

# *Taking Reading Comprehension Matters into Your Hands*

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## **How is a strategic reader like a surgeon?**

A surgeon uses her hands and tools to operate - repair, heal and save lives like, a strategic reader (sentence surgeon) uses her hands and metatextual markers and a pencil or pen to fix comprehension when it breaks down or bring life to complex text. After a strategic reader or sentence surgeon operates on (dissects) complex text, she has a command of evidence.

Let us dissect the words “*dissect*” and “*command of evidence*”. The root “*sect*” means to **cut** and the prefix “*di*” means **two, twice, or double**. When something is dissected, it is cut in two or in medical terms, cut open. If the words, command of evidence are dissected, command becomes the prefix “*co*” meaning **with** and the root “*man*” meaning hand. Evidence becomes the prefix “*e*” meaning **out** and the root “*vid*” meaning **see**. Translated, the two terms mean, “*with hand take out what you see.*”

In essence, when a sentence surgeon or strategic reader provides evidence she manipulates (with her hands) the tools of metatextual markers and a pencil or pen and removes key details from complex text that provide visual proof of any claim or response to text dependent questions. Cognitively, while under the direction of the brain the hand orthographically demonstrates understanding of complex text.

Metaphorically, each finger has a duty in the hand’s role in text maneuvers. To demonstrate an understanding of the concept of Command of Evidence, this writer will depict a glove used by a construction worker. Each finger will have an affix/root imprinted on it, as well as the meaning(s) and a corresponding skill that signifies its job. It is this writer’s goal to conceptualize the reader’s understanding of her responsibility in managing complex text.

# Comprehension Glove



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## Thumb

The distinctive feature of the thumb, not possible of the fingers is its ability to grasp things. The Latin root word written on the thumb of the Command of Evidence glove is “**hend**,” which means “*to grasp*”, as in the word, *comprehend*. When strategic readers comprehend, they metacognitively *grasp the meaning* of the author or writer’s words.

## Index Finger

The index finger is anatomically considered the most well-developed of the four fingers. It is noted for fine movement. When supported by the thumb, the index finger is used for holding a pen or pencil for writing or drawing the responses to questions or tasks. The Latin roots “**scribe and script**” and “**graph and gram**” are written on the index finger of the Command of Evidence glove. These roots mean “*to write*” as in the words *paragraph, graph, bar graph, or diagram*. Strategic readers show that they have a command of evidence by writing about or depicting what they understand.

## Middle Finger

The middle finger is the biggest, strongest and tallest of the fingers. It is used to push things. “If you are using your fingers to push things, this is the finger to use.” (<https://www.quora.com/What-are-each-of-our-fingers-good-at> 5/8/13). The middle finger is also located in the center of the hand. The Latin root, “**fer**” is written on the middle finger of the Command of Evidence glove. The root “**fer**” means “*carry*” as in the word “*infer*.” The prefix “**in**” means “*to*.” The skill “*infer*” requires critical thinking. When done properly this skill can *promote* understanding. The root “**mot**” means “*move*” and the prefix “**pro**” means forward. When strategic readers *infer*, they metaphorically carry ideas and information from the text, combine them with previous related knowledge or experiences, and move their understanding of the text forward. Like the position of the middle finger, the skill, of **inferring**, stands out and is heavily weighted as a critical element in supporting students’ comprehension of complex text.

## Fourth Finger

The fourth finger shares the same tendon as the middle finger and supports the action of the other fingers. On the Command of Evidence glove, this finger has the word *annotate* written on it. This word comes from the Latin root "*notare*" meaning "*to note.*" When strategic readers annotate text they are supporting their understanding of the text by asking questions of the author or highlighting or noting key details.

## Pinky Finger

The smallest finger on the hand is called the pinky. Its position on the hand allows for more flexibility in movement. The root "**struc, struct**" is written on the pinky of the Command of Evidence glove. It means to "*build, arrange, or assemble*" as in the words, "**word structure, sentence structure and text structure.**" When strategic readers conduct, a CLOSE read of text using metatextual markers they are analyzing the author's words by dissecting them down to the smallest elements of text complexity. They inspect how words are built, how sentences are arranged and how the text is assembled. Knowing the structure of the author's words is essential to comprehension.

## Affixes/Roots Lesson Plan

### scROOTinEYES®

**Language 4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

6-8L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 6-8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

**b) Use common grade appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word.**

#### *How do you teach/reinforce Affixes and Roots?*

- Promote understanding of roots/affixes through Essential Questions.** Let's look at the word promote. *The prefix /pro/ means forward, forth, toward the front. The root /mot/ means move.* We will move forward the understanding of affixes and roots through Essential Questions.
  - How is using affixes/roots like solving a puzzle?**
  - How is using affixes/roots like solving an equation?**
- Introduce/reinforce affixes/roots within authentic text or within lessons of different content areas.**
- Introduce/reinforce affixes/roots as a family, theme, or within a category.**  
Example: Look across the "S" row on the CLOSE Reading Strategies Affix/Roots handout. There are several affixes/roots that provide word parts for words that signal text structures. In the compare/contrast structure, the prefix /**com**/ means with and the root /**par**/ means equal. The prefix /**contra**/ means against. When you compare/contrast you are analyzing what is similar and what is different. Additional affixes/roots in this category provide word parts for the words sequence, chronology, proposition/support, and enumeration/description
- Include the teaching/reinforcement of affixes/roots within a scheduled instruction of vocabulary.** You must teach the actual meanings and generate examples. Students must learn what the affixes/roots mean.

5. **Create vocabulary related jobs or group names for your students.**
  - a. **Vocabulary Volunteers**
  - b. **Wide-eyed Word Warriors**
  - c. **Sentence Surgeons**
  - d. **Wordologists**
  - e. **Word Scientists**
  - f. **Multiple-Meaning Masterminds**
  - g. **Literary Device Detectives**
  - h. **Transition Word Translators**
  - i. **Cogniticians**
  - j. **Context Clue Commanders**
6. **Create a portable affix/roots word wall.**