

tips and
helpful
information

suggested
titles and
links

ABC's of Reading Comprehension

Using Read-Alouds

Pre K through Grade 1

for Parents and Teachers

By Carolyn Wilhelm of the Wise Owl Factory


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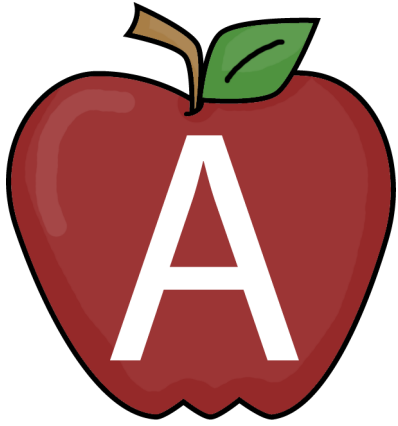


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A is for **always** have books on hand!

Good books children own and **love** should be kept at home or in the car. **New** books should be checked out from the library. Parents and teachers need to be aware of and use the many teachable moments that accompany read-aloud time.

Parents and teachers usually read to children which is wonderful. However, opportunities to develop reading comprehension can easily be lost if this time is not used to its best advantage. This document has suggestions from A to Z to help parents and teachers make the most of read-aloud time such as asking questions, pointing out nonfiction text features, discussing books, developing thinking skills such as inference, and more. I hope you will find many of the suggestions helpful. These ideas are ones I used with my own children and students at school, and are easily incorporated into read-aloud time.

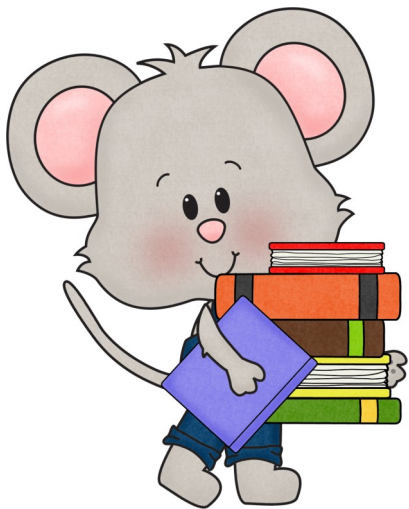
Books, books, books . . . where to get books?

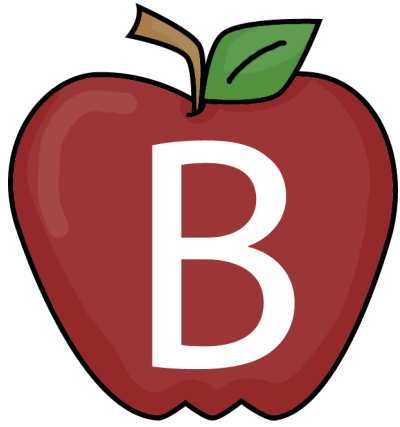
Some well loved books need to be owned by the child, as part of their identity and comfort. As children grow up, they may want to save special books from their childhood. Someday they may read these books to their own children. Children need to be involved with book selection, as do the adults who read to them. Books can be purchased at stores, school book fairs, and even garage sales.

Books from the library need to be checked out with the children's help at least as often as the renewal time for home use. Library books are usually available for up to three weeks. *(check with your local library for exact return times)*

For themes and units at school, children should help find some of the books using the school library. If the children are included in part of the selection process for classroom books, it increases their interest in the subject area or theme being taught. It also models how they can find books in their neighborhood libraries.

[RIF \(Reading is Fundamental\)](#) has a "vision of a literate America in which all children have access to books and discover the joys and value of reading." This is one of many organizations which helps children in need own books because literacy is so important.

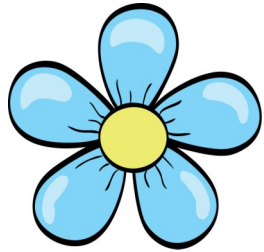




B is for big words and figurative language. Don't shy away from these opportunities for learning!

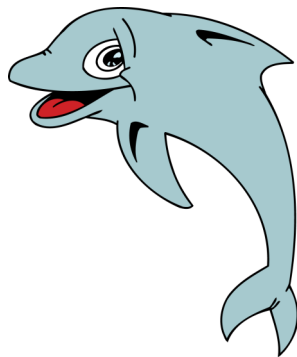
"un*believable*"

Keep Close to Nature's Heart



The sea, once it casts its spell,
holds one in its net of wonder forever.

~Jacques Yves Cousteau

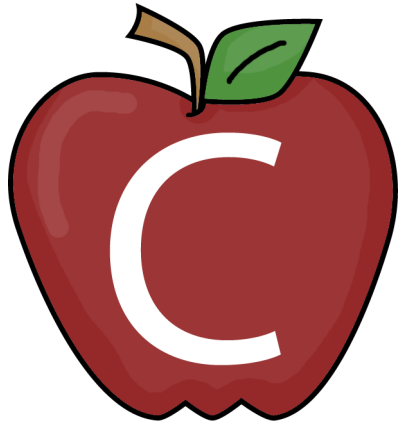


When we read aloud to children, there often are words or phrases that the children will not understand. When children are very young, they listen which is great exposure to the language they will someday use. Children need to hear varied vocabulary and sentence structure to someday master their own language skills. Do not avoid these types of books. Even the language in Little Golden Books can have lengthy sentences and vocabulary children do not understand.

Later, children will begin to question words and phrases as we read, and this offers teachable moments to explain what the words mean. This helps children expand their vocabularies. If you are pressed for time, leave the more complicated books for when things are more relaxed.

Did you know: *"Differences in the amount of cumulative experience children had ... were strongly linked to differences at age three in children's rates of vocabulary growth, vocabulary use, and general accomplishments and strongly linked to differences in school performance at age nine."*

Reading to children prior to age three is extremely important. See this [1995 language development study by Hart and Risley](#) that has been replicated by other researchers. Take the information to heart! Reading to children helps develop school abilities and IQ.



C is for comprehension and conversations — talk, talk, talk about books, stories, and language.

Why did the boy have to chop wood?



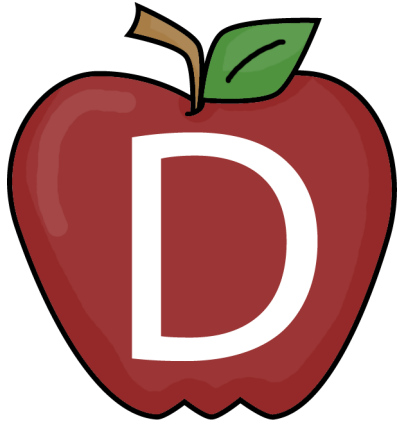
A long time ago people didn't have gas or electricity in their homes, and they had to burn wood to heat their homes.

When we discuss books with young children, they are learning about the world. Many topics are brought up that may not be raised surface any other way. This **doesn't** mean asking a list of "comprehension questions" at the end of a story, but allowing the children to say what they are thinking about as we read. Later this will pay off when the children think while reading, which is very important. Perhaps a good rule would be that the first time a story is read aloud no talking is allowed, and during re-reading questions and comments are encouraged.



This is very true when children are finally able to read to themselves, as well. No easy books have very interesting stories, sentences, or vocabulary. It leaves the child's reading life high and dry to discontinue reading aloud at the very time their [brains are developing so rapidly](#) (click skip on the ad). They need to practice reading at their own levels, but parents and teachers need to also read aloud the more interesting and informative stories, sentences, and vocabulary. Some children who are not read to do not realize how interesting reading can be until they are in upper grades, high school, or even college. They miss out on years of great entertainment and learning. It is not enough for the teacher at school to read to the children, some of this must happen at home for the children to realize the book has an actual story and it isn't just the teacher talking.

See this [article from the US Department of Education](#) for more information.



D is for digging deeper, especially with nonfiction books. There are many reading strategies that help develop reading comprehension including: [inferring](#), [synthesis](#), [asking questions](#), and more. A web site from Wisconsin Department of Education called "[Into the Book](#)" has short video explanations for students and teachers. The site is free and has a wealth of resources. Look around the site for dozens of free printables and various online activities for children.



In first grade digging deeper is usually taught using nonfiction books and looking at nonfiction text features. This is something teachers and parents can do by simply pointing out captions under photos, bold face type section headers, the glossary, the index, inserted sections showing maps or quotes, and by just guiding the children's attention to these features. We do not expect them to NAME the features, just begin noticing them. The different colors and kinds of type can be noticed in some fiction stories where the words that are spoken louder are larger, and whispered words are in small type. Stories that use different size fonts are often included in basal reading series and weekly newspapers for children, such as *Time for Kids*.

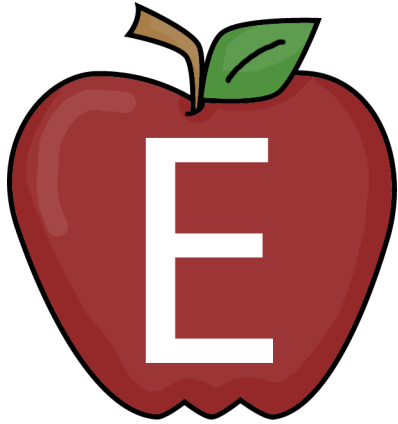
Digger the Dog



Nonfiction text features and different sizes of fonts can also be pointed out when using web sites appropriate for children, as on KIDSITES.ORG/Science.

Here is a [free K-4 lesson from Read Write Think](#) that utilizes digging deeper for comprehension of the story, *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. Although a fiction story, it lends itself to this reading strategy. I highly recommend the [READ WRITE THINK](#) web site because it has hundreds of free resources for teachers and home schools.

Here is a free [one page PDF about DIGGING DEEPER](#) that I posted on the Readinglady.com web site.



E is for evaluation, and realize children are often evaluating things that go on around them.



[Free SMART Board lesson](#) for children in grade 1 to help them understand the rubrics they must fill out about themselves.

If you need the **free** SMART Board interactive, [click here](#), even at home.



I'm sure you have tried to pull the wool over a child's eyes, hide a gift, or pretend you don't know what is going on about a birthday party or event. It isn't that easy to do, right? Children are suspicious because their brains are going all the time. We may let down sometimes and rest, but they are always busy thinking. They compare and contrast, figure out many things, ask questions, and make judgments for themselves.

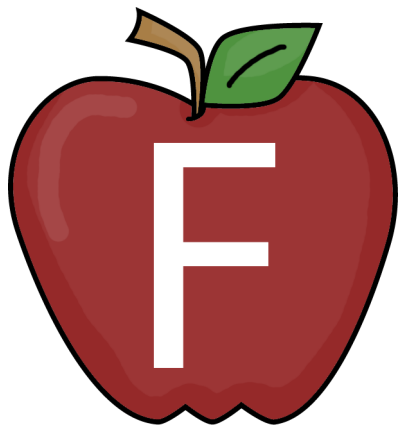
This is all good as children have to make many decisions on their own and by themselves, at school, at a friend's house, outside playing, and in life. We wouldn't want them unable to think and make decisions!

However, children have to be able to evaluate themselves to really know if they are following rules at school and to know if they are trying their best in class or at home. In first grade, children fill out rubrics on their work for math and reading units. These are shared with parents at conference time.

It is important to ask evaluating type questions when we read aloud to children, such as:

- Do you think Arthur (or other character) should have done that?*
- Would you have done that? Why or why not?*
- Is Binky Barnes (or other character) being nice? Why or why not?*
- Should Curious George leave his apartment/cage/area? Did he break a rule?*
- Was Bartholomew Cubbins doing anything wrong? Why do you think hats kept appearing on his head?*
- How did Tacky help save the day?*
- What did the Berenstain Bears learn in this story?*
- Did you learn something to do or not to do from this story?*

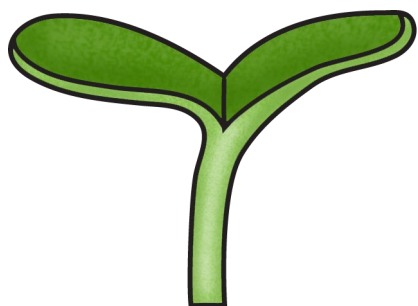
Blog post with [questions to ask](#) about *THE WAY BACK HOME* by Oliver Jeffers



F is for follow the child's interests and strengths when finding stories, books, and learning activities.



How we want to teach our children and lead them to what we think they should know. Usually however, we realize children are very much their own people with their own interests and opinions and it is much easier to follow their likes and dislikes as we nudge them toward learning.



You like gardening and your child likes plants? Perfect! You can plan little experiences so the child will notice how seeds are planted and how they grow. You hate gardening? Seeds can just be planted in cups at home, and experiences might be limited to walking through green houses and other people's gardens. You can find books about plants at the library to read and share.

At school this is tricky as teachers have to cleverly get the class interested in the units to be taught though not everyone will share enthusiasm for rocks or polar bears. Pictures, art projects, or a bulletin board may create the interest necessary for most students.



So what can be done to arouse the interest of a child in a topic they might not naturally like? Books are one answer. If you leave books on a certain topic around the home or class, children may wonder about the covers or pictures inside the book. Reading an entertaining story may create some questions the child would like to answer. For the most part at home though, it is easiest to plan learning along the natural ideas of the children. It is best not to force children to learn.



G is for glossary, be sure to point it out.

Point out the index, the copyright, the name of the author, the name of the illustrator, and even the page numbers.



Adults who want children to be good readers need to point out parts of the book to expose children to these features. We can say, "The copyright is from 2008, the year you were born!" We can say things like, "The author is Chris Van Allsburg, and his first name is like your friend's name, isn't it?" This is just part of helping the child to understand books have some specific expected components everyone understands. Nonfiction books that teachers prefer for the research projects in primary grades include an index, a glossary, a table of contents, and even a list of books for further reading or web sites to check out.



We help children when we use an index for them, and they can watch us model the process of looking something up. If the child has an animal book and wants to see the tiger page, we could look it up in the index and find the page. How simple it is to look at the index page, point to the word tiger, say it is on page 62 (or whatever), and then turn to that page. This modeling will allow children to do better in school when this skill is first introduced as they will have some background knowledge. If your child is helping you cook, you could look up the recipe in an index and demonstrate how it works as well. What a nice learning experience for a child!





H is for higher level thinking skills and “I wonder thoughts.” Be sure to ask thinking questions!



At the emergent reading level questions about the text are easily answered and not difficult. There isn't too much of a story line and not that much to wonder about in first reader books. That is why children still need to be read at this level in order to keep their thinking skills active. Young children who are read to can answer, ask, and think about higher levels of thinking skill questions. We need to keep reading and discussing books with them.

This is a link to a quick view page of [sample questions and different levels of questioning](#).

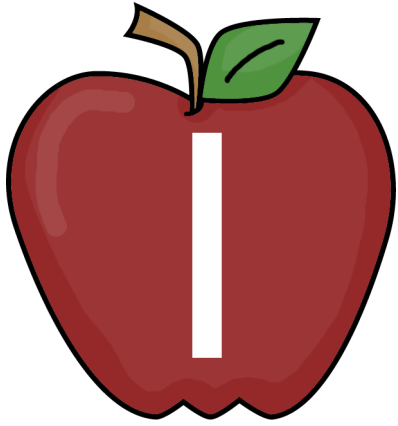
Basically, we need to **ask** questions which ask:

- How?
- Why?
- Can you show me the words that prove your answer?

And children need to **answer** with sentences which use words such as:

- Because . . .
- I learned . . .
- I figured out . . .
- I can prove that by reading this paragraph . . .
- I can justify that by reading this supporting sentence . . .
- I used to think but now I know . . .
- Right here it says . . .





I is for inferring! Did you know beanie babies can help teach children reading comprehension strategies? Try an iguana beanie baby for inferring.

The reading strategy of inferring is a thinking skill used to figure out what the author of the story really means. Reading is more than just the words on the page.

[Free Power Point](#) for an inferring lesson for K-1 based on *Great Wolf and the Good Woodsman* by Helen Hoover which opens right here. This is a story where the animals are missing their Christmas dinner because the Good Woodsman fell in his cabin and got hurt. The animals help him.

What do the words really mean?

Author Words + My Thinking = Inferring

The wonderful picture clues in books help us figure out stories.

Non-fiction Reading & Inferring

LEARNING GOALS:
Discuss life habits and how we learn to read for information.
Review non-fiction conventions (text and title) and what we research.
Read non-fiction books written in a story format. Compare text and facts from these books, too!
Select a non-fiction page with at least 3 facts.
Write a pretendational STORY that gives facts that are not simply a list.

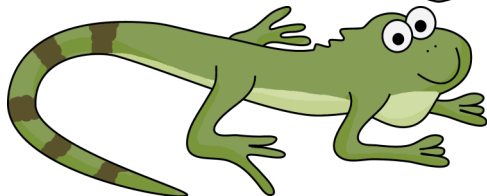
We can infer from reading nonfiction stories about animals. (multi-genre stories about animals with facts and a story line)

Children use the inferring strategy when they are using their imaginations in play, figuring out what the people around them really mean, and when being told stories. They are able to extend stories when they play, draw, and/or write. Pointing out this thinking skill helps them apply it in academic settings. [Children can lose their creative thinking](#) in later years if we don't encourage them to continue to think on their own.

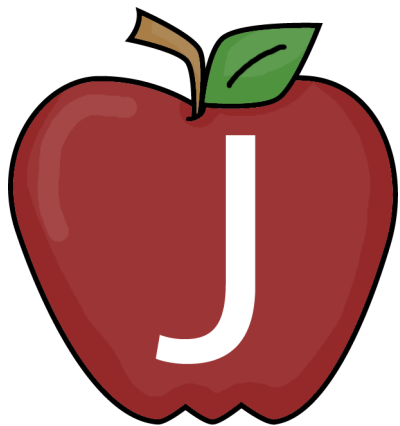
[Free PDF](#) based on the book: *Beaver At Long Pond*, by Lindsay Barrett George

[Link to my blog post](#) about this book. Again, if your children aren't writing on worksheets or you prefer not to use the worksheet, simply ask the questions aloud to discuss the book and practice inferring.

Iggy the Inferring Iguana



"At the University of New Mexico, neuroscientist Rex Jung reportedly has concluded that those who diligently practice creative activities learn to recruit their brains' creative networks quicker and better," according to the above thinking article link.



J is for justice. How many times do children say things are not “fair?” Children know when things are fair or not and will voice their opinions loudly.

First graders who are demanding fairness are showing good brain development according to this [online article](#). All children have some idea of justice; adults have to be careful to treat the children as equally as possible. They will hold you to what you say.

At the same time, most children want to win, be first, or be special. It is tricky for adults to maintain equal treatment of all the children in their care. This is a [link to a fairness experiment in the BBC news](#) with very young children and puppets, which shows young children understand fairness.

Books and stories are a great way to give a child a view of life beyond their own immediate world and concerns. They begin to see things from other points of view and to understand life is complex, and situations may have many factors to consider when thinking about fairness. This is a common theme in children’s stories.

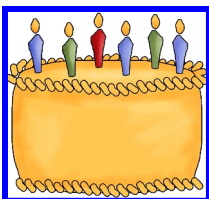
Cam Jansen and the Dinosaur Game by David A. Adler is a story where one of the children at a birthday party cheats to win a prize. This is a [free Power Point](#) (it opens right here) for teaching problem/solution in this lesson, which could also be used at home. Stories where someone does something wrong will arouse indignity in children and also give us an opportunity to discuss their ideas of fairness and justice.

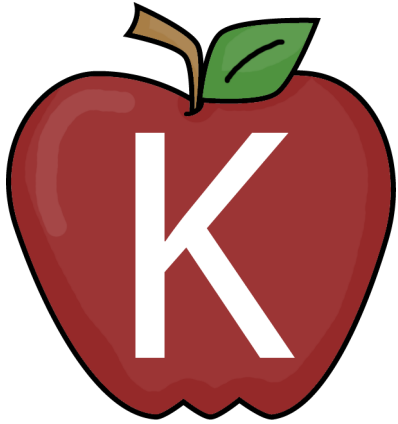
The series of books including [Diary of a Worm](#) show some sibling rivalry, as do the [Arthur](#) series of books. It is easier to discuss situations in stories than discuss what is going on at home, which leads to a more mature understanding of justice and injustice in the world.

FAIR means everyone getting what they need, not everyone getting the exact same thing.

“You get what you get and you don’t throw a fit!” is sometimes said.

Stories can help children understand what is involved with fairness if we read and discuss the stories with them. They may miss these lessons when left to read alone on their own at a young age.

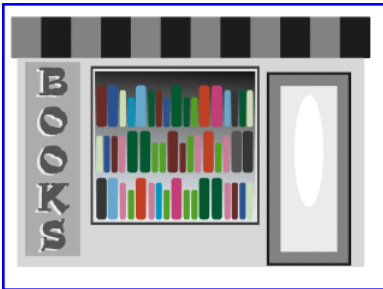




K is for kids selecting their own books (and every child should own some of his or her own books)

It is important for children to see adults reading books, newspapers, and magazines, then talking to each other about what they are reading. This helps children understand the value of the written world. They [need to own their own books](#) whether from a book store, a library sale, or yard sale. They also need to check out their own books from the library, which may be a limited amount but is important. Schools are moving toward [allowing children more book choices](#). The teacher or parent should approve the choices.

Children choose books based on their interests and how they see themselves in the world. They choose books on what they feel is important in their lives. Choice allows them to try out different ideas and become more interested or abandon the ideas, as when a child checks out firefighting or sports books.



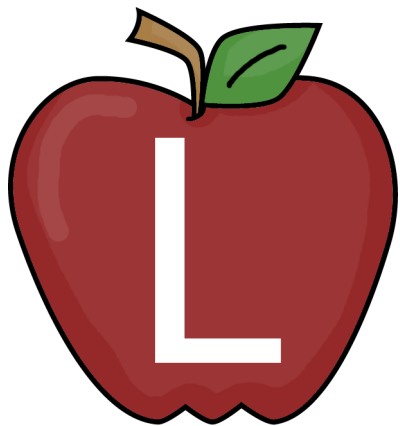
Parenting magazine has a list of [25 must have books for baby's library](#). There are many such book lists online. Kern County Library has a [list of 100 books](#) children should know (not necessarily own). [Grandparents.com](#) has a list of [20 must read](#) children's books.



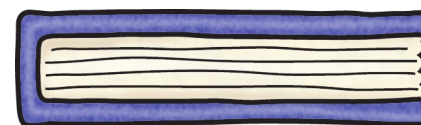
The books children own should provide comfort, closeness, night time stories, and enjoyment. They are the **loved** books. The books they check out from the library are temporary stories children think they might like to learn more about. Usually library books are more for thinking and building knowledge than the picture books that are owned. Library books are the **liked** and **exploratory** books.



Children need to help choose owned and library books, but also enjoy books selected by parents and teachers.



L is for library



As a teacher, I would advise parents to read to their children. Sometimes people would say, "What would I read to my child? I don't know what to read!"

Just take the child to the library children's book section, sit in a chair, and let your child bring you 3 to 5 books. Take the books home and read them aloud to your child. Your child can do the choosing. Elementary school librarians allow children to select their own books because it is important.

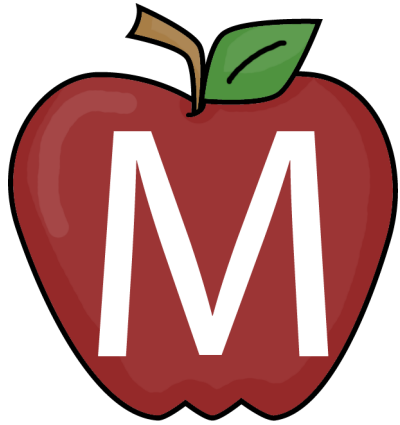
Make library trips easy on yourself. Be prepared with a library book shelf, bag, or plastic bag to keep the books in when not being read so they won't be lost. You will be ready to return the books without having to round them up at the last minute, and it will help avoid library fines.

Your child may select a book for its cover which has subject matter not appropriate for a young child. There are beautiful picture books with stories about the Civil War, World War II, and similar topics. This is tricky as the child will think the book is beautiful, but you don't want to check it out or read it aloud. So decide on a plan to handle this sort of situation saying something like, "This is a book we can read when you are older." Discuss *abandoning* books, and that sometimes adults do this also. It is easy to think a book has a great story, begin reading, and be disappointed. This can happen to anyone. Be ready for this issue to arise. Children judge a book by its cover!

In the classroom (especially) or at home, a piece of colored yarn could be tied around the spine through the middle of the book identifying it as one that needs to be returned and not kept. This takes a few minutes but is worth it to keep track of where the books came from.

Lost book? At home, check between the bed and wall in the child's bedroom! At school, check the child's desk, cubby, or backpack. First graders are sometimes unaware their library books were in their backpacks.





M is for mistakes to avoid!

Unfortunately, although we want the best for our children, it is easy to make mistakes. The following true stories happened to parents I have known.

Teachers tell parents to read to their children. One of my student's parents insisted they were reading three books a day to their child at home, which was true. The student did not make much reading progress in first grade. We had several conferences. Finally, in May the parents said, "We read every night! The *same* three books every night before bed!" The *same* three books each night are boring and will help a child sleep, not learn. Make sure books are varied, not used to help a child sleep, and that they are interesting. The child should help select some of the books. Most elementary children check out two books a week from the school library. Those books could have been read to this student. A key for students to thrive in first grade reading is being read to at home from a young age. It is especially important before age 3 and continuing until the child is reading chapter books independently.



Listen to your child read when she begins to read her first words, and do not be busy doing something else. Pay attention to the words. In first grade, we assigned ten minutes of oral reading each school night. Students were supposed to write the book titles themselves as this would also help the student with emergent writing skills. Another student did not make progress in first grade, and this child was actually very upset about his lack of progress. He thought everyone else was a better reader than he was, and it was true. The mother insisted she was listening to the child read. It was true, she was listening. However, she was listening as she ironed or cooked. She wasn't looking at the words at all! The child was making up the story as he practiced "reading." This will not help a child make progress. Teachers at school know if parents are actually sitting by children and looking at the words on the page. If a child makes up stories when reading aloud to the teacher, we know the homework is not being done correctly at home. This child was not read to at home and was a struggling reader in second grade. No book list was kept so writing skills were not practiced. Children in this situation may be behind in school for years.



A big mistake to avoid is telling words when the beginning reader hesitates. The teacher at school will know if your child is being told words as the child will stop several times in a passage as he or she reads to the teacher. This will slow reading progress immensely. The child will learn to sit and wait for help. When early fluent readers read and encounter words they do not know, they use [strategies to help word solve](#). (see page 26) [Children who can self-correct are really on their way in reading!](#)



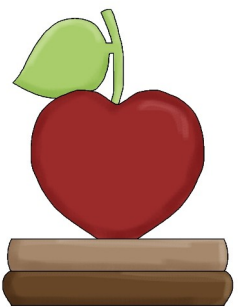
N is for *not only* word-calling
and
not only night reading

He ... went ...
to ... the ... car.



What is word calling?

After wonderful experiences hearing stories and being read to, many parents stop reading to the child. The emergent reader child takes over his or her own reading life. Books suddenly become “boring,” causing children to not want to read. This is because emergent reader books (leveled reading books) are not interesting, and amount to “word calling.” There isn’t much sense in many beginning books or sets of sight words on flash cards.



However as parents we are so happy as the child is reading! The child knows many words! We smile, clap, and praise the child who is calling out words. Not much story or information is in books until about level 15-16. Even at that time children can struggle with reading on their own. School is “boring,” reading is “hard,” and children may not want to do reading homework. I wouldn’t want to, either. Many children are embarrassed by the “baby” books given to the beginners. Keep reading interesting for children until independently reading chapter books and have engaging reading materials at about third grade. Play games with sight word flash cards when they are necessary to learn.

the

it is



Aren’t parents supposed to read at night? We are so busy!

Parents, reading at night is to comfort and help a child feel secure and sleepy. It is part of a bedtime routine. Reading in bed isn’t terrible, just begin reading before the child is nearly asleep. Start while the child is still alert and learning. The reading can begin while the child is still fairly awake and continue until the night-time books are read. Think of it like exercise with a cool-down routine: begin with books that exercise the brain, and cool-down with books that help the child feel secure and sleepy. Reading only at night with a sleepy child does not count as quality reading time.




O is for about online reading and language games, which are fine under certain conditions! Just don't let the computer replace the parent or teacher reading time. Computers enhance learning not replace it.





There are wonderful reading and language programs and games online. Your child might like many of these and feel happy about learning! So many children are given video games instead of learning games. However there are learning games which are very engaging and interesting.

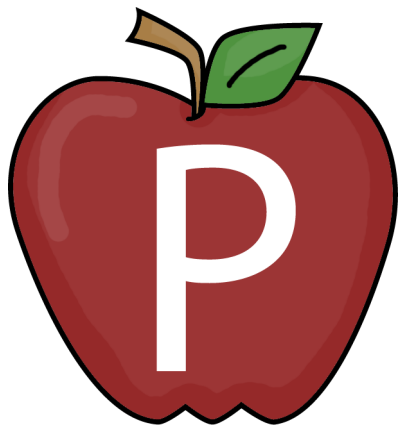
INTO THE BOOK is free and has [reading strategy comprehension games](#) for children similar to video games! Children enjoy playing these games over and over. There are games for: inferring, text connections, synthesizing, summarizing, and more! Try it yourself in the child area, you will be amazed!

 **Starfall for Kids** Maybe you know about Starfall for Kids, but there is a very helpful page many parents and teachers miss. There are printables you can use at school and at home on this wonderful page: [Scope and Sequence](#). Scroll down to find all the fabulous printable resources!



 **NatGeo Games** [National Geographic pages](#) engage children and encourage them to read to find out more about animals, different places, and play online games. While these pages are not specifically for reading, children using the site will notice many new words.

 **FOSS Science Kits** Foss science kits have free online interactives. This [link is to the K-2 modules](#). Owning the program isn't necessary.



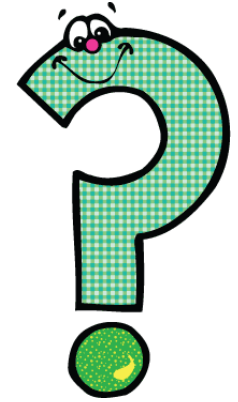
P is for parent laps are the best place to learn! Literally or just near by, physical closeness helps children enjoy and learn more from the reading experience.





Q is for question asking!

Parents and teachers get tired of questions so do this when refreshed and ready to answer!



[Asking questions](#) helps readers understand stories. Eventually children should do this in their head as they read so they are reading for meaning. Good readers do this naturally, and so we need to allow children to ask questions during or right after read-alouds to help them understand all the parts of the story. In fact, we have to encourage them to ask questions by reading books that are somewhat puzzling, such as the following:

Questioning Owl



[The Boy in the Garden](#) by Allen Say, [free PDF](#)

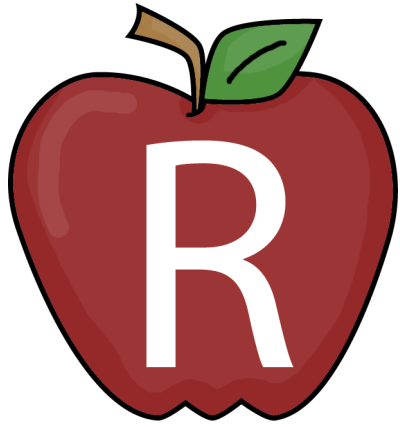
[The Bicycle Man](#) by Allen Say, [free PDF](#)

[Charlie Anderson](#) by Barbara Abercrombie, [free PDF](#)

[A Photographic Fantasy: Stranger in the Woods](#) by Carl R. Sams II and Jean Stoick, [free PDF](#)

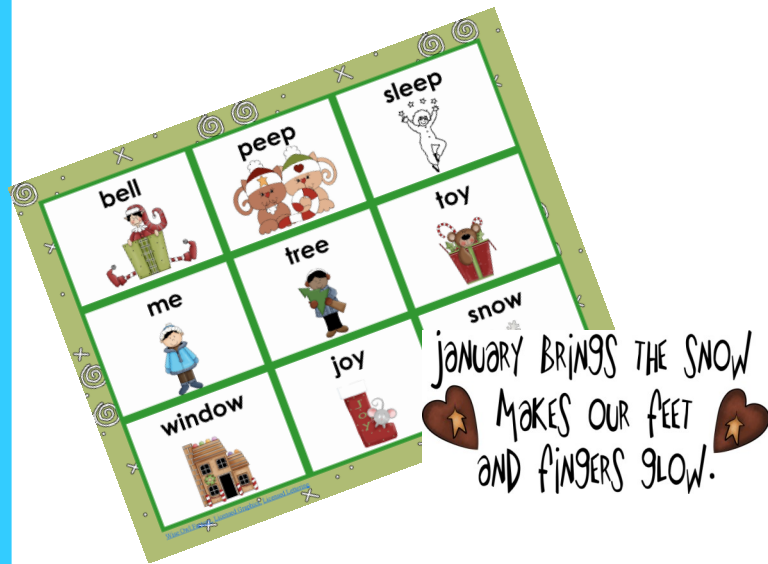
[Books by Chris Van Allsburg](#), [free PDF for teachers and parents](#)

*Note: If your children are too young to write answers asked on the printables, just read them aloud and have the children answer orally. The book title links to my blog post, and the free PDFs will open here.



R is for rhyming games in the car or waiting time, not just nursery rhymes.

Any waiting or travel time can be filled with mental math or word games to help increase your child's thinking ability. It is a shame to waste time that could, if the children are willing, be put to educational use. In a waiting room most people will not be annoyed by such games played quietly.



"I Spy" questions about something in the room that rhymes with air (chair), pest (desk), ill (pencil), and so on, could be asked. The children will soon be asking you questions.

When in the car, a word could be given with everyone contributing a rhyming word until it gets too hard. Then a new word chain could be started.

Lady in Waiting

SAILING

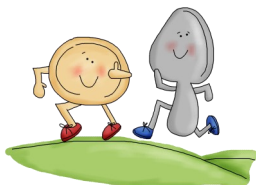
CHILLIN'

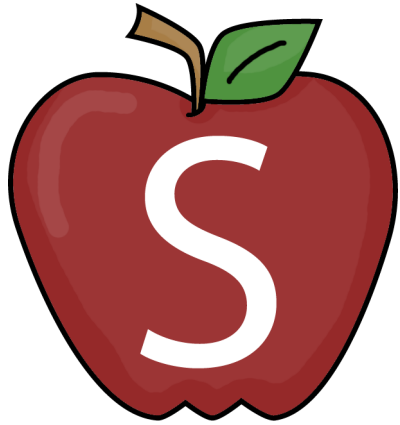
PRINCESS in Training

Nursery Rhymes

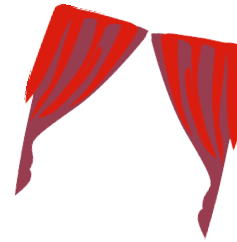
Rhymes for the middle or ending sounds are especially good for emergent readers who need to learn to read all the way through a word.

Play when everyone is happily contributing and rest when needed.





S is for synthesis and summarize, yes, really!



Synthesis for Pre K- Grade 1:

Readers retell what they have read as a way of synthesizing:

- tell what's important
- in a way that makes sense
- without telling too much

[free synthesis poster](#)

Did you know in reading evaluations children are asked to retell stories they have just read orally to a teacher, and graded? Retelling in a succinct and germane way is an important skill when being tested and in life conversations. Do we like hearing about a movie from someone who goes on and on, or the person who sums it up in an interesting way? Summarizing is important in many subject areas through all the years spent in school. We “retell” when we share about our vacations and experiences with friends. Children are retelling when sharing at show and tell. Reading plays are retelling of stories, too; so it is good to have short plays in school or at home.

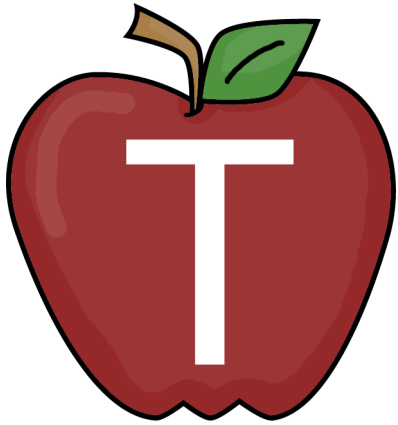
It is good to be in the habit of asking your child or students to retell the story after a read aloud! Select students who can be a role model for others.

Here is a [free 14 page PDF](#) for children to retell the three little pigs using stick puppets or the writing frame.

Allowing children to have their own little retelling plays encourages them to include important portions of the story. They could also be encouraged to tell their own variations which not only summarize important points but use thinking skills to embellish the stories.

Jabber the Reteller





T is for themes in stories

This is the oddest thing when you stop and think, but if you read a book to a kindergartener or first grader and ask what the story is about, they will often tell you things like:

- we should be nice to each other
- friends should not fight
- we need to be careful with babies
- manners are important
- families are important

Of course, if you ask what the theme is, they don't know because they do not know the word theme. After explaining, "it is what the story or author is trying to say" children will begin to tell you the theme of the story. Because so many children's stories end with a moral, children begin to get the idea, and are also often able to extend that idea to stories without obvious lessons. There is a lesson in each story and picture book, and it is important for children think about themes. Get in the habit of asking what the theme is after read alouds!

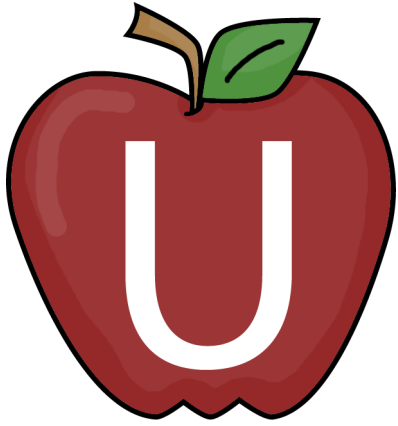


Here is a free 4 page printable for the themes in Betsy Bowen books. Try reading the stories and see if the children can figure them out!

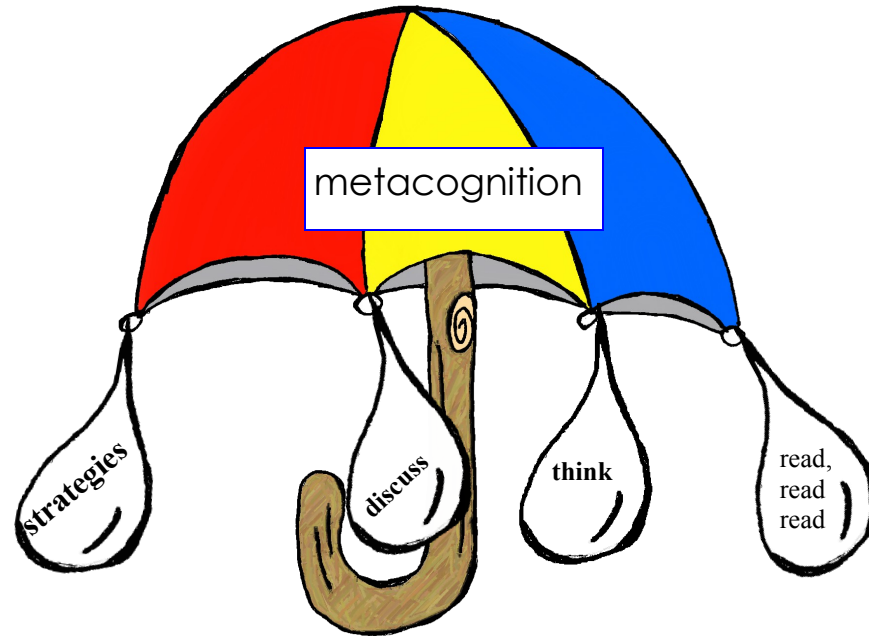


Class book sorts are fun and can also help children think about story themes. Here is a free book sort lesson at [READ WRITE THINK.](#)





U is for the umbrella term for reading strategies: metacognition. [Metacognition](#) is “big thinking” or thinking about thinking!



Click on these words or the picture below to get a [handout with all the reading strategies](#) on it based on the book *READING WITH MEANING* by Debbie Miller. The PDF is free and will open

Children really think all the time as evidenced from their observations, comments, and questions. We want them to be thinking while we read to them. Some children will just daydream and wait until a story is over if they aren't challenged to answer some questions or allowed to make comments to the reader.

When reading alone, children need to ask themselves, “Do I understand what the author is saying? Am I paying attention and thinking about the words?” We must teach them if they drift off or start day-dreaming, they may need to reread the page or paragraph. It helps children to know adults have to do this, too.

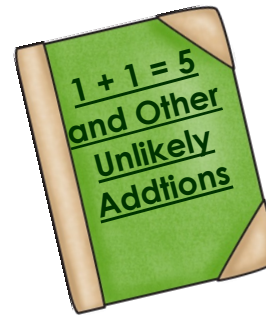
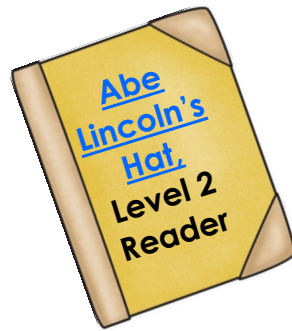
FREE READING WITH MEANING, READING STRATEGIES TEACHER PDF

TEACHER PAGES





V is for read various genres, not just one or two.



"The world is so full of a number of things, we should all be happy as kings!"

Robert Louis Stevenson

When reading to young children (a captive audience, although they will really let you know if they dislike a book) we can expose them to many genres. They will like and enjoy more genres if exposed to them early on. Be sure to include folk tales, fairy tales, nonfiction, modern fiction, biographical, historical fiction, outer-space stories, humorous books, and easy reader books. Yes, read reader books to your child so they will feel the books aren't silly or stupid.

If children aren't exposed at a young age to the different genres, they later may discover a genre on their own and find it so exciting they may *only* want to that genre books for years. Help your child enjoy different genres because such reading will be required later in school, and they will have more interests. It may also help expand his world to help reduce excess video game time and a limited selection of movies. Some children prefer only nonfiction and this is acceptable if many different topics are covered.

*Teacher tip: Some who like nonfiction and learning may actually begin to read on their own if they have their own copy of a [book of World Records for children](#). I have seen this happen for discouraged parents who thought their child would not be interested in reading. *Note: I am not an affiliate and do not make money from recommending books.*





W is for word solving suggestions.

Please **don't** say, "Sound it out!"
Do say, "Whisper it out!"

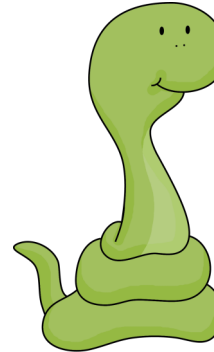
These strategies may be used with or without stuffed animals.

Skippy Frog



Try saying, "Skippy Frog!" when a child is stuck reading a word out loud. Skippy Frog means jump over the word, finish the sentence, then come back and figure out what the word meant. As adults we do this without even realizing it. This is using context to figure out a word. So often children just stop on a word, give up, or get frustrated. Skippy Frog can help them get over this!

Stretchy Snake



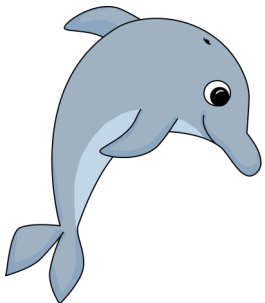
This is often the BEST solution for figuring out words. Instead of "sound it out" which uses isolated sounds that don't make sense (try sounding out bam-boo) Stretchy Snake allows the sounds to blend together and make sense.

Ba-aaa-m-ba-oo-oo (choppy)

so blend the sounds together

bbaaammmbbooo (whisper it out)

Flippy Dolphin



"Flip the sound!" is what we say in first grade. A child tries reading

same but says **Sam**

or reads **Sam** as **same** . . .

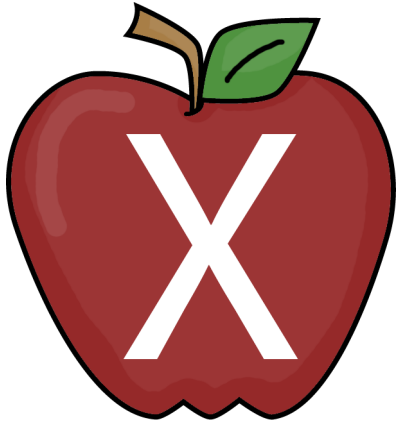
So we say, "Flip the sound," and the children will often change the vowel sound from short to long, or long to short. We don't go into detail about this with the child, but it works!

Eagle Eye



Everyone wants to be an eagle eye! If a child isn't reading all the way through the word and is seeing only the initial sound or final sound say, "Be an eagle eye!" Encourage the child to look at ALL the letters in the word.

If the word is longer, the child can use eagle eyes to find little words inside the big word. While children can't find actual syllables, they enjoy finding the little words they can read which helps them read longer words.



X is for Xerox!

I wonder if I can copy a chapter of this book for use in class?



Sometimes it is necessary to copy materials for use in an educational setting. Fair use and copyright rules apply. These are some of the conditions where copies may be used in class:

Rules for Reproducing Text Materials for Use in Class

- a complete poem if less than 250 words or an excerpt of not more than 250 words from a longer poem
- a complete article, story, or essay if less than 2,500 words or an excerpt from any prose work of not more than 1,000 words or 10% of the work, whichever is less; or one chart, graph, diagram, drawing, cartoon, or picture per book or per periodical issue

This is a link to the site where the permissible use of copies is further explained:

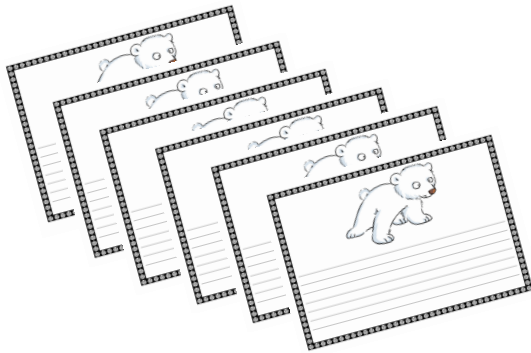
[Copyright and fair use explained, from Stanford University](#)

One chapter of a book is allowed, and often such chapters may be found online.

This is a link to a page about fair use best practices from the American University:

[Fair Use Best Practices](#)

Special rules apply to educational use which may be a little different from fair use. A copy of a story may be used for 45 days if then destroyed, for instance, "If the copying provides replacements or substitutes for the purchase of books, ... but can only use it for instructional purposes during the first ten of the 45 days ." Great when waiting for more copies of a book needed for curriculum now but will be delivered later!





Y is for young! You can read to babies and the very young children. Babies should be read to and children read to even when they are able to read themselves.



Even babies enjoy hearing books read! Watch a baby being read to and he or she may show great interest. You may wonder what they are learning as it certainly isn't about learning letters and words. There are so many things about reading you may not be thinking about, such as:

- to treat books with respect
- pages turn from left to right
- the book opens and closes (as opposed to a computer screen)
- pictures in books are interesting to look at
- books are fun
- books tell stories
- [hearing the vocabulary helps language development](#)
- words and letters will be noticed as something to learn more about someday
- books should be held right side up
- we turn one page at a time (usually)
- we should listen to a story (listening skills)
- we should stop reading when we are tired or hungry and put books away



Yes, a board book may be chewed on a little and we should gently explain not to eat books. Yes, books may be crawled on or sat on, but it won't hurt baby books. Start a child on the wonderful reader's life by starting early!



Z is for zig-zag. Children may not want to read a book in order! Let them zig and zag and point out the pages that look interesting to them, especially when the book is non-fiction. It is OK!



What's that? Does it bite?

For nonfiction books such as animal books, children may want to skip around the book and look at the animals they find most interesting. That is OK when the sequence isn't important. If the book is animals a to z, the story could be read in order to help establish the sequence of the alphabet. If the animals are not in any special order, skipping around is fine (adults do too), when looking for information. If the animals are in order by size from smallest to largest as in [ACTUAL SIZE by Steve Jenkins](#), the book is intended to teach relative size and the sequence is important.

If the child doesn't want to listen to a story in sequence, breaking sequence once in awhile is fine. The child may enjoy opening the shark page over and over to be impressed about the shark's size! Think about what the child is learning, before insisting all the reading rules are followed.



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Cover photo

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Recommended reading for parents:
[7 Keys of Comprehension](#) by Susan Zimmerman
and Chryse Hutchins

Recommended reading for teachers:
[Reading With Meaning](#) by Debbie Miller

**Note: I do not earn compensation for recommending books. Recommendations made in this document and on my blog are independent and have been valuable in my teaching.*