

How to Help a Reader

1. Prompt

We need an independent reader – so don't tell them all the answers!

A reader should use lots of strategies to help them: meaning of text and picture, visual cues like sounds, blends, chunks, syntax and grammar, pace, fluency and colloquialisms!



Don't jump in – they might just be thinking!

Scaffold your approach to help: start off with a vague prompt: 'Do you know that word?' and work down the scale of support 'Do you know the ending?' 'Do you know that sound/blend/chunk?' 'Do you know the starting sound?'

Give them words that they definitely won't know – choose decodable words that they might be able to work out.

Perfect Prompting is *Short, Sharp and Succinct!*

<p>Visual Does it look right? Check that. Which word looks like this one?</p>	<p>Aural Did it sound right? What is the first sound? This word sounds like ...</p>
<p>Processing What could it be? What did you think? You made a mistake – find it.</p>	<p>Comprehension Did that make sense? What do you think ...? Why did he?</p>
<p>General Try again. Were you right? Why did you stop?</p>	<p>Fluency and phrasing Put it together. Did it sound good? Read it smoothly.</p>

2. Praise

Process praise not person praise!

Praise what the child does, not who they are.

Research (James Nottingham, Carol Dweck) shows this creates an active, independent learner.



<p>Process Praise ✓ Good effort today Excellent decoding for that word You fixed that well You used some good expression I liked how you did that You gave a lot of thought to that I liked your concentration just now</p>	<p>Person Praise ✗ You are so clever! You always get it right That was perfect You are the best reader in your class You are really bright/smart/intelligent</p>
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Praise any attempts at active learning or independence. Praise can help a passive learner become active, as their confidence grows they are more likely to try and to put more effort into the process.

Please write a brief comment in the record book – let the teacher do the in-depth comment!

3. Process

The process of reading draws on many areas of learning.

Allow time for a little book introduction – especially if the child speaks English as an additional language. Follow this pattern, using as many steps as you think is needed:

Talk about the front cover – what can you glean from the picture and title? What will it be about? Do they know anything already?

Have a picture walk through – the child only attends to the pictures and tells you briefly what might be happening.

'De-bug' the book by telling the child about any difficult words they might encounter, eg: names or places. Discuss any colloquialisms eg: 'day after day'.

Ask the child what might happen after a certain page – get them to predict the outcome.

Ask the child to relate the book subject to his own experiences.
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Pace and fluency – insist on it!



If the child is young, run your finger smoothly under the words for them. Encourage an older child to do this – never allow prodding!

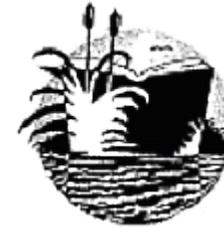
Model phrasing, eg: 'Come on!' 'Oh no!' Ask the child to repeat it.

Prompt to 'read like talking.' 'Make it sound smooth'

Expression – ask the child to make it sound interesting and consider character voices. 'How could that person sound?'

Punctuation – Older children need to start to be aware of punctuation in text, and allow it to guide expression, pace and fluency. 'Make your voice go down at full stops' 'That comma means a mini-breath'

How can I help readers to be the best they can?



Volunteer reader-support leaflet