

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2016

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ **Bridges Are to Cross** (Philemon Sturges)

Llamas cross a rope suspension bridge in Peru, big ships pass beneath a drawbridge in England, and trains travel over a double-cantilever steel bridge in Scotland. In this nonfiction book, young readers will see pictures of bridges around the world and learn how they're designed and used.



■ **If You Give a Pig a Pancake**

(Laura Numeroff)

When an adorable piglet climbs through the kitchen window, a little girl offers him a pancake. Then the pig wants one thing after another, including a bubble bath, a field trip—and more pancakes. Your child can predict what the pig will request next as the story comes full circle. Part of the *If You Give* series. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ **Ling & Ting Share a Birthday**

(Grace Lin)

Six-year-old twins Ling and Ting face a few mishaps on their birthday as they dress up and open gifts. Their creativity and cooperation save the day in this collection of short stories for early readers. A cute look at similarities and differences between twins.

■ **What Really Happened to Humpty?**

(Jeanie Franz Ransom)

Did Humpty Dumpty really fall off the wall, or was he pushed? This sequel tells the story from the point of view of Humpty's detective brother, Joe. Now several nursery rhyme characters are suspects in his investigation! A funny read-aloud sprinkled with egg jokes.



The magic of graphics

Charts, tables, graphs, and more—your child will read a lot of graphics in school. Help him prepare with these ideas for reading graphics in everyday life.

Name the facts

Your youngster may be surprised by how much information a graphic can provide at a glance. Have your family look at the weekend weather chart.

Together, make a list of all the facts you learn from it. If your child sees a snowflake in the "Friday" column, for instance, he may want you to help him write, "It might snow on Friday!" How many facts will you list?

Go on a nutrition mission

While grocery shopping, tell your youngster he's on a nutrition mission. First, show him how to read the table on a nutrition label. For example, tell him that "4g" next to "protein" on a box of rice means 1 serving has 4 grams of protein. Can he find yogurt with fewer than 10 grams of sugar per serving? How about bread with more than 2 grams of



fiber? He'll practice reading tables—and get an introduction to nutrition labels.

Match it up

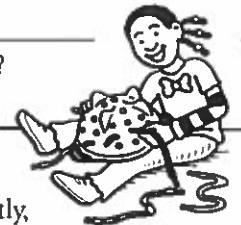
Let your child see how text and graphics work as a team. Find three kid-friendly newspaper or magazine articles that include graphics. Cut out the articles and graphics separately, and mix them all up. Read the articles to him, and see if he can match each graphic with its article. For instance, he might say that a graph showing Asian elephants and Bengal tigers goes with the article about endangered species.♥

Colorful handwriting boosters

What does finger paint have in common with a colander? Both can improve your youngster's handwriting! Try these suggestions for building hand strength and coordination:

● For a squishy yet mess-free paint activity, help your child spoon finger paint into a small freezer bag. Seal the bag tightly, and have her move her finger gently over the bag to form letters, numbers, and shapes in the paint.

● Give your youngster a colander and shoelaces or a ribbon. She can weave the material in and out of the holes. Add even more fun by encouraging her to use different colors and to weave up, down, or diagonally.♥



Family storytelling

Anyone can be a storyteller! Here are creative ways to enjoy family storytelling as your youngster practices language and writing skills.

Story stones. Collect rocks outside, draw simple chalk pictures (stick figure, sun) on them, and put the stones in a basket. Then, the first person selects one and begins a story based on the drawing. (“The alien came from a planet with a purple sun.”) She passes the basket to the next person, who picks a rock and adds a line to the story. Keep your story going until you run out of stones. Erase your drawings, make new ones, and play again.



Memory beads. Tell a story based on a family memory. You’ll need a bowl of beads and a ball of yarn. Decide what your story is about (say, adopting your dog). Take turns choosing a bead, saying one line of the story, and stringing the bead onto the

yarn. (“When we saw Maisie wagging her tail for us, we knew she was the one.”) Once your story is complete, tie the yarn so the beads can’t fall off, and hang it in a special spot to remember the tale.♥

Fun with Words

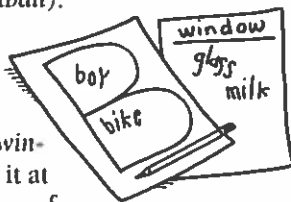


Word brainstorms

Stretch your child’s thinking and vocabulary with these two word activities.

1. Fill the letter. Ask your youngster to choose a letter (say, *B*) and write it large enough to fill a sheet of paper. Take turns writing words inside it that begin with the letter (*boy, bike*). Can you fill up the entire letter? *Variation:* Make it more challenging by using only words with more than one syllable (*balloon, basketball*).

2. Play a word association game. Pick a word, such as *win-*



*-*window, and write it at the top of a piece of paper. Underneath, your child writes the first word he thinks of (*glass*). Based on that, you write the next word that pops into your mind (*milk*). Continue for two minutes. Look over your list, and talk about why you chose each word. Now, start over with a new word.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated

128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfconline.com
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Parent to Parent

A reading playdate

Recently, my son Tyler mentioned that he loves reading with his friends in school. I suggested that the next time a friend visits, they could read together. Secretly, I thought it would be a great alternative to the video games they usually ask to play.

Tyler invited his friend Jack over, and they decided to read a book that Tyler had checked out of the school library. They took turns reading the pages aloud. I noticed that Jack read more smoothly than Tyler, who tripped over a few words. I was impressed to hear how patient Jack was—he even helped Tyler sound out the words. When they finished the book, I heard them reading riddles to each other from a joke book and cracking up.

The boys had fun, Tyler got in some good reading practice—and not once did they ask to play video games!♥



Q&A Write to a pen pal

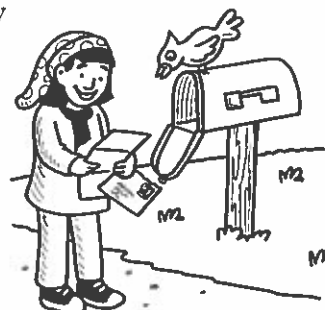
Q When I was little, I had a pen pal in another state. This sounds like a good way for my daughter to practice writing and to learn about life in a different place. Any ideas?

A Start by talking to neighbors or family friends. Someone may have a niece in another country or a grandparent in assisted living who would enjoy exchanging letters with your child.

Once you find someone, help her write her first letter.

She could introduce herself by writing about her family, school, or hobbies, for example. Explain that she should also ask questions to show interest and to give her pen pal something to respond to. (“What is it like to live where it’s warm all the time?” or “What was your favorite school subject when you were my age?”)

She’ll be excited to receive a letter in reply! Help her read it. Then, she can keep the fun going by sending another letter to her pen pal.♥



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Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks



■ *A Dragon's Guide to the Care and Feeding of Humans* (Laurence Yep and Joanne Ryder)

Miss Drake the dragon tells the story of her new pet human, a 10-year-old named Winnie who refuses to behave like a pet. But watch what happens when Winnie's drawings of magical creatures come to life and terrorize the town!



■ *Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery that Baffled All of France* (Mara Rockliff)

Bright illustrations, historical details, and a healthy dose of fun are packed into this nonfiction book. After Dr. Franz Mesmer claimed that waving an iron wand over sick people cured them, Benjamin Franklin used the scientific method to prove Mesmer a fraud.



■ *Zack Delacruz: Me and My Big Mouth* (Jeff Anderson)

Being a "nobody" keeps sixth-grader Zack Delacruz out of trouble. Then, he defends a classmate from a bully's attack and gets more attention than he can handle. Suddenly he's responsible for the school dance fund-raiser—can he pull it off?

■ *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* (Miranda Paul)

When plastic bags piled up along roadsides in Gambia, Isatou knew something needed to be done. This book tells how her campaign to recycle the bags by crocheting them into purses benefited both the environment and the community.



Read the instructions

Whether your youngster is doing a school assignment or building a model car, he needs to be able to follow written directions. Suggest these three steps for success.

1. Repeat and rephrase

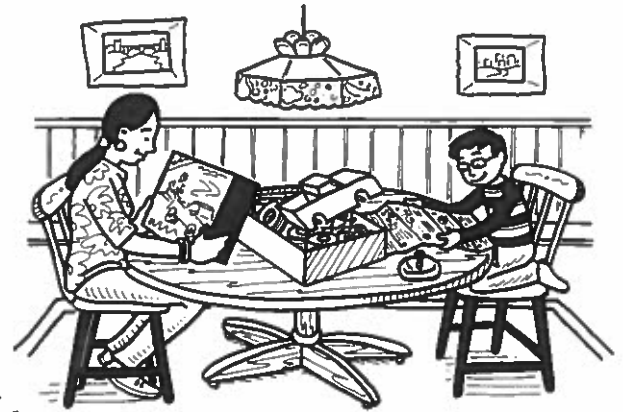
First, your child should read the instructions all the way through for an overview of what to do. Repeating them in his own words can help, too. If he reads, "Identify the point of view, and give your opinion on why the author chose it," he might say, "Name the narrator, and explain why he was the best one to tell the story."

2. Clear up confusion

Now, have your youngster do a quick self-check. Does he understand everything the instructions tell him to do? He can reread any confusing parts and look up words he doesn't know. If he's still stuck, he could ask someone for help.

3. Underline key words

Next, encourage him to underline each action. Example: "Insert tab A into slot B,



and glue it in place." When they're all marked, he could number the steps to ensure he doesn't skip one. Finally, have him check off each step as he completes it.

Name those directions!

To practice reading and understanding instructions, play this game: Read aloud instructions from objects around the house (cake mix, washing machine)—but don't tell your youngster what they're for. Can he identify the source? Then, let him find and read a set of instructions for you to guess. 📖

Journey to a fictional setting

Neverland, Oz, Narnia...there are lots of fantastical fictional settings to explore! Let your child take you on an imaginary trip to one—the journey will boost her reading comprehension.

After she reads a book, have her describe the setting with lots of colorful details ("sparkly green castle") to help you imagine it. Get her recommendations on what to pack for your "trip." She'll need to consider the climate and the surroundings to advise you on clothing and supplies.

She might even suggest a souvenir to bring home. That will encourage her to think about the landmarks, scenery, or other interesting details she read about. Now, take her on a journey to the last place you visited in a book! 📖



Infer with mysteries

Mysteries are great tools for practicing *inferring*, or combining details and personal knowledge to understand things the author doesn't say outright.

Write down clues. Take turns reading aloud from a book of short mysteries (ask a librarian for suggestions). You can each point out clues you see in the text. Have your child jot notes in a "detective notebook" to keep track. *Example:* "It is raining outside, but the stolen bicycle they found is dry."



the bike is dry, what could that mean?" (The bike has not been outside since it started raining.)

Talk it out. Before reading the solution, go over her notes together, and discuss the clues. Try to pose questions that will help her read between the lines to uncover information that's not stated. For instance, ask, "If it is raining but

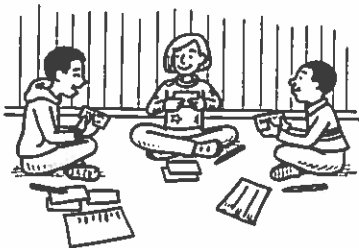
Solve the case. Encourage her to use what she has inferred from the clues to come up with an answer. "Since it was raining outside but the bike is dry, it must have been stolen before the rain started!" *Note:* If your youngster is stumped, she can go back and reread for missed clues. ¶

Fun with Words

Bluff-ulary

Is a *carnivore* an animal who loves carnivals or one who eats meat? This bluffing game is a fun way for your child to use his imagination while learning new vocabulary.

Use a vocabulary list from school (or a list of fun words that you brainstorm), and write each word on an index card. The leader turns one word faceup and, on a separate index card, secretly writes its definition.



Next, each player (including the leader) writes a made-up definition on a separate index card. The trick is to write a definition that other players will think is real! The leader shuffles the cards, including the one with the correct definition, and reads them aloud. Vote for the one you think is real—and score a point if you're correct. You also score a point if someone chooses your fake definition.

Continue playing, word by word. Score the most points to win. ¶



Parent 2 Parent

When writing is a struggle

My son Nick has *dysgraphia*, a learning disability that makes it difficult for him to express himself in writing. Doing reports is especially overwhelming because while he focuses on getting the words on paper, he forgets what he wanted to say.

Nick's teacher is working with us to make things easier. The most helpful strategy was her suggestion that Nick talk before he writes. First, he captures what he wants to say by dictating into a recorder. Then, he plays back the recording and writes or types his words. This allows him to write at a comfortable pace, and it's less stressful because Nick can pause or rewind the recording if he needs to.

Nick is proud of the improvements he is making, and I'm glad he has a way to tackle his writing assignments. ¶



Q&A

Be creative with book reports

Q My daughter is excited because she can decide on her own format for her next book report, but she's not sure where to start. Any suggestions?

A It's great that she gets an opportunity to be creative. Encourage your daughter to consider different ideas to find one that's the best fit for her book.

For instance, she could make a "Who's who?" booklet by drawing portraits of

the characters and describing their roles in the story. Or she might mimic a favorite magazine's format. She can summarize the plot in a news article, write up an interview with the main character, and publish letters to the editor with reader opinions about the book.

Or perhaps she'd rather do a video book report. Suggest that she write a script and film herself delivering it, even interviewing a few "characters" using different voices. ¶



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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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