

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2018

Keystone Oaks School District

## Book Picks

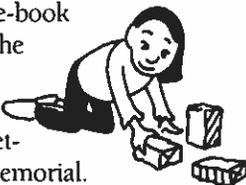
Read-aloud favorites

■ **The Invisible Boy** (Trudy Ludwig)  
Brian is not really invisible, but he certainly feels that way. His classmates never pick him for kickball teams, invite him to birthday parties, or notice his drawing talent. When the other students tease a new boy named Justin, Brian draws a picture for him and finally makes a friend. A story about acceptance.

■ **Hooray for Chefs** (Kurt Waldendorf)  
Tucked away in the kitchen, a chef prepares meals for others to eat. This nonfiction book takes readers behind the scenes to see how chefs follow recipes, use special tools, and serve up delicious food. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ **Mercy Watson to the Rescue** (Kate DiCamillo)  
Oh, no! Mr. and Mrs. Watson's floor is collapsing, and they're counting on their pet pig, Mercy, to save them. Instead of going for help, however, the pig goes looking for breakfast and gets into mischief. The first book in the Mercy Watson series.

■ **Maya Lin: Artist-Architect of Light and Lines** (Jeanne Walker Harvey)  
When Maya Lin was a little girl, she built buildings and towns made of paper and dreamed of being an architect. This picture-book biography tells the story of the girl who grew up to design the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



## I ♥ poetry

Colorful descriptions, kid-friendly topics, and playful language make children's poems a fun tool for boosting your youngster's reading skills. Welcome poetry into your family's reading routine, and use these activities to enjoy it together.

### Notice descriptions

If a poem mentions "pretty painted horses" and "spinning dizzily 'round and 'round," will your child guess that the verse is about a carousel? Call his attention to descriptive language with this idea. Secretly choose a poem, and read a few lines without telling him the title. Ask him what it's about. Now have him read a poem aloud so you can figure out its topic.

### Bring poetry to life

Your youngster may understand a poem better—and appreciate it more—if he explores its subject firsthand. After reading about "a stack of fluffy pancakes with a melting square of butter," plan a

pancake breakfast. Or read a poem about "prickly pinecones," and let your child collect pinecones outside to examine how prickly they feel.

### Play with words

Poets might swap beginning sounds in words (*puddly cuppy* instead of *cuddly puppy*) or rhyme words at the ends of lines ("I'd love a bowl of *custard*, but you can hold the *mustard*"). Encourage your youngster to listen for wordplay like that when you read poetry to him. Then, have fun making up your own silly words or rhyming pairs together. ♥



## Listen while you walk

Encourage your little one to practice listening while you take a walk together. Try this twist on I Spy.

Tell your child you're going to walk quietly so you can hear sounds all around you. Choose a sound to imitate, and have the other person try to identify it.

You might say, "I hear, with my little ear, a sound that goes *ring ring*." Can she guess that you're hearing bells or wind chimes? Or your youngster may say, "I hear, with my little ear, something that sounds like *rumble-rumble-rumble*." You might say a garbage truck or a motorcycle.

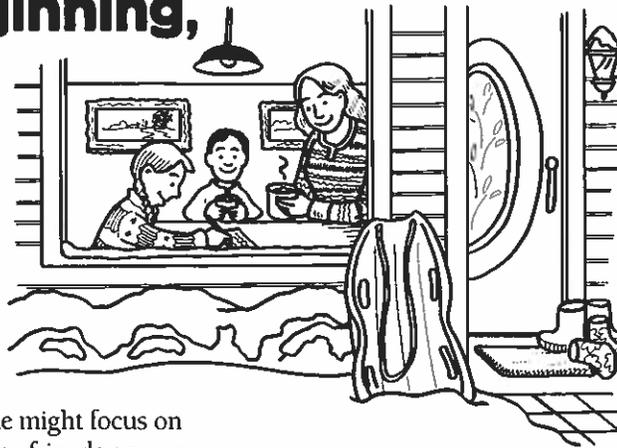
The next time, take a new route or walk at another time of day so your youngster can listen for different sounds. ♥



# Story writing: Beginning, middle, end

Your youngster probably has lots of exciting stories in her head. Help her write them down with these tips for getting started, adding details, and wrapping things up.

● **Beginning.** Starting her story will be easier if your child zeroes in on a specific event. Encourage her to “think small.” Instead of writing, “We had a snow day,” she might focus on one part of her day: “I went sledding with my friends on our snow day.”

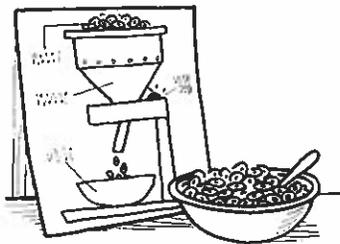


● **Middle.** Ask your youngster questions that will help her find at least two or three details to include. You could say, “How did you feel while you were soaring down the hill?” or “What happened that you didn’t expect?” She may write about snow flying into her face or spotting a deer.

● **End.** A new writer may need help deciding how a story should end. Try asking, “What’s the last thing you remember?” Perhaps she’ll complete her tale with a sentence about going inside to drink hot chocolate with you!♥

## Engineer and write

A machine that pours cereal and milk? A robot that tracks down missing socks? Drawing and labeling diagrams of imaginary devices encourages your child to combine engineering and writing skills.



First, explore a few diagrams for real machines together. You can often find these in instruction manuals for household items like a vacuum cleaner or a blender.

Next, ask your youngster to draw a diagram of a contraption he would like to own. Suggest that he label each part. His “cereal maker” could include a timer you set the night before so cereal is ready at breakfast time. Or his “sock finder” might feature a radar dish for zeroing in on any sock without a partner.

Finally, have him walk you through his design and describe how the machine works. What else can he invent?♥



## Parent to Parent

### Reading the forecast

My daughter Ava was fascinated by the idea of a groundhog “predicting” the weather on Groundhog Day. I decided to have her read a forecast so she could see how people really get information about the weather.

Together, we looked at the weather page of the newspaper. She figured out that a sun symbol with a tiny cloud means mostly sunny, and I explained that a squiggly line tells us it’ll be windy. Then, I had her read the high and low temperatures. Finally, we read tomorrow’s full forecast together.

When I mentioned this to Ava’s teacher, she said it was a great way for my daughter to see nonfiction reading as useful in everyday life—and to practice reading words, numbers, and symbols. Now Ava checks the forecast as part of her bedtime routine and proudly reports the weather so we know what to wear.♥



## Q&A From pictures to words

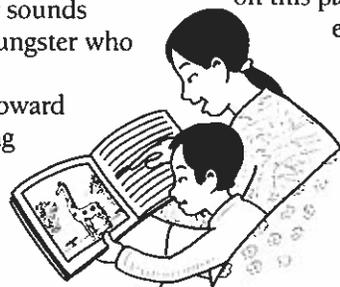
**Q** When my kindergartner “reads,” he often ignores the words and makes up his own story based on the pictures. What should I do?

**A** Your son’s behavior sounds totally normal for a youngster who is just learning to read.

Gently nudge him toward the next step—noticing words—by running your finger under the text as you read aloud to him. When you come to a word that’s

illustrated (say, *giraffe*), tell your son, “This word starts with G. Can you look at the picture and figure out the word?”

You can also say, “Do you see a word on this page that you know?” He’ll be excited to point out ones he has learned in school like *the*, *and*, and *friend*. Another idea is to ask a librarian to help you find a book with a character who shares his name—he’s guaranteed to spot at least one word he recognizes throughout the book!♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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# Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2018

Keystone Oaks School District

## Book Picks

### ■ *A Dog's Life: The Autobiography of a Stray* (Ann M. Martin)

What does a stray dog think about? This story is told from the view-



point of a dog named Squirrel. As a puppy, he became separated from his mother. Now he must search for a permanent home—while avoiding dangers along the way.

### ■ *Eye of the Storm: NASA, Drones, and the Race to Crack the Hurricane Code* (Amy Cherrix)

Young weather buffs can follow hurricane hunters and NASA scientists



doing the difficult work of predicting

when and how hard a hurricane will hit. Also explains how smartphones and social media have saved lives and improved emergency preparedness.

### ■ *Smile* (Raina Telgemeier)

Sixth grade isn't off to a great start for Raina, especially since she lost her two front teeth when she tripped and fell. This funny and colorful graphic memoir is based on the author's middle school dilemmas. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *Lives of the Presidents: Fame, Shame (and What the Neighbors Thought)* (Kathleen Krull)

Celebrate Presidents' Day with these profiles that focus on fun facts. Kids will enjoy discovering how one president got stuck in the bathtub, another had a beard that was so long it dipped into his soup, and much more.



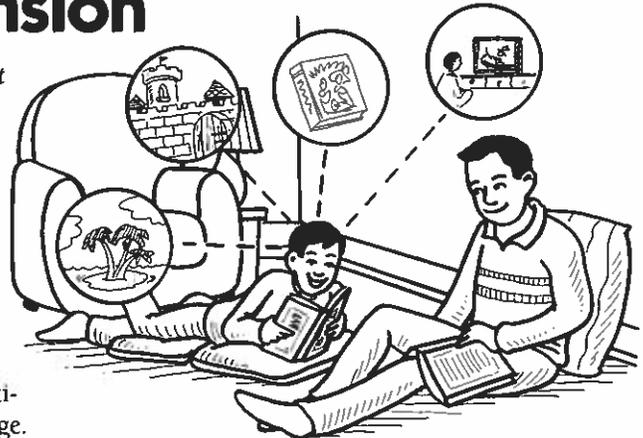
## Background knowledge builds comprehension

"I saw a shark just like that at the aquarium."

"I camped out under the stars once."

"I always want to win big prizes at carnivals, too."

When your child connects what he already knows to something he's reading, his comprehension can soar. Try these ideas to activate his background knowledge.



### Brainstorm word associations

Before your youngster starts reading a book, ask him to scan the cover for an interesting word or picture—and use it to trigger associations with words he knows. For *Treasury of Greek Mythology* (Donna Jo Napoli), he might target *mythology* and come up with a string of words like *stories*, *legends*, *heroes*, and *old*. This kind of brainstorming gives him a general idea of what to expect from the book.

### Visualize the setting

Having an image in his head increases your child's understanding. As he reads, he could jot down places mentioned in

the text (examples: castle, island). Every time he adds a setting to the list, he can ask himself: Does this place remind me of any place I have visited or that I've seen in a TV show or movie?

### Think about other books

When your youngster starts a new book, encourage him to look back on similar books he has read. For example, if he's reading historical fiction, he might relate it to a textbook chapter he read about the same time period. Before reading the second book in a series, he can skim through the first installment to recall details about the characters' personalities and the plot. 📖

## Just-right words

Encourage your child to stretch her vocabulary by going on a "word quest." She'll see how papers and other written assignments can be more interesting when she uses a variety of words.

1. Ask your child to write three sentences and underline at least one word in each. Examples: "The ugly monster roared." "The little rabbit ate." "The leaves blew in the dark forest."
2. How many synonyms can she list for each underlined word? Perhaps the rabbit *nibbled* and the leaves *rustled*. (Hint: If she's stuck, suggest that she use a thesaurus.)
3. Now she can try the new words in her sentences. Which ones sound best? 📖



# Picture this! Write that!

Looking for a way to inspire your youngster's creative writing abilities? Photos can do the trick. Here are ways to get started.

**Photo walk.** Go for a walk together, and let your child take pictures of scenes that might lead to a story. She could snap a photo of a fire truck speeding past with its lights flashing or of a frozen lake shimmering in the sun. At home, she



can look at the pictures and write a story about a courageous rescue or an ice hockey game.

**Magazine clippings.** Have your youngster cut out pictures of people, places, animals, and objects from old magazines. Next, suggest that she put the pictures in a paper bag, reach in, and pull out three at random. She can challenge herself to write a story to go with all three pictures. If she pulls

out a photo of a cat, a backpack, and a little girl sitting in a classroom, your youngster may write about a cat who sneaks into his owner's backpack so he can go to school, too. 📖

## Parent <sup>2</sup> Parent Watch out for spell-check

Parent <sup>2</sup> Parent

For the longest time, I couldn't get my son Max to understand the importance of proofreading his writing. He would roll his eyes and insist that spell-check and autocorrect were there to do the job for him.

Then one day, he read a story he had written to our family. He kept tripping over sloppy mistakes—and he couldn't believe how much they changed the meaning of his story. The first one was kind of funny: "I didn't know he was a police officer because he wasn't wearing his unicorn." It was obviously supposed to be *uniform*. We laughed about what autocorrect had done to his story, but he quickly realized that proofreading wasn't a laughing matter.

Now when Max writes, he likes to share funny examples from autocorrect. But I'm glad to hear them, because finding the mistakes means he is proofreading his work carefully. 📖



## Fun with Words A new kind of word puzzle

Fun with Words

What in the world is a ditloid?

It's actually a rather funny name for a clever kind of word puzzle. Simply put, you combine numbers and letters to represent a familiar phrase, date, or fact. For example, 24 H in a D is a ditloid for 24 hours in a day. (Note: Common words like *the*, *in*, *a*, *an*, *of*, and *to* usually aren't abbreviated.)

You and your youngster can take turns making up ditloids for each other to solve. He'll practice creative thinking, and you'll enjoy a fun game together. Score one point for each one you get right.

*Idea:* If you need hints, sketch pictures to go along with the clues. 📖



### Try these!

- 50 S on the F
- 27 A in the C
- 52 W in a Y
- 101 D
- 1 F 2 F RF BF
- A the W in 80 D

- Around the World in 80 Days
- Blue Fish
- One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish,
- 101 Dalmatians
- 52 weeks in a year
- Constitution
- 27 amendments in the
- 50 stars on the flag

Answers

## Q&A Never too old for read-alouds

Q Now that my daughter can read by herself, should we still read aloud?

A Reading aloud—at any age—is great for parent-child bonding and for boosting your child's reading and listening skills.



Let her choose books she might not read on her own, perhaps ones with more complex stories or longer chapters. Mix

things up by having her read a page or section to you, too. Or choose characters for you each to "play," and read their lines in different voices.

Another way to liven up read-alouds for this age is to read in various places and at different times. Reading before bed is great, but you could also read to her in the kitchen over snacks, on the front steps on an unexpectedly warm day, or while waiting for a relative at the bus station. 📖

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