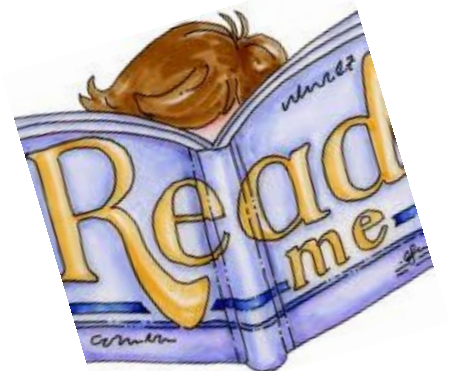# Bridging the Gap–Literacy

Some ways to help with reading assignments For Parents

What is reading?

Reading is much more than knowing letters or recognising words

Reading is

☆ Making meaning from what you see

☆ Making links between what you read and what you already know

☆ Using meaning to learn new things

☆ Evaluating what you've read

Readers not only do these things, they know how they do it.

What do good readers know about reading?

They know:

☆ Why they are reading.

☆ What they hope to get out of reading.

☆ What they are reading will make sense.

☆ That what they read will link, or change, or add to what they already know.

☆ That they need to make judgements about what they're reading—not everything you read is right or complete.

☆ That people write from different points-of-view.

☆ To look for the cues and support the author gives them.

☆ How to use such things as titles, illustrations, maps and headings to help them understand what they are reading and to store the information.

☆ That different authors from different cultures may write differently.
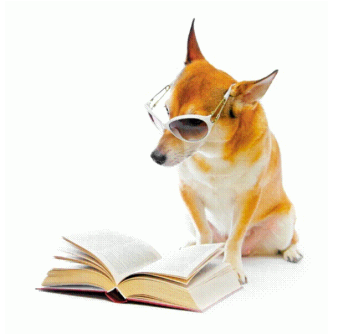
Good readers also know about language.

They know:

☆ There is a difference between written and spoken language.

☆ How written stories or reports or explanations are organised (once a upon a time... First sift the flour.... In 1814, American whalers....).

☆ How ideas are represented by words.

☆ How words are constructed into sentences.

☆ How letters are used to represent the sound and the meaning of words.

Good readers know about themselves.

They know:

☆ Their own strengths and weaknesses.

☆ They have to be persistent.

☆ They have to solve problems.

☆ They have good reading strategies.

☆ They need to adapt and develop new strategies.
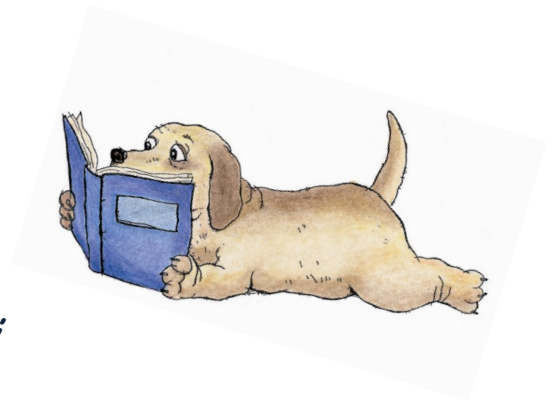
☆ To use different reading strategies for different tasks.

Above all good readers are confident.

What do good readers do?

Good Readers:

☆ Understand the task.
In a school, that means understanding what the teacher:
- Wants them to do,
- How they want them to do it, and
- How a task forms part of what they know.

☆ Give their reasons for reading.
In school, that means knowing:
- What they want to know, and
- What they need to know.

☆ Thinks about what they already know about a topic.
They use this to:
- Help them understand as they read,
- To make links with what they know, and
- To think about what they need to find out.

☆ Solve any problems they meet as they read.
They decide when:
- They understand and when they don't
- To re-read or when to read on,
- To read slowly and when to speed up, and
- To ask for help.

☆ Make judgements about what the passage told them and what it didn't
And then decide what they still need to know.

☆ Weigh-up whether or not they have been successful.

Good readers find enjoyment and reward in reading.

What can I do to help?

You can help at several important stages.

☆ Talk with your children about reading assignments. Check whether they understand what they have to do and why?

☆ Before your child begins to read, talk to them about the content of the text to be read.

☆ Look through the book, or passage before beginning to read. Remind them of things they already know about the topic.
- When readers read they make meaning. They link what they have learned with what they already know.
- Ask questions about what the author is saying.
- Ask questions about those links.

☆ Help them plan for reading. Together, make up some questions to ask during reading.
- Talk about what parts might need to be read slowly and carefully.
- How should I approach this next bit of reading?
- What if I don't know much about the topic?

☆ Talk about the information that can be gained from
- The Illustrations
- The diagrams
- The headings
- The table of contents.

☆ Talk about words that might cause difficulty.

When I'm reading what do I do I, if:

- I don't know a word.

- I can't locate the specific answer to a question.

Working out unknown words—try this

☆ What makes sense here?

☆ What sounds starts it?

☆ Are there base words, prefixes, suffixes or endings that I know?

☆ Keep reading and thinking to try to work it out

☆ Use these ideas last

- Someone's help

- Dictionary

- Skip it

☆ How will the assignment be assessed?

How will I show what I understand?

When I'm finished what should I do with the information?

☆ When the task is completed talk to them about what they learned. Praise them when they've done well.

Be positive. Ask questions like

- What didn't I understand?

- What's the best thing I learned today?

- Why?

- What can I do better today than I could yesterday?

Did the assignment stimulate any further questions eg

- I'd like to know a little more about .....?

- What will I do about this?
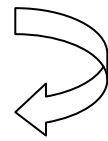
Ask yourself these questions.....

☆ What do I already know about this topic?

☆ Why am I reading this?

☆ What did I need to know?

☆ How is this chapter organised?

☆ How do the illustrations etc. help?

☆ How can I organise the information I get?

☆ Do I understand what I'm reading?

Yes!
Great!!!
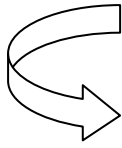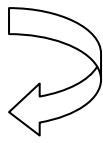
No!
What am I going to do about it?

What could I do?
I could

☆ Focus on the writer's message by
- Looking for signalling words
- Looking at the pictures and diagrams to see if they help give the information to read the text
- Using another strategy
- Rereading

☆ Look up words not clear to me

☆ Get another book

☆ Ask for help

☆ Take a break. I'm tired.

☆ Was I successful? How do I know?

Success.

Learning to read is like learning to play a sport....

You need to have knowledge of the

☆ Aims of the game

☆ Rules by which it is played

☆ Skills which let you play the game

Above all you need

☆ The practice,

☆ The instruction

☆ The encouragement and

☆ The opportunity to develop this knowledge