

Helping Year 6 pupils develop their reading.

To supplement the reading activities in school, it is useful if pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home- both for pleasure and in a more focused, analytical way.

Reading for pleasure

Try to share a love of stories.

Why not have your own mini family book club. (Share reading the same book and discuss it to agree/disagree on characters, plot, effectiveness of the ending etc.)

Let your child see that you read for pleasure/leisure- even reading the news counts.

Speed Reading

Pupils will also need to read pieces of text quickly.

There are 2 key speed reading skills:

Scanning- reading the whole text as quickly as possible. (Imagine running your eyes across the whole text aiming to just take in the main ideas and not reading every word.)

Skimming- looking to skim into the text to find a key word, phrase or place in the text. (Imagine your eyes just bouncing across the text, like a stone skimming, to find just a key word or phrase.)

These are skills that can easily be practiced.

Play a game- how quickly can you read a piece of text, then turn it over and tell someone the main points in the writing. (Scanning Practice)

Give your child a key word or phrase to find in a text- how quickly can they put their finger on the right part of the text.

Analyzing text

Below is an example of how you can encourage children to be more analytical in what they read.

It is followed by some suggested question stems that make good starting points when checking their understanding.

Example of discussing texts with children

Text:

“Let’s get the dinner on shall we?” said Matthew’s mum.

“What are we having, Mum?” Matthew asked her.

“Cottage pie and peas,” she replied cheerily.

Matthew grinned from ear to ear. Mum smiled back at him.

“I tell you what,” she said, “why don’t you go and learn your spellings for twenty minutes before we have dinner?”

The smile on Matthew’s face disappeared.

“Do I have to?” he whined. Matthew thought practising spellings was a bit like watching paint dry.

Retrieval of information

Example question: What was Matthew’s mum making for dinner?

Expected answer: Cottage pie and peas.

Inference

Example question: How does Matthew feel about eating cottage pie and peas? How do you know?

Expected answer: He loves cottage pie and peas. We know this because he grins from ear to ear when his mum tells him that is what she is making for dinner.

Deduction

Example question: What do you think Matthew might do next? Explain why you think this.

Possible expected answers: There could be several answers to this, but the person sharing the text with the child would be looking for the child to have thought about what Matthew might do, based on what they have read.

For example: I think Matthew will go and watch TV instead of doing his spellings because he doesn't want to do his spellings.

At this point try to encourage use of PEE [Point, Explanation, Example/Evidence] by asking an additional question.

How do you know he doesn't want to do his spellings?

Expected answer: It says, 'The smile disappears from his face.' This shows he has gone from being happy about the meal to sad when he realises his mum wants him to do his spellings when he's finished eating.

Opinion

Example question: Do you think Matthew's mum is a kind person? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Answer: Yes, I think Matthew's mum is a kind person because she is cooking his favourite meal. We also know she wants him to do well at school, which is why she asks him to practise his spellings. (Note expanded answer showing PEE)

Commenting on effectiveness of language

Example question: 'Matthew thought practising spellings was a bit like watching paint dry.'

Why is this a good way to show how Matthew feels about his spellings?

Answer: The author is comparing spelling practice to watching paint dry to show how boring Matthew finds it.

At this point encourage expansion of the explanation.

Possible question: Why watching paint dry?

Possible answer: Well watching paint dry would be boring because it takes ages to dry and it dries by itself. You don't need to do anything, it just does it so watching it happen would be really boring.

Question stems and examples of questions to check areas of understanding.

Literal/Recall Questions

What does..... mean ?

What does 'smartly' mean?

What happened at ?

What happened at the beginning?

Describe

Describe the Giant. Describe the house they found.

Which word told you that?

Which word told you that this is not the first comic strip about Souperkid?

Inference and Deduction Questions

How did ?

How did Lyddie know the others had reached safety?

What words tell us.....?

What words tell us the writer of this letter is a child?

What does think?

What does the author think about the Roman army?

Structure of the text questions

Why is in?

Why is this paragraph in bold print / italics?

Why are used?

Why are the subheadings on page 9 used?

Writer's use of language and impact on the reader

Why does the writer compare .. to ..?

Why does the writer compare Hadrian's Wall to a molehill?

Why did the author use?

Why did the author use this simile?

How does ... help you to understand?

How does the comparison help you to understand the behaviour of the character?

Was this text trying to ...?

Was this text trying to persuade you to watch the film?

Does the author like? How do you know?

Does the author like spiders? How do you know?

Which text do you think is more/most effective?

Both of these texts try to make you care about whales. Which is more effective?