READING HATS

At Emersons Green, we use 'Reading Hats' as a whole-school approach to teaching key reading comprehension skills. There are 7 'Reading Hats':

BLACK HAT – CAUTION

Black Hat encourages children to identify what they don't know when reading. This includes **vocabulary** as well as **prior knowledge of time, place, genre and theme.**

Black Hat is especially useful in ensuring children are checking their familiarity with any new vocabulary they are faced with. They must be given time to explore these new words, **using a range of strategies**; this could be by using a root word, through exploring the context, finding synonyms or checking the meaning using a dictionary.

WHITE HAT – FACTS

White Hat is used to find evidence and answers directly from the text – facts.
Examples of White Hat questions include:

- Who…?
- What…?
- Where…?
- When…?
- How…?
- Find evidence that…
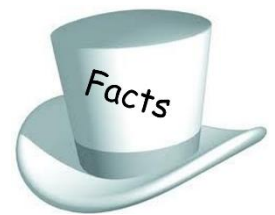
The key feature of White Hat is that **children should always be referring closely to and copying from the text.**

White Hat underpins all other Hats, in that children should always be referring to the text when answering comprehension questions.

RED HAT – FEELINGS

Red Hat is about exploring feelings – those of the reader, the characters and the author.
Examples of Red Hat questions include:

- How is xxx feeling?
- What do you think about xxx?
- Why do you think xxx did xxx?
- Do you like the character/setting/ending?
- What does the author think about xxx?

We use **"I think…"** to answer Red Hat questions. We can then build on these initial ideas by using White Hat – **"I think… because in the text it says…"**

BLUE HAT – EXPLAINING

Blue Hat is used for children to delve deeper into their thinking and reasoning – thinking about thinking. This is a 'challenge' and links closely to '3 mark' reading comprehension questions. Teachers may ask "So what?" to encourage children to explaining their ideas in more detail.

Blue Hat is often used alongside Red Hat and White Hat, so that children construct answers using **"I think… because in the text it says… which means…"**

YELLOW HAT – EFFECTS

Yellow Hat is used to describe, discuss and analyse the different effects authors create with their writing. Examples of Yellow Hat questions include:

- What is the effect of using words such as xxx and xxx?
- Can you find a simile/metaphor? What image does this create for the reader?
- Can you find any words/phrases that are used to create tension/humour/excitement/atmosphere?
- How does the author make you want to continue reading the story?

Children often need support in explaining the different effects, in order to move away from answers such as "It's an effective word to use." A 'bank' of possible effects is useful for this. **White Hat** should continue to be used alongside **Yellow Hat**, so that children are referring closely to specific examples of language in the text.

PURPLE HAT – ORGANISATION

Purple Hat asks children to describe the layout, presentation and organisation of a text. Examples of Purple Hat questions include:

- How many paragraphs are there on the page? How are they used?
- What is the purpose of xxx? (e.g. labelled diagram, contents page, subheadings)
- Why is xxx bold/underlined/in italics?
- How does this paragraph/chapter link back to the beginning?
- Find three features that tell us this is a newspaper/non-chronological report/instructions.

GREEN HAT – CREATIVITY

Green Hat is all about using the key elements/features of a text (found using White Hat) to innovate. This includes:

- Prediction
- Summarising
- Making links between texts; Identifying themes

Green Hat also makes close links to the wider English curriculum, for example:

- Orally retelling a story; Story mapping
- Writing a sequel or a story following a similar structure/theme/plot-line
- Drama and role-play
- Creating a non-fiction text based on ideas from a fiction text (e.g. a newspaper report)