

3 A collection of prompts for reference

Prompts are not just talk! Short prompts give a maximum of information to the child using the fewest words. 'Too much teacher talk' interferes with solving a problem. Conversations in the lesson should be warm and friendly, but when the child must attend to something, or must pull several things together, the prompt should be short, clear and direct. What is the next most helpful thing this child could do?

Contrast the next two examples.

I really liked how you were noticing when you got here that it did not say 'put it on and you went back and fixed it up. You did some good thinking. On this page when you were trying to figure out 'lion tamer' I saw you checking the picture. Does it start right for 'tamer'? Would you expect to see that 't' there?

Good teaching would have sounded more like this.

Good thinking! Show me 'lion Now look at what letter comes next- the first letter of that new word!

It is imperative to prompt clearly. It is not imperative to us any particular prompt in the guidebook. Teachers have asked for more alternative prompts, and I have provided some suggestions. Vary your prompting to maximize the progress of individual children.

Some of the prompts scattered throughout the teaching procedures are listed below under headings that suggest why the prompt might be used. Most Of them come from sections 10, 12 and 13. However the same words might prompt different responses, depending on the reading or writing context. The list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Be clear

Do this. Don't do that.

Cover the end.

Open-ended (used more in later lessons)

What did you notice?

Try that again.

Were you right?

How did you know it was ... ?

Look carefully and think what you know. Was that okay?

How could we finish it? Why did you stop?

Think what you know that might help. How did you know?

How did you know it was right? How did you know it said 'was'?

To locate

Read it with your finger. Did it match?

Were there enough words?

Did you run out of words?

Point to each letter/word.

Use the pointer and make them match.

Try that again with your finger.

Can you find the tricky word?

What do you expect to see at the beginning?

... at the end?

... in the middle?

Where is the hard bit?

Why did you stop?

What did you notice?

Run a finger under it while you say it slowly.

To look

Would X start like that?
I liked the way you were using your eyes.
Does it look right?
Do you think it looks like 'went'?
Use your eyes and think about it.
Look for something that would help you.
What can you see that might help?
Do you know a word that looks like that?
Can you see what might help?
See this letter.
Look at this letter/word.
Does this help? (pointing to a helpful cue)
You know a word that starts with those letters.
Make another word that looks like that.
Make another word that ends with that pattern.

To hear sounds and words

What is the first letter?
Let's go to the board. You write the first letter.
What's the first letter in 'look'?
We can take the first part away (to the left).
Where is the first letter? Where do we start?
What is a word that starts with that letter?
What is a word that starts with that sound?
Make another word that starts like that.

To find first letters

Can you hear this letter?
You said . . . Was that right?
Can you hear the last part of 'looking'?
What sound does it make?
What is its name?
Make another word that sounds like that.
What sounds can you hear in that word?
Does that sound right to you?

To attend to meaning

You said ... Does that make sense?

Would X make sense?

Would that make sense?

Would 'went' fit in there?

To attend to structure

You said ... Can we say it that way?

Is that a little letter or a big one?

Is that a capital letter or a small one?

To think about processing

What could this word be?

You solved the puzzle. How did you do that?

You said, 'I think we shall go and find him.' Is that what the rabbit said?

And here Mother Bear is asking a question. How would she ask a question?

Was that okay?

How did you know?

What do you think?

Which is it? What do you think?

You found out what was wrong all by yourself.

You made a mistake on this page. Can you find it?

How did you know?

How did you know it was right?

To attend to fluency, and/or phrasing

Let's put this together.

Let's put 'here comes' together.

Are you listening to yourself?

Did it sound good?

Can you read this quickly?

Put them all together so that it sounds like talking.

How would you say that?

Make it sound like a favorite book.

Make it sound like a story you would love to listen to.

Read up to your finger.

Read it all smoothly.

Make your voice go down at the end of the sentence.

Change your voice when you see these marks on the page.

To seek help from writing

You're saying 'said' for a word you know.

Write this word.

Write it quickly. Good job. What is it?

Prompt to remember

You need to know that word tomorrow.

Have you got it in your head?

How could we finish it?

I liked the way you did that [searched memory].

You tried to think of that word. That was good.

What is another letter that looks like that?

Prompting to check

Check it.

Were you right?

What could you check?

Does it look right and sound right?

It has to make sense and it has to sound right.

What would make sense, and sound right and look like that?

You made a mistake on that page. Can you find it?

What's wrong with this?

Comprehension—to think about the message

You said ... Does that make sense?

What did he do that was nice?

Does the pot look too small to you?

How did Mom trick Greedy Cat?

Would you like to have Jake for a brother?

What do you think Dad is going to do now?

General

Try again.

Try that again.

Try that again and think what could make sense.

Try that again and think what would sound right and look right.