



How do I help my child who is having trouble with reading? What should I do when they are stuck on a word?

Do not automatically tell them the word. Students need to know that it is their responsibility to do some work and use what they know to help them. One thing to say to them first is - "What can you try?"

Students get help from meaning cues.

What would make sense?

What is happening in the story?

What is in the picture that would help?

Students get help from language structure.

What word would sound right in the sentence?

How would you say that? (*The boy are riding a bike.* This does not sound right.)

Students get help from visual information.

Get the word started using first sound.

Break the words into parts you know. (ch-ill her-d be-gin)

Do you know a word like that?

Prompt them for what they can do. Students who are able to break words into parts should not be looking at individual letters to solve.

If a student attempts a word and uses the incorrect sound, you could say, "What other sound could you try? For example if they pronounce *cube* as *cub*, they should notice that this word would probably not make sense in the sentence. If prompting for meaning does not help, say, "What other sound could you try?" This should prompt them to try the long u sound and solve the word. Students need to learn to quickly problem-solve on tricky words. If one thing does not work, they should try something else.

Students need to use all 3 - meaning, structure, and visual information when reading. **The most important piece is meaning.** If meaning is not the focus, students will overuse visual information and meaning will be lost. If meaning is lost, so will comprehension - which is the ultimate goal of reading.

Other Things to Help

- ✓ Often students stuck on a word will not keep their eyes on the word. Although glancing at the picture for meaning support is a good strategy, this should be quick. Some students look up when trying to solve. It is important to stress to keep your eyes on the word. Although most students should not be using a finger to track print once mastered levels 4/5, it is a good strategy for some students to put finger in under a tricky word. This helps them to keep their eyes on the word while solving.
- ✓ For students having difficulty progressing, it is also very important to make sure they are looking left to right across words. Do not cover the first part of words and tell them to look at the end. This is another reason why having them put their finger under the word could help them.
- ✓ Beginning readers need to reread books! This cannot be stressed enough. When students reread books, they are practicing all of the strategies in place to be successful readers. Practice makes perfect. As they reread books, what they can do becomes solid. Rereading also builds fluency which also builds comprehension. First graders should be rereading books at least 10 minutes nightly.

Thank you for your time and effort. You will not be sorry. Students on grade level in reading at the end of first grade are more likely to be successful in later grades. You are making a difference!

