Tutor Training
Beyond the Book: Maximizing the Read Aloud
Part 2 of 4: Comprehension

Helping Students with Comprehension

Comprehension is simply the ability to understand what you have read. In order to understand what you are reading, you need to be able to:

1. Decode words – know the sounds of letters and blends and put them together to form words.
2. Bring your background knowledge on the subject into play to connect what you already know to what you are reading.
3. Delve deeper into thinking about what you have just read, making inferences, imagining the story, characters, topic, using the descriptors to decide what the main idea is and what is the tone of the story.

Tips for Working with Students from 1st to 4th Grade

1. Ask questions about the subject to pique the interest of your student.
2. Try and relate what they like to what is happening in the story so they can make connections.
3. Ask them to think about how the character might be feeling at a certain point in the story. What words in the story led them to that conclusion?
4. See if they can sequence the events in the story and pick out the important parts. Preface your reading by saying that you want them to pay attention to the events in the story. Ask them what happened first? Next? Next? How did it end?
5. Did they like the story? Would they like to read another book by the author? This helps them to form opinions.

Tips for Working with Middle School Students

Preface the reading by talking to them about how you're having them practice comprehension with this text. Tell them you want them to be looking for the main idea and key points of the story – the who, what, where, when and how. Make sure they understand what is meant by this.

1. Go through the text and identify, pronounce and define for them words they do not understand. This will speed up their fluency.

2. Ask them what they already know about the topic (background knowledge).
3. If a passage has questions, read the questions first.
4. Model scooping phrases to help your student with the cadence of the words. Show them the role punctuation plays in reading fluently. It's perfectly fine to tell them, "Try reading it like this…"
5. Help them decode big words by breaking the word into syllables for them so they recall how to do it. (You can write lightly with a pencil right on the page.) You've already pronounced them once at the beginning, but now you can repeat with chunking syllables.
6. Point out again, we're looking for the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how*, so when they get to one, ask them to identify it.
7. Take your time with the text. Pointing out how to better read a passage will help build skills for the long-run!

Tips for Working with High School Students

As with younger students, tell your high schooler that you want to make sure they understand what is being read.
1. Try to pick a quiet spot in which to read. While tutoring this may not always be possible, but do encourage your student to find a spot free of activity where they can focus better on what they are reading when they are home.
2. Students should read with the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* questions in their mind. They should try to identify these as they read. If they cannot, they should go back and look for them.
3. Students are encouraged to read with a paper and pencil at hand to jot down characters, descriptor words, events, and any words they want to look up.
4. You want to ask them to read aloud so that you know they are pronouncing the words correctly and they understand the tone of the characters.
5. Encourage them to read what they love. Some of our students are visual learners and graphic novels are very enjoyable to them. Other students prefer non-fiction, so you will want to be sure to ask them what their background knowledge is on the subject before they begin reading.
6. Again, if a passage has questions at the end, review those questions before reading the story. This will help identify the main idea.

Additional Resources Available at NHR

1. K-W-L Chart