



Reading Explorers Program

AN INSTRUCTORS GUIDE TO DIALOGIC READING

What is Dialogic Reading?

- Dialogic Reading is an evidence-based method of shared reading where students and reading partners (parents, caregivers, teachers, or any caring person in a child's life) have conversations about a book.
- By reading and having ongoing conversations, instructors can help students connect language and the content of books to their own language and experiences.
- The ultimate goal is for the students to become the storytellers and the instructor to become the listener.
- The instructor guides the reading and conversations on the book by prompting, reflecting, expanding, and encouraging the students' responses.
- The technique is most effective when used with books that the instructors and students have read several times together.

What are the benefits of dialogic reading?

- It increases your students' language, vocabulary, and recognition of words, which is critical nutrition they need for later reading comprehension.
- Your students learn about the rules of reading and writing, like how words (print) flow from top to bottom and left to right on the page. This is called print awareness.
- It develops your students' interest in books and motivation to listen to stories, which will help them to be lifelong learners!
- It strengthens the relationship between you and your students because you are spending time together building language and reading skills.

What kinds of books work best?

- Books that:
 - Have clear pictures
 - Have a simple story
 - Are short enough to keep your students' attention
 - Have pictures of things that are familiar to your students
 - Are interesting to your students
 - Have pictures that show action and detail



STEPS FOR DIALOGIC READING

Step 1: Prompt your students to talk while you are reading the story

- [Open-Ended Prompts](#). Focus on the pictures in the book and invite your students to tell you about them. Examples: What is happening in this picture? Tell me what you see on the page.
- [Wh- Prompts](#). Ask questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why, and how about the pictures in the book. Use your finger to point to what you are asking about. Examples: What's this called? What do we use this for? How many X do you see? What does X mean?
- [Completion Prompts](#). Ask your students to complete a word or phrase and/or pause for them to finish the sentence. These are typically used in books with rhyme or repetitive phrases. Example: "Let's finish this page together..."
- For children ages 4 and older:
 - [Recall Prompts](#). Ask details about what happened in the story. Examples: What was this story about? What happened at the beginning of the story? What happened at the end?
 - [Distancing Prompts](#). Ask your students to relate the picture or words in the book to experiences outside the book. Examples: Have you ever X? When have you seen an X?
 - [Prediction Prompts](#). Ask your students to think about the sequence of the story and what will happen next. Example: What do you think will happen next?

Step 2: Reflect and Evaluate what your students say

- Repeat what your students say and think about their response. Is the answer correct? What information can you add? Help your students as needed with the responses.

Step 3: Expand on what your students say

- Add a few other words or another piece of information to your students' responses. In some cases, gently provide the correct response.

Step 4: Repeat the prompt

- Ask your students to repeat the new or corrected information that you provided.

Step 5: Enjoy!

- Praise and encourage your students. Tell your students when they are doing well by saying things like: "Good reading!" or "That's right. Good job!"
- Follow your students' lead in what they want to talk about. If your students show an interest in a picture, follow by asking questions about that picture.
- Balance your prompting. Your students may just want to listen to the story and that's okay too! Keep it fun!

Reading the story for the first time

- Preview the book before you read it to your students the first time. It can be helpful to prepare your prompts in advance, place them on sticky notes, and insert them into the book so that you can quickly reference them as you are reading the story.
- Read the title of the book from the cover, pointing to each word as you say it.
- Have your students repeat the title as you point to each word.
- Identify and discuss the author and the illustrator of the book.
- Point to the picture on the cover. Ask: What do you think this story is about?
- Read the story, moving your finger under the words as you read. This helps your students connect what you are saying to the printed word.
- We recommend that you prompt your students 1-2 times per page of the book.
- Utilize the dialogic reading steps to bring the conversation to life!

Reading the story again and again

- When you read the story again, do less reading of the words in the story, leaving more and more time for your students to do the reading and retelling of the story in their own words.
- You should expect more sharing from your students each time you engage in dialogic reading with the same book.
- If your students need help responding to a prompt, ask that prompt again the next time you read the book.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- How you read to your students is as important as how often you read to them.
- Your students learn most from books when they are actively involved.
- Be thoughtful in your book selection. Choose books that are culturally relevant and include characters with whom your students can relate.
- It's helpful to focus on the interaction and conversation you are having with your students rather than being concerned about reading all the words on the page or finishing the book.
- Positive early learning experiences with books set the stage for later interest and motivation to read.
- A strong foundation in language and early literacy skills is built when caregivers regularly talk, read, and sing with their children from infancy. You can promote language nutrition in the home setting by encouraging caregivers to talk frequently in their home language as they share everyday activities with their children, and by supporting their use of shared book reading.



For more information about the research on Dialogic Reading, please visit [Reading Rockets](#).

For helpful instructional videos please visit [CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge](#)

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