

Reading At Home Guidance

Dear Parents and Carers,

Please find below information about reading with your child at home.



Reading Journals

Teachers will be monitoring reading journals weekly, checking these on a Monday. Please ensure that each week you have signed your child's reading journal to show that the weekly home reading expectations have been met.

An example of a weekly comment might be:

'Billy read chapters 3-8 of his book this week. He has a good understanding of what has happened in the story so far and has made predictions about how he thinks it will end. We discussed what he thinks of the main character and he was able to find parts in the story that tell us more about him.'

Reading Aloud

When reading, we do expect that children are given the opportunity to listen to an adult read aloud. It provides children with a demonstration of phrased, fluent reading and exposes children to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech. In turn, this helps them understand the structure of books when they read independently.

As well as the adult reading aloud, children should be reading aloud to an adult. This allows you to check whether the text is at the appropriate challenge level (children should be able to read 97% of words confidently) and whether their reading flow and punctuation awareness is secure. When your child is reading aloud, here are some things to think about:

- Are they reading in an expressive way or is their reading rather flat and mechanical?
- Are they using punctuation to help them to read e.g. pausing at commas and full stops, lifting their voice for a question mark?
- Are they using expression to make the meaning clear?
- How are they reading when characters speak?

You can then read the same part that they have just read to model good reading techniques and practices.

Fluency

You may notice that your child has brought home a book that they have already read. This is to improve their fluency. Fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression. Re-reading a text for fluency has the following benefits:

1. **Increased vocabulary** – Increased exposure to reading increases vocabulary. When a child re-reads the same text, they memorise more than when exposed to many words. The key to learning new vocabulary is through familiarity with words and those repeatedly re-reading books increase their vocabulary more than those who read a variety of books.
2. **Phonemic awareness development** – Re-reading books strengthens an understanding of the pattern, rhythm and pronunciation of the text. This involves identifying, hearing and manipulating separate sounds in words. Reading aloud promotes the connection between correct pronunciation and spelling and will only grow through exposure to the same vocabulary.
3. **Comprehension skills** – Re-reading books provides an opportunity to develop a deep understanding of a book's plot or character development, something not possible reading a book once. Exploring the text and illustrations helps children delve into the story's message and make new connections, preparing them for more complex narratives.

4. **Confidence building** - Memorisation is an important reading strategy for comprehension to develop increased vocabulary, reading fluency and accuracy. Reading a book without pausing or waiting for an adult to reveal an unknown word is confidence-boosting. Often, when a child gets to this point, they will move onto new books with new challenges. Greater confidence develops into a lifelong love of reading.

Book Talk

When reading at home with your child, as well as your child reading aloud, please do participate in discussions about the text to ensure they are understanding what they are reading. Below are some suggestions as to how you can initiate effective book talk:

Exploring opinions:

- Was there anything you liked about this book?
- What especially caught your attention?
- What would you have liked more of?
- Was there anything you disliked about this book?
- Were there parts that bored you?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Was there anything you thought strange?
- Was there anything that you'd never found in a book before?
- Was there anything that took you completely by surprise?

Making Links and developing language:

- When you first saw this book, even before you read it, what kind of book did you think it was going to be?
- Have you read other books like this? How is this one the same? How is it different?
- Have you read this book before? If so, was it different this time?
- Did you notice anything this time you didn't notice the first time? Did you enjoy it more or less?
- Because of what happened to you when reading it again, would you recommend other people to read it more than once, or isn't it worth it?
- While you were reading, or now when you think about it, were there words or phrases or other things to do with the language that you liked? Or didn't like?
- Have you noticed anything special about the way language is used in this book?
- If the writer asked you what could be improved in the book, how would you have made it better?
- If you had written this book, how would you have made it better?
- Has anything that happens in the book ever happened to you? In what ways was it the same or different for you?
- Which parts in the book seem to you to be truest to life?
- Did the book make you think differently about your own similar experience?
- When you were reading, did you 'see' the story happening in your imagination?
- Which details / passages in the book, helped you 'see' it best?
- Which passages stay in your mind most vividly?
- How many different kinds of stories can you find in this story? Was this a book you read quickly, or slowly? In one go, or in separate sessions?
- Would you like to read it again?

Making recommendations:

- What will you tell your friends about this book?
- What won't you tell them because it might spoil the book for them? Or might mislead them about what it is like?
- Do you know people who you think would especially like it?
- What would you suggest I tell other people about it that will help them decide whether they want to read it or not? Older than you? Younger?
- How should I give it to them? For example, should I read it aloud or tell them about it and let them read it for themselves?
- Do you know anything about the writer? Have you read anything by them before? Was this better than what you had read before?

Understanding and comprehension:

- How long did it take the story to happen?
- Did we find out about the story in the order in which the events happened?
- Are there parts of the story that took a long time to happen but were told about quickly or in a few words?
- And are there parts that happened very quickly but took a lot of space to tell about?
- Were there parts that took the same time to tell as they would have taken to happen?
- Where did the story happen?
- Did it matter where it was set? Could it just as well been set anywhere? Or could it have been better set somewhere else?
- Did you think about the place as you were reading?
- Are there passages in the book that are especially about the place that the story is set?
- Was the setting interesting in itself? Would you like to know more about it?
- Which character interested you the most?
- Is that character the most important in the story or is it really about someone else?
- Which character(s) didn't you like?
- Did any of the characters remind you of people you know? Or remind you of characters in other books?
- Was there anyone not mentioned in the story but without whom it couldn't have happened?
- Can you think of any reason why s/he doesn't appear or isn't mentioned?
- Who was telling – narrating – the story? Do we know? And how do we know?
- Is the story told in the first person (and if so, who is this person)? Or the third person? By someone we know about in the story or by someone we know or don't know about outside the story?
- What does the person telling the story – the narrator – think or feel about the characters? Does s/he like or dislike them? How do you know?
- Think of yourself as a spectator. With whose eyes did you see the story? Did you only see what one character in the story saw, or did you see things sometimes as one character saw them, and sometimes as another and so on?
- Did we ever get to know what the characters were thinking about? Were we ever told what they were feeling? Or was the story told all the time from outside the characters, watching what they did and hearing what they said, but never knowing what they were thinking and feeling?

How can I support my child with their reading comprehension at home? <i>You could try one or more of these activities at home with your child when you hear them read at home.</i>	
	Vocabulary Pick out two or three words from the text they have read and use the passage to discuss their meaning. Talk about other words that have the same meaning.
	Infer Discuss a character's personality or feelings – ask your child "how do you know this?" See if they can spot something that is suggested but not said e.g. "the boy's hands were trembling" – we can infer that he might be nervous.
	Predict At the end of the chapter, encourage your child to make a prediction about what might happen next, based on what they know.
	Explain Pick an event from the chapter and encourage your child to explain and why they think it might be included. Find a phrase or word and discuss why the author used it – what effect does it have on the reader?
	Retrieve See if your child can retrieve key information from the chapter you've read with them e.g. names/ details/ events.
	Summarise At the end of the chapter/pages – see if your child can sum up the key points of what they have just read.

Additional Activities and Games for Reading at Home

Author Study:

Find another book by the same author and read the first paragraph or page. What makes the content similar or different to the book your child is reading? Are there any grammatical features which are common in both books?

Picture books:

Picture books contain very little text so every word really matters. Can your child tell the story just from the pictures? Could they explain the moral or the message in the story if they haven't seen the pictures? Do the picture support or contradict the text? Why?

Change the vocabulary:

Choose a section in the text and discuss which words could be swapped to change the effect of the meaning the author is trying to create. Brainstorm synonyms and antonyms or try playing 'word association' to help your child develop a wider vocabulary.

Page 99:

Pick a story that your child has not read. Before looking at the front cover or blurb, turn to page 99 (or another random page number) and read it together. Have a discussion about what they can infer from this one page. What is the genre? What is the book about? Who are the main characters? Where is it set? How do you know?

Tricky Word Window:

Select a word that your child did not know the meaning of and complete a tricky word window, with the headings 'tricky word', 'examples', 'definition', and 'opposites'. Here is an example:

Tricky word <i>soothing</i>	Examples music bathtime
Definition comforting offering relief	Opposites loud noises distractions

See the school website for '40 Book Based Activities' for additional home reading tasks.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about reading at home, please do visit the school website or email your class teacher.

Kind regards,

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