

Reading

Guide



Maria Fidelis Catholic School



Introduction

Reading with children is very important, as it will help build their self-confidence and encourage learning. However, it can sometimes be hard to understand how best to help pupils develop in their reading skills when they are older. I have therefore put together the following information to help you. Reading can be hard work for some pupils, but the patience you show will, most certainly, motivate the reader to try and to succeed.

Choosing a Book

- Pupils are always welcome to borrow books from the library and do not have to purchase their own books. Both the librarian and fellow pupils can give recommendations. In addition, the reading lists on the websites give some information about our most popular books.
- There is a box of books set aside by the librarian, which contains a range of easier books which are still interesting for older pupils.
- For our weakest readers, books with few words, easy words, and lots of repetition are often best, as are books that include rhyming.

Different Styles of Reading Together

- Reading ‘independently’: the child can read a book that is at his or her level, with little help from you.
- Shared reading: reading together, and saying the words together. The child will probably ‘echo’ you while you read, sounding out some words and waiting for you to say the hard words.
- Reading to the child: sometimes it is fun to read a book (sometimes one that is harder to read) to the child. This can help the child enjoy a book without having to ‘perform’. This can be useful when the child has been struggling, and it adds entertainment value. After all, learning to love books is a big part of learning to read.

Working on Difficult Words

For words that are not familiar, use the following strategies.

- Sounding it out. Break up the words into parts, showing how the letters work together. For small words, you may have the child tell you what the letters are. Ask what sound the first letter(s) make. Point out suffixes (endings like –ing, -ed, etc.)
- Point out the pictures or recall the plot, and ask the pupil if his or her guess makes sense in that context.

Correcting Errors

- When there is an error, **wait**, perhaps the child is thinking - give him or her a chance to problem solve before you step in.
- Be gentle. Let the child figure things out, but if it seems to be getting stressful, help him or her out.
- Don't point out every mistake. This disturbs the flow of the reading, and can be disheartening. You can always return to those parts when the book is done.
- Have a pencil and paper available to write down notes about words that are difficult for the child so you can go back later and review with him or her, without interrupting the reading.
- If there are too many mistakes, or a lot of trouble sounding things out, the book is too difficult. Try sharing the reading or take over the reading.

Encouraging Critical Reflection

- Ask one or two questions. Help the child ask questions. Help him or her learn that books have meaning.
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- Do you think the story could have gone differently?
- Could the story have been told differently, with the same meaning?
- Does this relate to your life?
- Based on the story (or pictures) what do you think the author (or illustrator) is like?
- If the book is an old one, what makes it different from new ones?
- If the book takes place in a distant place or time, what can we say about this difference? How is it like or unlike the world of the child's experience?
- Did the main character learn a lesson?
- How do you think the characters are feeling?

Story Questions to Ask

You do not have to ask all of these questions, but they may help you in discussing the story.

Author Questions

- What do you know about the author?
- Why do you think the author wrote the book?
- What did the author have to know to write the book?

Character Questions

- Who are the main characters?
- Do you like/dislike them? Why?
- Why are they important in the story?
- Do you know anyone like them?

Story Questions

- What happened in the story? What was the sequence of events?
- What might have happened if a certain action had not taken place?
- Were you able to predict the ending?
- What other way might the story have ended?

Setting

- Where did the story take place?
- What was the place like?
- When did the story take place? (past, present, future)
- How does the writer create the atmosphere for the setting?

Mood Questions

- How did you feel while reading the book? Why?
- What was the saddest/funniest incident?
- What was the most exciting/unusual/mysterious incident?
- What do you remember most about the story?

Style Questions

- How did the author describe the characters?
- Were there any unusual ways of saying things?
- How does the author keep you interested?
- What special words does the author use to help you hear, see, smell, taste, or feel things?

Prompts to Help Children in Reading

- I like the way you worked that out.
- Try it.
- Go back and read that again. Think of what would make sense (or sound right).
- I like the way you noticed that and fixed it yourself.
- Go back, read that again, and start the word. (Demonstrate)
- You're nearly right.
- Do you know something about that word?
- Do you know a word like that?
- What do you know that can help?
- Look at the beginning of the word. Now, say more of the word.

Strategies to Try When Reading is Difficult

When reading is slow

Praise the child for his/her hard work

- When the child tries, even if he/she is wrong;
- When the child reads for meaning;
- When the child corrects himself/herself.
- Be patient and give the child time to think about the word and the meaning of the story.
- Express your appreciation of the child's reading.

When the story is too hard (the child makes more than 5 mistakes in 50 words):

- Read the story to the child and talk about it.
- Choose another, easier book.

When the story is too long

- Take turns reading a page, paragraph or sentence.
- Read aloud together.
- Read at the same time: make your voice louder or softer according to how much support the child needs.
- You read and pause at words you think the child knows and can fill in.
- Decide with the child on stopping points during the reading to take a break and discuss it. Together decide on places in the text that are confusing, interesting, funny, exciting, etc.
- Choose another book.

When the child is not very interested in the story

- Read the first pages together and make guesses about what will happen.
- Relate personal experiences to events and characters in the story.
- Help find a more interesting story.

What Can You Say Besides “*Sound it out*”?

Use meaning by saying

- Look at the picture to help yourself;
- Think what would make good sense;
- Does that make sense?
- Start that sentence again.
- Make a good guess, then go on.
- It could be _____, but look at _____ .
- Say more of the word.
- Does that look right to you?
- Get your mouth ready to say it.
- Look at how the word begins.
- Do you know another word that starts that way?
- If that was, what would you expect to see at the beginning? At the end?

Important Tips to Remember

- Ignore errors that don't change meaning.
Example: I saw a lion. (child) I saw the lion. (text)
- When readers make a meaning-changing error, wait. They may self-correct it later. If they don't, go back later and ask them to reread and make sure it makes sense.
Example: I was a lion. (child) I saw a lion. (text)
- When readers stop because they're unsure of a word, wait to give them time to figure it out. Remind them to use the ‘stuck on a word’ strategies on the last page of this booklet.

- Reread: when a tricky part is worked out, have the child read the whole sentence again.
- After reading, ask your child to tell you about his/her favourite part.
- Give specific praise.
Examples: "I'm glad you stopped. It wasn't making sense."
"You read smoothly, like talking, today."

Independent Strategies

By Jill Marie Warner

When I get stuck on a word in a book
There are lots of things to do.
I can do them all, please, by myself;
I don't need help from you.
I can look at the picture to get a hint,
Or think what the story's about.
I can "get my mouth ready" to say the first letter.
A kind of "sounding out."
I can chop the word into smaller parts,
Like on and ing and ly,
Or find smaller words in compound words
Like raincoat and bumblebee.
I can think of a word that makes sense in that place,
Guess or say "blank" and read on
Until the sentence has reached its end,
Then go back and try these on:
"Does it make sense?"
"Can we say it that way?"
"Does it look right to me?"
Chances are the right word will pop out like the sun
In my own mind, can't you see?
If I've thought of and tried out most of these things
And I still do not know what to do,
Then I may turn around and ask
For some help to get me through.