

At Home Activities

The History Book

Pretend the events of the novel happened 100 years ago and are now being taught in a history class. Your child is the professor delivering the comprehensive lecture on the "historical event." They must retell the plot chronologically, but they must use formal, objective language to detail the timeline, the conflicts, the catalyst (the inciting incident), the major battles or turning points, and the ultimate fallout (the resolution).

The Puppet Master

In complex novels, there is often a powerful entity pulling the strings behind the scenes without the main character realizing it until the very end. Have your child retell the story entirely from the perspective of this "Puppet Master." They must recount the sequence of events by explaining how they secretly orchestrated, manipulated, or anticipated the main character's moves from the beginning to the end.

The Multi-Perspective Scenario

Pick a major, chaotic event where multiple characters were present. You act as an investigator questioning your child. Your child must retell that single event three times in a row, switching seamlessly between three different characters. However, they must strictly limit what they retell based only on what that specific character actually saw, heard, or knew at that exact micro-second in the book.

The Ripple Effect

Choose a single piece of dialogue or a minor mistake made by a character in the middle of the book. Your child must retell the rest of the book by exclusively tracking the "ripples" of that one moment. They must detail how that single event directly or indirectly caused every conversation, conflict, and resolution that followed it down the line.

20/20 Hindsight

Have your child retell the story from the perspective of an older, wiser version of the main character who is looking back on their past mistakes. As they retell the events in order, they must pause at every major decision and analyze the "blind spots" they had at the time. For example: "In Chapter 3, I trusted the stranger and gave him the key. Retelling it now, I can see all the red flags."

The "Catalyst"

A character's growth is usually spurred by a series of specific, jarring catalysts. Have your child retell the story by focusing entirely on the character's internal transformation. They must sequence the retell by identifying the 3 or 4 exact moments in the book where the character's worldview was shifted and how they acted differently afterward.

Did You Know?

You can practice retelling with your child using almost any media—asking them to explain the plot of a cartoon, a video game, or a family event uses the exact same brain pathways as retelling a story.

