

Reading Connection

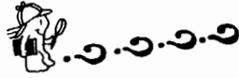
Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2016

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

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ **Lou Caribou: Weekdays with Mom, Weekends with Dad** (Marie-Sabine Roger and Nathalie Choux)
Lou is a young caribou who has two homes, and both are filled with love. This cute rhyming story shows Lou having fun with his mom during the week, then packing his suitcase each weekend for more fun with his dad. A nice read-aloud for children whose parents live apart.

■ **The Squiggle** (Carole Lexa Schaefer)
During a walk to the park, a little girl sees a red “squiggle” on the sidewalk. She picks it up and begins to imagine all the things it could be—a trail of fireworks, ripples in water, or even part of a storm cloud. Your child will enjoy imagining what else a squiggle might be.



■ **Ice Cream: The Full Scoop** (Gail Gibbons)



Does your youngster know that the first ice cream recipe included snow? Combining history and science, this nonfiction book explains how the dessert has changed through the years. Readers will discover interesting ice cream trivia and learn about different ways the treat is served.

■ **The Little Engine That Could** (Watty Piper)

“I think I can. I think I can!” This classic story of perseverance tells of a little blue engine who believed in herself. When the big red engine breaks down, it’s up to the little engine to deliver toys and food to the children on the other side of the mountain. (Also available in Spanish.)



Read between the lines

If your child reads “The snowman looked smaller than it did yesterday,” can she figure out the snowman is melting? Making *inferences*, or understanding what’s happening when the author doesn’t come right out and say it, is an important comprehension skill. Try these strategies.

Make up riddles

Take turns thinking of a person, place, or thing and giving each other clues to guess it. *Example:* “Sometimes I am round, and sometimes I’m a crescent shape. You see me at night. What am I?” (The moon.) Then, pose “riddles” from stories you read together: “In the story, the girl frowned and stomped off. How do you think she feels?” Your youngster may answer, “I think she is angry.”

Solve mysteries

Read a mystery, and let your child pretend to be a detective. She might get a small notepad and a pencil to jot down or dictate clues. (“Jack was not at work



the day the vase was stolen.”) Her mission is to use the clues to solve the mystery before the book characters do.

Infer in real life

Get your youngster in the habit of making everyday inferences. If you put a skillet, a loaf of bread, and cheese slices on the kitchen counter, invite her to infer what you’re cooking (grilled cheese). Or if you place the cat carrier by the front door, ask her what inference the cat could make—he’s probably going to the vet!♥

Playful printing activities

These hands-on ideas make it enjoyable to practice forming letters.

● **Disappearing letters.** Write letters or words on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Your child can trace over each letter with his finger or a cotton swab to make it vanish.

● **Toothpicks and clay.** Have your youngster roll clay into a large ball and flatten it. Then he could use a toothpick to “write” letters in the clay.

● **Snack-time writing.** Cover a plate with a thin layer of hummus. Let your child drag celery stalks or pretzel rods through it to write his name—and eat the dipped treats when he’s finished!♥



Winter writing

Winter brings plenty of opportunities to write. Whether your youngster is just starting to write words or can write complete paragraphs, keep his skills sharp with these suggestions.

Weather calendar. Draw or print out a blank calendar page. Before bed each night, your child could record the day's weather with a symbol (snowflake, raindrop, sun) and write the weather word.



Resolution list. Let your youngster interview family members about their New Year's resolutions. Help him list them on a sheet of paper. Then on New Year's Eve, invite him to read them to everyone.

Winter break journal. Help your child staple together paper—one sheet for each day of winter vacation. Encourage him to write about what he does every day. When he goes back to school, he could share his journal with his teacher.♥



Q&A Catch the mistake

Q My daughter doesn't always notice if she makes a mistake while she's reading aloud. She'll just keep going even if a sentence doesn't make sense. What should I do?

A Strong readers learn to "self monitor," or catch their mistakes and try to correct them.

When your child makes an error that affects a story's meaning, wait, and give her a chance to correct herself. If she doesn't, encourage her to think about whether the word she said looks like the printed word or makes sense in the sentence. If she says *soft* instead of *sofa*, point out that the word looks like *soft*, but that a puppy wouldn't sleep on a *soft*.



Note: If your youngster often makes mistakes and doesn't seem to understand what she's reading, talk to her teacher.♥



Syllable shout-out

Who can spot something with two syllables? How about three?

With this game, your child will practice listening to separate syllables—a skill that will help her sound out words.

Materials: pencil, paper, picture book or magazine

Let your youngster write each player's name across the top of a piece of paper. Then, she flips to a random page in the book or magazine and says either "one," "two," or "three." Everyone looks at the open page for an item with that number of syllables. The first person to find one points to the object and says its name slowly, pronouncing each syllable separately. (For three, someone might spot a *car-ou-sel*.)

Help your child write the word and the number of syllables under the player's name. That person goes next and turns to a new page. After 10 rounds, add the scores, and the player with the highest total wins.♥



It's poetry night!

For a cozy family evening filled with reading and fun, try holding a poetry night. Check out children's poetry books from the library, and enjoy these activities.

"Musical" verses

Line up a row of chairs, one for each player and a few extras. Each person chooses two short poems, writes them on pieces of paper, and places each sheet under a chair. Then, play music while everyone walks around the chairs. When the music stops,

sit on the closest chair, and read the poem underneath—no one is out. Keep going until everyone gets a chance to read every poem.

Poem-in-a-bag

Before poetry night, every family member picks a poem, puts related "props" into a brown bag, and writes the title on the bag. For a poem about lemonade, for example, your youngster might include a lemon, a sugar packet, and a cup. Pull out your props as you read your poem to everyone.♥



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

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INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

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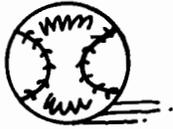
Book Picks

Laugh-Out-Loud Jokes for Kids (Rob Elliot)

Aspiring comedians can find hundreds of jokes packed into this volume. Youngsters will get plenty of giggles while sharing funny stories, silly poems, knock-knock jokes, and tongue twisters. The first book in the Laugh-Out-Loud series.

Tortilla Sun (Jennifer Cervantes)

All Izzy knows about her father is that he died before she was born. While spending the summer with her nana in New Mexico, Izzy is determined to learn more—especially why he wrote the words *because* and *magic* on a baseball.



Science on the Loose: Amazing Activities and Science Facts You'll Never Believe (Helaine Becker)

Fooling the brain, making ice cream, and testing reflexes are just a few of the experiments your child can do using common household items. Interesting explanations, along with facts and trivia, add to the fun of exploring real-world science.



Infinity Ring: Mutiny in Time (James Dashner)

Fifth-grader Dak Smyth gets to see history firsthand after he and his friend Sera discover a time-traveling device. When Dak's parents are lost in time, the friends must travel back to 1492, while keeping the device a secret. Book 1 in the Infinity Ring series.



Be a word collector

Your child might collect stickers or coins, but how about collecting words? Starting a word collection will increase her vocabulary and make her a stronger reader and writer. Share these ideas.

Get artsy

When your youngster draws a picture, ask her to think of a creative way to add words to it. For instance, after drawing an elephant, she could read an article about the huge mammals. Then, she might write words she learned (*pachyderm, herbivore, endangered*) as a spray of water coming from the elephant's trunk.

Sprinkle on "spice"

Let your child turn empty spice containers (or any empty jars) into a collection of "zesty" words to use when she writes. Have her label each container with a common word like *pretty, great, or went*. She can hunt in books, a thesaurus, or a dictionary for replacements (*gorgeous, astounding, scurried*). Have her write each one on a slip of paper and



add them to the matching container. Encourage her to use these words to spice up her writing!

Play games

Suggest that your youngster write interesting words on index cards and play word games with them. She might play War where the longest word, or the word with the most vowels, wins. Or try this: Flip Scrabble tiles upside down. Each player picks a word card. Take turns drawing tiles—the first person to spell the word on her card is the winner. Tip: Have your child keep blank cards on hand for adding to her collection. ■

In a nutshell

Writing summaries helps your youngster remember and describe key ideas in a story. Foster this skill at home with these everyday activities:

- Suggest that your child keep a two-sentence diary. Every night he could think of details about his day that stand out and then summarize them in two sentences. "I finally saved enough money to buy a fish tank. Mom bought me my first two fish."
- Have your youngster secretly pick a movie and think about the plot by asking himself the questions *who, what, where, when, and why*. His challenge? To summarize the answers in one paragraph. Your challenge? To guess his movie! ■



Family winter reading fun



Winter break means a vacation from school—not a vacation from reading. Keep your youngster turning pages with family-friendly activities like these.

Season's readings. Hold family read-alouds with books that have a winter theme. Ask your child to bring home a selection from the school library, or check out books from your public library. Then, take turns reading chapters from fiction like

Snow Treasure (Marie McSwigan) or nonfiction about winter weather or animal habits, such as *DK Eyewitness Books: Arctic & Antarctic* (Barbara Taylor).

Silent party. Help everyone unwind with a silent reading party. Family members can each bring a book and a blanket and gather in the living room. Snuggling and reading is the best feeling!

Stories in motion. Turn a favorite tale into an evening's entertainment. As one person reads aloud, another acts out the story. At the end of each chapter, let a new reader and actor take over. 📖



Fun with Words

Ready, set, punctuate

This editing game will strengthen your child's punctuation powers.

Materials: newspapers or books, paper, pencils



Have each player write a random sentence from a newspaper or book, leaving out the punctuation marks. Count the number of deleted punctuation marks and jot it down at the end of the sentence. For this sentence—*Sally ate apples, bananas, and oatmeal.*—your child would remove the two commas and the period and then write 3.

Trade papers, and add the missing punctuation. Compare your corrected sentences with the originals. Score one point for each mark you missed. At the end of five rounds, the low score wins. 📖

Q&A

Developing digital literacy

Q My son's teacher says he needs to be more thorough when he does online research. How can I help?

A It's common for kids—and adults—to do simple Google searches and rely on the first links that pop up. Show your son how digging deeper leads to better results.

Have him search online for something he is interested in, perhaps "most popular sport." Then, brainstorm ways to change the search to get more targeted results. For example, he might type "most popular sport in Minnesota" or "most popular winter sport." He'll see the difference a few words can make.

Also, help him evaluate which sites are more trustworthy. For instance, a site from a company that sells winter sports gear might be less reliable for the information he seeks than a site from a university or a government agency. 📖



Parent 2 Parent

Bring characters to life

Our older daughter, Chloe, loves making up characters for stories she writes. So when our younger daughter, Emma, needed help dreaming up characters for a creative writing assignment, I asked Chloe for ideas. She invented a fun activity to do with her sister.

They each found a picture of a person in a magazine. Then, they imagined 10 things about that person. Is she funny? Does she like to dance? What kind of pet does she have?

Using their lists, they wrote a letter from their character introducing herself to them. Chloe showed Emma how she makes a character's language reflect that person's background. For instance, her cowgirl opened her letter with "Howdy" instead of "Hello." Emma decided that her character would be French and begin with "Bonjour."

Emma really enjoyed doing this. Now I'm looking forward to seeing what characters she comes up with for her stories. 📖



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