

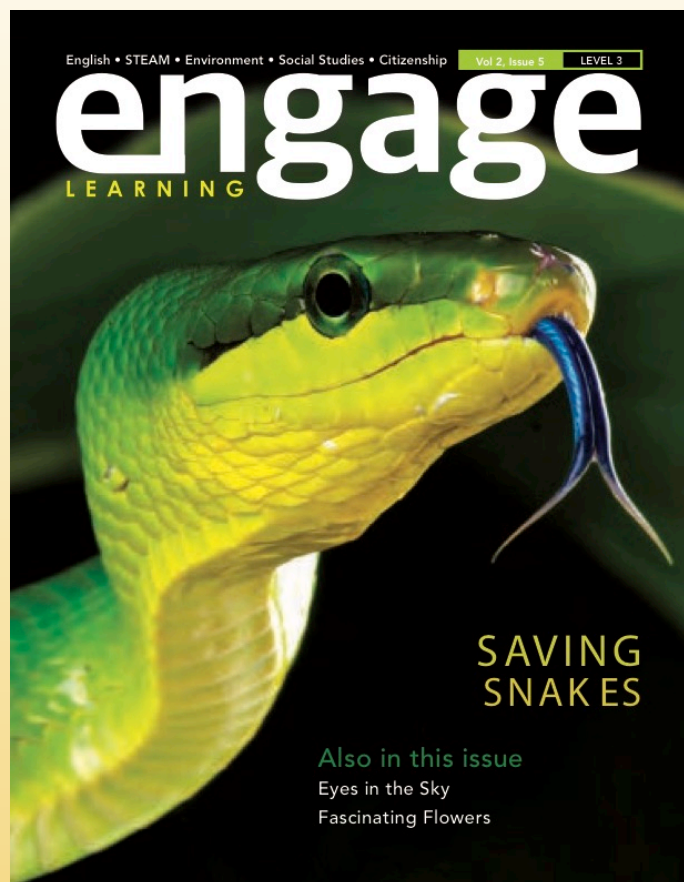


Solving India's Reading Problem



People are India's greatest resource. India provides the world with researchers, professors, doctors, and CEOs. Proficiency in English is key to this success.

In the following slides, we will see that most children in India are not proficient readers. Reading is key to each student's success and India's success. Engage's learning materials teach reading and help your children become tomorrow's leaders.



Engage materials provide an authentic, engaging reading experience with high-interest, curriculum-based content illustrated with great photography. It helps students develop their reading skills in a way that textbooks cannot.



Engage uses curriculum-based content to teach reading and writing skills. It is one of the few teaching materials that teaches students how to read nonfiction content and provides an excellent model for developing writing skills. It is dedicated to solving India's reading problem.

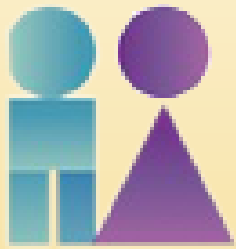
India's Reading Problem



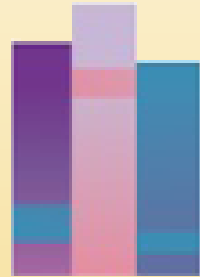
Studies show that students who struggle with reading in class 3 will most likely struggle with reading and learning for the rest of their lives.

Students with limited reading skills will have limited success in the 21st-century. Most employers already complain that recent hires cannot read and write.

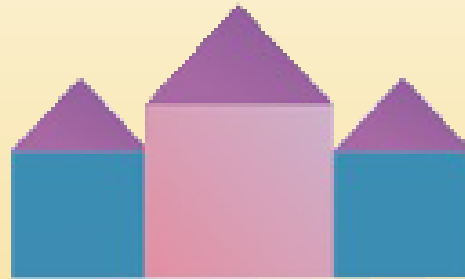
To learn the extent of the problem the FAST Reading Survey was administered.



19,765 Children



Grades 4-6



106 Schools



20 States

The FAST reading survey is a scientifically-based, recognized reading assessment. The survey indicates that students' reading abilities are significantly below grade level and that the gap in literacy negatively correlates with grade level.

The FAST survey was administered to students in classes 4, 5, and 6 in 20 states.

- Andhra Pradesh
- Assam
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Madhya Pradesh
- Maharashtra
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal

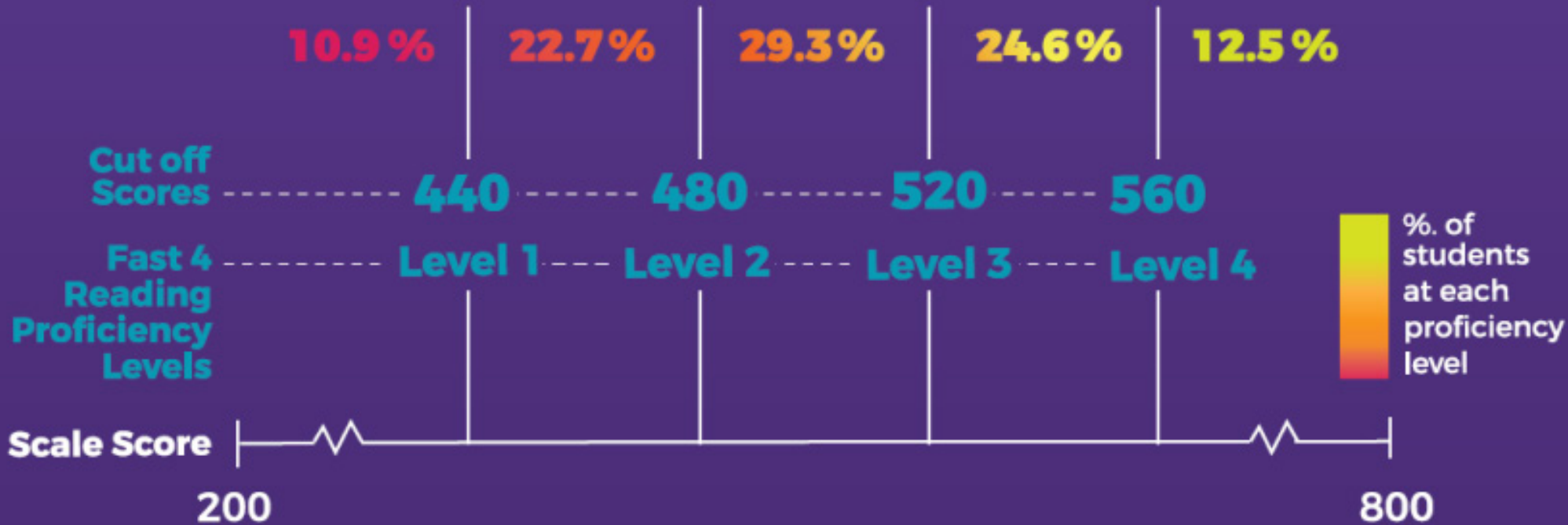
The following three slides show the results of the survey for each class.

Study Results, Class 4

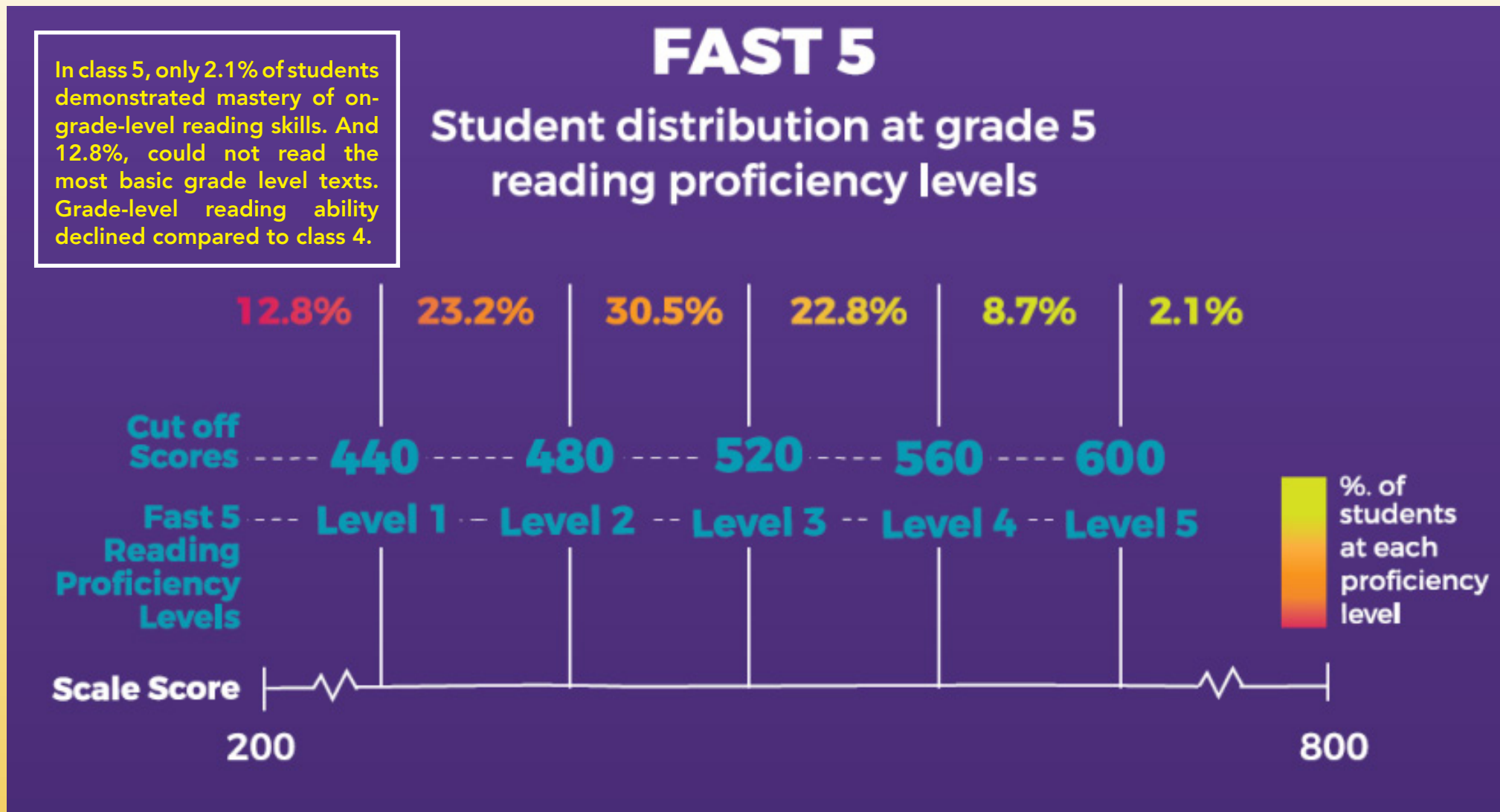
In class 4, only 12.5% of students demonstrated mastery of on grade level reading skills. Nearly an equal percentage, 10.9%, could not read the most basic grade level texts.

FAST 4

Student distribution at grade 4 reading proficiency levels



Study Results, Class 5



Study Results, Class 6

In class 6, only 3.9% of students demonstrated mastery of on grade level reading skills. And 10%, could not read the most basic grade level texts. Grade-level reading ability declined compared to class 5 and 4. As far as reading is concerned we are doing something wrong.

FAST 6 Student distribution at grade 6 reading proficiency levels



The study shows half the problem. Textbooks are another obstacle.

Textbooks are:

- *boring*
- *contain grammatical errors*
- *contain spelling mistakes*
- *are factually incorrect*
- *too hard!*

Many textbooks are written poorly and are too hard for students. Here is a passage from a popular class 5 science textbook.

“Our skull is attached to our vertebral column, which is also called the spine. The vertebral column forms the main axis of our skeleton. It is made up of 33 small and irregular-shaped bones, called the vertebrae, which are linked together. Although the vertebrae are linked together, they are not fused. The vertebrae allows us to bend, twist and stand upright. Another important function of the vertebral column is to protect the important blood vessels and the delicate spinal cord, which is a bundle of nerves.”

The average reading level of this passage is grade 7.9, nearly three grade levels higher than the best students can read. The last sentence is written on the college level. So students are reading below grade level and textbooks are written above grade level.



Engage takes a different approach. We want students to read and learn. If students cannot read our content, we have failed. Let's take a look at the text features of an Engage story to see how it helps students learn to read. We use different features to guide the reading and improve comprehension.

CONTENT SPECIFICS

THE OPENER

The opener for each story has an engaging photo, a headline and a deck. These are all carefully chosen to both spark student interest in reading the story and to tell why the article is important to read.

Most textbooks, even those written in India, feature non-Indians and locations outside of India. We feel it is important that students relate to what they are learning. Two-thirds of Engage stories feature locations or people in India. And about one-third are located outside of India or do not feature Indians. So students learn about both India and the world.

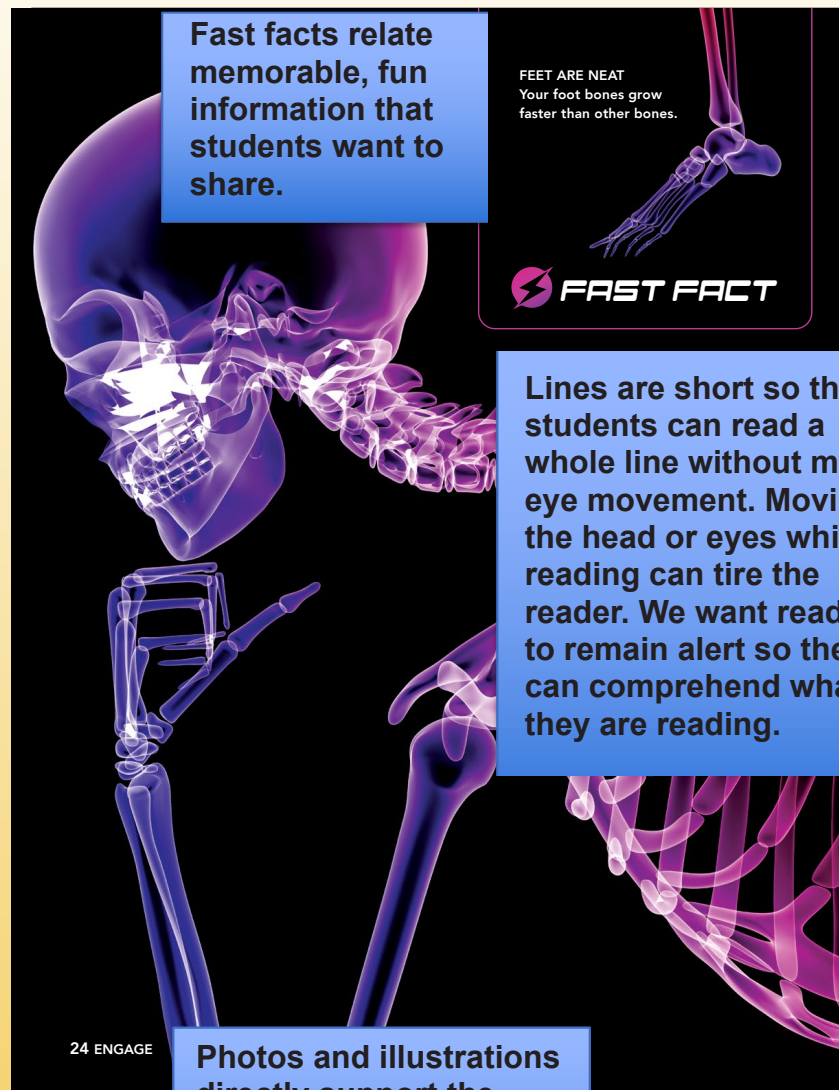


CONTENT SPECIFICS

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Many textbooks add artificial features to support reading. This provides an artificial reading experience and makes textbooks look formatted, so that the pages look the same.

Engage uses nonfiction text features to accomplish the same goal. The text features are carefully manipulated to provide the structure or scaffolding that students need to improve comprehension. It also makes the text look easier to access. This scaffolding is explained on both this and the next page.



Fast facts relate memorable, fun information that students want to share.

FEET ARE NEAT
Your foot bones grow faster than other bones.

FAST FACT

Lines are short so that students can read a whole line without much eye movement. Moving the head or eyes while reading can tire the reader. We want readers to remain alert so they can comprehend what they are reading.

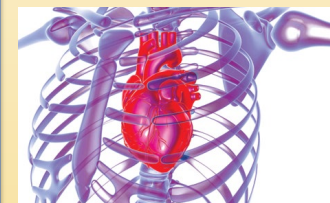
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Photos and illustrations directly support the content.

Type style and size is based on research so that students can easily make out letters and words. Some type styles are harder to read than others.

You may think that your bones are hard and never changing. Think again. Your bones are alive. They grow and change with you. "From the time you are born until you are about 19 years old, the length of your bones increases," said Dr. Kannan Pugazhendhi of the Indian Institute of Sports Medicine.

Your bones do many different things. They shape you and hold you up. They allow you to move, stand, sit, wiggle and bend. Bones protect your organs, too. For example, your ribs are like a fort protecting your heart and lungs. Bones also make blood cells. "So, bones may be hard structures, but they perform many functions," said Dr. Pugazhendhi.



a system of bones

About 206 bones make up your **skeletal system**. Without your skeleton, you would be a puddle on the floor. Instead of walking, you would flow. Let's look at your skeleton and discover what it does.

When you were in your mother's womb, your bones were soft and flexible **cartilage**. Jiggle the end of your nose. It is made of cartilage. "A child's bones are soft enough that they can actually bend before breaking," said Dr. Pugazhendhi. Since then, your bones have been hardening.

Also, the number of bones in your body has changed. You had 300 or more bones when you were born. Many of these extra bones were in your head. They fused to protect your brain.

dig into bones

The place where two bones meet is called a joint. Some joints, such as the joints in your head, do not move. However, most joints move. Your shoulders and hips are ball-and-socket joints. A ball-shaped end of a bone fits into a bowl shape in another bone. These joints allow bones to swing in a circular motion. Other joints, such as elbows and knees are hinges. They move back and forth, like a door. Other kinds of joints result in different kinds of movement.

Your bones have different parts. The outermost part of your bones is called hard bone. It protects the inside of the bone. Below the hard bone, your bones look like a honeycomb. This part of the bone is called spongy bone. The middle of many bones is hollow. It is filled with a soft, gooey substance called **marrow**.

There are two types of marrow. One is yellow and the other is red. Yellow bone marrow stores fat. Your bones release this fat when your body needs energy. So your bones need to constantly replace yellow marrow.

Red bone marrow makes red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Without your bones, you would not have any blood. Each day your bones make 5,000,000,000 red blood cells. They also make thousands of white blood cells and platelets.

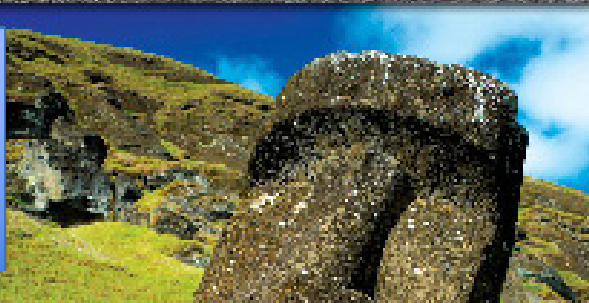
Red blood cells carry the oxygen your lungs inhale and carry it throughout your body. Without oxygen moving in blood, your body would die. White blood cells cruise through your body and fight diseases. "Think of germs invading your body as terrorists and white blood cells as bullets," said Dr. Pugazhendhi. "The white blood cells keep the terrorists from taking over your body." So your skeletal system is also part of your immune system. Platelets help your blood clot when you get a cut or scratch and keep all your blood from flowing out.

skeletal system: all the bones in a body
cartilage: firm but flexible tissue
marrow: a soft, fatty goo in the middle of bones

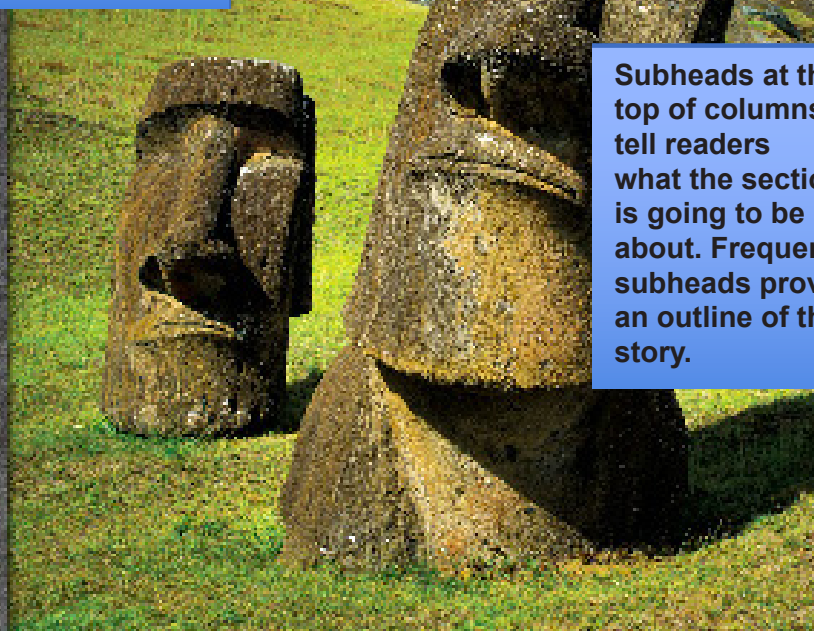
Academic and content vocabulary are defined on the page to increase usability and comprehension.

MOAI MYSTERY

Large, colourful photos create interest in the story and transport students to the location being discussed. The text does not fill every space so that it looks accessible.



Subheads at the top of columns tell readers what the section is going to be about. Frequent subheads provide an outline of the story.



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To improve comprehension, columns, pages, and spreads always end with a complete paragraph. Studies show that sentences that cross columns and pages decrease comprehension.



STANDING STATUES

Nearly a thousand years ago, some people moved canoes across the Pacific Ocean. They reached their home on an island, naming it Rapa Nui. It is 1,200 km from the closest island and 3,700 km from the nearest mainland.

Volcanic eruptions forged the rock that makes up Rapa Nui. When the travellers, called the Rapaui, reached the island, grasslands and palm tree forests covered it. A single lake provided fresh water.

The Rapaui carved the rock into giant statues, called moai. Over time, they made 887 statues, each about 4 m high and weighing 13,000 kg. After carving each statue, the Rapaui put it on two trucks and rolled it to a place on the island. Next, they positioned the statue to face inward and carved canoe shapes on the back of each statue. But what do the statues represent?

Archaeologists think that the statues represent the Rapaui's ancestors. Perhaps they were important chiefs or the ancestors of the families that relocated to the island. By looking inward, the statues were watching over and protecting the islanders.

On Easter Sunday 1772, the first Europeans arrived on the island. That is why it is now called Easter Island. The Europeans saw the statues, the remaining Rapaui and a largely deforested island.

ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

Archaeologists have different ideas about what happened on the island. The Rapaui lived near the only source of freshwater on the island. Over hundreds of years, the Rapaui increased to about 12,000 individuals. They may have needed more freshwater than what was available. The lack of freshwater may have caused the trees to die off. The Rapaui did not help the forests. They cut down trees to make canoes, grow crops, build fires and maybe build shelters.

The Rapaui may have had help destroying the island's forests. They brought rats with them. Some of the rats made their way to the forests, where they ate palm nuts. Within a few years there were millions of rats that ate nuts that could have grown into trees.

Without trees, the Rapaui burned grass for fuel. Without their forest habitat, birds disappeared. So did other animals. The Rapaui had little food. Then around 1600, war broke out. Next, Europeans arrived, bringing new germs to the island. These germs made the Rapaui sick, killing many of them.

Starvation, war, European diseases and finally slavery wiped out the Rapaui. But the real disaster might have simply been deforestation. Perhaps their forests collapsed as they cut down the island's last trees. Even the moai could not save the Rapaui from this ecological disaster.

Shorter paragraphs and sentences, as well as lower readability at the beginning of a story helps striving readers.



All of Engage's stories are levelled so that students can read them. Engage uses strict writing guidelines for each levelled article. The guidelines ensure that the stories can be read by students at the appropriate grade level. The following five slides show these guidelines.

Levelling: Pre-K

- 1-2 lines of text per page.
- Article focuses on one single concrete idea.
- Content area vocabulary is clearly and directly supported by photos.
- Many other words are part of children's oral vocabulary and sight words.
- Sentences are brief, no more than 6 words.
- A few simple compound words and a few simple content-specific multisyllabic words that are used frequently.
- Layout clearly directs children to the most important information.
- Captions are not used.
- Labels are used.
- The placement of text can vary but must be clear.
- Column lengths within a story can vary. Sentences do not run in.

Levelling: L1

- 1-3 lines of text per page.
- Focus is on a single concrete idea.
- Content-area vocabulary is introduced and clearly supported by the photos on each page.
- Most words are sight words, one or two syllables. Some three-syllable words may be used.
- Up to 10 words per sentence.
- Layout clearly directs children to the most important information.
- Photos rarely have captions. If used they support concepts children are learning and introduce no additional information.
- Text placement may vary.
- No colons or semicolons. Columns are aligned and sentences run in in the second half of the year.
- Simple text features are included.

Levelling: L2

- 3-8 lines of text per page.
- Articles are focused on one or a small number of clearly articulated supporting ideas.
- Content-area vocabulary is introduced and clearly supported by the photos on each page.
- Multiple exposures support understanding of more complex content-area vocabulary,
- Many multisyllabic words and more compound words are used.
- 5-12 words per sentence.
- Longer more complex sentences may include prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, embedded clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives.
- Line breaks rarely match the end of sentences, and sentences may continue for up to two lines.
- Layouts may be more complex, but still clearly direct children to the most important information.
- No colons or semicolons.
- Ideas do not carry across columns, pages, or spreads. A range of text features are introduced.

Levelling: L3

- Up to 900 words per story.
- Article is focused on several clearly articulated ideas, but these may be unfamiliar and require some prior knowledge to understand.
- Content-area vocabulary is clearly supported by the photos on each page.
- Multiple exposures support understanding of content-area vocabulary.
- Many multisyllabic words, some having 3-4 syllables, and many compound words are used.
- Sentences can have up to 15 words.
- Many compound sentences are used.
- A full range of punctuation may be used including ellipses and dashes, but no colons or semicolons.
- Photos and illustrations have captions of increasing length.
- Layouts may be more complex but still be clear and direct.
- Few spreads have single photos. Some pages have more than one photo, diagram, chart, etc.
- Ideas do not carry across columns, pages, or spreads. A range of text features are used.

Levelling: L4

- Up to 1,500 words per story.
- Article is focused on several clearly articulated ideas, but these may be unfamiliar, require prior knowledge to understand, or be more abstract.
- Readers are expected to bring background knowledge to the text.
- Multiple exposures support understanding of content-area vocabulary.
- Many multisyllabic words with 4 or more syllables and many compound words are used.
- Sentences can have 15 to 20 words.
- Some challenging language and sentence structure is used.
- Mid to high level of inferencing required.
- A full range of punctuation is used.
- Photos and illustrations have captions of increasing length.
- Layouts are increasingly more complex but are still direct.
- Few spreads have single photos. Some pages have more than one photo, diagram, chart, etc.
- Ideas do not carry across columns, pages, or spreads. A range of text features are used.

Comprehension Strategies

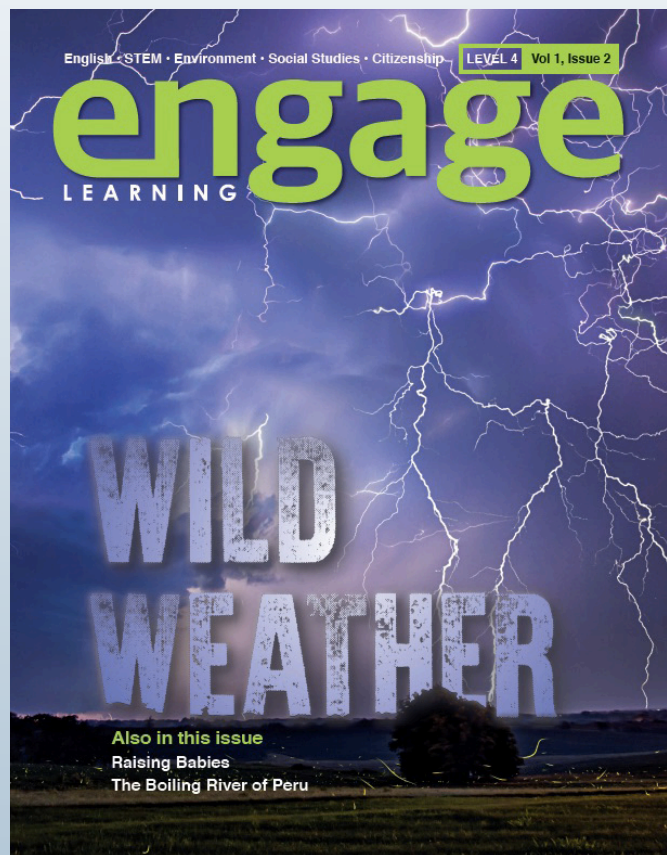


Studies show that reading comprehension strategies improve comprehension. Engage has identified six strategies that it teaches and students practise. These strategies turn poor readers into good readers and good readers into great readers.

The Six Reading Strategies

1. **Read with a Purpose** – This sets the reason why we are reading a text.
2. **Preview and Predict** – This lets us know how a text relates to our purpose for reading.
3. **Connect to Prior Knowledge** – By connecting what you are reading to prior knowledge, you connect new information to familiar information.
4. **Ask Questions** – By asking questions, you remain engaged in reading.
5. **Summarize** – By summarizing sections and the whole text, you check comprehension.
6. **Draw Inferences** – This allows you to extend the reading in new ways.

Assessments



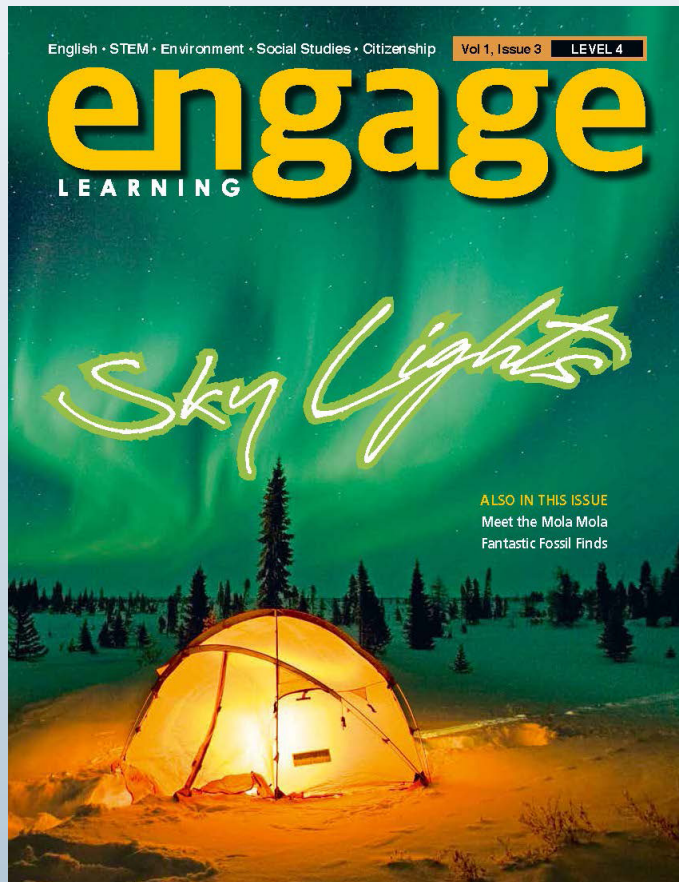
Engage uses two kinds of assessments. An issue assessment accompanies each issue. These are currently being modified to include clearly labeled headers such as comprehension, grammar, and punctuation. This will help teachers pinpoint areas in which students may need to improve.

Annual Assessment



An annual assessment will assess student comprehension. Students will read different genres of nonfiction text and then answer comprehension, summarization, inference, and other kinds of questions based on the passages. Ideally, the results of these assessments will be shared with Engage so that we can spot trends to mitigate any areas where students need to improve.

The Engage Experience



Engage is designed to solve India's reading problem. It does so by concentrating on developing students' nonfiction reading skills. Students learn to read fiction, but those skills are not the same as the ones needed to read nonfiction. Engage uses high-interest nonfiction content to teach reading and support the science and social studies curriculums.

Each Engage story comes with its own teaching guide. Each Engage story has an assessment vehicle. An annual assessment tracks student progress. Engage is the most attractive educational tool that teaches nonfiction reading skills, subject content, and exposes students to India and the world through authentic, current reading experiences.

WHY ENGAGE?

Engage Learning started with a question: Why are textbooks boring? We set out to answer that question by reviewing many of the textbooks available in India, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. We determined that those materials did not reflect most of those cultures. Students reading their books rarely saw people who looked like them or read about researchers from their countries. We also noticed that the books were really just lists of facts.

So, we decided to reinvent educational materials. Engage believes that educational materials should not only teach important content but should act as both a mirror and a window on the world. Students should be able to find in their learning materials both the world as well as their own backyards. They also need to see themselves in their learning materials. They need to envision themselves becoming the leaders of tomorrow. In order to do this they need to see experts who look like them.

Engage also believes that storytelling is essential to all learning. Most textbooks are little more than listings of facts. Engage teaches by telling important stories. Your curriculum is embedded in the storytelling. In this way, we create a more authentic learning experience. Since our learning materials provide authentic learning experiences, they can be used in the classroom to teach the core curriculum. They can also be used in the home to extend the school curriculum so that students are successful.

Engage's educational materials provide unparalleled depth of understanding. Textbooks provide mere lists of facts that pigeonhole content. All of our learning materials integrate the content so that students see connections between different subjects, as well as relate it to what they experience in real life.

Our approach to educational materials is so unique that many schools and publishers have approached us to develop materials and programs for them. We are happy to work with you to develop materials that carry your brand. This provides a perfect match between our approach and your needs.

THE FOUNDERS



FRANCIS DOWNEY
Editorial Director

With more than 40 years of experience in education, Fran has a long history of developing innovative educational products that have been used on six of the seven continents. He is best known for developing authentic educational programs that inspire independent learning. He has worked at leading educational publishing companies such as Weekly Reader, National Geographic, and Cengage Learning.



LATA VASVANI
Sales & Marketing Director

Lata began her career at India Book House and co-founded the Crossword chain of bookstores. Today, she works with more than 500 different schools to help them provide the best educational materials to their students.



PADMINI MIRCHANDANI
Head of Publishing

For 25 years, Padmini was Director of Publishing at India Book House that launched the famous *Amar Chitra Katha* series and *Tinkle* magazine for children, as well as an internationally acclaimed line of illustrated art books. Today, she supports the development and deployment of all content in print and digital formats.



 **Thank you** 

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