THE MORE YOU READ, THE BETTER YOU GET AT IT.

FACT

Regardless of age, country, color, or wealth — you get better at reading by . . . READING.

World Literacy Scores by How Much Students Read Outside School

- Low income
- Medium income
- High income

The more you read outside school, the higher the scores inside school.

- Students who read least amt.:
  - Low income: 423
  - Medium income: 463
  - High income: 463

- Students who read medium amt.:
  - Low income: 506
  - Medium income: 540
  - High income: 548

- Students who read the most:
  - Low income: 540
  - Medium income: 540
  - High income: 583

Chart Source: OECD PISA database, 2001

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Tips for Parents

What do children learn when we read to them?

- New words.
- Enjoyment of a story.
- Focus, concentration.
- How to use their imaginations.
- How to predict.
- The connections between words and pictures.
- The relationship between words and sounds.
- How to read from left to right.
- How to follow a story from beginning to end.
- Listening skills.
- Communication skills.
- Knowledge or information in the story.
- Sharing and enjoyment of a special activity.
Reading Tips for Parents/Caregivers

What can I do to help my children learn to read?

- Let them see you reading.
- Share books together.
- Point out the print that is all around you. Look at street signs, grocery store labels, and posters.
- Make scrapbooks from photos or old magazines.
- Cook together.

Steps for reading with your children

- Choose a book from the library or from your home. It’s even better if you let your children choose.
- Take turns reading aloud, or tell the story by looking at the pictures.
- Talk about what’s happening in the story.
- Help your children with difficult words.
- Praise the efforts being made.

Tell Me a Story!

Children learn from stories, and storytelling is a great way to build skills that will lead to future success in reading. It develops oral language, teaches new vocabulary words, keeps history alive, shares family/community beliefs and culture, and helps children understand the world they live in. It’s important for storytelling to be an interactive experience—including your children in the storytelling.
Telling Stories Is Easy

- Make up the stories with your child
- Start a story, then stop and let your child continue telling it
- Create a tradition by telling a certain story on a special occasion
- Stories can be real or imaginary
- Write the stories down and add pictures
- Have your child sit close
- Make the story active
- Change your voice to fit the story
- Use your child’s name in the story
- Keep your story simple and about familiar items or events
- Tell stories from memory or read from books

Story Ideas

Tell your child a story about:

- Their childhood
- An imaginary story about a problem or fear your child faces and talk about how the character feels and overcomes it
- Old family pictures and baby pictures
- Your childhood
- A story you already know. It’s okay to tell it in your own words
- Animals or make-believe characters
- Family traditions
- Places you visit and other destinations
Books

Keep reading fun by finding things to read that are interesting to children—comic books, cookbooks, books about subjects they are interested in. Expose your child to different kinds of reading materials such as stories, informational materials, and poetry. Visit the library and bookstore. Read the newspaper together and search the Internet. Here are some tips about the kinds of books to share with your school-age child. Remember that children may still enjoy reading favorite books from their earlier years. Encourage them also to read new books that are challenging, but not frustrating.

Look for books that:

- Have clear, easy-to-read print. As your child’s reading ability grows, look for books with more challenging text.
- Are about interesting topics, places, events, and people.
- Play with sounds and language, like books that rhyme or include chants and songs. Read poetry together, too.
- Present a realistic and accurate picture of the world.
- Are nonfiction, like books about science, history, or real people.
- Have interesting pictures or artwork.
Reading Aloud - Guidelines for Families/Caregivers

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success is reading aloud to children.”


Read to suit yourself and the child

- Choose a story you will enjoy reading aloud. Your enthusiasm will be contagious. Your reading choices and reading style should fit your personality.
- Select stories that have an interesting plot, dialogue, some suspense and/or adventure, suitable emotional content for the age and background of the student.
- Look for books that support and extend the students’ special needs and interests.
- Ask the child for suggestions to read aloud.
- Read the tried-and-true but also stretch your child to experience new types of literature – challenge but don’t overwhelm them, move beyond what is safe, i.e., what children will choose themselves.
- Read children’s and young adult books yourself, and explore children’s literature review journals, websites.
Prepare for reading aloud

Pre-read the book! You need to preview it thoroughly before you read it to the child to identify any possible pitfalls, e.g., unexpected themes / plot developments, character’s names etc. and to identify good “stopping points” with cliffhangers.

Match the length of the story with the child's attention span and listening skills. Begin with short selections, increase story length gradually and try using two or three short books in place of a longer story.

Choose appropriate material

- Books heavy on dialogue or dialect are harder to read and listen to.
- An award-winning book isn’t necessarily a great read-aloud.
- Don’t choose a book which is very well known (for example has been made into a film or been on television) – once the plot is known much of the interest is lost.
- Avoid long descriptive passages until the listener can handle them.
- Look for books that represent a variety of cultures in both content and illustration.

At the start of the read-aloud

Show the cover and read the title and author / illustrator of the book. “Name drop” if you have information, e.g., others by the same person, similar titles etc. You might like to share the
dedication, any notes from the author or illustrator, or information about the illustration technique.

You might want to suggest things to look or listen for during the story.

During the read-aloud

Try to set aside at least one “traditional” time each day to read aloud, and don’t leave too long a gap between read-aloud sessions of a serial novel – keep it regular, and remember you can read quite a lot in 5 minutes!

Make a note of interesting words that come up in the text, with a brief note about what they mean, and these words will transfer into the child’s own writing.

Decide if you want to have multiple copies of the book being read so that your child can read along if they wish.

How to read aloud

The most common mistake in reading aloud is reading too fast - read at a varied and moderate pace and allow the child to create mental images of the words.

Change your voice to fit the mood or action.

When choosing what to read aloud, booktalk 4 or 5 possible options and ask the child one they would choose.
When a book isn’t working...

- Don’t persevere with a book if it has become obvious that it was a poor choice, though make sure that you have given it a fair chance to get going.

After the read-aloud

- Reading aloud can involve “warm ups” and “follow ups” – allow time for discussion after the story (and during the story, as appropriate).
- You might want to share your own thoughts about the story or have some discussion about aspects in the story – sharing a “reading response”, such as:
  - Does this book remind you of another book? Why?
  - What is your favorite part of the story and why?
  - How did the story make you feel?

Reading to older students

- Although older, they too may well need to develop their listening skills and stamina.
- Reading aloud provides an opportunity for them to hear stories that they have missed out on, e.g., myths and legends, or stories beyond their comfortable reading level.
- As well as novels, you could read short stories, poetry, magazine articles, newspaper columns or editorials, Young Adult books and books that might have been missed from childhood.
With novels for older students it is even more important for you to preview read the book.

Read a chapter or a good “chunk” each day – keep the momentum going.

Read books that suit students intellectually, socially and emotionally.

From: The National Library of New Zealand is part of the Department of Internal Affairs

Making Connections Strategy

Some readers often move directly through a text without stopping to consider whether the text makes sense based on their own background knowledge, or whether their knowledge can be used to help them understand confusing or challenging materials. By teaching students how to connect to text they are able to better understand what they are reading (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Keene and Zimmerman (1997) concluded that students comprehend better when they make different kinds of connections: Text-to-self, Text-to-text and Text-to-world.

Text-to-self connections are highly personal connections that a reader makes between a piece of reading material and the reader’s own experiences or life. An example of a text-to-self connection might be, "This story reminds me of a vacation we took to my grandfather’s farm." Sometimes when reading, readers are reminded of other things that they have read, other books by the same author, stories from a similar genre, or perhaps on the same topic. These types of connections are text-to-text connections.
Readers gain insight during reading by thinking about how the information they are reading connects to other familiar text. “This character has the same problem that I read about in a story last year,” would be an example of a text-to-text connection.

Text-to-world connections are the larger connections that a reader brings to a reading situation. We all have ideas about how the world works that goes far beyond our own personal experiences. We learn about things through television, movies, magazines, and newspapers. An example of a text-to-world connection would be when a reader says, "I saw a program on television that talked about things described in this article."

Cris Tovani (2000) offers reasons why connecting to text helps readers:

- It helps readers understand how characters feel and the motivation behind their actions.
- It helps readers have a clearer picture in their head as they read thus making the reader more engaged.
- It keeps the reader from becoming bored while reading.
- It sets a purpose for reading and keeps the reader focused.
- Readers can see how other readers connected to the reading.
- It forces readers to become actively involved.
- It helps readers remember what they have read and ask questions about the text.
How to Use the Strategy

To effectively use this strategy, spend time modeling how to make meaningful connections. Model text-to-self connections initially with selections that are relatively close to the student's personal experiences. A key phrase that prompts text-to-self connections is, "this reminds me of...." Next, model how to make text-to-text connections. Sometimes when we read, we are reminded of other texts we have read. Encourage students to consider the variety of texts they have experienced which will help them understand the new selection. Finally, model how to make text-to-world connections. Building the necessary background knowledge is a crucial means for providing text-to-world support. Students need to be challenged to analyze how their connections are contributing to their understanding of the text. Text connections should lead to text comprehension. Below are some examples of connecting statements for students to use. This part reminds me of.... I felt like...(character) when I.... If that happened to me I would.... This book reminds me of...(another text) because.... I can relate to...(part of text) because one time.... Something similar happened to me when....

Below are some examples of statements that can be used to facilitate student connections:

**Text-to-self:**

This reminds me of the time I...
This is like _______ in my life...
This is different from my life because...
Something like this happened to me one time...
(The character) is a little bit like me because...
When I read this I felt ___ because...

**Text-to-text:**

This reminds me of another book I read (name of book) because...
This sounds like something else I read...
This is different from the other (type of text) I read because....

**Text-to-world:**

This reminds me of (something in the real world) because...
This book is like real life because...
This is different from real life because...

Sources:

[1] National Center for Families Learning, Graphic Organizers for Cognitive Reading Strategies.