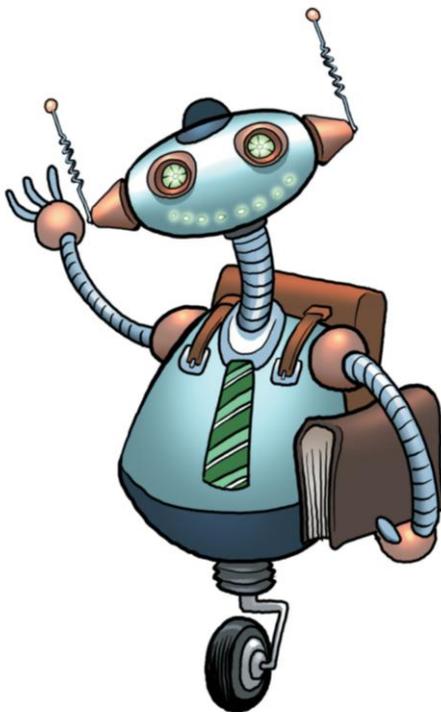




# Developing Reading Skills Through Questioning



LEARNING  
LADDERS

To enable the effective teaching, learning and assessment of reading we have developed the Skills of the Hiltbury Reader. Each of these skills is reflected in one of the Ladders in the pupil booklets. We want the children to recognise that it is these skills which, when combined, make for a confident and engaged reader.

The six skills are:

- 1) **Decoder** - the actual act of reading the words on the page
- 2) **Comprehender** - being able to retrieve information from a text and knowing how the structure of the text can make that easier
- 3) **Reading Detective** - the skills of inference, deduction and prediction
- 4) **Language Lover** - commenting on the writer's use of word choices
- 5) **Responder** - commenting on the writer's purpose and point of view
- 6) **Big Reader** - relating the text to its social, cultural or historical context

In the early stages of learning to read, the focus for teaching is primarily on skills 1 and 2. When these are secure then the focus can broaden to encompass the complex range of skills from 3 to 6. Through the use of the Learning Ladders the children learn to recognise what each of these skills demand and to recognise which skill is required to be able to answer a particular question. As children move beyond skills 1 and 2 they start to 'read to learn' rather than 'learn to read'. Having said that, skills 1 and 2 remain in use, even if they are at the very top of a Ladder!

Our main vehicle for teaching reading is Guided Reading. Each week the children will spend time working with the teacher in a small group, to focus on these reading skills and to think about where they are on that particular ladder. This is when targeted questioning allows us to assess children's current attainment, as well as develop their skills to enable them to progress.

In this document we have grouped together the key types of questions that help to develop each of the six skills. Without the context of the text being read it is not possible to allocate these questions to certain rungs; sometimes a question can look relatively simple but if the text it is coupled with is demanding then it would relate to a higher rung. It might be useful to use this booklet along with the Transition Assessment Guide for Reading, which contains further details of what each of the reading skills looks like.

Some questions will naturally apply to more than one Learning Ladder. For example, the question 'What do you think will happen next?' naturally fits into Reading Detective. However, when the answer is, 'I think the wicked ogre will die because they are always defeated by good in fairy tales', then it has become a Big Reader as it is making reference to their wider reading experience. The most important thing to remember is quality questions to develop a range of reading skills.

At the end of the booklet we have included a range of questions and prompts that can be useful to use when listening to children read and to get them thinking about the text that they have read.

## Decoder Questions

While we recognise that the majority of children learn to read through a phonics driven approach, here are some other strategies and prompts that can be used with children when tackling unfamiliar words.

Phonic knowledge – both segmenting and blending sounds

Think of a possible meaning from context

Read on to the end of the sentence

Break the word down into known parts

Use meaning of known parts of words

Does it look like any word I know already?

Use the diagram/picture clues if appropriate

Look the word up in a dictionary

Read text together before rereading independently

Does the sentence make sense if that is the word?

## Comprehender Questions

Find the sentence/word/phrase which shows that/means that ... (Which is the word that lets you know the country was small?)

How / what / where / when questions. (What colour was the boy's dog? In what year did the ship set sail?)

Put these events in order.

Who is telling the story?

What was the first thing that happened?

What happened next?

What happened before / after ...?

Did he/she ... before or after ...?

How did it all end?

How is the page set out?

What is the purpose of the bold writing at the top of the page? (Title) –

Extend to:

Subheadings

Cartoons

Charts

Tables

Captions

Diagrams

Editorial comment

Bubbles

Glossary

Italics / bold writing within text

Why has the writer chosen to use any of the above?

What is the purpose of this writing and who is the audience?

How do you know that this is a letter / dictionary / glossary / poetry / cartoon strip etc.?

What are the main points in each paragraph? If you were to give them a sub-heading, what would it be?

How can we use skimming (looking for overall message) and scanning (looking for specific details) here to help us find the answer?

How can the index/contents/sub-headings help us to find information?

Is it true or false that ...

Find an example of a page that has an interesting layout. Why have you chosen this one?

## Reading Detective Questions

Why did ... do ...?

What do you think about ...?

What is the author trying to explain?

What in the text makes you think that ...?

Give me another way in which ...

Find the word/s that suggest/s ...

If you were the character what would you do / say / think / feel ...?

What clues can you find to tell you about ...?

How is the character feeling?

Why is the character feeling like this?

How is this situation similar to ...?

How is the situation different from?

Explain your views on ...

What is your opinion? Justify / convince the reader.

How is the general mood / atmosphere created?

How is ... feeling at this stage?

How could ...'s feelings change?

What do you think the author feels about ...?

What tells you he/she feels like this?

Find two reasons ...

Where does it imply that?

What might that character write in their diary that night after all that had happened?

How would the other character have re-told that event from their point of view?

What do you predict is going to happen next? Why do you think that?

What do you think had already happened before? Why?

How did the character's actions affect the outcome of the story?

What did ... mean when they said ... ?

Why is ... an appropriate title for this poem?

What assumptions have you already made?

## Language Lover Questions

Why did the author choose that word?

What effect does that word have?

Find the word / line / sentence, which suggests ...

What is the purpose of the word choice?

What word would you choose?

How does the author describe ... and why does he/she describe it in this way?

Give me an alternative word that would fit into this sentence.

Can you find a word that means the same as ...?

What effect is the author trying to convey?

What feelings do the words create?

What picture does this put into your mind?

Why has the author used a question?

**N.B.** Look for imagery – similes / metaphors / personification / alliteration and discuss the purposes effect.

What does this onomatopoeic word tell you?

Can you find the metaphor in the poem? What impression does it give you?

Which feature does the author use in a (specified) piece of text? Why?

What does (word/phrase) mean? Why has the author used this?

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 the impression that... ?

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?

## Responder Questions

What is the story about?

What is the genre of this story?

What is the theme of the story / text?

The author says ... do you agree? Give reasons.

Does this remind you of any other story?

What is the moral of the story?

What do you think the author believes? Justify.

Have you learnt anything from the story?

Did you like this story? Give reasons.

What did the character(s) learn from the story?

How have the characters changed?

How does the author create ... atmosphere?

Why do you think the author has been successful? (e.g. for creating suspense or being persuasive)

What would you have done if you were that character at this point in the story?

What if ...? (What if the step-mother let her go to the ball?)

Which word/s do you think engages the reader the most on this page?

Why has the writer used repetitive structures?

Why did the author choose this setting?

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?

## Big Reader Questions

How is this similar to other books by this author?

How can we tell this book was set in (Roman) times?

Why was (Dickens) talking about how bad it was for the poor people?

Why is this story a typical fairy tale?

Where do you think this story is set?

Does knowing when/where the story is set make a difference to how we read it?

Would readers from the country that the story is from react to it differently than us?

Can you think of another story which has a similar theme; e.g. 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 or 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?

## **Prompts for Discussing Reading**

- The text has made me feel angry
- I wonder why.....
- Some people say that.....
- It reminds me of.....
- I can't remember where we first learnt about \_\_\_\_\_'s feelings
- I still don't think I know enough about.....
- I'm not sure what I think about.....
- I've got a favourite bit of the book. *My favourite bit is ...* What is your favourite bit?
- I've found a special word/sentence. It's so good I'm going to try to use it again. *My special word/sentence is ...* Can you find a special word that you'd like to use again?
- *I wonder why* .....
- *Perhaps it was* ....
- *Maybe it could be* .....
- *I was thinking* ... what do you think?
- *At first I thought* ... but now I'm not so sure ... can we all think about it and look for clues?
- Well, do you know, I missed that when I read it ... well-spotted!
- Can we all try to think about? ... because this needs everyone's ideas. *John's idea is that ...*
- *This makes me feel* .... How does it make you feel?
- *For me it was exciting when* ... Which bits did you find exciting?
- If you were (character) how do you think you would feel? What would you say to ... *I might say* ... Can you think of something that you might say?
- When I read the title, first pages, *I thought this would happen ... I was surprised when ... happened.* Did anything surprise you in the story?
- When I found out about ... *I really wanted the story to end with* ... How did you feel about the ending?
- Tell me about ... I can see what you mean ... Can you find the first in the story where you thought that?
- Were there any other times? That was very convincing. Well-spotted. Well explained.

### **Reinforcing shared risk:**

- I like your idea better than mine, can you tell me a bit more?
- So we all have different ideas about this character (how the poem makes us feel etc.). Let's make a collection of them. You'll have to tell me again so that I can write them down. (Sue) thought .... (John) had another idea, he thought ... Look at our list. We were all thinking hard today!

## The changing role of the adult as children develop as readers

In the earlier stages, the teacher:

- Prompts the child to use different strategies;
- Places planned and incidental emphasis on decoding work, including phonics;
- Draws attention to unfamiliar ideas, making links with experience where possible;
- Draws attention to key vocabulary including high frequency words and new words or structure;
- Probes understanding and encourages reading for meaning;
- Monitors and assesses individuals;
- Encourages response to the book through discussion or follow-up activities;
- Supports attempts to read independently and self-correct;
- Promotes enjoyment and appreciation;
- Observes, prompts and praises the use of the range of reading strategies.

As children develop as readers, the teacher revises and develops the above and:

- Teaches strategies to further develop comprehension;
- Encourages self-regulated comprehension;
- Uses opportunities to teach and reinforce decoding where appropriate;
- Encourages reciprocal teaching;
- Enables pupils to identify and comment on the structure, features and organisation of texts;
- Probes understanding and interpretation of texts by promoting the use of deduction, inference and interpretation of ideas or events;
- Enables pupils to explain, comment on and respond to a writer's use of language;
- Teaches strategies to enable pupils to summarise, generalise and develop an overview of the text.

### **Five useful ways to facilitate discussion are:**

- **Wait** before offering statements, prompts or even very tentative thinking, to give pupils an opportunity to voice their ideas first.
- **Listen** carefully to what pupils say.
- **Support** and encourage pupils to ask their own questions and to lead the discussion.
- **Avoid** questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'
- **Refer** back to the text wherever possible

**And Finally ...**

Don't forget the importance of reading for pleasure!