



Background Knowledge: The Missing Piece of the Comprehension Puzzle

Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey

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"Background knowledge is too often neglected in our push to raise test scores, despite the fact that we know background knowledge is a critical component of comprehension. Background knowledge simply has to become an instructional focus if we want to help students make sense of school. We will lose a generation of learners if we don't act now."

-Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey

Why background knowledge?

- Because the *Grapes of Wrath* is dry reading if students don't know about the Dust Bowl.
- Because the Boston Tea Party is a non-event if students don't know loyalists from patriots.
- Because knowing a triangle has 180 degrees isn't the same as knowing why.

Because content-area comprehension depends on it, you and your students need **Background Knowledge**. **Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey** help you develop lasting subject-area understanding with ideas for modeling, guided practice, productive group work, and independent work that effectively engage adolescents. You'll learn to:

- distinguish incidental knowledge from core background knowledge
- check students' understanding prior to a unit with tools such as opinionnaires, interest surveys, and anticipation guides
- model how to activate and apply prior knowledge so kids can wrestle with new content
- build up students' background knowledge through virtual fieldtrips, YouTube, guest experts, and more
- provide collaborative ways for students to develop expertise, show what they know, and own their learning.

Doug and Nancy also build *your* background knowledge with multimedia book-study resources at www.heinemann.com/backgroundknowledge.

"As teachers our job is not to simply fill students' heads with facts," write Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey. "We need to have students manipulate and apply information so that it becomes a permanent understanding." That's why the time is now for **Background Knowledge**.

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