

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Pollard School Reading Room
Ms. Tozier and Mrs. Rockwell

Help your child find meaning in reading

It's one thing to read words. It's another to understand them. That is exactly what reading comprehension is all about—understanding the meaning of what is read. To improve your child's understanding, try encouraging him to:



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- **Use what he knows.** Connect reading to things he already understands.
- **Predict the future.** Have him imagine the story and what might happen next.
- **Discuss organization.** Say, "What happened in the beginning, middle and end?"
- **Ask questions.** For example, "Why did he do that?" "Was that a good decision?"
- **Sum it up.** Ask, "If you had to describe the story in a few sentences, what would you say?"

Source: "Reading Resources for Parents: Comprehension," Florida's Instructional Technology Research Center, www.itrc.ucf.edu/other/seirtec/parentpages/comp.html.

"If there's a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

—Toni Morrison

Reading books about math can help your child

If your child struggles with math, perhaps reading about it will help. You'll find many books about math available, from picture books to books about multiplication. Ask the librarian to help you find some. You might start by looking for:

- **Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday**, by Judith Viorst. This book describes how far a dollar can go.
- **The Doorbell Rang**, by Pat Hutchins. Kids learn about division in this story about sharing tasty snacks.
- **Fish Eyes**, by Lois Ehlert. The concept of addition is introduced by colorful fish.

Source: "Literature and Math," Share2Learn, www.share2learn.com/mathliterature.html.

Learn when to use 'me' and 'I'



Have you ever corrected your child's grammar when she says, "You and *me* went to the store" instead of "You and *I* went to the store"? Have you secretly wondered if you're giving the right advice? Check by taking "you and" out of the sentence. See how it sounds. ("*Me* went to the store" or "*I* went to the store.") Now you know "*I*" is the right choice!

Source: Martha Brockenbrough, "Grumpy Martha's Guide to Grammar and Usage," MSN encarta, <http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/columns/?article=grammarmain>.

Favorites build 'fluency'



It's bedtime, and your child pulls out the same old book to read again. Is this okay?

It's great. That's because when kids read a favorite book over and over, they build "fluency." This ability to read smoothly is an important skill.

Source: Dr. Linda K. Rath, "Expert Q&A: Reading Difficulties," pbsparents, www.pbs.org/parents/experts/archive/rath-difficulties.html#4.

More on reading nonfiction



"Should my second grader read nonfiction books?"

Yes! He will learn to study real people, places and events. Exciting photos and real-life stories open new doors to learning. Informational reading skills also help children on state and national reading tests.

Source: Dr. Brenda Parkes, "Real World Reading and Writing," *Creative Classroom*, May/June 2001 (Creative Classroom Publishing, LLC, www.creativeclassroom.com).

Teach 'active' reading strategies to your child

Your child's homework is to read chapter five of his textbook. He looks the chapter over, and he's ready to begin. But instead of reading start-to-finish, he should read "actively." This involves doing things while he reads. He can:

- **Stop once in a while and think.** What are the main points? What has he learned? Is anything confusing? How does the material relate to real life?
- **Restate what the book says.** If your child puts things in his own words, it may reassure him that he "gets it."
- **Summarize the main points.** Making a list is a great way to prepare for the next reading assignment.

Source: "Lesson #11—Textbook Reading, Part 2," PinkMonkey.com, www.pinkmonkey.com/electricdesk/studysmart/ssmart11.asp.

Make attendance your priority—and your child's

Good attendance helps kids build reading skills. Some ways to boost your child's attendance include:

- **Show that you believe** school and attendance are important.
- **Let the school know** when your child will be absent.
- **Plan special events**, such as vacations or shopping trips, for non-school hours.
- **Help your child form** routines that make it easier to be on time, such as getting enough sleep each night.



Source: "Attendance Initiative—'Every Day Counts,'" Rochester City School District, www.rcsdk12.org/district/attendance.htm.



Q: I'm worried because my third grader still struggles with reading occasionally. Is that okay?

A: Your child's teacher can provide good information about your child's progress.

But in second and third grade, some kids:

- **Sound "choppy" when reading aloud**, especially when seeing something for the first time.
- **Try to read too quickly.** They may mix up simple words because they are rushing and are not focused.
- **Choose "easy" books to read.** That's okay! This kind of reading builds confidence.

Source: "Reading Checkup for Developing Readers (Grades 2 and 3)," Reading Is Fundamental, www.rif.org/parents/articles/Checkup_Developing.mspx.

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.



For lower elementary readers:

Ugh! A Bug! by Ned Crowley (Millbrook Press). Take an up-close look at bugs in this easy-to-read book, which is full of excellent color photos.

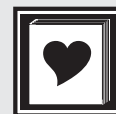
Chicken Chuck, by Bill Martin (Winslow Press). Chicken Chuck eats a strange blue seed and sprouts a blue feather. The other barnyard animals want one, too. They find their special feathers when the circus comes to town.

For upper elementary readers:

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase, by Joan Aiken (Delacorte Books for Young Readers). This classic tells the story of a girl and her cousin, who must live under the care of a more than difficult woman.

Salamandastron, by Brian Jacques (Ace Books). A wise old badger leads the good animals against an evil weasel and his corps of vermin.

Read greeting cards jointly



Valentine's Day greeting cards offer a wonderful opportunity to read with your child. When you shop for cards, read the messages inside together.

After your purchase, decide who will enjoy which card. This gives more time to read aloud and discuss. If your child's class at school exchanges cards, make sure you have a complete list of names. And remember to make one for the teacher, too!

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