

Year 3/4 Reading - A Guide for Parents



Parents often wonder how they can help to develop the reading skills of children who are already fluent readers. The best way is to continue to share books with your child, regularly listening to them read, sometimes reading to or with them, but also discussing books read in increasing depth. Our advice is always to vary how, what and where you read with your child, so you could:

- Listen to your child read a little of their book and then spend time discussing it
- Read a page each, alternating turns
- Read to your child from their own book
- Read for 'real life purpose' e.g. adverts, newspaper stories, letters

To become good readers children need to develop skills in seven key areas and it can be useful to think about these when reading with your child.

Word Reading: this is the skill that parents are generally most familiar with, and deals with the varying strategies used by children to make sense of the words on the page. Even fluent readers can be stumped by an unfamiliar word, and it is useful at these times to discuss the range of strategies used to make a sensible guess.

Themes and Conventions: this involves your child making relevant links to other texts or their own personal experiences. They should be able to recognise themes in age-appropriate texts, such as bullying or honesty and recognise conventions like the use of 'the power of 3' (wishes, characters, e.g. the king's 3 sons etc.) in fairy stories and folk tales.

Clarify: this is a vital skill as children read more new and unfamiliar words in challenging texts. They need to be encouraged to self-correct misread words when reading age-appropriate texts and discuss the meaning of new words in context.

Monitor and Summarise: this is most important with non-fiction texts, which your child should read regularly. They need to show understanding of the main points they have found out from more than one paragraph of a text.

Select and Retrieve: again, this is particularly relevant to non-fiction texts. Children should use features of texts to locate information, e.g. contents; indices; subheadings and locate information by skimming and scanning for keywords. They also need a good understanding of alphabetical order so that they can use dictionaries to check the meaning of words they have read.

Respond and explain: when answering questions about a text, children need to begin to use vocabulary from the text to support what they say.

Inference: children need to be able to 'infer', i.e. they need to be able to pick up on what is suggested about characters but is not explicitly said. They should make predominantly correct inferences, e.g. they could try inferring characters' feelings and thoughts from their actions in the stories. As they become more confident they will support what they say by referring back to the text. Also, children need to be able to make predictions based on what has happened in the text and begin to justify their views by referring to the text.

Language for Effect: as children come across a more varied, richer vocabulary in texts they will think about authors' choice of words and how it makes them feel, considering how the choice of words affects the reader.

Top Tips

- Read little and often
- Include reading as part of your daily routine at a time when it is relaxing and not rushed
- Vary how and what you read
- Don't let reading with your child be a battle - if your child is not enjoying the experience, choose a better time
- Let your child see you reading too - it is important that children see reading as part of everyday, family life and not just something they do at school
- Get everyone involved - parents, older siblings, grandparents
- Visit the local library so that your child has the choice of a wide variety of new books
- Talk to your child about books and authors
- Praise effort and enthusiasm, even if your child has struggled
- Enjoy the experience, we all want your child to develop a love of books and reading for the future.



On the next two pages are possible questions that you could use when talking to your child about their book. Some are focused towards fiction, some non-fiction. Do not feel that you have to ask all questions every time; they are suggestions which you can pick from as appropriate.

Non-fiction Books

What have you learnt from your reading today?

Who do you think would find this book most interesting and useful?

How is the information arranged on each page?

How does the way that the information is set out help you to understand it?

Here it says (point to the contents page) is on page ... What do you think that page will be about?

How would you use the index to find something out?

Could you suggest any ways in which your book could be improved?

Poetry

Can you find out who wrote this poem and when it was written?

What pictures did it make you think of as you read the poem?

What is the poem about?

What is the poet trying to do or say?

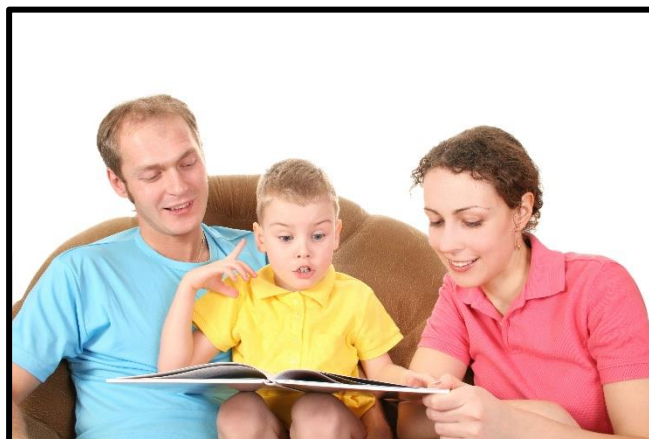
What is it about the poem that you liked?

How do you think the poet is feeling about what they are writing about?

What 'poetic features' can you identify? (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration etc.)

Did the poem remind you of anything else that you have read?

Does the shape the poem makes on the page, or the sounds it makes when you read it, add to the message?



*Questions to ask your child
when reading - Key Stage 2*

Before reading the book:

- What do you think this story will be about?
- What might happen in the story?
- What genre will this story be? E.g. fantasy, comedy, horror.
- What do we call the writing on the back of the book? (Blurb) or What does the blurb tell us?

During the reading of the book:

- What has happened so far? Is it what you expected to happen?
- What might happen next?
- How do you think the story might end?
- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Who is the character you like least? Why?
- Find 2 sentences, which describe the setting.
- Is the plot fast or slow moving? Find some evidence in the text, which supports your view.

*Questions to ask your child
when reading - Key Stage 2*

At the end of the book:

- Which part of the story is your favourite / least favourite? Why?
- Would you change any part of the story? How?
- Would you change any of the characters? How?
- Which part of the story was the funniest, scariest, saddest, and happiest? Find some evidence in the text to support your opinion.
- Would you like to read another book by this author? Why?
- Does your opinion of this character change during the story? How? Why?
- If you met one of the characters from the story, what would you say to him / her?
- Find 2 things the author wrote about this character that made him / her likeable or unlikeable?

