

# 5 Easy Skills to Teach Kids During Read-Alouds

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/developing-reading-skills/5-easy-skills-to-teach-kids-during-read-alouds>



Children can learn reading comprehension strategies even before they're able to read texts on their own. By watching and listening to adults model reading strategies during read-alouds, even our tiniest ones will begin to pick up on the habits of strong readers. Then by the time they are reading on their own, these children will naturally make predictions, activate schema, ask questions, make connections, and visualize what they're reading.

Parents can incorporate reading strategy work on the fly, at any time, with little to no prep at all. All parents need are just a few key words and phrases to keep in their back pocket to pull out during time spent reading with kids.

1. Predicting is simply making a logical guess about a story or article before the text is read. Model predicting by:
  - Examining the cover of the book and talking about the book's title before reading. Say, "The title of the book is *Stranger in the Woods*, and on the cover I see two deer looking at a snowman. My guess is that the snowman will be the 'stranger in the woods.' Let's see."
  - Stopping midway through a book and saying, "Okay, I know that Lucky the dog keeps following the leprechaun. Will the leprechaun ever be nice to that poor dog? I bet they'll be friends by the end."
2. Activating schema just means that you're getting children to think about what they already know about a subject before they read or talk about the topic. You can activate schema by:
  - Saying, "The book we're going to read is called *Penguin Puzzle*, and it looks like it's about penguins. I know that penguins live in cold areas and that they can't fly. What can you remember about penguins?"
3. Questioning is a skill critical for developing reading comprehension. When we model questioning, we show children that it is super important to think about what they're reading as they're reading. After every few paragraphs or pages, model how you reflect on what you read:
  - "I wonder why . . ."
  - "What will happen to the . . ."
  - "Why is the little girl frowning in that picture . . ."
  - "How does the dog feel now that . . ."
4. Making connections draws readers closer to texts. They feel more in touch with characters, events, and ideas when they are able to find some basic similarities with them, and as a result, readers are more likely to remember what they read. Connecting is easy for young readers to do on their own. Model connecting by saying:
  - "I know how that character feels! I remember when I fell and hurt my knee . . ."
  - "We saw the very same sand crabs when we were at the beach last year. Remember?"
  - "You have a brother and a sister, just like Arthur."
  - "You will start school in the fall, and we just read a book last week about Max who was starting at a new school."
5. Visualizing is simply having readers picture, or visualize, what they are reading. Visualizing isn't always necessary when reading richly illustrated children's books, but when reading stories, poems, or articles that lack photos, parents can say:
  - "When I read these words, I can really feel the warm breeze blow through my hair."
  - "Close your eyes, and tell me what you see when I read this poem. What pictures does it put in your mind?"

Every little bit we can do will help our children become the best readers and thinkers they can be — even before they're reading on their own!