

Reading

Questions for analysing

Children should also be given opportunities to really think about and analyse what they read. To encourage this, you could ask questions like:

- If...happened, what might the ending have been?
- What was the problem with...?
- What was the turning point?
- What was the purpose of...?

Questions for creating

Is it also important that children are given creative time to stretch their imagination. This can be supported by doing or answering the following:

- Making up another ending or creating a new title for the story
- Can you create new and unusual uses for...?
- Can you design a...to...

Questions for evaluating

If we extend the children's exposure to varied reading materials then we are increasing their ability to evaluate and make judgements about what they read. By extending the children's language skills we enable them to be able to offer their own opinions and suggestions.

- Was the main character good or bad? Why? Compare them to another character.
- Which is better...?
- Would you agree that...?
- What is your opinion of...?
- Were they right to do...? Why? Or why not?

These types of higher-order open questions allow children to remember, understand, apply, analyse, create and evaluate reading – giving children the good reading skills that will help them to progress throughout their lives.



Parents as Partners

Little and Often

Reading with your child is vital. Research shows us that it is the single most important thing that we can do to help a child's education. It's best to read little and often, so try to put aside some time for reading every day. As children mature, it is also important to expose them to different reading materials other than books that will challenge them such as newspapers, magazines and comics.

- Visit the library often.
- Look for books on topics that your child is interested in.
- Make sure that reading material is easily accessible in different rooms about the home.
- Buy dual-language books if English isn't your family's first language.

Parents and carers are often busy people and the stress of daily life can get in the way of reading time, so it is important to set aside time for reading. Reading informs, educates and inspires and good reading skills are the basic cornerstone that helps all of us progress throughout our lives.

Organising your reading time

Here are some suggestions:

- Talk about the reading material, spend time looking at and discussing the content.
- If s/he has read the text before, what can s/he remember?
- Read the story aloud. Reading aloud is not only one of the best activities to stimulate language and cognitive skills; it also builds motivation, curiosity and interaction.

- Don't always feel that you have to ask questions each time you read together. It is important to enjoy your reading time together.

So, sometimes, just enjoy the fun of reading aloud together. If you stop too often, s/he may lose the thread of the story and interest may waver.

Questions for remembering and understanding

It is important to ask the right questions when reading with a child. You may have heard of open and closed questions. It is a simple, but effective, idea where open questions are the ideal as they avoid one word answers. For example, if you asked a child 'Did you enjoy the book?' The answer you'd most likely receive is 'yes' or 'no.' Therefore, to help the child respond with more detailed answers try asking in-depth, 'higher order,' open questions such as those below, as they will enable the child to develop their thinking, remembering and understanding skills when they are reading.

Questions for remembering reading

- Describe what happened after...
- How many...?
- Can you name...?
- Which is true or false...?

Questions for understanding

- Can you explain why...?
- How would you explain...?
- What do you think could have happened next...?
- Who do you think...?

Questions for applying

It is important that the children can then use the information gained in their reading to apply in other situations.

- What would happen if...?
- Do you know of another instance where...?
- Do you know someone like...?
- How would you...?