

Resources for Children's Literacy Tutors

Summer Reads



Title: Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension

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Target audience: Elementary school children

Topic(s):

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About Summer Reads:

This children's literacy tutor resource was created by Summer Reads VISTA members. Summer Reads is an [AmeriCorps VISTA national service](#) program of Literacy Minnesota. For 8 weeks over the summer, Summer Reads VISTA members volunteer full-time as children's/youth literacy mentors in schools, libraries and out-of-school-time programs across Minnesota. They bring literacy to life for low-income students through a variety of activities – one-on-one tutoring, creative enrichment activities like using arts and drama to explore language or practicing vocabulary and comprehension in science and other subjects. They also connect students and parents/caregivers to community resources through wrap-around basic needs support. At the same time, the VISTA members build their own leadership, explore career paths, pay for college and become lifelong advocates for the communities they serve due to the power of their experience. www.literacymn.org/summerreads

Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension

Questioning

Have you ever had a child read a book to you but afterwards you ask them what it was about and they have no idea?

Questioning readers before, after, and while they read allows them to decode and reconstruct the meaning of the books that they read. It also allows them to practice their active reading strategies and increases their comprehension.

Asking questions before reading allows students to build their background knowledge so that they have an understanding of the book and can relate it to their personal experience. During reading, questioning keeps students focused and engaged in the text while monitoring what parts of the story they understand as they read. After reading, questioning allows students to reflect on the text, to learn the deeper meaning of the text, and to practice summarizing texts. It gives the tutor time to assess the student's overall comprehension, and it allows tutors to ask upper-level questions to extend students thinking of the text.

Open-ended questions where there is not a direct right answer can be used to check for comprehension and analysis/reflection, whereas closed questions usually only have one right answer and are only used for comprehension. Questioning is beneficial for children of all ages. Check out the questions below that work best with grades K-6.

Questions for before, during and after reading a book

1. Before

- What do you think this book will be about?
- What do you know about this topic?
- Do you think this story will be fiction or non-fiction? How do you know?
- What does the title tell us about the story?
- What does the picture tell us about the story?
- What do you think will be the conflict of the story? How do you know?

2. During

- What do you think will happen next?
- How does the character feel right now? Why do they feel that way?
- What is the most important thing that has happened so far?
- What does this word mean? How do you know?
- What questions do you have right now?

3. After

- Who were the main characters?
- Can you retell me the story in your own words?

- What was the problem in the story?
- Why is this topic important?
- Why did the author write this story?
- What questions do you have?
- Did the character grow? How did the character grow?
- What did you like about the story?
- What did you not like about the story?

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are used for children in grades 1-6th to display what they have learned while reading. It gives students another way to visualize and organize their thoughts, opinions and background knowledge to learn and create meaning about the text.

When teaching virtually, the tutor and the child can make their own graphic organizers and show them to each other. Another option is to use Google or a Microsoft document where the tutor and the student can edit at the same time.

KWL Charts:

KWL stands for Know, Want to know, Learned. This type of graphic organizer is used for students to activate background knowledge, set a purpose or goal during reading, and reflect or analyze after reading. These charts are best used for younger readers because they can fill the columns with drawings instead of writing sentences or words to allow students to express understanding.

In virtual tutoring, these charts can be easily created in a Word or Google document and shared between the tutor and student to add to collectively or simply screen-shared with the student while the tutor writes if the student cannot type yet.

Example Book:

Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship, by Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes

What I already know:	What I want to know:	What I learned:
People love having pets like dogs. Dogs can help people who are blind. Dogs can be mean and friendly.	How do Rescue and Jessica meet?	Dogs can be helpful to someone who does not have limbs and have prosthetics. Rescue and Jessica are based off of a true story.

Cause and Effect Charts:

Cause and effect charts would be most useful to use after reading a book to help students reflect and analyze the story. The chart is created with 2 columns, one labeled Cause and the other Effect. It is most helpful to ask students what problems they noticed in the story and then how that changed or progressed the story. These graphic organizers help students see how different parts of the story affect each other. This can also be made simply on a word document and shared with a student for tutors and students to edit collectively.

Cause (Why something happens)	Effect (What happens)
Jessica's legs were badly hurt.	So, Jessica needs an amputation of her leg. Later, her other leg needed to be amputated.
Jessica loves seeing a dog that came to see her.	Jessica wants a dog to help her.

Story Maps:

Story maps allow students to understand and organize all the elements of a story. Story maps can include but are not limited to including, characters, main ideas, settings, important events, conflicts and resolutions. These graphic organizers are most helpful for younger kid's grades K-6th and struggling readers. This chart can be made on a document and shared with tutors and students to complete collectively.

Title and Author Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship	Setting Hospital (Jessica) Farm (Rescue) Park and Hospital (Rescue and Jessica)
Characters Jessica Rescue Jessica's parents Rescue's trainer Currahee Jessica's Doctor	Conflict Jessica is badly hurt and has to relearn how to do a lot of things with her prosthetic leg(s).
Resolution Jessica learns how to do everyday things with the help from Rescue. Jessica and Rescue help each other to enjoy life and are great friends.	Themes Friendship Healing Help Preservice