

Question Words & Signal Words

Question Words help you understand what you read. Use these words as you form questions to ask yourself before, during, and after reading. The questions you ask for text that is fiction will be different from questions about nonfiction text.

Question Word	Fiction	Nonfiction
Who?	Who is the main character?	Who is the text about?
What?	What do you think will happen next? What is the character's problem?	What is the main idea? What is this text about?
When?	When does the story take place?	When did these events take place?
Where?	Where does the story take place?	Where can you find more information about this topic?
Why?	Why did the character do something?	Why did the author write this text?
How?	How did something happen? How did the character solve a problem?	How does the author organize this text?

Signal Words connect ideas. They help you understand important information and how the information is organized. Look for signal words as you read.

Signal Words that tell the order of things:

after	first	finally
after that	second	last
before	then	lastly
in the meantime		

Signal Words that show cause and effect:

and so	due to
as a result	so
because	thus

Signal Words that show similarities:

also	like
as well as	plus
and	similarly

Signal Words that show differences:

although	on the other hand
but	still
however	yet
in contrast	