

Comprehension – How can I help at home?

Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to be able to

- (1) decode what they read;
- (2) make connections between what they read and what they already know; and
- (3) think deeply about what they have read.

One big part of comprehension is having a sufficient vocabulary, or knowing the meanings of enough words.

Readers who have strong comprehension are able to draw conclusions about what they read – what is important, what is a fact, what caused an event to happen, which characters are funny. Thus comprehension involves combining reading with thinking and reasoning.

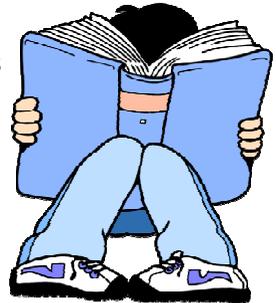
What parents can do to help at home

The following information will take your child through to the end of Key Stage 2 in developing their comprehension skills. Children in Key Stage 1 will be covering the same themes, but at a much simpler level.

- Hold a conversation and discuss what your child has read. Ask your child probing questions about the book and connect the events to his or her own life. For example, say

"I wonder why that girl did that?" or "How do you think he felt? What makes you think that?" and "So, what lesson can we learn here?".

- Help your child make connections between what he or she reads and similar experiences he has felt, saw in a movie, or read in another book.
- Help your child monitor their understanding. Teach them to continually ask themselves whether they understand what they are reading.
- Help your child go back to the text to support their answers.
- Discuss the meanings of unknown words, both those they read and those they hear.
- Read material in short sections, making sure your child understands each step of the way.
- Discuss what your child has learned from reading informational text such as a science or social studies book.



Suggested questions that you could ask your child when reading

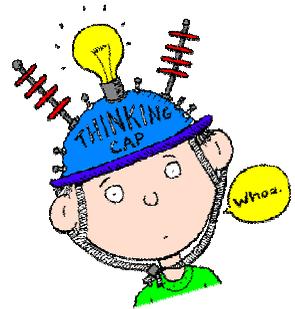
INFERRING (for a narrative text)

- Can you predict what is about to happen next?
- Why did you make that prediction?
- Can you point to something in the book that helped you to make that prediction?
- OR
- What do you already know that helped you make that prediction?
- Why did (the character) do that?
- What did the author mean by _____?
- (Character name) must be feeling _____. Are there clues that help us to know that?
- What's going to happen next?

- What must have taken place before _____?
- Is there evidence in the story that helps you to know that?
- What do you think that (character) meant by _____?
- ... felt about _____?
- ... thought about _____?
- ... will do about _____?

SUMMARIZING

- In general, what is this story about?
- What is the problem to be solved in this story?
- Is there a solution?
- What has happened so far?
- Who did what?
- What makes you think so?
- What do you wonder about after reading so far?
- What is the most important point in this story or passage?
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SYNTHESIZING

- Is there anything you understand in a new way from reading this story?
- What ideas (or concepts, or feelings) are most interesting to you?
- Why?
- Does (a historical event or personal experience) make more sense after reading this?
- What is something that you understand better after reading this?
- What is confusing about this story or event?
- What picture comes to your mind when thinking about how (character) _____?
- What are the reasons that _____ happened?
- Does this book make you think of anything that has happened to you?
- Does this story remind you of anything else you have read?

ANALYZING

- What things would make everyone like this book?
- Describe the writing style of this author.
- The author makes you feel as if you were there by _____?

- What are some examples of rich, colourful, or great language that makes this a good passage to read?
- What are the critical points in the plot?
- How does the story unfold?
- Would people in your life act this way?
- What is unbelievable about this text?
- Should other children read this?
- Why or why not?
- What makes this (book, story, biography) authentic or real?
- What important information is missing?
- What would have made this story more interesting to read?
- What parts of the story show the attitude of the author?
- What are the words or phrases that you really liked? That made you feel...?

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