

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2017

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Mr. Ferris and His Wheel*

(Kathryn Gibbs Davis)

This is the true story of how an American engineer invented the Ferris wheel.



George Ferris designed an enormous steel wheel with fancy cars that fairgoers could ride in, and it became one of the most popular carnival attractions of all time.

■ *Henry and Mudge: The First Book*

(Cynthia Rylant)

Henry's new puppy, Mudge, quickly grows into a 180-pound dog who walks Henry to school, sleeps in Henry's bed, and occasionally gets into trouble. The boy and his dog learn a valuable lesson when Mudge gets lost. Book 1 in the Henry and Mudge series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Before After* (Anne-Margot Ramstein and Matthias Arégui)

In this wordless book, pairs of pictures show "before" and "after"—a caterpillar and a butterfly, a pumpkin and a carriage, a snowy winter scene and a lush spring one. Can your child explain how each pair is related?



■ *I Had a Favorite Dress*

(Boni Ashburn)

A little girl wears her favorite dress every week until she starts to outgrow it. She asks her mom to turn it into a shirt—which she wears every week until it's too small. But that's not the end of it! What will her mom turn it into next?



Plan for creative writing

Youngsters are naturally creative, whether they're doing art projects or playing with toys. Let your child use his creativity to plan the stories he writes. Here are playful ideas.

Sculpt a character

Who will star in your youngster's story? Encourage him to create a main character out of play dough. It could be a person, an animal, or an imaginary creature. Suggest that his character perch nearby as he writes about it—he might write its name and its age, describe its personality (silly, serious), and tell what it likes to do for fun.



Sketch a setting

Where will your child's story take place? Have him draw or paint the setting (a classroom, a playground, a castle), and ask questions that will inspire him to add details. For example, are there tables or desks in the classroom? Does the castle have a moat and a drawbridge? He can refer to his picture while you help him

write a detailed story: "My best friend and I sit at the same round table in class."

Plan a plot

What problem does your youngster's character face? He could flesh out his plot by using small toys (action figures, bouncy balls, blocks) to act out scenes. "Seeing" the action will help make his writing more vivid and specific. For instance, he might describe exactly how a basketball player sank the winning shot or how the dragon toppled the tower.♥

Everyone reads!

Show your youngster the importance of reading by talking about books on a regular basis. Consider these everyday tips.

● **"Today I read..."** Tell your child what you read at work or in your spare time. You could describe the dishes on the new menu at your restaurant or mention a suspenseful mystery that's keeping you on the edge of your seat. Ask her to tell you what she's reading, too.

● **"I know who'd enjoy this book..."** Point out what relatives or friends might like to read. While looking at the "new arrivals" shelf at the library, you could say, "Uncle Rick loves science fiction. Let's tell him about this book." Then, encourage your youngster to be on the lookout for other books to recommend.♥



Super sight-word activities

Being able to recognize common words automatically is an important step toward fluent reading. Try these activities to help your youngster learn to read frequently used words like *said* and *went*.

Note: Use a list of sight words that your child's teacher sends home, or find a list online (try lincs.ed.gov/readingprofiles/Dolch_Basic.pdf).



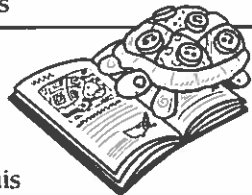
Slide and find. Your youngster can reveal sight words hidden in rice. First, cut a sheet of construction paper to fit inside a plastic zipper bag. Write 15–20 sight words in random places on one side of the paper, slide it into the bag, and have your child add scoops of dry rice until the page is covered. Seal the bag, and lay it flat on the table. She

should use her finger to slide the rice around through the plastic and say each word as she uncovers it.

Stuffed animal research

What would your child's stuffed squirrel like to eat? What kind of home does his turtle need? He can practice reading nonfiction and build early research skills as he finds out!

1. Together, find library materials that would answer his



questions. You might try information books, picture book biographies, children's encyclopedias, or kids' science and nature magazines.

2. Help him read the table of contents and the glossary to see which pages contain the facts he wants. For instance, he could look for pages that mention *diet* or *habitat*.

3. Now it's time to use what he learned to "take care of" his animals. He might "serve" acorns to his squirrel. Or he can create a pond for his turtle using blue construction paper. He'll discover that doing research to learn new things is fun and useful!♥

Q&A

Reading silently

Q My son recently started reading silently. Since I can't hear him read, how can I check on how he's doing?

A Silent reading is typically—but not always—a sign that a child is reading automatically and efficiently.

To make sure your youngster understands what he reads silently, invite him to tell you about it when he's finished. Browse through the book as he talks so you can see how well he understood it. Ask him to show you any hard words he figured out—or any he couldn't get. Also, tell him that he can come to you or an older sibling for help when he reads.

And remember, just because your son *can* read silently doesn't mean he has to do it all the time. Let him read aloud to you, and you'll be able to hear his progress.♥



Parent to Parent

A recipe for writing fun

In school, my daughter Sara had to write a recipe for something other than food. Sara decided that her recipe would be for friendship, and it called for "ingredients" like 1 cup loyalty and a pinch of laughter.

She enjoyed the assignment, so I suggested that she write recipes for other things. In her recipe for a perfect day, her instructions included mixing together

½ cup sunshine, ½ cup playground fun, and 1 cup family. Sara has also written recipes for her ideal sleepover, soccer game, and school field trip.

This has been a great way to encourage my daughter to practice writing. Now, she's compiling her recipes into a "cook-book" to keep on our bookshelf for everyone to read.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Working Together for Learning Success

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■ *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary* (Laura Shovan)

Emerson Elementary is closing at the end of the year, and the 18 fifth-graders in Ms. Hill's class want to keep it open. This novel, told in poems from the students' journals, shares their daily struggles with family, friendship, and fitting in, along with their attempts to save their school.

■ *The Future Architect's Handbook* (Barbara Beck)

Readers will follow a fictional architect who draws plans for a house.



Detailed illustrations lead aspiring young architects through the process—and may even encourage them to come up with their own designs.

■ *White Fang* (Jack London)

Your child will see the world through the eyes of White Fang, a wild wolf-dog, in this classic novel. Can the wolf-dog leave his wild life behind and learn to love a human?



Read along as White Fang becomes a sled dog and a fighting dog before finally finding a home. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *How to Turn \$100 into \$1,000,000: Earn! Invest! Save!* (James McKenna and Jeannine Glista)

You don't have to win the lottery to become a millionaire. This guide, designed to teach youngsters to be financially smart, offers tips for earning money, setting financial goals, creating budgets, and investing.



The power of predictions

What will happen next in the book your child is reading? Encourage him to combine clues from the text with what he already knows to make predictions—a powerful strategy for building reading comprehension. Try these steps.



1. Predict

Have your youngster pause after each chapter and make a prediction about the following one. Let him use a notebook to jot down his forecast, along with evidence from the book to back it up. For example, he might write, "I predict the prince will get in trouble because he invited a stranger into the castle, and the king forbids that."

2. Revise

As your child continues reading, he could gather more evidence and consider whether the new clues make him want to change his prediction. If so, he should note what he has learned and

how his thinking changed. For instance, after he reads that the king's advisor has called a council, he might add, "Now that I know about the council, I expect the prince will stand trial."

3. Confirm

When he finishes the book, he will find out if his predictions came true. Since books may contain twists and surprises, some of your youngster's forecasts may not happen as he expected. If so, suggest that he go back and reread for clues he overlooked or that could be interpreted in a different way. 📖

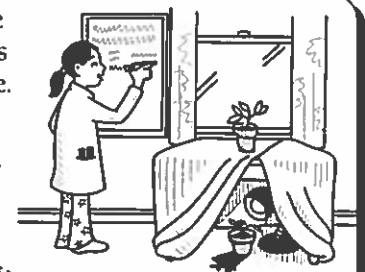
Write like a scientist

Your youngster may not realize it, but doing science involves a lot of writing. Have her imitate real scientists by documenting her own science experiments at home.

● **Before.** Your child could write an "If/then" statement giving a hypothesis about the outcome. *Example:* "If a plant is left in sunlight rather than artificial light, then it will grow faster."

● **During.** Remind your youngster that scientists write reports so others can repeat their experiments. She'll need to include each step along with her observations. "Day 3: The plant receiving sunlight has more new leaves than the one getting artificial light."

● **After.** Now your child will describe what happened. "The plant grown in artificial light is smaller than the plant exposed to sun." 📖

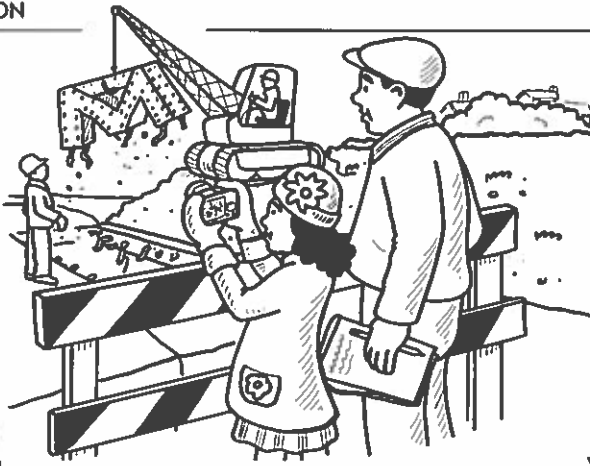


Writing for the future

One hundred years from now, who will tell people what it was like to live in 2017? Your youngster, of course! Inspire her to practice writing with that audience in mind as she creates a record for readers of the future.

Share the latest fads. Hula hoops and yo-yos were once crazes. What toys or activities does your child love today? Encourage her to write about them in a notebook. She might provide instructions for a popular game and explain why she enjoys it.

Explore current events. Today's news is tomorrow's history. Ask your youngster to create news articles about interesting



events like a baby panda born at the zoo or the opening of a new park. Remind her to answer the six questions crucial to information gathering: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Think local. In 2117, your hometown will probably look different. Let your child keep a record

of things that change. If a bridge is being replaced, she could compare and contrast the old and the new to put things in context for future readers. "The historic bridge had only two lanes, and the town needed a bigger one to support more traffic." Suggest that she snap photos to add to her record. 📷

Fun with Words

Name my "whatsit"

Figuring out unfamiliar words from context clues is a key part of reading comprehension—and a skill that gets a workout with this fun activity.

Let your child write a sentence or pick one from a book or magazine, replacing one word with *whatsit*. For instance, "The bandage has *whatsit* that sticks to skin but not the wound."



Use clues from the sentence to determine the word your youngster replaced. Talk out your thinking as you go. "I think *whatsit* is *adhesive* because it's the sticky part of bandages."

If you need more clues, ask your child to write another sentence using the word. "This *whatsit* holds wood together better than white glue."

Once you guess his word, trade roles, and replace a word in a sentence with *whatsit* for your youngster to guess. 📝

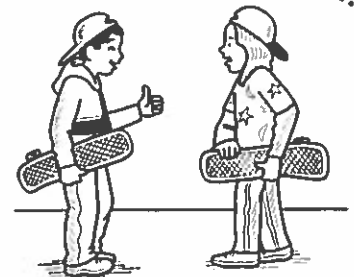


Strike up a conversation

Good conversation skills prepare your child for group discussions at school. These ideas can help him start and continue conversations.

Similarities

To get a conversation rolling, suggest that your youngster talk about shared interests. "I see you're wearing a Colts jersey. I love that team! How do you think they're playing this year?"



Compliments

Is there something your child admires about the person? Paying a compliment creates a natural opening for more talk. "That's a cool trick you did on your skateboard. Will you teach me how to do it?"

Advice

People love to share their opinions, so asking others what they think is a simple way to start or add to a conversation. "I need to pick out a birthday gift for my cousin in college. What do you think would make a good present?" 📝

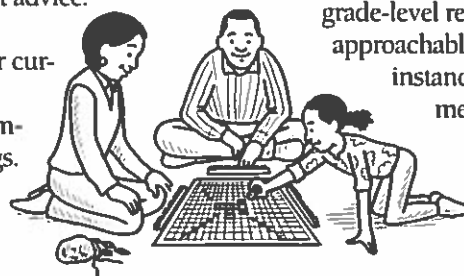
Q&A How to help your struggling reader

Q My daughter reads below grade level. She meets with a reading specialist once a week, and I'd like to help her at home, too. Any suggestions?

A Start by working closely with your child's teacher and reading specialist—they can give you great advice. Then, encourage your daughter to read at her current skill level for fun, whether it's books, comics, magazines, or blogs. This can help her develop confidence and a love of reading.

Also, use reading and reading-related activities for entertainment. Word games like hangman and Scrabble increase vocabulary and improve word recognition. Reading trivia questions aloud builds fluency.

Ask her teacher for ways to make grade-level reading materials more approachable for your child. For instance, she may recommend that your daughter listen to an audio version of a novel while she follows along in the book. 📖



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