

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2019

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ Shelter Pet Squad: Jelly Bean

(Cynthia Lord)

Suzannah has just become the youngest member of the Shelter Pet Squad, a group of kids who help local shelter animals. Her first mission is to find a forever home for an adorable guinea pig named Jelly Bean. Book one in the Shelter Pet Squad series.



■ In Mary's Garden

(Tina and Carson Kugler)

This biography tells how Mary Nohl loved art as a little girl and grew up to create an unusual garden. She used materials like sand, metal, wood, and rocks to make interesting sculptures, turning her garden into what would become a historic landmark.

■ The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!

(Jon Scieszka)

According to the big bad wolf, the story everyone knows about the three little pigs is wrong. And he's here to set the record straight. Readers will laugh at the wolf's elaborate tale of how he never meant to eat the pigs—he just wanted to borrow a cup of sugar. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ If You Were the Moon

(Laura Purdie Salas)

The child in this story thinks the moon just hangs around in the sky. But it really has many "jobs," from making ocean waves to waking nighttime animals. This picture book uses a conversation between a girl and the moon to present scientific facts.



Pretend play boosts vocabulary

"I'm grooming my stuffed dog." "I can fix that car—I'm a mechanic!" Imaginary play gives your child chances to say words that he might not use every day. Try these ideas to grow his vocabulary through make-believe.



Find props

Give your youngster new things to talk about. You could put a wrench and a socket with his toy cars. Or offer him empty food packages to play store. When you notice him using the props, name them for him. You could say, "I see you're repairing your cars with a wrench and socket" or "Oh, your grocery store sells relish and chickpeas."

Play together

Spend time pretending with your child, and introduce new words. Maybe you'll hold a chopstick and say, "I'm a conductor. I'm using this baton to conduct the symphony." Or if you're playing vet, ask,

"What kind of dog do you have? Mine is a Siberian husky."

Act out a story

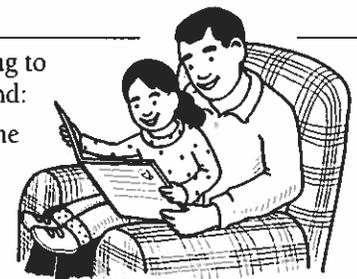
It's common for youngsters to pretend they're book characters after hearing a story. When you read to your youngster, explain unfamiliar words he can use to act out the book. If the story was about a scuba diver, perhaps he'll pretend his pajamas are a wet suit. He might turn a cardboard tube into a snorkel and go on an imaginary underwater adventure! ♥

How to handle reading errors

Oops! Your youngster just goofed while reading to you. What should you do? Keep these tips in mind:

● Wait to see if she catches her own mistake. If she doesn't notice her error by the end of the sentence or paragraph, ask, "Did that part make sense?" or "What other word would make sense there?" She'll learn to self-correct—an important step toward becoming an independent reader.

● Resist the urge to correct every mistake your child makes. That can interrupt the flow of the story. For example, if her error doesn't really affect the meaning of the sentence (say, she reads *house* instead of *home*), consider letting her keep going. ♥



“Just right” books for now—and later

Q: What are the three categories of books that help new readers grow?

A: Books that are too easy, ones that are too hard, and those that are just right!

Too easy. That favorite book you think your child has outgrown is similar to a “beach read”



for adults. She knows all the words and doesn't have to think too hard about the plot. Encourage her to relax with books like these—they build confidence and her enjoyment of reading.

Too hard. Sometimes kids want to read books that are out of reach of their reading abilities. If

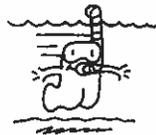
your youngster has her heart set on one, read it aloud to her. She'll enjoy listening to a book she chose. Plus, she'll pick up new words and be exposed to a more complex plot.

Just right. These books are ones your child can read with a little help. To determine if a book is a good fit, have your child read the first couple of pages to you. If she knows most of the words and understands what she's reading, it's likely the book will challenge her abilities without frustrating her.♥

Fun with Words

Rhyming dominoes

Forget dominoes with dots—this game uses rhyming words instead! Play it to help your child hear sounds in words.



Materials: 40 slips of paper, pencil

1. Have your youngster draw a line on each slip to divide it in half like a domino. On each half, help him write a word ending with one of these letter combinations: *all, et, in, og, un.* (Be sure to have 8 words per letter combination. Repeat words as needed.)



2. Spread the dominoes facedown, let each player take three, and flip a starting domino faceup.

3. Players take turns trying to form a chain of dominoes where rhyming words touch. Say the starting domino has *met*. If your child has a rhyme (say, *pet*), he links his domino with that one, end to end. If he doesn't have a rhyme, he takes a new domino, and his turn ends.

4. Continue taking turns, adding a rhyming domino to either end of the chain. The first player to get rid of all his dominoes wins.♥

Parent to Parent

And now...the family news

After a local news anchor visited my daughter's class for Career Day, Amelia wanted to be a reporter, too. I suggested that she interview her grandparents and deliver a news report about their activities. What a hit!

Her grandparents loved being interviewed, and Amelia remembered to ask *who, what, where, when,* and *why* questions—just like the news anchor said she does. For instance, Amelia asked her grandmother, “When did you start your new job?” and “What do you like best about it?” She listened carefully and wrote down the responses.

Finally, I videotaped Amelia reading her report in her best “anchor voice.” This has been a great way for her to work on writing, speaking, and listening skills.♥



Q&A

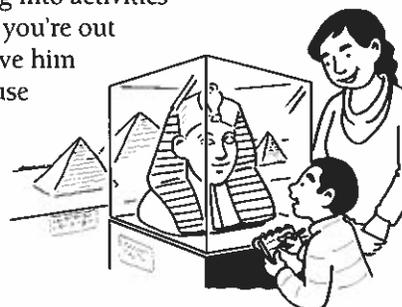
Writing on the move

Q: My son's teacher says he needs more writing practice, but it's a struggle to get him to sit still and write. Any ideas?

A: Try weaving writing into activities your son can do while you're out and about together. Give him a special notebook to use when you go places together, perhaps to a museum or the park. Encourage him to write about what he sees. At a museum, he

could jot down information about the Egyptian pyramids or a Tyrannosaurus rex. In the park, he might write a description of a carousel or a waterfall.

At home, suggest that he expand on what he wrote. Maybe he'll write a story about visiting a real pyramid in Egypt or making friends with a T-rex. Or perhaps he'll write a “visitor's guide” to the park.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks

■ *Heartseeker* (Melinda Beatty)

What if you could “see” lies? In this novel, an eleven-year-old girl named Only Fallow can! Now she must help a king determine who is loyal to him. Along the way, she learns some uncomfortable truths about the kingdom.



■ *National Geographic Kids Brain Games: The Mind-Blowing Science of Your Amazing Brain* (Jennifer Swanson)

Youngsters will explore the human brain in this book of fascinating—and often surprising—facts. It's full of brainteasers and challenges for your child to try and includes an



explanation of the science behind each activity.

■ *The BFG* (Roald Dahl)

In a land of scary giants, the Big Friendly Giant (BFG) is special. Follow the BFG and a little girl named Sophie as they try to stop the not-so-friendly giants from getting up to no good. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Some Writer! The Story of E. B. White* (Melissa Sweet)

This scrapbook-style biography introduces readers to the author of classics like *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*. See photos of animals that White's stories were based on, writing samples from his childhood, rough drafts of his manuscripts, and more.



Strategies for summarizing

“What was that book about?” Listening to your child summarize a book shows her teacher (or you) how well she understood it. And the act of summarizing builds comprehension. Suggest these ideas.

Start with questions

Pretend to be a reporter, and ask your youngster the “5W” questions (who, what, when, where, and why) about her book. She can use her answers to give a brief summary. *Example:* “tiger cub” (who), “adopted” (what), “2018” (when), “India” (where), “orphaned” (why). Her summary could begin, “An orphaned tiger cub was adopted by another mother tiger in India last year.”

Rank importance

Can your child convince you to read a book she enjoyed? Record her making a commercial about it. The catch? She has a 60-second time slot, so she must stick to what matters most. Ahead of time, suggest that she list details, then number them from most to least relevant. For instance, clues that helped a detective



solve a mystery belong in her summary, but a description of the detective's clothing probably doesn't.

Draw a picture

A colorful graphic organizer lets your youngster visualize her summary. She might draw an ice cream cone labeled with the book's title and add a different color scoop for each story element: characters, setting, problem, and solution. Now she could fill in details and look at her cone as she summarizes the story. (“A young girl from a small town moved to a big city. She had to learn how to fit in.”) 📌

Write a how-to guide

What's a fun way for your child to practice his writing and help someone out? He can write a how-to guide for something he's good at!

Let your youngster choose a topic (say, drawing portraits) and list numbered steps. *Example:* 1. Gather supplies. 2. Find a model. 3. Draw an outline. 4. Refine the outline.

5. Add features. Then, he could expand on each step to explain it thoroughly. “Add features” might become “Add facial features, such as eyes, a nose, and a mouth.”

To see if his instructions work, he should follow them step by step. If they don't, he may need to add steps or be more specific. 📌

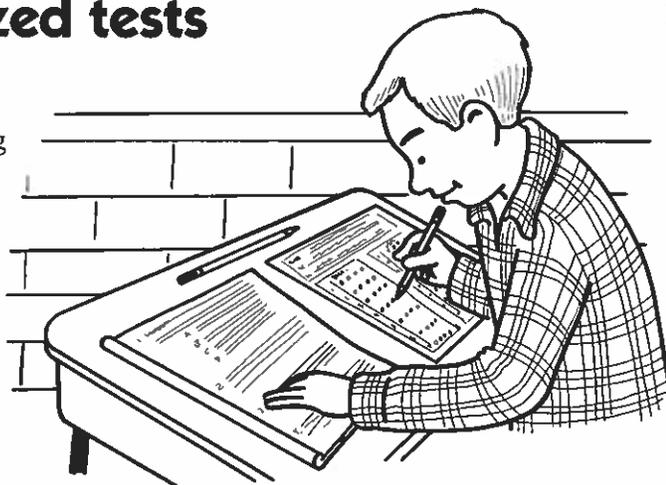


Tips for standardized tests

Knowing how to approach different types of questions can improve your youngster's performance on state reading and writing tests. Share this advice.

Multiple choice. Your child should read the entire passage and all possible answers before choosing one. There might be several options that seem good but perhaps aren't the best choices.

Short answer. On some standardized tests, your youngster may have to read



passages and write answers to questions. He could highlight or jot down facts or details on scratch paper first. Then, he can refer to the passages or his notes as he writes and include evidence if required.

Essay. Taking his time with each stage of the writing process (planning, rough draft, editing) will make your child's final product better. Encourage him to read the instructions

carefully so he knows what kind of essay he needs to write (narrative, informative, persuasive) and how it will be scored. If sources or samples are provided, he should read through all of them, too. 📖

Fun with Words Vocabulary: Stack the cups

Build towers (and your youngster's vocabulary!) with this cup-stacking word game.

1. Have your child get a textbook or another nonfiction book with a glossary. Together, pick 25 words, and write each one on a separate plastic or paper cup.



2. Take turns choosing any cup, then reading the word and giving its definition. Another player checks the book to see if your definition is correct. If it is, you keep the cup.

3. As players win cups, they stack them to build towers. If the tower falls, they must return all of their cups to the middle of the table.

4. When every cup has been claimed, count to see who stacked the most. 🏆



Q&A Learning to listen

Q My daughter's gymnastics coach said Rachel doesn't always listen when he gives instructions to the team. How can I help her be a better listener?

A Listening takes practice. In addition to having regular conversations, use these activities to sharpen your child's ears:

- Have her close her eyes. Make four noises (rustle paper, jingle keys, snap your fingers, stomp your feet). Name one sound, and ask her if it came first, second, third, or fourth.
- Let your daughter listen closely to a song and write down the words, pausing or rewinding as necessary. She can compare what she wrote to the actual lyrics. *Tip:* Search for lyrics online. 📖



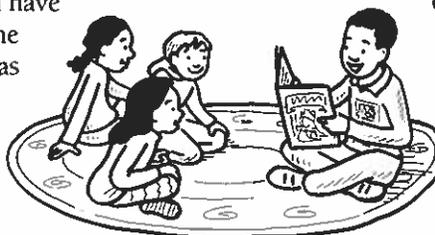
Parent 2 Parent Read aloud with confidence

My son Luke loves to read silently, but he's hesitant about reading aloud. I'm trying different ideas at home to make him more comfortable reading out loud at school.

First, I suggested that he read to his younger cousins when they visit. It was cute watching them have "story time." And the book Luke chose was easier than what he normally reads, so I think that helped him feel confident.

Also, I find opportunities for him to read out loud in everyday situations. For example, I'll ask him to read the list of pizza toppings from a takeout menu. Or when we're driving around town, I'll have him turn on the GPS, mute it, and read the directions to me in his best "GPS voice."

Luke's teacher recently mentioned that he volunteered when she asked for someone to read a poem. I guess the practice at home is helping! 📖



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