

Dear Families,

Parents often ask us how they can help their children grow as readers. In the 3rd and 4th grade, students often have developed strong decoding skills and literal comprehension. Basically, they can read the words and tell us all about it. As their brains are developing during this time, we are asking them to go deeper in their thinking, to ask questions and infer. In this manner, we are not just developing readers, but also developing critical thinkers.

How can you help? When your child is reading independently periodically ask to read alongside for part of the time (many like some independence). Keep it light and fun. Our goal is to create life-long readers and deeper thinkers. Engage in conversations about their books, movies, and TV shows. There are many questions you can ask, we have compiled some prompts to get you started... but take it from there.

Let us know if you have any questions!

Some prompts to grow thinking in fiction:

- What are you wondering about?
- What do you predict will happen? Why and how? (nudge to use that they know about the inside of the character).
- What are you thinking now?
- What is this story /part really about?
- What's that making you think?
- What are you envisioning in that part?
- What questions do you have?

When you are ready to get more specific, try:

- Try asking yourself and answering a question about fairness (or power) in your book.
- What is the main problem? Describe your character's reaction to the problem.
- What does your character really want? What gets in his or way?
- How will the main character change?
- What questions can you ask of the text to think more deeply?
- How is the problem getting worse?
- What will your character learn? or has learned?
- Is your character changing? How?
- Think about your characters. What effects do your characters have on each other?
- What is your theory about your character?
- Of all of the details you told me, what's the most important one?
- Describe the setting. Imagine how the story would be different in a different place.
- Do you think there is any symbolism in the setting?
- What was the author's message?
- What do you know about this topic after reading this material?

Some prompts to grow thinking in nonfiction:

- What seems important here?
- What are some words you are learning?
- What do you think is the main idea? What facts support that?

To read without
reflecting is like
eating without
digesting.

- EDMUND BURKE

- Which idea can you back up with the most detail?
- Find the sentences that tell you what this section is mostly about.
- What did you learn after reading that?
- What is the author's opinion?
- What do you think the author is trying to say about that topic?
- What's the author's angle or slant?
- What do you know about this topic after reading this material?

If your child is not monitoring his or her own basic comprehension and seems confused you can remind your child to check his/ her comprehension. In class, they use this bookmark:

