

Learning together

What Does This Word Mean? Let's Make a Hypothesis!

ACTIVITY #6

SEQUENCE: READING STRATEGIES
3RD CYCLE — PRIMARY

By Laurence Arcouette,
Educational Specialist, for Institut TA



Purpose of the activity

To fully understand a text, vocabulary is essential: you need to know about 95% of the words to grasp its meaning well.



Relevance of the activity

If your child is reading a text with several unfamiliar words, it is important to teach them to think about their meaning. This helps them expand their vocabulary and better understand the text.



Supplies

■ Examples mentioned in this activity sheet

To carry out this activity, you can also use:

- the school texts your child needs to read;
- a book that matches your child's reading level.



LET'S GO!

What?



Today, we are going to learn how to make hypotheses about the meaning of an unfamiliar word to better understand what we read.

Why?



To fully understand a text, you need to know every word in it. When you come across an unfamiliar word, it is important to use strategies to try to figure out its meaning. Ignoring these words can make it harder to understand the text.

When?



This strategy is used during reading. When you come across a new word, you pause for a moment and try to figure out its meaning.

How?



It's normal not to know every word when you read. What matters is knowing what to do when it happens.

Here are some steps that can help you during your reading:

1 Check the word:
Ask yourself: Did I read the word correctly?
Does it make sense in the sentence?



2 Look for clues:
Look at the other words in the sentence to help you understand.

3 Make a hypothesis:
For example, in the sentence: "Monkeys mainly live in the tops of trees and move through the highest branches."

The words "trees" and "highest branches" give me a clue.
I think that the "top" is the highest part of the tree.

4 Check your idea:
Replace the word with what you think it means. If the sentence makes sense, your idea is probably right. If not, you can check in a dictionary.

You can now practise this strategy using a book that matches your child's reading level.

Don't forget!

Look for a smaller word inside the unfamiliar word. Sometimes, a word contains a smaller word that you already know, and this can help you understand its meaning. For example, in the word "sunflower," you can recognize the words "sun" and "flower," which gives you a clue that it is a type of flower.

