

Help!

Tips for Parents to help with Summer Reading

How can I help my child with the summer reading assignment without pulling my hair out?!?

1. First, go to the public library or the book store and ask for a "Nutmeg Nominee." These are books selected by a committee of teachers and public library media specialists in Connecticut as the best stories of the year. Have your child read a paragraph to see if they understand what he or she is reading and to see if he or she has interest in the book. If your child seems interested and can read and understand what he or she has read, you've found the right match!
2. Students have to write responses to three questions from our summer reading menu of choices. Below are some ways you might respond to your child's call for help related to each of the nine questions. Remember, no matter the question, encourage your child to **support his or her answer with information from the story.**

What important lesson does your main character learn in the story?

In books, many times characters have things happen to them that are challenging. The characters have to figure out how to meet this challenge and along the way, the characters learn something about themselves or about life. Sometimes other characters help them face these challenges or give advice. Think . . . What characters might have helped the main character learn something? What bad thing happened that forced the character to face a challenge and succeed in the end?

If you wanted to describe how the main character changed in the story, which event would you write about?

Think about the main character in the beginning of the story. What kind of person were they? What was his or her personality like? At the end of the story, was he or she different in some ways? For example, maybe the character was more self-confident in school because he found a friend who accepted him the way he was. Maybe that friend helped him come out of his shell, and now he is not as shy and makes friends more easily. You would write about how the experience with his friend changed the main character.

What kind of person do you think the author is?

Think about the story and what you thought about it. For example, you might have just read a book about a girl who lived on an island alone for many years and survived. You might think, "This girl had to learn to do many things herself without the help of anyone, but she did it. She was independent and brave." What kind of person would write a book like that? The author is probably someone who believes in being independent and someone who knew a great deal about survival and nature. Use the type of things the author wrote about to help you solve author mystery.

What does the story say about people in general? In what ways does this book remind you of people you have read about?

This question asks you what the story says about MOST people. Think about the main character and what happened to him or her and how he or she responded. For example, you might have read a story about a man who was paralyzed and didn't give up. The author of this story believes that most people would not give up. You would then need to think about other books or movies that had characters who did not give up despite the challenges they faced.

Choose the part of the story that you think was the most important or interesting.

Think of a BIG event in the story that changed the character or that helped the character in some way. You need to write about a big, major event so that you can show how the event changed the rest of the story. For example, if you were writing about the children's story, "Snow White," you might write about how the witch poisoned Snow White as your event because that event caused a number of other things to happen in the story.

What will the main character probably do next?

Think about how the story was resolved (how the problem was solved). Now predict what the character will do based on that resolution. Use your imagination and support your answer by basing your prediction on what actually happened in the story.

Write a paragraph that could have appeared in your main character's journal.

Remember to write like YOU are the character. Write about things the main character thinks are important to him or her. You could also write about events that happened to the main character.

Choose the part of the story that was most interesting or surprising.

Write about whatever part you found important or surprising. Remember to give lots of detail about what happened. You should reread that part of the story to be sure you are answering with enough detail and correct information.

If your main character were alive today, what would you most like to ask him or her?

Think of the main character as a person you could ask anything. You get to ask them why they acted a certain way or how they felt when something happened to him or her. Of course, explain why that question would be one that you would want to ask.