

# Teaching Your Child to Read

Here are some useful tips for parents to use at home to make sure that every child is reading for meaning, not just words!

## Before Reading:

The following are a list of strategies that can easily be adopted to activate the child's prior knowledge of the topic prior to reading, thus giving the child a set purpose before reading:

1. **Predictions** - Ask the child to consider what might happen in the story based on the title and pictures from Readers.
2. **Create a K.W.L. Chart** - draw three columns as follows and fill out columns 1 and 2 prior to reading and column 3 after reading:

What I <b>K</b> now about the topic...	What I <b>W</b> ant to find out about the topic...	What I have <b>L</b> earned from my reading...

**3. Challenging Vocabulary** - Explain all difficult words that appear in the text **before** reading and ask your child to put these words into sentences. This activity helps to ensure that the child knows the correct context for the different vocabulary.

## During Reading:

Often children can read words by simply recognising them but find it difficult to extract meaning from what they have read. These are some tips to help your child read for meaning and make sense out of what they are reading:

- 1. Read-Cover-Remember-Retell** - A simple 4-step reading guide which children really enjoy. You ask the child to:
  - **Read** only as much as his/her hand can cover.
  - Use his/her hand to **cover** up the part of the story that was just read.
  - Take time to think about what was just read and **remember** it!
  - **Retell** what has just been read in his/her own words.
- 2. P.A.L.s** - **P**artner **A**ssisted **L**earning. This is an effective strategy to use in developing reading competence among children. The child reads aloud for about 5 minutes while parent/guardian listens. The parent corrects errors throughout the child's reading - *Stop, you missed that word, can you figure it out? Good, read the sentence again.* (If the child cannot read the word, the adult identifies the word for him/her). The parent then asks questions on what was just read beginning with: Who? What? Where? When? Why? This will continue for a further 5

minutes. (Examples may include: *Who were the characters in the story? What is the story about? Where is the story set? When is all this taking place? Why did a particular character act in such a manner?, etc.*)

It might be a nice idea for the parent and child to swap roles on the second reading or half way through the reading.

3. **V.I.P.s - Very Important Points.** This is useful for children who try to remember too many details! You simply ask them to consider what the most important points from the story are. They have to make judgements here and create a hierarchy of information. As children read, they can mark the sentences they feel are very important with a simple \*.
4. **Underlining difficult words** - This is useful for children who have difficulty breaking down the sounds within words. If the word is underlined they will be more willing and determined to remember it on the next reading. Over time, they will learn to recognise such words quicker.

## After Reading:

When the child has read the text **at least twice**, it is vital that they are questioned about what they have read. Here are some comprehension strategies to check whether or not they extracted meaning from the piece of reading:

1. **Sensory Impressions** - Draw the outline of a hand on a piece of paper and in each finger write the following:
  - What could you **see**?

- What could you **smell**?
- What could you **hear**?
- What could you **touch**?
- What could you **taste**?

This is only useful for stories and fictional pieces of reading.

- 2. Fact or Fib?** When children are reading information texts, i.e., texts with factual information, it is a good idea to make up certain statements and question the children on whether they are true (fact) or false (fib). For example, *Paris is the capital city of France?* (Fact).
- 3. Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?** This is an alternative version of Fact or Fib. Children could simply reply to statements by putting their thumb up if the statement about the story is correct or by putting their thumb down if it is false.
- 4. Questions** – Ask a variety of questions from simple recall questions, (e.g., *Who was the main character in the story?*) to more difficult questions which require "reading between the lines", (e.g., *How would you feel if you were John?*). It is important to ask children questions on the following areas:
  - Characters (people in the story)
  - Setting (where and when the story takes place)
  - Plot (what is the problem in the story and how was it solved? How does the story end? Can you predict what will happen next?)
  - Summary (in what order did the events take place? Do you have any unanswered questions about the story?)

5. **Alphaboxes** - This is an excellent strategy for helping children to reflect on what they have read and it helps to expand their vocabulary. Children dig deep into their minds to find words that relate to the text or describe what happened in the text. Start with A - *Can you think of a word beginning with "a" which relates to the text?* Progress down through the alphabet prompting children when necessary. It is important that the words used do not appear in the text!! This is a sample outline for Alphaboxes:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>		

6. **"Word of the Day"** - Ask the child to identify a new word that s/he finds interesting from the text. Encourage them to use that word as many times as possible that evening or even for the duration of the week.

7. Complete the third column of the K.W.L. Chart (see above under "Before Reading" section...)
8. Spellings! - Think "Slavacawac"!



**Say, Learn and Visualise and  
Cover and Write and Check!**