

Learning together

Identifying Substitute Words

ACTIVITY #11

SEQUENCE: READING STRATEGIES
3RD CYCLE — PRIMARY

By Laurence Arcouette,
Educational Specialist, for Institut TA



Purpose of the activity

Learn to recognize and understand **substitute words** in order to better follow ideas and understand the meaning of a text.

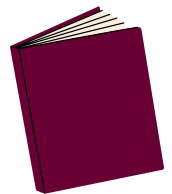


Relevance of the activity

In a text, authors often use **substitute words** (such as he, she, this one, that one) to avoid repeating the same words. Learning to identify them helps you understand **who or what is being talked about** and makes reading easier to follow.



Supplies



To complete this activity, you can use:

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

LET'S GO!

What?



Today, we are going to take some time to identify and understand substitute words!

Why?



You often encounter substitute words when reading and use them even when you write or speak! Substitute words allow an author to avoid repetition and provide links between sentences, but you must understand them clearly.

When?



This strategy is used while you are reading.

How?



As I explained, a substitute word replaces another word or group of words in the text.

When you are reading and you come across one, remember that it refers to something that has already been mentioned. Sometimes the word it replaces is nearby, but other times you may need to reread the previous sentence—or even go a bit further back.

At that point, ask yourself:

Who or what does this word refer to?

Let's try an example together:

Read the following text aloud to your child.



The Rainforest: A Natural Treasure

The **rainforest**, also known as the **jungle**, is a **great expanse filled with very tall and dense trees**, where it rains heavily throughout the year. **It** is an amazing **place**, as **it** is home to a wide variety of animals and plants, more than any other place on Earth.

This short excerpt talks about the **rainforest**. To avoid repeating these same words, the author uses synonyms or other groups of words, but always refers to the rainforest! Take a closer look: To refer to the rainforest, the author uses the words "jungle," "great expanse filled with trees," "place" and "it."

If I use the word or group of words I have identified, does the sentence still have the same meaning?

It is an amazing **place**, as **it** is home to a wide variety of animals and plants, more than any other place on Earth.

Here, if I want to make sure that the substitute words I've spotted refer to the rainforest, I can try to replace them with these words.

The **rainforest** is amazing because the **rainforest** is home to a wide variety of animals and plants, more than in any other place on Earth. It works, even if it's repetitive!

When you notice that you have lost the common thread of your text, that there are a lot of characters and that you no longer know who it is referring to or what it is talking about, it is a sign that you must take a break and read the passage again, taking care to identify the substitute words to clear up your misunderstandings!

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

Don't forget!

You can **highlight or circle** the substitute words while reading to help you spot them.

