

Reading: Age 7–8 (Year 3)

In Year 3, your child will hopefully be on the way to becoming a confident, independent reader. Many children who have got to grips with phonics and word-reading will shift their focus onto comprehension.

There are a variety of simple things you can do at home to support your child's developing reading skills.

Read on to find out how your child will learn to read at school and how you can help at home.

How to help at home

There are plenty of simple and effective ways you can help your child with reading in Year 3. Here are our top tips.

1. Listen to your child read regularly

Although your child will probably be doing some reading on their own, listening to them read is still really helpful.

Making time to listen means that you can help with any unfamiliar words and talk to them about the book to make sure that they understand. Seeing words in print is also good for your child's other English skills – reading aloud helps them to understand the words, to spell them, and to see how grammar and punctuation are used to make meaning.

2. Keep reading to your child

Once your child can read on their own, it is tempting to leave them to get on with their own reading – but reading a book *to* them can be just as important as encouraging independent reading.

Reading to your child can help them develop language skills and comprehension. This is because it gives them access to books that they can't yet read independently, such as longer novels. It also provides a great opportunity to bond, and can form part of a relaxing routine to help your child get ready for a good night's sleep.

3. Don't give up!

When your child reads more challenging books, there might be times when they struggle and want to stop. Help them through these patches by reading a bit with them to get them started or hooked into the next chapter.

Take it in turns to read a page or take on the role of particular characters or the narrator. Inventing different character voices is a great way to hook them in and distract them when they are feeling frustrated.

4. Talk about books, stories, and words

Talking about books is a really useful habit to get into. Talk about the characters and what happens in a story, or what specific bit of information was most useful, and ask your child for their opinions too. Let them tell you if (and why) they don't like a book. Part of growing as a reader is learning that it's okay *not* to like books sometimes!

Asking your child open questions that begin with 'how' and 'why' can help them to think about what they're reading. Try to get your child to go back to the text and pictures to tell you how they know the answer.

When reading stories, good readers are always thinking ahead to start to work out what might happen next. You can help your child become better at this by asking key questions such as:

I wonder if ... will happen?

Who do you think will...?

5. Use pictures to discuss stories

Pictures are still a great way for your child to practise their comprehension skills.

Talk about what is happening in a picture, what the characters might be thinking, or what might happen next. Use a photo or picture on its own, or an illustration from a picture book, non-fiction book, or comic strip. Many popular books for children of this age include illustrations as part of the story.

6. Explore word meanings together

When your child comes across a new word in their reading, talk together about what the word might mean. Encourage them to use the other words and sentences around it to try to work out the meaning.

Talk about other ways you could use the word. Give them an example of another sentence using the new word and encourage your child to do the same.