Three Level Comprehension Guide for Active Reading

What it is: Leveled reading is a way to comprehend, interpret and apply difficult texts by working at the literal, interpretive and applied levels.

What it does: Leveled reading helps readers to go beyond the surface of a text in a step-by-step way.

Level 1 (literal – reading what is right there)
Here the reader finds the answer in the text. The reader might be asked to do any of the following:

- Identify the main ideas of the paragraph or short story.
- Recall details that support the main ideas.
- Organize the sequence in which the main events occurred.


Level 2 (interpretive – reading between the lines)
Here, the reader interprets the information to find answers. The reader might be asked to any of the following:

- Predict endings and anticipate consequences.
- State reasons for events.
- Make generalizations.

Examples of interpretive question starters: Why did . . .? What was . . .? What do you think about . . .? Can you explain . . .? How was this similar to . . .?

Level 3 (applied – reading beyond the lines)
Here the reader makes links between the text and his or her own experience and knowledge to develop an answer. The reader asks open-ended questions to promote deeper understanding and do the following:

- Make generalizations.
- Make comparisons.
- Make judgments.
- Make recommendations and suggestions.
- Make decisions.
- Create alternative endings.

Examples of applied question starters: How would you . . .? Do you agree . . .? What would have happened if . . .? How might . . .? What effect does . . .? If you were . . . what would you . . .?