

Later Reading Skills

By now you are probably confident that your child is a good reader with great decoding ability and so the comprehension aspect of reading is more important than ever. One or two of these questions each time you read could make a big difference.

Before you open the book

- What are you expecting from this book and why
- What does the blurb tell us and how does it try to make the book appeal
- Talk about the title and what it may say about the story

During reading - strategies if they get stuck

- Decode (break the word down)
- Blend sounds you recognise
- Look for words within the word
- Read to the end of the sentence
- Check meanings in a dictionary

Find information directly from the text

- Describe what happened at
- Who spoke to
- Can you tell me why
- Where did s/he/it live
- What happened after
- Which paragraph tells you
- Where and when did the story take place
- What did s/he/it look like

Read between the lines

- Describe why a character felt/thought
- Explain why this is important
- Through whose eyes is the story told
- What could this tell us about the character
- Put yourself in their shoes, what would you/your friends say/do/think/feel
- What would this character think about (perhaps something currently in the news)

Comment on the structure and organisation

These are particularly good for non-fiction

- Where in the book would you find
- How many levels of headings and subheadings does this book have
- If you can't find information in the contents, where else might you look
- What is the difference between the index and the contents and how are they used

Think about language choices

- Which words and phrases tell you that the author is describing
- How has the author been humorous
- What is the author's style, which features help you identify this and why is this style effective
- How could this be made to sound more friendly and informal or more formal and serious
- What words/phrases indicate the author's attitude

Understand the writers' viewpoints

- Why did the author choose this setting
- What did the writer intend by
- What impression do you think the writer wants to give of this character and why
- What effect does this have on other characters
- In this paragraph, what effect does the author want to have on the reader
- Which text would most persuade you to change your mind and why

Make social, cultural and historical links

- How would this text work in a different cultural/historical setting
- What are the links to texts by the same author
- What research would the author have needed to do before writing this text
- Can you think of another story which has a similar theme e.g. good over evil; wise over foolish
- Do you know of another story which deals with the same issues e.g. social; moral; cultural

At the end of a book

- What makes this a successful story
- How could it be improved
- Is it as good as
- How is it similar to
- How is it different from
- Which is better and why
- Which bits surprised you
- Sell it to me in 2 minutes

Also...

- Include a variety of text types
- Keep listening to your child read aloud
- Keep reading to them, particularly the longer novels that they may be less inclined to attempt alone
- Talk about books *you* have enjoyed reading
- Encourage children to ask their own comprehension questions - to you, for younger siblings or themselves