

3-Question Memory Bookmark™

Remember what you read with 3 tiny questions

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Problem & Goal

Problem:

Child finishes the passage → reads the first question → "...Wait, what was that again?" → re-reads the whole thing → runs out of time.

Goal:

Train them to:

- Read the passage once
- Mark key lines on that first read
- Answer most questions by jumping straight to the right line, not starting again

PART 1 – The 3-Mark System (What to Mark)

When you read a passage the first time, your pencil has only 3 jobs:

1. Underline = Main ideas

- Underline topic sentences and conclusions in each paragraph
- Usually the first and last sentence of a paragraph

2. ○ Circle = Names, dates, numbers

- Circle names, places, dates, ages, numbers
- These come up a lot in "detail" questions

3. ★ Star = Clue lines

Put a ★ in the margin next to:

- definitions
- cause & effect ("because", "so", "therefore")
- "big feeling" lines (characters' thoughts/feelings)

Rule: No colouring in. No drawing. Just underline, circle, star.

PART 2 – Single-Pass Reading Routine

When you get a reading passage in practice or an exam:

1. Look at the title + any picture / caption (5-10 seconds)

"What type of text is this? Story / article / argument?"

2. First read (1-3 minutes depending on length)

Read all the way through once, doing the 3-mark system:

- Underline main idea sentences
- Circle names/dates/numbers
- ★ key clue lines

3. Then look at the questions

For each question, ask yourself: "Is this about main idea, detail, or feelings/inference?"

4. Scan back to the right line

- Main idea? Look at underlined sentences.
- Detail (who/when/how many)? Look for circled bits.
- Feeling / why? Look at ★ clue lines.
- Only re-read a whole paragraph if you really need to – not the whole passage.

PART 3 – Practice Passage 1 (With Marking Guide)

Instructions (for the student):

- Read the passage once.
- While reading, do:
 - Underline main idea sentences
 - Circle names & numbers
 - ★ the lines that explain why something happened or how someone felt
- Then answer the questions without re-reading everything.

PASSAGE 1 - "THE CLASS GARDEN"

Our teacher, Ms Chan, had a new idea. She wanted us to turn a small, empty corner of the schoolyard into a class garden. At first, most of us were excited, especially when she mentioned that we could grow strawberries.

However, after the first week, only a few students were still helping. The soil was dry and heavy, and the weather was hotter than we expected. Digging in the sun after school was not as fun as it had sounded. Some people quietly slipped away to play handball instead.

One afternoon, I noticed Amir still pulling out weeds while everyone else was packing up. His face was red and sweaty, but he kept working. "Why are you still doing this?" I asked. "No one else cares."

"That's not true," Amir replied, pushing his glasses up his nose. "The plants will care. They can't water themselves. And Ms Chan believed we could do this. I don't want her to come out here and see everything dead."

The next day, I brought my little sister's watering can to school and stayed to help Amir. When we turned on the hose, dark water soaked into the dusty ground. We didn't say much, but I noticed something small and green poking through the soil near the fence.

HOW IT SHOULD BE MARKED (PARENT REFERENCE)

On a first pass, the student might:

Underline main ideas:

- "She wanted us to turn a small, empty corner of the schoolyard into a class garden."
- "However, after the first week, only a few students were still helping."
- "The next day, I brought my little sister's watering can to school and stayed to help Amir."

Circle names:

- Ms Chan, Amir
- maybe "my little sister", "schoolyard"

★ clue lines:

- ★ "Digging in the sun after school was not as fun as it had sounded." (why kids stopped)
- ★ "The plants will care. They can't water themselves..." (shows Amir's attitude)
- ★ "I don't want her to come out here and see everything dead." (Amir's motivation)
- ★ "something small and green poking through" (hope / result)

QUESTIONS (STUDENT)

1. Main idea: What is this passage mostly about?

- A. A class who hates gardening
- B. A teacher who gives too much homework
- C. A few students who keep working on the garden even when others give up
- D. A school that bans handball

2. Detail (who/what): Which statement about Amir is most accurate?

- A. He only helps in the garden to impress his friends.
- B. He keeps working because he promised Ms Chan and cares about the plants.
- C. He wants to stop working but the teacher forces him.
- D. He thinks the garden is already a failure.

3. Inference (why): Why did the narrator decide to help Amir the next day? Use clues from the ★ lines.

QUICK ANSWER KEY (PARENT)

1. C – find by looking at underlined main idea sentences.
2. B – look at ★ "The plants will care..." and "I don't want her to... see everything dead."
3. Inference: Narrator was influenced by Amir's persistence and care; felt guilty or inspired and decided to help instead of leaving him alone.

PART 4 – Practice Passage 2 (Short Article Style)

Instructions: Same 3-mark system (underline, circle, ★).

PASSAGE 2 – "THE LIBRARY WITHOUT SHELVES"

A new library has opened in the city, but it doesn't look like an ordinary library. There are no tall shelves, no rows of heavy books and no long lines of people waiting to borrow them. Instead, there are beanbags, tablets and large touch-screen walls.

Visitors can sit anywhere they like and read digital books on the screens or borrow e-readers to take home. The library still has printed books, but they are kept in a small, quiet room at the back for people who prefer paper.

Some older residents are unsure about the change. They say a library should smell like books and have the sound of pages turning. Younger visitors, however, often feel more comfortable with screens. The librarian says the goal of the new design is simple: to make reading feel welcoming to everyone, no matter how they like to read.

QUESTIONS

1. Main idea: What is the main purpose of this new library?

- A. To remove all printed books
- B. To make reading welcoming whether people prefer screens or paper
- C. To force everyone to use tablets
- D. To be quieter than old libraries

2. Detail: Which of these is NOT mentioned as part of the new library?

- A. Beanbags
- B. Tall shelves
- C. Tablets
- D. Touch-screen walls

3. Inference: Why might some older residents be unsure about the new design? Use both what the text says and common sense.

WHAT TO MARK (PARENT REFERENCE)

Underline:

- "A new library has opened..."
- "Instead, there are beanbags, tablets and large touch-screen walls."
- "The librarian says the goal of the new design is simple: to make reading feel welcoming to everyone..."

Circle:

- "beanbags, tablets, touch-screen walls", "small, quiet room", "older residents", "younger visitors"

★:

- ★ "Some older residents are unsure about the change..."
- ★ "Younger visitors, however, often feel more comfortable with screens."
- ★ the "goal of the new design..." line

Answers:

1. B – main idea: look at the last underlined sentence.
2. B – tall shelves are mentioned as something that is NOT there.
3. Because they grew up with printed books and like the old smell/feel; the library is very different to what they are used to → change is uncomfortable.

PART 5 – Daily 10-Minute "Single-Pass" Drill

Use any comprehension book / past paper:

1. Choose one passage.

2. Explain the 3-mark system again (Underline / Circle / ★).

3. Set a timer:

- 3–5 mins for reading + marking
- 5 mins for questions

4. After they finish, ask them:

"Show me one underlined sentence (main idea), two circled things (important details), and one starred line (feeling / reason). How did those help you answer the questions?"

You're wiring their brain to think: **"Mark as I read → jump back to the right line → no full re-read."**

That's exactly how the Single-Pass Reading Trainer™ delivers on its promise: it turns serial re-readers into kids who mine the first read for clues and save massive amounts of time in OC / Selective / Scholarship reading.