

Comprehension Strategies

The following are several strategies children can use to help them make meaning out of the stories they read. Have your child try one or two of these strategies when they read their leveled reader to you at night.

Predictions: A prediction is what you think will happen. Readers use the pictures, what the author is telling them, and what they already know about the topic to make a good guess at what will happen in the story. Before your child reads, have him/her look at the pictures and predict (guess) what the story will be about. When finished reading, ask your child if he/she was correct.

Inferences: Authors do not always tell readers everything they want them to know. Good readers infer when they want to understand more than what the author has written. Inferring occurs when you understand something that is not stated directly (read between the lines). When inferring, readers say things to themselves like:

- ✓ "I think..."
- ✓ "This must mean that..."
- ✓ "Based on this, I'm guessing that..."
- ✓ "I predict...because..."
- ✓ "I think that happened because..."

Summarizing: Children should be able to retell a story in their own words. The details they share should follow a beginning, middle, ending sequence. When your child finishes a story, say "tell me what you read."

Visualization: When children start reading stories without pictures (chapter books) or when they listen to stories, they should be able to picture what is happening in their minds. I often tell the students that reading a good book is like watching a movie in your mind. Have your child describe what he/she is seeing as he/she reads or is read to. Your child can also draw what they see.

Making Connections: Children can often relate to what they read. Maybe they have an annoying little sister like the main character. Maybe the characters are at the beach, and your child remembers when your family went on vacation to the beach. The more connections children can make to the story, the more meaning they will get out of the story.

Asking Questions: As children read, they should ask questions about the story. They can ask questions before, during, and after they read. Some examples are:

- ✓ Who are the characters in the story?
- ✓ When and where does the story take place?
- ✓ What happened in the story?
- ✓ What was funny, sad, or interesting?
- ✓ Does this remind me of something else I have read?