

Helping your child to develop as a reader.

This is intended to offer ideas to guide discussion when reading with your child. It is not an exhaustive list; nor do we intend you to ask every single question each time your child reads... just dip in and out!

Decoder Questions

While we recognise that the majority of children learn to read through a phonics driven approach, here are some other strategies and prompts that can be used with children when tackling unfamiliar words.

Phonic knowledge – both segmenting and blending sounds

Think of a possible meaning from context

Read on to the end of the sentence

Break the word down into known parts

Use meaning of known parts of words

Does it look like any word I know already?

Use the diagram/picture clues if appropriate

Look the word up in a dictionary

Read text together before rereading independently

Does the sentence make sense if that is the word?

Comprehender Questions

Retrieving information...

Find the sentence/word/phrase which shows that/means that ... (Which is the word that lets you know the country was small?)

How / what / where / when questions. (What colour was the boy's dog? In what year did the ship set sail?)

Put these events in order.

Who is telling the story?

What was the first thing that happened?

What happened next?

What happened before / after ...?

Did he/she ... before or after ...?

How did it all end?

Structure of the text ...

How is the page set out?

What is the purpose of the bold writing at the top of the page? (Title) –

Extend to:

Subheadings, Cartoons, Charts Tables

Captions, Diagrams, Editorial comment, Bubbles

Glossary Italics / bold writing within text

Why has the writer chosen to use any of the above?

What is the purpose of this writing and who is the audience?

How do you know that this is a letter / dictionary / glossary / poetry / cartoon strip etc.?

What are the main points in each paragraph? If you were to give them a sub-heading, what would it be?

How can we use skimming (looking for overall message) and scanning (looking for specific details) here to help us find the answer?

How can the index/contents/sub-headings help us to find information?

Is it true or false that ...

Find an example of a page that has an interesting layout. Why have you chosen this one?

Reading Detective Questions

Why did ... do ...?
What do you think about ...?
What is the author trying to explain?
What in the text makes you think that ...?
Give me another way in which ...
Find the word/s that suggest/s ...
If you were the character what would you do / say / think / feel ...?
What clues can you find to tell you about ...?
How is the character feeling?
Why is the character feeling like this?
How is this situation similar to ...?
How is the situation different from?
Explain your views on ...
What is your opinion? Justify / convince the reader.
How is the general mood / atmosphere created?
How is ... feeling at this stage?
How could ...'s feelings change?
What do you think the author feels about ...?
What tells you he/she feels like this?
Find two reasons ...
Where does it imply that?
What might that character write in their diary that night after all that had happened?
How would the other character have re-told that event from their point of view?
What do you predict is going to happen next? Why do you think that?
What do you think had already happened before? Why?
How did the character's actions affect the outcome of the story?
What did ... mean when they said ... ?
Why is ... an appropriate title for this poem?
What assumptions have you already made?

Language Lover Questions

Why did the author choose that word?
What effect does that word have?
Find the word / line / sentence, which suggests ...
What is the purpose of the word choice?
What word would you choose?
How does the author describe ... and why does he/she describe it in this way?
Give me an alternative word that would fit into this sentence.
Can you find a word that means the same as ...?
What effect is the author trying to convey?
What feelings do the words create?
What picture does this put into your mind?
Why has the author used a question?
What has the author used in the text to make this character funny/sad/angry/tense? How effective is this?
How has the author used the text to make the situation or event angry/tense? Comment on the effect.
Think of another more/less emotive word you can substitute here. What different effect would your word have?
As a reader, how do you feel about...? How has the author created this feeling?
Which words and phrases tell you that the author is describing...?
Comment on the technical language..... and.....? Explain why the author used it.
What words/phrases indicate the author's attitude?
How does the author show that... is important?
Why has the author used repetition? What effect does it have?
Why have exclamation marks/italics/capitals been used? How does this affect the way you read it? What effect does this create?
What is the author's style? What features help you identify this? Why is this style effective in this text?
What words give you the impression that... ?
How has the author been humorous?
What words, phrases or features make you think that?
How would you explain this... in similar terms/to a younger child?

Responder Questions

What is the story about?
What is the genre of this story?
What is the theme of the story / text?
The author says ... do you agree? Give reasons.
Does this remind you of any other story?
What is the moral of the story?
What do you think the author believes? Justify.
Have you learnt anything from the story?
Did you like this story? Give reasons.
What did the character(s) learn from the story?
How have the characters changed?
How does the author create ... atmosphere?
Why do you think the author has been successful? (e.g. for creating suspense or being persuasive)
What would you have done if you were that character at this point in the story?
What if ...? (What if the step-mother let her go to the ball?)
Which word/s do you think engages the reader the most on this page?
Why has the writer used repetitive structures?
Why did the author choose this setting?
What is the purpose of this particular paragraph/character/change?
Why has the author used humour at this point?
Look at the caption and diagram. What does it explain to you? Why does the writer choose to include them?
What impression do you think the writer wants to give of this character? Why? What effect does this have on other characters?
In this paragraph, what effect does the author want to have on the reader?
What is the author's purpose in this piece of text in relation to the plot?
From the opening section of the text, what is the writer's opinion of school/the war/animals etc.? How does this affect the story/plot/characters/setting etc.?
Which other author handles time in this was e.g. flashbacks; dreams? Which stories have openings like this?
Who is the advert trying to persuade?

Big Reader Questions

How is this similar to other books by this author?
How can we tell this book was set in (Roman) times?
Why was (Dickens) talking about how bad it was for the poor people?
Why is this story a typical fairy tale?
Where do you think this story is set?
Does knowing when/where the story is set make a difference to how we read it?
Would readers from the country that the story is from react to it differently than us?
Can you think of another story which has a similar theme; e.g. good over evil; weak over strong; wise over foolish?
Where there is a different cultural setting - where is the story set? What are the features of this setting e.g. language, environment or attitudes?
What difference does the culture make to how the characters act/react in the story? What does this tell us about the way of life within this different culture?
Which other stories deal with similar issues e.g. social; moral; cultural?
In other poems by (same author), what common features, such as themes or language, do you notice?
What do you know about this period in history that helps you to understand the writer's second paragraph/ the author's meaning/ the character's feelings etc.?
How is the heroine/hero in this story similar to others you have read about?