

Guidance for Schoolreaders Volunteers: Early Years & Key Stage 1

Supporting in the early stages of reading

When reading with a child: give them time, let them attempt unknown words, help them sound out the letters and use the pictures for clues. Ask the child questions about the story when it is appropriate.

When you hear the child read:

- Let them hold the book and point to the words as they read.
- Allow time for discussion before they turn over the page. Talk about the pictures, what other information can they find out from those. What do they think might happen next?
- Let the child retell the story to you at the end. Ask them if they enjoyed it and what their favourite part or character was and why?

Helping the child read a word

- Ask which letter sounds they recognise and ask the child to “sound out” the word. Then ask them to combine the sounds together (this is referred to as “blending”). This may need to be done a few times before the child hears the correct word.
- If they have read the word before, remind them that they read it on a previous page and show them if necessary – this may prompt them to remember it.
- Ask the child if there are any parts of the word that they recognise and get them to tell you what that part is, for example, they may recognise the word “cup” in “cupcake” but not be able to read the second part of the word. Getting the children to break the word into parts they are familiar with is known as “chunking”. You can then help the child to work out the other parts of the word, or tell them, and allow them to blend the “chunks” back together.
- Once they have got the word ask them to re-read the sentence to check that it makes sense.
- Encourage the child to look carefully at the punctuation in the passage. If they are not using this when reading, model reading the passage to them without punctuation and then again with – you can exaggerate the punctuation to show them what a difference it makes. Ask the child how the punctuation made a difference and then ask them to read the sentences using the punctuation.

Asking questions

At this stage it is useful to ask more specific questions about what they are reading.

You can use questions like these to check and clarify whether the child has understood what they have read:

- What happened at the beginning / end of the story?
- Where is the story set? / Tell me about some of the places in the story...
- Did you enjoy the book? Why / why not? What was your favourite part / the funniest part / the saddest part? Why?
- What type of book is it (fiction/non-fiction) – what were the clues to help you decide?

- Tell me three things that you remember from the story / that you have learnt from this book...
- Use why / what / how / when words at the start of your questions – why do you think the... / what do you think ... means? / how did the... / what happened...

These are questions you could use to talk about the type of language the author uses:

- Can you find a word in the book / passage / sentence that means... / which words describe...?
- Why do you think the author used the word ... to describe ...?
- Can you find an adjective / describing word on this page?
- Which word told you that... (Johnny was looking forward to going to the park / it was about to start raining), how... (Johnny was feeling at the start / middle / a certain part of the story?), what was the character worried / happy about?
- Where did ... happen / how did ... happen?

What do I write in the reading record? (if you are asked to fill it out)

Comments in the reading record are extremely helpful for the teacher and also as a link between the Schoolreader and school.

The following list is not exhaustive but offers some suggestions that may be appropriate:

- Read very enthusiastically today and worked hard at reading some new words.
- Read fluently and used some good expression.
- Sounded out the unfamiliar words well and was able to explain what they meant / we talked about the meaning of them.
- Was able to retell parts of the story and understand how the characters felt during...
- I enjoyed listening to ... read today.
- Remembered to pause at commas and full stops - great job.
- Showed great understanding of the character/storyline.