

What should I ask my child when reading together?

It is not expected that you ask all of these questions every time you read a book together! However, choosing just a small selection to ask before, during and after reading will help develop your child's comprehension of what they read, and increase their enjoyment of the books they choose to read.



While these questions are suitable for children of all ages, you may wish to adapt them slightly. After all, you know your child best!

General (before reading)

- Why did you choose this book?
- What is the title of the book?
- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- Can you predict what might happen in the book from looking at the front cover and blurb?
- What might this book be about?
- What kind of characters do you think we will meet?
- What genre will this story be? (Adventure, traditional, fantasy etc.)
- Do you think you will enjoy this story? Why? Why not?
- Have you read any other similar books to this?
- Talk about the different parts of the book (Front cover, back cover, title, author, illustrator, blurb, ISBN number, bar code, publisher marks). What are they for? Why do they look the way they do?
- For an information book, challenge your child to use the contents/index page to find out where to learn about something specific. Where can I find out about spiders? What will I learn on page 20?

During reading

It is important that your child gets used to supporting their answers using the text. Wherever possible, ask them to justify their responses using quotes from the book.

Plot

- What has happened so far? Summarise what has happened in this chapter.
- Is it what you expected to happen?
- What might happen next?
- How do you think the story might end?
- What issues/dilemmas are the characters facing?
- How has the story developed since the beginning of the book?



Character

- Who is your favourite/least favourite character and why?
- What sort of character is...?
- How has the author described the character?
- When the character says...what do you think they mean?
- Why did the character act in that way?
- If you were that character, what would you have done?
- How does the character feel about what is happening?
- Would you have been friends with this character?

Setting

- Where is the book set?
- Describe the surroundings as you imagine them. What information/descriptions from the story did you use to help you?
- Would the story have been the same if it was set somewhere different?

Writers' Language

- Find me two sentences/words which...

- describe the setting
- describe X's character
- tell me that X is scared
- give a clue what is going to happen next
- Why has the author used this word to describe...?
- Why is there an exclamation mark/question mark here?
- Why are some words written in capital letters/bold/underlined/italics?
- Find me...a noun/a verb/an adjective/an adverb etc.
- Which words help paint a picture in your mind?
- Can you think of another word for...?
- Can you spot any words which rhyme with...?
- Have you learned any new words?
- Are there any words which you don't understand? Can you work out what they mean by looking at the rest of the sentence? If not, use a dictionary.

After reading

Plot/enjoyment

- What happened in the story?
Summarise what happened in 30 seconds.
- What was your favourite part of the book? Why?
- Which part of the story was the funniest/scariest/saddest/happiest/most tense? How did the author make you feel that?
- Have you ever read any stories with similar themes or issues?
- Has anything like what happened in the story happened to you?
- Would you have ended the book differently? Did it end the way you thought it would?
- Did the issue/dilemma get solved?
- Did the plot change direction during the story? Where was the turning point?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?



- How did the book make you feel?
- Would you still read this book if it did not have pictures? Why?
- Does this book remind you of any other stories/TV programmes/films?

Character

- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Did your opinion change of any of the characters?
- Would you have changed any of the characters?
- If you met one of the characters, what would you say to him/her?
- How did the author make this character likeable/unlikeable?

Author

- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- If you could give the writer feedback on this story, what would it be?
- Are there any parts of the book that are repeated? Why do you think the author did that?
- Would you like to read another story by this author?

Some key words to use when reading with your child

story	sub-headings	diagrams
book	blurb	predict
character	beginning	issue
setting	middle	dilemma
plot	end	language
author	fiction	describe/description
illustrator	non-fiction	development
title	information	noun (object)
front cover	page	verb (action)
back cover	bold	adjective (describes an object)
publisher	italic	adverb (describes an action)
contents	underlined	
index	pictures	
glossary	illustrations	
headings		