



Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension Program - Level 1

By Joyce VanTassel-Baska Ed.D., Center for Gifted Education, Tamra Stambaugh Ph.D.

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The *Jacob s Ladder Reading Comprehension Program* targets reading comprehension skills in high-ability learners by moving students through an inquiry process from basic understanding to critical analyses of texts using a field-tested method developed by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary. Students in grades K–9 will be able to comprehend and analyze any reading passage after completing the activities in these books.

Using skill ladders connected to individual readings in poetry, short stories, and nonfiction, students move from lower order, concrete thinking skills to higher order, critical thinking skills. All of the books, geared to increasing grade levels, include high-interest readings, ladders to increase reading skill development, and easy-to-implement instructions. The ladders include multiple skills necessary for academic success, covering language arts standards such as sequencing, cause and effect, classification, making generalizations, inference, and recognizing themes and concepts.

The *Jacob s Ladder* guides provide teachers with an explanation of the nature and substance of supplementary tasks in reading comprehension that will help prepare students for their state assessment tests. At the same time, these tasks will move students from basic reading comprehension to more critical reading behaviors. Also included are an overview of the goals and objectives of *Jacob s Ladder* tasks and suggestions for implementation, giving every teacher of gifted learners the tools needed to create a successful reading classroom.

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Editorial Review

Review

I find that *Jacob's Ladder* is easy to use and thoroughly enjoy how it helps light a spark in my children. They truly do not consider working on *Jacob's Ladder* to be school work; for them, this is a treat . . . It engages higher order thinking and takes the children far beyond the texts they are reading . . . This is the first comprehension program that I've seen that I can wholeheartedly recommend. While it's targeted at gifted children, I think that all children will enjoy this program as you can guide the answers as deeply or as shallowly as you wish. If you have children, who like mine, love to engage in philosophizing, this is definitely a program they would enjoy. --Homeschooled Twins blog - June 8, 2010

About the Author

Joyce VanTassel-Baska is Professor Emerita at The College of William and Mary, where she founded the Center for Gifted Education. Formerly she initiated and directed the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University. Joyce has also served as state director of gifted programs in Illinois, a regional director, a local coordinator of gifted programs, and a teacher of gifted high school students. Her major research interests are in the talent development process and effective curricular interventions with the gifted.

She is the author of 22 books and has written more than 500 other publications on gifted education. She was the editor of *Gifted and Talented International* for several years and received the Distinguished Scholar Award in 1997 from the National Association for Gifted Children and the Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia in 1993. She received the Distinguished Alumna Achievement Award from the University of Toledo in 2003, the President's Award from the World Council on Gifted and Talented in 2005, and the Collaboration and Diversity Service Award from CEC-TAG in 2007.

Tamra Stambaugh, Ph.D., is a research assistant professor of special education and director of Programs for Talented Youth at Vanderbilt University. Her current research interests include the impact of accelerated curriculum on student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and talent development factors-especially for students of poverty.

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