

Reading Comprehension

What is reading comprehension?

It is the child's understanding of the story, the content and the key terms when reading. The goal of reading is comprehension.

A child's reading comprehension may be affected by:

- Poor sleep, nutrition, or anxiety
- Difficulty with attention, memory, or processing speed
- Difficulty with language skills or vocabulary
- Trouble with phonemic awareness skills. Phonemic awareness helps a child hear, separate and make words out of sounds.
- Difficulty with decoding skills. Decoding skills help a child match sounds to letters and say written words.
- Slow reading fluency. A child with good reading fluency can read quickly and in a natural speaking voice. He will not sound like a robot.



A child has good reading comprehension when the skills listed above all work together.. If just one of the skills is weak then comprehension may be affected.

Strategies for improving reading comprehension:

Before-Reading Strategies

- Have your child read the titles, headings, bold, italicized or underlined words. Read any questions first. Highlight or underline the answers when found. Invite your child to guess the main idea of the story after reading the title, italic/bold/underlined words and skimming the text.
- Ask your child to think about why the author wrote the story or what the reader should learn from the story.
- Ask your child questions about what they already know about the topic or main idea.

During-Reading Strategies

- Ask your child how parts of the story might relate to their own life.
- Ask your child to make a guess about what is going to happen in the story.
- Talk about difficult vocabulary words. Help your child connect these words to experiences from his own life.
- Talk and think aloud while reading. Ask your child questions while reading.
- Have your child draw a picture about the characters, important facts, and concepts in the story. Use visual aids to help your child remember details from the story. Use this visual aid when answering the questions.
- Listen to the audio book. A child who has trouble reading may benefit from listening to the words while he reads.



After-Reading Strategies

- Ask your child questions about the story. Try to ask questions that start with “why, how, what, describe, tell me about ____, or what do you think about ____.” These types of questions require the child to think back on the story.
- Allow your child to read the text again; read over the titles, headings and important paragraphs. Let your child draw a conclusion about the story by using information from the text, characters, setting, and plot.
- Have your child write down the parts of the story in an organized way to help remember the story.
- Ask your child what they learned from the story.
- Invite your child to re-tell the story, talking about the characters, setting, problem, and solution (written or orally).
- Have your child explain how the characters, settings or events were alike and different.
- Have your child talk about what happened and why it happened.
- Allow your child to talk about the difference between a fact and an opinion.

If you are concerned that your child may have a reading problem:

Call the Reading & Literacy Discovery Center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (513) 803-READ (513-803-7323) or visit us at <http://rlcdc.chmc.org/>

