

Supporting your child's reading development

Learning to read should be an enjoyable experience. It is not simply about reading the text on a page; a good reader has an understanding about what they have read and is able to talk about it. In early books children need to look at the illustrations to gain an understanding of the story, as well as reading the words. Use the questions below as a starting point for the discussion about your child's reading book and PLEASE DO NOT BE TEMPTED TO COVER UP THE ILLUSTRATIONS TO MAKE YOUR CHILD SOUND OUT THE WORDS!



- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happened in the story?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Where is the story taking place?
- Why do you think (character) did that/said that?
- How do you think the (character) felt?
- How would you feel if . . . ?
- What would you do if . . . ?
- Do you think that was a good thing to do?
- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- What was your least favourite part of the story? Why?

Why not use these questions when sharing books together?
Remember' school reading books are there to support reading development and should not be used as the only tool to teach reading.

Happy Reading!

Top tips

1. Try to make reading time fun & encourage the reader to read out loud. Aim to do little & often, but not when the reader is tired.
2. Make sure that you are using reading material with the right level of difficulty for the reader. Also check that the content is suitable.
3. **Blending** - encourage the reader to break words down into a series of sounds e.g. c-r-a-sh. Run your finger under each sound in turn to encourage the reader to blend the sounds together.
4. Identify some key letter groups in the reading material and ask the reader to look out for them. Use the child's reading log to record the new letters/letter groups you are focusing on in each session.
5. Encourage the reader to look at any pictures in the book to get an idea of what it is about. Discuss any pictures with the reader.
6. Make a note in the reading log of any tricky or hard words - particularly common exception words (listed in this book).
7. Help the reader to 'work out' words which can't be blended by looking at the other words in the sentence or at the pictures in the book.
8. Try reading some pages to the reader before asking him/her to read. This will show what fluent reading sounds like and help with the reader's understanding.
9. Read a wide range of poems and stories to the reader, including ones that are too complex for him/her to read at this stage.
10. Draw attention to punctuation marks and help the reader to read with feeling e.g. "Hooray!" they shouted.

Checking understanding

- Talk to the reader about each book as much as possible.
- Before starting a new book, ask the reader to look at the cover and any pictures on the inside pages. Invite him/her to guess what might happen in the story.
- Ask questions as the reader progresses through the book.
 - What do you think is going to happen now?
 - What/who is the story about?
 - Where did the story take place?
 - What do you think . . . looks like?
 - Why did . . . do that?
 - How do you think . . . feels now?
 - What would you do if you were . . . ?
 - Which part of the book did you like best?
- Choose some key words & ask the reader to tell you what the words mean. Encourage the reader to use a dictionary to check meanings of words.
- At the end of the book, ask the reader to retell parts of the story in their own words, or tell you which was their favourite part.
- Encourage the reader to try to remember some short rhymes and poems by heart.
- Play games with the reader. For example, you could:
 - Ask him/her to find a word on the page that rhymes with fish.
 - Try to make up nonsense words for the reader to blend, e.g. twoch.
- Use flash cards to practise tricky words, common exception words or some letters/letter groups and their sounds.
- Invite the reader to draw a picture of a character/scene from the book.

Top tips- Phonics

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to:

- Recognise sounds that each individual letter represents
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters represent (e.g. /ch/ or /ai/)
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word

Children can use this skill to decode new words.

On the following pages you will find a list of common letters and letter groups. There are pictures and example words to show the common sound linked to each one.

The language of phonics

The overview above contains all you need to know to help a reader learn through phonics. If you want to know more, the following information may be useful.

- The smallest units of spoken sound in a language are called phonemes.
- These sounds (phonemes) are represented in writing by letters/ groups of letters called graphemes.
- Phonemes can be represented by more than one grapheme (e.g. the /ow/ sound in **cow** is the same as the /ou/ sound in **out**).
- Some graphemes represent more than one phoneme (e.g. /th/ can be the /th/ sound in **thin**, or the /th/ sound in **that**).
- Developing readers should become increasingly aware of these grapheme-phoneme correspondences.