You can encourage children’s higher-level thinking skills by asking them open-ended questions during a read aloud. These types of questions usually require children to think more deeply about the book. Asking questions also keeps children engaged. Open-ended questions encourage more extended responses, and promote children’s oral language development.

Questions can be **open** or **closed**.
- **Closed questions** have a limited number of possible answers and are usually answered with one word or a simple phrase. For example:
  - Teacher: “What are the children in this book eating?”
  - Child: “Pizza.”
- **Open questions** are answered in a variety of ways and usually encourage a longer response. For example:
  - Teacher: “Why do you think they ordered pizza for the birthday party?”
  - Child: “Pizza is delicious! I like pizza! I bet those kids like pizza, too.”

Before you conduct a read aloud, read through the book and reflect on your own thinking. Where does the book surprise you? Where might you make a prediction about what will happen next? Where can you make an inference about what the character is feeling? Put a sticky note in those places to ask open-ended questions.

Here are some open-ended question starters:
- Why do you think...?
- How do you know...?
- What would happen if...?
- Tell me about...
- What would you do....?
- What happened when...?
- What do you think will happen next?