



# GREATER ATLANTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## Reading Comprehension

**Goal:** GAC graduates are prepared for college level texts; students should be able to embrace whatever reading is necessary to pursue their chosen field of study. To that end, it is essential that students continuously build their reading comprehension skills. Here are several ways that parents and students can use summer reading to strengthen their skills and confidence:

**Focus:** reading requires focus; remove as many distractions as possible.

- Cell phones, computers, TV, music, and loud conversation all reduce the ability to focus.
- When reading, be aware of moments when focus is lost and read the text again.

**Question:** Asking and answering questions about a text will build comprehension. Parents can be particularly helpful here by asking their child questions about the text they are reading. Students should also learn to ask these questions of themselves.

- What do you expect to happen next?
- What problems have arisen and how are they solved?
- Why are characters making these choices?

**As readers mature, higher level questions can be used**

- What do you think the author is trying to show or what is the author's perspective?
- Can you identify a theme? Is there an idea that appears in multiple ways?
- Relate the ideas of the book to personal experiences or opinions.

**Summarize:** Skilled readers summarize texts as they go, particularly with challenging or lengthy books. Developing this habit will increase comprehension immediately and allow parents to identify where help is needed.

- When you finish a portion of a book or finish for the day, take the time to write a 2-sentence summary of what you have read.
- Be specific; use character names and important events
- If you have developed questions about what you are reading, write them down.

**Visualizing:** Develop the habit of visualizing the story; for many students, this will aid recollection and engagement.

**Audio:** Audiobooks can increase comprehension, but should **not** totally replace print for students.

- Use the summarizing and questioning skills described above with audiobooks to make sure that you are comprehending and **not just hearing the text**.
- Audio may help with fluency; professional readers are good models of correct inflection.
- Use audio along with print for students who need to build vocabulary and fluency
- Having a mindless task such as exercise or driving combines well with audiobooks.
- Be aware of when focus is lost (it happens to everyone); go back and read again if your mind wanders.

**Feedback:** comprehension tests are given to aid students in knowing when they truly understand a text and when they do not.

- Feedback is essential for improvement.
- The strategies given should increase performance on tests.
- If the feedback is negative, work on the skills & strategies above or seek additional help.

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