Parent Pipeline

CAFÉ Strategy: Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning

Occasionally readers come to words that are unfamiliar and therefore difficult to understand. When this happens, readers can use context clues to help gain understanding. Context clues are the words, phrases, and sentences surrounding an unfamiliar word that give clues or hints to its meaning. Although not all words can be figured out this way, it is important for readers to know this strategy as one way to gain meaning from a word. This strategy may take awhile for a reader to become comfortable using, but with practice it will help expand vocabulary and enhance understanding.

How can you help your child with this strategy at home?

1. Encourage your child to look for clue words to help figure out the meaning of a word. These words include: but, however, unlike, means, in other words, also known as, etc. Remind your child that punctuation may also provide clues to the meaning of a word.

2. Your child was taught different context clues, what they mean, and how to use them with the steps below. Review these steps with your child and model them when reading with your child so they become familiar.
    - Check for a context clue that is in the sentence.
    - After finding a context clue, reread the sentence with the new term or clue in mind.
    - Think about what the sentence says using this context clue.
    - If you don't find a clue or understand the main point the author is making, try a different strategy to figure out the word, such as asking someone the meaning or using a dictionary.

3. Remind your child to self-monitor as they are reading. Good readers should check themselves to see if what they are inferring looks right, sounds right, and makes sense.

4. Write a sentence, leaving one word out. Have your child read the sentence and use context clues to guess what word is missing. They enjoy trying to figure it out and it is a great way to practice using context clues.

Thank you for your continued support at home!

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