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Listening to Children Read

Information booklet for volunteers



We greatly appreciate the time parents and other volunteers give to listen to readers in school. This booklet is designed to make listening to children read a useful and impactful use of that time.

Ideally children should read with you for approximately 5-10 minutes. Depending on the child, these 5-10 minutes should be a combination of listening to the child read aloud and then a discussion about what they have read using some of the questions contained in this booklet. For those children who find reading a challenge, you could also take it in turns to read the text aloud.

These higher order questions are relevant when hearing children read from all year groups within the school. The conversation between you and the child when listening to them read is as important as encouraging them to read fluently. The questions contained in this booklet will encourage the discourse between you and the child which will benefit their understanding of the text and inference skills.

The booklet also has ideas for strategies the children can try when they are struggling to decode new words. The children need to have the opportunity to have a go at decoding new or tricky words using some of these strategies. At the same time, don't let them struggle unnecessarily. You can help them by modelling the strategies, for example, how to sound the word out or use clues from the page or text. If you want any more guidance then speak to the class teacher who will be more than happy to help.

Thank you again for you time

Reading Strategies

When I am reading something, I can use the following things to help me:



I use the pictures to help me.

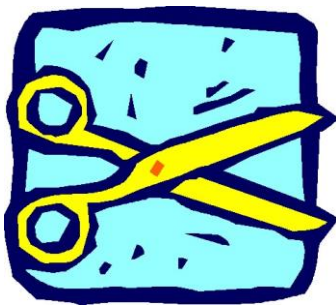
I sound out/blend words I don't know.

"C-AR-P-E-T"

I look for smaller words inside words.

"CAR -PET"

"tEACHer"



I can break words down into syllables.

"en - joy - a - ble"

"Enjoyable"

I use punctuation to help me make sense of what I am reading.



I go back and read a word or sentence again if I don't understand it.

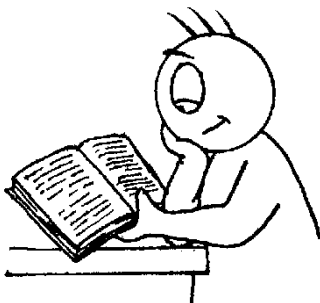


I read on to see if I can work out the meaning of a word I don't know



I listen to what I am reading to see if it makes sense.

I check that I am right by going back to look at words carefully.



I can tell when I've made a mistake and go back to try and put it right.

I ask questions to help me with my reading if I don't understand.

I talk through my ideas, thoughts and feelings about what I'm reading.



I think about what might happen in the book and I can say why.



When I read I imagine what is happening and create a picture in my mind.

I use words I can see around me or that I have read before.





Types of questions

Literal Questions

Recall: recalling or revising material that has already been covered

Comprehension: understanding the main points of a story

Higher Order Questions

Application Questions:

Transferring knowledge learned in one context to another

Do you know any other story which has a similar theme, e.g. good over evil, weak over strong, wise over foolish?

Can you think of another story which deals with the same issues, e.g. social, cultural, moral, issues?

Can you think of another author who handles time in this way? e.g. flashbacks, dreams

Which stories have openings like this?

Analytical Questions:

Analysing mood, setting, characters, expressing opinions and preferences, make inference and deduction, refer to text

How does the layout help ...? e.g. paragraphs, sub-headings, font

Why are words misspelt in this comic? What makes you think that?

What words give you that impression?

How did ...? E.g. the ostler betray Bess and the Highwayman?

Can you explain why?

Do you agree with ...'s opinion?

I wonder what the writer intended?

Explain why the writer has decided to ...?

How were the purposes of the texts different?

What can you tell about the viewpoint of the author?



Questions requiring synthesis:

Developing a critical stance based on information from a range of sources

What ideas are we given about ...? e.g. impact of weather

What does the author think about ...? e.g. looking after the countryside

What is your opinion? What evidence do you have to support your view?

Using evidence from the text can you tell me what you feel about ...?

Based on what you have read, what do you think about, e.g. global warming?

What would this character think about ...? (possibly a present day issue)

Look at the descriptions of 3 people. Who is most likely to buy this book?

In what kind of magazine would you expect to find an article like this?

Why were ...? e.g. the quotations included

Evaluation questions:

Making judgements, explaining reasons for judgements, comparing and contrasting, developing reasoning using evidence.

What makes this a successful text?

What evidence do you have to justify your opinion?

Does it work?

Could it be better? Is it as good as ...?

Which is better and why?

Which text do you think is more/most effective?

Which text is giving the writer's own opinion? How do you know?



Use a range of strategies including accurate decoding of text, to read for meaning.

What voice might the character use?

How would the character say ...?

What strategies would you use when you get stuck on a word?

To understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to the text.

Find a few words/phrases/sentences that tell you about (character, setting, atmosphere)

What do other people say about the character?

How did ...?

Who had ...?

What happened to ...?

What happened after ...?

Who is/was ...?

What was ... doing when ...?

What did ... do, after ... did ...?

What makes (name of character) special?

Which word tells you about how big/small ...?

How often ...?

How many ...?

What is another name for ...?

Who is telling the story?



Is it true/ false that ...?
Give one example of ...
How old/big/heavy/strong etc ...?
What does (a particular word) mean?
Draw a timeline of events.
Find two/three facts/reasons for ...
Non-fiction books - What is the text about? What is the title of the text? Who is the author of the text?
Non-fiction books - What kind of things would you expect to see in this book?
Non-fiction books - Can you find examples of different features of this text type?
Non-fiction books - Find something that interests you from the text. Explain why you chose that particular part.
Non-fiction books - Where would you look to find out what a technical word means?
Non-fiction books - What is on the cover of the book? What does this tell you about the content inside?

To deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts.

What do you think this story is going to be about? Were you right?
How did (character's) actions affect the outcome of the story?
How does (character) feel at this point and what does it tell you about him/her?
Do you remember what ... did the first time? In the light of what you know now, why do you think he felt so (angry/happy etc)?



Why did ... say/do/think ...?
What was ... sad/happy/surprised/excited?
What does (a particular phrase) mean?
What did ... enjoy/dislike/find surprising? Why?
What did ... mean when she/he said ...?
What does (a particular phrase) tell you about what ... was thinking/feeling?
What was ... thinking when ...? How do you know?
What does this character feel about? How do you know?
What do these pages/paragraphs tell you about?
What do you learn from ...?
What is the main idea of this part of the poem/chapter/ article? Find two examples to support your point of view.
Why is ... an appropriate title for this text?
Give one of the effects of doing/not doing ... Do you think ...?
Non – Fiction: Which parts of the book could help you find the information you need?
Non – Fiction: When would you use the contents page in the book?
Non – Fiction: When would you use the index page in the book?
Non – Fiction: What sort of person do you think would use this book?
Non – Fiction: When might someone use this book? Why?



Non – Fiction: Can you suggest ideas for other sections or chapters to go into the book?

Non – Fiction: Do you think the author of the book is an ‘expert’ about the topic of the book? Why/why not?

What is happening? What do you think might have happened before? What do you think might happen next?

Identify and comment on the **structure and organisation** of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level.

Why is the text arranged in this way?

How does beginning the passage with a question make the reader want to read on?

Look at the way the poem is organised. Are there any words that signpost change? What effect does this change have?

What is the effect of the change of rhyme scheme?

How does the form of this poem suit the ideas it expresses?

Why has the writer used these repetitive structures?

Why is there an exclamation mark/question mark/colon/ bullet point ...?

Where does the writer give another point of view?

How does she/he signal that s/he is going to do this?

Is the use of direct speech here effective? Why/why not?

How does it fit in to the presentation of his/her argument?

Non – Fiction: What is the purpose of the writing in the boxes/bold type/italic/etc ?

Non – Fiction: Why is the background in this piece a different colour?



Non – Fiction: How have the different parts of the text been made clear?
Non – Fiction: What is the heading/sub-heading for?
Non – Fiction: Why are there lines to the picture/photograph?
Non – Fiction: How does the layout and presentation of this advertisement help to persuade you to take notice of its campaign/message?
Non – Fiction: How many paragraphs? What connectives? How are the topic sentences used?
Non – Fiction: Why is there a contents page/index/glossary?
Non – Fiction: Can you find an example of a page you think has an interesting layout? Why did you choose it?
Non – Fiction: Can you find examples of words which tell you the order of something?
Non – Fiction: What kind of a text is this? How do you know?
How are the beginning and ending similar? Why is this order of events significant?

Explain and comment on the writer's use of language , including grammatical and literary features at word and sentences level.
What effect has the author created? How?
What do the onomatopoeic words tell you?
What does ... mean? Think of another more/less emotive word you can substitute here? What different effect would your word have?



Find a metaphor that helps you visualise ... What makes it effective?

Non – Fiction: How does the information in this paragraph try to influence your view of ...?

Non – Fiction: Which bullet points are fact and which are opinion? How do you know?

Non – Fiction: Why does this book contain technical vocabulary?

Non – Fiction: Find an example of a technical word. Read the sentence it's in. What do you think it means based on how it's used in the sentence?

Non – Fiction: Are there any examples of persuasive language?

Non – Fiction: Why do we need a glossary in a text?

What does ... tell you about how the speaker is feeling?

Identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader.

What did you learn about ... from ...?

Why is the story called ...?

Why did s/he explain ... in this way?

What impression does the writer give of ...'s character? What makes you feel this?

Why did the writer choose (these words) to describe ...?

How effective is (e.g. the comparison of animals with human beings) in getting across the writer's viewpoint?

Why does the author begin with ...? How does this make you want to read on?



Has the writer got one clear viewpoint on ...? How do you know?

How does the author make sure that you do ... before ...?

Non-fiction: Why has the writer written this text? What do you think he/she thinks about the topic?

Non-fiction: Have you found any of the illustrations, diagrams or pictures useful? Why/why not? Try to explain fully

Non-fiction: Why did the writer choose to present the information in the way they did?

Non-fiction: How could the information be presented better?

Non-fiction: What makes this text successful?

Non-fiction: Are there any features that it hasn't got? Why do you think it doesn't have them?

Non-fiction: Can you think of another text that is similar to this one? What are the similarities and differences between them?

Which was the most exciting part of the story? Explain why.

How can you recognise the attitude of this character?



Strategies for Developing Effective Dialogue

These can be used alongside effective questioning techniques to assess and develop children's thinking and understanding in literacy.

Invite pupils to elaborate

Encourages pupils to develop more complex contributions

'Say a little more about that ...'

Echo helps pupils clarify their own thinking, and shows they have been listened to 'So you think that ...'

Non-verbal invitations

Can signal to individuals to contribute or leave very open – a versatile response Eye contact, tilt of head, nod, etc ...

Make a personal contribution from your own experience

Encourages pupils to offer contributions of their own, and see identification and empathy as useful tools 'I remember ...'

Clarify ideas

Makes the key points easier to grasp, and encourages children to consider viewpoints 'I can tell that is the case because ...'

Make a suggestion

Encourages pupils to offer their own suggestions or build on teacher's suggestion 'You could try ...'

Reflect on topics

Encourages pupils to explore the topic rather than seeking a single answer 'Yes, I sometimes think that ...'

Offer information or make observations on a topic

Encourages pupils to offer their own information and discuss the adult's contribution 'It might be useful to know that ...'



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Speculate on a given subject

Encourages pupils to explore ideas, and understand that uncertainty is a normal stage in the thinking process

