

Background

At Elmbridge primary school, we want every child to read and to have a love of books. Reading with your child at least 3 times per week will really help them succeed.

Reading can be divided into two very distinct components of ‘word recognition skills’ and ‘language comprehension processes’, both of which are vital for successful reading.

- **Word recognition** is the process of using phonics **to recognise and read** (decode) words.
- **Language comprehension** is the process by which word information, sentences and other contextual cues (e.g. pictures, illustrations and other words) are processed to form **understanding and meaning**.

Some children can read books by using their phonics but can’t tell you what the book is about – this is because their word recognition skill is good but their language comprehension is poor.

Conversely, some children struggle with their phonics and find it difficult to read a book but, if read to by someone else, could summarise the story or relay other information about characters etc well – this is because their language comprehension skills are good but their word recognition skills are poor.

Below are some strategies that you may find useful in supporting your child.

- Encourage children to work out new words by themselves by using their phonic knowledge – i.e. splitting the word into individual sounds then re-blending to form a complete word.
- Make links to words with similar phonic sounds – e.g. **shout**, like **out**, like **pout**.
- With larger words, encourage the use of chunking, i.e. splitting the word into smaller parts – e.g. under-stand-ing
- When previously read words or ‘high frequency words’ occur (e.g. is, it, has, have etc), try to encourage them to ‘sight-read’ the words (if able) rather than using phonic sounds and blending.
- If really stuck, before reading a word to the child – is there a possibility to use contextual cues? E.g. how does the illustration help them, what has the story been about so far? What could the word be? etc.
- Check understanding by asking *literal* comprehension questions about the book (see overleaf). To extend comprehension skills further, use questions that encourage them to *deduce*, *interpret* and *infer*.
- Read regularly, but don’t make reading a race. It is better for children to keep a book longer and re-read it until they can fluently read the book on their own with understanding than over-supporting the child and moving on for the sake of ‘getting a new book’.

Example Comprehension Questions (These can be adapted for the book your child is reading)

Literal Questions

What does 'smartly' mean?

Which word told you that the giant was angry?

Can 'light' have more than one meaning?

What happened at the beginning?

What did the bear do?

Where did Peter Rabbit go?

Describe the Giant. Describe the house they found.

Which paragraph tells you they were out of the bear's reach?

Where are the main places you can see superheroes now?

Look at page 10. Why do people like superhero adventures?

Deduce, Interpret and Infer questions:

How did Lyddie know the others had reached safety?

What words tell us the writer of this letter is a child?

Why did Lyddie have her back to the family?

How did Charles react to the danger?

Why is the ladder important in the story?

Most importantly – keep reading fun and read anything and everything with your child!