

Set the Example!

If your children see you reading at home, you are giving them the message that you value reading. Newspapers, magazines, novels, work related documents, directions for using appliances – any kind of reading shows them that reading is something important that you do everyday. If you can read in a language other than English that is also a very valuable thing to model.

In addition to showing children that you read, talk with them about how people read at work. It's OK to tell them that sometimes job-related reading is difficult or challenging. If your children realize that even grown-ups don't always find reading easy, they will be less likely to give up when they become frustrated with difficult texts.

Talk about how you read difficult text. To do this, you might have to slow down your reading and think about what you do automatically when you are confused by something you read. You probably read slower and you may re-read several times until you understand. You probably pay attention to things like charts, graphs, pictures, and captions that can help you understand what you are reading. You probably have ways of figuring out new words by reading the words around them and guessing. Or perhaps you use what you know about prefixes and suffixes to figure out the meaning of words. These are all ways good readers handle difficult text. Tell your children what you do.

Elements of Reading

Success

When children are learning to read in the early grades, they work on recognizing that certain letters and combinations of letters represent sounds in spoken language. They come to understand that combining the letter sounds makes them into words. Once they understand that, they can begin to make meaning from their reading.

As they continue learning to read, they develop reading fluency. This is their ability to read quickly and with expression. They also begin to build vocabulary.

The elementary school years are spent learning to read, but when students enter middle school, they are instead asked to *read to learn*. They must get information from their textbooks and use it in some form to prove their learning.

Many students have reading difficulties in middle and high school. This is not a reflection of their intelligence. Instead, it usually means that somewhere in their reading education they did not get the skills they needed for "reading-to-learn". It is even possible that students who get good grades don't have the reading skills that will allow them to get the most from what they read.

Helping them to know what good readers do when they read is the best way to give them those skills. Parents can help by discussing with their children times when they have been confused by a text, and how they overcame that confusion.

Trappers Read!

**Helping Your
High School Student
to Become
a Successful Reader**



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Helping With Reading Homework

Make sure your children have a place as quiet and free from distractions as possible where they can read. Do not let them read in front of the television.

Set aside specific times for reading. Some students like to do their reading homework as soon as they get home from school. Others need a little break from school work before they start reading again.

Before they start reading, make sure your child understands the purpose of the reading homework. Is it to summarize what is read? To prepare to answer questions for a discussion? To do a research paper? To use the reading to solve problems? Knowing what needs to be done with the information will make reading more successful.

While they are reading encourage your children to “read with a pencil” by taking notes. They can do this by creating webs, outlines, charts or tables. Some students like taking notes on small post-it notes and leaving the notes in the book until they need to use them in school.

After they are finished with the reading assignment, ask your children questions about their reading. Ask them to summarize or interpret what they read. Ask for their opinions about the text or the event described in the text. Ask them if they have ever heard or read about anything similar to what they have just read. Ask them to make a prediction about what will happen next in their reading.

Helping Students Choose Books for Fun

The more students read, the better their reading skills will become. Encourage your children to read for enjoyment.

Positive experiences with reading material will make your children more likely to see themselves as good readers. To help them select a book that is right for them try the following:

1. Ask what kind of book they like to read. Fiction or non-fiction? Realistic fiction? Science fiction? Fantasy? Sports fiction? Romance? Guide them in selecting a book that you approve of, *but that will also be interesting to them.*
2. Make sure the book is at the right reading level. An easy way to tell is with the “5 Finger Test”. Have your child read one page of the text. Every time he or she finds an unknown word, he/she should hold up a finger. If five fingers are up before the end of the page, the book is above the child’s reading level. Reading a book that is too difficult will frustrate your child.
3. Encourage your child to give the book a “10 page chance”. Often children give up on a book too early. By telling your child they need to read at least 10 pages, they are more likely to come to the interesting part of the book.
4. Ask for suggestions from your librarian. They have lists of great books for kids and can help guide your selection.

Helping Students Prepare for the Reading WASL

All the strategies in this brochure will help improve your child’s reading skills. In addition, watch for announcements about special classes offered at Fort before the WASL tests in March. These classes are specially designed to give students a chance to practice with texts and questions similar to the ones they will find on the WASL.

Make sure your child gets to school on time on the WASL test days. Missing the test or coming too late will result in no score. In addition, make sure your child gets enough rest the night before the test and eats a good breakfast the morning of the test.

