

Plan to understand the story:

No matter which plan you choose, it's always important to make sure that your child can re-tell a book after reading. You may want to adapt some of these ideas for non-fiction books because these are helpful for fiction and non-fiction. Try out a couple of different strategies to find the ones you and your child like best.



Back up and re-read.

Pay attention to when you feel confused.
Then go back and re-read.



Make a movie in your mind.

Stop every few pages.
See if you can close your eyes and make a movie in your mind of what just happened in the book.



Double check your predictions.

Make a prediction before reading.
Stop your reading and check your predictions. Were they right? Do you need to adjust them?



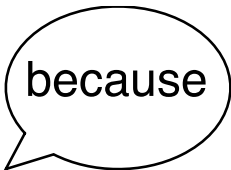
Tell the story across your fingers.

Use your palm for the main idea. Touch your palm and say, "This book was all about _____."
Use your thumb to tell about the characters. Use your pointer to tell about the setting.
Use your fingers to tell what happened "First, next, last."



Use what you already know.

Be on the lookout for things in the book that you already know about.
Stop reading and talk about what you know.



Explain WHY something happened.

Tell the story backwards. Start with how it ended and then say that happened because _____, which happened because _____, which happened because . . .



Tell about a character inside and out.

For each main character, tell about 2 "outside" facts. (How do they look? Where do they live?)

What it says	What it means

Read between the lines.

Look out for hidden meaning. Try stopping every page or so to talk about "what it says" and "what it really means."

Plan to figure out the words:

Here are some ideas to help when your child is stuck on a word. As your child grows as a reader, you might want to try new strategies. You might want to pick a familiar idea to get really good at it and to make it a habit.



Make a guess, then be your own teacher.

When your child hesitates on a word and then makes a guess, have the child ask 3 key questions: 1. Does the word I said make sense? 2. Does the word I said match the letters in the word on the page? 3. Does the word I said sound like something an author would say?



Use the pictures.

When your child gets stuck, cover up the words and then have your child look at the picture and just talk about what's happening in the picture. Then go back to the words and re-read.



Make your mouth ready.

Have your child make the beginning sound.

It also works well to cover up the ending part of the word and have your child make the first few sounds with their mouth. Then look at the picture or at the rest of the word.



Sound it out, then slide on through.

For simple words, have your child say each sound while pointing under each letter.

Then have your child slide her finger under the letters smoothly while blending the sounds together.



Flip from one sound to another.

Remember that many letters (a, e, i, o, u, g, c, and more) have multiple sounds.

Have your child try the word using one sound. Then flip to the other sound and try it again.



Skip ahead, then come back.

Plan to skip a tricky word and finish the rest of the sentence. Then re-read the sentence and see if it's easier to figure out the tricky word.



What would you say?

When your child is stuck, have him pause and think about what he would say if he were the author. Predicting a word can help decode and also help define new words that your child might encounter.



Look for chunks.

Be on the lookout for word parts or small words that your child knows inside longer words. Use those parts to figure out the rest of the word.

Plan to read like a storyteller:

Some ideas to improve fluency are listed below. Remember that whenever you're working on fluency with your child, it's important to group words into phrases, to pay attention to punctuation, and to use pauses to make reading sound more fun.



Back up and re-read.

Pay attention to when your child's voice sounds choppy or like a robot.
Have your child go back and read it again until it is smooth.



Read together.

Read a page or a book with your child. Make it fun and try to keep your voices together.



Time your reading.

Pay attention to when your child's reading sounds particularly slow.
Make reading faster a little like a game: time how long it takes to read a book or a section of a book. Then read it again and take another time. Do it for 3 or 4 repetitions and see if the time gets faster.



Act out the story.

Before reading the book, plan out who will be which character.
Read it as you normally would, but while reading pay attention to the characters.
After reading a story, put the book aside and act it out together. It's okay to improvise.



Do some readers' theater.

This works best with books that have a lot of dialogue.
Before reading the book, plan who will be the narrator and who be the characters.



Echo-read.

Have your child read the words and figure them out independently.
Then you say the sentence back to your child in a smooth way.



Alone-Together-Alone

As the parent, you read the whole book to your child.
Then read the whole book together, with your voices matching.
Then have your child read the book alone, with you listening.

Funny Voices



Plan to read the book in a funny way. This will help your child learn how different kinds of reading can feel. For instance, your child can read the whole book sounding like Darth Vader, or read the whole book sounding like Alvin & the Chipmunks, or read the whole book sounding like a giant. It's fun to try on different voices.