

Literacy at Carre's

Improving Literacy is a school priority and we do so in a variety of ways. How your child understands, learns and communicates will depend a great deal on how competently he/she can read and write. Throughout the curriculum, we put special emphasis on:

- Speaking, reading and writing well;
- Learning words and understanding their definitions;
- Spelling well and learning to use a dictionary;
- Planning work carefully and presenting it appropriately.
- A form period is set aside each week for the students to read. Students can read a book they have brought with them or choose one from the LRC. You can help your child by reminding them to take a reading book to school.

How you can help with reading, writing, and speaking skills.

The development of literacy begins in the home. You can support the development of your child's literacy skills by regularly speaking to them about their interests, and also current affairs that may be of interest to them. Similarly, listen to your child reading aloud will enable him/her to improve his/her reading and their confidence. Students who lack confidence in their reading will benefit from reading aloud to a supportive parent or carer as they may not always be eager to read aloud in school.

Furthermore, listening to audio books while you travel in the car can be an excellent way of exposing the family to different styles of writing, improving listening skills and widening vocabulary.

Encourage the use of libraries as a way of broadening your son or daughter's reading habits. Your son or daughter can access the Learning Resource Centre at school or your local public library. Students can develop language skills more swiftly and securely if they read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts regularly. The LRC and your public library will ensure that your child has free access to a wide range of texts and the freedom to choose texts that interest them. Where possible students should visit the LRC or their library and withdraw a book fortnightly.

Encourage your child to try new authors or styles of books, and to challenge him or herself by trying a more difficult text than usual.

Helpful ideas for you to help support your child improve their reading

- Reading at home for at least 20 minutes a day; books, magazines, internet, newspapers.
- Ask about what they have read.
- Play Scrabble or Bananagrams so spelling is part of a game and the desire to win!
- Carre's Literacy target of the term - displayed in a prominent place e.g. the kitchen or their bedroom. Promote its use over the term.
- If the family needs some information, task your child with finding it out as this will invariably involve reading, but it will have real purpose.
- Randomly ask your child to spell words.
- Puzzle books can be a good way to increase exposure to words – and keep your child occupied on journeys!
- Apps on phone, the Kindle app, Play books, Whirly Word, Drop word are all free to download.
- Use a Kindle or encourage your child to use their tablet or smart-phone to read an e-book.
- Encourage using a dictionary to check spellings and meanings of words whilst doing homework.
- Challenge your child to use a different word using a thesaurus.

Helpful questions to ask when reading a FICTION book.

Here are just some ideas to think about when discussing a fictional book that your child is reading....

1. Who was the character that...?
2. Show me in the text where you found...?
3. What is happening at this point/in this part of the story?
4. Find one/two things that the main character did in this part of the story.
5. Why was...important in this story? Tell me/write about what sort of character/person... was from the things they did/said in the story.
6. What do you think...thoughts were at this point in the story/play? Use the text to help you think through your answer.
7. If you were going to interview one of the characters, which questions would you ask and why?
8. How did one of the characters change their ideas/ attitudes during the story/play? What was it that brought about this change?
9. What do you think would have happened if...?
10. Tell me about one important event that happened that could not be left out. Why is it so important? If...had not done..., how might this have changed other events in the story?
11. How has the author organised the writing?
12. Why does the author begin a new paragraph here?
13. What is/are the main event(s) that happen(s) in this/ each paragraph?
14. How has the author used words/phrases to make this character funny/sad/adventurous/clever/frightening/ excited/disappointed, etc?
15. Which part of the story best describes the setting/ characters/action?
16. Which words and /or phrases do this?
17. Find and copy some words or phrases that show us that this character is special/helpful/adventurous/ unsure/worried, etc.
18. How did the story make you feel? Why did it make you feel like this?
19. Why do you think the author chose this particular setting for this story?
20. How has the author started this in an interesting way?
21. How does this make the reader want to read on?

Questions about non-fiction texts

Here are some questions that you can ask your child about an information text that they are reading...

1. Where can you find an important piece of information about ...?
2. Find two pieces of information that tell you about ...?
3. What does this part of the text tell us about?
4. Which part of the text tells us about ...?
5. How does this text layout help the reader?
6. How does (a diagram/picture/caption) help you to understand the information on this/these pages?
7. What is the purpose of the list/diagram/caption/ sub-headings in this text?
8. Find something that is not a fact but the author's opinion.