

## Dialogue

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

Reading dialogue requires the student to apply knowledge regarding the use of quotations to determine which character says what, and to focus on how character dialogue relates to the story line.

Most children enjoy reading a dialogue, but often get confused by quotation marks. It may be helpful to verify that the student is comfortable with the use of quotation marks. Provide the student with a dialogue and ask questions regarding the content and characters.

Or, help the student create a story frame. A story frame consists of the following questions:

1. In this story, the main problem is . . .
2. The problem began when . . .
3. The characters involved in the problem are . . .
4. The events involved in the problem are . . .
5. The problem is solved when . . .
6. At the end of the story . . .

These questions require reflection and critical thinking. When the student answers such questions orally or in writing, the story elements and key events become clearer. If he or she expresses confusion regarding which characters made specific statements or whether information was part of the story narration or a character quotation, find such sections of the book and reread them together.

Another strategy for helping the student construct meaning from text is using "echoing." Choose a story that contains dialogue between characters. During "echoing," the tutor and student hold the story so both can view text and illustrations. The tutor reads one line aloud, pointing to each word as he or she says it. Then, the student repeats the same line, trying to mimic the exact words and expression conveyed by the tutor. The tutor should point to the words on the page as he or she says them. In this way the student learns how to bring a character to life when reading dialogue.

Often reading comprehension is tied to the student's amount of invested effort. Sometimes students need extra help engaging with reading materials. One way to prompt such interaction is through choral reading.

During choral reading, materials should be held so both the student and the tutor can see the text. The student and tutor read the text aloud together, with the tutor modeling reading strategies and behavior by reading slightly louder and faster than the student.

During each succeeding reading session, the tutor's voice should become softer and the student's voice should lead. Eventually, the student will lead the choral reading completely.

## **Dialogue: Character Analysis**

At this level, the student should begin to interpret information relayed about characters and to infer character emotions.

Authors convey characterization through character dialogue and actions. While reading with the student, stop to discuss meaning after each important quotation or event. Discussion will help the student become aware of character traits and will help the student focus on his or her own impressions of characters and how such impressions were formed.

Another fun activity is writing character letters. Begin by discussing a character from a familiar story. Talk about and list this character's traits. Next, repeat this process for a second character (not necessarily from the same story).

Using these character details, ask the student to write a letter as one of these characters to the other character. What would this character say to the other? What do the two characters have in common?