

Story Elements

Who, What, Where, When, Why?

Beginner: Ask simple questions about the story and make connections between the pictures and words.

[Tip]: “Which character do you like and why?” and, “What colour are they?”

Intermediate: Ask detailed questions about who the story is about, and what happened in the beginning, middle, and end.

[Tip]: “What are the names of the characters?” and, “What are they trying to do on this page?”

Experienced: Ask questions that encourage your child to think about different possible outcomes for the story.

[Tip]: “What would the end of the story be if...?” or, “How would you feel if...?”

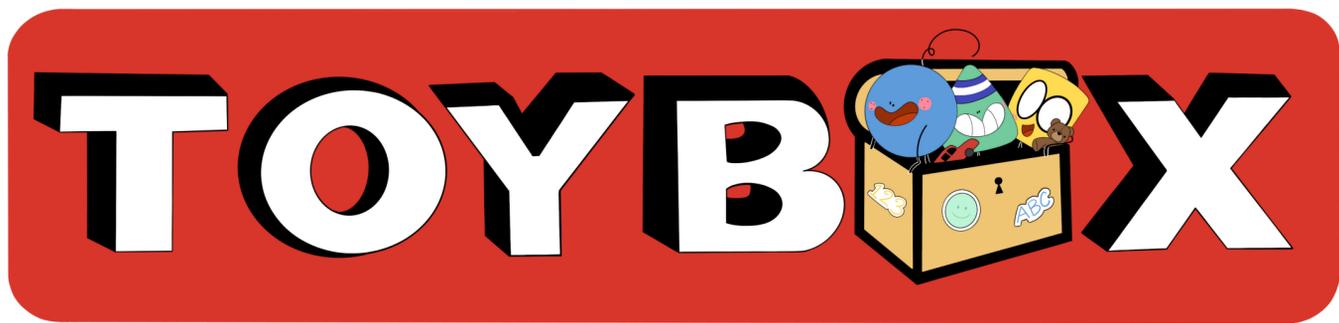
Why is this important? Talking about different parts of a story helps children understand and appreciate the overall meaning of the text.

Looking for more information? Scroll down to see our reading comprehension prompts!

References: Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade: IES Practice Guide. NCEE 2010-4038. What Works Clearinghouse

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, S. (1997). Character Perspective Charting: Helping Children to Develop a More Complete Conception of Story. *The Reading Teacher*, 50(8), 668-677.

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Reading Comprehension Prompts

Here are some questions you can ask while reading a story, to confirm understanding and think critically about elements of the text

Before Reading

1. "Can you point to the title?"
2. "What clues does the title give you about the story?"
3. "Based on the cover art, what do you think this story is about?"
4. "Why do you think this author chose this title?"

While Reading:

1. "What has happened so far?"
2. "What do you think will happen next?"
3. "What is the main problem, and why is it important to the story?"
 - a. "How would you try solving this problem?"
4. "Why is this character important to the story?"

After Reading:

1. "What is the main idea of this story?"
 - a. "How do you know this?"
2. "Is this a real or imaginary story?"
3. "Do we need to reread to better understand....?"
4. "What is your favourite part of the story and why?"

