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## High Down Junior School

Believing | Achieving | Learning for life

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents,

### Reading at home

Today, your child has been given a High Down Schools Journal. We hope that you and your child find this a useful document. We have explained to the children that this is a very important book and we want them to look after it. We have also told them that we want them to take their journal home every day, read at home and then return the journal to school on the next day.

The journal is where we would like you to make a comment every time your child reads with you. We check the journals every Monday and give a housepoint if your child has read to you on four days during the week. We give two housepoints if your child has read to you on more than four days during the week. Please will you sign your entry in the journal in your role, e.g. mum / dad / granny etc as this helps us to make sure that we give the correct number of housepoints.

This regular reading practice is so vital in giving your child the lifelong skills of reading and a joy of books. We certainly notice the progress made by children who regularly read at home.

In the journal, you will find a couple of spelling lists. One is a list of the 100 Common Exception Words that your child will learn during Y3 and Year 4. We concentrate on the first 50 in Year 3. You will also see a list of approximately 100 of the most frequently used words. We gave the children a spelling test on these words at the start of September. Any words that they did not spell correctly in that test have been highlighted.

Please find below, questions and ideas to talk about with your child as they read with you, which we hope you will find useful.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Wright

Nina Bjergfelt

Rachael Taylor



## Comprehension questions to ask your child before, during and after reading

Decoding words is the first skill necessary for reading, Phonics (sounding out) should be the main way that children work out unfamiliar words.

However, word recognition is only the beginning of the reading journey. Children need to understand and engage with the text by reading it closely. When asked questions about their reading, children have to think at a deeper level than just their eyes skimming over the words.

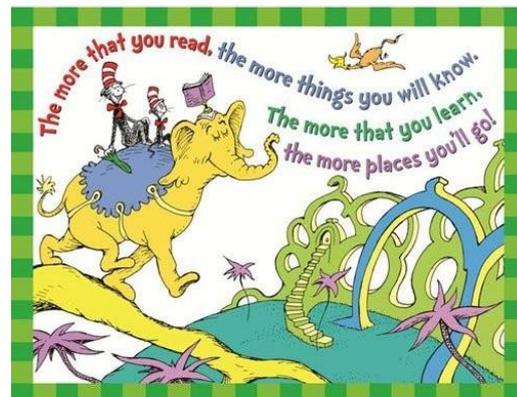
Questions can be **literal**, e.g. "Where did Tom go?" "What is Jane's favourite colour?"

Even deeper thinking comes through questions which encourage **inference, prediction and empathy**.

Below are some ideas for questions to ask your child. Always encourage him/her to look back in the text for evidence, to find the answers and to support his/ her thinking.

### Fiction (stories, plays, poems) books:

- What has happened so far? What's the story about?
- What will happen next?
- Who was the character that...?
- Show me in the text where you found...?
- What is happening at this point / in this part of the story?
- Find one/two things that the main character did in this part of the story.
- Why was...important in this story?
- Tell me what sort of character / person... was from the things they did / said in the story.
- What do you think...thoughts were at this point in the story? Use the text to help you think through your answer.
- If you were going to interview one of the characters, which questions would you ask and why?
- How did one of the characters change their ideas / attitudes during the story? What was it that brought about this change?
- What do you think would have happened if...?
- Tell me about one important event that happened that could not be left out. Why is it so important?
- If...had not done..., how might this have changed other events in the story?
- How has the author organised the writing?
- Why does the author begin a new paragraph here?
- What is / are the main event(s) that happen(s) in this/each paragraph?
- How has the author used words/phrases to make this character funny / sad / adventurous / clever / frightening / excited / disappointed, etc.?
- Which part of the story best describes the setting / characters / action? Which words and / or phrases do this?

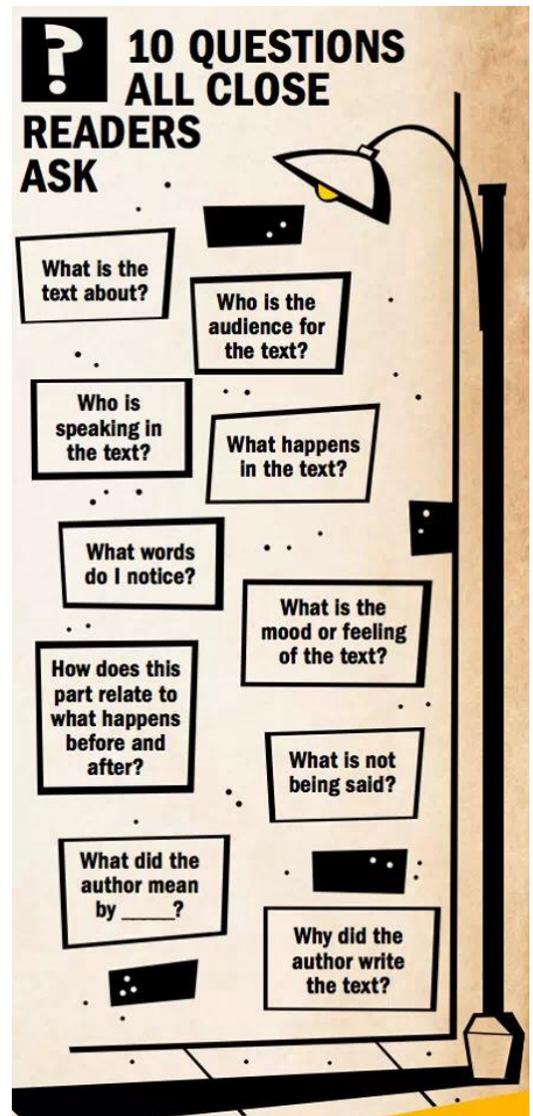


### Non-fiction (information) books:

- What did we find out about..... Why?
  - Read the information about ... List 3 key points about it.
  - How has the information been organised by the author?
  - How does this help the reader?
  - Compare (object) to those of today. List key differences.
  - What fact(s) did you enjoy learning about the most?
  - Of the information you learned, which would you like to share with someone else?
  - Would you like to read more books about this topic?
- Why?
- What else would you like to learn about this topic?
  - What pictures or illustrations did you find interesting?
- Why?
- Is this book like any other book that you have read?
  - If so, how are they alike? How are they different?
  - Which one did you like better? Why?
  - What kind of research do you think the author had to do to write this book?
  - What questions would you ask the author if you ever had the opportunity to meet him/her?
  - How can you learn more about this topic?
  - Would the book be different if it had been written 10 years ago?
  - Did you discover anything that may help you outside of school?

- **Have fun reading together.**

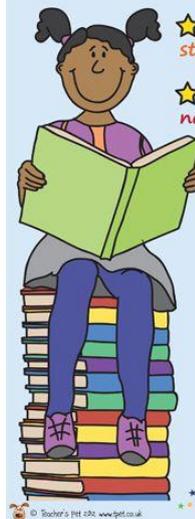
- **Ten minutes a day is much better than a longer session once a week.**
- **Build up your child's confidence by praising their efforts.**
- **Write a comment in the journal.**
- **Reading bedtime stories to your child is still really beneficial (and, hopefully, fun for both of you).**



### *Becoming Better Readers...*

Questions you can ask your child about their book.

- ★ Who is the main character?
- ★ Where is the story set?
- ★ What was the problem in the story and how was it solved?
- ★ What do you think will happen next in your story?
- ★ Which character do you like most? Why?
- ★ Which character do you think would make a good friend? Why?
- ★ What was your favourite part of the story?
- ★ Did you like the ending? Why/why not?



**Fiction/Story Books**

