

Parental engagement - Literacy



(World Book Day celebrations across the years...)

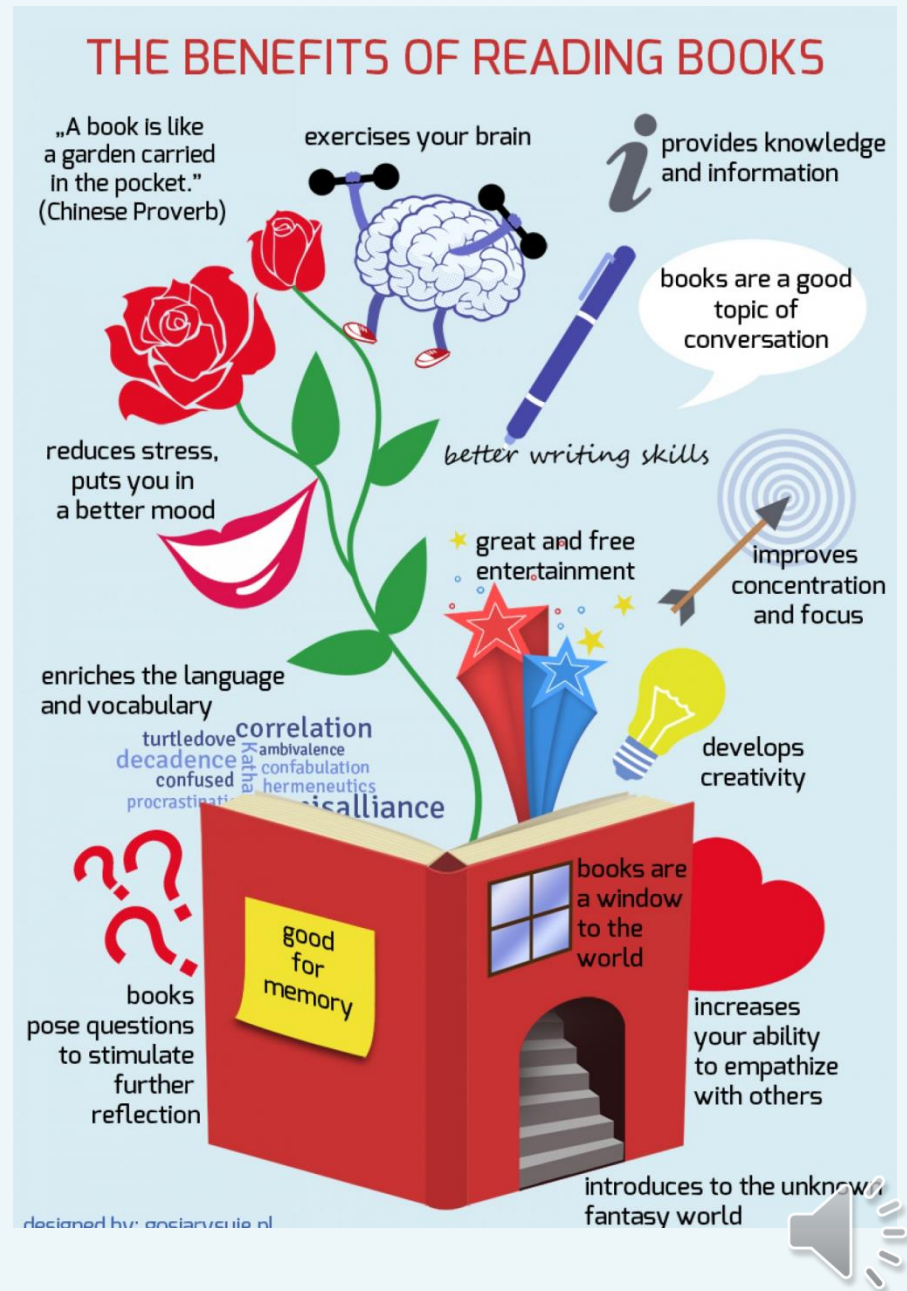


Mrs Martin (was Miss Scarth)- English teacher and Literacy Coordinator at Halewood Academy

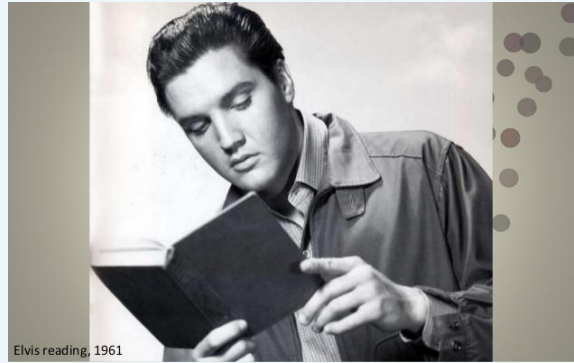


A quick reading skills tutorial!

We want to build confident and inquisitive readers of the future!



- 1) Predicting
- 2) Skimming
- 3) Scanning
- 4) Close reading
- 5) Questioning
- 6) Showing empathy



READING SKILLS

USE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE 	ASK QUESTIONS 	IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE 	IDENTIFY THE MAIN IDEA 
RECOGNIZE SEQUENCE 	RECOGNIZE CAUSE AND EFFECT 	MAKE INFERENCES 	MAKE PREDICTIONS 
SUMMARIZE 	DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION 	FIND FACTS AND DETAILS 	RECOGNIZE COMPARE AND CONTRAST 
MAKE CONNECTIONS 	VISUALIZE 	REREAD FOR CLARITY 	ADJUST YOUR PACING 

THE CLASSROOM KEY



Predicting...



- 1) Give your child the title of a text. Ask them questions such as: Based on this, what do you think the story will be about? Why? Look at the words that have been used. What clues do they give you about what is to follow? What genre do you think the story belongs to? Why? Where might it take place? Who might it involve?
- 2) Give your child a picture/front cover/diagram or chart from a text. This could be a book or magazine you pick up at the supermarket. Ask them what they think it might be about? Why? If it's an article, ask them to come up with their own headline and explain their choices. (You can also use online resources for this such as 'The Day' student-friendly free online newspaper)
- 3) When you see a billboard or poster at the cinema, on a bus stop or the side of a bus, ask your child what they think the story might be about? Does it look like a good story? Why? Who do you think the people are? What might it be about? How might the people know each other?

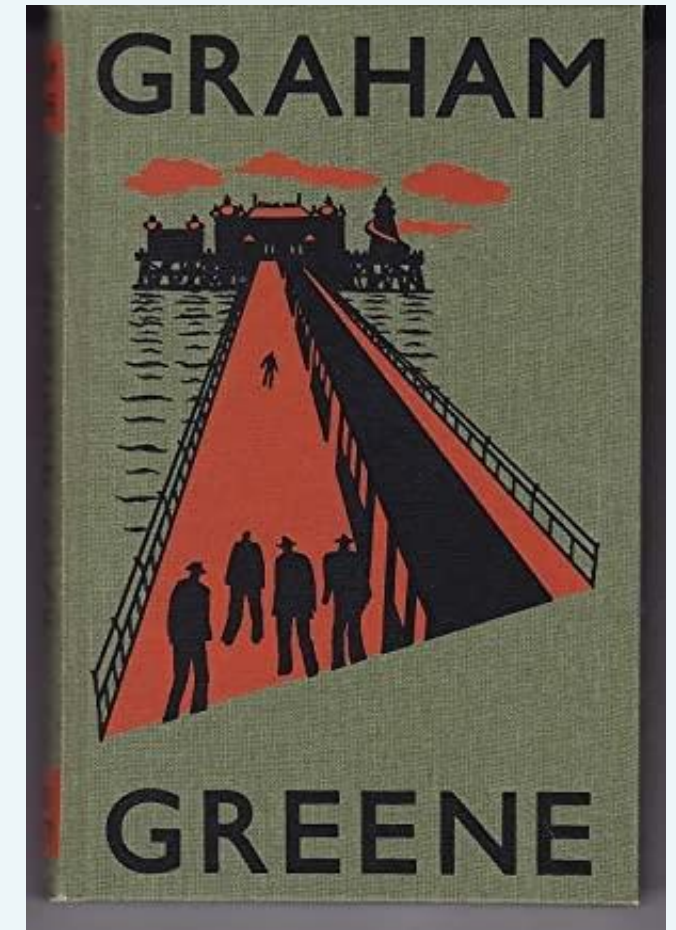
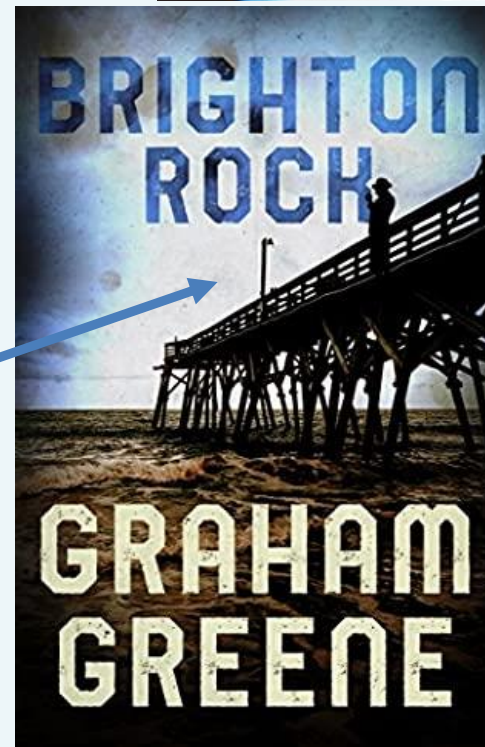


Example – Book covers of 'Brighton Rock' by Graham Green.

Example questions you could ask: What might this razor blade tell you about the story? What sort of story might it be? What might happen? Who is it aimed at? How do you know?

Example response: It suggests to me that the story might be a crime story or a thriller. There might be a murder investigation and this is a clue found by detectives.

Example questions: Who might this be? Why is it a silhouette? What does this make you think? What does it suggest about where the story is set? What does the title make you think of?



What does this indicate about the setting? What sort of place does Brighton look like? What do the colours use make you think of? What might be happening in the picture?



Skimming...



- 1) Give your child a short story/article. Give them 15 seconds to get a general gist or overview of what the text is about. Have a brief discussion – What is it generally about? what words do they remember? What is their initial reaction to it? Who does it involve? Give them another 30 seconds to skim the text and follow this with another discussion. What else have they found out? Has their opinion changed about the text? (You could make this into a competition by timing them with a stopwatch or offering points for amounts of details found)
- 2) Skim read the first line of each paragraph – what is this part about? What is the writer's attitude? What does it make you think or feel?
- 3) Skim read a text- draw a diagram or picture giving an overview of what the text is generally about. What are the key ideas or images that come to mind?



Scanning

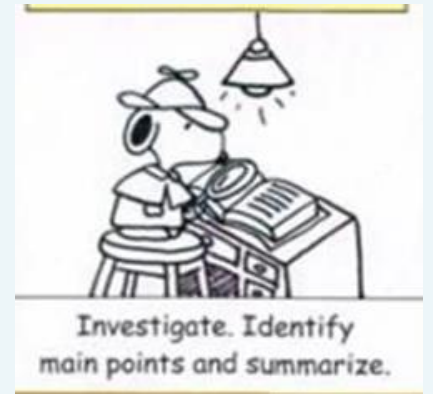


- 1) Give your child a key word that appears in the text. Ask them to highlight everywhere it appears or give them the amount of times the word appears and they have to find the times it appears and highlight it. Give them a time limit and encourage them to find as many in the time as possible!
- 2) Have a selection of random books in front of you. Ask your child to think of a word and find it in the books provided as quickly as they can. If they can't ask them to find words related to that word. E.g if the word is 'elephant' they would find words such as 'ears' 'trunk'....
- 3) In the car on a familiar journey, ask your child to scan the road signs and jot down the route to a destination. This will involve scanning the signs for key details.
- 4) When shopping, give your child the shopping list and ask them to find some particular items within a time limit (make it into a competition with points awarded or a tally)

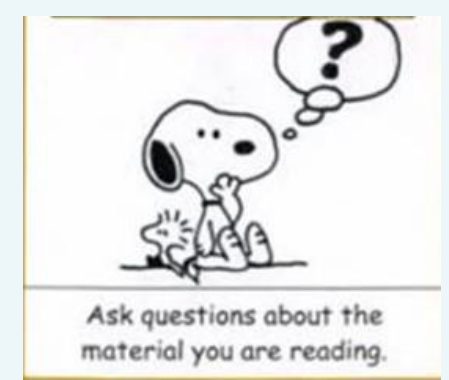


Reading closely

- 1) Give your child a paragraph or short text. Ask them to summarise the meaning of the paragraph in no more than 5 (or if you like, 10) words. They will need to read carefully to be able to summarise the key information.
- 2) Ask your child to read a short story and create a flowchart or series of pictures to summarise what it is about in the order that events happen or key details occur. This will test their ability to recognise key details and also to recognise sequencing within a text.
- 3) Ask him or her to rewrite a paragraph or sentence in their own words to assess understanding or explain a paragraph/short story to someone who hasn't read it such as a younger sibling or another family member.
- 4) Ask your child what the most important part of the text is and why. Ask them what this sentence contains that others doesn't. What key details does it tell us?



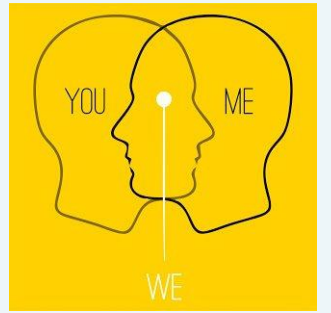
Questioning



- 1) Read off challenge – Read the same short text or section of a story as your child. Create a list of 10 questions for the other to answer.
- 2) Read aloud to your child – Ask them what their favourite part was and why? Which character did they like or dislike and why? Where did it take place?
- 3) Is all the information relevant? If you were to cut the text down, how would you do it?
- 4) What questions would they like to ask the writer/author? What information would they like to know? What would further their understanding?

Who is a person 	What is a thing or an action 	When is a time 
Where is a place 	Why is the reason something happened 	How is a number or a the way something is done 

Learning to show empathy....

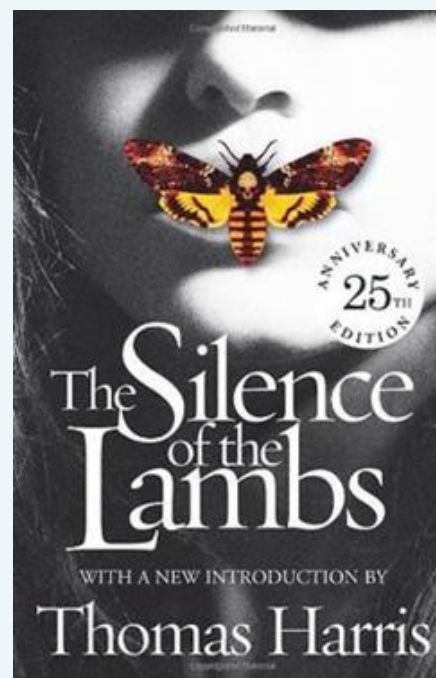


- 1) Write a diary entry from the point of view of the character in the text. What would they be thinking or feeling?
- 2) Hot seating – Ask your child to assume the position of a character from the text they have read and you can ask them questions to test their knowledge or memory of the story as well as their understanding of the character.
- 3) Thought bubble attitudes – when your child has read a text, ask them to assume the point of view of different people – what would their reactions be to the text? What would they agree or disagree with and why?
- 4) Discuss a news story/soap/TV series you have been watching – ask your child how a certain character might be feeling and why? What would they do in that situation? What advice would they give? Whose side are they on? Why?



Want to see what these reading skills look like in action?

For this example of the reading skills in action, I have used a short extract from Thomas Harris' novel 'The Silence of the Lambs'.



The following extract is taken from the novel *The Silence of the Lambs* by Thomas Harris. In the novel, the FBI trainee agent Clarice Starling has been asked to interview Dr Hannibal Lecter, a serial killer.

Dr Lecter's cell is well beyond the others, facing only a closet across the corridor, and it is unique in other ways. The front is a wall of bars, but within the bars, at a distance greater than the human reach, is a second barrier, a stout nylon net stretched from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. Behind the net, Starling could see a table bolted to the floor and piled high with softcover books and papers, and a straight chair, also fastened down.

Dr Hannibal Lecter himself **reclined** on his bunk, **perusing** the Italian edition of **Vogue**. He held the loose pages in his right hand and put them beside him one by one with his left. Dr Lecter has six fingers on his left hand.

Clarice Starling stopped a little distance from the bars, about the length of a small foyer.

'Dr Lecter.' Her voice sounded all right to her.

He looked up from his reading.

For a steep second she thought his gaze hummed, but it was only her blood she heard.

'My name is Clarice Starling. May I talk with you?' Courtesy was **implicit** in her distance and her tone.

Dr Lecter considered, his finger pressed against his pursed lips. Then he rose in his own time and came forward smoothly in his cage, stopping short of the nylon web without looking at it, as though he chose the distance.

She could see that he was small, sleek; in his hands and arms she saw wiry strength like her own.

'Good morning,' he said, as though he had answered the door. His cultured voice has a slight metallic rasp beneath it, possibly from **disuse**.

Dr Lecter's eyes are maroon and they reflect the light in pinpoints of red. Sometimes the points of light seem to fly like sparks to his centre. His eyes held Starling whole.

Predicting: Based just on this introduction, to which genre do we think this novel belongs? Why? What do we expect from this Dr Lecter? What does it suggest if he is a 'Dr'?

Skimming: Reading the first line of each paragraph, what does each paragraph focus on? What are your thoughts on these two characters? Why?

Questioning:

What sort of person is Dr Lecter? How do you know? Find some examples.

What is it about the description of his cell that tells us he is dangerous?

What would you like to know about these characters?

If you were summarising this extract, what are the main pieces of information?

Empathising with characters:

How do you think Clarice feels in this scene? Why? What might she be thinking?

Write a diary entry from Clarice's point of view describing your thoughts and feelings.

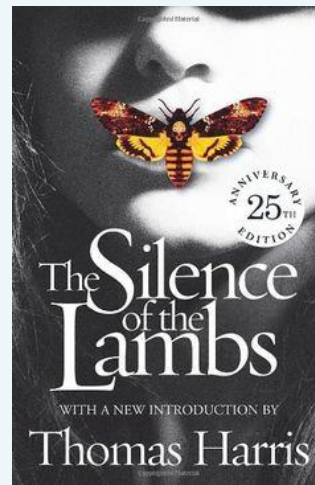
Scanning: Highlighted are some of the trickier, less common words.

Try to figure out what each means by reading around it or looking for parts of the word that you do recognise.

e.g. If he 'reclined' on his bunk, a bunk is a bed so it is likely to mean something like lean, sat or lay.

If he is 'perusing the Italian edition of Vogue', the word 'edition' tells us that 'Vogue' is likely to be a magazine or newspaper, if he is 'perusing' it this must mean reading or browsing.

Later on, if his voice has become raspy from 'disuse', we recognise the part 'use' within this word- the addition of 'dis' if we think of words such as 'disappointed' means something negative so 'disuse' must mean lack of use.



If you'd like some more opportunities to implement these skills.....

I will put an extract from *The Hunger Games* on the school website which you can use either independently or alongside your child to practise the reading skills covered in this session.

Remember the key ones to focus on for now are:

- Predicting
- Skimming
- Scanning
- Reading closely
- Questioning
- Showing empathy