

What is reading?

Reading is a process of **making meaning** from written and visual texts. This involves two significant processes – **comprehending** the story or ideas; and **decoding** the words and pictures.

Why is this important?

Reading provides opportunities to develop understandings about ourselves, the world around us, and about how language works. It develops our mind and is a fundamental skill that is applied to all other learning areas. Reading a 'text' may include reading picture books, novels, comics, ebooks, TV programs, movies, posters and brochures.

What does the teaching and learning look like?

To help students comprehend texts we use the **QAR** (Question-Answer-Relationships) framework to ask and answer questions. There are four types of questions that require students to use their own knowledge and also information in the text to find the answers.

- **On my own:** Have you read any books like this before? What do you know about this topic? What do you think might happen?
- **Right there:** What are some of the things the character does? Where does the character go? What can that animal do?
- **Think and search:** How does the character feel? Which events are the most important? What are the key facts about that topic?
- **Author and me:** What is the author's opinion? Why do you think the author wrote this book?

To help students decode words and pictures we use a range of reading strategies.

- **Look at the pictures:** What clues do the pictures give us? What is s/he doing?
- **Get your mouth ready for the sounds:** What sound does the word start with?
- **Re-read the sentence:** What do you notice if you re-read that sentence again?
- **Look for small words:** Can you find a small word within that word?
- **Think about other words:** Does it look like a word you know?
- **Skip the word and read on:** Can the rest of the sentence help you?
- **Pay attention to the punctuation:** Can you use the punctuation to help the reading sound right?
- **Cross-check:** Does the word make sense in the sentence? Does the word sound right in the sentence? Does the word include those letters/sounds?

How do we know how our children are progressing?

Teachers use a range of strategies to monitor both the comprehension and the decoding skills as they develop from Prep to Year 2. These include:

- Informal and formal checks using QAR questions
- Running records which provide information about the strategies being used at a specific reading level
- Levelled reading books which support students as they develop and apply an ever-increasing knowledge of vocabulary, sight words and reading strategies.

What support can be provided at home?

- Read with your child as much as possible – even 5 minutes a day could result in 30 hours of practice!
- Read and discuss a range of texts including books, movies, TV shows, DVD covers, brochures, leaflets, food packages, magazines and newspapers.
- Find everyday opportunities to read e.g. following the shopping list, locating the correct product by reading the label, accessing the online TV guide, sending and receiving postcards.
- Model how much you love reading and read out loud as often as possible.
- Read and discuss library books and books sent home from school.
- Listen and encourage as children learn sight words and read Home readers (print and online).
- Support children when they 'get stuck' by:
 - **Pause:** Wait 5 to 10 seconds in case they can work it out
 - **Prompt:** Use one of the strategies e.g. What clues can you get from the picture? What sound does that word start with? Try that sentence again.
 - **Praise:** Use specific feedback e.g. I love the way you really thought about the sounds in that word. That was clever to choose a word that made sense.
- Celebrate the successes!