

## 2. Reading With a Purpose

The reasons **why** we read are as varied as the materials we read. When a student's assigned material to be read, it's important for them to focus on the reason for reading. Is it:

- To find out facts and opinions?
- For enjoyment?
- To learn how to make or do something?
- To solve a problem?
- To learn new ideas or information?

If your teen cannot narrow their focus, they may not understand any of the material they have to read. Once the purpose has been decided, a student needs to ask themselves questions so that, as they read, they'll look for specific information.

### Informational and Narrative Reading

Students will read materials that fit into two main categories: **informational** and **narrative**.

**Informational reading** includes everything from textbooks and magazines to recipes and instructional manuals. **Narrative reading** includes fiction in all its forms, as well as poetry.

### Reading Strategies

Here are some strategies you can work through with your teen to help them get the most out of whichever type of text they read.

#### INFORMATIONAL

1. Understand the purpose for reading.
2. Identify what is to be read (such as a textbook).
3. Preview and skim the material:
  - How is the material organized?
  - Do you have any previous knowledge about the topic?
  - What do you expect to learn?
  - Can you organize the material visually (a graph, chart, diagram)?
4. Read the material, changing reading rate as necessary.
5. Review and skim:
  - Have you missed anything?
  - Can you restate the main points in your own words?
6. Deal with unfamiliar words:
  - Use context clues.
  - Examine familiar word parts (prefixes, roots).
  - Look up the word in the dictionary.
  - Jot the word down and look it up later.
  - Ask someone what it means.

#### NARRATIVE

1. Understand the purpose for reading.
2. Identify what is to be read (such as a story).
3. What is the setting?
4. Who are the main characters and what are they like?
5. What is the main character's goal?
6. What obstacles stand in his or her way?
7. What will the outcome be and how will it come about?
8. What messages about life might the author be trying to communicate?
9. What mental images are you getting of the characters and events?

## Something else to keep in mind... Reading for *Fact and Opinion*

A critical reader doesn't accept information blindly. They need to be able to separate facts from opinions.

- A **fact** is a statement that's known to be true and that can be **checked or proven**. We find facts in math and science content and also in social studies, when we are reading about things that have actually happened, or that can be considered to be true.
- An **opinion** is someone's belief or feeling about something, based on what **seems to be true or valid**. An opinion, though often supported by facts and reasons, cannot be proven.

When reading, it's important to identify what is fact and what is opinion, and then look for conclusions the author may have drawn. A conclusion based on fact is always stronger than one based on opinion.

Sometimes, authors do not draw conclusions about what they write, so the reader must do it. Reading and thinking about facts and other people's opinions will help your teen learn to draw their own conclusions.

## Other reading strategies your teen can try:

### SELF-TALK - ASKING THE BIG QUESTIONS UP FRONT

1. What is the author's purpose?
2. Is this selection fiction or non-fiction?
3. How is the material organized?
4. How will I deal with unfamiliar words, expressions or terms?
5. What am I expected to find out?
6. Am I looking for facts, opinions, general information, reasons or examples?

**Tip:** Encourage your teen to write these six questions or others on sticky notes. They can make more than one sticky for each if that's helpful. As they read, they can stick the stickies beside passages that answer one or more of the questions.