

How to help your child read at home.

Students should aim to read at home for 20-30 minutes a day. It is more beneficial to read regularly for a shorter period of time rather than rarely reading and then reading for hours. You can help your child to enjoy reading by encouraging them to read, praising them for reading and modelling reading in your home.







How you can promote reading at home:

- Try to build time into your daily routine for reading.
- Make books available at home, lots are now available for free online (see our website)
- Have a discussion about what you or your child may have read.
- Encourage your child to read a wide range of texts –online news articles, short stories, opinion articles.
- Encourage them to listen to audio books – this still counts as reading.
- Model reading to your child. Spend five minutes reading aloud to them.

What can you do to help your child when they are reading?

Below are six key strategies that help readers to understand what they read. These strategies can be used with any type of text (novels, newspaper articles, academic textbooks) Inside this guide you will find examples of how to use each strategy to help your child.

	
Activating prior knowledge	Questioning
Visualising	Making connections
	
Making inferences	Summarising



Activating prior knowledge:

What does your child already know about the topic? Ask them.

You could then get them to unlock their prior knowledge. This will help improve your child's confidence before they start reading.

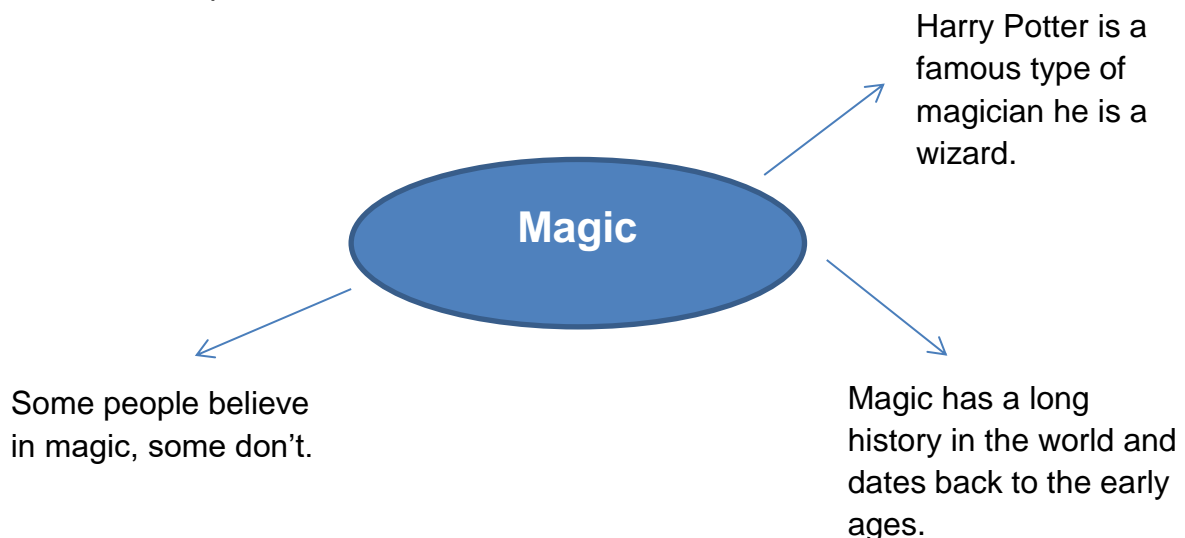
You could use the grid below to help. Can they think of at least one idea for every letter of the alphabet relating to the topic they are about to read about.

A-Z Grid

A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H			I	J
K	L			M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Spider diagram:

Before reading a text or section of text, place the name of the text or topic in the centre and then think of as many ideas as possible relating to it in some way. For example:



Questioning

Your child can complete this activity after reading a text, or you can pause part way through reading and ask your child questions. Good readers question themselves regularly and it is important to ask questions about reading, as sometimes children can read the words aloud but not gain any understanding from them.

Use the question generator to help:

Question	Is	Did	Can	Will	Would	Might
What						
Where						
When						
Why						
How						

For example:

Where did the character seem to change?

What might have caused the character to change?

How could this impact other characters?

Or you could use the questions stems below to ask your child questions:

How are _____ and _____ alike?

What is the main idea of _____?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of _____?

In what way is _____ related to _____?

Compare _____ and _____ with regard to _____

What do you think causes _____?

How does _____ tie in with what we have learned before?

Visualisation

When your child reads their brain is trying to visualise what they have just read. It is almost like the brain tries to create a movie from the words on the page. Once they can visualise the text this helps them to remember and understand what they have read.

To help them try the task below:

Read through the text again and ask your child to note down a key word (a word that communicates an important idea from the text) and then draw an image/symbol next it.

'It was chaos. The entire city had descended into chaos'



The key word/idea is 'chaos' so ask your child to draw an image they associate with 'chaos'



If your child struggles to do this, then you could ask them to draw a character.

From what they have read what do they think the character looks like?

Or ask them to draw a place described in the text. What does it look like? For extra challenge ask them to label it with quotations from the text

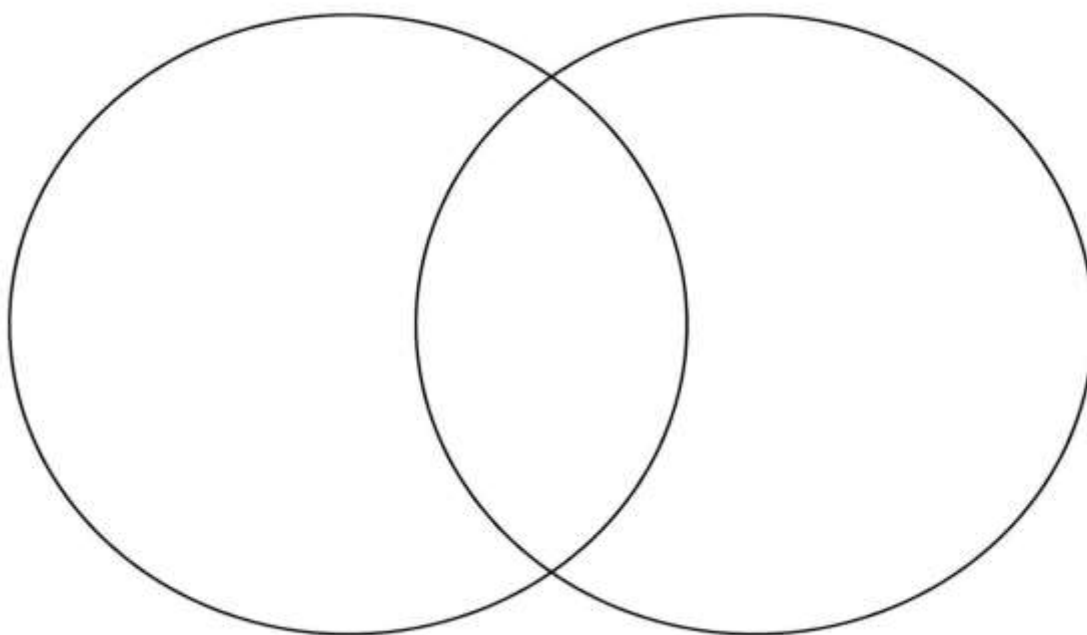
Example: A drawing of a soldier in the text 'Private Peaceful' by Michael Morpurgo.



Making Connections

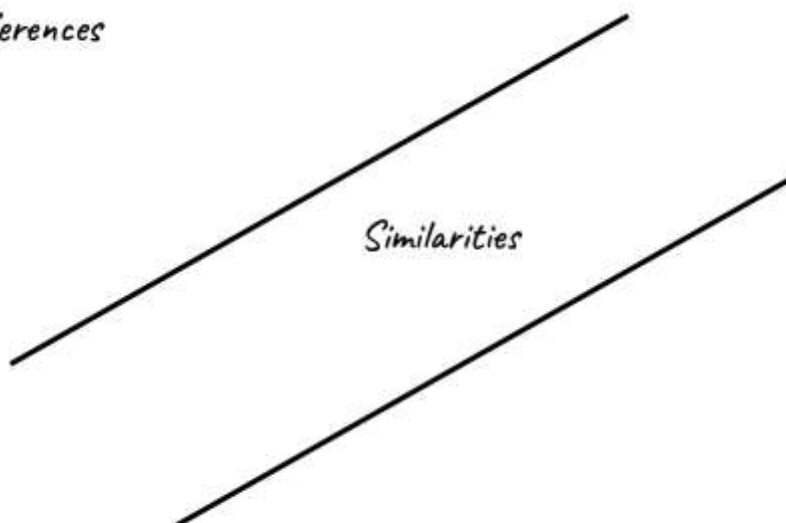
Immediately after reading, choose two things to compare. Your child could compare characters, feelings, opinions, views, or topics etc.

The focus should then be on exploring similarities and differences. They could use the venn diagram below to help:



Or organise their ideas into a 'comparison alley' like the one below:

Differences



Similarities

Differences

Making Inferences from a text

To gain a solid understanding of a text, a good reader will make inferences. This is commonly referred to as 'reading between the lines' and authors expect readers to be able to do this. Sometimes the reader has to work things out for themselves.

To help your child you could:

Ask them questions such as:

- What do you think will happen next and why?
- How do you think a character is feeling in that speech? How do you know?
- Why do you think a character has behaved in that way? How do you know?
- Ask them what clues they have noticed in the text to later events.

Summarising a text

Finally, after your child has finished reading. Ask them to summarise the text. They should be able to remember the key points or key events.

You could use the activities below to help:

- Summarise the text or section of text you have read using no more than 25 words.
- Order the 5 main events in the text into chronological order. Or for extra challenge, order the events into order of importance.

First: _____

Second: _____

Next: _____

Then: _____

Finally: _____