

Adolescent Literacy Read-At-Home Plan



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Read-At-Home Plan for 4th-8th Grade Students

The Read at Home Plan is designed to help families support their child's reading growth beyond the classroom. By encouraging regular reading, meaningful conversations about texts, vocabulary development, and brief writing activities, families can reinforce the literacy skills students need for success in every subject. Consistent reading at home helps build stronger comprehension, critical thinking, and confidence while fostering lifelong reading habits.

This plan supports the goals of Mississippi's SB2294 Adolescent Literacy Initiative by strengthening the partnership between schools and families to improve literacy outcomes for all students and includes support for 4th through 8th grades. Additional activities for families of 4th and 5th grade students can be found at strongreadersms.com. Together, educators and families can help students become confident, capable readers who are prepared for success in school and beyond.

Make Reading a Daily Habit

Reading at home strengthens vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and critical thinking. Even 20 to 30 minutes of reading several days each week can make a meaningful difference in your child's academic success. Your family can support reading by letting your child see you read, discussing books and news together, visiting the local library, and limiting distractions by turning off the television and putting phones and other devices away. Reading success grows through consistent practice. Your encouragement, conversations, and support help build your child's confidence and lifelong love of reading.

Set a Weekly Reading Goal

- Read 20-30 minutes at least 4-5 days each week.
- Read together while waiting for appointments.
- Read anything such as books, magazines, newspaper articles, recipes, instruction manuals, community flyers, or digital texts.
- Encourage reading from a variety of subjects, including English language arts, science, history, and career topics.

Ask Questions

- **Before reading**, help your child prepare to read by asking questions such as:
 - What do you already know about this topic?
 - What do you think you will learn?
 - What questions do you have before you begin?
- **During reading**, encourage your child to:
 - Highlight or write down unfamiliar words.
 - Stop after each section to summarize what was read.
 - Ask questions when something is confusing.
 - Make connections to personal experiences, other books, or current events.
- **After reading**, spend 5-10 minutes discussing the reading by asking:
 - What did you learn?
 - What surprised you?
 - What was the main idea?
 - What details supported the main idea?
 - What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
 - Would you recommend this reading? Why or why not?

Build Vocabulary

When your child encounters a new word:

- Talk about what the word means.
- Look for context clues. Encourage your child to look at the words, sentences, and pictures around the unfamiliar word for hints about its *meaning*. Parents can ask: "What clues in the sentence or paragraph can help you figure out this word?"
 - **Definition clues:** The text may explain the word directly. *Example:* A habitat is the place where an animal or plant lives.
 - **Example clues:** The author may provide examples that help explain the word.
 - **Contrast clues:** Look for words such as *but*, *however*, or *instead* that show differences.
 - **Word part clues:** Look for familiar prefixes, suffixes, and root words that can help determine meaning.
- Use a dictionary if needed.
- Challenge your child to use the word in conversation or writing during the week.

Use Word Parts to Figure Out New Words

As students move into middle and high school, they encounter more complex words in every subject. Learning how words are built from smaller parts (prefixes, suffixes, and roots) helps students determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, build a stronger vocabulary, and better understand the academic vocabulary they read across content areas.

Help your child break words apart

When your child comes across a challenging word, encourage them to look for familiar parts:

- Prefixes come at the beginning of a word and can change its meaning.
Examples: un= not, pre= before, re= again, mis= wrong
- Roots and base words carry the main meaning of a word and often come from Greek or Latin.
Examples: bio= life, graph= write, port= carry
- Suffixes come at the end of a word and can change the word's meaning and function.
Examples: -ful= full of, -less= without, -tion= process or action

Routine for unfamiliar words using word parts

When your child finds an unfamiliar word:

1. Circle or identify the word parts you recognize.
2. Think about what each part means.
3. Combine the meanings of the parts to determine the meaning of the whole word.
4. Check the meaning using the sentence or a dictionary.

Talk About What Your Child Reads

Reading is more than understanding the words on the page. It is about thinking deeply, making connections, and explaining ideas. Conversations about what your child reads help strengthen comprehension and encourage students to become active, thoughtful readers. The most important thing is creating opportunities for your child to talk about what they read, explain their ideas, and develop confidence as a reader.

Talking about what your child reads

After your child reads, take a few minutes to discuss the text. Conversations can occur during dinner or while in the car. Ask questions that encourage your child to explain their thinking such as:

- What was this text mostly about?
- What was the most important idea you learned?
- What details from the text support your thinking?
- What questions do you still have?
- What part of the text was interesting, confusing, or surprising?
- How does this connect to something you already know?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author's ideas? Why?

Encourage your child to use evidence from the text

Strong readers support their ideas with information from the text. Encourage your child to go back and find examples, details, or quotes that explain their thinking.

Try asking:

- “What in the text makes you think that?”
- “Where did you find that information?”
- “What evidence supports your answer?”

Make connections

Help your child connect reading to the world around them:

- **Text-to-self:** How does this connect to your experiences?
- **Text-to-text:** Does this remind you of another book, article, or idea?
- **Text-to-world:** How does this connect to current events or the world around us?

Write About Reading

Writing helps your child organize their thoughts, explain their ideas, and show what they understand. Writing about what they read strengthens comprehension and helps them communicate their thinking clearly. Writing does not have to be a long assignment. A few sentences, a quick response, or a short reflection can help your child become a stronger reader and thinker.

Encourage your child to write about what they read

After your child reads, encourage your child to write a few sentences about what they read. Some simple writing activities include:

- Write a summary: “What was this text mostly about?”
- Share an opinion: “What do you think about this topic? Why?”
- Make a connection: “How does this relate to something you already know?”

Encourage writing in everyday life

Writing is not just a school assignment. It is a skill used everywhere. Encourage your child to:

- Write a grocery list
- Write a thank you note
- Keep a journal
- Create a plan
- Develop a to-do list
- Create a resume