

## Tips for Home Reading, Helping Your Child Think and Talk About Books

1. Support your child in reading everyday at home.
2. Make reading time enjoyable through praise and encouragement.
3. Help your child to select a variety of reading material: picture books, nonfiction books, magazines, chapter books, novels, newspapers, letters, recipe books, flyers...
4. Help your child choose "just right" books to read. These are books they can read with good understanding and with good fluency, with a few difficult words occasionally. These books make your child feel strong as a reader.
5. Encourage your child to reread favorite books.
6. Listen to and enjoy your child's reading. Ask questions and become absorbed in the story they are reading.
7. Read to your child. Choose books that are beyond your child's "just right" level to help them grow as a reader (example: Harry Potter Books). Reading challenging books aloud to your child will help build their vocabulary.
8. Before reading, talk with your child about what they and you already know about the topic or what they think will happen or learn.
9. Tell your child what you think about before you read, while you read, and after you read something. Show them how you problem solve as you read. For example, when you get confused while reading you may slow down your reading or stop and reread.
10. After reading, discuss with your child their thoughts and opinions about the text.
11. Teach through example: let your child see how much you love to read and value reading by reading often.

## How Can I Help My Child Improve Their Reading Comprehension?

Parents, you can help your child with reading by reinforcing the comprehension strategies taught at school. In school, your child will learn and practice the following comprehension strategies:

**Phonics/Decoding**

**Monitor/Clarify**

**Predict/Infer**

**Question**

**Summarize**

**Evaluate**

Research has shown that good readers use these strategies flexibly while they read. The following comprehension strategies apply to beginning readers as well as more advanced readers, what changes is the level of text.

### *Phonics/Decoding*

*To learn the sounds that letters represent,  
and blend them to make words*

When your child is having trouble with a word, prompt them with:

- Reread the sentence and try a word that makes sense and starts like \_\_\_\_ (*first letter sound*).
- Get your mouth ready (say beginning sound).
- Look across the word.
- Try sounding the word out.
- What other sound could you try?
- Is there another word you know that looks like this one?
- Check for word parts (chunks) you know.
- Use analogy - "You know the word *would*, so this word is *sh + ould*."
- Do you notice any prefixes, suffixes? Take those off and find the main word.
- Look into the word and divide it into syllables.
- Think of another word that starts or ends the same way.

### **Monitor**

#### ***To be aware of when meaning is lost***

When your child makes an error that changes the meaning of the text, ask:

- Is that a real word?
- Does that match the picture?
- Does that make sense?
- Does that sound right?
- Do you understand what that means?
- Do you know what's going on in the text?
- Is there anything you don't understand?
- Can you picture that in your head?

### **Clarify**

#### ***To take steps to restore meaning***

To help your child fix an error with a word, see phonics/decoding prompts above.

To help them clarify meaning, suggest strategies such as:

- Try rereading the confusing part.
- Slow down your reading.
- Try reading on, then go back to reread.
- Reread the parts before the confusing part.
- Think back to what has happened so far.
- Think about what you know about\_\_\_\_\_.
- Sometimes it's best to ask for help.

### **Predict**

#### ***To guess what will happen or what you will learn***

Help your child learn to predict and confirm or change predictions by taking turns with:

- Before reading, guess what the text will be about, or what you will learn. Tell why you think that. "I think... because..."
- During reading, discuss whether predictions have come true or need to be changed. Tell why you think that. "Now I think... because..."
- Continue to make new predictions while reading.
- After reading, think about your original predictions and the evidence to support or disprove them. "I thought I'd learn ... but instead I learned..."

## Infer

***To understand what is not stated directly, but is implied in the text***

Help your child learn to infer by practicing the following with them:

- Ask or discuss your thinking about:
  - How characters are feeling.
  - Why characters act the way they do.
  - Possible themes
  - Ask: What do you think? How do you know?
- Look for clues about character feelings, actions, or problems in the story that are in the illustrations.
- Try to figure things that the author does not say directly. "The author didn't say... but I know that... because the clues from the text were..."
- Ask: How did the character feel? How do you know they felt that way? Have you ever felt that way?
- Discuss what you used to infer:
  - Text clues
  - Your background knowledge or experiences
- Try inferring the theme. "I infer that the theme is ... because..."
- With nonfiction text, infer the causes and effects. "I think ... will cause... because..."
- With nonfiction text, infer comparisons. "... is like ... because..."

## Question

***To inquire or examine***

Encourage and deepen students questioning skills by taking turns asking questions:

- Ask "I wonder" questions. "I wonder..." "How come..."
- Ask prediction questions. "Why is the boy on the cover crying? Maybe it is because..."
- Ask clarifying questions. "Wait, who found the treasure?" "I don't understand why..."
- Ask author questions. "Why did the author...?"
- Ask teacher type questions: Who, what, why, where, when, what if... questions. Try to avoid asking questions to check their understanding all of the time. Rather, ask questions that lead to a discussion between you and your child.
- Ask open ended questions that do not have a yes or no answer.

### **Summarize**

***To concisely obtain the essence or main point of the text***

Help your child with summarizing by:

- Practice retelling with puppets or acting out the story.
- Before reading, look at how the text is organized (especially important with nonfiction text).
- While reading, take quick notes to keep track of important events or main ideas.
- Stop occasionally to visualize or draw what has happened.
- Pause and sum up what has happened so far.
- Think about the main idea or important parts of the text. Do this section by section.
- Tell the important events or points in your own words.
- Try to retell what happened in 3-5 sentences.
- Think about what the author wants to teach you.
- What is the message or theme?

### **Evaluate**

***To form an opinion or judgment about what has been read***

Guide your child to evaluate the text and their own reading through modeling or asking the following questions:

- Is this text too easy, too hard, or just right for me?
- Did I learn what I thought I would learn? Why or why not?
- Did I like the text? Why or why not?
- What character actions do I disagree with? Why?
- Do I agree or disagree with the ideas?
- What is most important to remember at this point in my reading?
- Am I learning what I wanted to know?
- What did the author do well?
- How would I rate the author's style?