

# Sequencing

**Sequencing** is one of many **skills** that contributes to students' **ability** to **comprehend** what they read. **Sequencing** refers to the identification of the components of a story — the beginning, middle, and end — and also to the **ability** to retell the events within a given text in the order in which they occurred.

Finding meaning in a text depends on the ability to understand and place the details, the sequence of events, within some larger context—the beginning, middle, and end of a story. The ordering of events in a story, along with connecting words such as *once upon a time*, *then*, *later*, *afterwards*, and *in the end*, are good examples of textual features<sup>1</sup>, an understanding of which gives the reader a way of integrating the story's individual parts into its larger framework—and thereby understanding the author's purpose.

readers and those that have not had much opportunity to work on their sequencing skills have a tendency to retell a story by starting with the end, since it is the part that they read or heard most recently. Even more experienced readers may re-tell a story by focusing primarily on the sections that were most appealing to them rather than by giving a more complete picture of the events that occurred. Practicing sequencing helps remedy both of these issues and makes this aspect of reading comprehension second nature.

If students are encouraged to identify the parts of a story, for instance, they will be better able to retell it to someone else, as it is a more manageable task to think of a story in pieces—the beginning, middle, and end—rather than try to recall it as one large chunk. Sequencing activities also provide an opportunity for students to examine text and story structure, which, in turn, strengthens their writing skills.

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<sup>1</sup> **Text features** include all the components of a story or article that are not the main body of **text**. These include the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams.

Sentence strips work well for sequencing , since events can be written on individual strips and then rearranged as necessary to put the events in the correct order. Let students use these lists or strips as reminders as they retell the story