

At Home Activities

Retell Perspective

Have your child retell a major chapter from the perspective of a minor character, a bystander, or an antagonist who views the main character's actions with suspicion or disapproval. They must include all the same plot facts, but retell them with a completely different emotional tone or interpretation.

The Connections Interrupt

Have your child begin a chronological retell. At any point, snap your fingers and call out a secondary character's name (e.g., "The quirky neighbor!" or "The estranged brother!"). Your child must instantly freeze the main story and retell exactly what that secondary character was doing, thinking, or experiencing during that exact moment in the timeline, before snapping back to the main plot.

Fifth Grade Prompting Tips:

Instead of asking what happened, ask more detailed questions like:

- How did the author use the setting in that chapter to match the character's internal conflict?
- Where do you think the turning point was for that character's relationships?

The Foreshadower

Start at the end of the book and trace clues backward. Retell the story in reverse. For example: "The ending happens because of X. But if we go back to Chapter 10, the author dropped a hint when the character noticed Y. And if we go all the way back to Chapter 2, it was actually setup by Z..."

The Motif Tracker

Stories often use recurring symbols or motifs (like a specific color, an animal, bad weather, or an old watch) to represent a deeper meaning as the plot progresses. Have your child retell the story only through the lens of that recurring object or symbol.

The "Breaking News" Live Feed

Pretend the most exciting part of the story is happening right now in real-time, and your child is a news anchor delivering a breaking news broadcast. They must retell the event using frantic, immediate language ("This just in..."). For example: "We are live at the castle where the dragon has just broken through the gates! For those just tuning in, this crisis actually began three days ago when the prince mistakenly took the golden egg from the valley..."

Did You Know?

There is a major difference between a "retell" and a "summary"—a retell is a detailed, step-by-step account of a story, while a summary is a brief overview of only the most critical main ideas.

