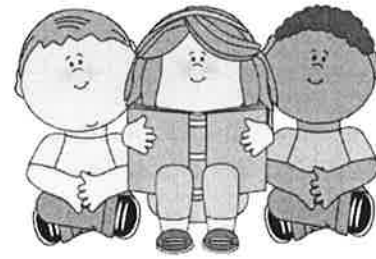


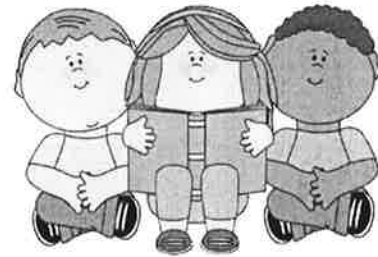
Challenging Questions to Ask About Reading



--Narrative (any story)--

- *How is this story like any other story you know?
- *How is the setting (time and place) important to the story?
- *How did the author show the passing of time?
- *What words did the author use to describe the place?
- *How does the season or time affect the characters or the plot of the story?
- *Who is the most important character?
- *How does the author tell us about the character?
(Hint: Look at what the character does, thinks, says, and what others say about the character.)
- *Which character changed in the story? How did he/she change?
- *What is the author's message?
- *Why did the author most likely write this story?
- *What is this story mostly about?
- *What do the illustrations add to the story?
- *What was the most important problem in the story?
- *What clues did the author give to help the reader predict the ending?
- *What lesson does this story teach about life?
- *What can you tell about this character?
- *What two or three sentences summarize the whole story?
- *What are some interesting words, phrases, or sentences?
- *What words help create a feeling or picture in your mind?
- *What did the author have to know to write this book?
- *What did the author do to interest the reader?

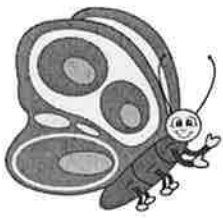
Challenging Questions to Ask About Reading



--Informational/Non-fiction--

- *What is this selection mainly about?
- *Why is this topic important?
- *What are some of the most important ideas related to this topic?
- *How has the author made it easy for the reader to find information?
- *Why did the author most likely write this text?
- *What does the title tell you about this text?
- *What information is provided through graphic features? (illustrations, maps, charts, diagrams, photographs, etc.)
- *What information is provided through text features? (bold print, key words, italics, captions, labels, etc.)
- *How does this (chart, illustration, map, etc.) help the reader?
- *How can the reader tell that the author's purpose was _____?
- *What details are important to the main idea of the selection?
- *Which sentence from the text best supports the idea that _____?
- *What can you tell from this text?

**Tip: Always ask
"How do you
know?" and
follow up with a
discussion!**



Phonemic Awareness

Parent Handout– First Grade

What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds in words. Children must first understand that words are made up of separate speech sounds that can be blended together to make words before they can make sense of using the alphabet to read and write. Research has identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the best two predictors of how well a child will learn to read during the first two years of school (National Reading Panel, 2000). Children who develop strong phonemic awareness skills at an early age are more likely to become fluent readers and better spellers than children who do not.

What should my first grader be able to do?

By the middle of first grade, children should be able to:

- Identify the beginning, middle and ending sounds in words (“What is the last sound in the word ‘cat’?” Child: /t/)
- Blend 3-4 phonemes (sounds) into a whole word (/s/ /a/ /m/, Child: “sam”)
- Segment 3-4 phonemes in a one-syllable word (“map”, Child: /m/ /a/ /p/)

By the end of first grade/beginning of second grade, children should be able to:

- Substitute a sound in a word (“Sat. What word do we get when we change the /s/ to /p/?” Child: “pat”)
- Delete a sound in a word (“Frog. What word do we get when we take away the /r/?” Child: “fog”)
- Add a sound to a word (“What word do we get when we add /b/ to the beginning of ‘rake’?” Child: “brake”)

How can I help my child develop phonemic awareness skills?

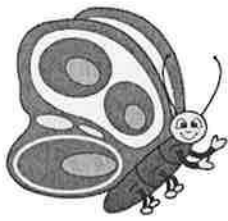
To help your child blend sounds to make words:

- Have your child guess a word that you sound out slowly (ssssssuuuuuunnnnn).
- Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a 3-4 letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.

To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:

- Give your child 3-5 blocks, beads, bingo chips or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
- Play Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound, and knees for the third while saying each sound.
- Jump for Sounds. Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.





Oral Reading Fluency

Parent Handout

What is Oral Reading Fluency?

Reading fluency is the ability to read quickly and easily. It means that a child can recognize and decode words accurately and automatically and understand the words as they are being read. Children who do not read fluently (choppy readers) have to work hard on the mechanics of reading that there's no mental energy left to think about the meaning of what they are reading.

How do I know if my child is reading fluently?

A simple way to know if your child is reading fluently is to listen to him/her read grade level text aloud. Have your child read a paragraph from his/her social studies, science or reading book. As your child reads consider the following:

- How many words does he/she struggle with?
- How easily is he/she sounding out an unknown word?
- Is he/she reading with expression? (for example, pausing at commas, periods, etc.)
- Can he/she retell the story or summarize what the paragraph/story was about?

Many schools test students' oral reading fluency skills as a way to screen for possible reading difficulties. Your child may be asked to read a grade level passage for one minute. The teacher will then calculate the "words correct per minute" (wcpm). Children who have strong word recognition skills and can quickly use word attack strategies when coming upon an unknown word are able to read grade level text at an appropriate rate for that grade.

How can I help my child read fluently?

To help your child develop reading fluency:

- Model fluent reading. Provide opportunities when your child can hear you read aloud. Be sure to read with expression pausing appropriately at punctuation marks and changing voice for characters.
- Teach your child high frequency sight words. High frequency sight words are words that readers are encouraged to recognize without having to sound them out. It is estimated that the first 100 sight words account for approximately 50% of what we read. Words such as "the", "and" and "he" are considered high frequency sight words. These words can be practiced on flashcards. As you and your child read, point out the sight words in the story. Some children are able to identify the words on flashcards; however, this skill does not transfer to reading. Pointing them out as you read helps in transferring to reading the words in books.
- When having your child practice reading aloud, help your child choose books at his/her independent reading level. Use the 5-finger rule as a guide. This means that a child shouldn't struggle with more than 5 words on a page.
- Repeated reading has proven to be one of the best strategies for developing reading fluency. Children should be provided with many opportunities to read the same passage (or story) orally several times. It is best if the adult reads the passage (paragraph, story) first and then has the child read and re-read the same text. Typically reading the text 4 times is suggested when focusing on improving fluency skills.

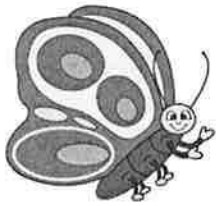


- Paired reading is another strategy to improve oral reading fluency. Using this strategy, you and your child read the words aloud together. Be sure to read at your child's speed reading every word. Make sure your child is looking at each word as one of you points to the words. If your child reads the word incorrectly, say the word and then have your child immediately repeat the word.
- Having your child listen to a taped recording of a book while following along in the story is another good strategy to improve oral reading fluency. Children benefit from listening to fluent readers read while following along in the book. Encourage your child to point to the words on the page while listening to the story as this helps to strengthen word recognition skills.
- When listening to your child read, when he/she comes to an unknown word, wait 5 seconds to allow him/her to use word attack strategy skills to figure out the word. If you have to provide the word for your child, be sure to have him/her repeat the word aloud while pointing to the word in text.
- There are several computer programs available for home use to improve oral reading fluency skills using the repeated reading strategy. The One Minute Reader produced by Read Naturally (www.readnaturally.com) and Raz-Kids interactive books (www.raz-kids.com) are two programs that you can order or download from the internet.
- Whether your child reads to you or you read to your child, be sure to talk about what was read. Asking open ended questions such as, "What did you think of....?", "How would you feel if?" "What do you think might happen if...?" is better than asking questions which require a simple one word answer.
- When possible, help your child make a real life connection to the story. For example, after reading a story share an experience that the story made you think of from your childhood. Encourage your child to share his/her thinking or experiences. Having such discussions with your child sends the message that the purpose of reading is to understand and think about the text rather than just read words.

First 100 high frequency sight words

the	to	and	he	a	I	you	it	of	in
was	said	his	that	she	for	on	they	but	had
at	him	with	up	all	look	is	her	there	some
out	as	be	have	go	we	am	then	little	down
do	can	could	when	did	what	so	see	not	were
get	them	like	one	this	my	would	me	will	yes
big	went	are	come	if	now	long	no	came	ask
very	an	over	your	its	ride	into	just	blue	red
from	good	any	about	around	want	don't	how	know	right
put	too	got	take	where	every	pretty	jump	green	four





Reading Comprehension

Parent Handout

What is Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand what is being read. Children must be able to read the words in the text and combine it with what they already know to “think” about what the author is trying to say. Reading comprehension is NOT just finding answers in the text. Children must be able to interact with the text, think deeper, analyze, predict and be able to summarize what is written.

How can I help my child with reading comprehension?

- Before reading, look through the book and find words that your child may not know the meaning. Talk about the words with your child– discuss the meaning of the word and give examples. For example, “I was looking through the book and found this word, ‘ecstatic’. Ecstatic means very, very happy and excited. I was ecstatic on the day you were born. Can you think of a time when you were ecstatic?”
- Before reading a story with your child, look at the cover. Read the title and look at the picture if there is one. Talk about what you already know about the topic and try to make a connection with what your child already knows. For example, before reading a book on “Desert Animals”, you can talk about what your child already knows about the desert and animals that live in different areas. Activating this “prior knowledge” helps with reading comprehension.
- While reading, help your child make connections with the text. When you ask your child a questions such as “how would you feel if that happened to you?” or “does this part of the story remind you of our vacation on the beach?” you are having your child make a “text-to-self” connection”.
- Encourage your child to make predictions while reading. (“What do you think will happen next?” “Let’s keep reading and see”).
- Model thoughtful question asking while reading. Stay away from yes/no questions. Questions such as “Why do you think the boy was afraid?” is preferable to “Was the boy afraid?”
- Model what good readers do when they don’t understand what they are reading. “Think-aloud”, or verbalize, what you are doing. For example, “I’m not quite sure I what this means, I’m going to go back and re-read this part.”
- During and after reading, have your child retell or summarize the text.
- Encourage your child to “make a movie in his/her head” while reading. This strategy is known as mental imagery and helps with reading comprehension. If reading a chapter book with limited pictures on the pages, stop periodically in the story and share with your child how you are picturing the scene and ask him/her to share with you.
- Read aloud to your child and read with your child everyday!

