



Parent Mini  
Guide

The Three  
Schools

# Reading Comprehension

## Reading Comprehension

An understanding of meaning isn't spontaneous. It is discovered, negotiated, made, arrived at and discussed.

In order to enable this to happen we must ask the right kind of questions that will help young readers discover and share their understanding. Finding clues from reading will help children to discover the kind of story they are reading which will lead to better understanding and better understanding leads to enjoyment.

The following guide is not intended as a mechanical list to be followed to the letter. There are some questions that can be asked of any text but other questions will depend on the text itself and the child's response to it.

### **Before beginning reading:**

Allow your child to look through the book discussing any issues that are raised from the pictures or from prior reading. If you notice any words that you think your child will struggle with such as names, objects or new vocabulary then point these out. Do a strategy check with your child to ensure that all their strategies are turned on. *IF we get stuck on a word what can we do?*

- Try and sound the word out.
- If it is a longer word, break it into small bits
- Look for little words hiding inside a big word.
- Miss the word out, try reading on and then return to the beginning of the sentence.
- Make a sensible guess; what word could we put there that makes sense?
- Look at the picture for clues.
- If your child has tried some of these strategies and is still unable to read the word then tell your child the word and move on.

### **During reading the book:**

Look at the front cover together: *what do you think this story is going to be about? What makes you think that? What is the title of this book? As events unfold in the story check that your child has understood what they are reading. Use general questions and comments to check their understanding. Why did that happen? Why did this character say that? How do you think this character will be feeling? What might the character be thinking now? If an important event happens or there is a climax to the story you could ask; can you think what might happen next?*

### **After reading the book:**

Was there anything you liked about this book?

Was there anything you disliked about the book?

Was there anything that puzzled you or you thought was strange?

Were there any patterns you noticed or connections?  
(Repeated phrases, a repeated image or idea in the text)

Was the story as you expected?

Did this story remind you of any other stories you have read?

Were there any words or phrases or other things to do with the language that you liked or disliked?

Who was telling the story? How do you know? Who did you think was the most important character, what made you think that?

Did you feel part of this story and how did you know what the characters were thinking or feeling?

Where did this story happen? Would this story be the same if it had happened somewhere else?

If the writer asked you what could be improved in the book, what would you say?

What would you tell your friends about this book?

**This is a long list so please remember that every question should not be asked every time.** If you use these types of questions regularly they will become part of the whole reading process and eventually your child will be thinking about them as he or she reads. It is also important to listen to the questions that children think of themselves as they are reading. This shows they are actively trying to make sense of what they are reading.

Book talk is a way of giving form to our thoughts, ideas and emotions that have been stimulated by the book. By talking with your child you will be making meaning together and this will help them to interpret texts and increase their understanding and delight.

Please remember that your own reading of a text may be different from your child's. You have much more experience of the world to bring to your reading than your child. Don't disagree with what they are saying but praise and encourage their ideas but ask them to justify them by asking questions such as *what makes you think that? Or how do you know that?*

Encourage your child to read as widely as possible, not only stories but poetry and non-fiction. Tell stories from memory and encourage your child to make up stories. Read stories to them and talk about what you have read and what it makes you think or feel. Model reading behaviour too, if you have time!

Talking about books is a high-value activity in itself. Quality conversation about books is the best rehearsal there is for talking well about other things. So in helping children to talk about reading, we help them to articulate for the rest of their lives.



If you have any questions about anything you have read in this guide please come in and talk to your child's class teacher. No matter how trivial you feel it might be we want to help you and your child to enjoy quality reading experiences together.