

# What is Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what you are reading! Skilled readers do not just read - they interact with the text.

Skilled readers, for instance:

1. Predict what will happen next in a story using clues that are in the text
2. Create questions about the main idea, message, or plot of the text
3. Monitor understanding of the sequence, context, or characters
4. Clarify parts of the text which have confused them
5. Connect the events in the text to prior knowledge or experience

## 4 Ways to Improve Reading Comprehension

**Scholastic for Parents** states children need help retaining what is read — a critical skill, especially as they get older and need to gain important information from textbooks.

1. **Provide the right kinds of books.** Make sure your child gets lots of practice reading books that are not too hard. He/she should recognize at least 90 percent of the words without any help. Stopping more often than that to figure out a word makes it tough to focus on the overall meaning of the story.
2. **Reread to build fluency.** To gain meaning from text, your child needs to read quickly and smoothly — a skill known as fluency. Rereading familiar, simple books gives your child practice at decoding words quickly, therefore allowing your child to become more fluent.
3. **Supplement school reading.** If your child is studying a particular theme, look for easy-to-read books or magazines on the topic. This will help to build background knowledge.
4. **Talk about what your child is reading.** This "verbal processing" helps him remember and think through the themes and main ideas of the book. Use the 5 W's to get started (Who, What, When, Where, and Why!)

***It is important to ask your child questions before, during, and after a reading session. For example:***

**Before:** "What about this book interests you?" "What do you think that this book is going to be about?" "What do you already know about this topic?" "What information can you get from reading the title of the book?"

**During:** "What is going on in the book? Is it turning out the way you thought it would? What do you think will happen next?" "Why did \_\_\_\_\_ happen?" "What do you visualize as you read?"

**After:** "Can you summarize the book? What did you like about the book? Does this book remind you of another book? Which one? Why?" "Does it remind you of an experience that you had in the past?" "What other information would you like to learn about this topic?"

