

What Do Good Readers Do?



Activate Background Knowledge

When good readers approach a text for the first time, they automatically summon any information they already have relevant to the main idea, theme, characters, time period, or context. Struggling readers often skip this important step.



Set a Purpose

Good readers determine what they expect to get out of the reading before they begin. They identify what the point or purpose of the piece is, and they adjust their reading process accordingly.

Decode

Good readers attack the “surface structures” of text fluently, but many struggling readers do not. At the secondary level, decoding words into meaning often involves relying on context clues and our grasp of word parts.



Connect

Good readers make connections between new learning and what they’ve already learned **in school**, through **other books**, and in their **own lives**. They also connect new learning to what is going on **globally**.



Predict

Calling upon text features such as headings, titles, the table of contents, tables, charts, and graphs allows good readers to predict what might be discovered through reading. As they continue through the process, they rethink and revise their predictions.

Visualize

When reading fiction, good readers imagine what characters and settings may look like. When reading nonfiction, they may create symbols, maps, and webs of their understandings about the text. Often, struggling readers find that the ability to “see” the text is what interferes MOST with their ability to comprehend it.



Question

Good readers understand that confusion is often a natural part of reading. They pose questions to themselves and to others as they read to clarify meaning. They also ask questions about the content of the text, the writer’s purpose, their reactions, and opinions in order to explore the text in deeper ways.

Monitor Understanding and Summarize

As good readers move through a text, they carry an “invisible suitcase” with them. As they read, they drop helpful information into the suitcase that enables them to make sense of the text. If something doesn’t make sense, they unpack it and study it further. They use the items they collect to further synthesize and draw meaning from the text.

