

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Skills graphics



Click on a skill to see a colourful graphic and a child-friendly explanation.

Key Stage 1 Comprehension skills

Word meaning

Retrieval

Sequencing

Inference

Prediction

Key Stage 2 Comprehension skills

Word meaning

Retrieval

Summarising

Inference

Prediction

Relationship

Word choice

Comparison





Read around the target word to see how it is being used in the text.

Word meaning



What is the child doing in the picture?

I think they are asking a question. We ask questions to help us understand what something means.

Word meaning questions ask us to explain the meaning of words or groups of words in the text.

Words can have lots of different meanings. Always find the target word in the text to check that you understand how it is being used in the sentence.

It helps to read the words that come before and after the target word.

Try swapping the word with a similar word you know. Does this change the meaning of the sentence?



Touch the answer
in the text before
you fish it out.

Retrieval



What is the child doing in the picture?

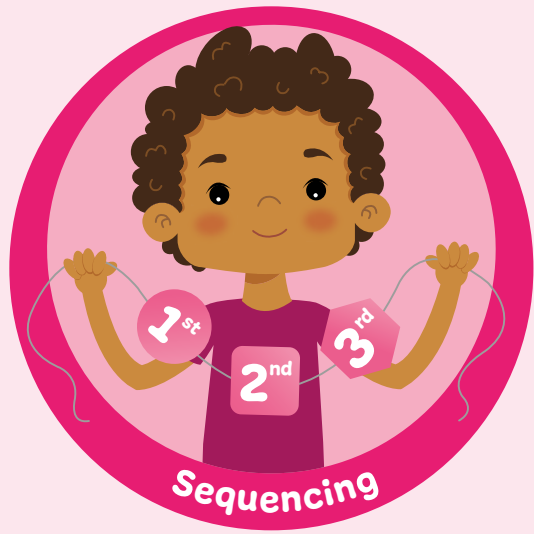
I think they have caught a fish and they are pulling it out of the water.

Retrieval questions ask us to pull certain details out of the text after we have read it. When you 'retrieve', it means you 'bring something back' from the text.

Read the question carefully and decide which words are important. Then scan for those words (or similar words) in the text.

Don't rely on your memory. Always go back and check the information in the text before you write your answer.

See if you can put your finger on the information in the text that shows your answer is correct. Who will be the first to find it?



Find the events
in the text before
you put them
in order.

Sequencing



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are holding a string of beads. A 'sequence' is a group of things that come one after another, just like beads on a string.

In a story, the sequence is the order in which things happen from the beginning to the end. **Sequencing** questions ask us to put events from the story into the right order.

Sometimes it's tricky to remember all the things that happen in a story. Make sure you find the events the question asks about in the text before you write your answer.

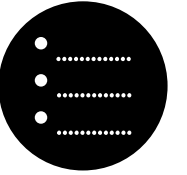
Use a pencil to underline each event if it helps.

Sequencing questions often ask you to look back at the whole text. Practise skim-reading to help you read quickly.



Find and talk
about the text's
main points.

Summarising



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are pointing at a whiteboard. I can see that the whiteboard has three bullet points on it. Bullet points are a way to sum up important points in a text.

Summarising questions ask us to find the most important points in a text or part of the text. We need to decide what is a main point and what is added detail.

Sometimes we are asked to choose a title that covers the key points in the text.

Try looking at only the first sentence of each paragraph in the text and thinking about what it tells you.

Or try writing a short caption beside each paragraph to remind yourself of its main point or event.

To find the main points, we need to have a good sense of the whole text. Skim-reading helps when you want to remind yourself of what happens in a text.



Use clues from
the text and your
own ideas to
work out the
answer.

Inference



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are dressed like a detective. I think they are looking for clues, trying to solve a mystery.

‘Infer’ means ‘work something out’. **Inference** questions ask us to use clues in the text to work out hidden meanings, like a detective.

To work out the answers, we need to use clues from the text and our own ideas.

For example, you might need to work out how a story character is feeling by looking at what they say or do in the text.

You might have to think about when you have said or done something similar, and how you were feeling at the time.

Make sure you explain which clues from the text you used to get your answer – just like a detective explains how they solved the case!



Decide what is most likely to happen next in the text.

Prediction



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are using a crystal ball to predict the future. 'Predict' means 'say what will happen'.

To answer **prediction** questions, we need to say what we think will happen next. We can't just say what we want to happen! We need to say what is most likely to happen, using clues from the text and our own ideas to back ourselves up.

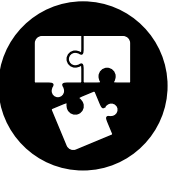
For example, if we are asked to predict what a character will do next, we need to look at what is happening to that character and how they are feeling. How have they behaved so far in the text?

Sometimes it helps to ask yourself if you have been in a similar situation before. If so, what would you do next?



Talk about the structure of the text.

Relationship



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are doing a puzzle, thinking about how the pieces fit together.

To answer **relationship** questions, we need to think about the content of the whole text. We need to look at how the author organises the text for the reader.

In a fiction text, we might look at how a character's mood changes, and the events that cause this change, or we might discuss how the author makes us want to read on.

In a non-fiction text, we might think about why a certain section has been included, or what the purpose of the text is.

We need to think carefully about the type of writing we are reading. If it is a fiction text, is it a fairy tale or an adventure story? If it is non-fiction, is it an information text or a list of instructions? What do we know about the features of these types of writing?

We also need to consider the text's main themes. We need to use our knowledge of the type of writing, the themes, and the way the text is organised to help us answer the question.



Talk about the effect of words and groups of words used in the text.

Word choice



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are writing in a book. I think they are using their imagination to come up with exciting words to use in a story.

To answer **word choice** questions, we need to think about specific words and groups of words in the text. We need to use what we know about the meaning of the word or words to say what effect they have on the text as a whole.

It helps to think about words with similar meanings (synonyms). If we know some other ways to say the word in the question, we can think about how the text would sound different if these synonyms were used instead. This helps us to understand a word's effect.

We also need to use what we know about the text in our answer. For example, if we are asked to explain the effect of a character's words at the end of a text, we might go back through the whole text to look for clues about that character. This information might help us to explain the effect more clearly.



Compare the events, characters and structure of the text.

Comparison



What is the child doing in the picture?

They are looking at a scale. One end of the scale is higher than the other so there is a difference between the two weights. When we compare, we look at what is similar and what is different about two or more things.

In a fiction text, we might compare the behaviour or the personalities of two characters, or say what is similar or different about two ideas in a non-fiction text.

To answer **comparison** questions, we need to be able to say how aspects of a text are similar to or different from each other.

When we write our answers, we usually need to give both sides of the comparison. For example, if we were comparing the different sounds made by dogs and cats, we wouldn't just say 'dogs bark' or 'cats purr'. We would include both sides, like this: 'Dogs bark but cats purr'.

When we are comparing, it helps to look for evidence in the text. Often we need to use the whole text to answer comparison questions. It helps to highlight useful information that supports our ideas.