

## Five strategies to give your child's vocabulary a boost!

Reading at home is one of the best ways to boost your child's vocabulary. That's because reading exposes your child to new ideas, concepts and words.



Here are five effective strategies that will help you increase your child's vocabulary:

1. Read different kinds of books to your child. If you usually read fiction, go to the library and get a book that explains how something works instead. Check out a book about a sport or activity your child enjoys. Or, read a biography about a person she admires.
2. Look for words your child might not know as you read. "It says here that George Washington went to school to become a surveyor. What do you think that word means?"
3. Listen for new words as you're watching TV. News programs often include words your child may not know. "Have you ever heard the word tsunami before? Let's look it up to see what it means."
4. Pull out the thesaurus. Find synonyms for words your child uses often when writing or speaking.
5. Help your child create her own dictionary. All you need is a notebook with a page for each letter. When your child discovers a new word that she wants to remember, have her write it and its definition in the notebook. Review those words from time to time.

## Stay involved and review your child's homework every day

Homework is a vital link between home and school. In addition to helping students master concepts, homework gives parents a sneak peek into what their children are learning in school.

Experts say that reviewing your child's homework is important no matter what grade she is in—even if you don't understand it. Your daily interest sends the message that learning is important.

Be sure to:

- Set aside time every day to look at your child's homework. Even if you're not at home when your child does her homework, always ask to see it.
- Ask your child to tell you about her homework. What did she like best about an assignment? Was it easy or was it challenging?
- Praise your child's effort. Compliment homework that is completed and neat.

## Do you let your child take charge of homework?

In homes everywhere, parents and kids argue about homework. To avoid conflict, some parents simply do the homework for their children!

Are you making sure your child takes responsibility for homework? Answer yes or no to each question below to find out:

1. Have you told your child that homework is his responsibility? You offer support, but don't do the work.
2. Does your child have a regular study time every day? Does he do schoolwork during that time?
3. Do you give your child some choice in how he does homework, such as choosing which subject to tackle first?
4. Do you look over your child's homework to see that it's finished?
5. Do you contact the teacher if your child faces regular struggles with homework?

### How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean your child is taking responsibility for homework. For no answers, try those ideas.

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** Last year, my daughter put off her science project until the very last minute. She finished it on time, but stressed out our entire family in the process! What can we do to make sure this year is different?

**A:** Science fair projects teach students—and sometimes parents—valuable lessons. Last year, you learned what not to do.

Your daughter is obviously a person who can meet a deadline. So your job this year is to help her set a lot of deadlines before the science project is actually due.

Encourage your child to:

1. Select her topic early. The sooner she knows what she is going to do, the more time she will have to do it.
2. Make a list of all the things she will need to do to complete the project. She should include the trip to the store for supplies and the time it will take to create a display. Have her build in at least two days for the unexpected that often seems to happen.
3. Set a deadline for each part of the project. Make sure your child knows the consequence for missing a deadline. (If she hasn't done her work, for example, she certainly doesn't have time to watch TV.)
4. Post the list of deadlines in a place where you'll both see it every day. Then, as your child achieves each step, have her cross off that deadline.

If she follows these steps, your daughter will not only learn something about science this year, she'll also learn some valuable time management skills. Good luck!

