



Reading Strategies

Making the Most of Reading 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 think deeply 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 right in the table of contents. This pamphlet will assist you in defining what a strategy is, how to ask critical thinking questions, and give you access to bookmarks that will focus your child's strategy use.

Although reading strategies should realistically be used in combination or selected from a bank that the student chooses, young children 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.

When working with your child, choosing a book that has particular patterns that support a strategy can

help your child become a strong reader. This allows your student to practice a strategy either in isolation or build on what may have learned at school.

There are a couple of sites which list books that could be used with each strategy. Visit the [Reading Mentor Text](#) site for quality book suggestions or [Reading Rockets](#) for suggested books and ideas for use.

Even though specific books lend themselves easily to working with a particular strategy, the most important thing is allowing your child to enjoy reading and the time spent together.

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Helping Your Child Choose the RIGHT Book

Many teachers give students a five finger rule when seeking out books for independent reading time. This can be very helpful at home as well. When your child chooses a book, avoid telling them it's too hard or too easy. Ask them to hold

up their hand and read from any page in the book. If they make a mistake, one finger goes down. 0-1 finger after reading means

the book can be practiced with ease. 2-3 fingers down means the book is a bit challenging but will help your child grow as a reader.

4-5 fingers down means the book may frustrate your child and can be saved for a later time or you to read the book aloud to your student. Set goals and make the reading time fun!



Retelling

When children hear a book or read it for themselves, it is important that they can tell a parent, another child, or even a stuffed animal, the basic points about the book. A couple great questions to ask are

- What is the author telling you?
- What are the main points? Your child should use who, what, where, when, and how to retell

Learning how to retell a story helps your child grow as readers and thinkers. Have your child retell the beginning, middle and end. Have a child organize their thoughts in this

Background Knowledge

Building background knowledge is a strategy that allows a child to use their personal experiences to help them draw conclusions and understand the text. Better. For



example, if learning about their five senses, ask what body part helps them see, hear, feel or smell. The more exposure to different topics

Visualizing

Visualization 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 putting themselves in the character's shoes or being a part of an informational text's setting. The author will use words to make a picture in the mind. For example, in the book by Cynthia Rylant titled *The Country at Night* offers opportunities

framework and most will easily be able to describe the characters and setting at the beginning. Then, the student should discuss what problem may have occurred and who had the problem (middle). Finally, ask them how was the problem solved (ending)?

If you or your child are reading an informational book with facts, the same idea of retelling beginning, middle and end can be applied. Ask what information is shared in the book (beginning), list some facts that are shared (middle) and what important words should be remembered (end).

also allows students to gain valuable vocabulary development because the more you know about a topic, the easier it is to read a text, understand it, and remember the information.

When helping your child work with this strategy, ask questions before reading the text:

- What do they already know about the cover,
- Who makes the pictures, and
- How is this book written? (informational or fiction).

for students to create an image about night life in the country.

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. The student might also draw their own version. *Snowmen at Night* by Caralyn Buehner is a suggested book for this activity.

Asking your child for specific points in the book where the author uses words to create an image also

Some books that are great to use with retelling are:

- Eric Carle's *The Hungry Caterpillar*,
- Jan Brett's *The Mitten*,
- Laura Joffe Numeroff's *If You Give a Mouse A Cookie*, or
- Collard Sneed's *Animal Dazzlers: The Role of Brilliant Colors in Nature*



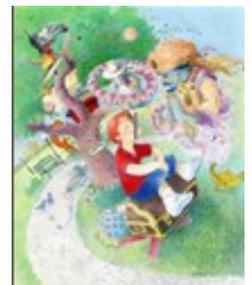
It is important NOT to give away all of the ideas about the book when building background knowledge. It is more about just giving a few hints and clues so a child can connect to something they already know.

Great books to use for this strategy are informational texts like:

- Nick Bishop's *Frogs* or
- *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remark -able Friendship* by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Dr. Paula Kahumbu.

supports this strategy. A suggested book for this activity is *The Woods* by Paul Hoppe.

Finally, use a picture book with few words and ask the child to describe a picture using their own words to create the mental image. A suggested book is *The Lion and The Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney.



Summarizing



Summarizing is different than just retelling the main points. Students should be able to answer the question "what does the

author want me to understand?" This is when a child should be able to understand who is narrating or telling the story,

Another idea for a child to think about is what does the author say about where the story is taking place? And what do the characters' actions in the story teach them?

Asking a child what they were to learn from the story, such as being a good friend helps in understanding theme. If there is a question at the beginning of a text, which informational writers frequently do, can the child answer it after reading?

Some books that help with summarizing are:

- *Story Boy* by Paul Owen Lewis,
- *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett and
- *The Story of Jumping Mouse* by John Steptoe.

Using non-fiction text is a great way to support reading in the content of science or social studies. Your child should self select a topic they would like to learn about and then after reading aloud to them or with them, (s)he should summarize the most important information. Ask your child "what is the important information the author is trying to teach?"

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

Predicting

Predicting is a rather easy strategy to grasp. We want students to make a guess at what the book is about based on the cover's illustrations or pictures. Ask your child if there is an important word in the title and what is on the cover that could connect the text and the title. Make predictions based on evidence from the cover.

For example, the text *The Emperor's Egg* by Martin Jenkins has a drawing

of a baby penguin under a furry belly with bird feet. After reading the title and looking at the illustration, ask your child what words in the title and what about the illustration gives them a clue as to what the book might be about.

Another idea to try with children is to have them look for other words in the text that lead your child to make a prediction. This is easily done with

pattern books such as Eric Carle's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. Ask your child what animal comes next based on the clue from each page? Use the evidence from the text to support the prediction.



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. For example, let's say their classroom is studying animal habitats and your child wants to read a book about

forests. 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 forest text. Ideas to use to help your child understand connecting are:

- This reminds me of . . .
- This helps me understand what I am reading because I am connecting it to . . .
- Since I already know about ____ ,

that is going to help me understand ...

Some books that lend themselves to topics your child may be studying are

- *Sisters and Brothers: Sibling Relationships in the Animal World* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page.
- A friendship book with a subtle anti-bullying message is *Stick and Stone* by Beth Ferry.
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst.

Asking Questions



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?
- What senses does the author want us to use after reading certain words?

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 the picture and determine what the word really means.

Books that support this are *The King Who Rained* and *Chocolate Moose for*

Dinner by Fred Gwynne. Also, *Parts* by Arnold Lobel and *Birds of a Feather: A Book of Idioms and Silly Pictures* by Vanita Oelschlager.

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

- Why would the author write this story?
- What does the author want me to learn?
- How does a certain character feel? How do you know?

Inferring



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, the bookmark shows an example of a cat licking her paw. Milk is spilled on the

floor. The caption doesn't explain that the cat spilled the milk but your child could make an "educated guess" based on the clues and that (s)he knows that most cats like milk.

Many times, the parent, as the adult reader, will catch the opportunities where a student could try to infer. Inferences are not spelled out in a text with ease. A book that lends itself to inferring is *Miss Nelson is Missing* by Harold G. Allard. The students in this book about poor

classroom behavior have no idea where their teacher went but at the end, picture clues give away that the sub was really Miss Nelson!

Finally, asking your child what is the lesson in the story or what kind of "person" is the character really helps with inferring. Your child must show you what picture or what thoughts prove it such as in the book *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by John Scieszka.

The Dos and Don'ts of Reading with Your Child

What to Do To Promote Reading

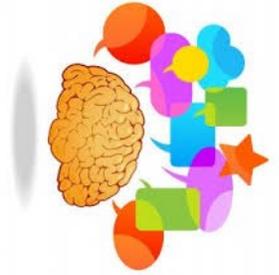
- Take trips to the library or a popular book store so that your child has an opportunity to see a variety of books at their leisure. Library time at school can be rushed.
- Make connections with things the child already knows about by asking a student to point to the author, illustrator, and title. Find key words in the title and discuss how the information in the book supports title.
- Encourage your child to discuss how a character was good/bad, make a different ending, or look at other books about the same topic and compare them.
- Warming up to reading is done by practicing some sight words that your child may be studying at school.

What Hinders Good Reading Habits

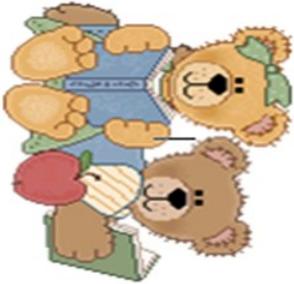
- Do not force reading time with your child. It will set up a resistance between the child and parent and reading time should be FUN!
- Don't give away the whole book or ask what they think the book will be about (unless using evidence from cover). This causes a student to make up something on the spot or creates boredom because the ideas in the book were already given away.
- Resist the urge to show a movie about the book until after the book is read and then discuss the differences.
- Some schools require an allotted time to read and can even reward for this. Encourage your student to enjoy reading for the sake of learning.



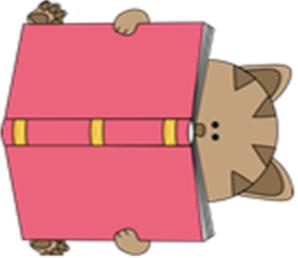
Good Readers **Visualize** by forming pictures in their minds as they read



Good Readers use what they already know about a topic to help understand it. This is **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**



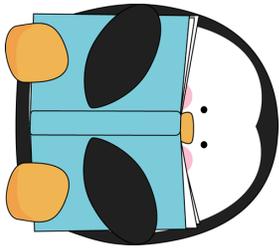
Readers **Retell** the most important events by using correct time order and the clue words: **first, next, then, and last**



Good readers **Summarize** by retelling the most important information about the character or plot.

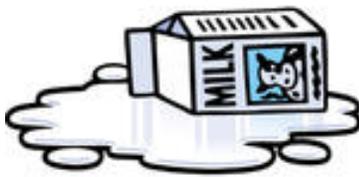


Good readers help themselves understand a story by making **Connections** between the text and things they already know about.



Good readers **PREDICT** by stopping and thinking about what might happen or come next.

Good readers **Infer** by using story & picture clues and what they already know to figure out a situation or character's feelings.



The milk was dripping all over the floor.
The cat was in the corner licking her paws.
What do you think happened?



Good readers **ASK QUESTIONS** about why things happened and how the book was made. They wonder about why the author wrote it and how new endings could be made.