

Hamstead Junior School.



Better reading.

A guide for parents to help their child read.

This guide is written to support parents in discussing the books that their child is reading. We hope that you find it useful.

ASSESSMENT FOCUS	KEY PHRASE
1	Decode accurately. Read with understanding.
2	Seek, find and understand text. Literal responses to text. Text reference.
3	Read between the lines Inference and deduction. Interpret. Put yourself in their shoes. Text reference.
4	Examine the structure. Commenting on presentational features. Why is the text presented and organised as it is?
5	Look closely at Language. Why did the writer use that word / phrase / image / sentence etc. Literary awareness. Impact on reader.
6	Examine the Writer's purpose. Writer's purpose. Writer's attitudes and values. Big messages about life.
7	The Text and the World. How the text fits into its social, historical, cultural, literary heritage context.

Assessment Focus 1

- use a range of strategies, including accurate decoding of text, to read for meaning.

Can your child

- Read on sight
- Use phonic strategies
- Use textual and grammatical knowledge to self correct
- Show awareness of punctuation marks
- Show accurate and fluent decoding skills
- Demonstrate understanding in prepared reading?

Question prompts to develop this area

- Do you see a word you know?
- Check the picture
- What would make sense/ sound right?
- What would you expect to see at the beginning of?
- Is it like a word you already know?
- Can you see a word inside the word?
- Blend this part of the word.
- Does the sentence make sense?

Assessment Focus 2

- understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to text

Can your child:

- Recall main ideas, grasp key ideas in a story
- identify how characters behave
- connect words and illustrations
- say what they have found out
- retrieve relevant details
- see a range of texts to demonstrate understanding of content, and select and refer?

Question prompts to develop this area

Retrieval questions

- Where and when did the story take place?
- What did s/he/it look like?
- Who was s/he/it? Can you name the....?
- Where did s/he/it live?
- Who are the characters in the book?
- What happened after?
- How many....?
- Describe what happened at....?
- Who spoke to? Identify who....?
- Can you tell me why? Which is true or false.....?
- Find the meaning of....?
- What is. ... ?

Assessment Focus 3

- deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts

Can your child:

- Make predictions,
- make deductions about significance of text e.g. images,
- interpret text,
- refer to text and images,
- draw out implied meanings,
- distinguish between more and less important items of information,
- use clues to explain what characters say and do?

Question prompts to develop this area

Simple comprehension questions

- What do you think is happening here? (interpret)
- What happened in this part of the story? What might this mean? (interpret)
- Through whose eyes is the story told? (deduce)
- Do you know what might happen next? (deduce)
- What do we know about....? (deduce/infer) e.g. Sarah was up the tree in her best frock. What do we know about Sarah? (deduce)
- What could this tell us about Sarah? (infer)

Some questions to help children deduce, infer and interpret

- Describe in your own words(interpret)
- What do you think will happen because of ...(infer/deduce depending on text evidence)
- If this was you – how would your friends react? (interpret and deduce)
- How do we know that?(deduce/infer- depending on text)
- If you were in _____'s shoes what would you do now? (interpret)
- Look at the text and find.... What do you think...?(infer)
- What was_____ thinking as he...? How do you know? (could be any depending on the text)
- From the information, can you devise a set of instructions for...
- Where are the examples to support your point of view?

Deduce, infer and interpret – questions to discuss

- Could this have happened in? Why, what are your reasons?
- Which events could not have happened?
- If_____ happened, what might the ending have been?
- How was this similar to....?
- What do you see as possible other outcomes?
- Can you explain what must have happened when....?
- What were the motives behind...?
- What was the problem with...?
- What assumptions have you made and why?
- What evidence do you have? Justify your answer. Clarify your reasoning

Assessment Focus 4

- identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level.

Can your child:

- Identify key punctuation and comment on use e.g. commas and colons
- Understand how organisational devices work in the text e.g. contents, glossary, index, headings, bullet points
- Say how to find information e.g. skimming and scanning.
- Trace how ideas link, how a writer signals change or connection e.g. openers, connectives, font size, italics
- Show critical awareness of sentence patterns e.g. repetition, length of sentences
- Show critical awareness of structure and whole text presentations e.g. flashbacks, order of paragraphs?

Question prompts to develop this area

Questions for Non-fiction

- Where could you find out about... in this book? Where in the book would you find...?
- Is there another way? What the quickest way?
- How many levels of headings and subheadings does this book have? Are they statements or do they ask questions?
- Which engage the reader more effectively?
- How do headings help you when you scan the text?
- What do the headings describe?
- What's the difference between the index and the contents?
- If you want to find out about... how could you do it?
- What's the best place to look for information about...?
- If you can't find information in the contents, where else might you look?
- If there isn't an entry in the index, what might you do to find out about...?

- How could I use the search engine to find out about...?
- Why are the sites found organised in this order? Why are 'hot links' useful?

Questions on organisation

- Why are these words useful to the reader?
- Highlight the words that tell you which order to follow – e.g. first, then, after, finally
- Why have these words been put in bold? (not-to stand out)
- Who would this information be most useful for?
- How is...similar to and different from....?
- Which words indicate that some people think differently about this issue? E.g. however, although, on the other hand.
- Can you distinguish between formal and informal style?
- Give 2 ways in which this text is written like a diary/report/discussion etc?
- What are the features of this text type? How are they appropriate for the purpose of the text

Questions for cohesion

- What are the main ideas in this paragraph and how are they related?
- Which idea in this paragraph is linked to the next paragraph?
- Look at the way this poem is organised. Are there any words that signpost change? What effect does this change have?
- How does the layout and presentation of this advert help to persuade you to take notice of its campaign?
- Where in this chapter does the writer give another point of view? How does she signal that she's going to do this?
- How does it fit in to the presentation of the argument?
- What was the turning point in the game?

Assessment Focus 5

– explain and comment on the writer’s use of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level.

Can your child:

- Recognise the effect of writer’s choices
- Comment on how specific words effect and convey meaning
- Discuss language patterns and how they contribute to meaning
- Identify how punctuation may alter meaning and effect
- Show understanding of writer’s use of language and impact on reader through dramatised reading
- Shows awareness of literary style

Question prompts to develop this area

Analysing writers’ use of language

- Which feature does the author use in a (specified) piece of text? Why?
- What does (word/phrase) mean? Why has the author used this phrase/feature? E.g. italics, bold, repetition, simile, exclamation marks, headings, bullet points, captions etc. Comment on the effect.
- What has the author used in the text to make this character funny/sad/angry/tense? How effective is this?
- How has the author used the text to make the situation or event angry/tense? Comment on the effect.
- Think of another more/less emotive word you can substitute here. What different effect would your word have?
- As a reader, how do you feel about...? How has the author created this feeling?
- Which words and phrases tell you that the author is describing...?
- How could the meaning be changed by altering the punctuation? E.g. commas, full stops, ellipsis, exclamation marks etc. Comment on the effect.
- Comment on the technical language..... and.....? Explain why the author used it.

- What words/phrases indicate the author's attitude?
- How does the author show that... is important?
- Why has the author used repetition? What effect does it have?
- Why have exclamation marks/italics/capitals been used? How does this affect the way you read it? What effect does this create?
- What is the author's style? What features help you identify this? Why is this style effective in this text?
- What words give you that impression?
- How has the author been humorous?
- What words, phrases or features make you think that?
- How would you explain this... in similar terms/to a younger child?
- How does the metaphor/simile/adjectives/adverbs... help you to understand this text? What makes it effective?

Register – the tone of the writing

- What is the relationship between the writer and the person who will receive the letter? How do you know?
- Which features give you a clue that this is a formal letter?
- How would this biology be different if the subject had written it? How would the tone/emphasis/mood change?
- Why has the author set out the text like this? Comment on the effectiveness of this style. Could it have been written any other way?
- How could this be made to sound more friendly and informal? How could this be made to sound more formal and serious? Comment on the effect this has on the reader.

Assessment Focus 6

– identify and comment on the writers’ purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect

Can your child:

- Say why they liked or disliked the writers’ viewpoint
- Identify the main purpose of a text
- See a link between what is written and impact on reader
- See how the writer’s style affects the reader
- Compare differences between writing to entertain and inform?

Question prompts to develop this area

Commenting on the writer’s purpose and viewpoint.

- Why did the author choose this setting?
- What do you think the writer’s purpose is? How do you know?
- What did the writer intend by (phrase /sentence /incident... etc)?
- What is the purpose of this particular paragraph/character/change?
- Why has the author used humour at this point?
- Look at the caption and diagram. What does it explain to you? Why does the writer choose to include them?
- What impression do you think the writer wants to give of this character? Why? What effect does this have on other characters?
- In this paragraph, what effect does the author want to have on the reader?
- What is the author’s purpose in this piece of text in relation to the plot?
- From the opening section of the text, what is the writer’s opinion of school/the war/animals etc? How does this affect the story/plot/characters/setting etc?
- Which other author handles time in this was e.g. flashbacks; dreams? Which stories have openings like this?
- Which article/letter would most persuade you to change your mind? Why?
- By using these words/phrases (.....) what effect has the author had on the reader?

- How are the two texts different in purpose? What effect does this have on the reader?
- From these texts, how have the authors presented the information in different ways? Which is the most effective? Why?
- Whose viewpoint is being presented here?
- What does the writer want to persuade you to do/think/believe?
- Who is the advert trying to persuade?
- Can you tell what the author thinks?

Assessment Focus 7

- relate texts to their cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions

Can your child:

- Identify traditional characters and setting
- Relate the text to others
- Use cross reference as a checking device
- Explain the process of text production
- Speculate about context of book production?

Question prompts to develop this area

Context Questions

- Can you think of another story which has a similar theme; eg. good over evil; weak over strong; wise over foolish?
- Where there is a different cultural setting - where is the story set? What are the features of this setting e.g. language, environment, attitudes?
- What difference does the culture make to how the characters act/react in the story? What does this tell us about the way of life within this different culture?
- Which other stories deal with similar issues e.g. social; moral; cultural?
- In other poems by (same author), what common features, such as themes or language, do you notice?
- What do you know about this period in history that helps you to understand the writer's second paragraph/ the author's meaning/ the character's feelings etc?
- How is the heroine/hero in this story similar to others you have read about?


Evaluation Questions

- In the fairy stories that you know, who are the heroes/ villains? What have they got in common and how are they different?
- What cultural/ historical/ traditional features add to the success of this story/ piece of writing/ poem/ description etc? What evidence do you have to justify your view?
- How is this setting similar to settings in other traditional tales you have read?
- How would this text work in a different cultural/ historical setting?
- Which text is more effective? In what ways?
- How is this text similar to...? How is it different from...?

Process & Production

- How do you think the author and illustrator worked together?
- What role would the publisher have had?
- What influences might have caused the author to make changes?
- What are the links, if any, to texts by the same author?
- What would he have needed to know/ what research would be needed before writing the text?

Activities to do with your child to develop reading skills.
Assessment Focus 1

Do a crossword of high frequency words.	Make sentences from given words.	Find compound words and words inside words.
List words beginning with or rhyming with	Write some sentences like the model in your story.	

Assessment Focus 2

List the main events in the story.	List the characters from the story with a thumbnail sketch for each.	Make a facts chart or fact file about a character.	Draw a timeline of events.
Make a list of places where most of the action takes place.	Write an acrostic naming events and characters.	Using ideas from the text, make a true or false quiz for a friend.	Make a chart showing who did what and when.

Assessment Focus 3

Draw a plot profile.	Write a summary in no more than 100 words.	Prepare a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of events in flashback story.	Draw a story map illustrating the character's feelings.	Write and perform a play based on the story.
Make a cartoon strip showing the turning point in the story.	Write a newspaper report of your story from the point of view of a character (biased).	Compare 2 characters. Justify your descriptions.	Write a letter the main character advising them of the motives of others.	Using speech bubbles, draw a conversation between two characters at a particular point in the story.


Assessment Focus 4

Make a connectives bank and group them with sub-headings.	Make an information page about... including effective presentational features.	Invent new subheadings for paragraphs in your book.	Choose a non fiction book. Devise questions to help your friend to make use of its NF features.
Make a poster to advertise your book using eye catching layout and presentation.	Compose a poem that signifies change. E.g. time, seasons Highlight the words or phrases which signpost change.	Turn information into a flowchart or set of instructions.	Write a short story with as many of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flashback• use of <i>italics</i>• change of font• !! and ?• “ ---- ”

Assessment Focus 5

Find similes and metaphors in your book. Illustrate them.	In the style of your favourite author.....	Make banks of 'happy' and 'sad' words etc.	Find some phrases you like. Explain why you have chosen them and what they mean to you.
Make a continuum of words e.g. happy, angry. Explain the difference between each word in the order you have chosen.	Paint a 'photograph' of a particular phrase or scene which you like in the text.	Find a piece of descriptive text you like. Change the adjectives for synonyms. What effect does this have?	Choose a conversation. Rewrite it in a dramatic way, exaggerating actions and using more expressive vocabulary.

Assessment Focus 6

Illustrate what you think the main idea was.	Draw a poster to persuade someone to buy your book.	Write an argument to oppose the writer's opinion.	Write a conversation between two people who disagree about an issue.	Write a paragraph in the style of this writer.
Design a book cover and new title for the story.	Write your opinion about an issue in the book.	Think of a tricky situation. What would your character do if....?	Draw a picture of a friend for a character. What qualities would they need?	

Assessment focus 7

Draw one of the characters and invent another adventure for them.	Compare 2 books by the same author. List similarities and differences.	Find other books dealing with the same theme.	Write a letter from a character in your book describing their home/ school/ work day.
Imagine your book was being made into a film. Design poster for it.	Draw a plot profile for your story showing time and excitement.	Compare plot profiles for two stories you know. How are they similar/ different?	