



# Making Sense: Small-Group Comprehension Lessons for English Language Learners

*Juli Kendall, Outey Khuon*

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Reading is all about understanding. Many English language learners simply do not understand what they are reading, whether it's a picture book, a literature selection, or a science textbook. Juli Kendall and Outey Khuon believe that small group comprehension lessons have a key role to play in advancing students' understanding of texts.

*Making Sense* provides answers to many common questions asked by teachers of English language learners: How do we organize small-group comprehension instruction? How do we select books to teach strategies? How do we know our kids are getting it—and what do we do when they don't get it? It is an easy-to-use, practical resource for ELD, ESL, and ESOL pull-out teachers, and for push-in teachers working "in-class" to support English language learners.

The book's five main sections are geared to the stages of language proficiency, and lessons are divided into 'younger' and 'older' students, spanning kindergarten through grade 8. The authors outline fifty-two lessons that teach students how to make connections, ask questions, visualize (make mental images), infer, determine importance, and synthesize. Each lesson follows a four-part teaching framework:

- Start Up/Connection—helping students build background and use prior knowledge to connect to the lesson;
- Give Information—explicitly telling students what they are going to learn and why they are learning it, and then teaching them;
- Active Involvement—often occurs during the teaching as students practice what they are learning while the teacher checks for understanding and monitors and adjusts instruction;
- Off-You-Go!—opportunities for students to practice what they learned with peers or independently.

*Making Sense* also explores the stages of language proficiency through descriptions of ten English language learners of different ages. A chart of student characteristics for each stage shows how students demonstrate understanding and outlines the implications for planning instruction. This book will appeal to experienced teachers seeking to expand their repertoire of lessons, as well as new teachers just beginning the adventure of teaching comprehension to English language learners.

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