

General Description

Transitional readers can recognise many words automatically and therefore read familiar texts fluently and with expression. They use a variety of ways to work out unknown words such as slowing down, re-reading, reading on and sounding out. Transitional readers change the way they read to suit different texts or purposes.

How to Support Transitional Readers

Transitional readers will benefit from a range of experiences. Consider any of the following suggestions.

- Read to your child regularly. Transitional readers still benefit from hearing 'good' readers. This is also an opportunity to share and discuss opinions about information presented in texts.
- Encourage your child to choose texts to read on a daily basis. Expose your child to a wide variety of texts and give encouragement to read new material, e.g. *books by a new author, texts on different topics*.
- Give encouragement and praise whenever your child chooses to read.
- Ensure your child sees other members of the family reading, and talking about their reading.
- Talk about characters, people, settings, plots, events and information found in texts.
- Encourage your child to discuss how characters or people are presented in texts, and make comparisons with people in real life.
- Encourage your child to express and justify their reactions to texts, and listen to the opinions of others.
- Point out and discuss words related to different topics and subjects, e.g. *'perimeter' in maths, 'environment' in science*.
- Talk about how to find information in different texts, e.g. *using the index, looking for headings*.
- Support your child in completing research work.



Encouraging Reading

To ensure that you are encouraging your child to become a reader, consider the following questions.

- Is my child read to or with every day?
- Does my child see others reading at various times?
- Is a comfortable place provided where my child can read? Is my child happy with this 'space'?
- Are reading materials provided that capture my child's interest? Is my child encouraged to read about different subjects and different text forms, e.g. *sports magazines, newspapers, novels*?
- Is my child encouraged to discuss what they have read?
- Is interest shown in what my child is reading?
- When reading to my child:
 - is attention paid to how they are responding?
 - are questions asked if their attention is drifting?
 - is the text abandoned when they lose interest?
 - is the pace adjusted to fit the text?
 - is the tone of voice adjusted to match the dialogue?
 - is the text discussed by talking about things in the text that they know about?
 - are opinions about the text asked for?
 - is sufficient time given to answer or ask questions?



Reading with your Child

Transitional readers may prefer to read texts themselves. However, if they still enjoy being read to, then make time to continue doing this. Continue to vary the type of texts that you read to them, e.g. *science fiction, mystery*.

When reading to your Transitional reader consider any of the following.

- Allow your child to select the text to be read and discuss reasons for the selection.
- Discuss what you both think the text might be about and explain why you have decided that, e.g. *illustrations, have read previous books by the same author*.
- If you are reading a text as a serial, talk about what has happened so far.
- Throughout the reading sometimes stop and ask 'why' questions, e.g. "*Why do you think the author made the character that way?*" "*How did the illustrator draw the characters?*"
- Answer your child's questions even if it interrupts the flow of the text.
- Put aside a text if your child has lost interest and choose another.

- *During or after reading:*
 - discuss characters, plot, setting and events
 - discuss what was learnt from informational texts
 - compare characters and events in the text with real life people and events
 - compare the text with other texts read.

If your Transitional reader prefers to read by him or herself, try the following suggestions.

- Catch your child's attention by reading a small part of a text or the first chapter then allowing them to finish reading the book independently.
- Whenever there is time available, discuss what is being read and what is being enjoyed about the text.
- Read some of the books your child enjoys so you can share reactions and pleasure together.
- Provide stick-on notes for your child to flag areas they would like to discuss or that have difficult words.

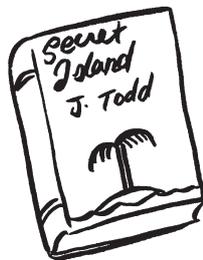
Selecting Texts

Transitional readers need to be encouraged to read a wide variety of texts. Ensure there is plenty of reading material available from which your child can select. Talk about some of the reasons for reading, such as enjoyment or for information.

Suggestions for reading materials can include the following.

- Books that have been made into films or videos. Read the book and watch the video together. Talk about the differences between the book and video or film, e.g. *“Were the characters as you expected them to be?” “Was the setting as you expected?”*
- Newspapers—your child could find an interesting article or photograph and discuss it with you.
- Recipe books, instructions for games and use of equipment, e.g. *How to set up the DVD player*. Have your child read and follow the instructions.
- Everyday print material such as magazines, comics, invitations, advertising brochures, telephone books, street directories, dictionaries and atlases.
- Different versions of the same story or event, e.g. *a news item on TV and in the newspaper*.
- CD-ROMS and web sites. Many websites offer book clubs for children but precautions need to be taken to ensure the sites are legitimate. Some online book clubs feature a new book each week. Your child can then decide if they would like to visit the library to borrow the book.
- Favourite authors that you and your child both enjoy. Talk about why you like them.

Encourage your child to share texts read at school with family members at home. Likewise, encourage your child to share texts read at home with teachers and peers.

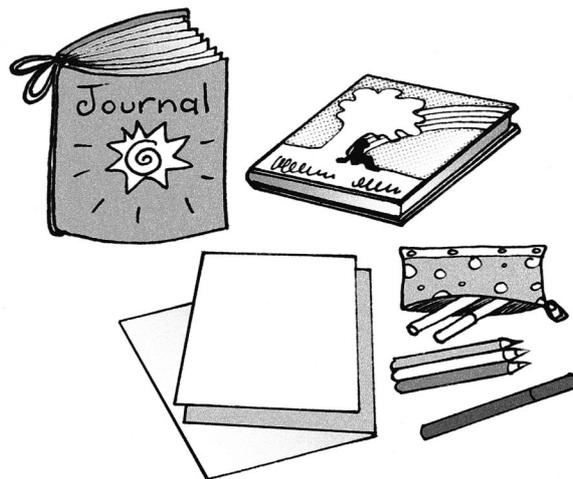


Reading and Writing Links

Encourage your child to be involved in writing as often as possible. Writing could be either on the computer or on paper.

Your child could be encouraged to try any of the following.

- Write messages, emails, letters and postcards to other family members.
- Make greeting cards and party invitations.
- Keep a diary or journal when you go on a trip or holidays. This is especially valuable if you are travelling and your child is missing school. Collect printed material such as brochures, leaflets and tourist guides to include in the journal.
- Compile lists for a particular reason, e.g. *gifts wanted, shopping list, jobs to be completed*.
- Give a diary, book or notebook as a present to another person.
- Enter competitions from magazines and newspapers.
- Make scrapbooks about their favourite stars, sports or interests.



Supporting Oral Reading

If your child makes a mistake and corrects the error ...	If your child comes to a word they don't know and pauses ...	If your child makes a mistake which does not make sense ...	If your child makes a mistake which does make sense ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer praise or support for making the correction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait and give them time to work it out. • If they're successful, encourage them to read on to maintain meaning. • If the word is likely to be known, ask them to go back to the beginning of the sentence and have another go at it. • Ask them to guess a word which begins with the same letter and would make sense. • Ask a question which will give a clue to the meaning, e.g. <i>"How do you think Johnny feels? Angry?"</i> • If the word is not likely to be known, say it quickly and encourage them to keep reading to maintain fluency and avoid loss of meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait to see if they work it out for themselves and offer praise if they do. • If they don't correct the word themselves ask, <i>"Does that make sense?"</i> • Ask a question which will give a clue to what the word is, e.g. <i>"Where will he go to catch the train?"</i> • If the word is not likely to be known, say it quickly and encourage the child to read on. Later, when the whole text has been read, go back to unknown words and help your child use other word-identification strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sounding out individual sounds in a word – sounding out chunks of words, e.g. <i>base or root of the word, prefixes and suffixes</i> – looking at the words around it – consulting an authority, e.g. <i>dictionary.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing until the child has finished. • When they have finished go back to the word and say <i>"You said this word was ____; it made sense but it begins (or ends) with the letter __ so what do you think it could be?"</i> • You may wish to discuss the letters of the word with your child and see if they can think of any other words with similar letters.

Understanding How Texts Are Read and Organised

Literary and informational texts are read in different ways because the purpose for reading them is often different. Consider the following:

	Literary	Informational
Examples of Texts	stories, novels, plays, poems, songs	newspapers, magazines, textbooks, instructions, bibliographies
Purpose	Read for entertainment, enjoyment or appreciation.	Read for information and enjoyment.
How the Text Is Read	From start to finish. Read the entire book. Usually the meaning comes from print.	Begin anywhere in the material. May read only part of it. Read the charts, tables, graphs, diagrams and photographs as well as the print.
Rate of Reading	Read fairly quickly.	Read at a varying speed — depending on how familiar your child is with the words and topic.

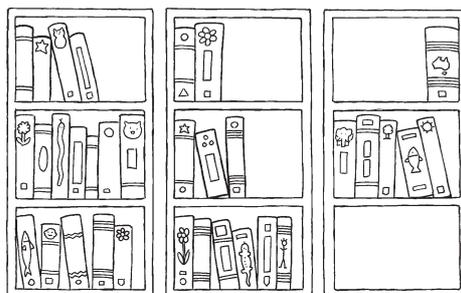
Helping your child to understand the way texts are organised will help them locate and understand the information.

- Ask your child to predict what the book is about from the cover, title, illustrations and diagrams.
- Discuss how the index and table of contents might help them find specific information.
- Help your child look quickly through a section of a chapter to further narrow their search for specific information.
- Help your child to read and understand things on a page such as:
 - bold and italic print
 - captions and explanations under the pictures and photos
 - diagrams and labels
 - charts, tables and graphs.
- Encourage your child to use the glossary at the back to help understand the meaning of the special vocabulary used in the text.

Building a Love of Reading

There are many ways to encourage your child to be a reader and develop a love of reading. Try any of the following suggestions.

- Buy books and magazine subscriptions as gifts.
- Have a selection of reading materials such as comics, magazines and informational texts available at home and in the car.
- Have a special place for each person in the family to keep their books.
- Encourage your child to set aside a time for reading. Do this yourself so your child can see you as a reader.
- Encourage all family members and visitors to participate in reading or being read to.
- Encourage children to select their own books and magazines.
- Allow your child to have a subscription to a magazine of their choice.
- Exchange books with friends and other family members.
- Talk about books whenever possible.
- Display your own collection of books. Discuss why you liked or disliked any of the books. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Show an interest in what your child is reading. Ask them to recommend books for you to read.
- Visit the library often so your child can check out a variety of texts to sustain their interest.
- Provide access to a computer so your child can make use of the Internet for research purposes. Often local libraries have computers where the Internet is available.
- Join online book clubs. This is one way your child can share their thoughts with others, as well as hear others' opinions. Ensure any web sites your child is visiting are legitimate.



Supporting Comprehension

Talking to your child about what they have been reading themselves or what you have been reading together is a wonderful opportunity to make connections with your lives, and to talk about opinions and reactions. Discussing texts with your child allows them to be actively involved and to show their understanding. Different types of questions will provide more information about your child's understanding of the text.

Literal Questions

Literal level questions focus on what was said. The answer is 'right there' in the text, illustrations or diagrams. It is helpful to follow up these types of questions with a further question that asks your child to return to the text to clarify their answer and substantiate it, e.g. *"Where is that in the text?"*

Inferential Questions

The answers to inferential questions can be found in the text but not necessarily in the one place. Your child has to 'put the answer together' from various sections or sentences in the text, e.g. *"What is the author telling us here?"*

Interpretive Questions

Interpretive questions require your child to base the answer on the text but also draw on what they know to reach an answer, e.g. *"From the evidence presented by the author, is it a good idea to ... ?"*

Critical or Evaluative Questions

These questions go beyond the text, asking for the child's own opinions or judgements. The answers are not in the text at all. The text provides a starting point for discussions about the underlying messages or themes, e.g. *"What is your opinion of ... ?"*

It is not necessary to ask each type of question every time you talk with your child about their reading. These book discussions should be a fun way for you and your child to explore the text and to stimulate further discussions.

Helping with Research Work

You can support your child when they are completing school research by guiding, advising and talking things through. If you feel tempted to do the research yourself, ask, “Will this help my child to learn?”

Suggestions for assisting with research work include any of the following.

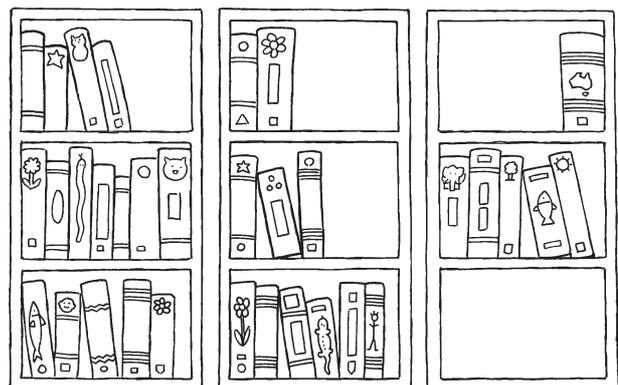
- Help to find appropriate information by taking your child to the library, providing access to the Internet or providing reference books at home.
- Encourage your child to jot down questions about the topic.
- Help your child to organise and group information into categories.
- Ask questions which encourage your child to explore the topic further e.g. *If, Why? Where?*
- Encourage your child to use the following procedure when taking notes:
 - short notes: jot down key words and phrases with the reference material open
 - long notes: close the reference material and use the short notes to make sentences.
- Talk about the best way to present the research work, e.g. *poster, tape recording, booklet, model, PowerPoint presentation.*
- Spend time with your child while they are using the computer, giving tips or assistance when necessary.



Using the Library

Visiting the library is a great way to encourage your child's reading and learning as well as providing an opportunity for you to show that you value books and reading.

- Make library visits a regular activity for the whole family.
- Encourage your child to keep library books in a safe place while on loan.
- Get a library card for yourself, your child and other family members.
- Help your child select books by suggesting that they read the 'blurb' on the back to get a clear idea of the story.
- Encourage your child to use the library to locate reference material, favourite authors or particular texts by using the cataloguing system or computer.
- Help your child determine if the library has the resources needed or whether other information sources need to be checked.
- Check out the special services your library offers, such as homework hotlines, for helping children with school assignments.
- Log on to your library's home page. Many of today's libraries have their own sites on the World Wide Web. Here you can find listings of everything in the library's collection, including whether an item is checked in or out.
- Set aside time to use resources available in the library that you may not have at home, e.g. computers.



Building Word Knowledge Through Games

Puzzles

Puzzles provide opportunities for your child to investigate both the structure and meaning of words. There are many commercially produced publications (including software packages) incorporating puzzles such as crosswords and word sleuths, and others that involve creating words, finding small words inside larger words and rhyming activities.

Tic Tac Toe

Tic Tac Toe is played in the same way as Noughts and Crosses. However, specified letters, patterns or words are used to create a sequence of three diagonally, up or down, instead of noughts and crosses. For example, you may write words that have a particular sound spelt a different way in each word and your child may have to write words ending with 'ough'. If your child is having difficulty thinking of words to add, you could both make a list of words prior to beginning Tic Tac Toe.

tray	tray	enough	strain	enough
strain		rough		rough
vein		vein		cough
great				though
cake	though			through

Odd One Out

Odd One Out assists your child to identify words or parts of words that vary. A series of four words is presented. Three of the words have something in common. The fourth will be the 'odd one out'. Your child needs to select the odd one and suggest why it does not fit.

Depending on the words chosen, this activity can be used in many different ways:

Number of Syllables – "Listen while I say four words: *bicycle, January, newspaper, elephant*. Tell me which one doesn't have three syllables."

Matching Sounds – "Listen while I say four words: *strain, vein, meat, great*. Tell me which one has a different middle sound."

The focus can also be on the meaning of the words, e.g. *Which is the odd word out of: dams, ice caps, rivers, oceans? The answer is 'oceans' because it is the only source of salt water.*

Word Searches

Transitional readers enjoy the challenge of searching for particular words in magazines, the environment and newspapers. With your child, set criteria, e.g. *words that begin with 'aqua'*. Have your child keep a record for a week of the words found. You can make this into a personal competition where the child tries to find more of the next word, e.g. *"I found ten words beginning with 'aqua' last week and I found fourteen words beginning with 'semi' this week."* They might like to share their findings at school with the teacher and peers.

Building Word Knowledge Through Games

What Comes Next?

What Comes Next? is an adaptation of what was known as the game Hangman. However, in What Comes Next? your child is required to guess the letters in the correct order.

- Choose a word from something your child has read or from a particular subject area, e.g. *diameter*. Make a dash for each letter in the word.
- Give your child a clue to help them guess the first letter, e.g. *the first letter is between C and E in the alphabet*.
- Allow your child to guess the letter.
- As your child guesses the next letter, a guess that could be a correct English letter sequence is written on the left, e.g. *dr, de*.
- Those that could not be a correct English letter sequence are written on the right as single letters, e.g. *t, b* — not modelling incorrect letter patterns, e.g. *dt, ditk*.
- A penalty is only given for guesses that could not be correct. When your child guesses a letter that couldn't be right, a segment of the mouse is drawn.
- Have your child continue to guess the letters in order until all letters are written.
- The game ends if the drawing of the mouse is completed before the word is completed.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

d i a _ _ _ _ _

<p>COULD BE</p> <p>dr din dis</p>	<p>COULDN'T BE</p> <p>l w</p>
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(The word is diameter.)

Board Games

Play games such as Scrabble, Topple, Scattergories, Concentration or Balder-dash together, they are fun and they reinforce reading skills.