



Learning together

Understanding Words... That Replace Others

ACTIVITY #4

SEQUENCE: READING STRATEGIES
3RD CYCLE — PRIMARY

By Laurence Arcouette,
Educational Specialist, for Institut TA



Purpose of the activity

To understand a text well, your child needs several tools: good decoding skills, sufficient vocabulary, and knowledge of the language and the topic of the text. They also need to understand the meaning of **pronouns**, which are used to replace other words in the text.



Relevance of the activity

Pronouns are used to replace a noun or a group of words that has already been mentioned in the text. If the child does not understand who or what the pronoun refers to, it can affect their understanding of the text.



Supplies

To carry out this activity, you can use:

- school texts that your child has to read;
- a book at your child's reading level.



LET'S GO!

What?



Today, we will look at pronouns and what they refer to.

Why?



Authors use different strategies to make a text more enjoyable to read. For example, they use **pronouns** to avoid repeating the same words all the time. You can find them in **all types of texts**, even in math problems! That's why it is important to understand **how pronouns work**.

When?



This strategy is used **while reading**. Often, we do it without even realizing it. Sometimes, certain parts of the text are more difficult to understand. At that point, we can ask ourselves a question: **who or what is this sentence really talking about?**

How?



Reminder: A pronoun refers to another word. This other word is called a **referent**.



Here is an example:

My mom lives far away. She and I often talk on the phone to catch up on each other.

Here, I know that the pronoun «she» refers to «my mom.» It does not prevent me from understanding; I know who we are talking about! However, if I had not known, there would have been a breakdown of understanding.

When you read a text, you have to be aware of the pronouns and tell yourself that they refer to another word or group of words in the text. If we do not know who the referent is, we must find it!

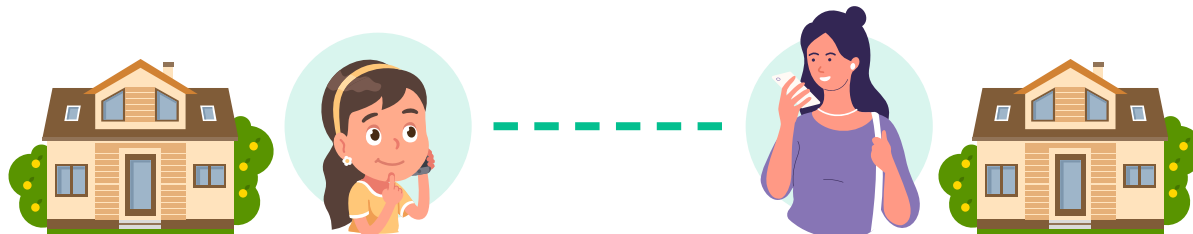
Sometimes the pronoun is close to the one it replaces. We may have to go back to the previous sentence, or even before that to identify it. This is often when you have to ask yourself the right questions:

- 1 To whom or to what is this pronoun referring?
- 2 Can I use gendered pronoun (f/m) and number (s/p) clues to identify the word or group of words it is replacing?
- 3 If I use the word or group of words I have identified, does the sentence still have the same meaning?

My mom lives far away. She and I often talk on the phone to catch up on each other.

Here, the pronoun «she» is feminine and singular. The referent will have to be, too. If I replace “she” with “my mom,” it works. It is repetitive, but it respects the meaning of the sentence!

You can now practise this strategy using a book that is appropriate for your child’s reading level.



Don't forget!

When you see a pronoun, go back, find the word it replaces, and try reading the sentence again to see if it makes sense.

