



Reading is thinking!

If you ask questions when you read, you are awake. You are thinking. You are interacting with the words. Even questions that are unanswerable—enrich the reading experience.

Reading Comprehension At Home

Strategy Focus:

Questioning

How do good readers ask questions as they read?

“Asking questions is indispensable for creating and strengthening the reader’s ongoing dialogue with the page. Questions help a reader clarify ideas and deepen understanding” (Zimmerman, p. 71).

Good readers constantly ask questions before, during, and after reading. As adults, we may not even be aware of how many questions we ask while we read. Questions are what keep us reading. We want to discover what happens next. Some questions are answered in the book, while others are not. “As a parent, you want to encourage your child to ask the *real* questions, those questions that really puzzle them, even if you can’t answer them” (Zimmerman, p. 74).

“Questions send readers on quests” (Zimmerman, p. 80). They prompt readers to seek, pursue, and search for answers or deeper understanding. Here is some language readers use when they ask questions: *I wonder...*, *Why?*, *What does this mean?*, and *How come?*.

Home activities to practice asking questions:

- ◆ First and foremost, share your questions with your child. Showing him that even you have questions when you read, frees him to ask his own.
- ◆ Start with any book. Look at the cover. What questions come to mind? While reading what questions do you have? And after reading, did any questions come to mind. Usually, one question can lead to another, and another. Keep a list of the questions you had before, during, and after reading. Which ones were answered? Which ones were not? Discuss these. Often times, the unanswered questions are the ones that lead us into deeper thinking.
- ◆ Play the “I Wonder” game. I wonder if there is life on other planets? I wonder if there are pirates still living today?
- ◆ When you have questions don’t rush to answers right away, let the questions hang in the air. Ask several questions and let some of them be fun and silly.
- ◆ Language to use with Questioning: (Zimmerman, p. 84).
 1. I wonder...
 2. Why?
 3. What does this mean?
 4. That was a great question. Do you have any more?
 5. Your question made me think of another question.
 6. How come...?

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