

FAMILY AND CAREGIVER ACTIVITY

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Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About a Story

Regional Educational Laboratories
West, Northwest,
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Families and caregivers, you play an important role in your child's language learning. Children can strengthen their language every day by asking and answering questions about a story. In this activity, you will ask your child to talk about what they read, hear, or know about a story.

Keep in mind:

- You and your child can use your home language or English.
- Asking and answering questions in your home language will also help your child with English.
- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

Why ask and answer questions about a story?

Asking and answering questions about a story allows children to strengthen their language.

Let's get started!

Follow the steps below. *See the back for story ideas and additional language supports.*



- ▶ **Step 1: Share** or **read** a story to your child.



- ▶ **Step 2: Ask questions** before, during, and after reading the story.

- Help your child “stretch their language.” If your child answers your question with one word, ask them to add more to their answer. You can model this for them.
- Ask surface- and deeper-level questions. The answers to surface-level questions help your child recall what they read. Example: *Who or what are we reading about?* Deeper-level questions help your child to think more about the story and put ideas together. Example: *What do you think will happen next?* Examples of questions and possible responses are on the back.



- ▶ **Step 3: Encourage** your child to **draw** or **write** about the story.

Learning Goal: Children will strengthen their oral language skills

Grades: Kindergarten–3rd grade

Materials: A story that you would like to share with your child; paper and crayons, pencils, or markers

Family and Caregiver Activity: Supporting Young English Learners by Asking and Answering Questions About a Story

Types of Stories to Read and Talk About With Your Child

- Books with pictures and words
- Legends, folk tales, or fairy tales
- Nursery rhymes
- Poems, rhymes, or sayings
- Chants
- A favorite story about a family member or friend

Additional Language Supports

Your child can stretch or develop their language when asking and answering questions about a story. Consider using the questions and responses below as you discuss the story.



Surface-Level Questions to Ask About a Story	Possible Responses
What is this part mostly about?	This part is mostly about ___.
What is happening?	In the beginning/middle/end ___.
Who is involved in what’s happening?	The character(s) is/are ___.
When and where is it happening?	The story takes place ___.

Deeper-Level Questions to Ask About a Story	Possible Responses
What do you think about ___?	I think ___.
Why do you think ___ happened?	I think ___ because ___.
Why did the author ___?	The author ___ because ___.
What do you think might happen next?	I think ___ will happen next

Language Challenge:

Children can strengthen their language every day by asking and answering questions about a story. Now that your child has **answered questions**, encourage them to **ask questions** for you to answer about the story. Children can create their own questions to ask you or they can use some of the questions in the table above. Asking questions allows children to stretch their language on a daily basis.

