

Key Stage 2

Types of questions to ask when reading with your child

Vocabulary Questions

Will help to work out the meaning of unknown words and phrases using context clues.

2a: Give / explain the meaning of words in context

Retrieval Questions

Will help to go into a text and retrieve the facts and key details

2b: Retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

Sequence Questions

Will help to work out the meaning of unknown words and phrases using context clues.

2c: Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph

Inference Questions

Will help to hunt for clues in a text about how someone might be feeling or why something is happening.

2d: Make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text

Prediction Questions

Will help you work out what might happen next from clues in the text.

2e: Predict what might happen from details stated and implied

Compare, Contrast and Comment Questions

Will help to discuss the content of a paragraph/text and compare events and characters.

2f: Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

2h: Make comparisons within the text

Author Choice

Will help to spot examples of ambitious vocabulary and figurative language and explain how the words and phrases that have been used add to the meaning of the text.

2g: Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases

Vocabulary Questions

Will help to work out the meaning of unknown words and phrases using context clues.

2a: Give / explain the meaning of words in context.

Vocabulary questions are all about the words that a writer uses and the meaning of these words.

This can include the children's ability to:

- Explain and understand the meaning of words in a text
- Decipher the meaning of unfamiliar words by using clues from the text
- Identify the correct usage of a word by its context (i.e. bat - a piece of sports equipment or an animal)
- Recognise synonyms (words with the same meaning) and antonyms (words with the opposite meaning)

The best way to support the development of your child's vocabulary is through lots of talk and lots of reading. Don't be afraid to use more advanced vocabulary and to explain its meaning to your child (which teachers do all the time). When reading to your child or hearing them read to you, discuss the meanings of words they come across and talk about how we could use those words in different situations.

Vocabulary Example Questions

- What does this word tell us about the character/setting/atmosphere?
- Look at that sentence/passage and circle a word/phrase that means the same as _____.
- Which words/phrase in this text give us the impression that the main character is _____?
- Which words/phrase in this text give us the impression that the setting is _____?
- Which words/phrase in this text give us the impression that the atmosphere is _____?
- The author uses words like _____ to describe _____. What impression does this give us of the character/setting/atmosphere?
- The author describes the main character as _____. Think of another word that could be have been used instead.
- Why did the author use the word _____ to describe _____?
- How does the author make the reader feel _____ in this part of the text?
- How has the author's choice of words created the feeling _____?
- What do phrases such as _____ tell you about _____?
- What might that mean?
- What do you think the writer is saying, when they _____?
- What does that imply/suggest/indicate about _____?

Retrieval Questions

Will help to go into a text and retrieve the facts and key details

2b: Retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

Retrieval questions simply ask the children to find information within the text. They test pupils basic understanding of what they have read and may ask about characters, the setting of the story, key events and in non fiction texts just the facts.

When answering questions it is important that the children pick out the key information rather than copying out chunks of the text in the hope that the answer is in there somewhere.

The best way to support your child with retrieval is to talk about books you have shared together and ask questions about them. Encourage your child to focus on what the question is asking. For example, if you ask, "Who is the main character in this story?" They shouldn't just name all the characters but should think about who takes a main part in the story and could, therefore, be called the main character.

Retrieval Example Questions

- Where is the story set?
- How does the main character look/behave/speak?
- When is the story set?
- Where would you find a section about _____?
- Can _____ have more than one meaning?
- What does the word _____ mean?
- What did _____ do when _____?
- Where did _____ go?
- Find a word or phrase which tells us how the character is feeling.
- Where in the book would you find _____?
- Who are the key characters in the book? (*fiction*)
- What happened at _____?
- Describe...
- Which paragraph tells us _____?
- Which section tells us _____?
- Where does the story take place? (*fiction*)
- When did the story take place? (*fiction*)
- What did (s)he/it look like? (*fiction*)
- Who was (s)he/it? (*fiction*)
- Where did (s)he/it live? (*fiction*)

Sequence Questions

Will help to work out the meaning of unknown words and phrases using context clues.

2c: Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph

Summary questions will test your child's ability to summarise (or retell) the most important points of a text without giving a detailed and in depth summary of what they have read.

It is very important that your child read these types of questions carefully. For instance, the topic of a text may be the rainforest but there could be a section about deforestation section. Therefore, if the question was, 'What is the author's main point in this section?' and they wrote 'the rainforest', then this would be classed as incorrect as the correct answer should have been 'deforestation'.

To support your child at home, ask them to summarise the key points of a chapter or section of a book they have read. You could also ask them to summarise films and television shows (or segments of them) that they have watched to reinforce this skill.

Sequence Example Questions

- What is the main theme/argument in this paragraph?
- What is the main message in this paragraph?
- Can you describe what has happened in this paragraph/chapter?
- Using less than 20 words, could you write a new blurb for this book..
- Which is the most important message in this book?
- Can you describe what happened in three sentences?
- Why do you think that might be important?
- Is there anything you know now which you didn't know before?
- What sticks most in your mind about _____?
- What moment do you remember most from _____?
- Can you remind us about _____?
- How would you sum up _____?(fiction)

Inference Questions

Will help to hunt for clues in a text about how someone might be feeling or why something is happening.

2d: Make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text Inference questions involve being a 'reading detective' as children have to use clues from a text to infer meaning. This could be about the author's intentions, the layout of a text or a character's thoughts and feelings.

For example a text may read:

"It's not fair!" shouted Jack as he slammed the door shut and flung himself onto his bed. He picked up his and screamed loudly into it.

Inference questions about this section of text may include:

'How is Jack feeling?'

'Where do you think Jack is?'

Your child needs to use the clues within the text to work out an answer and justify it e.g. 'He is feeling angry because it says he slammed the door and screamed into his pillow.' Or 'He is in his bedroom because it says he was on his bed and picked up a pillow.'

Inference questions are very much about asking pupils what they think but they must be able to justify their answer by referring back to the text.

To support your child with inference questions talk about what you have been reading together and ask lots of questions that begin with 'why', 'where', 'who', 'how', 'what', 'do you think...?' Encourage your child to explain why they think something and to refer back to the story to find evidence to back up their ideas.

Inference Reading Questions

- What makes you think _____? Give evidence for your opinions.
- Which words/phrases give you that impression?
- Why do you think the author chose to _____? Give reasons for your answer.
- How was _____ different after _____? Why?
- Explain why the author chose this word to describe...
- What impression do we get of _____? Why?
- What do you think will happen to the main character now? Can you give reasons for your opinion?
- What makes you think this?
- Why is _____ important?
- What does the word _____ imply about _____?
- Which character would you most like to meet? Explain why.
- Why did the character behave like this?
- What do people usually do when _____?
- Does that remind you of _____?
- Why do you think (s)he _____?
- What do they seem to think about each other?
- Can we work out how _____ feels about _____?
- Which characters seem to _____?
- Why do you think _____ tells _____?
- What does _____ think?
- How did _____ react?

Prediction Questions

Will help you work out what might happen next from clues in the text.

2e: Predict what might happen from details stated and implied

Prediction questions ask pupils to say what they think will happen next, based on what they have read so far.

As with inference questions, children need to use their understanding of the text to justify their answer.

To help your child with these types of questions, stop regularly when reading to ask, 'What do you think will happen next?'

Discuss your child's ideas and share your ideas too. Try to model your thinking aloud what you already know about the story and the characters to help you to make predictions about what may come next.

Prediction Examples Questions

- Who is on the front cover? What is in the background? How might these details give us clues about the content of the book?
- Based on what you know about the character/event, how do you think the story will develop next?
- Think about the author's other stories. Are there any familiar themes/characters/settings to the story we are reading? How did the story end? How might this story end?
- Do you think the character will change his/her behaviour in the future? Give evidence for your ideas.
- How is the character like someone that you know? How would she/he react to this situation? How does that affect how you think this character might respond?
- The character is in a tricky situation. What will the character do next? What would you do? Why?
- What don't we know about _____?
- What do we need to know, in order to _____?
- Is anything missing from _____?
- Is there something that we haven't _____?
- What do you think is likely to happen when _____?
- Do you think the author has a plan for _____?
- What could _____?
- What might happen if _____?
- What do you guess could _____?
- Why do you suppose _____?
- Write 3 questions you would like to find the answer to in this text.

Compare, Contrast and Comment Questions

Will help to discuss the content of a paragraph/text and compare events and characters.

2f: Identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

2h: Make comparisons within the text

For these types of questions, children are expected to identify links between different parts of a text, and also explain how a whole text conveys a message or idea. These questions also ask children to make compare different sections, people and places within a text. They may be asked to compare different characters, settings or themes within the text.

Compare, Contrast and Comment Question Examples

- Look at the section entitled _____. Why has this been included in this text?
- Look at the front cover of this book. What sections would you expect to find in this book?
- Explain how the character's behaviour/appearance has changed over the book. Why/how has this happened?
- What is the purpose of _____?
- How does the layout help to _____?
- Compare one character to another. How are they different or similar?
- When might someone choose to read this book?
- In what ways, is _____ like _____?
- How has the author organised the text? Why?
- How does the organisation of this text help us to better understand the information?
- In what ways do diagrams, photographs or illustrations help us to enjoy/understand the text?
- Who has the author written this text for?
- Compare how the characters are reacting to this problem. Who deals best with the situation?
- How has the character changed during the text?
- Which is the most important section in this book? Justify your choice.
- Compare one setting to another in the book. Why are the two settings significant to the story?
- What can you tell about the viewpoint/opinion of the author on this topic?
- How have your feelings about _____ changed?
- What's different now about _____?
- What, overall, is the effect of _____?
- What was the most effective/thought-provoking moment of the story?

Author Choice

Will help to spot examples of ambitious vocabulary and figurative language and explain how the words and phrases that have been used add to the meaning of the text.

2g: Identify/explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases

For questions about the author's words and phrases, children must be able to explain and comment on writers use of language. They have to explain how words and phrases add extra meaning to the text.

Author Choice Question Examples

- What does the word _____ tell us about the character/ setting/atmosphere?
- Look for a phrase that implies that the character/setting/atmosphere is _____.
- The author uses the word _____ to describe _____. What impression does this give us?
- How does the author show that the character/setting/atmosphere is _____?
- Can you think of a synonym/antonym for _____?
- Look for an example of a simile in the text. How does this add meaning?
- Look for an example of a metaphor in the text. How does this add meaning?
- Look for an example of personification in the text. How does this add meaning?
- Why have the headings/chapter names/character names been chosen for this book?
- Explain why the word _____ is used to describe _____.
- What does the word/phrase _____ tell you about _____?
- How does the word/phrase _____ help us to understand _____?
- How has the choice of words created a feeling of _____?
- Why did the author choose the verb/adjective/adverb _____?
- Which sentences are most _____?
- Which word(s) makes you feel _____?