

## **AIM Higher!<sup>®</sup> English Skills for Assessment Research Base**

### **When students are taught to read strategically, their comprehension improves.**

Successful readers use a variety of strategies to understand text (Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992; National Reading Panel, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Struggling readers either lack a knowledge of or ability to use these strategies, not knowing when or how to apply them (Vacca & Vacca, 2002). When students are taught to read strategically, their comprehension improves (e.g., National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley, 2000). *AIM Higher!<sup>®</sup> English Skills for Assessment* includes instruction in comprehension strategies to give students the tools and strategies they need, such as finding the main idea, scanning for details, and analyzing text structure, to improve their comprehension and do their best on test day.

### **Writing helps students connect with literature and improves overall literacy.**

The benefits of frequent writing have been emphasized by many authorities, including the National Reading Panel (2000) and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary (2001) in the summary of evidence-based instruction essential to the No Child Left Behind initiative. Many opportunities and extended time to practice, share, and discuss writing builds confidence and skill in student writers (e.g., Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983, 1994).

Because students are not equally familiar with all modes of writing, such as expository and persuasive writing, students need instruction in various forms of writing and how the forms are organized (Downing, 1995; Lenski & Johns, 2000). By teaching students to write essays for assessments and in response to test questions, they are able to practice the required format and develop as writers.

### **Teaching students to read graphics is an important goal of literacy instruction.**

Helping students learn to read graphics is an important goal in literacy instruction (Fry, 1981). Because graphics are abstract and often oversimplify or appear to distort information (Roe, Stoodt, & Burns, 1998), deciphering them can be confusing. However, the need to read graphics accurately is likely to become increasingly important and is often tested on reading assessments. *AIM Higher! English Skills for Assessment* scaffolds students' efforts to read and interpret information from graphics. This includes reading the title or caption, making inferences, and drawing on prior knowledge.

***AIM Higher! English Skills for Assessment* is an effective form of test preparation.**

Each book in the *AIM Higher! English Skills for Assessment* series contains a pre-test and post-tests, as well as numerous practice activities in answering reading and writing questions. Providing students with opportunities to practice critical thinking skills in a test-taking format prepares them to be successful on high-stakes tests.

## References

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