

Reading

Our whole school reading program includes the following:

- Whole school approach that is consistent from Prep – 6.
- Explicit teaching of the comprehension strategies of monitoring, predicting, activating prior knowledge, asking questions, visualising, inferring, determining importance, summarising and synthesising (see further explanation below).
- Independent reading using ‘Just Right’ books (see explanation of Independent Reading & ‘Just Right’ Books below).
- Teacher/student conferencing and goal setting.
- Small group reading and discussion groups.
- Gradual release of responsibility.

Demonstration:

- Teacher models, explains, thinks aloud.
- Learner listens and observes.

Guided practice:

- Teacher demonstrates, leads, responds, acknowledges.
- Learner interacts, questions, participates.

Independent practice:

- Learner practises, problem solves, self corrects.
- Teacher scaffolds, encourages, clarifies, confirms.

Application:

- Learner - initiates, self-monitors and self directs, self-evaluates.
- Teacher - affirms, assists as needed, evaluates.

Independent Reading

- Students choose any book to read; teacher guides selection.
- Reading time every day, up to 20 minutes.
- Excellent classroom library required.
- Students read mostly ‘Just Right’ books.
- Teacher monitors comprehension.
- Students keep a reading log.

‘Just Right’ Books

- Books that are not too hard and not too easy.
- Are of interest to the student.
- The student can read most of the words.

Comprehension Strategies

Think Aloud/Monitor

- When readers monitor their comprehension they:
 - Keep track of their thinking while reading
 - Listen to the voice in their head that speaks to them as they read
 - Notice when the text makes sense or when it does not
 - Know when, why and how to apply specific strategies to maintain and further understanding
- Use ‘fix-up’ strategies, including stopping to refocus their thinking, rereading or reading on
- Question, connect, infer, sort and sift ideas, notice new information
- Show a range of emotions, responding with delight, wonder, sadness, even outrage
- Have a conversation with the text.

We want students to leave tracks (write) of their thinking because:

- It enables students to remember what they were thinking as they read
- It helps students to monitor comprehension and enhances understanding
- It is impossible for teachers to know what students are thinking when they read unless they tell us through conversation or written response.

Predict

Proficient readers predict before, during and after reading. They use the pictures or titles of texts to predict (have a guess) what the book might be about, or what might happen next.

When predicting we can use:

- What we already know about the topic, story, character
- What has happened previously
- The pictures/title/contents page.

Ask Questions

Proficient readers spontaneously and purposefully generate questions before, during and after reading, depending on their purpose in reading.

Proficient readers ask questions to:

- Clarify meaning
- Speculate about text yet to read
- Show scepticism or a critical stance
- Determine an author's intent, style, content or format
- Locate a specific answer in a text
- Gain deeper understanding.

Activate & Connect to Prior Knowledge

When reading we think about what we know – our background knowledge – to understand new information. We make the following connections:

Text to Self: What experiences have you had that remind you of something in the book?

Text to Text: Does this text remind you of other books, stories, authors or illustrators?

Text to World: Does this text remind you of things happening now or that have happened in the world?

Visualise

When readers visualise as they read, they construct meaning by creating mental images – seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. They create pictures or movies in their minds about the characters, setting and plot.

It is common for a group of people to all read the same text but visualise quite different mental images of characters, settings and story lines.

The reason we are sometimes disappointed with the movie adaptation of a text we have read and enjoyed is that the director's representation of the book does not match the way we visualised it as we read. Good writers describe scenes very well, they help us to visualise by using descriptive words (adjectives), eg hair like snakes, golden brown pancakes covered in gooey maple syrup.

Language of summarising and synthesising:

'I see...'

'I visualise...'

'I have a picture in my head...'

Visualising personalises reading, keeps us engaged, and often prevents us from abandoning a book prematurely.

Infer

Inferring is the process of creating a personal and unique meaning from text.

It involves a mental process that combines information gleaned from the text and relevant prior knowledge. The reader's unique interpretation of text is the product of this blending.

Inferential thinking = reading between the lines

When proficient readers infer they create a meaning that is neither stated explicitly in the text or shown in the illustrations. The process implies that they actively search for or become aware of implicit meaning.

We teach readers to:

- Think about what they know and merge their background knowledge with text clues to make meaning
- Make inferences from the pictures to get information
- Infer from the features to get information
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts
- Infer about characters.

Determine Importance

To demonstrate their understanding of determining importance proficient readers:

- Recognise the similarities and differences between fiction and non-fiction.
- Fiction texts:
 - contain a beginning, middle and end, and they entertain us
 - are read from start to finish
 - include setting, characters, problems, events, solutions
 - have pictures
- Non-fiction texts:
 - tell us information and amazing facts
 - can be read in any order
 - include contents, index, glossary, etc
 - have photos, diagrams
- Both types of texts:
 - have a title
 - have illustrations
 - help us to learn
 - are fun to read
- Distinguish between important and unimportant information in order to identify key ideas or themes as they read.
- Use their knowledge of fiction text features to make predictions.
- Use their knowledge of non-fiction text features (labels, photos, captions, maps, different fonts, index, glossary, contents, etc) to help them distinguish important information from unimportant information.
- Use their knowledge of important and relevant parts of the text to answer questions and build upon their understandings.

Summarise & Synthesise

When students **summarise** they put the information into their own words to demonstrate understanding of what they have read.

When students **synthesise** they combine their background knowledge of a topic with the new information that have just read. Synthesising the background knowledge with the new information may change or reinforce their opinions, eg. I had a fear of German Shepard dogs because years ago I was scared by one and they use them as police dogs, so I thought they must be vicious. Then I read a book about these dogs and it changed my opinion of them. I still have a slight fear of them but I now realise how intelligent/friendly they can be etc. etc.