

Reading Aloud to Build Comprehension

When you share books with your children, they are learning to think and act like good readers – without even knowing it! You can help them get even more from reading time when you talk to them as you read.

Children learn when they make connections between what they hear and what they know. One method parents can use to help make these connections is called a *think aloud*, where you talk through your thoughts as you read. Here are three ways to use *think alouds*, with examples from some of our favorite kids' books. Try this idea to expand learning and to improve reading comprehension:

Think Alouds

1. Connect the book to your child's own life experience

Example: A River Dream by Allen Say

"This book reminds me of the time my father took me fishing. Do you remember the time we went fishing?"

2. Connect the book to other books they have read

Example: Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

"This story reminds me of *Cinderella*. Both stories are about sisters. Do you know any other stories about nice and mean sisters? Let's keep reading to find out other ways the stories are similar."

3. Connect the book to big ideas/lessons

Example: Stellaluna by Janell Cannon

"This story helps me understand that we are all the same in many ways, but it's our differences that make us special."

In these examples, you are "thinking aloud" many of the connections that good readers make naturally as they read. Modeling these types of connections will help young readers know how to do it when they read alone.

Check out Reading Rockets' **Books and Authors** section for great read-aloud books:

www.readingrockets.org.

Adapted from *Reading Aloud to Build Comprehension* by Judith Gold and Akimi Gibson (2001).