

The Three "P"s of READING

Pause – Prompt – Praise

Techniques That Support Learning - Excerpt from *Every Child Can Read*

Prompting is perhaps the most important Learner Support technique, and the most frequently used during strategy sessions. It is a subtle art that requires careful timing and knowledge of the prompts that are most effective for different situations. Appropriate prompts can be stepping-stones to help children decide which problem solving strategies they need to use, and help students become aware of the effectiveness of using those strategies.

Prompts can remind children not only to think about how a word, phrase, or segment of text fits into the larger piece of text they are reading, but also to provide feedback and encouragement and to help students understand what they have read. Prompts develop early independence in readers by helping them to see that there is much they themselves bring to the reading.

Sample Prompts

Here are some examples of prompts that effectively support children in their reading in different situations. The actual prompts you use will depend on the child's confidence and ability to use different strategies, as well as on what you and the child have worked on previously and the text you are now reading. Prompts really are impromptu suggestions that grow out of the text and child's ability to make sense of it. Even though prompting soon becomes natural and automatic, you may want to keep a list of some possible prompts and a list of strategies near at hand just to get started.

- 1. If a child has made an attempt to figure out the word but has been unsuccessful, value the attempt and follow it up with information or a suggestion that might help the child make a prediction.*
For example you might say:
 - That's a good try. See if you can find any clue in the picture that might help you.
 - I noticed that you used the picture to help you. Try looking at the first sound in the word and see if it helps you find a word in the picture that might fit there.
- 2. Try to make a link to a word that was in a book the child has already read or to another story. This kind of prompt encourages the child to draw on previous experiences as a reader and make connections between texts.*
 - Rabbit made one of these in the story you read yesterday.
 - This part tells about the size of the whale, like the dinosaur book did.
- 3. If the child stops at a word and does not seem to know what to do next, encourage him or her to think about some strategies to try. Then experiment with any suggestion the child makes, to see how it works.*
 - What do you think we might do to help figure out this word?
- 4. If the child is still unable to figure out a word after several attempts, then you will need to suggest solutions.*
 - Let's try leaving it out and moving on this time.
 - Try rereading the sentence and taking another run at the word.
 - Read on and see if that helps.
 - Try skipping the word for now and maybe you will get it after you finish reading the sentence.
 - Try using another word that you think might work there.

- Look at the beginning sound of the word and see if that will help you decide what word might make sense.
5. *You may find that some children respond better to visual prompts than to oral ones. (See Attachment.) Visual prompts can be very effective since they do not interrupt the flow of the text; eventually, you may not need to use oral prompts as often.*
 6. *The easiest prompt, but one that shouldn't be overused, is simply telling the child the word.*

Prompts That Discourage Children

It is also important to recognize that some prompts are neither effective nor supportive. These prompts imply criticism of the child's ability to read, even if said in a praising way:

- Oh, come on now, you know this word.
- We learned this word yesterday. You remember, don't you?
- That word was on the last page. I told it to you then.
- Sound it out. You know how to do that.
- That word's not hard. You can figure it out if you try.

Prompts like these put pressure on the child, even though they are cloaked in praise. They make the child feel the need to be able to do something; if he or she cannot do it, such prompts simply become a reminder of the child's difficulty with reading.

Using Prompts Effectively

During support sessions, you need to concentrate on making the student feel good about reading and confident in his or her reading ability. It also helps if you can point out signs of progress. *An important goal is helping children to develop a feeling of confidence and to see themselves as readers.*

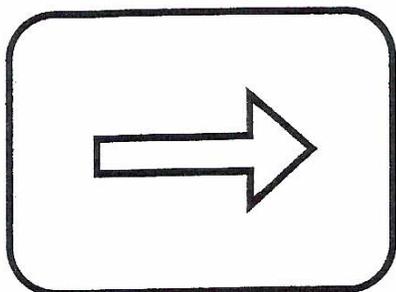
As a child reads a passage of text, it is important to strike a balance between giving sufficient time and opportunity for the child to try and figure the word out alone, and you intervening. Consciously using the *"pause, prompt, praise"* technique will help establish that balance.

When a child comes to an unfamiliar word, don't jump in to assist too quickly. It may help to count to five slowly before you prompt the child. Praise any attempt, especially if an appropriate strategy or cue has been used, even if it did not result in an accurate reading of the word or phrase.

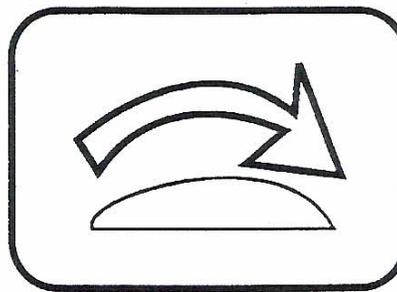
- Good work. You used the *b* at the beginning of the word to help you figure that out.
- That's almost right. *House* would make sense there, but the author used the word *home* instead.
- Good try, but take another look at the end of the word.
- You're right. When I look at the picture, I can see why you thought the word might be *summer*.
- That's close, but this is a two-part word. Look again and see what the two parts are.

When the child correctly figures out a word, praise should be natural. In most cases, just a nod of the head or a smile that acknowledges the accomplishment is all that you need do.

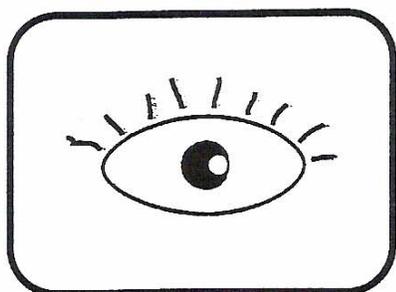
Strategy Picture Cards



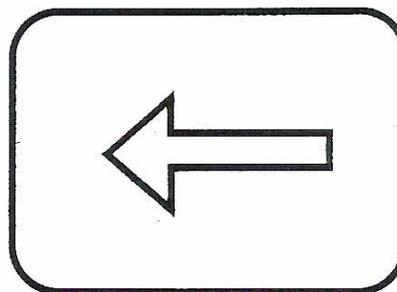
READ ON



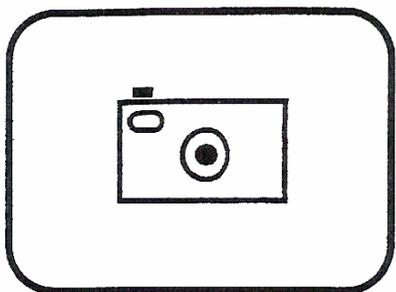
SKIP



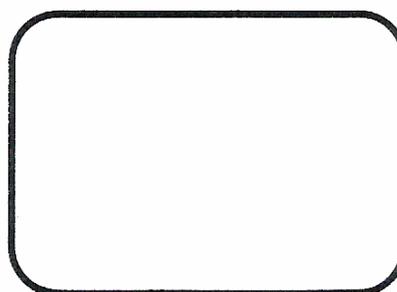
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REREAD



LOOK AT PICTURE CLUES



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