

Reading Strategies

Volunteers often want to know exactly what to say when the student comes to a word they don't know. The first thing to say is NOTHING. Give the person a chance to work on the word and observe their behavior. Some prompts to use to help get the reader going include:

- What would make sense here?
- Check the picture.
- Does that make sense?
- Why don't you start that sentence again?
- Skip that word and go on. Does that help?
- Does that sound right?
- Get your mouth ready to say that word.
- Look at how the word begins.
- Have you seen that word before?
- Think of a word that you know with the same sound in it.
- Is that right? Check it again. Does it match the letters?
- What can you do to help yourself?

You can tell the word to the student if they aren't successful in figuring it out (usually about 5 seconds is a good idea).

Reinforcement Strategies

It is important to encourage good strategies when your student displays them. Do this by saying positive statements such as:

- I like the way you looked at the first letter of that word and got your mouth ready to say it.
- I'm proud of how you tried hard to work on that word all by yourself.
- I noticed that you looked at the picture to see if it helped. That is a good way to figure out a word.
- Excellent! You really thought about what would make sense there.
- It was a good idea to read that part over again. It seems like that really helped you.
- I noticed that you tried _____ when you had trouble. Good for you! That's what good readers do.

Remember that it is okay for students to make mistakes in their reading. In fact, a student who is making mistakes and self-correcting may actually be demonstrating better reading than a student reading perfectly. We know for sure that a student who is self-correcting is reading for meaning.

Picture Walk

A picture walk is a way to introduce a book to a student so that he can read it independently with success. During a picture walk, the tutor "reads through" the pictures in the book to help the student get a feeling for what the story is about. A picture walk can stir prior knowledge, implant language, and introduce concepts.

Reading Strategies

You will want to include sentences such as:

- Tell me what you see on this page.
- What is this?
- Look here. I wonder what is happening.
- What are they doing here?
- What's on this page?
- What do you think is going to happen on the next page?

Discussion Starters

Never underestimate the power of talking about the books. Following are discussion starters for before, during, and after a story.

- What do you think the story might be about?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Why do you think the character....?
- What would happen if...?
- If you were _____, what would you have done?
- I wonder why.....
- Have you ever....?
- That reminds me of How about you?
- What was the favorite part of the story? Why?
- If you could be any character, who would you be? Why?
- That was funny when....
- I wonder if the author....