

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Reading Strategies

There are many strategies that students use to comprehend what they read. Listed below are the strategies that proficient readers automatically use every day when reading any type of text. As a parent, you can see if your child is using the following strategies by talking with your child about what they are reading. Often many of these strategies are used in conjunction with each other.

Making Connections – Accessing prior knowledge and experiences help to better understand what is read. There are three forms of connections:

Text-to-Self: connections made between the text, their personal past experiences, and prior knowledge.

Text-to-Text: connections made between the current text they are reading and another text (books, poems, scripts, or songs)

Text-to-World: connections made between the text and the bigger issues, events, or concerns of society and the world

Questioning – Asking questions before, during, and after reading helps to internalize text and clarify information. Students should question the content, the author, the events, the issues, and ideas in the text.

Visualizing – Creating mental images in your mind (creating a movie of the text) as you read helps to make a visual connection with the text. This makes the words on the page real and concrete. Imaging also increases engagement in the text.

Inferring – When students infer, text clues merge with the readers prior knowledge, and ideas develop about an underlying theme or idea in the text. This is easily explained to students by relating it to making inferences about expressions, body language, and tone.

Determining Importance – What is important in a text depends on the purpose for reading. What is interesting is not always important.

Synthesizing – Putting together parts to form a new creation, or new line of thinking. This is often described as putting a puzzle together. All of the pieces fit together to make a whole. As students read a text, their thinking evolves. They are required to sift through the information given, and pull out the essential ideas to get the gist of the text.