

Understanding, connecting, engaging and responding to texts

Being able to read the words, does not necessarily mean that your child understands what they have read. S/he might sound like a fluent reader which can make you believe that they are a 'good' reader.

The only way to judge how much your child understands is to talk about the book and ask questions that make him/her think.

- What do you think this story/book will be about?
- I wonder what will happen next. What do you think?
- Does this remind you of anything/a place that you have been to/a feeling?
- What is happening here?
- How do you think this character feels?
- What do you think s/he should do?
- What would you do?
- Why do you think the character has done/said that?
- Where might we find information about . . . ?
- What do you already know about?
- Does this remind you of any other stories that you have read?
- What were the main events in this story?
- What happened at the beginning, middle, in the end?
- What does this word mean? How can we find out?
- Do you like these words? Why? How do they make you feel? Why do you think the author has used them?
- How do you think the author feel about this character/situation/subject?
- Did you like the story/book? Why? Why not?
- Which five words would you choose to describe this character and why?
- If you could ask the character three questions what would they be?
- Do you think this character is good or bad? Why?
- What was the best bit?

Useful Web Addresses

www.rif.org/parents

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

www.topmarks.co.uk/parents/readingtips

www.kidsource.com

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies

www.storiesfromtheweb.org



A guide to helping your child with reading

The Power of Reading

- Creating a love of reading in children is one of the most powerful ways of improving academic standards in school.
- A reading family is a learning and thinking family.
- There can be few better ways to improve pupils' chances in school, or beyond in the wider world than to enable them to become truly independent readers.
- Reading is all about acquiring meaning; i.e. for enjoyment, information and understanding.
- It is not a performance.
- It is not a test - every time you finish a book, do you always choose a harder one next time?

Reading at Home - Enjoy!

- Reading is taught and practised in school. Home is also a great place to practise - but in a more informal and relaxed atmosphere.
- Make reading visible; have books available in your home.
- Share books every day.
- Boys need to see that reading is something men do.
- Talk about books.
- Sit and listen - don't do chores around the reader! Turn the TV off.
- Respect choices - your child is much more likely to become a better reader if they are interested in what they are reading. Comics and special interest magazines are allowed!

Read to your children

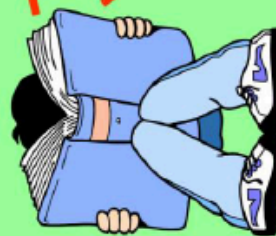
- Introduce your children to different types of books; classic fiction, chapter books, short stories, joke books, poetry, non-fiction.
- Read them the book that was your favourite when you were a child.
- Read slowly with expression. Try to use different and funny voices for characters.
- Follow the words and read the story using the pictures to help understanding.
- Talk about what is happening and what might happen next
- Leave stories on a cliff hanger.

What do we do when we read?

Understand the text. Know what the individual words and the whole text means.

Make a personal response. How does text make you feel or remind you of?

Engage with the text. 'See' the pictures the words make; feel the emotions the text evokes.



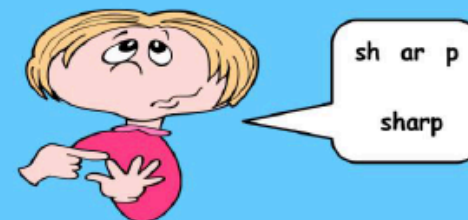
Blend the letter sounds together to read the words.

Make connections with what we already know. Bringing our existing knowledge, understanding and personal responses to a new text.

Consider whether we like or dislike the text or whether we think it is a good read.

Blending Sounds - Phonics

- The words that your child speaks and reads are made up of separate sounds, (phonemes). Your child will learn these sounds in Reception and Key Stage One. S/he will learn to blend the separate sounds together to read a word. This is what your child might call 'sounding out'.
- You can help your child to blend sounds by making sure that they recognise the sound that the letter/s make and say the sounds correctly. The separate sounds in words are very short and crisp. There should be no 'er' sound at the end. So, t is 't' not 'ter'. m is 'mmm' not 'mer'. 'c' a 't' not 'cur arh tur'. If the sounds are too long, the word will not make any sense to the reader.
- Play oral blending games at home and when out and about. *Please could you bring me the c u p. Let's go to the sh o p s'*
- Use phoneme fingers - say each sound crisply and point to the tip of each finger; thumb first. Fold down any unused fingers. Run your finger across the tips and blend the sounds to read the word.



When phonics are not enough

- Sometimes 'sounding out' is not enough. Some words don't fit the rules so other strategies are needed.
- If your child cannot read a word suggest that they miss it out and read to the end of the sentence. What word would make sense?
- What sound does it begin with?
- Does it sound right? Ran not runned; gave not gived.
- Does it look a bit like other words you know? e.g. if your child knows 'could' they might be able to read 'should' and 'would'.
- What word would make sense in this story or subject?
- Does the picture give you a clue?