

# ***5 Strategies for Introducing New Read Alouds at Home***

## **1. Look at the Book Cover or Title Illustration**

Before you ever ask your scholar to just turn to page x to begin reading the story, you must prepare them for what they are to learn from the text.

Ask your scholar to study the cover of the book or the image on the title page. What do they notice? To get the conversation started, try asking the following kinds of questions:

***What is happening?***

***Does it look like the story will be fiction (make believe) or nonfiction (real)?***

***When have you seen something like this before?***

***Explain what the picture looks like.***

***Does the illustration or picture seem to match the title of the story? Why or why not?***

***What does the title tell us about the story?***

***Does the image and title remind you of anything you have experienced?***

## 2. Open to the Story and Read the Pictures

The illustrations or pictures included in a story, whether it be fiction or nonfiction, are incredibly important.

Printing images is costly, so if a publisher decides to include specific illustrations or pictures, it is a deliberate decision. They must add to the story. So, before you begin a new read aloud take a moment to ask your scholar what they can learn from the pictures.

Some educators call this a **picture walk**. Some just call it previewing the text.

Whatever the name you assign, take the time to draw your scholars' attention to important images that may give away bits and pieces of what they can expect from the story. In fiction stories, this may be plot elements, while in non-fiction it may be picture captions and diagrams with labels.

## 3. Discuss Possible Predictions and Make a List of Questions

Making predictions and asking questions are two reading strategies that most reading curriculums formally teach, and they are both things that active readers naturally do.

Many teachers won't touch on these strategies until they read the story with their scholars, however starting them before the text is ever read allows for deeper discussion throughout the reading as well as following the reading.

Invite your scholar to make predictions as well as write down any questions they might have from previewing the pictures and the text.

## 4. Introduce New Vocabulary and Concepts

The text selected for scholars is often at their instructional level, which means that children need **scaffolding and support** as they attempt to read it.

One way teachers minimize the frustration or boredom some scholars experience is by introducing them to new vocabulary and concepts before reading the text at all. This is especially true of non-fiction text as well as historical fiction.

## 5. Relate Concepts to Scholars' Background Knowledge and Personal Experiences

To really get your scholar interested in a selected text, it is imperative to compare the concepts in the story to their **personal experiences and background knowledge**.

This gives a feeling of confidence as they begin actually reading, making them feel they already have a connection with the characters or concepts. **Of all of the steps, this one cannot be skipped.**

### *New Read Alouds at Home Means New Learning*

The thing about spending time to complete the five strategies for introducing new read alouds as stated above is this... it takes time. And sometimes you feel crunched and pressured and you don't feel like you have any extra time.

But **you can't skip these steps**. Even if you are only using one of the above strategies to keep your scholars' mind from wandering elsewhere before you even begin reading, you will see improvement.

You will find your scholar interacting more with the story as they read, and developing deeper interests in new topics. And you will find as a result, they will become better readers, too!