

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 third grade. To support this work, the district launched ReadS-BISD 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 do to 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 Engagement 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, Melissa Ramirez and the SBISD Elementary Humanities team for their support in developing this guide.

SBISD Community Engagement
partner@springbranchisd.com
713.251.2460

Table of Contents

ReadSBISD Parent Guide Overview

Families as Partners

What it Takes to Read

Scarborough’s Rope

Simple View of Reading

SBISD’s Approach to Literacy Instruction

What Happens Within Books?

Text Bands

How to Read at Home

Power of Reading Volume

Book Selection

Phonics

Learning about Phonics

Supporting Phonics at Home

How to Read with Your Child

Taking a Book Walk / Sneak Peek

Unknown Words

Wait Time

Read, Stop, Think!

Making Connections

Say Something!

Say Something Prompts

Inferences

Resources

Families 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 vision for every SBISD graduate to successfully attain a technical certification or military service, or a two-year or a four-year degree.

Thank you for your partnership!

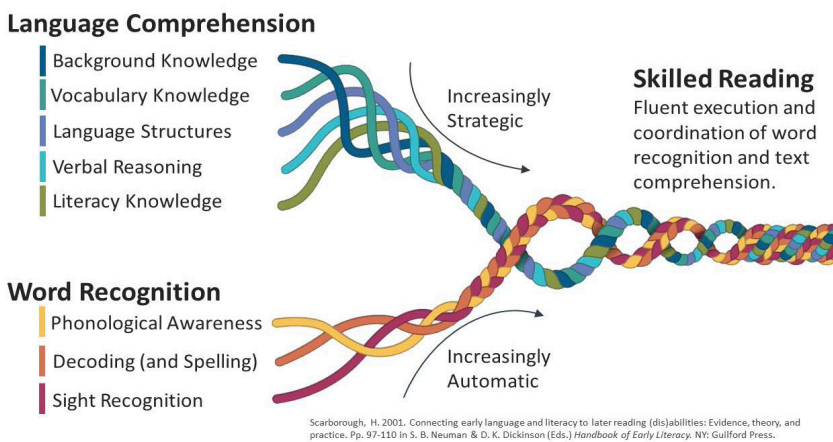
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What it Takes to Read

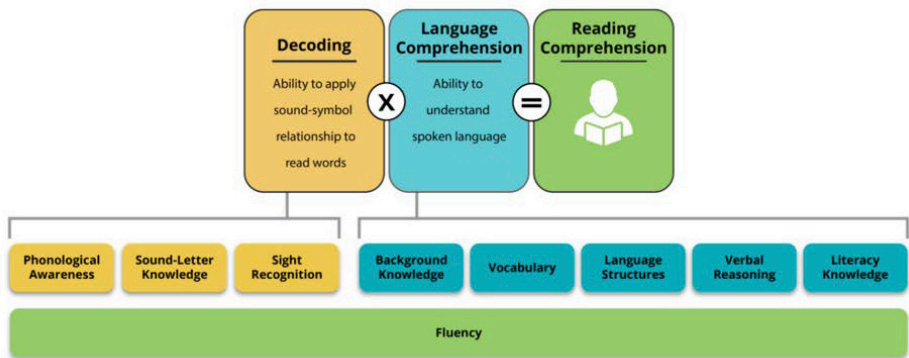
Reading requires many skills! The picture below from Dr. Hollis Scarborough shows how word recognition skills and language comprehension strategies work together to create a skilled reader. Early readers work to easily recognize words so they will be able to decode, or pronounce, more complicated words as they progress in reading. At the same time, readers will grow their comprehension skills so they will understand more complex texts.

Scarborough's Rope



The Simple View of Reading

The Simple View of Reading (1986), shown below, is another way to understand how these two literacy skills work together to create strong readers. Decoding skills and language comprehension skills are both needed, and work together, to support strong reading comprehension!



Gough, P. B., & Tunmer, W. E. (1986). Decoding, Reading, and Reading Disability. *Remedial and Special Education*, 7(1), 6–10.



SBISD's Approach to Literacy Instruction

Spring Branch ISD has adopted a balanced literacy approach to teaching language arts. Each day, students participate in reading, writing, interactive read alouds, shared reading and interactive writing. During this literacy block, also called reading and writing workshops, teachers develop lessons for decoding, encoding and developing language comprehension to strengthen foundational literacy skills.

- **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.
- Teachers explicitly teach **phonics** skills during a designated time every day that are used by the student during reading and writing workshops.
- 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 students to use their phonics skills to decode words and creates opportunities to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression (i.e., fluency).

Spring Branch ISD Curriculum

The Spring Branch ISD reading, writing and phonics curriculum are divided into units of study. These units lay out the year in a standards-based scope-and-sequence aligned to grade level TEKS. Each unit focuses on specific skills that build on each other throughout the year.

SBISD recognizes Every Child does not learn the same way or arrive at school with the same background experiences. The workshop approach to reading and writing is designed to support Every Child. After direct instruction, teachers use independent work time to support students based on their learning goals and needs. This research-based approach is designed to:

- help teachers address each child's learning through individualized lessons
- explicitly teach strategies students will use
- support small-group work
- support student agency and transfer to learning
- build on background knowledge through a variety of texts

What does this look like at each grade level?

Kindergarten

- Begin reading emergent storybooks to develop story language, book handling skills and build vocabulary
- Learn the letter-sound relationship to apply in both reading and writing
- Build foundational literacy skills to decode and read high-frequency words (or "snap words") as they move from reading decodable text to leveled patterned text with longer sentences and more words on a page

First Grade

- Apply both foundational literacy skills and reading comprehension skills to decode text and retell what happens in books
- Acquire strategies to empower students to move into longer texts and read with the ability to self-monitor
- Transfer foundational literacy skills to writing about books in different genres

Second Grade

- Read early chapter books requiring more advanced comprehension strategies for reading longer texts
- Study literacy language and read words with multiple syllables to reflect and write about what they read
- Work with early forms of book clubs in order to bring greater meaning to their reading through conversations
- Continue to build on their writing skills in different genres

Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade

- Engage in fiction stories with more complex characters and plots
- Engage with complex non-fiction texts across subject areas using known vocabulary and combining new learning with known learning
- Develop thoughtful reading plans (including organizing “jots”, or quick notes taken while reading), participating in book club conversations and writing literary essays
- Create narrative stories and compose essays, informational and argumentative, around a central idea with research-supported details

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 and Z being the most difficult.

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 their teacher!

What Happens Within Books in Different Levels / Text Bands?

Text Band	Characteristics
A/B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)• Noticing word parts is important as the first or last letter of a word will not be enough to help read unfamiliar words

Text Band	Characteristics
F/G/H	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer stories• Complex plot structures• Non-repetitive episodes• Longer sentences with dependent clauses• Fewer new high-frequency words
I/J	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 more complex• 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

Text Band	Characteristics
N/O/P/Q	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

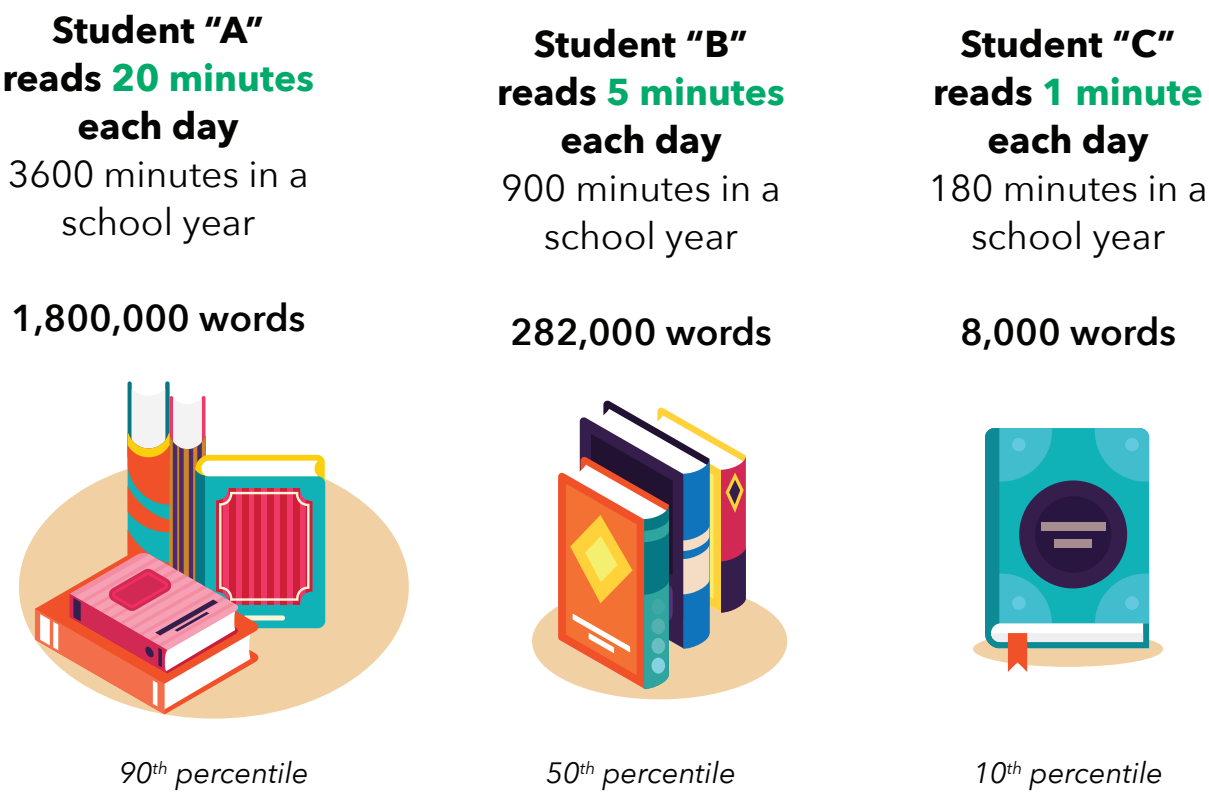


Power of Reading Volume

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?



By the end of the sixth 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 Reading Volume at Home

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

How Many Books Should I Read Each Week?

Levels A-I	10-12 books
Levels J-K	8-10 books
Levels L-M	4-6 books
Levels N-Q	2-4 books
Levels R-T	1-4 books
Levels U+	50-70 pages





Book Selection

In school, students learn to select many books that are just right for them. Having a couple of books that are a little easy lets them build fluency and confidence, and having one or more that is more difficult and requires a little more work helps your child grow. 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 parents can also have an account at their child’s school?
- Students in SBISD have access to a full digital library through **Sora, Capstone and myON**. Hundreds of eBooks and e-audiobooks are available for students to checkout. Capstone and myON provide the book narration and the ability to highlight and/or add notes to texts online.
 - 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).
- **Public Libraries** allow free access to thousands of print, digital, and audiobooks as well as online subscriptions to magazines and databases.
 - 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.

Book Selection

Students are taught how to select texts at school - we call this book shopping. Just like you teach your child how to grocery shop, book shopping also requires guidance. As students grow in their reading independence, they are taught to choose books matching their reading level so they continue to apply new skills.



This book is too hard for you to read!	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.
This book is too easy for you to read!	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.
You’ve already read that book. You don’t need to read it again.	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.
You’re a level (___) reader.	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.



Learning About Phonics

SBISD kindergarten through second grade teachers explicitly teach phonics daily. 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 the ability 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 the ability 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?

- Teaching phonics is an important aspect of beginning reading instruction.
- Phonics must be explicitly and systematically taught.
- Classroom teachers in the primary grades value and teach phonics as a part of their reading program.
- Phonics instruction should be engaging to students, allowing them to play with language, practice with others, and apply phonics to what they read and write.
- Phonics instruction, to be effective in promoting independent reading, must be embedded in the content of a total reading or 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 formation
- Letter names, forms, and related sounds
- Words are made up of sounds and those sounds are related to letters and groups of letters
- Relationships between letters and sounds can help us write and read words

Learning About Phonics

Term	Example
consonant	b, f, s, t
vowel	a, e, i, o, u
short vowel sound	cat, pet, pig, pot, cup
long vowel sound	cake, eat, like, rope, use
blends	br, str, pl, spr
digraphs	ch, wh, th, sh
prefixes	re-, un-
inflectional endings	-ing, -est, -ed
suffixes	-ful, -ness, -ly
plurals	-s, -es
upper- and lower-case	Aa, Bb, Cc, Dd, Ee
syllables	car-ton; to-ma-to; po-ta-to
vowel patterns	CVC (dot, get, fit, hot, nut)
	VCE (gave, scene, fine, home, tune)
	VVC (train, boat, beat)
	CV (be, hi, go)
vowel pairs	ai (rain)
	oa (boat)
	au, aw (author, saw)
	ee, ea, ie (teen, team, believe)
	oi, oy (oil, boy)

word patterns (phonograms)
-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

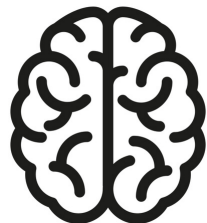
When it comes to an **UNKNOWN** **WORD**, **ASK...**



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:

"Look for word parts." Often prefixes and suffixes challenge readers. Prompt them to break the word into chunks (ie, re/read/ing). 

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

"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. 

We always want readers to go back and make sure the word they read makes sense to the meaning of the text.

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 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:

- Preview
- See how the book is 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, "Let's 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?"

Child: Makes a prediction or a connection... says something!

Parent: Gives credence to the child'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 nonfiction, pay attention to the table of contents, the index, the large headings and highlighted vocabulary. If it's fiction, have your child turn the pages and comment on what is happening in the storyline according to the pictures.

Sneak Peek with Young Readers

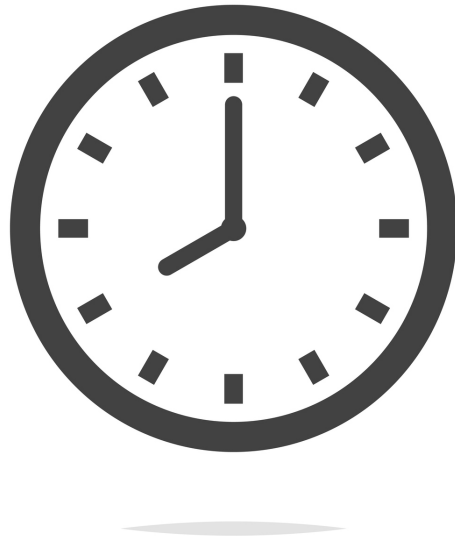
- Look at the cover and pictures.
- Talk about who is in the story.
- Discuss what is happening in the pages.
- Build a little vocabulary for your child to apply when they read.
- Predict what might be the problem.
- With nonfiction books, discuss what the topic might be and the details.

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 (the time and place) of the story.
- Discuss with your child what you have learned and put it together with the cover.
- Picture walk (lower level chapter books), knowing the pictures are not necessarily telling the story, but help with some visual supports.
- As children get older, themes begin to grow more evident in the blurbs of the books.

Sneak Peek with Nonfiction Books

- Notice the cover and title. Ask, "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, captions and 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, such as headers and bullet points.
- Discuss the author's purpose.



Wait time

Wait time gives the student a chance to show what they know about the reading process. If you jump in the minute they encounter 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 them 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 child who simply wants to wait you out, you will probably have to give explicit instruction in what you expect them to do when they come to a word they do not know.



Read, Stop, **THINK!**

Some people believe that reading means buzzing right through the text, stopping after the last period, 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!

Whether we read silently, or out loud, if we are reading carefully, then we are monitoring our understanding.



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 reread?
 - 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?

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 talk 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 start a 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! (Examples: 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...Ask, "Do you agree or disagree?"
- Comment on the author's style.
- Tell what you think another character might be feeling.
- Ask, "What is the most important thing about what you just read?"
- Make an inference, or a conclusion based on known facts.

Say Something Prompts

After reading, take the time to discuss what you have just read with your child. Remember to praise their efforts and accomplishments!

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

1. With your child, 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.

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 ...

Say Something Prompts

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

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 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 is from Jerome Harste
Extended for analysis by Alana Morris*

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.

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 / High Frequency Words

Sound Box

and more!



Spring Branch
Independent School District

Thank you for
**INSPIRING
READERS**
and **SHAPING**
the future for Every Child.

S SPRING
B BRANCH
E EDUCATION
F FOUNDATION

MAKING OUR SCHOOLS BETTER

T O G E T H E R

Thank you to the
Spring Branch Education Foundation
for supporting this important resource
for SBISD families.