

How to Improve Comprehension When Reading with your Child

For Parents and Teachers

Before Starting to Read-getting an idea of the content

Before you start to read the book look at the front cover and discuss what your child thinks that the book may be about. Then look inside the book at the illustrations and discuss how this can tell us more about the information/story. If there are any, look at the title of the chapters; would this give us clues about the story, would it make us change our minds from looking at the illustrations? Then read the synopsis.

Connecting the book to what we already know.

Who is the author, what do we already know about him/her? What types of books do they produce? For example, Roald Dahl often writes about children being victims and then becoming the hero in the end. If it's historical fiction talk about what it was like to live in the time the book was set. If the story can be connected to the child's personal experience talk about that.

Help your Child to Visualise

Many teenagers will say that, if they know what book they will be reading in class, they always watch the DVD first as they can visualise the chapters and this helps them to tackle the text and comprehend. The ability to visualise is very important but sometimes it needs to be taught. As the story is being read stop and say things such as, 'This place they are going to; I think that it will be like this because...' 'What do you think?' Describe what you are seeing and ask your child to do the same.

Ask their opinion and ask them to Predict

At times ask what your child thinks the person means by something that was said, or repeat a sentence and ask your child why they think the author wrote it. Describe what you think to. Ask what they think is going to happen as a consequence of an action or at the end of the chapter? And ask for their reasons why? Say what you think and if it is different to your child's thoughts explain why.

Reading Aloud, Sharing the Reading and Strategies to Improve Comprehension.

It often helps children if you read the passage or a couple of pages first, sometimes it helps to then read the same passage together and then your child reads it on their own. They could read a page and then you read a page to keep the story following. You could arrange a signal so that your child can read and then, if they are tiring or finding the text difficult, or they are finding it hard to comprehend they can knock on the table or clap and you take over with you clapping when it's time for them to take over.

If they come to a word they are unsure of agree that you will give them the word after 3 seconds to keep the flow and then come back to it at the end and explain what it means, put it in the context of a sentence. You might ask your child to sound the word out or break into syllables to attack the word.

