

Chapter One

Tackling the TAKS

Chapter One introduces a variety of reading and teaching strategies. These strategies will be interspersed throughout the lessons and activities in this book. As mentioned in the Overview, the main purpose of The TAKS Tutor is to provide teachers with a resource that can be used to teach good reading habits and skills. Strategies included in this resource have been shown to increase comprehension skills.

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Chapter Two

Objective 1: Basic Understanding

Chapter Two focuses on strategies to help students develop a basic comprehension of text. This comprehension is the foundation needed to develop a greater understanding of what students read and learn. In other words, it is the framework for lifelong learning.

Reading comprehension involves complex strategies to construct meaning. In order for students to comprehend what they read, they must be able to bring meaning to words in **context and identify multiple-meaning words**. Also, students are expected to determine a word’s meaning through **root words, prefixes and suffixes**. Tested vocabulary will be above grade level. However, reading selections will be at or below grade level.

Main idea items on the TAKS can focus on one or more paragraphs in a narrative or of the entire selection for expository or mixed selections. “**Summary** items focus on a reading selection as a whole” (TEA: TAKS Information Booklet, January 2002).

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Chapter Three

Objective 2: Literary Elements

Chapter 3 offers students opportunities to develop an understanding of literary elements. When students have multiple opportunities to analyze stories for literary elements, these stories become more meaningful to them as they make connections between the characters, events, setting and theme while learning about emotions beyond their own experiences.

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Chapter Four

Objective 3: Analyzing Texts

Chapter 4 focuses on strategies that will help students recognize text structure and understand how ideas are related. This chapter will also offer practice that will help students graphically represent text information. These practices will help students make inferences or draw conclusions from information contained in graphics, such as: story maps, charts, graphs or other graphics. Test items that focus on representing text information will require students to select an answer choice that best completes a missing portion of a particular graphic organizer.

This chapter will further offer practice in comparing and contrasting story variants, identifying the different purposes of text as well as describing how an author’s perspective or point-of-view affects the text.

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Chapter Five

Objective 4: Critical Analysis

Proficient readers know that predicting and inferring before, during, and after reading are essential to enhancing meaning. It is important for students to use a variety of strategies to comprehend texts such as drawing conclusions, distinguishing fact from opinion, and recognizing how authors organize information. Students should also be provided opportunities to support their conclusions with examples drawn from text. These strategies will aid readers in comprehending text and answering TAKS questions that require them to use critical-thinking skills.

Objective 4 questions may ask students “to draw a conclusion, make a reasonable prediction, understand the relationship between two parts of text, understand how a text relates to their own lives, or understand the deeper meanings implied by text” (TEA TAKS Information Booklet, January, 2002). Fact and opinion items will only be tested from selections in which the author’s intent is to persuade using techniques to influence the readers’ actions or thoughts. When students are asked to support interpretations or conclusions with verbatim examples from text, the answer choices will be italicized.

Chapter Five includes lessons that will help teachers prepare students to become text analysts. Thus, assisting students in applying critical-thinking skills of culturally diverse written texts.

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