

Questions to Aid Understanding

Reading is not all about being able to pronounce words properly – it is equally important that children understand what they have read and that they have ideas and opinions of their own about books. You can help your child to develop these skills by using questions before, during and after reading.

Different questions can be used to check different kinds of understanding. Some kinds of understanding are listed below with corresponding questions (please not these get harder as they go down). Use these to help guide your discussions about what you are reading.

Opinion

- Are you enjoying this book?
- What do you like/not like about it?
- What do you think of the characters?
- What genre (type) of book do you think it is?

Understanding the sequence of events

- What happened in the previous chapters/sections/books in the series
- Why is the character behaving in a certain way?
- Where is the book set?

Prediction

- What do you think will happen next?
- How will the character react to certain events?
- What do you think the outcome will be?
- Do you think this book will have a happy ending?
- Is the character good/bad?

Visualising

- What sort of place do you think this is?
- Would you like this place/building/object
- What do you think this character looks like?
- How big/small do you think this object is?
- Would you like to visit this place? Why?

Empathising

- How do you think this character feels?
- Why do you think this?
- How would you feel in this situation?

Inferring

- Does the character mean what s/he is saying here?
- Why do you think this happened?
- What secrets do you think this character has?

Remember – these questions do not have to be answered verbally! If your child enjoys art they could answer a visualisation question by drawing you a picture, or a child who enjoys writing could answer an opinion question by writing a review of the book. If you have time try out some different ways of getting your child to think about what they are reading.