

Avoid telling them, "look at the picture."

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Pictures are great for adding enjoyment and can help with meaning as well. Pictures should not be used to decode a word. As this encourages/builds a bad habit which is hard to break.

Avoid telling them the right word straight "away.

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Resist the urge to jump in too soon. Any sound that the child knows they should read.

Example: "join" if they know j spells /j/ and n spells /n/ but don't know oi yet, have them read j, tell them that oi spells /oi/ and then have them read n, then blend the sounds.

Avoid asking, "What could make sense?"

Keep them focused on the word that is used. Help your pupil build the habit of using the words on the page and not just words they think could fit in the sentence.

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Avoid telling them to skip a word. if they are not ready to decode the word it is useful to cover up the unknown word. Say, "This word is _____, what sounds do you hear? Let's see how we spell those sounds." Avoid telling them to just use the first sound.

There are many words that start with the same sound! Teach your pupils to use all the letters in the word to decode it.



Strategies to use when we come across an unfamiliar word.

- 1. **Point** to the word
- 2. Look at all the letters in the word
- 3. Look for letter patterns
- 4. Tap out the sounds
- 5. Blend and Read
- 6. **Reread** the sentence. Does it make sense? If not stop and go back to decode the word and fix it.