Overview:

Available in K-2 and 3-6 sets, The Comprehension Toolkit series provides everything needed to help students understand, respond to, and learn from nonfiction text, building background knowledge across the curriculum and throughout the year.

This flexible resource can be used for instruction with whole group, small group, and individuals in a variety of settings including reading workshop, guided reading, intervention, ELL support and summer school.

The Comprehension Toolkit series offers robust comprehension instruction to encourage students to become lifelong learners. The practices:

- **Deepen students’ comprehension of nonfiction text** by focusing on reading, writing, drawing, talking, listening, and investigating.
- **Foster agency and strategic thinking across the curriculum** by helping kids navigate informational text and think about what they are reading to learn, understand, and remember it.
- **Provide an alternative to the traditional “assign and correct” curriculum.** Research-based explicit instruction follows the gradual release framework: model, guide and practice.
- **Support teachers** to understand comprehension strategy instruction, plan and design lessons and create ways to assess student growth over time.

Unpacking Your Comprehension Toolkit (Video 5:30):

http://www.heinemann.com/comprehensiontoolkit/?wvideo=h65woqc8yz#WhatsNew

Recap and Focus > Strategy and Lesson Books:

- The teaching and learning focus in The Comprehension Toolkit series centers on strategy lesson books organized around foundational comprehension strategies. Each ready-to-go lesson provides teaching moves and teaching language, as well as a lesson frame to fit any curriculum.
  - **Monitor Comprehension** shares ways readers keep track of their thinking and monitor their understanding as they read.
  - **Activate & Connect** alerts students to the impact background knowledge has on their learning and supports them to connect the new to the known.
  - **Ask Questions** highlights how readers can use questions to clarify unfamiliar ideas and discover new information.
  - **Infer & Visualize** teaches students how to use context clues and text evidence to draw conclusions about and crack open the new concepts and big ideas in a text.
  - **Determine Importance** helps students identify, organize, and share the important ideas and information in a text.
**Summarize & Synthesize** encourages students to go beyond the simple restating of facts, to pull together their thinking, and use all the strategies to understand big ideas.


**Informational Text:**

- The Toolkit’s engaging, real-world informational texts guide students to use comprehension strategies.
  - Magazine, web, and original articles are the centerpieces of many lessons. (In addition, the grades K–2 Toolkit includes large posters from *TIME for Kids Bigger Picture Edition* and *National Geographic Young Explorer.*)
  - A digital companion resource provides all of the articles and teaching resources in a full color reproducible format.
  - Trade books referenced in the Toolkit lessons are available.

  **The Comprehension Toolkit Lesson Frame (Video 2:46):**
  [http://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/9isd6u5mme?popover=true](http://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/9isd6u5mme?popover=true)

**Let’s Chat!**

**Student Assessment in the Comprehension Toolkit (Video 2:07):**
[http://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/k55f8mb3li?popover=true](http://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/k55f8mb3li?popover=true)

**Professional Support:**

- *The Comprehension Toolkit* series is committed to elevating teacher expertise through embedded professional development. Within *The Comprehension Toolkit* series, the authors mentor the educator through scaffolded lessons, teaching tips, student work samples, and more.

  Each Toolkit includes the following resources:

  **A Teacher’s Guide** provides an overview of the Toolkit’s research, philosophy, instructional design, and assessment options, and shows how to integrate the Toolkit into varied classroom literacy scenarios.

  **Digital resources** provide videos and slideshows of Toolkit instruction and author interviews to support ongoing teaching.

  **Print resources** include assessment rubrics, Think sheets, record-keeping forms, lesson texts, research articles, and full-color lesson texts.

  **The Power of Strategic Thinking (Video 2:36):**
  [http://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/i2nkrze5xl?popover=true](http://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/i2nkrze5xl?popover=true)
1. **Modeling thinking**
   We model how we read ourselves; to share our struggles as well as our victories. We peel back the layers and show how we approach text and in that way demonstrate for kids how understanding happens.

2. **Coding the text**
   We leave tracks of our thinking directly on the text or on a Post-it, in a notebook, etc. We might record our questions, confusions, thoughts, or highlight and underline important information, circle unfamiliar words, or star something we want to remember.

3. **Text lifting for shared reading**
   We place a copy of the text on an overhead projector or post it on a chart as students work from their own copy. We think through and code the text together to understand and process the information.

4. **Observing, noticing and sharing language and reading behaviors**
   While modeling, we ask kids to observe and notice our responses and reading behaviors. When we stop, the class discusses what they noticed, writes about what they observed or creates an anchor chart of behaviors they observed.

5. **Anchor charting**
   We construct anchor charts to record kids' thinking about a text, lesson, or strategy so that we can return to it to remember the process. Anchor charts connect past teaching and learning to future teaching and learning. Everyone weighs in to construct meaning and hold thinking.

6. **Reading, writing, and talking**
   Kids read, code, and respond to the text individually and then talk to each other and share out the process and the content.

7. **Interactive reading aloud**
   As the teacher reads aloud, kids respond in writing. The teacher stops occasionally to provide time for them to turn to each other and talk.

8. **Purposeful talk**
   We provide opportunities for kids to talk purposefully in a variety of structures including turning to each other and sharing during whole group instruction, jig-sawing the text in small groups, small group reading and responding, paired reading for discussion, and conferring.

9. **Scaffolds and forms**
   We provide a range of response options including graphic organizers, double and triple column forms and response starters to support kids to leave tracks of their thinking so they can better understand it.

10. **Using our own literature and reading experience to model reading**
    We bring in text we are actually reading to illustrate how we use comprehension strategies to make sense of and understand our own reading. In this way, students come to view us as readers and observe our authentic process.

11. **Rereading to clarify meaning and expand understanding**
    Going back over a piece of text to show how we clarify confusion as well as demonstrate how thinking changes when we reread.
Guiding Principles:

Traditionally in schools as kids read to learn, they were asked to remember a litany of isolated facts. And lots of kids did this pretty well-remembering the information just long enough to take the test. We finally understand why we remember so little from all those years of schooling, but still got decent grades. We memorized countless facts and quickly forgot them. What is the point of learning and forgetting, learning and forgetting, over and over again? Perkins says that “learning is a consequence of thinking. Far from thinking coming after knowledge, knowledge comes on the coattails of thinking.” It's so obvious; when we think about and actively use what we are learning, we remember it. When we memorize isolated facts, we forget them.

We need to find ways to move from a culture of memorization to a culture of thinking and understanding. The Comprehension Toolkit provides an alternative to the traditional assign and correct curriculum. Instead the teaching and learning focus is on strategic thinking and explicit instruction via modeling, practice, and application.

We use the following principles to guide us as we build a classroom community of thinkers and learners. Teachers and kids take responsibility for and collaborate to build a thinking environment. A shared sense of purpose guides learning-- all members of the classroom community view themselves as thinkers, learners and teachers.

The following are the principles that guided us as we developed The Comprehension Toolkit

1. **Creating an environment that fosters and values thinking**
   When we honor kids’ thinking, they learn that their thinking matters. Students and teachers feel free to take risks as learners when they know their thoughts, ideas and opinions will be treated respectfully by others. The room arrangement mirrors the focus on learning and thinking with meeting spaces for small groups, a comfortable spot where the large group can gather, and desks or tables in clusters to promote conversation and collaborative work.

2. **Nurturing thoughtful, curious readers and thinkers**
   Passion and wonder are central to life in a thinking classroom. Students enter our classrooms brimming with curiosity about the world and are encouraged to view learning as a way to better understand it. Engagement soars when kids listen to, respond to, and challenge each other’s thinking.

3. **Real world reading**
   Much of what adult readers read is short nonfiction: newspapers, magazine articles, memos, directions, essays, editorials etc. Often in school, students engage in focused content reading and have little opportunity for real world reading. Both are essential. When kids “read widely and wildly” as Shelley Harwayne says, they are far more likely to find content that intrigues them and propels them to investigate further. This also helps build background around all sorts of topics so kids have a reservoir of knowledge from which to draw.

4. **Teaching strategic reading within a gradual release framework**
   Strategies that proficient readers use include monitoring comprehension, activating background knowledge, and connecting to personal experience, asking questions, inferring meaning, determining importance, summarizing and synthesizing. We teach these strategies through the gradual release of responsibility framework. We provide explicit instruction through modeling and guided practice, and then provide opportunities for independent practice and application. Students learn to use these strategies flexibly, across a variety of texts, topics, and subject areas.

5. **Monitoring comprehension and leaving tracks of thinking**
When readers read, it is not enough to simply record the facts, they must merge their thinking with the information to learn, understand, and remember. They pay attention to the inner conversation they have with text, leaving written tracks of their thinking to monitor their understanding.

6. **Creating a common language for talking about thinking**
   Comprehension strategies offer a common language for understanding and discussing what we read, what we write, and what we think. Without a common language, it is nearly impossible to talk about anything substantive.

7. **Meeting individual needs and differentiating instruction**
   One size does not fit all. We consider how our instruction, materials and assessments can be adapted to students with varying reading proficiencies, learning styles and language backgrounds. Instruction occurs in a variety of groupings-- large groups, small groups, pairs, and with individuals.

8. **Teachers as thinkers and learners**
   Teachers can set the standard by being thoughtful readers and learners themselves. When teachers model their own thinking and support students to think when they read, everyone in the classroom has the opportunity to experience learning as understanding.

9. **Co-constructing meaning**
   Teaching and learning involves a process of co-constructing meaning. Both students and teacher weigh in with their thinking. We co-construct meaning in large groups by turning to each other and talking, in small groups, in conferences, and through discussions.

10. **Making thinking visible to hold, remember and share it**
    One of the best ways to promote thinking is to provide opportunities for kids to share their thoughts. To make thinking visible, we gather, record, chart, and talk about our thinking.

11. **Fostering a "strategic spirit" to engage kids in learning**
    David Perkins suggests that it's not enough to be able to think strategically; we have to want to do it. Tasks that require students to actively use, evaluate, and synthesize information are much more likely to engage kids. When kids are compelled by what they are learning, they are more likely to be motivated to think, question, and investigate.

12. **Constructing learning around texts kids can sink their teeth into**
    Allington and Johnston suggest that “one of the best ways to increase student thinking is to make sure you have a curriculum that provides students with things worth thinking about.” We need to provide text and materials that encourage kids to expand their thinking.

13. **Collaborative reading, writing, and discussion leading to purposeful talk**
    Throughout the day, students have opportunities to respond to reading in a variety of ways including talking, listening, writing, and researching. Responding in both small and large groups provides a chance to learn from each other and hear each other's perspectives, opinions, thoughts, and concerns. When students engage in purposeful conversations, they articulate their learning and have opportunities to change their thinking based on what they hear.

14. **Ongoing performance-based assessment**
    Every time we teach a lesson, we are assessing kids’ thinking, reflecting on our teaching, and planning for subsequent instruction. Conferring with students is the best way we know to assess learning needs. We read and listen to students’ many responses--Post-its, forms, journals, conversations, etc. We assess 24/7 and we evaluate (give grades) after students have had time to practice.

**CCSS and Standards Correlations**
- Common Core Correlations K-2
- Common Core Correlations 3-6