

Synthesizing

Readers decide what the text means to them. In other words, the reader can take a book and truly make it his or her own through a masterful retelling. Help your child learn to synthesize text by asking questions:

- Can you retell the important parts of the story?
- What does this story mean to you?
- How have your thoughts about a character or problem changed from the beginning to the end of the story?

Fix-Up Strategies

Good readers are aware of when they understand and when they don't. If they have trouble understanding specific words, phrases, or passages, they may use a wide range of problem-solving strategies. Help your child recognize when comprehension has broken down. Then encourage him or her to do one or more of the following:

- Go back and reread
- Skip ahead
- Use picture clues
- Summarize
- Ask questions
- Read the passage aloud
- Use a reference (encyclopedia)

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A Parent's Guide To Building Comprehension Strategies



- Making Connections
- Questioning
- Visualizing
- Determining Importance
- Inferring
- Synthesizing
- Fix-Up Strategies

Comprehension Strategy Overview

Making Connections

When readers fit what they read into what they already know or have experienced, they are making connections. As you read with your child, try encouraging him or her to use make connections to the text:

- **Make Connections**

How can you connect what you read to your own life?

How can you connect the reading to other books?

How can you connect the reading to events happening in our world?

- **Think About Prior Knowledge**

Help your child think about the title and pictures before he or she reads.

Encourage your child to use what he or she already knows to make predictions.

- **Think About the Author**

What do you know about the author that might help you to anticipate what happens in the story? Does the author like surprise endings? Does the author often use the same characters? This kind of understanding really helps young readers when they are reading within a series, like *Magic Tree House* (Mary Pope Osbourne).

Questioning

When readers question the text before, during, and after they read, they attend more closely to the text. Help your child question the information in the text:

- **Before Reading Questions**

What do you think will happen?

Why do you suppose...?

- **During Reading Questions**

Why did the character...?

How come...?

Why do you suppose...?

What is the reason why...?

- **After Reading Questions**

What would have happened if ...?

Why did the author ...?

Where we could look to find out more about...?



Visualizing

When readers imagine what they might smell, hear, see, taste, or feel as they read, they delve deeper into the text. When they turn words from the text into "pictures" that are meaningful, it helps them to understand and remember what they read. Help your child visualize text by asking him or her to create mental images:

- What does the setting look like?
- What do the characters look like?
- Describe a scene from the story or chapter.
- What kinds of things do you imagine hearing? Smelling? Tasting? Feeling?

Determining Importance

Readers need to prioritize as they read. They need to identify main idea and related themes. Help your child determine what is important information by asking him or her to organize thinking in different ways:

- **Prioritize Information**

What are the most important ideas?

What is just interesting without being important?

Who? What? When? Where? Why?

- **Identify Themes**

What message is the author trying to send?

Inferring

More than a simple prediction, inferring happens when readers can take what they know and what is written in the book to “read between the lines” of a text. The ability to infer helps the reader get to the “why” of the story. You can help your child to use inference to think about various considerations:

- What motivated the character to act this way?
- How does the character feel in this situation?
- Why did the author make this decision as he or she was writing the book?

