Part 3: Reading Comprehension–Connecting

Making Connections to Prior Knowledge
Students make connections between text and themselves, other reading, and the world.

Text to Self
Readers connect what they read with their own knowledge and experiences at home or school.

Text to Text
Readers connect topics and themes between different texts that they have viewed.

Text to World
Readers connect what they read to the broader world.

Making connections to prior knowledge, also known as reader's "schema", is a strategy that readers draw on to help them make sense of new information before, during and after reading. Readers comprehend better when they actively think about, and apply their knowledge of the book's topic, their own experiences, and the world around them.

A reader's prior knowledge is critical in helping them make sense of new material. Readers think about what they are reading and make three different types of connections. They connect the text to their own experiences (text to self), to what they have read (text to text), and things they know about the world (text to world).They connect what is known with what is read. Prior knowledge enriches everything that is read. Two readers can read the same text and make different connections depending on their background knowledge.

Linking to a child's prior knowledge improves reading comprehension because it helps them connect what they already know to what they are reading. Prior knowledge enhances a reader's ability to understand new ideas, to remember details from the reading and to explain and maintain comprehension.

Tips to help at home!
- ✓ Share your own connections.
- ✓ Relate events and characters in books to your child's life.
- ✓ Use sticky notes to 'post' connections during a reading

Focus Questions
To help your child make connections while they are reading, ask him/her the following questions:
- ➤ What does the book remind you of?
- ➤ What do you know about the book's topic?
- ➤ Does this book remind you of another book?
- ➤ Does this link to something you already know?
- ➤ Based on the connections you've made, what might you expect to find in this text?