

Guide to Supporting Reading at Home



Talking about the book with your child at the end will help your child in their enjoyment and understanding of the book.

- Did you enjoy that book? Why? Why not?
- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Which part did you like the best? Why?
- Was there any part you didn't like? Why?
- Would you choose this book/story again?
- Which books are best?
- Books your child likes.
- Books suggested by your child's teacher.
- Books your child chooses from a library or bookshop that they want to read.
- Never be afraid of re-reading books.

What else can your child read?

- Comics or magazines
- Instructions or recipes
- Information books
- Newspapers
- Poems
- Recorded stories

Top Tips for Reading at Home:

Younger Children

- Talk about the book with your child before reading – you could introduce any words to them you think they will struggle with.
- Encourage your child to read a section again to make sure it makes sense and to improve the expression.
- If they are finding a book difficult, don't ask your child to sound out every word - focus on words you know that your child can decode.
- Take it in turns to read a page.
- Draw your child's attention to repeated words – encourage them to read them by sight, instead of sounding out.
- Encourage your child to talk about what they are reading as they are going along, not just at the end – can they predict, comment, explain what's happening?
- Keep reading sessions short and enjoyable – reading should never be a chore!

Older Children:

- Encourage them to ask you if they come across new words
- Periodically ask them to read aloud to you and discuss books they have read
- Encourage them to read a range of texts
- Read stories, poems and other texts aloud to your child
- Let your child see you reading for purpose and pleasure
- Visit the library / bookshops
- Reading with siblings, older and younger
- Use stories on CDs to follow
- Follow your child's interests

- Give reading a purpose - TV guide, recipes, game instructions, signs, catalogues

Helpful questions to ask children when reading:

Children's understanding of what they have read is the key to success and enjoyment of reading. It allows children to challenge ideas, collect a wider range of vocabulary and become creative writers as they use the language they have acquired to improve their writing. Below are grouped questions under different themes that you may ask your child after they have read. They are some basic question starters that will give you a starting point for the type of questions to ask your child about the book they are reading.

Literal Retrieval

- Where does the story take place?
- When did the story take place?
- Can you describe the character's appearance?
- Can you predict what the story may be about the title?
- Where do the characters live?
- Who are the main characters?
- What happened in the story?
- Can you describe the problem in the story? How would you solve it?
- Can you identify words that describe the setting or character?
- What happened after....?
- Can you tell me why....?
- Look at the picture of the character, how do you think they are feeling? Why might this be?
- Describe what happened at/when.
- What do you think will happen next?
- What did the character say to....?

Inference

- What does the word ... imply/make you think of?
- If you were going to interview/ask a character a question-who would you ask and what would your question be?
- What do you think will happen because of
- Through whose eyes is the story told?
- Why do you think ... feels...?
- If this was you, what would you do next?
- How have the characters changed during the story?
- Predict what you think is going to happen next. What makes you think this?
- How do you know that...? (Deduce/Infer)
- What does the main character feel at this point in the story? How do you know this-can you pick out a sentence?

Structure

- How do headings help you when you scan the text?
- How does the layout help the reader?
- How does the title of the story encourage you to read more?
- How does the story blurb on the back cover encourage you to read the book? What things do you now want to find out after reading the blurb?
- Some of the text is printed in a different way, why do you think the writer does this?
- Why has the author repeated structures, words and phrases?
- What is the purpose of the pictures?
- What is the purpose of a caption?
- Why did the author choose to change paragraphs here?
- Why has the author used 'fact boxes' for key points?
- What is the purpose of the chapter titles?
- Which words tell you what order to follow?

Language

- What does (word/phrase) mean?
- Which words has the author used to make the writing sound more formal/informal?
- Why has the author used ... (italics, bold, exclamation marks, headings, bullet points, captions etc.)?
- What has the author used in the text to make the characters sound funny/sad/angry?
- Think of another word you can use here. What different effect would your word have?
- As a reader, how do you feel about this character? What makes you feel that way?
- Can you find any similes/metaphors in the story?
- Find some adjectives that help you picture the scene/character in your mind.
- Find a sentence that encourages you to want to read more of the story.
- Why has the author set out the text like this?

Writer's viewpoint

- What is the writer's purpose and viewpoint of writing the story?
- Can you think of another story that has a similar theme? (good/evil/weak/strong)
- Why does the author choose this setting?
- What makes this a GOOD story?
- What effect do you think the story has on the reader?
- Could the story be better? What would you suggest?
- What impression does the author want to give of this character? Why?
- What is the purpose of this paragraph? (e.g. time moves on)
- What question would you like to ask the writer of the story?
- Who is this advert trying to persuade?
- Would you solve the problem in the story in a different way?
- Do you think.....was right to?
- Does the article/story try to get you to care about anything? What can you tell about what the author thinks?

The Wider World

- Do you know any other stories like this? (good over evil, wise over foolish)
- Where is the story set?
- How is the hero/heroine of this story similar to others you have read about?
- What does the story remind you of?
- Does the story remind you of something that has happened to you?
- How would you have felt in that situation?
- What might you have done instead?
- What other stories have similar openings/endings to this one?
- Many stories have messages, what is the message of this story?
- Are there any familiar patterns that you notice? E.g. story structure, imagery.
- Does the story make you want to find out anything else aboutthe history, cultural, social area being discussed?

My child won't read, no matter what I do. How can I help?

- Read to your child as much as possible.
- Don't make an issue out of it.
- Talk to your child's class teacher - working together will help.

Websites to help the development of reading at home & school:

- Oxford Owl Press <http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk>
- Wordsforlife.org.uk <http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/>
- Booktrust www.booktrust.org.uk
- Reading Rockets <http://www.readingrockets.org/>