

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2020

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *Bots: The Most Annoying Robots in the Universe* (Russ Bolts)

What happens when a pair of robots discover a camera that Earth launched into space and forgot about? They become reality stars and broadcast their lives, of course! Your youngster will laugh at their funny adventures in this graphic novel. The first book in the Bots series.

■ *Girl Running*

(Annette Bay Pimentel)

In 1966, women weren't allowed to run in the Boston Marathon. Men said women weren't strong enough to finish the long race. But that only made Bobbi Gibb more determined to prove them wrong. This picture book biography portrays the determination of the first woman to run the race.



■ *The Lost Stone (The Kingdom of Wrenly)* (Jordan Quinn)

Clara and Lucas are unlikely friends who live in the magical kingdom of Wrenly. When the queen's emerald goes missing, the pair embark on a journey and meet everybody from fairies to wizards along the way. Book one in the Kingdom of Wrenly series.



■ *Skip Through the Seasons*

(Stella Blackstone)

This nonfiction book shows children enjoying the outdoors in each season. They ice skate in winter, play in spring rain, build sand castles in summer, and rake autumn leaves. The final pages are filled with facts about the calendar and seasonal changes. (Also available in Spanish.)



Mix up family reading time

Enjoying books as a family every day can help your child grow as a reader. Try these suggestions for adding variety to reading time—and maximizing his learning.

Vary the format

Give your youngster chances to read aloud, listen to others read, and read independently. Some days, take turns reading books to each other. Other times, listen to an audiobook together, or have everyone read on their own. *Idea:* Include extended family by inviting them over to read or arranging a video chat.

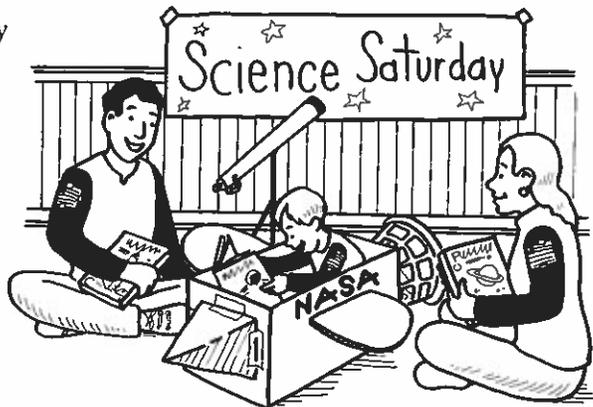
Discover different materials

Expose your child to a wide variety of reading material with this idea. Make a “bingo” card by dividing a sheet of paper into five rows and five columns. In each square, help your youngster write the name of something to read. *Examples:* fairy tale, poem, recipe, biography, graphic novel, cereal box, newspaper, magazine. Each time your family

reads something on the card, your child gets to color the square.

Explore in depth

Reading several related books lets your youngster dig deeper into a topic or notice similarities between books by the same author. Brainstorm a list of themes like Science Saturday or Roald Dahl Week. Take your list to the library and check out books to match. As you read each book, compare it to the ones you read before.♥



On-the-go storytelling

Boost your youngster's language skills and creativity by telling stories while you run errands. Use these ideas for inspiration:

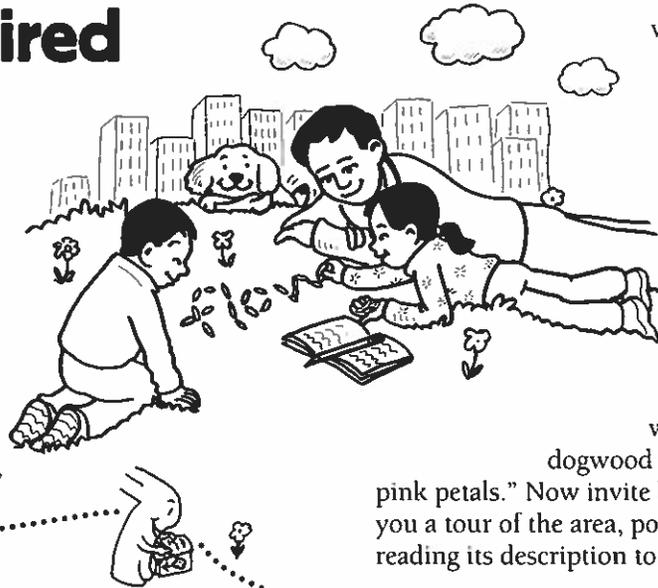
- Ask your child to choose a person or an animal who would make an interesting main character in a story. At the pet store, she might begin a story starring a colorful fish in an aquarium. She can give him a name and describe an adventure that he and his tankmates go on.
- Stuck in line at the post office or bank? Use it as the setting for a story you tell together. You might say, “Once upon a time, a little girl visited the post office.” Your youngster could add, “She wanted to mail herself to Grandpa, but there weren't enough stamps.”♥



Writing inspired by nature

Spring is perfect for a walk in the park or a romp in the backyard. While your youngster explores the great outdoors, encourage her to practice writing, too. Here's how.

Use natural objects. Help your child gather pebbles, flower petals, twigs, and other items from the ground. She can "write"



words by arranging the objects to form letters. She might write her name with blades of grass, use twigs and stones to form her spelling words, or create a message for you using flower petals. ("I love you!") Let her "save" her writing by taking a picture of it.

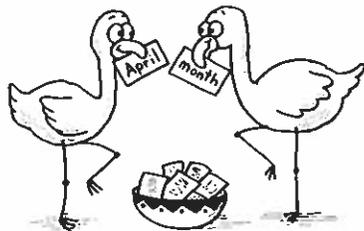
Make a field guide. In a small notebook, have your youngster draw and color plants or animals she sees outside. Then, she could write about each one. *Example:* "Our dogwood tree blooms in the spring. It has pink petals." Now invite her to use her field guide to give you a tour of the area, pointing out each plant or animal and reading its description to you.♥

Fun with Words

Proper nouns

This game will help your youngster identify proper nouns—names of people, places, and things that are always capitalized.

On 10 separate slips of paper, have your child write proper nouns (*Jack, Maryland, April*). Then, he should make 10 more slips, each with a common noun (*boy, state, month*) to match each proper one.



Mix up all 20 slips in a bowl, and take turns drawing two. If they match (*Chicago and city, Mrs. Jones and teacher*), keep both, and set them aside. If not, keep either one, and return the other slip to the bowl. As you draw more slips, you may also keep any noun that matches one you previously saved.

When all the slips have been drawn, the player with the most pairs of nouns wins.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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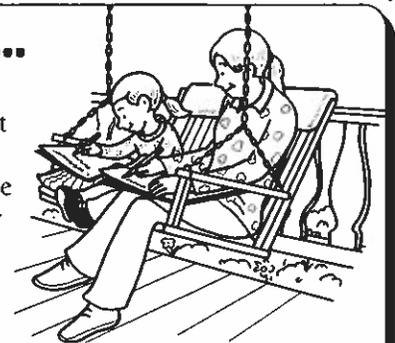
Parent to Parent

I like it because ...

My granddaughter Danielle was given a writing assignment that inspired the two of us to learn more about each other. She was asked to write one thing she liked and one thing she didn't, then explain her opinions. I knew she loved unicorns, but I had no idea she didn't like the color orange.

So I suggested that we each list five things we like and five things we don't, and write our reasons. We traded lists and took turns reading them aloud. I discovered that Danielle enjoys rainy days because they're cozy, and she learned that I've loved rock music ever since I started playing the drums in my teens.

This was a good way for Danielle to practice opinion writing and for us to bond. Now when she visits, I know not to put marshmallows in her hot chocolate—but cinnamon is just fine!♥



Q&A

Questions for better comprehension

Q I want to talk to my son about the books he reads. What kinds of questions should I ask him?

A Asking your child questions about books gets him thinking about what he reads, improving his comprehension skills. Try choosing questions that require more than a one-word answer. For example, rather than "Who is the main character?" you could ask, "What lesson did the main character learn?"

Also, encourage your youngster to dig deeper by asking questions with answers that aren't in the book. *Examples:* "What did you like best about the book?" "What would you have done differently if you were the king?"

Finally, suggest that your son pose his own questions.

He could get your opinion of a book or ask about a part that confused him. Your answers will give him new perspectives and help him understand what he reads.♥



INTERMEDIATE EDITION Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2020

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

■ *Sparks!* (Ian Boothby)

Charlie and August are two cats who are anything but ordinary. Every day, they hide inside a mechanical dog while they save lives. Join them in this graphic-novel adventure as they try to stop an alien named Princess from taking over the world.



■ *Inventions That Could Have Changed the World ... But Didn't!*

(Joe Rhatigan)

This nonfiction book gives readers a glimpse into some of the wacky inventions people request patents for. Imagine a TV you can smell, an alarm clock that lunges you out of bed, and a screeching doll, to name a few. Find out what could have been in this hilarious read.



■ *Stella Diaz Has Something to Say*

(Angela Dominguez)
Stella has a lot to say, but she's still learning English and is nervous about speaking in front of her classmates. This year in school she wants to make a new friend and compete in the spelling bee, and she has to give an oral presentation. Follow along as Stella gains courage and finds her voice.

■ *Poetry for Kids: William Shakespeare*

(William Shakespeare, edited by Marguerite Tassi)
Introduce youngsters to Shakespeare in this illustrated volume. The book includes excerpts from 35 well-known poems, verses, and sonnets, with definitions and explanations.



Writing warm-ups

Creative writing is like any other skill—it gets easier with practice. Your child can limber up her imagination and stretch her writing muscles with these fun ideas.

Collect characters

Let your youngster cut pictures of people from old magazines and newspapers. Then, she can glue each one onto an index card and write a "character sketch" (description) on the back. Suggest that she include lots of details: the person's name, his personality traits, and what's important to him. She'll have a cast of characters to use in her creative writing assignments.



Ask questions

This exercise is good for brainstorming plot twists. Give your child a small notebook, and encourage her to jot down "What if?" questions whenever they strike her. For example, while working on her science fair project, she might think, "What if a science experiment made the whole school invisible?" She can use her questions as inspiration for stories.

Pick a point of view

Have your youngster keep a list of story starters from different points of view. She might imagine how a ballerina feels before a recital—and how her ballet slippers might feel. ("We were nervous as we warmed up for the big performance.")
Tip: Suggest that your child write the same story from a different object's or character's point of view. How does the story change? 📖

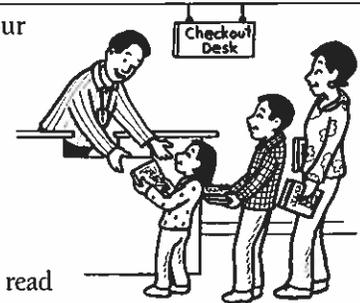
Use your library

Tap into your hometown library to foster your youngster's love of reading and find free family activities. Consider these ways to put library trips into your regular routine.

1. Make time. Pick a day that works for your family. You might visit on the third Saturday of each month or every other Friday afternoon.

2. Make each trip different. Your child might read magazines on one trip and explore music or videos on another. Ask your youngster what he would like to dig into each time.

3. Make it a family affair. Check the library bulletin board or website for events your whole family would enjoy. Keep an eye out for club meetings, storytelling, concerts, and movies. 📖



Reading + community service

Encourage your child to share his love of reading with others, and he'll learn valuable lessons in generosity and compassion. Try book-related community service projects like these:

- Ask your youngster to decorate cardboard-box "donation stations" where people can drop off gently used books. He can ask businesses or places of worship to



display the boxes. Together, collect the books and donate them to a homeless shelter.

- Your child might invite friends along to read to seniors at a nearby assisted-living home. *Note:* Make sure an adult can chaperone.

- Turn outgrown picture books into audiobooks for younger children. Have your youngster record a story and give the tape and book to a day care center.

- Host a different kind of birthday party. Ask guests to bring children's books for your child to donate to the pediatric floor of your local hospital. 📖

How many words?

Good writers vary the lengths of their sentences so the writing is more interesting and flows well. By making a simple graph, your youngster can see how her sentences stack up. Here's how.

1. Have her choose two or three paragraphs from one of her stories, reports, or essays. Let your child draw a bar graph showing the length of each sentence.

If the first sentence has five words, she would draw a bar that is five squares tall.

2. Your youngster can compare the bars to analyze her writing.

If they are all about the same height, suggest that she edit her paragraph. She might use conjunctions (*and, but, or*) to combine two short sentences. Or she could break a long sentence into two shorter ones.

3. She can graph her revised paragraphs to see the difference—and then read the before and after versions to hear the improvement! 📖



Singular to plural

Does your youngster get confused about how to make some words plural? Play this card game to help her remember.

Together, think of 20 words with tricky plurals (*fungus/fungi, shelf/shelves, deer/deer, potato/potatoes*). *Tip:* You can find lists of irregular plurals online.

Have your child write each singular word on one side of an index card and its plural on the other. Shuffle the cards and lay them out in rows on a table with the singular words faceup.

To play, take turns reading a card and, without looking, spell the plural version of the word. If you're right, keep the card, and go again. If not, return the card to the table, and it's the other person's turn. When all the cards have been collected, the winner is the player with the most. 📖



Series books build comprehension

As a child, I read all of the books in my favorite science fiction series. So when my son David showed an interest in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* books, I encouraged him to keep on reading. Every time he finishes a book, we stop by the library or a bookstore for the next one.

Although I knew I loved my books, I didn't know at the time that series books help readers build confidence and

comprehension skills. The familiar characters and words are helping my son become a faster reader, and he feels successful when he finishes each one.

I've also discovered some terrific adult series, and David and I are enjoying reading our books side by side. He says that after he finishes the first series, he's going to get started on the *Secret Coders* series by Gene Luen Yang. 📖



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