

Parent's
Guide to
Reading:
Third Grade
Edition

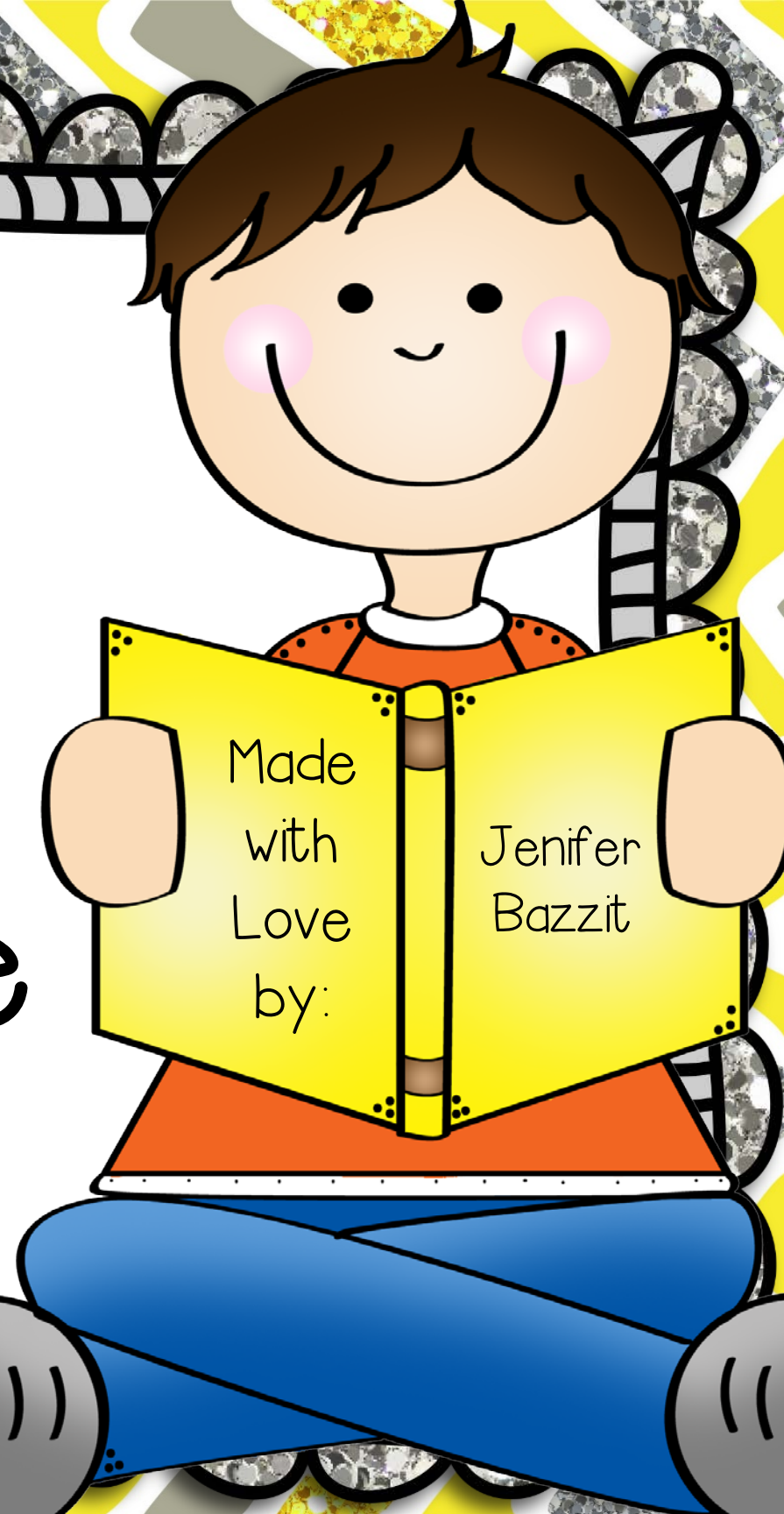


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The Five Big Areas of Reading

Phonemic Awareness

Hearing and using the sounds of our language

Phonics

Attaching sounds to written language

Fluency

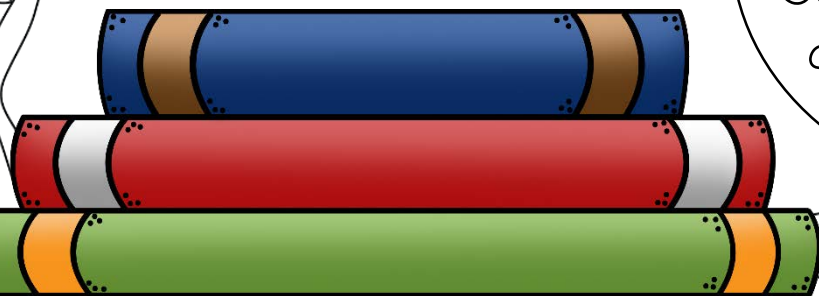
The ability to read quickly and effortlessly

Vocabulary

Our knowledge of words and our ability to use them

Comprehension

Attaching meaning to words



Phonemic Awareness

What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and use the sounds of our language. This is NOT phonics!

How Can I Help My Child With Phonemic Awareness?

1. By third grade, most students have mastered phonemic awareness. However, there are still things you can do to help your child improve his/her awareness of the sounds in our language.
2. Read rhyming books with your child. He/She will enjoy the rhymes and will enjoy playing with sounds. Read a page with rhymes to your child. Ask him/her to name some rhyming pairs of words from the page.
3. Play word games with your child. List 3 words and ask him/her to name the 2 words that contain the same vowel sound.
Example: "luck," "bring," and "grump,"
Which 2 words contain the same vowel sound?



Phonics

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a system for attaching sounds to written language. Letters and words are like a written code. Children must attach sounds to the letters and then learn to blend the letters into words to be able to read.

How Can I Help My Child With Phonics?

1. Talk with your child about blending letters to make words. Use word families like "ate," "uck," and "um" to help your child practice blending words together.
Example: Word family "uck"
Add letters to the front of "uck" to make new words.
Add "b," "t," "p," and "d." Read the new words.
2. Look for readers and word lists your child's teacher sends home. Practice these lists and readers many times! A lot of practice will help your child become a fluent and confident reader.
3. When your child struggles to read a word, ask him/her to look for familiar patterns in the word. Example: It's easier to sound out "bachelor" when you already know "ch" and "or."

Comprehension

What is Comprehension?

Comprehension is the act of attaching meaning to words. Comprehension begins long before a child is able to read a book. At an early age, children begin to comprehend verbal communication. Comprehension of printed material begins with an adult reading aloud.

How Can I Help My Child Improve in the Area of Comprehension?

1. Ask questions! While reading, stop every once in a while and ask your child questions about what is happening in the story.
2. Dig deeper! When your child talks about what is happening in the story, ask deeper questions like: "Why do you think the character said that?" and "Where do you think they will go next?"
3. Give background knowledge! If you are about to read a story about a lion, talk about the time you saw the lions in the zoo. Your child's comprehension will be at a higher level if he/she already knows something about the topic.



Vocabulary

What is Vocabulary?

Vocabulary includes our knowledge of words and our ability to use words. Children have oral vocabularies that are far bigger than their reading vocabularies. This means that they understand many more words than they can actually read.

How Can I Help My Child's Vocabulary Improve?

1. Talk to your child! Children whose parents talk to them often and for extended periods tend to have larger vocabularies.
2. Ask your child to describe things in his/her world. Example: After a visit to the park, ask your child to describe the play gym or tell how it felt to slide down the slide. Ask him, "What did you do to make yourself swing higher on the swing?"
3. While reading to your child, pick out a few words that your child may not know. Discuss the words with your child.
4. Create a vocabulary book or notebook. As your child encounters new words, ask him/her to write the word in the notebook and draw a picture to describe the word.

Fluency

What is Fluency?

Fluency is the ability to read quickly and effortlessly. Fluency is essential to reading because when students are able to read without effort, they are able to pay attention to the meaning of what they are reading (comprehension).

How Can I Help My Child's Fluency Improve?

1. Work with your child on sight words. Sight words are important to readers because they make up a large part of written text.
2. When your child stumbles through a page, try these strategies:
 - Read the page together.
 - Ask your child to read each sentence until he/she is able to read the sentence fluently.
 - You read 2 sentences while your child follows along. Next, ask your child to read the same 2 sentences aloud.



Why Should My Child Read 20 Minutes Each Day?

Reading practice is crucial for all children. Reading with a parent or loved one is a special experience for a child.

Just to be clear, 20 minutes of daily reading may include a child reading, an adult reading to a child, or an adult and child “share” reading.

Imagine two scenarios, if you will:

- Burke reads 20 minutes per night with his grandmother, usually 5 nights per week. During one year, Burke experiences 5,200 minutes of reading with his grandmother.
- Annabelle rarely reads with her dad. If time allows, they might read for 5 minutes at bedtime, 3 days per week. During one year, Annabelle experiences 780 minutes of reading with her dad.

Which child do you think will become a successful reader?

Which child do you think will be more successful in school?



"Sounding Out" Words

Sounding out words can be tricky! Try the following suggestions next time your child comes to a word he/she doesn't recognize:

Read the word syllable-by-syllable. Examples:

"refreshing"= "re"- "fresh"- "ing"

"busted"= "bus"- "ted"

Blend the syllables together!

Look for patterns in the word. Ask your child if he/she recognizes any patterns in the word. Your child may recognize "ing," "ed," "ch," "uck," and many more. Your child will have a head start in sounding out the word if he/she already knows part of it!

Sound out pieces of the word and blend together.

Example: "remembering"

re

re+mem

remem+ber

remember+ing

Blend together: "remembering"



Sight Words: Are They Important?

Absolutely! Sight words are words that are used most often in written text. These are words that should be recognized immediately by "sight."

The ability to read sight words fluently is a large part of fluent reading. Focus on a few words at a time. Be sure to frequently review previously learned words.

Sight words are usually words that cannot be "sounded out." This means that most sight words must be practiced, reviewed, and memorized by children. These sight words are already in your child's verbal vocabulary. Basically, we are helping connect the sight word in your child's memory to the written form of the word.

How to help your child practice sight words:

- * flashcards
- * Use the words to make sentences.
- * When reading with your child, take a few seconds to point out sight words in books. Ask your child to read the sight words.



Dolch "Third Grade" Sight Words Checklist

The Dolch Sight Words Lists provide a suggested order for helping children learn sight words. Mark the words your child can say immediately and without thinking. This checklist will help you keep track of the words your child still needs to practice.

<input type="checkbox"/> about	<input type="checkbox"/> fall	<input type="checkbox"/> kind	<input type="checkbox"/> seven
<input type="checkbox"/> better	<input type="checkbox"/> far	<input type="checkbox"/> laugh	<input type="checkbox"/> shall
<input type="checkbox"/> bring	<input type="checkbox"/> full	<input type="checkbox"/> light	<input type="checkbox"/> show
<input type="checkbox"/> carry	<input type="checkbox"/> got	<input type="checkbox"/> long	<input type="checkbox"/> six
<input type="checkbox"/> clean	<input type="checkbox"/> grow	<input type="checkbox"/> much	<input type="checkbox"/> small
<input type="checkbox"/> cut	<input type="checkbox"/> hold	<input type="checkbox"/> myself	<input type="checkbox"/> start
<input type="checkbox"/> done	<input type="checkbox"/> hot	<input type="checkbox"/> never	<input type="checkbox"/> ten
<input type="checkbox"/> draw	<input type="checkbox"/> hurt	<input type="checkbox"/> only	<input type="checkbox"/> today
<input type="checkbox"/> drink	<input type="checkbox"/> if	<input type="checkbox"/> own	<input type="checkbox"/> together
<input type="checkbox"/> eight	<input type="checkbox"/> keep	<input type="checkbox"/> pick	<input type="checkbox"/> try
			<input type="checkbox"/> warm

Third Grade Sight Words

Cut apart these flashcards and use them to practice sight words with your child. Practice until your child can say the word instantly!
the word instantly!

Remember to practice only a few minutes per day! This should be a fun task, not a chore!

about

better

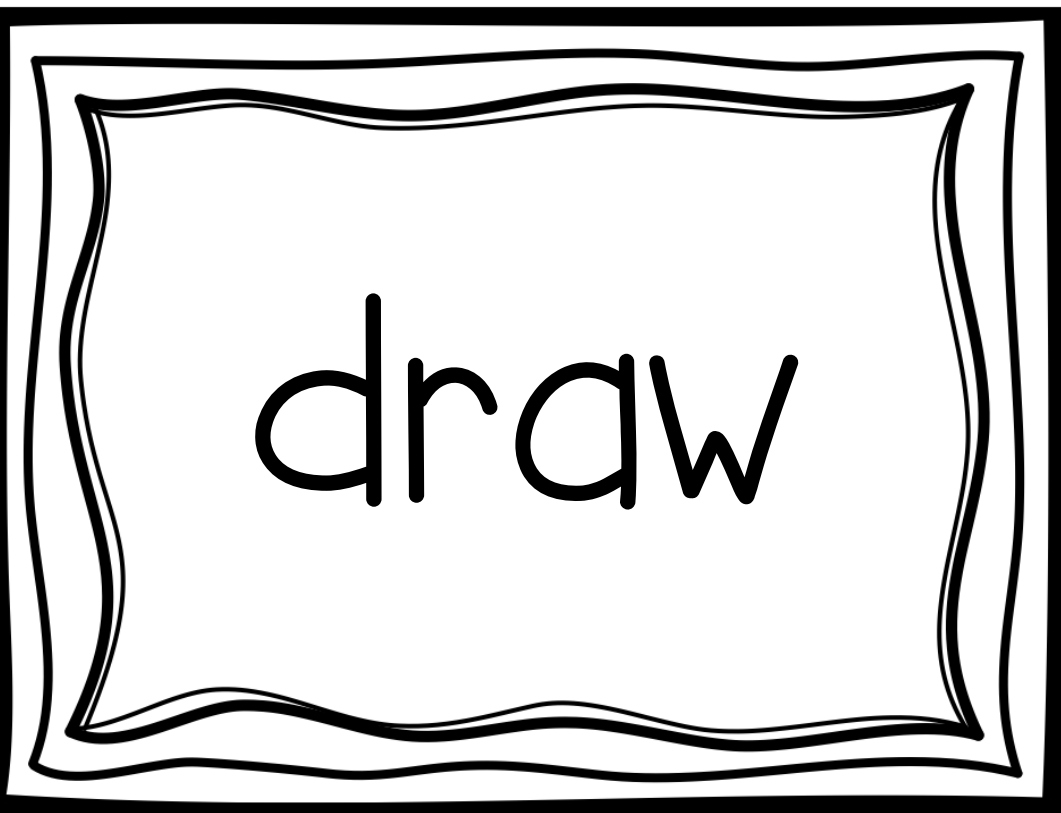
bring

carry

clean

cut

done



draw



drink



eight



fall

far

full

got

grow

hold

hot

hurt

if

keep

kind

laugh

light

long

much

myself

never

only

own

pick

seven

shall

show

six

small

start

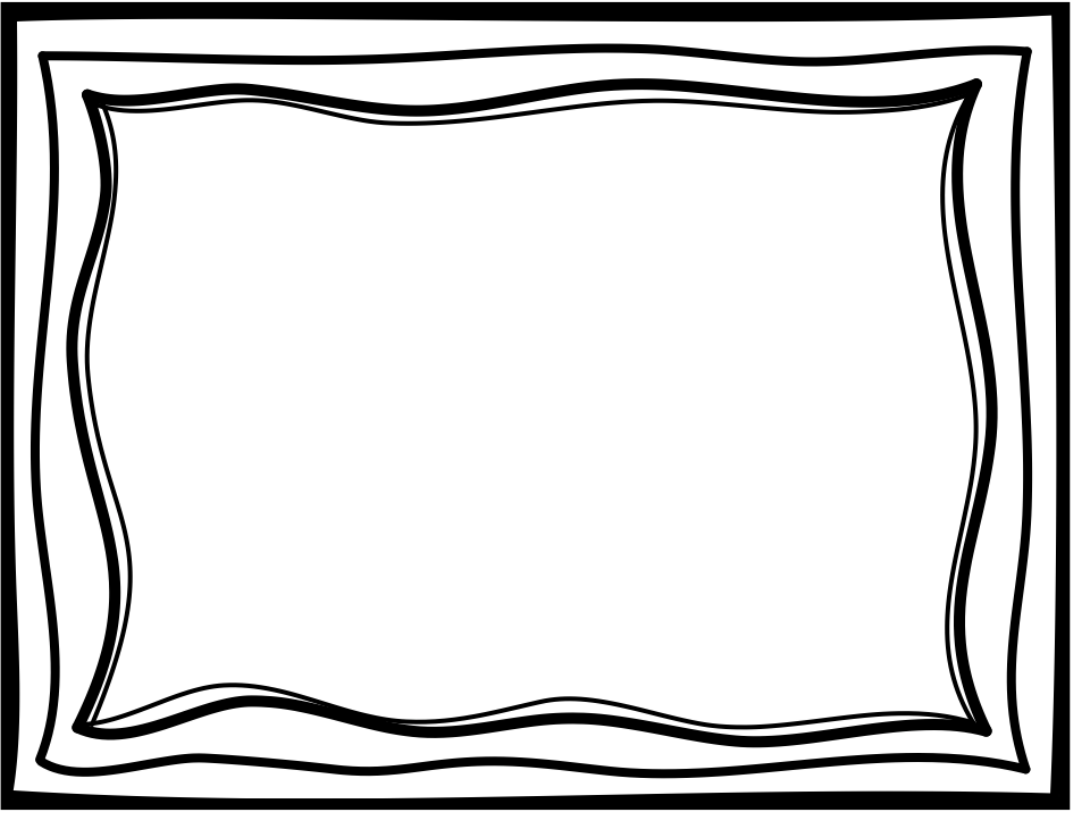
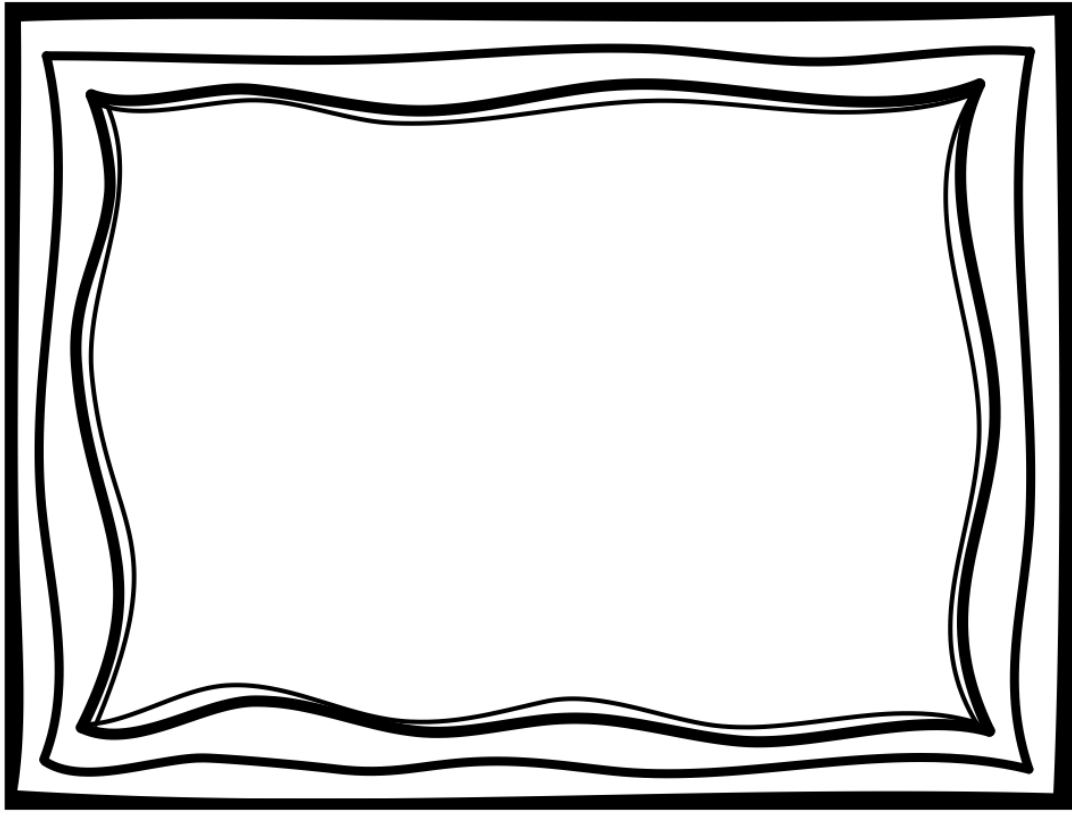
ten

today

together

try

warm



Third Grade Reading Patterns Cheat Sheet #1

When you see terms like “digraph,” “diphthong,” and “r-controlled vowels,” it’s easy to be confused! Keep this cheat sheet handy!

Contractions

Contractions are used to combine 2 words.

Examples:

is + not = isn't

can + not = can't

should + not = shouldn't

Consonant Digraphs (Blends)

These are groups of 2 or 3 consonants that make a special sound.

Examples: br, sm, th, ch, spl

brain

splash

Vowel Digraphs

These are pairs of vowels that make a special sound.

Examples: ai, oa, ee, ei, ay

pain

coot

free

Diphthongs

Diphthongs are combinations of 2 vowels that come together in a smooth motion.

Examples: oi, oy, oo, aw, ew

booi

rooo



Third Grade Reading Patterns Cheat Sheet #2

When you see terms like “digraph,” “diphthong,” and “r-controlled vowels,” it’s easy to be confused! Keep this cheat sheet handy!

R-Controlled Vowels

When an “r” follows a vowel, it changes the sound of the vowel.

Examples: ar, er, ir, or, ur
barn
flirt

Word Families

These are groups of words that have a common pattern.

Example: “-ain” family
train
plain
plantain

Multisyllabic Words

These are words with more than one syllable.

Examples:
blueberry
animal
marshmallow

Plural Endings

Plural = more than one
Add “s” or “es” to the ends of words to make them plural.

Example:
cookies



What are Latin Suffixes?

Beginning in 3rd grade, if not before, students begin to read words with Latin suffixes. Many of our words and word parts come from the classical language of Latin. You probably already know and use many Latin suffixes.

A suffix is a word part added to the end of a word. It usually changes the meaning of the word.

Latin Suffix	Meaning	Example
-er -or	one who...	teacher, survivor
-ment	act or process of...	enjoyment, payment
-able	able to be...	fixable, breakable
-ist	one who does...	artist, tourist
-ian -an	having a certain skill or belonging to...	magician, American

Helping your child learn Latin suffixes:

- Point out these suffixes in words when you are reading with your child.
- Give examples of words containing a particular suffix. Ask your child to think of more examples of words.

Choosing a “Just Right” Book

Have you ever tried to stumble through a book that is too hard for you? It’s miserable! We don’t want our children to suffer through “too hard” books! Attempting to read a book that is too difficult will only frustrate your child. Use the “5-Finger Rule” when trying to decide if a book is appropriate for your child’s reading level. Ask your child to read the second page of a book. Each time he/she comes to an unknown word, hold up one finger. If all 5 fingers are up before finishing the page, the book is probably too hard!

Parent Question:

My son frequently asks to read books that are too easy for him. Should I make him choose books that are more difficult?

When your child reads books below his reading level, he is building confidence, gaining fluency, and growing his love for reading! Many adults have a favorite book that they reread numerous times.

Allow him to return to his favorite books but encourage him to try out some books on his reading level. Go to the library and browse the shelves. Point out books with interesting covers. He may find a new favorite!



Tips for Reading with Your Child

- Help your child choose interesting books on his/her reading level.
- Read together in a quiet, comfortable place in your home. Reading time should always be a happy, cozy time.
- Use “shared” reading- You read to your child, your child reads to you, and both of you read together.
- Read favorite books again and again! Repeated readings help improve confidence, build fluency, and encourage a love for reading.
- When your child comes to a word he/she doesn't know, try these strategies:
 - a. Help him/her sound out the word slowly, then put it together.
 - b. Tap your finger for each sound, then blend the sounds.
 - c. Look for patterns in the word, like “am” or “ch.”
 - d. Read the sentence without the word- What word would make sense in the blank?



Comprehension Cards

Do you ever wonder if you are asking the right types of questions while reading with your child? These cards can help!

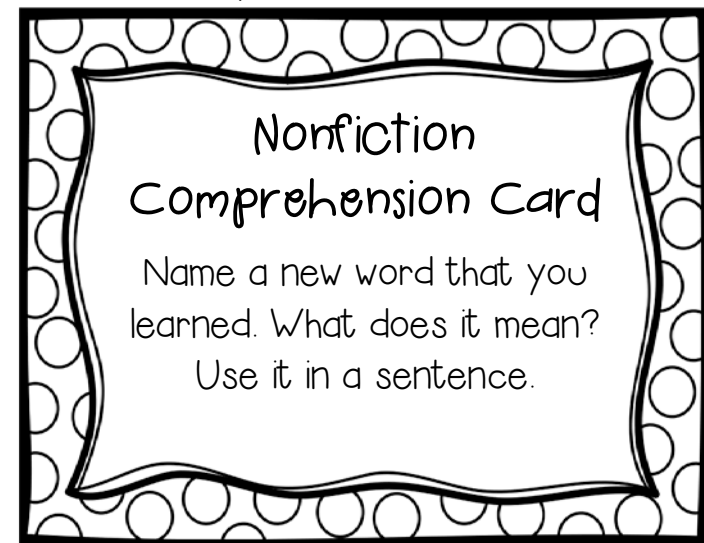
If you are reading a fiction (make-believe) story with your child, use the "Fiction Comprehension Cards."

If you are reading a nonfiction (real) story or text with your child, use the "Nonfiction Comprehension Cards."

Fiction Comprehension Cards look like this:



Nonfiction Comprehension Cards look like this:



Tip: Use one card per chapter or book. Don't overdo it! These cards are only a suggestion. Ask any and all questions you think are important!

Fiction Comprehension Card

Look at the title, cover,
and any pictures in the
book. What do you think
this book is about?

Fiction Comprehension Card

Where does the story take
place? Does it occur in the
past, present, or future?

Fiction Comprehension Card

Who is the main character?
How are you and the main
character alike and
different?

Fiction Comprehension Card

Is the author trying to
teach a lesson in this
story? What is it?

Fiction Comprehension
Card

If you had to become a character in the story, which one would you choose? Why?

Fiction Comprehension
Card

What is your favorite passage in the story? Read it aloud!

Fiction Comprehension
Card

Change the ending to this story. Describe your new ending.

Fiction Comprehension
Card

How does this story remind you of other stories you have read?

Fiction Comprehension Card

Think about the choices
the main character made.
What would you have done
differently?

Fiction Comprehension Card

What type of fiction story
did you read?

Realistic Fiction... Fantasy...
Fairy Tale... Myth

Fiction Comprehension Card

How do other characters feel
about the main character?
Use details from the story to
support your answer!

Fiction Comprehension Card

Create a commercial for this
book. Your goal is to make
other kids want to read the
book. What will you say and
do?

Nonfiction
Comprehension Card

What do you already know
about this topic?

Nonfiction
Comprehension Card

What can you learn from
the pictures and/or charts
before reading?

Nonfiction
Comprehension Card

How does the author make
this topic interesting?

Nonfiction
Comprehension Card

How does the author
present information on this
topic?

Nonfiction

Comprehension Card

Pretend you are explaining this topic to a friend who doesn't know anything about it. What will you say?

Nonfiction

Comprehension Card

Name a new word that you learned. What does it mean? Use it in a sentence.

Nonfiction

Comprehension Card

After reading this text, I want to learn more about _____.

Nonfiction

Comprehension Card

What did you learn about this topic?

Expand your Child's Vocabulary!

Vocabulary is a very important part of reading. The more words your child knows and can use correctly, the better his/her comprehension will be!

Here are some good ideas for helping your child expand his/her vocabulary. You will also find one thing to avoid:

Do This!

When your child encounters a new word, talk about the word with your child. Use the new word in a sentence. Talk about other words that have almost the same meaning as the new word.

Do This!

Ask your child to write new words he/she encounters. Invite your child to draw pictures to represent the words and write the meanings in his/her own words. Refer back to the words and pictures often to help your child remember the meanings of new words. Make a "Vocabulary Wall of Fame" with your child.

Do This!

Play word games with your child. One fun game is "I'm thinking of..."
Example: "I'm thinking of a word that means a person fell over something. It's what dad did when he tripped." Your child will try to guess the word. The word in the example is "stumble."

Don't Do This!

Do not ask your child to write dictionary definitions of new words. Your child will be more likely to remember and use new words that he/she has discussed and used while reading, speaking, and writing.

My Vocabulary Wall of Fame

Word: _____

What it Means: _____

Picture:

Word: _____

What it Means: _____

Picture:

Word: _____

What it Means: _____

Picture:

Word: _____

What it Means: _____

Picture:

Fluency & Comprehension

Always Together!

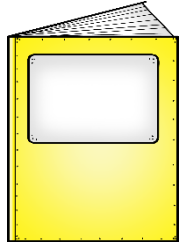
Fluency and comprehension work together beautifully!

When a child reads fluently (quickly and without stumbling over words), he/she can focus on comprehension (the meaning).

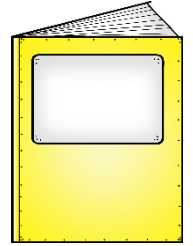
When a child understands what he/she is reading (comprehension) and has appropriate vocabulary, fluency will increase.

Parent Question: My child reads slow and choppy. He must sound out almost every word. Then, after he reads, he has no idea what the story was about. We are both frustrated! What should I do to help him?

Choose a book on a lower reading level. Show your child's teacher or librarian the book he is struggling with and ask for books on a lower reading level. It's better to start on a lower level and work up than to have your child struggle and become frustrated with reading. Your child will not understand the meaning of what he is reading until he is able to read the words fluently. Check out the suggestions on the next page!



Fluency and Comprehension



Always Together!

Here are some suggestions you can use to help your child improve his/her fluency and comprehension:

Choral Reading:

You and your child read at the same time. This will help your child because he/she will be able to practice with you, a fluent reader. This will help your child grow his/her fluency and gain confidence.

Echo Reading:

Read 2 sentences in a text while your child follows along. Ask your child to read the same 2 sentences. This will help your child develop fluency and will help build his/her confidence.

Ask your child to choose a short paragraph or page in a book. Ask your child to read it several times or until he/she reads it fluently. This will help your child increase fluency and will improve understanding of the passage.

Reading aloud should sound like a conversation. Model fluent reading for your child. If characters are speaking, change your voice for the different characters. Ask your child to do the same while reading.

Genre Study

What is genre?

A genre is a type of or category of writing. There are many different types of genres, such as realistic fiction, mystery, fables, and others.

Why should my child complete a genre study?

1. It's fun! Your child will learn about many different types of writing and books. He/She may discover a new favorite type of writing or new, fascinating books.
2. Your child will learn new words, ideas, and writing styles. This is called "wide reading." Students who read widely have larger vocabularies and deeper knowledge than students who stick to one type of book.
3. It will increase your child's achievement in school. Your child will be ready to discuss and answer questions about many different genres and types of writing.

How to do a Genre Study with your child:

- Study the genre categories on the next page.
- Take the "Genre Study Sheet" to the public library. Ask the librarian to show you the area in the library where books of each genre are located.
- Choose a few books. As your child reads each book, mark off the genre on the "Genre Study Sheet."
- Celebrate with your child once he/she completes the "Genre Study Sheet."

Genre Categories

Genre	Characteristics of this Genre
Realistic Fiction	These stories are make-believe but could happen in real life. Example: Junie B. Jones book series
Historical Fiction	These stories are make-believe and are set in the past. Example: American Girls book series
Mystery	These stories contain unknown parts, often including detectives and detective work. Example: Nancy Drew book series
Folktales	These stories are passed down through generations, often by word of mouth. Example: Paul Bunyan tales
Fairytales	These stories contain legendary creatures and actions. They often use kings, queens, talking animals, fairies, etc. Example: Cinderella
Fantasy	These stories are make-believe and could never happen in real life. They often contain talking animals and living objects. Example: Harry Potter
Information	This genre contains nonfiction materials. The purpose of this type of writing is to inform. Examples: newspapers, magazines, books about real animal habitats
Biography	In this type of writing, one person tells about another person's life. Example: The biography of Helen Keller tells about Helen's life.
Poetry	Poetry may rhyme or it may not rhyme. Examples: Shel Silverstein's poetry books, Dr. Seuss books, Jack Prelutsky's books

Genre Study Sheet

After you read a book from any genre category, color one small book next to the appropriate category. Be sure to talk about what type of writing each genre uses. Have fun doing this genre study!

Realistic Fiction	    
Historical Fiction	    
Mystery	    
Folktales	    
Fairytales	    
Fantasy	    
Information	    
Biography	    
Poetry	    

Third Grade Reading and Writing Journal

Your child will love keeping a reading and writing journal! Your child will be able to look back in the journal and see all of the enjoyable books he/she has read with you. After you read a book with your child, ask him/her to fill out a journal page. The journal does not have to be on fancy paper, a notebook works just as well.

Step One: Read a book with your child.

Step Two: Ask your child to write the title and author of the book.

Step Three: Ask your child to draw a picture of his/her favorite part of the book.

Step Four: Ask your child to write a few sentences to describe his/her favorite part of the book.