

Masters of the Reading Arts

Masters of the Reading Arts! Students who can decode and comprehend; who apply thinking skills and background knowledge; who love literature and language --- these are Masters of the Reading Arts. It's a challenge and advanced degree, but those who enroll in the *Reading Mastery* program can earn it with ease.

Reading Mastery is a complete basal reading program intended for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. A few principles have guided the program since its inception in the late 1960's, and they have played a large part in its resounding success.

- Along with the teacher, the program accepts complete responsibility for teaching every student how to read.
- All instruction is direct and unambiguous; tasks and activities are specified in detail.
- Every reading skill and strategy that students need is specifically taught, applied, and reviewed.
- Students receive consistent daily practice in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- Assessment is continuous; errors are corrected the instant they occur.

Decoding and Comprehension

There's no longer any doubt that phonics is the best method for teaching students how to decode, and *Reading Mastery* has always included phonics as an integral part of its instructional plan. But phonics is just the start. The real measure of a reading program lies in its ability to teach comprehension. In *Reading Mastery*, comprehension is specifically taught – not just tested – from the very first lesson. Students in *Reading Mastery* learn how to answer questions and how to make stories come alive. They learn the meanings of words and the forms of sentences. They draw story pictures and follow written instructions. They soon learn – through these and other techniques – how to comprehend the texts they decode.

Thinking Skills and Strategies

Reading Mastery places particular emphasis on the teaching of thinking skills and the acquisition of background knowledge. Specific step-by-step activities teach students not only how to infer, predict, and conclude, but also how to apply those skills to comprehension. No skill is taught for its own sake; every skill leads to reading.

No amount of skill development, however, can make up for a lack of background knowledge. That's why *Reading Mastery* includes realistic stories and factual articles that give students a broad and coherent view of the world they live in. Students learn important facts about physics, geography, astronomy, history, and other subject areas. These facts provide students with knowledge that they can apply to all their reading.

Literature and Language

A love of literature and language grows throughout *Reading Mastery*. It reaches its full flower when students read some of the world's greatest children's literature, by authors such as Mark Twain, Eleanor Clymer, and Langston Hughes.

Instead of excerpt, students in *Reading Mastery* read complete stories and poems, and even six novels, including such classics as *Tom Sawyer*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. The program also encourages outside reading by providing challenging study materials for award-winning modern novels, such as *Charlotte's Web* and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

Students in *Reading Mastery* are also writing, writing, writing. From early in the program, students write their own complete answers to questions, instead of circling somebody else's. By the upper levels, students are not only answering questions but also writing at least one paragraph a day on issues related to their reading. They are asked to reflect, to compare, to evaluate, to think. Bit by bit, they become full participants in the vibrant processes of writing, and reading.

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From the introduction of the letter a in the very first lesson to Huckleberry Finn's concluding speech in the very last, *Reading Mastery* provides a consistent and commanding instructional plan. Throughout the program, the readings increase in length and complexity, the questions become more probing, the skill exercises more demanding, and the writing assignments more challenging. The daily lessons provide a thorough integration of all activities, and the materials that students bring home show daily progress.

Progress. In *Reading Mastery*, it happens each and every day. It begins with a single letter and it ends with students who can truly be called Masters of the Reading Arts.