

Reading Fundamentals

There are two very important things one must do to read well:

1. Decode: Sound out letters and words, use picture clues or context clues in the text to be able to recognize or understand words.
2. Comprehend: Understand what you read...make meaning...

Reading is not just about saying the words; reading is about understanding the words and using them to make meaning...

How Do I “Make Meaning” or Comprehend Better? Try the following:

1. Mental Movie: be aware of a “movie” in your mind as you read. Make sure you are “seeing” images in your mind as you read each sentence. If you understand the words well enough to make a picture in your mind, then you will understand what you are reading.
2. Oh No! I Can’t Make a Picture! STOP and FIX IT!!!! Read more slowly and concentrate on each phrase, sentence or idea and try to make a picture for each word, phrase etc. and soon the movie may start to play. If you don’t understand the words, use a dictionary, ask a friend or a teacher, look them up on a computer...get some background knowledge about the word, text or author!!! This will help make your movie. You need to understand the words and ideas and sometimes the person who wrote it to make the movie happen.
3. Make Connections: As you read, if you can connect to the words or ideas on the page then the text will make more sense and be more interesting to you. For example, you can connect to your own life experiences, you can connect to other books you read or to events you’ve learned about. Suddenly, the text is easier to understand and remember because you can connect to the ideas in it. Also, if you understand how a text is organized (ex: textbook or graphic text) then it will be easier to know how to organize your thinking and you mental images. Finally, if you understand why the text was written, the author or the time period, different ideas within the text will make more sense.
4. Ask Questions: As you read, create a movie in your mind, and find ways to connect to the text, questions might appear in your mind. That is great!!! Pay attention to your questions...even write these questions in the margin (I call these footprints on the page). Allowing these questions to appear will help you to get curious and read deeper. This will lead to greater understanding.
5. Synthesize: Bring your images, background knowledge (connections) and the answers to your questions together and you will start making meaning...

BUT FIRST...

What's The Point? What's your Purpose?

1. Ask: Why Am I Reading This?

- a) Enjoyment: Just read, let the movie play, make connections and enjoy 😊
- b) Research:
 1. Be sure you know your topic! Underline the important parts of the question or prompt.
 2. Make your mental movie, make your connections, then...
 3. Use footprints to lead you back "home". Use a highlighter and writing on sticky notes or the page to keep track of your questions you're your thinking. Thoughts will pop into your head as you read. Write the ones connected to your research topic. When you stop, your thoughts may disappear and you'll be lost. You must make the footprints or leave the bread crumbs (like Hanzel and Gretal) so you don't get lost.
 4. Synthesize your ideas by writing them in your own words using an organizational strategy assigned by your teacher (essay, report etc.) and connect those ideas to the highlighted parts of the page.
- c) Answering test questions:
 1. Read the questions first **so you know what is important**.
 2. Read the text, make the mental movie, make connections and make footprints by highlighting the parts that connect to the questions.
 3. Answer the questions using the highlighted parts as clues to help you find the answers.