



## Helping Your Child with Reading



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# A guide to hearing your child read

We value the support you can give your child at home and would like to suggest the following ideas to make it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for you both.

1. Keep it short - 10/15 minutes every day is better than a long period once a week; the best time to read will depend on individual children and when they feel fresher.
2. Do not force a child to read but do take advantage of times when they are keen to read.
3. You will need somewhere quiet and comfortable; try and make reading a special time together without distractions such as the TV.
4. Before beginning to read discuss the story so far, look at the front cover/book blurb on the back or talk about why they chose the book.
5. Make sure your child starts reading at a suitable place e.g. at the beginning of a chapter, paragraph or sentence.
6. Listen carefully when your child is reading.
7. Keep it happy and give plenty of praise.

Fluency is important if your child is to understand what is being read.

You can help develop their fluency by:

- telling your child an unknown word if you feel it would be too distracting to stop and work it out,
  - reading or re-reading a section of the book to them to help them improve their understanding,
  - not correcting the child continually if mistakes don't change the meaning of the text.
8. Pause - prompt - praise is useful to remember. If your child stops at a word, let them think for 5 seconds and then suggest various ways of working it out e.g.
    - picture cues
    - initial letter sounds
    - reading on and then guessing the word from the context

You do not need to use all of these ways for every word, only the ones you feel would be most helpful.

The most important thing is that you praise the child when a sensible attempt is made, or the word is correct.

9. Talk about the book with your child and ask questions which focus on the character, the plot, what might happen next, what facts they have found out etc (see p8-11 for further questions)
10. If you or your child become irritated or frustrated, finish the session quickly without damaging your child's confidence.
11. Try to give some feedback to the class teacher by making a comment in the Reading Record Book, which you have discussed with your child.

*Always try and finish with a positive comment so it remains a pleasurable and enjoyable activity for both of you.*

## Guidelines to be used with the Reading Record Book

Please try to read with your child as often as possible, ideally 15 minutes daily. Please date, sign and make a comment so that we know your child has read to someone at home.

Here are some suggestions for comments you could write about when reading with your child e.g. the **strategies** they may use for actually **reading the text**, their **accuracy, fluency, expression and understanding** (also see 'Reading for Meaning' p8 and 'Questions to help develop reading further' p10). However please don't feel you need to write in great detail; only comment on things you feel would be helpful to the class teacher. Also please comment on things your child found more difficult as well as the things they could do.

### **Strategies used to read the text**

1. Picture cues  
Encourage your child to look at the pictures in the book and talk about them before you actually start reading (ask questions, predict what the story might be about etc). A picture can provide a useful clue when the child cannot read a word, so encourage them to use the picture to work things out for themselves.
2. Phonic cues (see 'Extra Guidelines for Phonic Cues' p6)  
A written word is made up of letters/letters groups and a spoken word is made up of the different sounds of these groups blended together. A child learns how words are made up of these smaller units. Once a child has acquired this information, they are able to de-code new words.

3. Context cues

A child can often make an intelligent guess at a word if he/she knows the words around it. For example, if they can read "Mummy got on the bus at the bus .....", they can make a fairly inspired guess that the unknown word may be 'stop'.

4. Reading on

Encourage your child to read on to the end of the sentence missing out the unknown word. They will then be reading for meaning and will come back making an intelligent guess at the word.

5. Reading back

Go back, look where the word has appeared before. Point out familiar words that might form part of the new word or a word which might rhyme with it. Make a mental note of any words that need going back over later on. Point at words at random and ask your child to read them; include plenty of easier ones to build their confidence.

**Accuracy - Self correcting**

Having used a cue wrongly your child might come back to the word and correct themselves, especially if they realise the sentence doesn't make sense. Don't correct immediately and give your child the opportunity to go back and correct themselves first.

A secure child can take risks and does not worry about making mistakes. Mistakes often provide a useful insight into how your child's mind is working.

**Fluency and Expression**

Your child may concentrate so hard on the individual words that their reading lacks expression or is jerky. To help them, read aloud to them from the book to model the flow of the words (fluency), how you breath when reading a sentence and pay attention to punctuation (expression). Also encourage your child to read the book several times to become more familiar with the text. Scanning the text first before reading aloud can also help.

**Understanding** (for further help see 'Reading for Meaning' p8)

To check their understanding ask them questions about the characters/ feelings, predictions about endings, describe and order events etc.

# Extra Guidelines for Phonic Cues

*"The giraffe looked at the gorilla."*

When you read this sentence, the animal names look similar but sound quite different. The words are same in shape and length. Your child will have to look at the letter sounds to read the word.

Say a, b, c, d, e aloud.

Did you say 'ay', 'bee', 'see', 'dee', 'ee'?

If so, you were saying the names of the letters.

Or did you say 'a', 'buh', 'cuh', 'duh', 'e'?

In this case, you were saying the **sounds** of the letters.

The sounds of the letters are the building blocks of words. Think of the word 'dog'. If you spell it out using the names of the letters, you say 'dee', 'oh', 'jee' but this doesn't help to read the word. However if you say 'duh', 'o', 'guh', you are saying the sounds of the letters and you're on the way to reading it.

The following list will help you check you are saying the sounds correctly. Say the words pausing after each first letter. The sound you make before the pause is the sound of the initial letter. Try to whisper when modelling the sounds to your child and keep the sounds short.

a a-pple	j j-elly	s s-un
b b-lack	k k-ing	t t-en
c c-at	l l-ip	u u-p
d d-og	m m-an	v v-an
e e-gg	n n-ut	w w-et
f f-at	o o-n	x look at endings
g g-o	p p-ad	e.g. bo-x
h h-op	q qu-een	y y-es
i i-ll	r r-abbit	z z-oo

The children will also learn:

- many of the sounds at the end of words.

ck luck  
ff huff  
ll fill  
ss boss  
zz buzz

- graphemes (groups of letters making 1 sound) e.g.

ch chip

sh shot  
 th that  
 th thin  
 ng ring  
 wh whip  
 ph dolphin

ai <u>paid</u>	ee <u>seem</u>	igh <u>light</u>	oa <u>boat</u>
ay <u>tray</u>	ea <u>read</u>	ie <u>pie</u>	oe <u>toe</u>
oo <u>food</u>	or <u>torn</u>	er <u>fern</u>	oi <u>coin</u>
oo <u>cook</u>	aw <u>lawn</u>	ur <u>burn</u>	oy <u>toy</u>
ue <u>due</u>	au <u>taught</u>	ir <u>bird</u>	
ew <u>chew</u>			
ear <u>hear</u>	air <u>chair</u>	ou <u>shout</u>	ure <u>cure</u>
ere <u>here</u>	are <u>hare</u>	ow <u>shower</u>	ar <u>park</u>

- some letters are not next to each other but still make only 1 sound - sometimes known as split graphemes.

a-e skate	e-e these	i-e time	o-e bone	u-e tune
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# Reading for Meaning

There are two parts to reading - word recognition (the actual reading of the text) and reading for meaning (understanding what the text is all about).

Reading for meaning is what will help your child develop as a reader, whilst continuing to use strategies when reading unknown words.

Here are some activities that will encourage and reinforce reading for meaning:

1. Read a variety of texts where meaning is very important for the reader, e.g. newspaper, sports results, letters, magazines, internet pages, recipes, instructions for games etc.
2. Ask questions on the text before reading in order to focus attention on finding information out (see p9).
3. Ask questions after reading, probing a) facts b) inferred or implied information c) 'Why' questions (see p9).
4. Flick through the book first so you can spot good places to stop and talk about what has been read/what will happen next etc.
5. Cloze procedure - pieces of the text where words are covered up/missing. This helps prediction skills based on making the text make sense.
6. Sequencing - chop up a copy page of the book so that it can be re-assembled in the correct order.
7. Write some 'True/False' statements based on the text.
8. Swap roles - can your child spot your **deliberate** mistakes?

## **General basic questions before reading the text:**

- What do you think this book is about or is going to happen? Why?
- Where would you look to get a general idea about this book? (e.g. contents, index, blurb etc)
- Why did you choose the book? What made you pick it?
- Who wrote/illustrated it?

## **Basic questions after reading a fiction text**

### **a) Personal response questions**

- Which part of the story did you like the best and why?

- What was the most exciting/strangest/funniest/ saddest part of the story?
- Did you predict the ending? Did anything in the story surprise you?
- How did you feel while reading the story? Why?
- What makes this a successful story?

b) Character questions

- Which character did you like/dislike? Why?
- Did you change your opinion about any characters during the story?
- Choose a character - How would you describe them? Use details in the text as well as the illustrations.
- What would you ask the characters?

**Basic questions after reading a non-fiction text**

- How helpful was the contents/glossary page?
- Tell me one piece of new information you have learnt.
- Any questions not answered by the book?
- Can you put some of this information into your own words or a different form (e.g. diagram, chart etc)?

# Questions to help develop reading further

Here are some generic questions you could ask to help your child develop their understanding further whilst you are reading together.

## **Questions to help a reader understand, describe, retrieve events/ ideas from texts and refer to the text to help them**

- Where and when did it take place?
- Where did he/she live?
- What did he/she look like?
- Describe what happened at .....
- Who spoke to.... and what did they say?

## **Questions to help deduce, infer or interpret information/events/ ideas**

- How did a character feel when..?
- Why did the character act in that way?
- What was the character thinking when...? How do you know? Try and support your ideas with actual words from the text.
- What does this conversation tell you about the character?
- If this was you, how would you or your friends react?
- Can you predict what might happen next? Why?
- If .....has happened, what might the ending have been?

## **Questions to help identify and comment on the structure and organisation of the texts**

- What's the difference between the index and the contents?
- Where could you find out about.....?
- How do the headings help you when you scan a text?
- Give two ways that this text is written like a diary, report etc
- What is the most important point of the paragraph/section?
- Why has the author repeated the phrase.....?

## **Questions to help explain and comment on the writers' use of language**

- What does this word/phrase mean?
- Which words tell you that the author is describing .....
- Discuss use of italics, exclamation marks, words in capitals etc.
- How is a certain character described? How does that make you feel about him/her?
- What has the author used in the text to make the character funny/sad/angry etc?
- Why has the author used lots of questions in this information text?

**Questions to help identify and comment on the writer's purpose and viewpoint, and the overall effect of the text on the reader.**

- Who is telling the story? How do you know?
- Why did the author write from that characters point of view?
- What do you think the writer's opinion is? How do you know?
- What does the author want to persuade you to think?
- Why did the author choose this setting?
- Discuss facts and opinion in the text.

**Questions to help relate texts to social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions.**

- Can you think of another story where good triumphs over evil?
- What type of writing is this?
- When is this book set? What clues in the text tell you this?
- Discuss historic events whn reading something with an historical setting.
- How is the book similar to other books you have read? (possibly by the same author)

# Further Reading Activities

Here are some activities you could try to vary reading time at home.

## a) Drawing

- Create your own illustrations/draw one of the characters.
- Design an alternative front cover.
- Draw a map of the location(s) within the story.

## b) Become the author

- Turn part of the story into a play/write an alternative ending.
- Extend the story - what would happen in the next chapter?
- Write the story from another characters' point of view e.g. the Big Bad Wolf in Little Red Riding Hood.

## c) Summarising

- Write your own book blurb for the back cover.
- Tell the story as a series of cartoon pictures.
- Make a storyboard (the author may have done this when planning the story) - identify the main events in the story.
- Can you tell the story in 6 sentences/100 words etc?

## d) Non-fiction

- Write down 3 new facts you have learnt from the text.
- Practise using the index/contents pages to find information.
- Make your own quiz based on the information.
- Make your own glossary/dictionary based on new words.

## e) Other ideas

- Find other books by the same author or in the same series.
- Revisit old favourites.
- Listen to taped stories - use your imagination to create the pictures.
- When reading aloud, develop voices for particular characters.

## Other ways to help your child

1. Act as a good role model - let your child see you reading for pleasure or for a purpose.
2. Read a wide variety of texts - letters, recipes, instructions, plays, atlases, crossword clues, information books, comics, encyclopaedia, information on websites etc.
3. Take your child to the Library (School and your local one) and choose books together.
4. Continue to read aloud to your child.
5. Even when your child can read fluently, it is still important to hear them read aloud to develop:
  - their use of expression
  - an awareness of a range of punctuation
  - the use of an appropriate pace
6. Children of all ages enjoy picture books, which can tell some very complex stories. Please don't consider them to be too easy; instead make the most of them. Pictures help develop imagination and can be a great starting point when talking about books - your child could tell or write their own story to go with the pictures.
7. Please remember that children develop at different rates and try not to make comparisons with other children/siblings.
8. If at any time you are concerned about your child's progress, please discuss it with the class teacher. Try not to let your child see that you are worried as this can cause anxiety.

## Further information

The school Library has a wide range of different authors, genres and subject matter. The non-fiction part of the Library is also growing rapidly.

The School now uses Junior Librarian.net. This is an online catalogue of all the School's library books and also contains research links to websites.

This can also be accessed via the internet at home.

The link is <https://u016203/microlibrarian.net>

Visit [www.lovereading4kids.co.uk](http://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk) for great suggestions of authors and books that would be appropriate for/interest your child. It also features 'Top 10 Books', 'Author of the Month', 'Books of the Month', 'Books for Reluctant Readers' and many more categories, giving you the opportunity to read extracts of the books to help to choose. You do need to register with the website but registration is free and quick to do.