

Supporting children with reading comprehension

What children can do to help themselves:

- Read stories or passages in short sections and make sure you know what happened before you continue reading.
- Ask yourself, "Does this make sense?" If it doesn't, reread the part that didn't make sense.
- Read with a buddy. Stop every page or so and take turns summarizing what you've read.
- Ask a parent or teacher to preview a book with you before you read it on your own.
- As you read, try to form mental pictures or images that match the story.
- Use outlines, maps, and notes when you read.
- Make flash cards of key terms you might want to remember.

What parents can do to help at home:

- Have 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. 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. Teach 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 he reads and those he hears.
- Read material in short sections, making sure your child understands each step of the way.
- Discuss what your child has learned from reading informational text such as a science or social studies book.

Pre-reading activities – before opening the book...

- Discuss the topic of the book with your child. What do we already know about this topic?
- Explore the cover and title. What clues do the cover picture and title give us about the book?
- Predict what may happen in the story. Change the prediction as you read through the story.

During reading...

- Ask your child to visualise what they are reading. Like a movie, our brain creates a picture/video of what is happening. Ask them to imagine what they can see, smell, feel, hear. (E.g. When reading about Cinderella... In my cinema I can see a tired girl in tattered clothes, who smells like smoke because she sleeps by the fireplace.)
- Help your child to make connections when reading. This will help him/her to relate to the text. This reminds me of _____ (a book, a movie, the time that we went to, etc.)

After reading...

- Discuss what your child has read.
- Ask your child different levels of questions
 1. Naming: *what are they doing?*
 2. Describing: *What is happening?*
 3. Retelling/ Sequencing: *What happened first/ last? What do you think would happen next?*
 4. Reasoning: *What will happen if...? What could you do when...? Why can't we...? What would you do if...? How do you know...?*