



Getting curious, finding out: reading nonfiction at Level 4

Engaging in a book with a child can open up a world of wonder, excitement, rich discussions, and ongoing learning. Nonfiction books offer a unique structure for children to learn about topics of interest, to deepen their vocabulary, and to actively explore information through engaging with timelines, visual features, and maps. Use this guide with Level 4 books in the Super Readers series to foster curiosity and to explore together with children.

Before you read

Book selection Help the child find a book based on their interests. For instance, if they are curious about oceans and wildlife, point them to *Shark Attack!*

Ask the child questions about what they already know about the topic and other engaging questions. For example, "What have you already read about ____?", "What else are you wondering about ____?"

Ask them to share what they notice about the front and back covers, title, and the table of contents. Ask, "What do you think the author's main message will be in this book?" Ask, "Where might you find information about ____?" Ask them about topics that are related to the chapter titles so they can infer which chapter may include that information, instead of asking to find specific chapter titles.

Set purpose for reading Ask, "What do you want to learn as you read?" and "What are the most important things the author wants you to know?"

While you read

Have the child read the first page out loud. Encourage them to use the pronunciation guide to read unknown words. If they need more support, have them continue to read out loud. If they can read independently, encourage them to read in their head.

Follow along as they read. If they pause to ask about an unknown word, help them use the words in the sentence to figure out the meaning, or remind them to use the glossary.

When they come to a page with images, timelines, maps, and labels, ensure that they read the text, illustration, and captions. Ask, "What is happening in that photo, map, or timeline?"

When they come to sidebar presentations, timelines, or maps, pause to discuss. For example, if the page has sidebar presentations, ask, "How might the information on the sidebars connect with what you read on the page?"

At various points, pause to have them read the headings and subheadings; ask why they think the author chose those headings and subheadings. This will help them identify the purpose of the headings and organize the information as they read.

If they ask questions while reading, pause to discuss them and have them find evidence that may help answer those questions.

After you read

After they finish the book, ask them questions about key information

"What was the author's main idea in this book? What details help you know that is the main idea? Where can you find those details in the book?"

"Why do you think the author chose to include details about ____? If you could talk to the author about this book, what might you share with them or ask them?"

"Think about the most important parts of the book. Can you summarize the information by sharing the most important parts in order?"

"How else have you explored this topic (e.g., other books, articles, Internet)?"

Identify certain parts of the book and ask them to compare and contrast. Verbally discuss or draw a Venn diagram and label the similarities and differences.

Revisit a specific page and ask them to identify the main idea and details of that section. Have them provide quotes directly from the book to support their answer.

Revisit a map, timeline, or illustration. Ask questions to discuss the information they provide. For instance, "Why is this illustration important?" and "Using this timeline, what may have caused ____?"

Review the text features to help the child identify how nonfiction books are structured. For example, examine maps, timelines, pages with labels or sidebars, or particular headings and subheadings. Ask, "How does the map on this page compare to the timeline on this page?" and "Looking at these two pages, what techniques is the author using to present information?"