



# Reading Comprehension At Home

## Strategy Focus:

## Making Connections

Reading is thinking!

*For readers,  
there must be a  
million autobiog-  
raphies, since we  
seem to find, in  
book after book,  
the traces of our  
lives.*

~Stan Persky

### How do good readers make connections as they read?

Making connections begins with activating background knowledge. "Background knowledge is all that you as a reader bring to a book: your personal history, all you've read or seen, your adventures, the experiences of your day to day life, your relationships, your passions. All of this becomes your background knowledge." (Zimmerman, p. 44-45). Students refer to this background knowledge as their *schema*. They use their schema to make three different types of connections: text to self, text to text, and text to world.

**TEXT TO SELF**~ what you read reminds you of something from your own life. Often, text to self connections carry a strong emotional charge. Making this emotional connection helps us remember what we read.

**TEXT TO TEXT**~ what you read reminds you of something else you have read or seen on TV or in the movies. These connections can help us understand common themes.

**TEXT TO WORLD**~ what you read reminds you of something in the world, something beyond your own life. Making T-W connections can help a child push their thinking further.

## Home activities to practice making connections:

**Share personal stories:** "Give your child the go-ahead by sharing your own memories," (Zimmerman p. 58) and be encouraged when your child stops to talk about the time he, too, made a Christmas ornament for someone special or experienced conflict with a friend. "Even when your child can read all the words in a book, it's important to continue sharing connections. Take turns reading alternate chapters, pages, or paragraphs. Have a stack of sticky notes on hand and mark the pages where you have connections. **SHARE YOUR MEMORIES.** Hang the sticky notes—footprints of your thinking—off the page like book-marks" (Zimmerman, p. 60).

**Questions to expose thinking:** (Zimmerman, p. 67).

- ◆ As you read that passage, did anything remind you of your own life? How does thinking about what you already know help you understand this part of your reading?
- ◆ How did remembering the last book you read in this series help you better understand this book?
- ◆ You've just described a memory related to these words. Could you see the scene in your mind?

**Further Suggestions:** Read a short story or chapter with your child and respond together. With different colored pens, family members can write on sticky notes their memories and experiences as they read words that activate their background knowledge.