

A Guide to help your child with their reading

It is important that when reading with your child, you focus on comprehension, (understanding of the text), as well as, sounding out and decoding the words. Some children may be able to read their book easily/fluent, but they also need to make sure that they have a full understanding of what the story is about, what the key words mean and can recognise many other features of the text. In addition to their school reading book, at home you could also let your child read 'real books' with more challenging words, which will help them to learn new words. At school we focus on all features of the book.

To help your child with the 'understanding' and 'sounding out' aspects of their reading books, here is a list of points that your child will benefit from learning to do:

- To be able to decode familiar words fluently and automatically (without sounding out or being prompted).
- To be able to decode/sound out familiar and some unfamiliar words using blending. There will be words that can't be decoded by blending and these are called 'tricky' words (such as: said, were, there, little, they, all, are). These words have to be memorised to be learned.
- To be able to develop an awareness of punctuation marks. For example, full stops, capital letters, question marks, exclamation marks etc...and to understand why they are being used in the sentence.
- To be able to remember the sequence of stories. What happened first? What happened next? Then what happened? Finally, what happened?
- To be able to locate pages or sections of interest. What was your favourite part of the book? Can you show me where that happened? What happened when...? Can you show me where that is? How did the character feel when? Can you show me where it says that?
- To be able to identify who is speaking in a story. How do you know that they are speaking? (This is where you could talk about speech marks and what they are used for). How do you know when the character has stopped speaking? (end of speech marks). Who is speaking in this part of the story (the part where the author/narrator is talking about the characters)?
- To be able to comment or ask questions about the meaning of parts of the text. Why is there a diagram in this book? What does it tell us? (That it's an information/non-fiction book). What is happening in the picture? Why

has the font/writing style changed in this part? (It may have got bigger because the character is shouting, or for another reason.)

- To be able to comment on the look of the writing, titles, labels etc... For example, if the story book is about 'monsters' the title may be in the style of slimy writing: Therefore, ask the child why the writing is like that and to link the writing style to what the book is about.
- To be able to comment on obvious features of language, for example, rhymes, repetition of text and interesting words or phrases. (Reading short poetry could help them with this and also poetry that interests them which may relate to comical poetry).
- To be able to comment on their likes and dislikes and to relate it to their own experience. (Obviously some stories cannot be linked to a child's own experience but if the story is about going to the park or going on holiday then the child will be able to talk about their own experience).
- To be able to think about and compare stories that they have read which may be similar to the one they are reading, such as, fairy tale stories. For example, 'The Runaway Chapati' can be linked to 'The Gingerbread Man' because the theme is the same. You could ask them what typically happens to good or bad characters and discuss the different illustrations (photos or drawings) which are used in fiction, for example, story books and non-fiction, for example, factual/information texts.
- To be aware that there are differences between information/non-fiction and story or fiction books. Information books may have captions, a contents page, a glossary, photos and talk about real, factual things. They are usually written to help us to understand how something works, or how to make something. Story or fiction books usually don't have a contents page (unless it's a book about several stories/anthology). They usually contain pictures or drawings, instead of photos and are usually 'made up' but can sometimes be related to real life experiences.
- You may also like to ask your child: 'Why do you think the author has written this book?' It could be to make the reader laugh, or to help the reader understand how to make something, or because it might help the reader who is going through a similar experience like a new baby in the family (if the book is about that.)

I hope this helps!