



Reading Comprehension At Home

Strategy Focus: *Inferring*

Reading is thinking!

Language for Drawing

Inferences:

- “ I predict.”
- “ I think that ”
- “ My guess is”
- “ That’s just what I thought ”
- “ Now, this is a surprise”

So what is an inference and how do good readers infer?

“By using an inference, you elaborate upon what you read, drawing conclusions, going beyond what is written on the page. The voice inside your head doesn’t simply parrot back the author’s words, but instead makes guesses, finds connecting points, asks questions. You predict what might happen next, see a scene more clearly in your mind, figure out an unknown word, answer questions. You personalize what you read to build a deeper meaning. . **Inferring involves forming a best guess about what the ‘evidence’ (words, sentences, and paragraphs) means; speculating about what’s to come; and then drawing conclusions about what was read to deepen the meaning of the literal words on the page**” (Zimmerman, p 97).

Home activities to encourage and practice inferring:

Read and discuss cartoons together:

Cartoons often require the reader to infer in order to “get it”. By blending our background knowledge with the pictures and text we find the humor in cartoons.

Play word games:

Play the Simile Game. One person says a phrase like, “As prickly as a ____.” Then rotate around the group taking turns to fill in the blank. The tricky part is not to repeat the previous guess.

Play Twenty Questions. Have one person think of a mystery person or thing. The others get 20 questions to figure out what or who it is. If the item or person is not guessed in 20 questions, the person who launched the round gets a point.

Practice inferring unknown words: As you read with your child, encourage her to use clues from the text and the story to figure out new words. Model your own inferring by explaining how certain parts of the text helped you infer the meaning.

Talk about the Big Message: Look for lessons, messages, themes or morals in books you read together. These “big messages” aren’t stated directly in stories. We have to infer to understand the bigger meaning or author’s purpose. Discuss your opinions of the message or about your own life experiences that support or conflict with the message.

Adapted from *7 Keys to Comprehension: How to Help Your Kids Read it and Get it!* By Susan Zimmerman and Chryse Hutchins 2003