

Three Levels of Comprehension

LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Student understands what the author **actually** says.

The instructor would ask questions like:

- 1) What is this story about?
- 2) What happened? Who did it?
- 3) When, where, how and why did it happen?
- 4) What words state the main idea of the story?

Literal comprehension is primarily the type of comprehension directly worked on by the BASIC O.G. tutor. The first job of the instructor is to work on having the student decode and build fluency using phonetically fair text.

INFERENTIAL COMPREHENSION

Student understands what the author **means** by what is said. The instructor would ask questions like:

- 1) What is the author suggesting but not really saying?
- 2) What is the author's purpose?
- 3) Is there figurative language that needs to be considered?

Making an inference must be based on three things:

- 1) Clues from the words in the text.
- 2) Student's own life experience.
- 3) Understanding semantics used in written text.

Inferential comprehension is at a higher level than literal comprehension. Some students at the basic level may need to work on some of these skills, particularly if they are older students or adults. Keep in mind that literal comprehension must be firmly mastered before it is appropriate to move into inferential comprehension skills.

CRITICAL COMPREHENSION

Student understands **why** the author says what he/she says. The instructor would prompt the student to answer questions like:

- 1) Could this happen?
- 2) Should this happen?
- 3) Is this information complete? Correct? Reasonable? Valid? Unbiased?
- 4) How does this information compare with other information that I already know?
- 5) How qualified is the author?

Critical comprehension is at a very high level and would NOT be worked on by a BASIC O.G. instructor. Advanced-level students would work on these skills when it is appropriate.