



MAKING CONNECTIONS

When listening to a text, children make meaning by interpreting the information and relating it to their schema, or, what they have already read, heard, or experienced. According to schema theory, the more prior knowledge one has stored about a topic, idea, or concept, the easier it is to understand a text.

Research identifies three types of connections that can help aid comprehension: text-to-self connections, text-to-text connections, and text-to-world connections.

- **Model text-to-self connections.** As you read aloud, verbalize the connections you are making. Try using strategy-related language such as, “This part, where [refer to what happened], reminded me of...” Encourage your mentee to share connections as well. Ask questions such as, “How does this book remind you of something in your own life?” “Have you ever been to a place like this?”
- **Model text-to-text connections.** Ask whether the book –or a particular aspect of the plot, a character, etc.—reminds him/her of another text. You might choose two books to read consecutively, and then model how to make connections based on similarities (e.g., “When I read this part of the story where [refer to the part], I thought about...,” or “This is similar to...”). Encourage your mentee to make text-to-text connections as well. You might even try “setting a purpose” before reading by asking the child to signal or point out whenever he/she hears a similarity in the second text that reminds him/her of the first text.
- **Model text-to-world connections** and encourage your mentee to do the same. Children are making text-to-world connections when something in the book makes them think about something that is happening or has happened in their neighborhood, community, country, or the world.
- As always, pause to monitor understanding and increase read-aloud interactivity by asking questions such as, “What part of the reading did you find most interesting or exciting?” “What problem did the main character experience and how did he/she handle this problem?” and “How would you have handled this problem if it happened to you?”

Morrison, V., & Włodarczyk, L. (2009, October). Revisiting Read-Aloud: Instructional Strategies That Encourage Students' Engagement With Texts. The Reading Teacher, 63(2), 110-118.