

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2018

Homer-Center Elementary School
Mrs. Lisa Weaver, Reading Specialist

Book Picks

■ *Martin Luther King Jr.: 10 Days* (David Colbert)

Your child can read about some of the most significant days in the life of the civil rights leader. This biography describes the day King launched a bus boycott, the day he gave his legendary "I Have a Dream" speech, and more.



■ *The League of Unexceptional Children* (Gitty Daneshvari)

The heroes in this story are just average kids. In fact, being ordinary is why the government recruited them to be spies. Their mission: Fix the country's biggest security breach ever and locate a missing vice president! The first book in the League of Unexceptional Children series.

■ *Puppet Mania!* (John Kennedy)

In this how-to book, a professional puppeteer shares his secrets for creating puppets. The text provides step-by-step instructions for 13 puppets, such as a "bottle bug" and a "spoon chicken." Your youngster will also find ideas for making puppets move and talk.



■ *Return to Sender* (Julia Alvarez)

A Vermont farmer hires migrant workers to save his farm after he's injured in a tractor accident. This brings together Tyler and Mari, two 11-year-olds from very different worlds who quickly become friends. A story about cultural understanding. (Also available in Spanish.)



Report-writing tips

A good report is well researched, interesting, and factual. Whether your child is asked to write about an animal, a famous person, or a historic event, here is advice to help her do her best.

Be curious

Curiosity can motivate your youngster to investigate deeper, making her report better. Talk to her about her topic (say, pandas), and encourage her to list questions. *Examples:* "Where do pandas live?" "What do they eat?" As she reads books and websites, she'll probably become even more curious. For instance, she may wonder why pandas eat bamboo if it's hard for them to digest and not very nutritious.

Keep the audience interested

Inspiring quotes, surprising statistics, and "little-known" facts can keep readers intrigued. For a report on an inventor, your child might "grab" her audience by starting with a quote. If she's allowed to include graphics, maybe she'll draw a



diagram of one of the person's inventions and label its parts.

Check the facts

Encourage your youngster to verify each fact in her report by checking at least two trustworthy sources. These usually include library books with recent copyright dates and websites of public libraries, schools, universities, and museums. If she's not sure whether a source is reputable, she could ask her teacher or school librarian. ■

Long reading assignments made easier

As your youngster gets older, he'll be asked to read longer books over several days or weeks. Help him build his "reading stamina" with these ideas.

● **Mix it up.** Using different approaches can motivate your child to stick with a long assignment. He might alternate reading one page silently and the next page out loud. For fiction, he could talk in the voices of the characters. If he's reading nonfiction, let him pretend he's narrating a documentary.

● **Break it up.** Suggest that your youngster divide a reading assignment into shorter sessions. He might read half after school and the other half before bed. Or he could set a timer to read in 20-minute segments with 5-minute breaks in between. ■

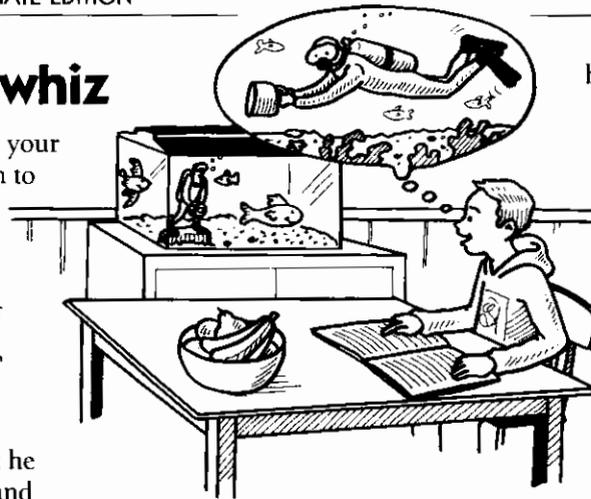


Be a word-attack whiz

Unfamiliar words don't have to stop your youngster in his tracks. Encourage him to use these strategies to figure them out as he reads.

Sound it out. Your child can try to pronounce challenging words aloud. If he says *mis-chie-vous* or *com-part-ment*, he may remember that he's heard the word used in conversation.

Cover up familiar parts. Suggest that he look for familiar prefixes and suffixes and cover them up to see what's left. For instance, he could put



his finger over *dis* in *disobey* or *ize* in *generalize*. Isolating *obey* or *general* may help him read the word.

Notice roots. A tricky word might have a root that he knows. If your child is confused by *aquanaut*, perhaps he'll think, "Aqua has to do with water. Maybe an aquanaut explores the ocean like astronauts explore space."

Use context. Suggest that your youngster skip a word he doesn't know and continue

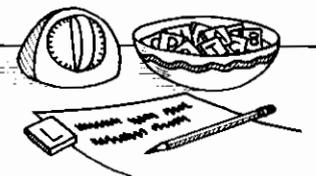
reading to the end of the sentence or paragraph. ("The *frigid* weather made Jack want to stay inside by the fireplace.") The meaning of the passage may make the word clear. ("*Frigid* must mean very cold.")

Fun with Words

Ahh, alliteration!

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" is a fun example of alliteration—where two or more words start with the same sound. Play the following game to let your youngster explore this writing technique.

1. Have your child put magnetic letters or letter tiles in a bowl. (Leave out Q, X, Y, and Z.)



2. Your youngster can pull a letter out of the bowl and set a timer for 3 minutes.

3. Each player writes the longest possible sentence using only words beginning with that letter. Sentences may be silly, but they should make sense. For L, your child might write, "Laura Llama licked lovely lavender lollipops."

4. When time's up, read your sentences aloud. Award one point for each word that begins with the chosen letter. After three rounds, the highest score wins.



Parent 2 Parent

Reading around town

My daughter Gabriella and I recently found a way to learn new facts about our town.

It started when we spotted a historical marker during a walk and realized that one of Gabby's favorite authors once lived nearby. Gabby learned that the writer arrived with her family in a covered wagon and wrote several books here. And I learned that this was a good opportunity for my daughter to read for information!

Now we point out all kinds of signs when we're out. Gabby read a plaque on a building and discovered that our town was once known for hat-making. We've also enjoyed reading the map at the commuter rail station, which describes landmarks along the train route—apparently there's an ice-cream factory three stops ahead. We plan to hop aboard soon and look for more things to read along the way!



Q&A Family discussions for everyone

Q My older son loves chatting at the dinner table, but my younger one doesn't join in very often. Any ideas on how I can balance out the conversation?

A Since good communication involves listening and speaking, your younger child benefits from hearing his older brother talk. But you can encourage him to speak, too, with these suggestions.

Try asking a "Question of the Day." It could be funny ("If you were an amusement park ride, which one would you be?") or straightforward ("What is your favorite family tradition?"). Then, go around the table to give each family member a chance to answer.

Another idea: Before dinner, ask each child what he'd like to discuss during the meal. Your younger son may be excited to participate in a conversation if it's on a topic he suggested.



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Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2018

Homer-Center Elementary School
Mrs. Lisa Weaver, Reading Specialist

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ My First Coding Book

(Kiki Prottsman)

Your child doesn't need a computer to learn about coding! The puzzles, flaps, and games in this nonfiction book make coding fun. Complex terms become easy to understand, and colorful illustrations add to the enjoyment.



■ Ladder to the Moon

(Maya Soetoro-Ng)

Suhaila wishes she could meet her grandmother, who died before she was born. Her wish comes true when Grandina Annie travels down a magical ladder. The pair go on a fantastical journey to help people in need. A dreamlike folktale about empathy. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ On the Spot: Countless Funny Stories

(Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Lea Redmond)

This clever rhyming hook invites readers to join in the storytelling. Each page has a fill-in-the-blank spot where your youngster can place a sticker or small object—and it becomes part of the tale. Read the book again using new items, and get an entirely different giggle-worthy story.

■ How People Learned to Fly

(Fran Hodgkins)

People tried many ideas on the path to inventing the airplane. Your child will love these fun facts about the history of flight. An activity at the end invites readers to experiment with creating their own airplanes.



Vocabulary builders

“Fancy” nouns, clever verbs, awesome adjectives—all kinds of words make up a good vocabulary. Here are ways to increase the number of words your child knows, making her a stronger reader, writer, and speaker.

Bring nouns to life

Your youngster has probably sat on an *ottoman*, but she may not realize that's what it's called. When she hears or reads a “fancy” noun (person, place, or thing), encourage her to write it on a sticky note. Have her use the note to label the object. She could stick *bureau* on her dresser, or label the hallway with *corridor*.

Act out verbs

This charades game will teach your child interesting new verbs (action words). First, brainstorm a list of verbs (*run, hop, sing, sweep*). Include ones she doesn't know like *chuckle* or *stomp*, explaining what they mean. Take turns



acting out a word from the list—whoever guesses it goes next.

Add an adjective

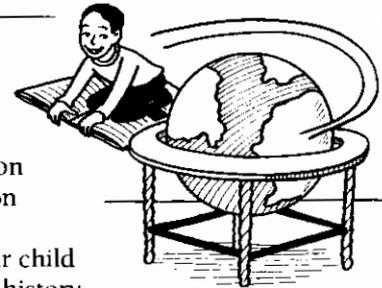
Have your youngster find an object and choose an adjective (descriptive word) for it. *Example:* “This is a *purple* hairbrush.” Then, you take the item and add a word, perhaps an unusual one (“This is a *sturdy purple* hairbrush”). Pass it back and forth until you can't come up with another adjective. Play again with a new item. ♥

Read around the world

Turn your youngster into a world traveler by helping him learn about other countries through books.

Together, look at a world map, and list the seven continents. Next, find library books set on each (a Japanese fairy tale, a nonfiction book on Australian animals).

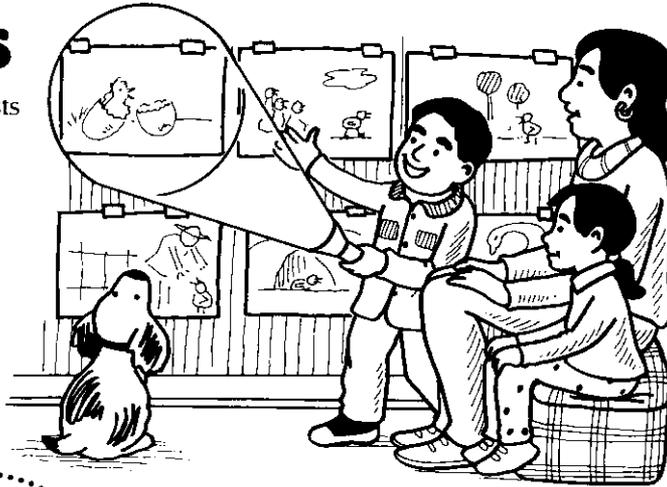
As you read, talk about what you learn. Your child may discover tidbits about a country's culture, history, and traditions, and even learn a word or two of the language spoken there. When you've finished reading, he could make a tally mark beside each continent on his list. How many books can he read for each continent? ♥



Retelling stories

Did you know that retelling a story boosts your child's reading comprehension? As he describes the characters, setting, and plot, he's putting events in sequence and picturing the story in his head. Make retelling more fun with these activities.

Slide show. Invite your youngster to draw each scene from a story on a separate sheet of paper and hang them in order on a wall or door. Then, he can put on a



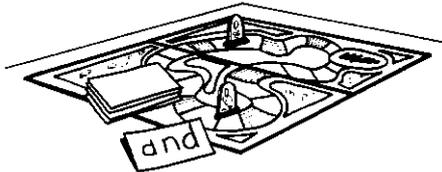
show! Turn out the lights, and have him shine a flashlight on each picture as he tells you the story.

Story figures. Let your child search through old magazines and cut out pictures to represent characters, places, and objects from a book. For a story about a boy who took his puppy to school, your youngster might

Fun with Words Game-night sight words

Replace the dice in any board game with sight words, and voila! You'll add reading practice to game night.

Ask your child's teacher for a list of sight words (commonly used words) they're working on in class, or find a list online at sightwords.com/sight-words/dolch/#lists. Help your youngster print each word on a separate index card, and stack them facedown.



Choose a board game with dice (Monopoly Jr., Chutes and Ladders). Play as usual—but instead of rolling dice, draw a card. Read the word aloud, and move your piece the number of letters in the word. So *and* lets your little one move three spaces, and *yellow* will send her zooming ahead six. Set the cards aside as they're used. If you run out before the game ends, mix them up and stack them facedown again.

Don't be surprised if your youngster wants to learn longer words so she has a chance to move farther on each turn!♥

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find a photo of a little boy, a classroom, and a puppy. He can tape each one to a building block and use the picture blocks to retell the story.♥

Q&A Paint the alphabet

Q My daughter is learning to write her letters. How can I help her work on this at home?

A Handwriting practice can be lots of fun for little ones.

Have your daughter dip a cotton swab into vegetable oil and use it to "write" any letter on paper. Then, let her paint over the letter with watercolor paint. Since oil and water don't mix, the oily letter will "resist" the watercolor, and the letter will be visible!

Make practice more challenging by giving her clues that tell her which letter to form: "Write the last letter in Mommy's first name" or "Your favorite food starts with this letter."

Once your child gets going, she might like to write the entire alphabet and paint over the letters with different colors.♥



Parent to Parent

My calendar book

My son Elijah told me that his class writes and puts together "real books" this year, and he wanted to make his own books at home.

His first one was a "calendar book." He counted out 12 sheets of paper, and then I helped him write the name of a month on every page. Next, he thought about each month and added a

sentence describing it, such as "January is for snow," "March is for kites," and "August is for the beach."

Finally, Elijah illustrated the pages, and I stapled them together. His book turned out super cute, and

he was happy to read it to me. The pictures helped him read the names of the months. Next, he wants to make a book all about shapes.♥

