HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH LITERACY IN HIGH SCHOOL

Children usually develop the ability to read stories, picture and fiction books quite well in their early and primary years. At high school, they need to develop their reading skills much further to understand non-fiction texts, such as Science books, and higher level fiction.

All teachers at PHHS work hard with students to teach them lots of new vocabulary, new forms of writing, such as reports and reviews, and to extend their reading comprehension skills. Students need to practice these skills so that they can be successful in high school.

Families are important role models for adolescents as they develop more complex literacy skills. Let your kids see you reading, researching such things as magazines, books, newspapers, labels, recipes, instructions, signs, junk mail, maps.

Make comments about things you read. For example, “this article said some interesting things. Would you like to read it and tell me what you think of it?” Let your kids see you think deeply and talk about some topics. These are the skills they need to be successful at secondary school and in their lives.

Turn over for more ideas that you could use at home to develop your child’s reading and comprehension skills.
IDEAS TO USE AT HOME

- Are there various items in the house that your son/daughter may be interested in reading? Things such as film reviews, novels, comics, fashion or sports magazines? Subscribing to a favourite magazine may be an idea for a present or borrow magazines from the local library.

- When you've bought something that needs assembling, instead of doing it by yourself, ask your son/daughter to read the instructions to you. Discuss the diagrams and how it fits together.

- Do you encourage your son/daughter to read widely? This reading could include: the Internet, novels, magazines, menus, packets, containers and brochures.

- Continue to read to and with your son/daughter especially with more challenging books.

- You could assist your son/daughter to use reference materials, such as a dictionary, a thesaurus and an encyclopaedia. Not only in book form but electronic as well. Some parts of these materials kids find hard to understand, especially an index and a contents page. You can also show your son/daughter how subtle interpretations of a word can be found in a thesaurus when you need just the right word.

- You could also choose wording that encourages thinking and planning. Here are some examples that you might try.

- What do we need to take with us when we go to the library, to the movies or on the picnic?
SOME IDEAS TO USE DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

- Research a sport and learn about particular players, events or rules.

- Maybe you could take your son/daughter to the local library to select non-fiction books and magazines. You could also show him/her how to research using different search engines online.

- Why not use the computer to investigate the history behind an interest such as music, toys, and fashion from different times?

- Help your son/daughter's listening by explaining the procedure of an activity. For example, read a recipe aloud; explain how to write a letter of thanks; explain how to assemble something.

- Encourage your son/daughter to plan a writing exercise on a hobby. He or she can then proofread and edit it.
IDEAS TO USE SHOPPING OR WHEN WATCHING A MOVIE

- When shopping, encourage your son/daughter to carefully read the labels on packets and containers. Is the size right? Is the product made in Australia? What is the product made of? Is there advice about washing it? Can the packaging be recycled?

- At the movies, discuss why the filmmaker may have created a film in a certain way. Who was the intended audience? What ideas, values and points of view were shown?

- Ask your son/daughter to explain their own interpretation of a film or a book by referring to scenes from the movie or sentences in the text and their own knowledge and experience.

- Encourage looking at a situation, event or issue from another person’s point of view. The old expression to ‘step into someone else’s shoes’ is often very beneficial in helping a son/daughter see another person’s perspective.

- Using words such as compare, analyse, predict, give examples may encourage more thought and promote conversation.