Comprehension Strategies

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Text Format

- Before reading a text in Spanish, first look at the format. Is it a story book, an article, a newspaper ad? Once you define the type of text it is ask yourself the following question: What type of information do I typically find in this kind of text?

Video Type

- What is the purpose of the video? Is it a documentary, a motion picture, an educational video? What type of information will be presented?

Illustrations/Images

- Looking closely at the illustrations/images can give you some ideas of what the story is about.
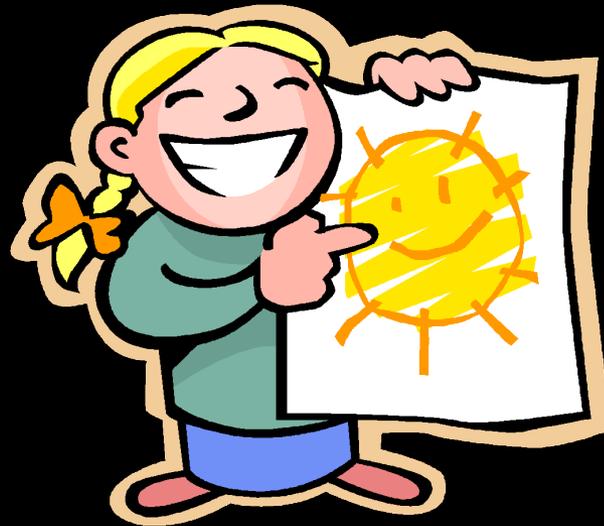
The Title

- Look at the words and the format of the title and see if it helps you define the topic of the reading.
- How does the title relate to the story?
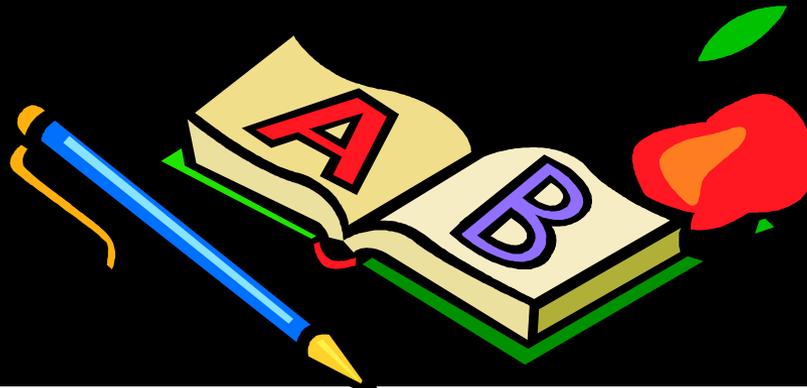
Cognates

Cognates are words that look alike and have the same meaning both in English and Spanish. For example, family & *familia*…However watch out for the false cognates! An example of this is "pie" & pie. "Pie" in Spanish means to foot but pie in English refers to a dessert.

Familiar elements in word structure

Spanish and English grammar share many similarities. For example, in both languages proper names are capitalized. Look at the text to find familiar elements that help you understand the message.

Cognates/Familiar Phrases

- On video, focus on vocabulary (cognates, key words, expressions, etc..) that are familiar to you.

- Use the images along with these phrases to find meaning and understand the message.

Background Knowledge

- Once you apply the above strategies think of what you know about the topic and try to make predictions on what the reading/story is about.

Context

Now that you know how to define the topic of a reading/story, use the context to guide you in understanding the details. For example, if you are reading/viewing a biography you know that the information provided relates to the life of the person. Most likely you will be learning about the person's country of origin, family, likes and dislikes, etc…