

How to Read Aloud

Effective storybook reading is an interactive process. If we wait until after reading to discuss the story, we are missing out on valuable literacy opportunities. When you precede the reading by inviting predictions and personal connections, you are creating context for the reading. Taking time to discuss and clarify difficult concepts during the reading can prevent misunderstanding further on, and encouraging your child to respond during the reading enhances both comprehension and interest in the story. Pausing to confirm and revise predictions, ask questions, and make inferences lay the groundwork for independent reading. Your child will learn that understanding text is a process that occurs before, during, and after reading.

Before Reading

- Preview the book and practice reading it with fluency and expression.
- Plan an introduction—find links to personal experiences.
- Introduce the title, author, and illustrator.
- Introduce any information that may be necessary to facilitate understanding of the story.
- Set a purpose for listening to the story (e.g., “I wonder” statements, such as I wonder what the wolf wants to do with the pigs, provide us focus for listening).

During Reading

- Read fluently and expressively.
- Hold the books so your child can see the illustrations.
- Try to establish frequent eye contact with your child.
- Draw attention to the illustrations and features of the text.
- Pause occasionally to revisit predictions, express curiosity, or comment on something interesting.
- Invite your child to question and comment but keep it focused on the story.
- Explain words and ideas you think your child might not understand.

After Reading

- Allow time for discussion
- Encourage various levels of response with questions
- Make personal connections to the text (e.g. “What did this story remind you of?”).
- Retell the story or reread it to enhance comprehension.

Jamison Rog, Lori (2002). Early Literacy Instruction in Kindergarten. *Interactive Storybook Reading: Making the Classroom Read-Aloud Program a Meaningful Experience*, 6, 49-55.

Sample Read-Aloud Strategy For The Little Red Hen

Say: Today I'm going to read a story called The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone. Let's look at the pictures and see if you can tell me what the story is going to be about.

Do: *Encourage your child to respond as you turn the pages of the book from beginning to end. This activity is sometimes called a "picture walk." Ask your child to offer their ideas.*

Say: This story is about a little red hen who needed help and asked for help while baking bread. While I'm reading, try to decide if you think the little red hen did the right thing or the wrong thing with her bread at the end of the story and why. As I read, try to remember what happened first, second, third, and at the end of the story.

Do: *Ask questions that build additional background knowledge and set a purpose for listening. Have you ever asked people for help? Did they help you? Has anyone ever asked you for help? Once your child is familiar with this questioning technique, you can ask him/her to think of their own questions.*

Say: Now that I've told you a little bit about the story, let's read it.

Do: *Show the pictures as you read. Stop occasionally for reactions, comments, and questions. To engage your child, you can ask the following discussion questions: "Can you remember what help the little red hen has asked for so far? How have the other animals acted about giving help?" If your child doesn't respond, you can model a response by saying, "These animals aren't very helpful to the little red hen. Each time the hen asks for help, the animals all answer, 'Not I.'"*

Say: Now that we've read the story, can you tell me what the little red hen wanted help with first? Second?

Do: *Let your child respond and ask him/her to retell the story using the pictures in the book to help them recall the story sequence. Finally, focus on the second goal, making inferences.*

Say: If you were the little red hen, what would you have done with the bread? Do you think the hen did the right thing? Why or why not? What lesson can we learn from this story?