

Reading Strategies

1. Using Meaning

Using meaning, or predicting when reading is the MOST IMPORTANT reading strategy. Reading is not knowing every individual word on a page – it is about telling a story using what would make sense.

When we use meaning we are able to predict what the next word is without even really thinking about it. The moment we stop to work out a word, we have forgotten what the sentence is about and we are trying to, usually, work out what the word is by looking at it one letter at a time and for most words, that is a very difficult way to work out a word eg try and work out “there” by looking at it one letter at a time.

Just think about the word “lead”. You would not know what that word is unless it was in a sentence giving the word some meaning eg I borrowed the lead singers lead pencil. **Children do not need to recognise every word in a text but need to be able to work out what would make sense.**

Using meaning involves:

- **looking at the picture** (please **do not** discourage children from doing this, as it lets them predict what the next word will be)
- **listening to what you have already read** so you know what the story is about and you can predict what the next word could be

Next time your child asks you what a word is, try not to tell them the word but **ask them what would make sense.** Get them **to look at the picture, talk** to them **about what is happening** and then ask them **to read the sentence again and see what would make sense.** After they have worked out the word tell them to do that next time they are stuck in a sentence. Always talk to them about what would make sense. Again, reading is NOT about knowing each individual word on a page but telling a story and thinking what would make sense.

Those steps again:

1. **Look at the picture**
2. **Talk about what is happening**
3. **Re-read the sentence**
4. **Think about what would make sense**
5. **Use the same strategy next time**