GROWING OUR READERS

Don't Just Read—Talk!

How Conversations Build Strong Readers



Volume XVII

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A family literacy resource | Kindergarten–5th Grade

ENDEAVOR CHARTER SCHOOL

Reading is more than saying the words!

Conversations help children understand, remember, and think about what they read.

BUILD VOCABULARY

Children hear, learn, and use new words in meaningful ways.



GROW COMPREHENSION

Talking helps children explain events, ideas, and information.



THINK DEEPLY

Children make predictions, connections, inferences, and support ideas.



The goal: Help your child move beyond reading the words to understanding, thinking about, and enjoying what they read.

Kindergarten I Look, Talk, and Tell!

Focus: oral language • vocabulary • listening comprehension • story understanding

K

ASK WHILE READING

- What do you see in this picture?
- Who is in the story?
- Where are they?
- What might happen next?
- How does the character feel?
- What happened at the beginning, middle, and end?

TRY AT HOME

- Picture walk: Look through the pictures before reading.
- Predict together: Pause before turning the page.
- Retell: Invite your child to tell the story using pictures.
- Play with words: Find rhymes and beginning sounds.



PARENT TIP: Children can discuss stories that are more complex than the books they can read independently.

First Grade | Sound It Out and Talk About It!

Focus: phonics • decoding • reading accuracy • beginning fluency • story meaning

1

ASK WHILE READING

- What sound does this word begin with?
- Can you blend the sounds?
- What might this word mean?
- Who is the main character?
- How do you know how the character feels?
- Can you retell what happened?

TRY AT HOME

- Pause and predict what may happen next.
- Talk about one or two interesting words.
- Reread a familiar book and retell it.
- When stuck on a word, look at the letters, say the sounds, and blend.



PARENT TIP: Give your child time to use phonics skills. After reading, talk about what the story means.

Second Grade I Read Smoothly and Think About the Story!

Focus: fluency • vocabulary • comprehension • retelling • connections

2

ASK WHILE READING

- What is the problem in the story?
- How does the character solve it?
- What was the most important part?
- What new word did you learn?
- What clues helped you figure that out?
- Can you retell the story in your own words?

TRY AT HOME

- Take turns reading pages or paragraphs.
- Stop and summarize after a few pages.
- Be a word detective: use sentence clues.
- Make connections to your child's experiences or other learning.



PARENT TIP: Move beyond "What happened?" Ask "How do you know?" and "What makes you think that?"

Third Grade I Make Connections and Explain Your Thinking!

Focus: main idea • supporting details • predictions • vocabulary • text evidence

3

ASK WHILE READING

- What is the main idea?
- Which details support it?
- How did the character change?
- What lesson might the author want us to understand?
- What can you figure out that isn't directly stated?
- What would you like to learn more about?

TRY AT HOME

- Find evidence: Locate a detail that supports an answer.
- Compare characters, events, or ideas.
- Read nonfiction about your child's interests.
- Predict what may happen next and explain the clues.



PARENT TIP: Strong readers don't just give an answer; they explain how they arrived at it.

Fourth Grade I Read Between the Lines!

Focus: inferences • author's purpose • theme • vocabulary in context • evidence

4

ASK WHILE READING

• What can you infer from the character's actions?
• What clues helped you reach that conclusion?
• Why did the author include this detail?
• Is the author informing, entertaining, or persuading?
• What is the theme or lesson?
• Do you agree with the character's decision? Why?

TRY AT HOME

• Read between the lines: What is suggested but not stated?
• Discuss the author's purpose.
• Share different opinions and explain why.
• Compare two short articles about the same topic.



PARENT TIP: Encourage your child to use clues, details, and what they already know to explain their thinking.

Fifth Grade | Think Critically and Support Your Ideas!

Focus: text analysis • perspectives • figurative language • conclusions • evidence

5

ASK WHILE READING

- What is the central message or theme?
- What evidence supports your interpretation?
- How does the author develop the main idea?
- What is the author's point of view?
- How might someone else see this differently?
- Is the author's argument convincing? Why?

TRY AT HOME

- Support an opinion with examples from the text.
- Compare two books or articles on one topic.
- Look for similes, metaphors, and idioms.
- Connect reading to history, science, and the world.
- Let your child lead a book discussion.



PARENT TIP: Encourage your child to explain not only what they think, but why they think it.

How Reading Conversations Grow from K–5

Use these question starters as your child develops as a reader.



GRADE	CONVERSATION FOCUS	TRY ASKING
K	Pictures, characters, events	What do you see?
1	Sounds, words, story meaning	What might this word mean?
2	Fluency, retelling, connections	How do you know?
3	Main ideas, details, predictions	What details support your answer?
4	Inferences, author's purpose, theme	What clues helped you figure that out?
5	Analysis, perspectives, evidence	What evidence supports your thinking?

Remember: Questions should feel like a conversation—not a quiz. Follow your child's curiosity.

You Don't Need a Book to Build Strong Language

Everyday conversations grow vocabulary, background knowledge, and curiosity.

AT THE DINNER TABLE

“What is something interesting you learned today? Can you teach us about it?”



IN THE CAR

“What do you notice? What do you think might happen next?”



WHILE COOKING OR OUTSIDE

Read a recipe, notice nature, explain new words, and wonder together.



Everyday conversations are literacy opportunities. Talk, listen, wonder, and learn together!

A Simple Strategy: PEER

Use these four steps to help your child join the conversation about a book.



P PROMPT

Ask a question about the book.
“What do you think is happening here?”

E EVALUATE

Listen and acknowledge your child's response.
“You noticed that the character is upset.”

E EXPAND

Add a detail, word, or idea.
“He may be frustrated because his plan didn't work.”

R REPEAT

Invite your child to build on the idea.
“What makes you think he felt frustrated?”

You don't need to use PEER on every page. Try it during a few natural stopping points.

Helpful Resources for Families

Explore these trusted websites for more reading ideas and activities.



READING ROCKETS

Read-aloud tips, comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and family literacy.
https://www.readingrockets.org/

COLORÍN COLORADO

Family reading activities and strategies for building language and comprehension.
https://www.colorincolorado.org/

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

Book recommendations and activities that encourage children to enjoy reading.
https://www.rif.org/

Choose books and topics that match your child's interests—curiosity is a wonderful place to start.

THE ECS FAMILY READING CHALLENGE

Don't Just Read—Talk!

This month, try these simple goals:

- Read together or listen to your child read.
- Ask two or three questions about what you read.
- Let your child explain their ideas.
- Share a connection or something interesting you learned.
- Celebrate your child's thinking and effort.



You don't have to be a reading teacher to help your child become a stronger reader. Your conversations matter!

Help Shape Our Next Parent Resource

Please complete a brief survey to help us create our next parent resource.



[Complete the brief survey]

Thank you for sharing your ideas!