

Boost Reading Comprehension and Learning: How Explicit Writing Instruction Can Help

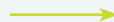
Based on a recent edWeb webinar sponsored by Voyager Sopris Learning® with Natalie Wexler

Only
27%
of American students
score **proficient or above**
on national writing tests.

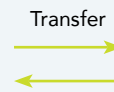
Writing is hard, and most teachers haven't received valuable training about how to teach it. But when the writing process is broken down into manageable chunks that are explicitly taught in a logical sequence, **all students can learn to write well**. With the right instructional method—and intervention when needed—writing can also identify and compensate for gaps in background knowledge that interfere with comprehension, familiarize students with the complex syntax of written language, deepen and cement knowledge of content, and foster analytical thinking.

Why is Explicit Writing Instruction Important for Reading Comprehension?

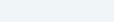
Writing can be a powerful lever for reinforcing and deepening knowledge and vocabulary. Writing helps with both “transfer” and “retrieval.”



WORKING MEMORY
4–5 Items | ~20 Seconds



Transfer

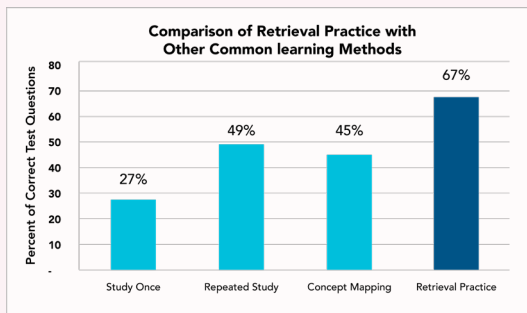


Retrieval



LONG-TERM MEMORY
Potentially Infinite

Writing about content helps students retain information. Having more information/vocabulary in long-term memory boosts reading comprehension.



Writing instruction can also boost reading comprehension by familiarizing students with complex syntax.

“Rachel Carson, a scientist, writer, and ecologist, grew up in the rural river town of Springdale, Pennsylvania.”

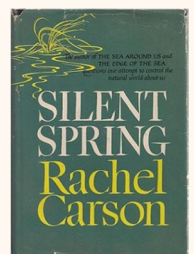
Student: “They grew up together in Pennsylvania.”

Source: Scott and Balthazar, *Perspect Lang Lit*. 2013 Summer; 39(3): 18–30

The solution:

- Teach students what an appositive is (a phrase describing a noun), using familiar content.
- After students have learned about Rachel Carson, give them this sentence to complete:

Rachel Carson, _____, grew up in Springdale, Pennsylvania.



Writing isn't just a skill. Learning to write well means learning to think logically and analytically. To build knowledge, have students write about the content of the core curriculum. Through explicit writing instruction, you can change students' concepts of who they are and transform their reading comprehension.

An explicit writing program, like *Step Up to Writing*®, is a comprehensive resource of multisensory reading strategies that develop K–12 students' ability to create thoughtful, well-written compositions. These strategies can be integrated into any curriculum or implemented as a standalone writing solution. [Learn more at voyagersopris.com/SUTW](https://www.voyagersopris.com/SUTW).*

*Note: Natalie Wexler has not specifically endorsed or recommended *Step Up to Writing*.

