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Growing Great Readers Reading Comprehension: REDW Strategy for Finding Main Ideas

REDW is a good strategy to use to find the main idea in each paragraph of a reading assignment. Using this strategy will help you comprehend the information contained in your assignment. Each of the letters in REDW stands for a step in the strategy.

READ

Read the entire paragraph to get an idea of what the paragraph is about. You may find it helpful to whisper the words as you read or to form a picture in your mind of what you are reading. Once you have a general idea of what the paragraph is about, go on to the next step.

EXAMINE

Examine each sentence in the paragraph to identify the important words that tell what the sentence is about. Ignore the words that are not needed . If allowed, draw a line through the words to be ignored. On a sheet of paper, write the words that tell what the sentence is about for each sentence.

DECIDE

Reread the words you wrote for each sentence in the paragraph. **Decide** which sentence contains the words you wrote that best describe the main idea of the paragraph. These words are the main idea of the paragraph. The sentence that contains these words is the topic sentence. The other words you wrote are the supporting details for the main idea.

WRITE

Write the main idea for each paragraph in your notebook. This will provide you with a written record of the most important ideas you learned. This written record will be helpful if you have to take a test that covers the reading assignment.

Use REDW to help you better understand the information that you are reading.

For More Information: Parents@MilitaryChild.org





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Flexible Reading

To become a flexible reader, you need to know how to select and use a reading style that is consistent with your purpose for reading. There are three important reading styles you should learn to use. Each has its own purpose. Knowing when and how to use these three reading styles will make you a flexible reader.

STUDY READING is the reading style used by flexible readers when their purpose is to read difficult material at a high level of comprehension. When using the **Study Reading** style, you should read at a rate that is slower than your normal reading rate. As you read you must challenge yourself to understand the material. **Study Reading** will often require you to read material more than once to achieve a high level of comprehension. Sometimes, reading the material aloud will also help you improve your comprehension.

SKIMMING is the reading style used by flexible readers when their purpose is to quickly obtain a general idea about the reading material. The **Skimming** style is most useful when you have to read a large amount of material in a short amount of time. When using the **Skimming** style, you should identify the main ideas in each paragraph and ignore the details in supportive sentences. Because you are looking only for the main idea in each paragraph you read, a lower level of comprehension is to be expected than when using the **Study Reading** style.

SCANNING is the reading style used by flexible readers when their purpose is to quickly locate a specific piece of information within reading material. The piece of information to be located may be contained in a list of names, words, numbers, short statements, and sometimes even in a paragraph. Since you know exactly what you are looking for, move your eyes quickly over the reading material until you locate the specific piece of information you need to find.

Before you begin your next reading assignment, identify your purpose for reading. Decide if you are reading for a high level of comprehension, trying to get a general idea about what you are reading, or looking for specific information. Then use the reading style that is appropriate for your reading purpose.

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Improving Reading Fluency

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Here are some ways you can improve your reading fluency.

Do your heaviest reading assignments when you are most alert. A physical task takes more time to accomplish when you are tired. The same is true for a reading task.

Focus on what you are reading. Your reading will be slowed if you are distracted. Distractions can be external, such as a TV playing, or internal, such as worrying about something you have to do the next day.

Look over the reading material before you begin reading. You can quickly scan a page by looking for headings, bullet points, and things in bold. As you do this you may find that there is some text you can skip.

Avoid reading word by word. Try to read blocks of words. Your eyes can take in four to five words at a time. Work on expanding the number of words you can read at a time.

Don't pronounce each word in your head as you read it. The action of pronouncing words, even if not aloud, slows you down.

Use a pen or pencil or even your finger as a pacer. Your eyes and brain will try to keep up with the pace you set. You can work on increasing your pace of reading.

Avoid straining your eyes. Reading with insufficient light, at an uncomfortable angle, or in bed lying down can result in eye fatigue that will slow your reading or cause you to stop for periods of time. Blinking your eyes from time to time can help ease eyestrain. Try not to let your eyes stay in the same place on the page for too long. Move on whenever you find yourself stuck.

Don't use a highlighter. If you do, you are likely to pay excessive attention to everything on the page.

Avoid going back to read something unless absolutely necessary. Rereading interrupts your reading flow and slows you down. You can always go back later to review material.

Focus on key words in the sentences. You can read more fluently by quickly moving past conjunctions (e.g., and), prepositions (e.g., as), and articles (e.g., a).

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Ten Read Aloud Commandments

By Mem Fox

www.memfox.com/welcome.htm

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1. Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes *every single day* reading aloud.
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times.
Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read.
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love, over and over and over again, and always read in the same 'tune' for each book: i.e. with the same intonations one each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters that start the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever *teach* reading, or get tense around books.
10. Read aloud every day because you just love being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do. This is as important for fathers as it is for mothers!

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How Do I Develop a Fluent Reader?

Model the skills that good readers do by:

1. Building Background Knowledge

Discuss what the book is going to be about and the literary features.

2. Making Connections

Use post-it notes to write connections you make to yourself, to other books, or world events.

Good books to practice this skill are:

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes—Her name is a big problem until she finds out the first name of her favorite teacher.

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats—All kids who have ever played in the snow can relate to the first snowfall of the season. Something is wrong with Nellie, but what is it?

3. Visualizing

Keep a journal of quotes from the text that give you a clear image, then either write down or draw a picture of what you visualize.

Good books to practice this skill are:

Abuela by Arthur Dorror—A little girl and her grandmother imagine what they would see if they flew high above the park & over the city. A glossary of Spanish terms completes the text.

All Tile Small Poems by Valerie Worth—The poet writes about everyday things like hoses, paper clips, and crickets in vivid, striking language that stimulates pictures in the mind.

4. Asking questions

Use post-it notes to write down questions

Good books to practice this skill are:

Elizabeth by Claire Nivola—The true story of a little girl who has to leave her beloved doll behind when she is forced to flee Nazi Germany. Thoughtful questions about families leaving and their destinations abound.

Why is the Sky Blue by Sally Grindley—The theme of teachers as learners comes through in this story of an old donkey and a young, very curious rabbit.

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5. Monitoring for Meaning

Model for your children the thinking in your head as you read. Talk about the following questions that readers use to construct meaning when reading:

- a. Does it make sense?
- b. Does it sound right?
- c. Does it look right

6. Making Inferences

"Reading Between the lines"

Discuss what you can infer from the cover , title, and pictures

Good books to practice this skill are:

Dandelion by Eve Bunting—Because the woman and her daughter in this pioneer family are so stoic, the reader must infer how the characters really feel about their increasing isolation.

See the Ocean by Estelle Condra—Clues abound that something is wrong with Nellie, but what could it be?

7. Synthesizing

Divide a piece of paper horizontally with the top half marked "Summary" and the bottom half marked "Response"

8. Determining Importance

Code information that is important with an asterisk (), then have your child describe why it is important.*

Information taken from the following resources:

Goudvis,A., & Harvey,S. (2000). *Strategies that Work*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Learning Media (1996). The reading process. III, *Reading for Life* (11-14). California: Huntington Beach.

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Reading Resources for Parents

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Publications:

The Military Child Education Coalition's *Chart your Course : Preparing for the Journey.*

Brenda Erhmantraut, *Reading at Home A to Z.*

US Department of Education, *Helping Your Child Become a Reader.*

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html>

Websites:

www.rif.org Reading is Fundamental: one of the oldest and most well respected literacy organizations. RIF efforts begin with books and continue with resources, activities, and professional development for educators, parents, and literacy volunteers to ensure that reading turns into a journey of opportunity for all children.

www.famlit.org National Center for Families Learning provides literacy strategies, programming, and resources.

www.read.gov The Library of Congress' homepage for young readers. See summer reading lists for all ages. Read classic children's literature online. Did you know we have a National Ambassador for Young People's Literature? Meet him here!

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Reading Homework Tips for Parents

- Have your child read aloud to you every night.
- Choose a quiet place, free from distractions, for your child to do his nightly reading assignments.
- As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns such as *cat, pat, hat*.
- When your child reads aloud to you and makes a mistake, point out the words she has missed and help her to read the word correctly.
- After your child has stopped to correct a word read, go back and reread the entire sentence from the beginning to make sure your child understands what the sentence is saying.
- Ask your child to tell you in his/her own words what happened in a story.
- To check your child's understanding of what he/she is reading, occasionally pause and ask your child questions about the characters and events in the story.
- Ask your child why he/she thinks a character acted in a certain way and ask your child to support her answer with information from the story.
- Before getting to the end of a story, ask your child what he/she thinks will happen next and why.

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Finding the Right Book for Your Child

Finding the right book for your child means finding something your child wants to read AND making sure it's at the right level for your child. Advice for both is below:

"I can't find anything to read!"

Libraries and bookstores are full of good books, yet sometimes it's hard for a child to find something to read. Genre and authors can help.

Genre: Think of genre as categories or types of books. Identifying what type, or genre, of book your reader enjoys can lead to them to certain shelves or areas. For example, does your reader like action and adventure? Fantasy? Graphic novels? Mystery? Start book searches by looking for new books within a favorite genre.

Author: Stumbling on a new author can be a treasure trove of new titles! Find a book your child particularly enjoys and see if that author has written other books. It's also fun to search online to see if that author has a website. Many authors do, and some include games, facts, and other interesting information to keep a reader engaged.

"This book is too hard! This book is too easy!"

Ensuring that a book is at the right reading level for your child can be a challenge. Parents often seek a "just right" book: not too hard, but not too easy. When looking for books for your child to read on his own, try the 5-finger test with them.

Check out this video: "Five Finger Rule" (3:45)

Models how to use the Five Finger Rule to select a Just Right book.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHESiWCOXyk>

For More Information: Parents@MilitaryChild.org





Five Finger Test: Find a “Just Right Book:

Open the book to the middle. Choose a full page of words. Read the page out loud, and hold up a finger each time they come to a word they don't know.

One finger (thumb): Thumbs up! Great book choice, this will be easy reading.

Two fingers (thumb and index finger): Makes an L, still Looking good! Enjoy.

Three fingers (makes a W): Warning! This book may be best when read along with someone.

Four or more fingers (whole hand): Stop! This book may be too tough to enjoy alone. Ask an adult or older sibling to read this book to you.

Finding the right book may involve a little bit of extra work, but it's worth it in the end.

Adapted for Parent to Parent from – “Growing Great Readers” Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine.

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Goldilocks' Rules for determining if a book is "Just Right"

In the fairy tale Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Goldilocks went to great lengths to find a bowl of porridge, a chair, and a bed that were "just right". The process of selecting a book can sometimes feel the same way. Just as Goldilocks found that some porridge was too hot or too cold and some was "just right", beginning readers often have to test different books to find ones that are not too hard to too easy, but "just right".

Next time your child reads a book, ask them the following questions to help them find a book that is "just right":

Too Easy Books

Ask these questions:

1. *Have you read this book many times before?*
2. *Do you understand the story very well without much effort?*
3. *Do you know and understand almost every word?*
4. *Can you read it smoothly and fluently without much practice or effort?*

If the answer is "yes" to most of the questions, then the book is probably too easy. Your child can still have fun reading it, but encourage your child to choose a book that is a little more challenging next time.

Just Right Books

Ask these questions:

1. *Is this book new to you?*
2. *Do you understand most of the book?*
3. *Are there a few words per page that you don't recognize or know the meaning of instantly? Remember to use the five finger test.*
4. *Can someone help you with the book if you hit a tough spot?*

If the answer is "yes" to most of these questions, then the book is probably "just right". These are the books that will help your child make the most progress in his or her reading. Read, enjoy and learn from the experience!

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Too Hard Books

Ask these questions:

1. *Are there more than a few words on a page that you don't recognize or know the meaning? Remember the five finger test.*
2. *Are you confused about what is happening in most of the book?*
3. *When you read are you struggling and does it sound choppy?*
4. *Is everyone busy and unable to help you if you hit a tough spot?*

If the answer is yes to most of these questions, then the book is probably too difficult. Encourage your child to remember this book as one to try reading again later. As your child gains confidence and experience in reading, books that were once “too difficult” will be “Just right”.

Literacy Videos:

Why Is Reading so Hard by Understood.org <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpi83OQEDaQ> (2:05 min)

Education expert Ann Dolin shares her tips for encouraging children to read by finding topics they will be interested in, suggesting popular series or utilizing reading technology. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92kGmqiLG1E> (1:36)

Stories out loud for struggling readers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okk22wLASHo> (4:41)

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Ages	Literacy Milestones
Birth to age 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Making imitating soundsPeek-a-boo or pat-a-cakePretend to readScribble with a purposeListen to storiesTalk about charactersRespond to gestures and facial expressions
Ages 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enjoy listening to storiesMake attempts to read and writeTalking about storiesIdentify some letters and soundsParticipate in rhyming games
Ages 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enjoy being read toRetell simple storiesBegin to write stories with some readable partsIdentify an increasing number of words by sightRecognize letters and sound matches

To learn more about Child Find:

<https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/child.find.index.htm>

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Do You Know The Signs & Symptoms for Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that, most often, makes it difficult for individuals to read. Individuals with dyslexia have an inefficient ability to sort out, analyze, and sequence sounds heard in spoken language. Students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities are as intelligent as others, and often have great strengths – but they learn differently. No two individuals with dyslexia will have exactly the same symptoms, but many students with dyslexia will experience difficulty with some of the following:

For preschool and elementary school children signs of dyslexia include difficulty with: Learning to talk, Pronouncing longer words, Rhyming, Learning the alphabet sequence, days of the week, colors, shapes and numbers , Learning letter names and sounds, Learning to read and write his or her name, Learning to identify syllables (cow-boy in cowboy) and speech sounds (phonemes: b-a-t in bat) in words, Sounding out simple words, Reading and spelling words with the correct letter sequence ("top" versus "pot"), Handwriting and fine-motor coordination

Adolescents, teenagers, and adults might have the signs of dyslexia listed above in addition to the difficulties listed below: Reading and spelling far below grade level , Avoiding reading and writing, Working slowly on reading and writing assignments and tests , Struggling with a foreign language, Struggling with reading fluency and comprehension , Struggling with organizing and expanding ideas in written expression , Forgetting detailed information

