

Reading comprehension

As well as reading for pleasure, children also need to understand what they are reading.

This includes:

- Being able to find information from a text;
- Being detectives and using inference and deduction skills to try and work something out from what they have been told, e.g. Knowing it is Autumn from a description of scenery which has fallen, red leaves, semi-bare branches, grey sky and cold weather;
- Understand the author's use of language, e.g. being able to explain why the author has picked a certain word, or used a simile or metaphor;
- Understanding the layout of a text, so understand the function of bullet points or one word/sentence paragraphs;
- Being able to summarise a whole story in a few sentences or recognise the mood of a story.

Types of activities to help with reading comprehension at home could include:



**Listing and recording
information, note-taking,
charts, jottings, sketches
etc.**

- Write down some facts that you have learned from your book.
- Devise some questions that can be answered by reading your book - make sure you can show where and how to find the answers.
- Jot down some of the features of writing or different types of layout that you have found in your book and think about why the author has used them.
- Try to scan a page to see if you can pick out the main information and summarise it.
- List any key words or phrases from a section of text.
- Try to summarise a section of text in your own words.
- List all the characters that appear in your story.
- List all the events in your story in the correct order.
- Sketch and label one of the settings in your story.
- Sketch some of the characters from your story and show how they are related/connected to each other.
- Jot down some ideas for a true/false quiz you could share with a friend based on your book.



Plotting story structure
e.g. story mountains,
paths, mind maps,
graphs, timelines etc.
**drawing and describing
settings.**

- Choose two books on the same topic and compare the way they are set out
 - what features are similar/different?
- Draw a story mountain/path to show the main events in your story ★
- Draw a bar chart to show the most exciting/dramatic parts of your story
- Over what period of time does your story take place? 1 day, 1 week, 1 month or possibly years? Draw a timeline to show the events in your story.
- Write a short description of an event that you think might have taken place before your story began or after it ended.
- Make notes about your story on a hand plan.★
- Try to storyboard the events in your story on a cartoon strip - which picture would show the most important/turning-point in the story?
- Draw and label a picture of a setting from your story, you could copy words/phrases from the book to help you.
- Imagine you are in an aeroplane looking down over a setting from your story
 - what else can you see?
- Find a description of a setting in your book, what atmosphere is the author trying to create? List the words/phrases that help to depict that feeling.



- ★ Story mountain: children draw a basic mountain shape and use it to plot the structure of a story showing a simple beginning, middle and end (this could be more complex for older children). The peak of the mountain helps to show a story building up to a climax.
- ★ Hand plan: using the outline of a hand to help children remember the important elements of story structure i.e. introduction, build up, dilemma, resolution and ending.

**Drawings of characters,
creating dialogue, ‘role on
wall’, profiles, letters and
diary entries etc,
comparisons, questions and
predictions.**

- Complete a ‘role on the wall’ for one of the characters from your story; don’t forget to include personality description as well as appearance.
- Use your ‘role on the wall’ to help you write a description of your chosen character.★
- Which is your favourite character and why? Are there any characters that you really don’t like and why?
- Pick one character from your story; write a list of the things you think they would like or dislike; e.g. what would be their favourite food, colour, television programme etc?
- Imagine you are one of the characters from your story. Pick one event and try to write what that character’s diary entry would look like for that day.
- Imagine you are able to make a telephone call to one of the characters from your story; what would you both say? Record your conversation in speech bubbles or as dialogue - don’t forget to set out and punctuate your speech correctly!
- Using speech bubbles, draw and write a conversation between two characters in from your story.
- Pick one character from your story; find and copy at least three things the author says about this person.
- Draw a chart to show how a character’s feelings change over the course of the story.
- Compare two characters from the story; how are they similar/different?

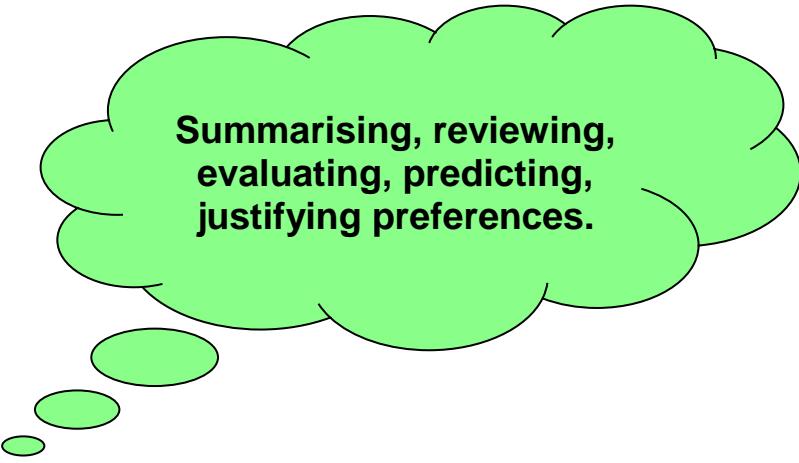


★ Role on the wall: draw the outline of a person; inside the shape write words/phrases that describe that character’s personality and around the outside of the shape, words/phrases that describe appearance.

Authorial choices: alternative titles, new ‘blurb’, designing covers, changing events and/or character actions etc.

- Write three questions you would like to ask the author of your book.
- If you were the author, would you have changed any of the characters/events/settings?
- Write down three questions you would like to ask one of the characters in the book - try to answer them in role (work with a partner).
- Design a new front cover for your book.
- Imagine you are the publisher, make a poster that would advertise your book and make people want to buy it.
- Write a new ‘blurb’ for the back of the book - don’t forget you need to ‘hook’ your reader.
- Choose one character from the book and say what you think would have happened if they had behaved/reacted in a different way.
- Choose a key moment in the story and change the event - what would have happened next?
- Try to think of at least three alternative titles for your book and explain your choices.
- When you have finished your book, try to think what would happen if there was an extra chapter - summarise this chapter.

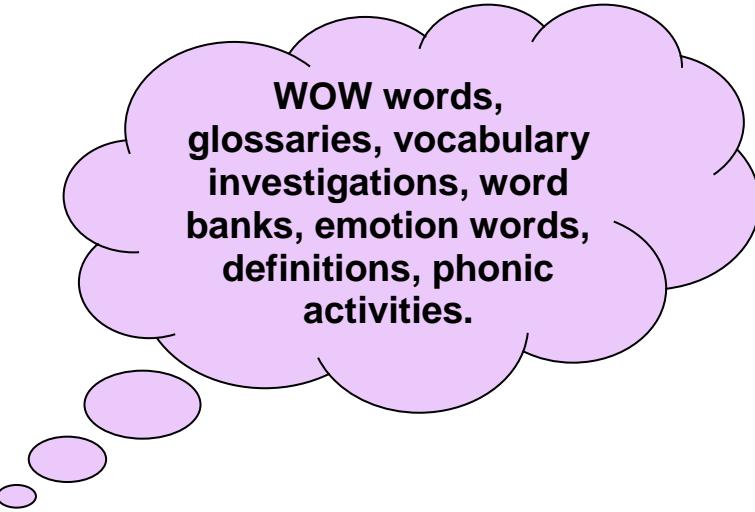




**Summarising, reviewing,
evaluating, predicting,
justifying preferences.**

- Summarise the main things you have learned from this book.
- Has this book changed your mind about anything? Was there something that you thought was true but have found out is false?
- Compare your book to another on the same topic, which do you prefer and why?
- Compare your book to a website on the same topic - which do you think gives you more/better information and why?
- Before finishing the story, try to predict what will happen.
- Try to summarise the book in 100 words or less.
- Imagine you are a book critic for a newspaper or magazine, write a review of your book for the readers. Would you like to read more books by this author? Explain your reasons. If you have already read some other books that this author has written; can you see any similarities/differences between them?
- Find out if this author has a website and research his/her background and other work.
- Do you feel any different after reading this story? Explain your answer.
- Was there any part of the story that reminds you of something in your own life or in another book that you have read? Try to explain the connections.
- Draw a poster advertising this book. Persuade people why they should read it.
- Write a brief summary at the end of each chapter; include the key events and new insights into characters and the plot.





**WOW words,
glossaries, vocabulary
investigations, word
banks, emotion words,
definitions, phonic
activities.**

- Make a list of the words and phrases used to create atmosphere, set the scene or describe a character.
- Find 10 interesting words in your reading book. Write down what each one means. Then use each word in a sentence of your own.
- Re-read a chapter/section of your reading book. Find x number of powerful words that you could use in your own writing. Use a dictionary if you don't know the meaning of the word.
- Create a list of key words and/or a glossary for the non-fiction book that you have read.
- Make a list of little words hiding inside bigger words in your reading book.
- Choose a descriptive passage from your reading book and make a list of vivid imagery, e.g. similes, metaphors, alliteration, noun phrases, etc.
- As you are reading your reading book, look out for really good adjectives. Try to find at least 10 good describing words for people and 10 for places.
- Re-read the opening of your reading book. How does the story hook you in at the beginning? Write a list of the words and phrases that you feel are effective in making you want to read on.
- Make a list of words from your reading book that people might find hard to spell. Circle or highlight the tricky bit in each one.
- Find 15 adverbs (adjectives or powerful verbs) that the author has used and list them in alphabetical order.
- Choose a descriptive word from your reading book. Using a thesaurus, list 5 synonyms and 5 antonyms for that word.
- Make a word search using character names, places and important words from your reading book.





- Imagine you are one of the characters in your reading book. Write your diary entry for one day in the story. Remember to include your thoughts and feelings about the events of the day.
- Write a letter as a character in your reading book to another character in the book.
- Write a missing scene from the story, that must have happened, but which the author has not included.
- Choose one chapter from your reading book. Re-tell the events from the point of view of a minor character.
- Construct a time-line to fit your story. Include all the major events.
- Make a fact-file about a topic from your non-fiction reading book.
- Re-write a section/chapter of your book as a playscript. Remember to include all the features of a playscript – setting, characters, stage directions, etc.
- Write a poem describing a person or place in your reading book.
- Write a newspaper report about an important event in the story. Remember to include a headline, interviews with people involved and pictures with captions.
- Write a telephone conversation between two characters from your story in which they comment on a key incident in which one or both have been involved.
- Draw a cartoon strip of the main events in your reading book.
- Re-write the story in a style and format suitable for young children.
- Choose a key moment in your story and change some element(s) of the event. Write what happens next.
- Write a letter to a 'Problem Page' from one of the characters in your story, and then compose the reply.

