

How to develop higher order reading skills

How to Help Your Child Develop As A Reader

Introduction

Reading is the key to successful learning in all areas of the curriculum. Our aim is to enrich how students read, recognising not just the text that they are decoding but to also understand the context in which they read them.

To encourage higher order reading skills, the children learn through a structured guided reading programme where they can develop and refine their knowledge of the assessment focuses which the school uses to assess their capability.

Your co-operation and support in encouraging your child to develop their reading skills is greatly appreciated. This leaflet gives some practical ideas and explains how you can help your child.

Developing your child as a reader

When children first learn to read, much of their effort is focused on decoding and pronouncing each word correctly. While this is essential, in order to become proficient readers students have to be able to understand the meaning of what they read.

How reading progresses

As children grow into mature readers, their comprehension and thinking skills should also mature. Reading comprehension involves the ability to not only read the words but also the next step of "reading between the lines." This involves higher order thinking that takes reading one step further. "Good readers" have the ability to read beyond the lines. Higher order thinking skills enable students to do this and find the real value in the information they are reading.

Why are these skills so important?

Children who develop their reading comprehension skills have the ability to understand the many layers of what they are reading. Processing the information presented in the text is easy for them. They are able to connect new ideas to previously learned facts and can implement higher order thinking skills therefore finding it easier to process new information.

These higher order thinking skills are:

- Retrieving information from the text;
- Finding clues and reading between the lines;
- Identifying the features of a structure of a text;
- Commenting on an author's choice of language;
- Commenting on an author's viewpoint and purpose;
- Comparing the social, historical and cultural context of a text.



The aim is to make reading an enjoyable experience, but careful questioning is essential if progress is to be made.



Key skills:

These can be developed through:

- Summarising (explaining what the text is about);
- Comparing one story to another (character, endings, story plot etc);
- Using new information to reach new conclusions (using the text to help you to add/change an existing opinion);
- Making inferences (using clues within the story to make predictions/form opinions);
- Comparing opinions from facts;
- Identifying and discussing the author's point of view.

Phrases to use

Parents can help their children develop higher order thinking skills using thoughtful questioning rather than simply listening to their child read.

Rather than simply asking,

"What was the story about?" also ask,

- "How was this story like another you have read?"
- "How could the ending have been different?"
- "What are the features of a newspaper report?"
- "Why did the author use the word, e.g. sinister, what does it mean?"

Encourage your child to identify problems or dilemmas when reading so they see themselves as text detectives. This invites creative thinking and problem solving - skills essential in developing your child as a critical reader.

Remember to give lots of praise, and be specific!



Frequently asked Questions

My child can easily read all of the words in the text, shouldn't they be on the next level?

Although your child can clearly read the words presented to them in the book and answer simple questions such as "Who is the main character?" they need to move beyond this simple understanding and instead read between the lines, using a range of questioning like the ones provided in this leaflet.

How often should my child change their reading book?

Your child is encouraged to change their book when they have read it and discussed key themes/characters with you. In Key Stage 2 children are expected to show evidence that they have read at home via their reading record book or through discussion with the teacher.

My child does not want to read their school reading book.

At this level, reading does not always need to take the form of the school reading book. Reading an extract from a newspaper, magazine, recipe or even examining the language used within a comic, all provide your child with meaningful reading experiences and this enjoyment of reading should be encouraged. Try to enrol your child at the local library and use online literature where possible.

My child cannot answer the higher order questions what shall I do?

Don't panic!! Developing these skills might be difficult at first and you may need to demonstrate how to answer questions, but stick with it as your child will begin to understand what is expected of them when they read and that they need to think about a deeper meaning. You can also speak to the class teacher about any concerns that you have.

How often must I read with my child?

Reading should be in short bursts of 10-15 mins where quality questioning follows. Lengthy sessions lose impact as children become disinterested and you can easily become frustrated, but ideally you should be sharing reading at least 3 times a week.

**The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.**

