

Writing as a Tool for Increasing Reading Comprehension: Cognitive Strategies Sentence Starters Resource

The following sentence starters can help students demonstrate comprehension of complex text.

Table 1. Cognitive strategy sentence starters.

Planning and Goal Setting • My purpose is... • My top priority is... • I will accomplish my goal by...	Forming Interpretations • What this means to me is... • I think this represents... • The idea I'm getting is...
Tapping Prior Knowledge • I already know that... • This reminds me of... • This relates to...	Monitoring • I got lost here because... • I need to reread the part where... • I know I'm on the right track because...
Asking Questions • I wonder why... • What if... • How come...	Clarifying • To understand better, I need to know more about... • Something that is still not clear is... • I'm guessing that this means _____, but I need to...
Making Predictions • I'll bet that... • I think... • If _____, then... • Visualizing • I can picture... • In my mind I see... • If this were a movie...	Revising Meaning • At first I thought _____, but now I... • My latest thought about this is... • I'm getting a different picture here because...

Making Connections • This reminds me of... • I experienced this once when... • I can relate to this because...	Analyzing the Author's Craft • A golden line for me is... • A strong/impactful word/phrase for me is... • This word/phrase stands out for me because... • I like how the author uses _____ to show...
Summarizing • The basic gist is... • The key information is... • In a nutshell, this says that...	Reflecting and Relating • So, the big idea is... • The conclusion I'm drawing is... • This is relevant to my life because...
Adopting an Alignment • The character I most identify with is... • I really got into the story when... • I can relate to this author because...	Evaluating • I like/don't like _____ because... • My opinion is _____ because... • The most important message is _____ because...

References:

Graham, S., Booth-Olson, C., Baker, T. (2026). Writing Instruction Across the Disciplines: Evidence-Based Practices in Grades 6-12. The Guilford Press.

Graham, S., Booth-Olson, C., Baker, T., Chung, H., Steiss, J. (2023). What Works in Secondary Writing Instruction? [PowerPoint slides]. National Writing Project: Write Center. <https://www.writecenter.org/exclusive-resources.html>. Accessed March 4, 2026.

Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center is funded by the Michigan Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.