

Reading Strategies

3rd-5th
Grade

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Why is Reading so Important at home?

- Parents are critical to children's early literacy (The Literacy Challenge, Fall, 2012).
- One major difference between children likely to become good readers and those likely to struggle is vocabulary knowledge (The Literacy Challenge, Fall, 2012).
- Globalization and technological advances have changed the nature of the workplace [requiring more advanced literacy skills] (Writing to Read, 2010).
- Strong readers think actively as they read. They use their experiences and knowledge of the world, vocabulary, language structure, and reading strategies to make sense of the text (Moss, B. Reading Rockets, 2016).

Making the Most of Reading Time with Your Child



Research by Richard Allington shows that the more students read, the better reader they become. A strategy is a plan chosen by the reader to help them comprehend what they are reading and thinking about

the texts. The goal is for students to be able to select and use a strategy automatically and independently. The strategies that will help your child are listed on the left in the table of contents. This pamphlet will assist you in defining what a strategy is and how to ask critical thinking questions. Access to bookmarks that will focus your child's strategy use are included.

Although reading strategies should realistically be used in combination or selected from a bank that the student chooses, your child may struggle to select which strategy is the best.

You can assist them by using this newsletter and the bookmarks to help them be familiar with each.

There are a couple of sites which list books that could be used with each strategy. [The Mentor Books](#) site is great for suggested books and ideas to use with each particular strategy. Visit the [The Corwin Press](#) site for quality book suggestions that align with the Standards.

Even though specific books lend themselves easily to working with a particular strategy, the most important thing is spending time together reading in a positive manner.

Helping Your Child Choose the Right Books

Today, we know students need to read from many different genres including informational trade books, newspapers, magazines, online resources, primary source documents, plays, poems, graphical texts, and biographies. Most experts recommend that classroom libraries include 50% literary texts and 50% informational texts. Every independent reading book a student selects does not need to be easy. When students pick harder books

that can stretch their thinking, they may need additional adult support to ensure success.

We also know that even 10 minutes of talk around texts can enhance achievement (Nystrand, 2006). Conversations can contribute to critical thinking and comprehension. Talk about everyday activities to build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension.

Some other tips are:

- **Make books special:** get a library card and visit regularly or give books as gifts.
- **Get them to read another one:** use book series to encourage this.
- **Play word games:** use time in the car or on errands to find words that sound the same but have different meanings. Board games are fun too!
- **Allow your student to choose the book.**

Noticing

As an adult reader, there are many things you may notice when reading because it has become automatic. Supporting your child by pointing out exactly what they should notice in a text is very valuable. Certain ideas that your child should “see” when they are reading stories are:

- ◇ The characters names and what they care about
- ◇ The setting or where the story is

Predicting



Good readers use information from a text (including titles, headings, pictures, and

diagrams) and their own personal experiences to anticipate what they are about to read(or what comes next). Children can usually grasp

- taking place.
- ◇ Memorable words that they may want to use in their writing.
- ◇ The turning point
- ◇ The way the author hooks you into reading the story
- ◇ How the author made the book memorable
- ◇ Any pictures that add to meaning

predicting easily if they’ve had any experience with weather forecasts. Scientists use data and evidence to make a prediction about what the coming weather will be.

To help make a prediction based on evidence, students can make predictions or answer questions about the text.

- ◇ Based on the cover and illustrations, what is the purpose?

For informational text, your child should notice:

- ◇ Any special features such as graphs, charts, or bold words
- ◇ How the text is organized
- ◇ Names of people and dates if important to the meaning
- ◇ Titles, subtitles, and topic sentences.



Wondering/Questioning

Periodically, your student should stop during the reading to ask and answer some questions.

- ◇ What will happen next?
- ◇ How will this end?
- ◇ What does the author want me to learn?
- ◇ Why did the author include some of these parts?

Other questions that can be asked of your child are about the words that (s)he may come across.

- ◇ Are there any words that seem important? Why?
- ◇ Is there any figurative language? (example: green thumb). Have your child look at pictures and determine what the word really means.
- ◇ What senses does the author want us to use after reading certain words?

Encourage your child to stop and ask questions as well. For example,



- ◇ Why would the author write this story?
- ◇ How does a certain character feel? How do you know?
- ◇ What do you already know about this topic? What new things did you learn?

Summarizing

Summarizing is different than just retelling the main points. Students should be able to answer the question “what is the big idea the author wants me to understand?”

Other ideas for your child to think about are:

- ◇ Can your child summarize the main parts of the story using who, what where and when?

- ◇ What is the problem in the story or details in an informational text?
- ◇ What does the author say about where the story is taking place?
- ◇ What do the characters’ actions in the story tell you about the character?
- ◇ How did the author get you hooked on the story?
- ◇ How was the story organized?



Ensure your child looks at the illustrations or captions, graphs, charts and table of contents to support their thinking.

Picturing



Visualization or picturing occurs when a child makes a vivid picture in their head about the text. Readers create images in their mind that reflect or represent the ideas in the text. Generally, this aids understanding by allowing the child to put themselves in

the character's shoes or become part of an informational text. The author will use words to make a picture in the mind.

Ask your child:

- ◇ Where in the story does that author want me to make a picture in my head?
- ◇ What words give me a clue that I should make a movie or picture in my mind?
- ◇ What senses does the author want me to use?

- ◇ How will a mental image help me understand the text better?
- ◇ Use the pictures from the text and are there any details the author didn't include that could be added?

A suggestion is to read a story and not share the pictures from the book so your child can tell you what it looks like from the words the author used. Your child may even wish to draw their own pictures from what the author said.

Figuring Out/Inferring/Synthesis

Synthesis by definition is the combination of ideas to form a theory. What this means is that your child may need to see several books on the same subject to arrive at their own understanding about a subject. For example, if your student is studying the forest, it would be helpful to have them look at many books on the topic such as animals and plants that lives in the woods. This then allows for the child to form their own opinion on how do the animals and plants rely on one another to survive.

Of all strategy instruction, inferring offers the largest challenge. A child must use what they already know, along with picture or text clues, and apply it to a situation or character. For example, in a story Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter, it can be read that Peter runs off to MacGregor's garden

and overeats the farmer's vegetables. He comes home and becomes very sick. The story never states that the mother knew where Peter was but it can be inferred that she knew Peter was not behaving. The child should look at how the mother reacted in the story and use their own knowledge to arrive at that conclusion.

To catch the reader's attention, the author will sometimes begin with a question.

Sometimes authors will lead their stories or articles with a question to catch the reader's attention. Going back to these questions allows for a



child to use the information in the text and answer what they learned. It allows them to figure out the author's purpose. Ideas to use are:

- While your child reads, infer how the problem gets solved, why the author wrote the text, and theme or message learned.
- How are the ideas in one text the same or different than another text on the same topic?
- Add up the clues to figure out how all the pieces fit together (works well for mysteries).

Connecting



Your child should tell you what they already know about a topic and ask them how

that knowledge will help them understand the text they are currently reading with you. After making a connection, ask your child what kind of reaction they have to the text?

Other Ideas to use to help your child understand connecting are to consider the following:

- This reminds me of . . . (another book, a similar experience).
- Since I already know about _____, it helps me understand ...
- How does the author want you to feel after reading this?
- What is the lesson of the book? When has that lesson been important to you?

- What is the big idea of the text and how can you connect to it?
- What surprised or disappointed you and why?
- What could have been changed to improve the book?

Your student should think about what has been learned in class and tell you how the book you're reading connects. Ask your student for vocabulary words they are studying and find any that match or connect in the text.

Talking Points That Align to the Standards

As content gets more difficult, it is important your child get the right support at home. Below are questions that you can ask your child as they are reading either assigned texts by the teacher or independent reading that your child has chosen:

Standards 1-3: These standards allow you to check in with your child about what they are reading and if they understand **what the text is about**.



- What do you know now that you didn't know before?
- Can you tell why this is a good title for the book? Why?
- What do you think are the most important details and why?
- How does the setting help you understand the problem?
- What does the author want you to learn from the text? Is there a message or lesson?
- How are the characters interacting with one another? Or how is a character feeling? How can you tell?
- How does one event lead to another?
- What has surprised you so far?



Standards 4-6: These standards are more about **how the author is saying or crafting their text**. How is it delivered? Not only should your child look at the words but the features such as bold words, graphs, charts, or if the book is written in a different format such as a letter, newspaper article, etc.

- What words are you struggling with? How can you decide what they mean?
- Are there sentences that use figurative language (ie., a green thumb, or the cat's meow) Why did the author use it?
- What are the important words (maybe not the hardest words) in the text?
- If reading poetry, look at sections or stanzas. How do the stanzas connect?
- What words are used from the author that grab your attention at the beginning of the book?
- When reading myths, legends, or fables, ask what side of the story or point of view are you getting? Look for different versions and see if there are different views.
- Are there any words that have more than one meaning?
- Look for nonfiction books that present the opposite views on the same topic. How are they different and what do you think?

Standards 7-9: These standards beg the reader to understand **why is the author choosing to say this**. Children are no longer concerned about just print on the page but have to see texts as videos, Internet sites, illustrations and photographs, and even speeches.



- If there are images in the text, how do they grab your attention and give meaning to the text?
- What information connects from one text to the other we are reading? How do you know/
- If reading nonfiction, and photographs are present, what ideas do you have about it and what you just read?
- Compare two or three texts that you are reading together about the same topic and ask what is alike/different?
- Is the topic being presented fairly, why or why not?
- Do you have new ideas or thoughts after reading the text(s)?
- If there are two different viewpoints that you are reading, is there evidence that supports each viewpoint? What is it?
- What purpose was there to write the text being read?

Noticing: *Good readers are observers.*



- In the text, what details are important to the meaning?
- What details support **what** the author has written?
- What details support **how** the author wrote the text?

Predicting: *Good readers make guesses about the text.*



- Think about the characters, setting, the problem and make a guess at what might come next.
- Does the author build suspense? How do you know?
- Are there consequences of an event (Informational)?

Wondering/Questioning:



- What did you think about when reading? How is that important to understanding the text?
- Besides the main problem, what other things would the author want you to wonder about? How can you tell?

Summarizing: *Good readers retell the main points in their own words.*



- Can you put the important points together to tell the story or text you have read?
- What details are important?

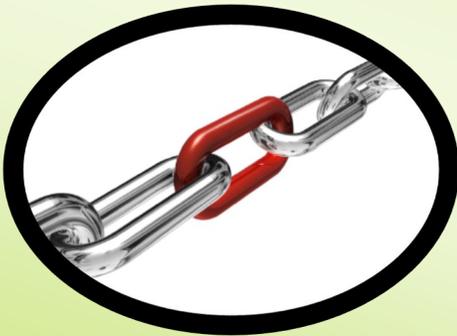


Picturing/Visualizing: *Good readers make a movie or picture in their mind.*

- What words or clues did the author use to help make a picture in your mind?



**Figuring Out/
Inferring/Synthesis:**



Connecting: *Good readers connect to ideas and other books.*

- What is the main idea or message and how will it help you make choices in the future?
- What other books are like the one you are reading? How?