

Helping your child with comprehension

At Key Stage 2, your child has probably begun to read quite well. They may still struggle sometimes, but most children are able to read some appropriate stories, poems and non-fiction texts by themselves, without getting stuck or making many mistakes. However, this doesn't mean that they have finished learning to read. Children at Key Stage 2 still need your help as they learn to:

- understand and enjoy increasingly complex stories, poems and non-fiction pieces
- use their comprehension skills and life experience to 'read between the lines' and work out meanings that may not be obvious just from the words on the page
- say what they think about things they read, giving reasons for their opinions and using quotes to support their ideas.

Helping your child get ready to answer the questions

Even though your child can read, it's still helpful if you can **read and talk about** the comprehension texts with them. You could ask your child to read the piece silently, and then prompt them to:

- tell you what the piece was about in as few words as possible – perhaps in just one or two sentences
- explain what they liked or did not like, giving reasons
- tell you about something in the piece that they thought was particularly interesting, exciting or puzzling.

If your child is a less confident reader, you could share the reading, taking it in turns to read aloud before you discuss the piece. It is important to share your own thoughts about the piece with your child.

Tackling the questions

If your child gets stuck with a question, it can help if they try answering it out loud before they write the response down. This will give them a chance to test out their ideas and see whether the answer makes sense before they write it.

- To answer **literal** comprehension questions, such as 'What kind of pet did Adam have?', your child will need to find the answer 'right there on the page' – in the text itself. They can find the answer by reading the text carefully, or by scanning it quickly to locate the relevant information.
- To answer **inferential** questions, such as 'Why was Eva so cross with Molly?', your child will need to use their own judgement as well as looking for clues in the text. They may need to think about what has happened from Eva's point of view and how they would feel if they were Eva. The text might not actually say 'Eva was cross with Molly because Molly was spending so much time with her other friends' – but a reader can work it out using clues.
- Some questions are **evaluative** – they ask your child to make a judgement and say what they think about a text. Encourage your child to give reasons for their ideas and quote from the text to support their ideas, rather than just saying 'I liked it,' or 'I thought it was boring.'