

# LITERACY STRATEGIES IMPROVE ADOLESCENT CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

## KEY COMPONENTS OF PACT

1. **Overarching question** to build background knowledge and motivation
2. **Essential word warm-ups** to build key vocabulary
3. **Critical reading** of primary and secondary source texts
4. **Comprehension checks** with individual and collaborative components
5. **Knowledge application activity** involving discussion and problem-solving

## WHAT DID THEY FIND?

Overall, PACT practices significantly improved the content knowledge acquisition of middle school U.S. history students. Students in PACT classrooms outperformed students in non-PACT classrooms on content knowledge assessments both immediately after receiving instruction and at a follow-up nine weeks later, which suggests that the PACT practices improved students' acquisition and retention of content knowledge. Additionally, the PACT strategies had a smaller but still positive effect on students' overall reading comprehension.

## EXPLORE MORE!



Look into sample lessons and materials here!

## ARTICLE

Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Wanzek, J., Furman, G., Martinez, L., & Sargent, K. (2023). Promoting adolescents' comprehension of text: A randomized control trial of its effectiveness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(5), 665–682.

## WHAT DID THEY DO?

Roberts and colleagues studied the effectiveness of PACT (Promoting Adolescents' Comprehension of Text), a set of instructional practices to engage students with texts in the content areas. It is intended to supplement, not replace, a teacher's curriculum.

In a randomized control trial, they studied the effectiveness of PACT practices in 48 public middle school U.S. history classrooms. The trial included a representative sample of 6500 students from fall 2017 to spring 2023.

## WHAT COULD THIS MEAN?

While the focus of this study was middle school U.S. history, the results may also be effective in other secondary content-area classrooms. The critical reading and collaborative components may foster deeper processing and stronger content recall by students, as compared to instruction that does not include these approaches. The PACT model involves shifting away from lecture-based instruction as the primary method for student knowledge acquisition, which may be difficult for teachers who fear that students will not learn or retain the content included on high-stakes tests. However, the results of this trial suggest that the PACT model yields improved content knowledge acquisition and retention for students. Teachers could also integrate individual components of PACT into their instruction, such as the essential word warm-ups and critical reading routines, without implementing the entire model.

