

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2018

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Princess in Black*

(Shannon Hale and Dean Hale)

Princess Magnolia has a secret. When monsters appear, she becomes a superhero. But hiding her identity is tough, especially with Duchess Wigtower snooping around. The first book in the Princess in Black series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *There's No Place Like Space! All About Our Solar System*

(Tish Rabe)
Dr. Seuss's Cat in the Hat stars in this fact-filled book about space. Readers can jump aboard his rocket ship and travel from planet to planet to explore our solar system.

■ *Drawn Together*

(Minh Lê)
A little boy and his grandfather speak different languages, eat different foods, and prefer different TV shows.



But when they discover that they both like to draw, they find a way to connect and communicate.

This sweet tale is told almost entirely through pictures.

■ *Bat Count: A Citizen Science Story*

(Anna Forrester)
Facts about bats, conservation, and citizen science are woven into this story. When Jojo's family notices the bats around their home are disappearing, she and her family volunteer to help scientists count the animals. (Also available in Spanish.)



Tap into what your child knows

Everything your youngster does, sees, or reads gets filed away in his memory as *background knowledge*. Here are ways to help him use and build on this information to understand what he reads.

Jog his memory

Before you read, ask your child what he knows about the book's topic. This gets his brain ready to take in new information. For a nonfiction book on bees, he may say the insects buzz and sometimes sting. *Idea:* Suggest that he draw bees on a sheet of paper and write and illustrate a fact on each bee. After you read, he can add more bees with things he learned.

Pair outings with books

A trip to a craft store or the dentist can fill your youngster's tank of knowledge. Read library books related to upcoming outings, and discuss what you might see (pottery, hygienist). When you get home, reread the book. It may be more meaningful now that he has



real-life experience. ("That's right, the hygienist cleans your teeth before the dentist checks them.")

I know that!

Help your child draw a stop sign on paper, cut it out, and glue it on a craft stick. Keep the sign nearby when you read. Each time he hears something familiar, he can hold up the stop sign. Stop reading to let him share what he knows. ("We have a pet hermit crab at school. When he outgrows his shell, he crawls into a new one.")♥

According to this expert...

Let your child teach you something. By writing instructions for you, she will share her expertise and practice informational writing.

First, she could choose something she's good at, such as making s'mores or drawing animals. Have her list each step in the process. Her first step might be "For each s'more, get 2 graham crackers, 1 square of chocolate, and 1 marshmallow."

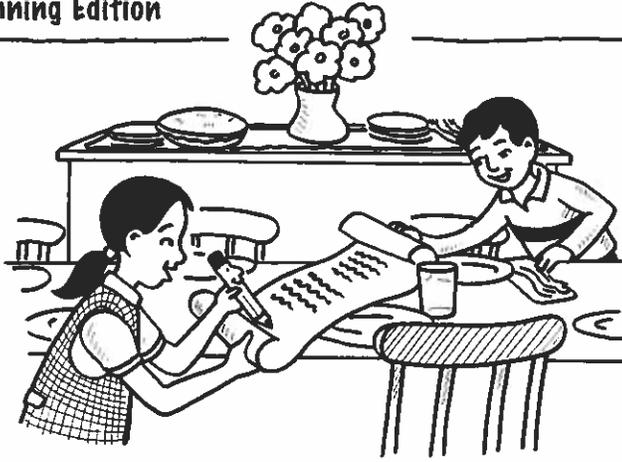
Now follow your youngster's instructions exactly. Can you complete the task? If not, ask her what's missing. ("Oops, you need to toast the marshmallow *before* you put it between the graham crackers.")♥



Thanksgiving poetry

Everyone's a poet with these family writing activities that will make Thanksgiving even more special!

Rhyming menu. What's for Thanksgiving dinner? Help your child write the name of each food (turkey, green beans, sweet potatoes) on a separate slip of paper. After she puts the slips in a bowl, have each family member draw one and write two rhyming lines of



poetry about the food. For instance, "Mashed potatoes are so *creamy*. With Mom's gravy, they're just *dreamy*." Now she can combine everyone's lines into one poem and make a copy to put beside each guest's plate.

List of thanks. Let your youngster hand out index cards and ask guests to write what they're thankful for. Then, your child

can collect the cards and write a *list poem*—by listing the ideas and adding descriptive words. Invite her to read it to everyone before you eat. *Example:*

We're thankful for
Loving family
Yummy food
Good health
Cute pets

That's what we're thankful for!♥

Q&A Too easy?

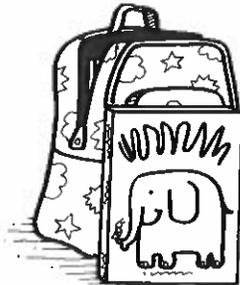
Q My son's teacher sometimes sends home books that seem too easy for him. Why is this?

A The books your child brings home are probably at his *independent* reading level—easy enough for him to read all by himself without getting frustrated.

It's likely that he reads more challenging books in school. Those books, at his *instructional* reading level, are ones he can read and understand with a little help from his teacher.

Also, keep in mind that reading involves more than just recognizing words. Your son needs books that build comprehension skills, too. For example, say he's learning to infer, or read between the lines. The teacher might assign a book that appears easy but actually requires deeper thinking to really get the meaning.

If you still have concerns, talk to the teacher. She'll be able to explain your son's reading level and how she decides which books to send home.♥



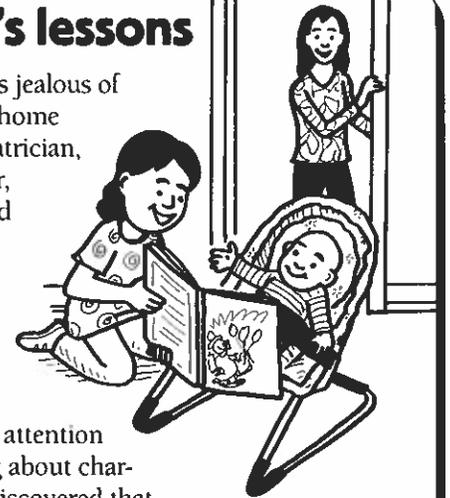
Parent to Parent

Books for life's lessons

My daughter Sophia was jealous of her new baby brother from the day we came home from the hospital. When I talked to our pediatrician, he recommended several books to read to her, including *The New Baby* by Mercer Mayer and *I Am a Big Sister* by Caroline Jayne Church.

Sophia loved the books. After we read them a few times, I caught her reading one aloud to the baby. I realized that not only was she getting in some reading practice, she was also bonding with her little brother.

Sophia is sometimes still jealous of all the attention her brother needs. But she's enjoying reading about characters she can relate to. And I'm happy I've discovered that reading is one way to help my daughter handle challenges she faces.♥



Fun with Words

Name games

When does n-a-m-e spell fun? When your youngster uses names to practice spelling. Together, list the names of everyone in your home (pets, too!), and play these games.

and drive the cars around to scramble the letters. Then, ask him to "park" the cars in order to spell the name. *Hint:* He could refer to the list if he needs help.

Draw and guess

Take turns secretly picking a name and drawing a picture of something that starts with each letter.

For *Paul*, you could draw a pickle, an apple, an umbrella, and a lion.

Can your youngster figure out the name you chose?♥

Park and spell

Let your child choose any name from the list and write each letter on a separate square of masking tape. Now he can stick each square on the roof of a separate toy car



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

November 2018

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Book Picks

■ *Pashmina* (Nidhi Chanani)

This award-winning graphic novel follows Priyanka, a young Indian-American girl trying to understand her past.

Thanks to a magic pashmina (a shawl),

Priyanka suddenly finds herself in the faraway land her family left behind. Will she discover the answers she seeks?



■ *Top Secret* (Paul B. Janeczko)

People have used codes and other secret communication methods

throughout history.

With this nonfiction guide, readers will learn about spies and find out how to make

and break different kinds of codes, create invisible ink, experiment with cipher systems, and more.



■ *Henry Huggins* (Beverly Cleary)

In this chapter book, third-grader Henry Huggins longs for excitement. One day he meets a stray dog, and his life is no longer boring. With Ribsy by his side, Henry rides in a police car, catches earthworms, and gets covered in green paint. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Baking Class: 50 Fun Recipes Kids Will Love to Bake* (Deanna F. Cook)

Encourage your child to read recipes and discover baking with this kid-friendly cookbook. It includes easy-to-follow recipes for biscuits, pie, and more, as well as tips for decorating cookies. Step-by-step photos will guide your youngster's way to delicious treats!



Details make stories sparkle!

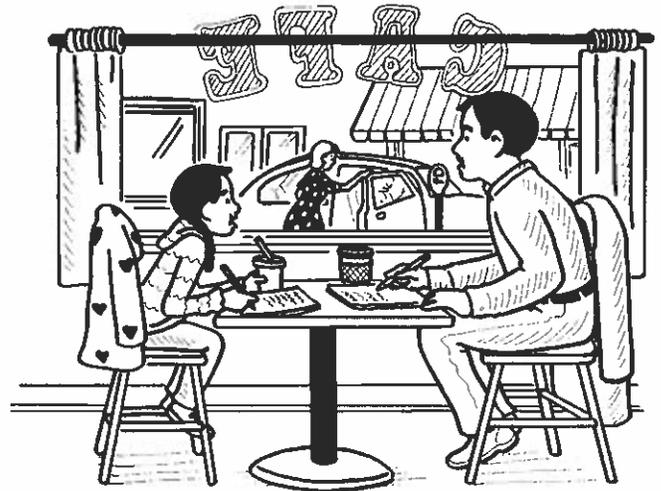
The best stories are full of details that make the reader feel like part of the action. Your child can help readers connect to her writing with these ideas.

How was your day?

Take turns telling each other about your day, and ask questions to get more specific information. If your youngster says, "We played a fun soccer game in PE," you could ask what made it fun. Maybe she'll add, "We learned a 'Catch Me if You Can' drill for dribbling faster." Do this regularly, and she'll get used to including more details—whether she's talking or writing.

Observe a scene

With your child, look out the same window for one minute. Now write what you saw, in as much detail as possible. ("A woman wearing a black-and-white polka-dotted dress and red shoes got into a silver car.") Compare your write-ups.



Your youngster will see that there are many choices when selecting details for a story.

Collect examples

Let your child keep an eye out for interesting details in books. She could jot them in a notebook or on sticky notes and use them to inspire her own writing. For example, she might notice ways an author describes weather ("Cold rain pelted her windbreaker") and characters' feelings ("Her rainbow-striped umbrella matched her sunny mood").

After-school reading

Getting involved in school and community activities is a great way to strengthen your youngster's reading skills. Consider these suggestions.

● **At school.** Encourage your child to try out for a school play. If he lands a speaking part, he'll get plenty of reading practice as he learns his lines. Or suggest that he join the band, orchestra, or chorus—reading music is a kind of reading, too.

● **In the community.** Animals can be great listeners—and your youngster may feel especially comfortable reading to them! Check your library and local animal shelters for programs that allow children to read to dogs or other animals.



What should I read aloud?

Your child is becoming an independent reader—but that doesn't mean you have to stop reading aloud. In fact, older readers reap many benefits from story time. Here's advice for deciding what to read.

Stretch his abilities. Choose something more challenging than what your youngster can read on his own. You'll expose him to more complex plots and harder words. Stop periodically to



check whether he understands what's going on, and keep a dictionary nearby to look up new words. *Idea:* Scan books or read reviews ahead of time to make sure the content isn't too mature.

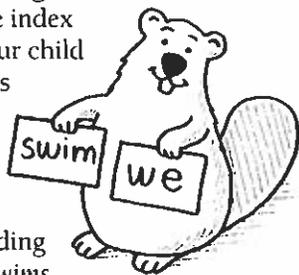
Show enthusiasm. Pick reading material you and your child will both enjoy. Whether it's a full-length novel or a short article, the pleasure you take in reading it is likely to be contagious. Consider a classic book you loved at your youngster's age or a review of a restaurant the two of you would like to try. 📖

Fun with Words

Pronouns and verbs that agree

Matching pronouns with verbs will be easier for your youngster after playing this game.

On separate index cards, have your child write pronouns (*I, you, he, she, it, we, and they*). She should write verbs ending with *s* (*runs, swims, skips*) on 10 additional cards and those same verbs without *s* (*run, swim, skip*) on 10 more.



Stack the pronoun and verb cards facedown in separate piles. On your turn, draw one card from each pile, and say the phrase formed ("we swims"). If the verb is correct, or if you can correct it ("we swim"), keep the verb card. (*Note:* The pronouns *I, you, we, and they* go with the verbs that don't end with *s*. The pronouns *he, she, and it* take verbs ending with *s*.)

Return the pronoun to the bottom of its pile. Continue until no verb cards are left—the player with the most verbs wins. 📖



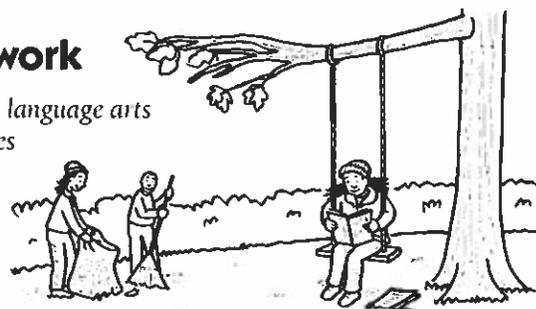
Q&A

Reading homework

Q A lot of my daughter's language arts homework this year involves reading silently. I'm used to looking over her finished homework, but I can't do that for reading. How can I support her?

A Being nearby when your child reads is a great way to offer support. Show interest by asking what she's reading about. If her assignment is a longer book, find out how many pages or chapters she's supposed to read, and help her set aside enough time to complete it.

When she has finished reading, ask what she liked or didn't like about the book. You might also encourage her to read her favorite part aloud to you. If she's supposed to record her reactions in a reading journal or write answers to discussion questions, you could look over her written work to be sure it's complete. 📖



Parent 2 Parent

In my opinion...

My son Ethan recently discovered the letters to the editor page of his favorite magazine. When I explained that the letters were sent in by readers just like him, he wanted to submit one, too.

Because my son has been asking for his own TV, he decided he would respond to an article saying kids shouldn't have TVs in their bedrooms. I told him the editor would be more likely to publish his letter if it mentioned information from the article.

For example, the magazine said kids tend to eat unhealthy snacks in front of the TV, so Ethan wrote that parents could make a rule about no food in bedrooms. The article also said children might see inappropriate shows, and he had a solution for that as well: parental controls.

We're hoping Ethan's letter will be published. Regardless, he got real-life writing practice, and he can always try again. And although I'm still against getting him a TV, now he knows I'm not the only one with that opinion! 📖



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