

HELPING CHILDREN CHOOSE BOOKS THEY'LL LOVE

ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN HELPING CHILDREN SELECT BOOKS:



- Model thoughtful literacy in your reading life
 - Talk about the books YOU read both in and out of school
 - Ask questions, make predictions, verbalize your thinking as you read aloud
 - Read a variety of formats (newspapers, magazines, etc) and discuss how they are alike and different.
 - Show your enthusiasm about reading!
 - Tell kids why you may choose NOT to finish a book you've chosen...and share
 - Things you DON'T like about the book you're reading

- Talk about why you choose the books you do... Analyze the book's effectiveness:
 - Is this a believable story, one that could really happen, or a fantastic story?
 - Are the characters like people I've known or are they people I'd like to know?
 - Did the characters learn something new, and then change because of it?
 - Were the characters complex people, with strengths and weaknesses?
 - Was the climax a believable one for this story?
 - Was the setting true for the time and place where the story happened?
 - Did I feel like I was really part of the setting? Did the characters fit there, too?
 - What was the author trying to tell me?
 - Was the language natural for the characters, setting and situation in the story?

- Make a WIDE VARIETY of books, magazines, videos, audiotapes, maps, subjects, and formats available for kids to choose from for their independent reading.

- Don't ALWAYS formalize the reading experience; sometimes let kids read just for the sake of reading!

- Involve the children in the elements of the story you are reading...
 - What is the THEME of the book? These are usually implied, not spelled out for you... and there may be more than one.
 - Are the CHARACTERS fleshed out by the narrator telling you about them, by their actions, by what other characters think about them, or are they revealing themselves to you directly or in conversation?
 - This becomes the POINT-OF-VIEW of the story!
 - Is the PLOT a "dynamic" one in which there is lots of action? Or is it more about the internal growth of a character or characters?
 - Does the plot clarify the theme?

- Does the SETTING develop a mood, create tension for the characters, clearly evoke an historical or geographical background, or become a symbol that is important in the book?
- GIVING THE CHILDREN THE SKILLS they need to select their own books...
(From *Guiding Readers and Writers*, Fountas & Pinnell, page 147)
- 🍏 Ways Children Choose Books (based on student responses in a classroom):
- Front cover/story summary inside the jacket
 - Back cover information
 - Great Illustrations
 - Interesting title
 - Characters we've read about in other books/Another book in a series
 - Sequel to a book we've read
 - Heard it read aloud
 - Read it before and liked it
 - Authors we know and like
 - Genres we like to read
 - "Must-read" Rack in our classroom library
 - Book recommendations from teachers, friends, and critics
 - Books that are movies
 - New or popular book
 - Try the beginning and like it
 - Read some of the middle and like it
- SELECTION SKILLS BASED ON THE FORMAT OF THE BOOK...
- Check out... the cover (Does it make you want to open it up?)
- The story summary on the cover (Do you want to know more?)
 - The Table of Contents (Any of these topics grab you?)
 - The Index (Will it be easy to refer back to something you need?)
 - The illustrations (Do they scare you? make you laugh? attract you?)
 - The length? (How much time do you have to read? what's your goal?)
 - The size and style of the print? (Can you read it easily?)
 - The format (Is it too big to read comfortably? too small to share?)
 - The dedication (Does it intrigue you? Tell you something interesting about the author?)
 - The author biography (Have you read something else by this person?)
 - Do they sound like someone you'd like to know?
 - The publication date (Is the information out-of-date?)
- TEST YOUR ABILITY TO READ THIS LANGUAGE...
- * The five-finger test

- Read the first paragraph
- Read something from the middle of the book
- Read the captions

➤ **WHEN CAN YOU ABANDON A BOOK?**

- Always give the writer a chance to “hook” you!
 - First 5 pages in a picture book
 - First chapter in a chapter book
 - First 50 pages in a novel

*(From **Guiding Readers and Writers**, by Fountas and Pinnell, page 149)*

🍏 **Why Readers Abandon Books... based on responses in classroom discussion:**

- It’s too easy or difficult
- It’s boring and “not going anywhere”
- Not interested in the genre now
- It takes too long for the action to start
- It’s a disappointing sequel
- Expected something different
- Don’t like the characters
- Its too sad, too scary, too confusing, too _____!
- Didn’t like the point-of-view
- Found another book of interest
- Plot is hard to follow
- Print is too hard to read
- It’s too similar to another book
- It’s not good for now, but maybe later

➤ **CHILDREN DON’T ALWAYS KNOW WHAT THEY ARE INTERESTED IN READING...**

- Have them make a list (or tell you) books they’ve enjoyed in the past
- Have them talk about what they like to watch on TV or which movies they like
- Have them tell you what they like to do outside of school
- Narrow their selection down to a few titles at first so they aren’t overwhelmed
- Keep a list of books they liked and/or subjects they are interested in
- Have them read with a buddy who has found a book they like
- Try different formats and different reading levels to find where they’re comfortable

***The Cool Web: The Patterns of Children’s Reading** by Margaret Meek et al
pages 380-381 “What level is your reader at?”*

🍏 There appear to be **four levels** of children’s response to literature:

1. First they **HEAR** it... wordplay, poetry, concept books
2. Then they respond to the **EVENTS** in the story... pattern books, traditional story elements, specific events
3. Then they notice the **ROLE** of characters in the story... acting them out or listing them
4. Then they begin to construct the **WORLD** of the story... the setting and environs!