EYFS | Reading expectations for parents

Early language, phonics and a love of books

What your child is learning

- Enjoy listening to stories, rhymes, poems and non-fiction; join in with repeated phrases and discuss what happens.
- Develop vocabulary through conversation, storytelling and listening to adults read aloud.
- Recognise that print carries meaning and that English text is read from left to right.
- Learn taught letter–sound correspondences and blend sounds to read simple words.
- Read simple sentences and books consistent with taught phonics, including some common exception words.
- Talk about characters, settings and events; anticipate what might happen next.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- What happened first? What happened next?
- Which character did you like? Why?
- Can you say Fred Talk and then Fred in your head?

How to help at home

Enjoy a story together daily. Re-read favourite books, play rhyming games and praise attempts to blend sounds. Do not ask children to guess unfamiliar words from pictures.

What progress might look like

Enjoying books, joining in, noticing print and blending simple words.

Year 1 | Reading expectations for parents

Build accurate decoding and early understanding

What your child is learning

- Apply taught phonics to decode unfamiliar words, including words with alternative spellings and sounds.
- Read common exception words taught so far and notice unusual spelling patterns.
- Read accurately from books matched to phonic knowledge; re-read to build confidence and fluency.
- Listen to and discuss stories, poems and non-fiction beyond independent reading level.
- Retell familiar stories, identify key events and make simple predictions.
- Explain the meaning of words and check that what is read makes sense.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- Which sound does this grapheme represent?
- Can you retell the beginning, middle and end?
- What do you think might happen next? Why?

How to help at home

Let your child decode with phonics, then re-read the sentence smoothly. Read richer stories aloud to develop comprehension.

What progress might look like

Using phonics to read unfamiliar words and becoming more confident on re-reading.

Year 2 | Reading expectations for parents

Move towards fluent, expressive reading

What your child is learning

- Decode using known phonics; read words with common suffixes and recognise common exception words.
- Read most familiar words accurately and automatically, without sounding out every word.
- Read age-appropriate books accurately and with increasing fluency and expression.
- Discuss the sequence of events, how items of information relate and the main ideas in a text.
- Make inferences about feelings and actions using clues in the text.
- Ask and answer questions; predict from what has been read; explain word meanings.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- Which words tell you how the character feels?
- Why do you think they did that?
- What is the most important thing we learnt on this page?

How to help at home

Encourage repeated reading of a familiar passage for fluency. Ask for evidence from the text rather than accepting a guess.

What progress might look like

Reading more automatically, with expression and explaining simple inferences.

Year 3 | Reading expectations for parents

Develop independence, vocabulary and evidence

What your child is learning

- Read a widening range of fiction, poetry, plays and non-fiction; use decoding skills for unfamiliar words.
- Read with improving fluency, phrasing and expression; notice punctuation when reading aloud.
- Use context to discuss the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.
- Identify main ideas across paragraphs and summarise them briefly.
- Retrieve information and infer feelings, motives and thoughts, explaining clues from the text.
- Predict from stated and implied details.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- Which sentence helped you work that out?
- Can you summarise this paragraph in one sentence?
- What does this word suggest in this context?

How to help at home

Read together and model fluent expression. Ask your child to point to a phrase that supports their answer.

What progress might look like

Explaining ideas and supporting answers with clues from the text.

Year 4 | Reading expectations for parents

Deepen inference and explain author choices

What your child is learning

- Read a broad range of increasingly challenging texts with growing accuracy and fluency.
- Explain vocabulary in context, including figurative expressions and precise word choices.
- Identify main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and summarise key points.
- Make and justify inferences about characters, events and relationships.
- Predict developments using both explicit details and implied clues.
- Discuss themes, text organisation and how language, structure and presentation affect meaning.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- What evidence supports your inference?
- How has the character changed?
- Why might the author have chosen this word?

How to help at home

Explore both fiction and information texts. Encourage full answers such as "I think… because the text says…".

What progress might look like

Summarising across paragraphs and justifying interpretations.

Year 5 | Reading expectations for parents

Read critically across increasingly complex texts

What your child is learning

- Read widely across genres, including classic and modern fiction, non-fiction and poetry.
- Read with stamina and appropriate expression; discuss vocabulary and meaning in context.
- Summarise main ideas across several paragraphs, selecting key details.
- Draw inferences about characters' feelings, thoughts and motives and justify with evidence.
- Make predictions using stated and implied information; compare themes and conventions.
- Discuss how authors use language, imagery, structure and presentation to influence readers.
- Distinguish statements of fact from opinion and retrieve, record and present information.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- What is the author suggesting without saying it directly?
- Is this fact or opinion? How can you tell?

How to help at home

Discuss different viewpoints, unfamiliar vocabulary and why a writer has organised information in a particular way.

What progress might look like

Comparing ideas and discussing how language and structure influence meaning.

Year 6 | Reading expectations for parents

Read confidently, analyse and evaluate

What your child is learning

- Read demanding fiction and non-fiction fluently, accurately and with understanding.
- Explain word meanings, figurative language and how vocabulary affects tone and meaning.
- Summarise across paragraphs, identifying main ideas and supporting details.
- Retrieve and record relevant information efficiently, including from non-fiction.
- Make detailed inferences and predictions supported by precise textual evidence.
- Explain and evaluate how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning.
- Compare texts, discuss themes, distinguish fact from opinion and justify personal interpretations.

Questions you could ask at home

Try these during or after reading

- Which quotation best supports your answer?
- How does the writer create tension or persuade the reader?
- How do these two texts compare?

How to help at home

Ask for evidence and thoughtful explanation, not just a correct answer. Continue reading aloud and discussing ambitious books.

What progress might look like

Using precise evidence to analyse, evaluate and explain a range of texts.