-area reading accessible to students, many teachers report feeling unprepared to help their students. To address this, the Law and Justice curriculum is designed with scaffolded activities—instructional tools and strategies that support students' development of literacy skills.[1] Students have opportunities to learn and apply literacy skills in a range of authentic contexts.

This toolkit describes several literacy strategies that teachers of the Law and Justice curriculum can use to support students who need help in reading and comprehending documents included in the curriculum materials. Suggestions for how and when to

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[1] Some students will need more targeted support to improve their literacy skills than classroom teachers can provide. In these cases, we encourage you to work with your school to provide more intensive interventions for your students.

employ these strategies appear throughout the *Foundations in Law* and *Foundations in Criminal Justice* Teacher Guides. Note that the literacy strategies included here provide tools to help student interact with text before, during, and after they read. There is some overlap across the strategies, and you will likely want to try different ones to see which work best with your students and with different kinds of texts.

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References are available on the Law and Justice Web site: http://lawandjustice.edc.org.

PREVIEW THE TEXT

Reading nonfiction text can be challenging. Previewing text can encourage active reading and help students connect the information in the text to what they already know. Students are introduced to one previewing strategy in the first unit of the *Foundations in Law* course; subsequent units use other previewing techniques to build students' skills. Below is a sample graphic organizer that students can use to preview text.

Introducing Preview Notes: At First Glance

When you look at a reading, what comes to your mind? Do your eyes go straight to a graph or photo? Do you try to make sense of the title? Do you check to see if there are questions at the end of the reading? These are good ways to approach reading something new. Before you start that first sentence, you're going to try a few strategies for finding your way through a reading. It's like using a road map before you set out on a trip—the map helps you find your way, and it can help you get back on track if you get lost. Note the clues you find and jot down any questions you have.

Clues from the Title
What is the topic of the reading? Write down what comes to mind.

Clues from Headings
Review the headings or subheadings. What type of information do they illustrate?

Clues from the Images	
Image 1: I think this image is showing me . . .	**Image 2:** I think this image is showing me . . .

Clues from Graphs or Tables

Graphs: Read the labels on the x and y axes to see what they tell you about the graph. **Tables:** Read the column and row headings to see what they tell you about the table.

My Own Questions

Words I Want to Know More About

QUESTIONING THE TEXT

Developed by literacy researcher Taffy E. Raphael in the 1980s,[2] the Questioning the Text strategy (also known as Question-and-Answer Relationships) helps students figure out how to effectively and efficiently answer a question about a text by considering what type of question it is. Students learn that answering different types of questions requires different reading behaviors and thought processes. This strategy also increases students' ability to find information.

The Four Types of Questions

Questioning the Text involves four question types:

- **Right there:** The answer is within a paragraph or sentence in the text.

- **Think and search:** The answer is in the text, but the reader must pull pieces from different paragraphs to answer the question.

- **On my own:** The answer lies in the reader's own background knowledge or experience; it is not found in the text.

- **Author and me:** The answer is not stated directly in the text; the reader must formulate ideas by using both prior knowledge and data from the text. Answers to these questions may include the words "The author implies . . ." or "The text suggests . . ."

Introducing the Questioning the Text Strategy

This strategy can be used with any text containing questions that students need to answer.

1. Look at the questions that accompany a text your students will read (such as the Questions for Reflection), and determine each question's type.

2. Introduce the strategy and its purpose. Using the questions from the text you chose, give students an example of each question type. (If the questions do not include all four question types, introduce the remaining types in later readings or make up a question for that type.) Let students know that such questions often appear in textbooks and on tests.

3. Give students time to read the text and answer the questions. Ask students to consider the question type in addition to the answer.

4. Have students share their answers, identify the type of question, and indicate where they found the answers.

As looking at question types becomes routine, students will become more adept at figuring out how and where to find answers to questions about a text.

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[2] Raphael, T. E. (1982). Teaching children question-answering strategies. *The Reading Teacher*, *36*, 186–191; Raphael, T. E. (1986). Teaching question-and-answer-relationships, revisited. *The Reading Teacher*, *39*(6), 516–522.

MODEL THINKING WITH THINK-ALOUDS

Good readers pay attention to what they are reading; they think about the ideas and how they all fit together. Good readers also read strategically, even if they don't realize it at the time, and can pay attention to *how* they are reading when they need to. "Thinking aloud" as you read is one way to become aware of how you read. When you think aloud, you read and, at the same time, you describe what you are doing in your mind—you verbalize your thought process. As you read, you say out loud (or write down) any questions that pop up, ideas that occur to you, ways in which you try to figure out unfamiliar words, or ideas that don't seem to make sense. Ideally, after you model a think-aloud for students, students should work independently or in pairs to apply the strategies you illustrated.

Here are some questions you can use to get started with thinking aloud:

1. What are the first things you look at on the page? What do you notice about the text in general?

2. What words stand out at first glance?

3. Before you start reading, what are you expecting from this text? What do you think it might be about? Why?

4. What kind of writing is it: Story? Personal essay? Explanation? Cause-and-effect? Informational? Instructions for doing something? Legal document? Legal case brief? How will you read this kind of writing?

5. What do you already know about the topic? How are you using that information as you read?

6. Are there unfamiliar words or familiar words that seem to have a special meaning? How do you decide whether the word is important enough to figure out or unimportant enough to skip over?

7. Are you asking yourself questions or wondering about things as you read? What are they?

8. If you are asking questions, are you finding answers? If not, what do you do?

9. Are you rereading parts of the text? What cued you to the fact that you needed to reread?

10. When does the article force you to infer information?

11. Are you creating mental pictures as you read? What are they?

12. Do you stop occasionally to pull together what you've read so far and make sense of it all? For example, what have you learned from the text so far?

If the think-aloud technique is new to you, focus first on addressing two or three of the questions to answer and share while reading the text to your class. Prepare ahead of time. When you model your thinking in this way, your choice of questions depends on the reading and your students' needs at the time.

Dimensions of Interactive Comprehension Modeling		
Dimension	**Definition**	**Components**
Vocabulary	Focus on "solving" an unknown word, not providing the definition of the word	Context clues Word parts (prefix, suffix, root) Use of resources (peers, Internet, dictionary, thesaurus)
Comprehension	Strategic moves to support understanding the text	Summarize/synthesize Predict Infer Visualize Question Connect Activate background knowledge
Text structures	Structures used in presenting information that readers can use to predict the flow of information	Cause/effect Compare/contrast Problem/solution Descriptive Story grammar (plot, setting, character, conflict, etc.)
Text features	Components of the text added to increase understanding or interest	Captions Illustrations and diagrams Headings and titles Bold or italicized words

Adapted from Lapp, D., Fisher, D., & Grant, M. (2008). "You can read this text—I'll show you how": Interactive comprehension instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 51*(5), 372–383.

GENERATING QUESTIONS

Effective teaching and learning requires educators to design thought-provoking questions, model higher-level thinking, and promote stimulating classroom discussion. Students' thinking is shaped by the ways in which teachers design and model complex questions. Therefore, implementing a range of questioning strategies and encouraging students to discuss and ask questions is an important part of reading comprehension.

Thin and Thick Questions

This literacy approach is intended to promote better analysis of questions and greater insight in writing. As students engage in a reading, they can jot down questions on sticky notes and then place their questions on a continuum from the thinnest questions to the thickest questions.

Thin questions are literal questions that are asked primarily to help the student eliminate confusion or understand vocabulary. In most cases, thin questions can be answered in a few words.

Thick questions are written at a higher level, are inferential or evaluative, and require students to answer in greater depth. Thick questions are used to address large or complex concepts.

Three-Level Guides for Reading

This is a useful technique for students to use while interacting with content-area text. This strategy requires students to construct knowledge on three cognitive levels: literal, interpretive, and applied.

Literal level: What is the essential information? What are the important ideas?

Interpretive level: What inferences might be drawn? What significant point is the author trying to make?

Applied level: What conclusions can be drawn by combining what the students already know with what information is presented here? How does all of this material relate to students' lives or to what they know of the world?

Anticipation Guides

Anticipation guides present students with the opportunity to reflect on previous knowledge and assess new information. Before reading, students reflect on what they know about the subject. One approach is to have students agree or disagree with teacher-provided statements. After reading, students reevaluate their original perceptions. Anticipation guides encourage active reading through a cycle of prediction, reaction, and reevaluation. One type of anticipation guide is a K-W-L graphic organizer.

K	W	L
What do you **know** about the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights?	What do you **want to know** about the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights?	What did you **learn** about the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights? What surprised you? Did any ideas confirm or advance your prior knowledge?

Questions Game

To help students develop the skill of self-questioning as they read, use a variation of the Questions Game (McTeague, 1996). This strategy encourages student-centered discussion and deeper comprehension

- Students read the same piece of text and write two questions they would like answered.
- Students share and discuss their questions with a partner and try to answer each other's questions.
- After a few minutes, pairs generate two new questions.
- Each pair meets with another two-person group and goes through the process again.

RECIPROCAL TEACHING (READING TOGETHER)

Reading in small groups can be done through Reciprocal Teaching, a comprehension technique in which students take turns leading a dialogue about sections of a text. The method involves prediction, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying. The purpose of this technique is to help students, with or without a teacher present, actively bring meaning to the written word. The structure of the dialogue and the interactions of the group members require that all students participate, and these elements help foster new relationships between students of different ability levels. The following process is a structured small-group discussion to help students get the most from a reading.

Directions

- Read your chosen section of the reading.
- Have each team member choose a role: Questioner, Clarifier, Summarizer, or Predictor. Take two or three minutes to read about your role and complete your question or sentence starter.
1.
- Follow the steps for each role, starting with the Questioner.

Questioner

1. Choose one **Question Starter** and complete the question.	2. Follow the **Questioner Steps** with your team.
Question Starters	**Questioner Steps**
- One question I had about what I read was . . . - How does the author know that . . . ? - Why does . . . ? - How does . . . ?	1. Share your question with the team, and write it on chart paper. 2. Have team members share responses. They might offer possible answers, or say whether they had the same question, or ask a different question that they also wondered about. 3. Record all your questions and possible answers on chart paper.

Clarifier

1. Choose one **Sentence Starter** and complete the sentence.	2. Follow the **Clarifier Steps** with your team.

Sentence Starters	Clarifier Steps
• One word (or phrase) that many people might be unsure about is . . . • A part of the section that people may find confusing is . . .	1. Share your sentence with the team. Write it on chart paper. 2. Together, figure out the meaning of the confusing word, phrase, or part of the reading. Get help from one another, dictionaries, glossaries, computer resources, or your teacher. 3. Write your team's clarifications on the chart paper.

Summarizer

1. Choose one **Sentence Starter** and complete the sentence.	2. Follow the **Summarizer Steps** with your team.

Sentence Starters
 	
 • The most important information in this section was . . .
 • The main idea I see in this section is . . .
 • This section helps me understand more about [something you are studying] . . .
	Summarizer Steps
	
	 1. Share your sentence with the team. Point to specific parts of the reading to support your reasoning.
	
	 2. Ask the team to respond to your sentence.
	
	 3. Create a summary with your whole team. Team members may:
	    o Suggest possible additions
	    o Suggest items to remove (for example, is anything said twice? Too detailed? Not quite important enough to include?)
	
	 4. Write your team's summary on chart paper.

Predictor

1. Choose one **Sentence Starter** and complete the sentence.	2. Follow the **Predictor Steps** with your team.
Sentence Starters • I think the next section may be about . . . • The next section is likely to explain or give examples of . . .	**Predictor Steps** 1. Share your sentence with the team. Point to particular parts of the reading to support your response. 2. Discuss your prediction. Does it seem likely? Does anyone have suggestions to add to

Hint: Headings within the reading may offer clues about what comes next.	the prediction or to change it?
	3. Revise your original prediction (if necessary) and write it on chart paper.

When you've completed the steps for all four roles, your team will have a written record of questions (and possible answers), clarifications, a team summary, and predictions about the next section of the reading.

REFLECT ON RECIPROCAL TEACHING/READING TOGETHER

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Did you learn what you expected to learn from the reading? Why or why not?

2. Do you still have unanswered questions? How do you think you could find answers to any remaining questions?

3. Think about the **Reciprocal Teaching/Reading Together** steps and discussions. What in this process was especially helpful? What was not so helpful?

WORD WALLS

A Literacy Strategy

How can you help students of any age take ownership of the vocabulary words they are expected to learn in a course? One proven strategy is to post new and unfamiliar words on a wall so students can regularly refer to them during discussions and in-class writing. When thoughtfully used, Word Walls can be a powerful visual aid for all students trying to master new vocabulary.

What Is a Word Wall?

The vocabulary of law can be challenging for students, especially those who are not fluent in English or who have language disabilities. A Word Wall is simply a display of frequently used or content-specific vocabulary words on large cards attached to a designated location in the room where all students can see them. The location can be a section of the wall, a bulletin board, a white board, or even a door in your classroom. The words can be posted on a three-panel display board, if there is limited space. To draw attention to the Word Wall, set off the space using ribbon for a border or fabric as a backing.

Write each word in large print on a piece of cardstock and post it on the wall when it is first introduced and discussed. Encourage students to integrate the words into their class discussions and their writing. Here are some tips for using a Word Wall in your classroom:

- Create word cards on cardstock or other heavy paper.

- Make the word cards all the same size; keep a stack cut and ready for words as they come up.

- Consider using specific colors for content-area themes.

- Keep the words up all year or change them for each unit's distinctive vocabulary.

- You will probably want to have about 10 to 20 words up at a time. Move words to another space in the classroom when you change units, or create a class glossary for the year.

Most teachers find it easiest to add words as they come up in the unit. Some teachers write definitions on the backs of the cards; others just post the words themselves. Words can be organized by alphabetical order, by word form (nouns, verbs), or even by word parts (root, prefix, suffix).

While a Word Wall can be a resource for students on its own, it can also be the source of short learning activities. You can use a given set of wall words (from a single week or from an entire unit, for example) to have students create a mind map or concept wheel that shows the relationships of the words to one another.

If you wish to learn more, further information can be easily found on the Internet by conducting a search on the phrases "word walls" and "secondary school" or "high school."

ANNOTATING AND PARAPHRASING

Reading and constructing meaning from a text is a complex and active process. One way to help students slow down and develop their literacy and critical analysis skills is to teach them how to annotate text as they read. This may include underlining key words, writing comments and questions in the margins, and circling words they don't know. Another way to develop students' literacy skills is to have them paraphrase or summarize text in their own words. By annotating and paraphrasing text, students actively interact with complex primary sources and increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Annotation Strategies

Read the title and write down questions or ideas it provokes for you.

Circle vocabulary words you are unsure of and check for definitions.

Try to make predictions as you're reading.

Flag a place in the reading where you're confused. Later, write down your attempt to "unconfuse" yourself.

Jot down questions in the reading when you wonder about the author's purpose for including certain information or details.

Indicate a place in the text with which you can make a personal connection or a connection to the world around you.

Paraphrasing Strategies

Figure out the meaning of difficult passages: What are the meanings of unfamiliar words? What are the subject, verb, and object of the sentence? What is the main idea of the sentence?

Use synonyms: Come up with a word from your own vocabulary that comes as close to the meaning of the original as possible.

Use the order of ideas or the sentence pattern: Change the pattern of the sentence without altering its meaning.

EVALUATING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Use these questions to help you decide how credible your research source is.

At first glance . . .

- What is the date and title of the resource?

- Is this resource a primary or secondary source?

- Where does this resource come from, and who published it?

Look more carefully . . .

- Who is the author of this resource?

- Why is the author writing this piece? What is the author's point of view?

- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda? Is it biased or objective? Think about the opposing viewpoint.

Think about what you found and what you need . . .

- How credible (believable) is this resource? Why do you think so?

- What kinds of information can you learn from this resource?

- What questions does this resource raise in your mind?

- What additional information would you need? Does the resource include references that you can use to obtain additional resources on the topic?

MIND MAPS

A Mind Map is a thinking and analytical tool that allows you to represent ideas and information visually. In a mind map, a key topic is identified, and subtopics are developed and classified into groupings or branches in a nonlinear format. Students and professionals in a range of fields use mind maps to classify and structure complex information, solve problems, and guide their writing and research. Mind maps can support student learning in the following ways:

- Make abstract ideas visible and concrete
- Connect prior knowledge and new concepts or ideas
- Provide structure for thinking, writing, discussing, analyzing, and planning
- Focus ideas, leading to understanding and interpretation

The sample mind map guidelines below are used when students read about the role of the branches and levels of government in creating and enacting school safety laws and policies: