

Top Tips



For Reading with Your Child at Home

As we all know, there is a lot more to reading than just reading! Here are some tips to help during reading sessions with your child at home.

- What is happening? Talk about what is happening in the pictures before you read the text. What can you see?
- Discuss the meaning of words. Use a dictionary to get your child used to exploring words for themselves.
- Discuss alternative words. For example, 'big'. Ask your child to think of another word that means the same, e.g. 'huge' (use a thesaurus).
- Make predictions. What do you think will happen next? What makes you think that?
- Start at the end of the book. What do you think has happened before this point? Why do you think that?
- Discuss feelings. How do you think the characters are feeling? What has made them feel this way?
- Where is the story set? Have you read another story with the same setting? For example, 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen and 'The Gruffalo' by Julia Donaldson are both set in the woods.
- Discuss the problem in the story. What has happened? What went wrong?
- Discuss the resolution. How was the problem solved? Is there another way it could have been resolved?
- Fact or fiction? Is this book a story book or a non-fiction book? How do you know?
- What have you learnt? What do you know now that you didn't know before reading the book?

During Reading

Encourage children to use expression when reading, especially for the voices of different characters.

Discuss the punctuation on the page, for example, exclamation marks. Ask: what are these for? What should you do when you see an exclamation mark?

You do not always have to read the entire book every night. Focus on 2 pages and talk about the characters, setting, and plot in a lot of detail. You might want to take it in turns to read so your child can hear how you read.

Below are some examples of questions that you can ask your child while reading.

Can your child find evidence directly from the story to answer your questions?

The answer is right there in the text. Identify and explain the key features of fiction and nonfiction texts such as: characters, events, titles and information.

- What kind of text is this?
- Who did.....?
- Where did.....?
- When did.....?
- How many.....?
- What happened when.....?
- Why did happen?
- How did?
- What happened to.....?
- How has the author made us think/feel...?

Make predictions with your child before, during and after reading.

- Look at the book cover/blurb – what do you think this book will be about?
- What do you think will happen next? What makes you think this?
- How does the choice of character or setting affect what will happen next?
- What is happening? What do you think happened before? What do you think will happen after?
- What do you think the last paragraph suggests will happen next?

Can your child think and search for the answer?

The answers are found in different parts of the story and they might have to apply prior knowledge or personal experience to an answer.

- Why was..... feeling.....?
- Why did happen?
- Can you explain why.....?
- Why did say?
- How do you think.....?
- How might....feel?

Discuss the vocabulary you find in the book with your child.

- What does the word mean in this sentence?
- What does this word or phrase tell you about?
- Can you think of any other words the author could have used?(e.g replacing big for enormous)
- Why do you think is repeated in this section?
- Find a word which means the same as.....
- Which word in this section do you think is the most important? Why?
- Which of the words best describes the character/setting/

Help your child to express and explain their opinions of the text.

- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Is there anything you would change about this story?
- What is your favourite part of the story? Why?
- Would you like to live in this setting? Why/why not?
- Do you like this text? What do you like about it?

Summarise the book with you child and discuss the sequence of the story.

- Can you retell the story to me in twenty words or less?
- What happened at the end of...?
- What was the problem in the story? How was it solved?
- Can you number these events 1-5 in the order that they happened?
- How/where does the story begin?
- What happens in the stories opening?

Top tips: Model good reading to your children, ensure your children are seeing and listening to you read, expose your child to a variety of texts, share your thoughts and opinions too and most importantly just enjoy reading with your child.