



Retelling and Discussing Stories with Preschool-Aged Children

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When a preschool student experiences a story read aloud, they have the opportunity to learn many essential skills and enjoy the story at the same time. Reading comprehension may not seem like something to tackle at this age level, but it is very important. From a child's first exposure to books that they begin to learn comprehension skills. As a child's first teacher, parents have the power to be a great reading model. Choosing books, showing interest and attention, believing each book holds a wonderful journey inside—these are all things that your preschooler can observe from you to inspire their own love of reading.

After Reading

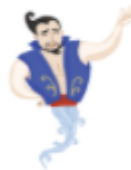
In this article we focus on what comes after the reading. There are lots and lots of ways to extend thinking about a text after you have finished it. For this age group some of the most impactful ways to work on reading comprehension skills are simple and practical. Remember, you are building foundational skills now to set your child up for a having solid reading and response skills in the grades to come. Keeping things concrete and seemingly effortless now will ready them for what comes in Kindergarten. Once you close the book, talk with your child about whether they liked it , and what they liked most. Encourage them to describe why they feel that way.

Characters

A good lesson model for children of this age is retelling the story mentioning characters, setting, problem, and solution. Allow the child to refresh their memory by looking back through the text to find answers rather than expecting them to recall everything without looking. With the book in their hand, ask them who the character(s) are in the story and to tell you a couple of things about them such as what they look like or how they treat others. Talk about how if the characters are talking animals (as they often can be at this level) then they know this is a made up story that is not real.

Fairy Tale Mix-Up

Look at the pictures in each row
and circle the character that doesn't belong to the same fairy tale.



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Setting

To get more specific about the setting of the story, examine the beginning pages, middle pages, and ending pages of the book. Many people make the mistake of assuming that a book only has one setting in time and place. For so many books in children's literature, that is untrue. As a student matures and reads to learn rather than learns to read, they may experience more texts with a broader setting to identify. For example, a 5th grader may identify the setting of a novel as during the winter of the Revolutionary War, but then there are smaller more intimate settings throughout the book. Younger children however might have 2-3 settings or even more to identify in a picture book read aloud. Each setting contributes to the story's progress and therefore should be understood. After reading a story, ask children questions while looking again at the book such as:

"Where did this part of the story happen?"

“What time of day does it seem like?”

“Are they inside or outside? Where?”

“What season of the year is it? How do you know?”

“Are there other places the characters go? Show me in the book where else they go.”

WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN? 

Look at the illustration. Then, check the box next to the picture that shows **where** the story happens.



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Problem and Solution

Identifying problems and solutions with picture books intended for reading aloud (many in fact, are) should come quite easily to the parent who's done the reading. Therefore, if this piece seems tricky for the preschool-aged child, you can help to guide their understanding through revisiting the pages that illustrate it best. Turn back to the parts that clearly show or describe character feelings and problems they would like to overcome. Sometimes the problem is laid out right from the beginning, and sometimes it becomes clear a few pages into reading. Talk about any steps the characters took to solve the problem and whether they had any help along the way. Discuss how the problem became solved and how character emotions changed from the beginning of the conflict to the resolution.

Craft and Structure of Stories: Assessment 2



1. Look at the pictures from the beginning, middle, and end of the story.



Beginning

Middle

End

2. Check what the story is about.

The animals love the skunk and the way he smells.

A group of animals that go on a trip. Then they get lost.

A deer who makes a sad skunk feel better.

Extending Retelling

After talking through the elements of the plot for the text, consider having your preschooler draw a picture to show each part. This will help them to show their artistic side and communicate with pictures rather than written words how they understand the story. Also, it sets them up for success in activities which show pictures and require children to place them in sequential order to demonstrate comprehension in Kindergarten. To extend the experience even further, the child could tell you (or draw) what they think happens next after the ending of the story. This is especially helpful for laying the ground work of written responses to text later on in their literacy journey.

Suggested Tips

The routine of reading, hearing fluent reading, and practicing the art of conversation are early literacy skills that make a large impact. Don't forget these few tips to make your reading routine most effective:

- Remember to take breaks- kids can get burned out very quickly because they feel the need to move. Don't be afraid to do reading comprehension in phases throughout the day or week. Rereading the text will help!
- If you begin reading and the story just isn't all that interesting, put it down and try something else. Motivation is key and if the story isn't something you like right away, it may be best at this age level to skip it and move on!
- Not every text needs a full lesson plan along with it. Be willing to sometimes just read for reading's sake and skip all the analysis.
- Share some books that you loved when you were little with your little one. It will make the reading time all the more special.

Let us know if you have tried any of these tips and how its all going by leaving a comment below! We at Kids Academy would love to hear from you!

