

Helping your child with reading at home



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Why is reading so important?

Reading is a vital tool for learning and for life. Reading not only helps us to widen our knowledge and experiences but also increases our confidence in many aspects of our lives. Research shows that children who enjoy reading achieve better results at school.



Helping children to make progress in reading is most successful when it is done in partnership between home and school. Any support you can give your child will improve his/her progress.

Book Banding

The school has used book banding as an effective way of organising texts for reading. All the reading books are graded by difficulty into reading levels known as Book Bands, each one with a different colour. By colour banding books your child will have access to a bigger variety of different books at an appropriate level, providing your child with greater choice of text and genre. There is a range of series and publishers within each band to prevent readers becoming over-dependent upon the language and structures of any one series. There will of course be some variation in style and challenge within the same band.

Your child's reading level has been assessed and then he/she was given a book from the appropriate colour band. Once your child is assessed to be confident in a particular colour band he/she will be moved onto the next colour. Progress through the bands is not automatic and it is important to ensure that children working in the early bands have secure understanding so that they remain in control of the task and motivated as they move on to more challenging texts.

In this booklet are some tips and advice which hopefully you will find useful.

Reading with your child at home

Book introduction (new book)

Prepare your child, providing support through reading the title, talking about the type of book and looking at any pictures. Aim to give your child confidence without reading the book to them. If necessary, locate difficult new words and unfamiliar concepts or names.

Book introduction (longer book)

Activate prior knowledge or recap on what your child has already read, e.g. what has happened in the story so far or the information your child has read. Keep this part of the session short and snappy.

Strategy Check

Review specific reading strategies that your child has been taught and remind them to use these when reading (see next page).

Independent reading

Your child reads the text at his/her own pace. Monitor your child's reading and use appropriate prompts to encourage problem-solving. Acknowledge correct use of reading strategies.

Returning to the text

Briefly talk about what has been read to check your child's understanding of what he/she has just read and address any misunderstandings of vocabulary or concepts, if necessary.

Response to the text

Encourage your child to respond to the text through discussion, expressing opinions, questioning, role play or other activities.

Strategies to use if your child is stuck on a word

Good readers use lots of different strategies. Decoding words or figuring out the words is just one piece of the reading puzzle. Below are prompts that you can use to help your child apply strategies to figuring out unknown words.

1. Wait at least 5 seconds

Before saying anything, quietly count to 5. Many times, if we just give the reader a moment to struggle and problem solve, he/she will be able to figure the word out on his own. But, if that doesn't work, try some more of the strategies on the list.

2. Give it a try

Many children are in the habit of just waiting for someone to tell them the unknown word. Encourage your child to try it on his/her own. This is a great confidence builder.

3. Use your sounds (phonics)

This one is similar to give it a try. When a child attempts the first sound, sometimes the child gets the rest of the word. This prompt is great for those children who just sit and stare into space waiting for someone to tell them the word.

4. Skip the word. Keep reading and then come back.

Sometimes, when the other strategies aren't working, it's best to skip the word and read on to the end of the sentence. The rest of the words can be helpful in determining the unknown word. Just remember to remind your child to return to the unknown word after skipping it.

5. Go back to the beginning and try again.

When we are struggling with too many words in a sentence or a paragraph our reading fluency is greatly impacted. All this problem solving also impedes comprehension. Try to encourage your child to go back to the beginning of a sentence, a paragraph or a page and try starting again.

6. Look at the picture for a clue.

The pictures are meant to complement the text and often can provide valuable clues to unknown words. Easy readers are purposefully designed to provide lots of text support through the illustrations.



7. Think about what word would make sense.

This is a strategy for decoding and comprehension. Thinking about the sentence, paragraph or story often provides clues to the unknown word.

8. Cover up part of the word and try again.

Covering the endings (suffixes) of words often helps young readers recognise words they may already know but don't recognise with the suffix attached.

9. Do you see a part you know?

Bigger words can be daunting. Have your child look for a part he/she already recognises in the word. For example, in the word hitting, your child might recognise the "ing" ending or the little word "it". Knowing some word parts can help you figure out the word.

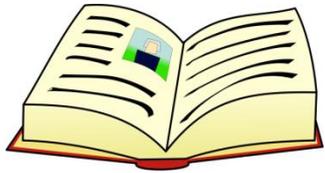


10. Does it sound right? Does it look right?

If your child mispronounces a word or says the wrong word, these two questions – '*Does it sound right? Does it look right?*' are very helpful. Thinking about what makes sense is critical in determining words and comprehension.

In-the-Book Questions

Right There Questions



The answer is in the text. The words used to make up the question and words used to answer the question are found in the same sentence.

Right There Questions

- Who _____?
- What _____?
- When _____?
- Where _____?
- What _____?
- How many _____?
- List _____

Think and Search Questions

The answer is in the text, but you need to put together different pieces of information to find it. The answer comes from different places in the text.



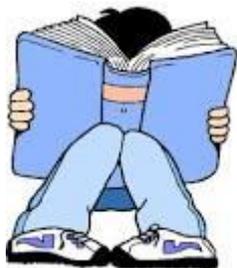
Think and Search Questions

- How do you know _____?
- How would you describe _____?
- Tell me in your own words
- What happened first, next, etc.?
- Explain why _____
- Find 2 examples _____
- Compare _____

In-My-Head Questions

Author and Me

The answer is not in the text. You need to think about what you already know, what the author tells you, and how it fits together.



Author and Me

- What do you predict will happen next? Why?
- The setting is never stated but where do you think the story is taking place?
- Why did _____?
- What if _____?
- What does the author mean when _____?
- What can you tell about _____'s feelings in this part of the text?
- Why do you think so _____



On My Own

The answer is not in the text. You can answer the question without even reading the text. The answer is based on your own experiences and knowledge.

On My Own

- Do you think _____?
- How would you _____?
- Which is better _____?
- Would you agree that _____?
- Were you ever _____?
- In your opinion _____?
- What is your favourite _____? Why?
- If you could _____

Comprehension

As children learn to read they are able to decode the text by orchestrating a range of cues. To become fluent readers they must also understand or comprehend and interpret what they read. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to be able to:

- decode what they read
- make connections between what they read and what they already know
- reflect/think deeply about what they have read

What parents can do to help at home

- Hold a conversation and discuss what your child has read. Ask your child probing questions about the book and connect the events to his or her own life. (See next two pages.) For example, say *'I wonder why that girl did that?'* or *'How do you think he felt? Why?'* and *'So, what lesson can we learn here?'*
- Help your child make connections between what he or she reads and similar experiences he has felt, saw in a movie, or read in another book.
- Help your child monitor his or her understanding. Encourage him/her to continually ask herself whether she understands what she's reading.
- Help your child go back to the text to support his or her answers.
- Discuss the meanings of unknown words, both those words he/she reads and those he/she hears.
- Read material in short sections, making sure your child understands each step of the way.

Discuss what your child has learned from reading information texts.