

UKS2 reading guide - Supporting Reading at Home: 5 Times a Week!

At Vernon Park, we encourage all our Key Stage 2 children to read at home at least 5 times a week. Reading regularly makes a huge difference to your child's progress, vocabulary and confidence.

To help us track and reward their fantastic efforts, please record and sign their reading diary every time you read together.

How to Fill in Your Child's Reading Diary

Every time your child reads with you:

1. Date & Book Name (Left Side). Record the date and write down the title of the book they are reading. This can be:
 - Their School Reading Book (phonics or book band)
 - Their School Library Book
 - Any book of choice from home (bedtime stories, comics, or favourite picture books count too!)
2. Signature & Notes (Right Side). Put your signature or initials to show they have read. You are also welcome to add a short note about how they did (e.g. "confident reading with great expression" or "we discussed the meaning of this word tonight.")

💡 Top Tips for Reading at Home:

- 10 minutes of reading a day is much better than one long session at the weekend!
- Reading to your child (you reading a story to them) is just as valuable as hearing them decode words, feel free to log these shared story times in the diary too!
- When the children finish their book, they are able to swap it for a new one.
- Ask your child some questions about what they have read to check their understanding (see below for ideas)

Thank you so much for your continued support and partnership in making reading a happy habit for your child.

Questions to Support Developing Understanding

1. Vocabulary Questions - Helps to work out the meaning of unknown words and phrases using context clues.

Vocabulary questions are all about the words that a writer uses and the meaning of these words. This includes the child's ability to:

Explain and understand the meaning of words in a text.

Decipher the meaning of unfamiliar words by using clues from the text.

Identify the correct usage of a word by its context (e.g., bat – a piece of sports equipment vs. an animal).

Recognise synonyms (words with the same meaning) and antonyms (words with the opposite meaning).

Support at Home

The best way to support the development of your child's vocabulary is through lots of talk and lots of reading. Don't be afraid to use more advanced vocabulary and to explain its meaning to your child (which teachers do all the time). When reading to your child or hearing them read to you, discuss the meanings of words they come across and talk about how we could use those words in different situations.

Example Questions

What does this word tell us about the character / setting / atmosphere?

Look at that sentence/passage and circle a word/phrase that means the same as _____.

Which words/phrases in this text give us the impression that the main character is _____?

Which words/phrases in this text give us the impression that the setting is _____?

Which words/phrases in this text give us the impression that the atmosphere is _____?

The author uses words like _____ to describe _____. What impression does this give us of the character / setting / atmosphere?

The author describes the main character as _____. Think of another word that could have been used instead.

Why did the author use the word _____ to describe _____?

How does the author make the reader feel _____ in this part of the text?

How has the author's choice of words created the feeling _____?

What do phrases such as _____ tell you about _____?

What might that mean?

What do you think the writer is saying, when they _____?

What does that imply / suggest / indicate about _____?

2. Retrieval Questions - Helps to go into a text and retrieve the facts and key details.

Retrieval questions simply ask children to find information within the text. They check pupils' basic understanding of what they have read and may ask about characters, the setting of the story, key events, or facts in non-fiction texts.

When answering questions, it is important that children pick out key information rather than copying out whole chunks of the text.

Support at Home

Talk about books you have shared together and ask specific questions about them. Encourage your child to focus on what the question is asking. For example, if you ask, "Who is the main character in this story?", they shouldn't just name all the characters, but think about who plays the central role.

Example Questions

Where is the story set?

How does the main character look / behave / speak?

When is the story set?

Where would you find a section about _____?

Can _____ have more than one meaning?

What does the word _____ mean?

What did _____ do when _____?

Where did _____ go?

Find a word or phrase which tells us how the character is feeling.

Where in the book would you find _____?

Who are the key characters in the book?

What happened at _____?

Describe _____.

Which paragraph tells us _____?

Which section tells us _____?

Where does the story take place?

When did the story take place?

What did (s)he/it look like?

Who was (s)he/it?

Where did (s)he/it live?

3. Sequence & Summarise Questions - Helps to identify and summarise the key events or points across paragraphs.

Summary questions test your child's ability to summarise (or retell) the most important points of a text without giving a detailed and in-depth summary of everything they have read.

It is very important that your child reads these types of questions carefully. For instance, the topic of a text may be the rainforest, but a specific section might focus on deforestation. If a question asks, "What is the author's main point in this section?", writing "the rainforest" would be incorrect, as the specific point is "deforestation".

Support at Home

Ask your child to summarise the key points of a chapter or section of a book they have read. You can also ask them to summarise films, TV shows, or specific scenes to reinforce this skill.

Example Questions

What is the main theme / argument in this paragraph?

What is the main message in this paragraph?

Can you describe what has happened in this paragraph / chapter?

Using less than 20 words, could you write a new blurb for this book?

Which is the most important message in this book?

Can you describe what happened in three sentences?

Why do you think that might be important?

Is there anything you know now which you didn't know before?

What sticks most in your mind about _____?

What moment do you remember most from _____?

Can you remind us about _____?

How would you sum up _____?

4. Inference Questions - Helps to hunt for clues in a text about how someone might be feeling or why something is happening.

Inference questions involve being a "reading detective" because children have to use clues from a text to infer meaning. This could be about the author's intentions, the layout of a text, or a character's thoughts and feelings.

Example Text:

"It's not fair!" shouted Jack as he slammed the door shut and flung himself onto his bed. He picked up his pillow and screamed loudly into it.

Sample Questions & Responses:

"How is Jack feeling?" → He is feeling angry because it says he slammed the door and screamed into his pillow.

"Where do you think Jack is?" → He is in his bedroom because it says he was on his bed and picked up a pillow.

Support at Home

Talk about what you have read together and ask questions that begin with "Why", "Where", "Who", "How", or "What do you think...?". Encourage your child to explain why they think something and refer back to the story for evidence.

Example Questions

What makes you think _____? Give evidence for your opinions.

Which words / phrases give you that impression?

Why do you think the author chose to _____? Give reasons for your answer.

How was _____ different after _____? Why?

Explain why the author chose this word to describe _____.

What impression do we get of _____? Why?

What do you think will happen to the main character now? Can you give reasons for your opinion?

What makes you think this?

Why is _____ important?

What does the word _____ imply about _____?

Which character would you most like to meet? Explain why.

Why did the character behave like this?

What do people usually do when _____?

Does that remind you of _____?

Why do you think (s)he _____?

What do they seem to think about each other?

Can we work out how _____ feels about _____?

Which characters seem to _____?

Why do you think _____ tells _____?

What does _____ think?

How did _____ react?

5. Prediction Questions - Helps to work out what might happen next from clues in the text.

Prediction questions ask pupils to say what they think will happen next, based on what they have read so far. As with inference questions, children need to use their understanding of the text to justify their answers.

Support at Home

Stop regularly while reading and ask, "What do you think will happen next?". Discuss your child's ideas and share your own. Model your thinking aloud by explaining what you already know about the story and characters to show how you form predictions.

Example Questions

Who is on the front cover? What is in the background? How might these details give us clues about the content of the book?

Based on what you know about the character / event, how do you think the story will develop next?

Think about the author's other stories. Are there any familiar themes / characters / settings? How did those end, and how might this story end?

Do you think the character will change his/her behaviour in the future? Give evidence for your ideas.

How is the character like someone that you know? How would that person react to this situation, and how does that affect what this character might do?

The character is in a tricky situation. What will the character do next? What would you do? Why?

What don't we know about _____?

What do we need to know, in order to _____?

Is anything missing from _____?

Is there something that we haven't _____?

What do you think is likely to happen when _____?

Do you think the author has a plan for _____?

What could _____?

What might happen if _____?

What do you guess could _____?

Why do you suppose _____?

Write 3 questions you would like to find the answer to in this text.

6. Compare, Contrast & Comment Questions - Helps to discuss the content of a paragraph/text and compare events and characters.

For these types of questions, children are expected to identify links between different parts of a text and explain how the text as a whole conveys a message or idea. They may also be asked to compare different characters, settings, or themes across the text.

Example Questions

Look at the section entitled _____. Why has this been included in this text?

Look at the front cover of this book. What sections would you expect to find inside?

Explain how the character's behaviour / appearance has changed over the book. Why/how has this happened?

What is the purpose of _____?

How does the layout help to _____?

Compare one character to another. How are they different or similar?

When might someone choose to read this book?

In what ways is _____ like _____?

How has the author organised the text? Why?

How does the organisation of this text help us to better understand the information?

In what ways do diagrams, photographs, or illustrations help us to enjoy / understand the text?

Who has the author written this text for?

Compare how the characters are reacting to this problem. Who deals best with the situation?

How has the character changed during the text?

Which is the most important section in this book? Justify your choice.

Compare one setting to another in the book. Why are the two settings significant to the story?

What can you tell about the viewpoint / opinion of the author on this topic?

How have your feelings about _____ changed?

What's different now about _____?

What, overall, is the effect of _____?

What was the most effective / thought-provoking moment of the story?

7. Author Choice Questions - Helps to spot examples of ambitious vocabulary and figurative language and explain how words and phrases add to the meaning.

For questions about the author's words and phrases, children must be able to explain and comment on a writer's use of language, detailing how specific words and phrases add extra meaning or tone to the text.

Example Questions

What does the word _____ tell us about the character / setting / atmosphere?

Look for a phrase that implies that the character / setting / atmosphere is _____.

The author uses the word _____ to describe _____. What impression does this give us?

How does the author show that the character / setting / atmosphere is _____?

Can you think of a synonym/antonym for _____?

Look for an example of a simile in the text. How does this add meaning?

Look for an example of a metaphor in the text. How does this add meaning?

Look for an example of personification in the text. How does this add meaning?

Why have the headings / chapter names / character names been chosen for this book?

Explain why the word _____ is used to describe _____.

What does the word/phrase _____ tell you about _____?

How does the word/phrase _____ help us to understand _____?

How has the choice of words created a feeling of _____?

Why did the author choose the verb / adjective / adverb _____?

Which sentences are most _____?

Which word(s) make you feel _____?