Parent Guide
ReadSBISD: Parent Guide

Parents and families play a critical role in educating Every Child we serve. You are their first teachers and our important partners!

SBISD’s priority is to ensure all students are reading on or above grade level by 3rd grade. To support this work, the district launched ReadSBISD in Fall 2019 as the umbrella for community-supported literacy initiatives.

This guide is designed to help you support your child’s literacy development. We know that learning to read may seem complex – but there are simple things you can to do help your child along the way. The information provided here will help you understand what is happening in your child’s SBISD classroom and how you can be a part of their learning process.

The ReadSBISD Parent Guide was developed by the SBISD Community Relations and Academics teams and is based in part on a volunteer reading guide developed in the early 2000’s by SBISD Literacy Specialists Patty Oliver and Mary Wheeler, under the guidance of Dr. Judy Wallis.

A special thanks to Dr. Kristin Craft, Joyce Evans, Holly Mercado and the SBISD Academics team for their support in developing this guide.

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Parents as Partners

We all play a role in the success of Every Child.

The SBISD Family Education, Engagement and Empowerment (Family E3) framework affirms that families and schools are equal partners in student success. Each plays a critical role as a champion for Every Child.

The information and strategies in this guide will help you help your child develop:

• increased reading fluency
• increased reading comprehension
• increased self-confidence
• increased ability to articulate thoughts

Your aim as parents is to support and inspire active readers who keep trying and who know how to work through unknown words in a variety of ways.

Students have partners at school during independent reading. Partners are critical to our reading communities because they support each other, share a common experience in reading, and push each other to meet reading goals. At home, you can be a great reading partner, too.

There are no rules for reading together! You can share a great book, read while your children are reading, read to your children, or have your children read to you. Taking the time to make reading together a priority will help children see how important literacy is.

Your efforts will help ensure your child is ready and on track to achieve our T-2-4 goal to successfully attain a technical certification or military service, or a two-year or a four-year degree, when he/she graduates.

Thank you for your partnership!
SBISD’s Approach to Literacy Instruction

Balanced Literacy

Spring Branch ISD has adopted a balanced literacy approach to teaching language arts. This means that each day, students engage with different components of balanced literacy: reading and writing workshops, word study, read alouds, shared reading, and interactive writing.

- **Reading and writing workshops** contain a brief mini-lesson that builds on the student’s skills and strategies. Students read independently while the teachers pull small groups or work with students in one-on-one conferences to assess how students are applying teaching points to their independent work. Teachers also use this time to introduce readers to new text levels, skills and strategies.

- In primary classrooms, teachers explicitly teach **phonics** during a designated time every day.

- Interactive **read alouds** are used to model higher-level thinking and to build a reading community with carefully planned “turn and talk” prompts.

- **Shared reading** teaches early reading strategies and creates opportunities for fluency work.

Units of Study

To support students as they grow in literacy and to support teachers, SBISD has adopted the **Units of Study in Reading, Writing, and Phonics** created by the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project of Columbia University.

The Units of Study approach to instruction recognizes “one size fits all” does not effectively meet the needs of all children. This research-based approach is designed to:

- help teachers address each child’s individual learning
- explicitly teach strategies students will use not only the day they are taught, but whenever they need them
- support small-group work, with multiple opportunities for personalizing instruction
- tap into the power of a learning community as a way to bring all learners along
- build choice and assessment-based learning into the very design of the curriculum
- build engagement so teachers are able to coach individuals and lead small groups

**What does this look like at each grade level?**

**Kindergarten**

- begin reading emergent storybooks to learn how story structure works and build a habit of studying pictures as they bring meaning to their stories
- acquire strategies to approach the process of reading with confidence
- build reading “muscles” as they move into text with less patterns and more high-frequency words, longer sentences, and more words to a page
First Grade

• use early reading habits to retell what happens in books and build stronger comprehension

• acquire strategies to empower students to move into longer texts and read with the ability to self-monitor

• study characters and explore early chapter and non-fiction books

Second Grade

• use partner talk with early chapter books and study story structures using retelling

• explore more complex non-fiction texts and chapter books, building fluency to increase reading volume, studying literary language, and understand the best ways to read chapter books

• work with early forms of book clubs in order to bring greater meaning to their reading through conversations

Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade

• work with more complex fiction and non-fiction titles

• engage in book club conversations and learn to organize their thinking through “jots” on Post-it® notes, eventually reflecting on ideas throughout their reading of different texts

• expand short “jots” into longer written reading responses

• spend time setting goals to become a more reflective reader and build voice and agency to become avid, lifelong readers
What Happens within Books?

**Text Bands**

In balanced literacy instructional settings, texts are often referred to by their “level.” Fountas and Pinnell created a leveling system to identify books based on their complexity on a scale from A to Z, with A being the easiest to Z being the most difficult.

In Units of Study, levels of texts are “banded” together based on similar difficulty. The goal over time is for students to acquire the strategies needed to move to more challenging texts on their journey to becoming a lifelong reader.

SBISD teachers continually assess students’ reading levels to ensure they are working with the right level of texts that both give them confidence as a reader and the ability to apply new strategies they have learned.

Unsure of your child’s current reading level? Ask your child or his/her teacher!
What happens within books in different levels/text bands?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Band</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A/B       | • One or two lines of text per page  
           | • Highly predictable as the text consists of a pattern  
           | • Pictures support the text  
           | • Simple sentences made up of many high-frequency words, also known as **Snap Words** |
| C/D       | • Texts continue to follow a pattern, but the last page consists of a pattern change  
           | • Many high-frequency words (snap words) that are not easy to decode  
           | • Detailed pictures/illustrations  
           | • Multiple lines of text  
           | • Dialogue statements by characters are introduced (the characters have a voice)  
           | • Question marks, exclamation marks, and apostrophes in possessive forms of words or contractions  
           | • Inflectional endings become more apparent (e.g., jumps, jumped, jumping)  
           | • Consonant blends (e.g., crayon, blue) and digraphs (e.g., ship, this) introduced |
| E         | • Sentences become longer  
           | • Illustrations are less helpful  
           | • Inflectional endings become very common (e.g., jumps, jumped, jumping)  
           | • Contractions continue to be a part of the text (e.g., don’t, can’t)  
           | • Compound words appear (e.g., doghouse, playground)  
<pre><code>       | • Noticing word parts is important as the first or last letter of a word will not be enough to help read unfamiliar words |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Band</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| F/G/H     | • Longer stories  
|           | • Complex plot structures  
|           | • Non-repetitive episodes  
|           | • Longer sentences with dependent clauses  
|           | • Fewer new high-frequency words |
| I/J       | • Books range from shorter texts (often nonfiction) to longer books of 40-60 pages  
|           | • Readers need to pay attention and build memory over time  
|           | • Characters are one dimensional, holding onto their personality throughout the story  
|           | • Storylines can contain more than one point of view  
|           | • Readers learn to pause and ensure that what they have read sounds right, makes sense to the story, and looks right to the structure |
| K/L/M     | • This text band allows for a great amount of silent reading, which allows for an increase of reading volume  
|           | • Books go from easy chapter books with many pages of illustrations to books with smaller font size that allows for more words per page  
|           | • Sentence structure and vocabulary are most complex  
<p>|           | • Often, children need guidance in how to apply the punctuation for these sentences and support with sophisticated vocabulary in order to understand the true meaning of the text |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Band</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| N/O/P/Q   | • Genres expand into mysteries, fantasy, and realistic fiction  
• Nonfiction texts become much more topic focused and carry many main ideas throughout the text  
• Plotlines contain multiple sources behind a problem  
• Sentence structure and vocabulary grows greatly in complexity  
• Often, children will need guidance in how to apply the punctuation for these sentences and support with sophisticated vocabulary in order to understand the true meaning of the text |
Power of Reading Volume

Reading volume is the amount of reading a child does. During independent reading time at school, students read typically 20-30 minutes, depending on the grade level. Adding time at home for reading will encourage making reading each day a habit that will help your child increase knowledge and vocabulary.

Educators often reference the study below demonstrating the power of reading volume:

**Why Can’t I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student “A” reads 20 minutes each day</th>
<th>Student “B” reads 5 minutes each day</th>
<th>Student “C” reads 1 minute each day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3600 minutes in a school year</td>
<td>900 minutes in a school year</td>
<td>180 minutes in a school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,800,000 words</td>
<td>282,000 words</td>
<td>8,000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90th percentile</td>
<td>50th percentile</td>
<td>10th percentile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the end of the 6th grade Student “A” will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student “B” will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

*Nagy & Herman 1987*
Tips to increase volume at home:

- Model reading. It doesn’t matter what you read, it just matters that you read!
- A-G level readers: read and reread books several times throughout the week in order to build fluency, strong reading habits, and recognition of words and how text works in order to transfer to other books.
- H-K level readers: spend around 15 minutes per book to continue with strong reading habits, work on reading rate, and build comprehension.
- Readers at levels K and beyond: readers often read about ¾ a page per minute.

How Many Books Should I Read Each Week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>How Many Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levels A-I</td>
<td>10-12 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels J-K</td>
<td>8-10 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels L-M</td>
<td>4-6 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels N-Q</td>
<td>2-4 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels R-T</td>
<td>1-4 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels U+</td>
<td>50-70 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Book Selection

In school, students learn to select many books that are just right for them, a couple that are a little easy to let them build fluency and confidence, and one or more that is more difficult and requires a little more work. You can recreate this process at home!

Libraries

• **School Libraries:** Each student in SBISD can check out titles from their school’s library. But did you know that parents can also have an account at their child’s school?

• All students in SBISD have access to a full digital library through Sora. Hundreds of eBooks and e-audiobooks are available for students to checkout. To access Sora, go to sorapp.com, select Spring Branch ISD as the school, and enter the student’s log in (district email and password).

• SBISD also provides access to eBooks through Capstone Publishing. Capstone eBooks are available to be read online or to be downloaded to a tablet or phone for offline enjoyment. All Capstone titles offer a read-along feature that highlights the words and provides a voice narration.

• **Public Libraries** allow free access to thousands of print, digital, and audiobooks as well as online subscriptions to magazines and databases.

◊ Harris County Public Library (HCPL): Did you know that your child has a digital library card from HCPL? Ask your child’s librarian for this library card number.

◊ Houston Public Libraries (HPL)

*Both Harris County and Houston Public Libraries require a library card. These cards are free of charge and can be picked up in a library branch near you.*
**Bookstores**

- Between Half Price Books, Barnes & Noble, Blue Willow Bookshop, and Amazon.com, there is a bookstore to fit every budget.

As students grow in their independence of book selection, they will still need guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid Saying...</th>
<th>Instead, Try Saying...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This book is too hard for you to read!</td>
<td>This book is harder than you’ve been reading. Let’s look at it together and make a plan for how I can help support you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This book is too easy for you to read!</td>
<td>A lot of times I enjoy reading a book that makes me feel good, this is something that we all enjoy in our reading stack. Let’s make a plan for what else will be in your reading stack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ve already read that book. You don’t need to read it again.</td>
<td>I have books that I love rereading because they are so great! This must be a book you really loved the first time you read it. It’s great that you want to read it again. Let’s look for another book that is like this because you might enjoy reading it, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re a level (___) reader.</td>
<td>You’re a reader, not a level! Some books on a level are just right for you, but make sure you are also thinking about what is interesting to you, too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning About Phonics

SBISD kindergarten through second-grade teachers implement the Phonics Units of Study. Phonological and Phonemic Awareness are critical in setting a strong literacy foundation as they allow students to become successful future readers and writers.

- **Phonological Awareness** is being able to recognize and play with spoken language. For example, a student will learn to count the number of words in a sentence, play with rhyming words, and clap out how many syllables are in a word like “table” (ta-ble).
- Phonemic Awareness is being able to recognize and play with sounds within spoken words. For example, a student will learn to listen for how many sounds are in a word – not just how many letters.

**What does research say about phonics instruction?**

- The teaching of phonics is an important aspect of beginning reading instruction.
- Classroom teachers in the primary grades value and teach phonics as a part of their reading program.
- Phonics instruction, to be effective in promoting independent reading, must be embedded in the content of a total reading / language arts program.

**Why do we teach phonics?**

- English is an alphabetic system.
- There is a relationship between the sounds we make and the symbols on the page that represent sound.
- The relationships between letters and sounds help us read; it is one important aspect of reading.
What do students need to learn?

- How to tell one letter from another
- Letter names, forms, and related sounds
- That words are made up of sounds and those sounds are related to letters and groups of letters
- That relationships between letters and sounds can help us write and read words

Learning About Phonics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>consonant</td>
<td>b, f, s, t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vowel</td>
<td>a, e, i, o, u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short vowel sound</td>
<td>cat, pet, pig, pot, cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long vowel sound</td>
<td>cake, eat, like, rope, use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blends</td>
<td>br, str, pl, spr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagraphs</td>
<td>ch, wh, th, sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prefixes</td>
<td>re-, un-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inflectional endings</td>
<td>-ing, -est, -ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suffixes</td>
<td>-ful, -ness, -ly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurals</td>
<td>-s, -es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upper- and lower-case</td>
<td>Aa, Bb, Cc, Dd, Ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syllables</td>
<td>car-ton; to-ma-to; po-ta-to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vowel patterns</td>
<td>CVC (dat, get, fit, hot, nut)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VCE (gave, scene, fine, home, tune)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VVC (train, boat, beat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CV (be, hi, go)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vowel pairs</td>
<td>ai (rain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oa (boat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>au, aw (author, saw)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ee, ea, ie (teen, team, believe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oi, oy (oil, boy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word patterns (phonograms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-ack, -all, -ain-, -ake, -ale, -ame, -an, -ank, -ap, -ash, -at, -ate, -aw, -ay
-eat, -ell, -est, -ice, -ick, -ide, -ight, -ill, -in, -ine, -ing, -ink, -ip, -ir
-ock, -oke, -op, -ore, -or, -uck, -ug, -ump, -unk

Adapted from So…What’s a Tutor to Do?, Roller & Help America
Read, Pinnell & Fountas

Supporting Phonics at Home

• Make an alphabet chart to match the letter to the sound.
• Work on letter features.
• Play Guess the Letter! Provide the letter features and ask your child to respond by naming the letter and its sound or the other way around.
• Match uppercase letters to the corresponding lowercase letters.
• Use sound boxes to break words and write the sounds.
  ◊ For example, CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) in the words cat, fun, car, etc.
• Practice the different ways vowels sound (short/long vowels).
• Distinguish between vowels and consonants by sorting and writing a list of words that contain a specific vowel/consonant.
• Recognize consonant blends (e.g., bl, cr, gr) in words.
• Write other words that are made up of the same blend.
• Provide pictures of objects that contain a blend.
• Find digraphs (e.g., sh, th, ch) in words.
• Write other words that are made up of the same digraphs.
• Write a book of digraphs.
• Label objects around your home with high-frequency or “snap words” (ex. the table).
• Build high-frequency words (Snap Words) by using:
  ◊ Popsicle sticks
  ◊ Magnetic letters
  ◊ Index cards/ flashcards/sticky notes

*Visit springbranchisd.com/read to see the Phonics Sequence of Instruction by grade level

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Taking a Book Walk / Sneak Peek

Taking a book walk or sneak peek is known as previewing the text. It’s a quick exercise to prepare the reader for the text. It is like when we wake up in the morning and think about our day and what to wear. We dress accordingly.

If we’re going to clean the garage, our outfit looks very different than if we’re going on a picnic or going to a wedding. We get ready because we know what to expect. The same is true for reading different genres.

Taking a book walk provides a time to:
• Peruse
• Browse
• See how it’s organized
• Look at the pictures, photographs, captions
• Identify genre
• Make predictions
• Locate tricky or exciting vocabulary
• See the author’s purpose
• Get comfortable with the format

Here’s what it might sound like:

Parent: With genuine enthusiasm, “Whoa, cool! Look at this book we’re going to read today! I think you’re going to like it a lot! Let’s check it out before we read it. That’s what good readers do! What can we tell by the cover? The title? What’s the voice inside your head thinking before we even open it up?”

Student: Makes a prediction or a connection… says something!

Parent: Gives credence to the student’s thought and continues to ask guiding questions such as, “What do you think we’ll see when we turn the page?” If it’s non-fiction, pay attention to the table of contents, the index, the large headings and highlighted vocabulary. If it’s fiction, have the student turn the pages and comment on what is happening in the storyline according to the pictures.
Sneak Peek with Young Readers:

- Picture walk with your child.
- Look at the cover and pictures.
- Talk about who is in the story.
- Discuss what is happening in the pages.
- Build a little vocabulary for the reader to apply.
- Predict what might be the problem.
- Discuss in nonfiction what the topic might be and the details.

Sneak Peek with Early Chapter Books

- Notice the cover and the title.
- Read the “blurb” on the back of the book. The blurb will share the main character(s) and the problem. It might hint at the setting.
- Discuss with your reader what you have learned and put it together with the cover.
- Picture walk (lower level chapter books), knowing that the pictures are not necessarily telling the story, but help with some visual supports.
- As children get older, themes begin to grow more evident on the blurbs of the books.

Sneak Peek with Non-fiction Books

- Notice the cover and title. “What do you think this book might be about?”
- Look at the back of the book for a blurb to gather information and vocabulary.
- Look at the pictures, photos, captions, graphs, in the book to gather information and discuss vocabulary.
- Notice the structure of the book. Many nonfiction books have different types of structures that might need to be pointed out to younger readers.
- Discuss the author’s purpose.
The Reading Continuum

Imagine yourself driving. The sun is out and the highway is empty. You are going to stay on the road for a long time. You turn up the tunes, put the car on cruise control and la dee dah, driving is easy!

Uh oh! Clouds gather, thunder cracks and within moments, hail is pelting down all around you. Roads are slick and, in an opaque wave, the fog rolls in.

Time to sit up straight! Reduce your speed. Grip the wheel tightly and concentrate really hard. This driving is tough!

The same thing is true for reading. We encounter all kinds of print. Sometimes we can zip through it. Cruise.

Other times it takes tremendous concentration. Slow down!

It’s important for readers to know where they are on the continuum so they can use the most effective strategies!

Read slowly

Take notes on a sticky note (stop, think, jot)

Monitor your understanding

Go back to the confusing part

Say something

Relax!

Read fast!

Enjoy the ease!

Wallow in the pictures!
Reading is complex!

Meaning
Does it make sense?

Structure
Does it sound right?

Visual
Does it look right?
When it comes to an **UNKNOWN WORD**, **ASK**...

- Does that look right?
- Does that sound right?
- Does that make sense?
Does it LOOK right, SOUND right and MAKE SENSE?

Marie Clay, the founder of Reading Recovery®, coined the above phrase for young struggling readers, believing that if they internalized these three questions, they will develop a self-extending system for solving unknown words.

As adults, we need to resist the temptation to jump in and rescue young readers. We need to encourage them to think of all the strategies they can use to figure out an unknown word.

It helps to prompt them with questions such as:

“Do you know another word that look like that?” ex. knowing ‘look’ will help access ‘shook’

“Get your mouth ready. Say the first sound.” Sometimes it just takes the initial sound for a word to spill out.

“Look at the picture!” In young reader’s books, the illustrations give lots of clues to the meaning.

“Do you remember that word from another page?” Flipping back and recognizing it from before will spark prior knowledge.

“Go to the beginning of the sentence and try it again!” Sometimes starting over is all it takes!

“Sound it out!” Although this doesn’t work all the time (consider ‘have’ and ‘gave’), sounding out words and taking them apart ‘on the run’ can work many times.

“What would make sense?” This is the MOST IMPORTANT question we want readers to ask!
Our voice could be saying any of the following when encountering:

UNKNOWN WORDS:
“Gee, I’ve never seen that word before! What could it mean? How do I pronounce it? Do I recognize a root word, suffix or prefix? How can I use the context to decipher its meaning? Maybe I should read on and see if it becomes clear, or go back and try it again.”

NEW INFORMATION:
“Wow, this is interesting information. I want to remember this! I think I’ll highlight it.”

CONFUSION:
“Time to keep the characters straight. There are too many of them, and I am getting confused. Think I’ll keep track of them on a bookmark!”

CONNECTIONS:
“Whoa! This reminds me of a time when…” OR “This reminds me of something else I’ve read…” OR “This really happened in the world!”

PREDICTIONS: “
I bet I know what’s going to happen next!”

INFERENCES:
“Now the author didn’t come right out and say it, but when I read between the lines, this is what I’m thinking!”

OPPORTUNITIES TO VISUALIZE:
“Even though there are no illustrations here, I can just picture how she looks from the author’s description!”

AN APPRECIATION OF WRITING STYLE:
“Whoa, what a great way to express that thought. Super word choice. I’d like to remember that, so that when I write, I can try that style!”
**Wait time**

*Wait time* gives the student a chance to show what she knows about the reading process. If you jump in the minute she encounters difficulty, you send the message, “Oh, no! You cannot do this!”

When a student has difficulty, wait a minimum of 3 to 5 seconds to give her the chance to solve the problem.

There are students who depend on the adult to solve the problem for them. If you are working with a student who simply wants to wait you out, you will probably have to give explicit instruction in what you expect her to do when she comes to a word she does not know.

**When to Ignore, When to Help, When to Tell**

- **Ignore** errors that do not change the meaning of the story.
- **Teach** at only a few key places where the student can learn what he most needs to learn.
- Sometimes it is OK to **tell** the word and sometimes it is not OK. Give the student enough wait time to try and problem solve on their own. If he is not successful, **tell** him the word.
- **Tell** the student words that are not in his speaking vocabulary.

*Adapted from So...What’s A Tutor to Do?, Roller*
During reading
GOOD READERS
STOP,
THINK
and make connections.
**Read, Stop, THINK!**

Some people believe that reading means buzzing right through the text at break-neck speed, stopping after the last period, sighing, and saying, “I’m done!” The focus for these readers is on finishing.

They are cheating themselves of literary opportunities!

**Reading is not a race.** It is an interactive process. Yes, even when we are alone with a piece of text!

Good readers listen to that little voice in their heads. It vibrates like a cell phone, alerting them that there is a personal response. Whether we read silently, or out loud, IF we are reading carefully, then we are monitoring our understanding.
Making Connections

Nothing exists in isolation. Our brains don’t take in information and have separate compartments with locked doors. Every time we read, our brains are hard at work. They are busy associating, accumulating, sifting, sorting, comparing, agreeing, disagreeing and thinking!

Our job is to be in touch with our brain. We call this “making connections.” There are three categories of connections:

**TEXT TO TEXT**
Hmm… This reminds me of something else I've read!” “Here is a fantasy story about dragonflies who get stuck in a Venus Fly Trap plant, and here is a factual article on the Venus Fly Trap…wow!”

**TEXT TO SELF**
“I know exactly how this character feels. Something similar happened in my life (my school, my family, to my friend).”

**TEXT TO WORLD**
“Whoa! This story about flowers reminds me of the time our science class visited our school garden!”
Say Something!

Reading is not an underground activity. Though most people read silently with an occasional chuckle, tear or aha, text is meant to be shared.

Say Something is a strategy used in school to remind readers to stop at certain points and talk about what they have read.

Parents have the unique opportunity to dialogue with students about print. It’s a good idea to use a little Post-It® or create a little STOP sign to insert periodically throughout a piece of text to initiate discussion.

There are no right answers or things to say. It’s just important to react to the text.

Some ideas follow:

- Make a connection! Text to text, text to self, text to world.
- Ask a question.
- Tell what this makes you think about.
- Make a prediction.
- Read your favorite part.
- Pick out a favorite phrase or word.
- Ask for clarification.
- Explain the picture in your head from a particular passage.
- React…do you agree? Disagree?
- Comment on the author’s style.
- Tell what you think another character might be feeling.
- What is the most important thing about what you just read?
- Make an inference.
Inferences

Authors intentionally don’t state all of the facts and feelings on a page. They rely on the reader to read between the lines, or to infer information from the text. It is very important for this skill to be practiced and verbalized from the earliest stages of reading.

EXAMPLES:

1. The text states: “Mom bolted through the kitchen door, threw the groceries on the counter and ignored the ringing phone.”

   The reader infers that MOM was in a hurry, though the text doesn’t explicitly state that. The reader might also infer that mom was late, pre-occupied or angry. Additional details will clarify these ideas.

2. The text states: “Harry stepped into his cabin to meet his new roommate. THUMP! Harry tripped over an open suitcase on the floor. Around the room lay dirty clothes and piles of orange peels.”

   The reader infers that Harry’s roommate is a messy person.

Good readers use evidence from the text to make inferences.

They check themselves as the text continues to see if the inference holds true.
Good Readers know when to USE CAUTION

Here are some things readers can do when they get stuck:

1. Point to where it got confusing
2. Then ask:
   • Should I re-read?
   • Can I guess, go on, and check my guess?
   • Do I need to read slower?
   • Who can I ask for help?
   • Would it help to take notes as I read?
   • Is this text too hard?
During reading
GOOD READERS
MAKE PICTURES in their heads.
Visualizing

You know the author has done a good job when you feel that movie projector rolling in your head creating images on the screen. You know just what the characters look like. You’ve got their posture down and envision their facial expression and mannerisms. The scenery is described so perfectly you can practically smell the flowers and feel the cool winter wind sweeping across your face.

**Good readers take time to make the words come alive on the page.** They stop, notice and appreciate the language. Perhaps the descriptions will leap off the page and be powerful enough to read aloud and share, or be documented.

**But unless we explicitly talk about the images we see as we are reading, they can be fleeting and dormant.** As Parents, we need to lift up expressive text and talk about what we see in our head.

A conversation may be started like this:

“The author didn’t say anything about a beard, but I see the preacher with one, what do you think? Is he the type of man who would have facial hair?”

You know what it’s like when you’ve read a book and then go see the movie? Sometimes the director has cast the movie with our idea of the PERFECT characters! And we are SO pleased. Other times, the plot is twisted a bit, and it just isn’t like we pictured it in our minds as we were reading. Is it better to see the movie first, or read the book? I say, read the book.

**Let your imagination have full reign and power.** Savor the words. Movies often move too fast and lose the moments that were stretched beautifully by the author. Take time to talk about the pictures in your heads.
What do I do after READING?
Say Something Prompts

After reading, take the time to discuss what you have just read with your student. Remember to praise his or her efforts and accomplishments!

Below is an exercise with prompts you can use to discuss a book together:

1. With your partner, decide who will say something first.

2. When you say something, do one or more of the following:
   - Ask a question
   - Make a comment/observation
   - Make a connection
   - Make an inference
   - Clarify something you misunderstood

3. If you can’t do any of these things then re-read closely, re-observe, and re-think about the text.
Say Something Prompts

Ask a question

• Why did...
• How is... like...
• What would happen if ...
• Why...
• Who is ...
• In other words, are you saying ...
• Do you think that ...
• I don’t get this part here ...

Make a comment/observation

• I noticed...
• I saw... (heard/smelled)
• This is good because...
• This is hard because...
• This is confusing because...
• I like the part where...
• I don’t like this part because...
• My favorite part so far is...
• I think that...
• Based on... I would guess that
Say Something Prompts

Make a connection

• This reminds me of...
• This part is like...
• This process is like...
• This… is like… because...
• This is similar to...
• This is different from...
• I also (name something in the text/experiment that has also happened to you)...
• I never (name something in the text/experiment that has never happened to you)...
• This concept makes me think of...
• These ideas make me think of...

Make an Inference

• I predict that...
• I bet that...
• I think that...
• One conclusion I can draw is...
• Reading/observing this makes me think that… is about to happen.
• I wonder if...
• I can infer that...
• This picture makes me think…
Say Something Prompts

Clarify something

- Now I understand …
- This makes sense now because
- No, I think it means…
- I agree with you
- This means…
- At first I thought… but now I think…
- This part is really saying…
- Can you elaborate on…
- Can you provide more information about…
- Can you explain how…

Say Something is from Jerome Harste
Extended for analysis by Alana Morris

Resources

Visit www.springbranchisd.com/read for further resources, including a growing library of how-to videos to see these strategies in action!
Resources include:

Alphabet Chart
Reading Log
Snap Words
Sound Box
and more!
Thank you for
INSPIRING READERS
and SHAPING the future for Every Child.