

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

November 2016

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



Book Picks

■ *The Misadventures of Max Crumbly: Locker Hero* (Rachel Renée Russell)

If middle schooler Max Crumbly had superpowers, the school bully wouldn't stuff him into lockers, he wouldn't miss the bus, and he'd never feel anxious. But when Max uncovers a plot to steal the school's computers, he gets a chance to really be a hero!

■ *This is Washington, D.C.*

(Miroslav Sasek)

Introduce your child to landmarks and the history of the nation's capital with this travel guide for kids. Explore monuments, museums, and parks, including the Lincoln Memorial, the White House, and the National Air and Space Museum. Part of the "This is" series.



■ *The Key to Extraordinary*

(Natalie Lloyd)

In Blackbird Hollow, 12-year-old Emma discovers through a dream that she was meant to find a mysterious treasure

and stop a developer from destroying her home. Will she get to the treasure in time?

■ *Mad About Monkeys* (Owen Davey)

This illustration-packed book is filled with information about monkeys—their habitats, what they eat, and how they play. Learn about funny facts, such as which monkey wins for "best facial hair," and about serious topics like the threats posed by deforestation. (Also available in Spanish.)



Dive in to read deeply!

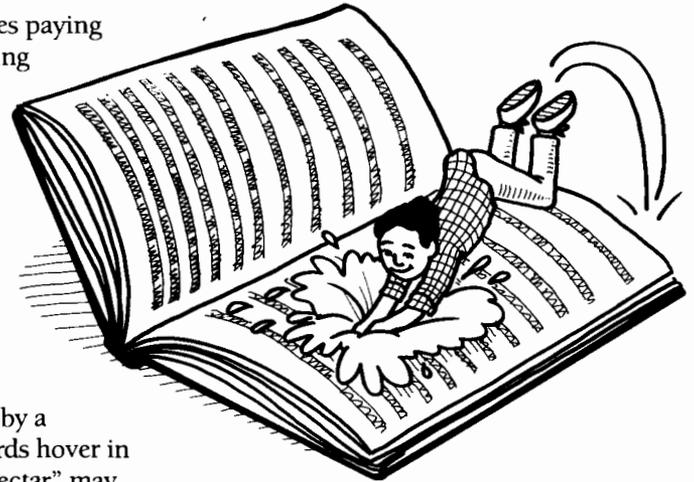
"Deep reading" includes paying attention to details, noticing characters' motivations, and making connections with what you read. Your child can dig beneath the surface with these suggestions.

Find the "big idea"

Small details often add up to a bigger theme. On the surface, sentences like "It's no fun to get sprayed by a skunk" and "Hummingbirds hover in midair while they drink nectar" may seem unrelated. But encourage your youngster to look for a link. He might realize, "Skunks spray to protect themselves, and hummingbirds hover to reach their food—this article is about animal survival."

Uncover the motive

One way to dig deeper is to consider a character's or an author's purpose. For example, why does Willy Wonka hold a contest in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl)? (He needs to find out who he can trust to take over his



factory.) Or maybe a movie critic wants to convince people to see a film. What clues can your child find in the review that point to the writer's motivation? ("Don't miss this gem!")

Dare to compare

Making comparisons to his own life helps your youngster analyze reading material. If he reads a textbook chapter about the Dust Bowl, he could compare it to a natural disaster that happened in his lifetime. How did each disaster affect people and the environment? ■

Question of the week

What's the best sport to play on the moon? Use questions like that to encourage your child to write about her opinions and defend her answers.

Family members could take turns posting an open-ended question each week. Then, everyone writes a response and an explanation. For example, your youngster might write, "Gymnastics is a great sport for the moon because you could do lots of flips and go really high. It would be better than a game with a ball, because a ball would float away."

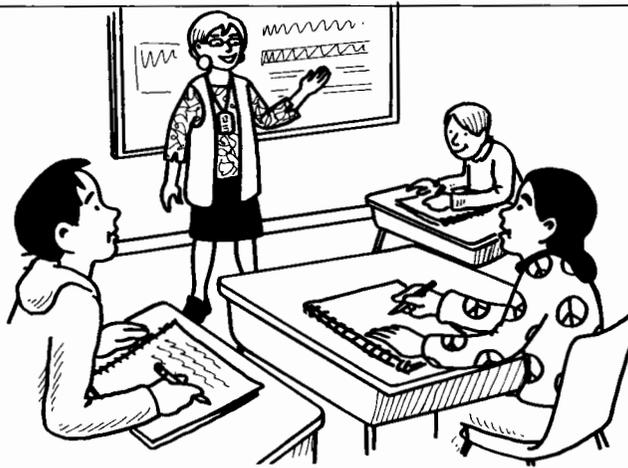
Put the responses in a box. At the end of the week, let your child read them aloud. You'll have fun discussing them over dinner! ■



Note-taking tips

Your youngster's notes are one of the best study tools she can use. Show her these strategies for writing down and keeping track of what she needs to know for tests and quizzes.

Be organized. Encourage your child to use a separate notebook or folder for each subject. She should write the date and the topic at the top of each page of notes so that later, she can easily find what she's looking for.



Zoom in. When her teacher talks, suggest that your youngster focus on clues that indicate she should write something down—such as when the teacher spells a person's name or repeats a date.

Abbreviate. Have your child think of

ways to shorten words she writes frequently. She might use "frex" instead of "for example" or "b/c" for "because."

Add symbols. Your youngster could put a question mark beside anything that confuses her as a reminder to ask the teacher about it. Or she may add a star to indicate something that's really important. 🌟

Fun with Words @ play

Get your child thinking about language in a fun and playful way by solving word puzzles together. Here's one to get you started:

What's ^{MAN}BOARD? (It's "man overboard!")

See how many of these 10 puzzles you and your youngster can figure out. (The answers are below.) Then, try your hands at creating new ones for each other to guess.

1. KCAP
2. ThePIEface
3. Read the print
4. Little little late late
5. +verb
6. Hijklmno
7. Somewhere the Rainbow
8. | Read |
9. NOONGood
10. e
k
a
w



Answers:

1. Backpack
2. Pie in the face
3. Read the fine print
4. Too little, too late
5. Adverb
6. Water (H₂O)
7. Somewhere Over the Rainbow
8. Read between the lines
9. Good afternoon
10. Wake up

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
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Parent 2 Parent Prepare for conferences

Last year at my parent-teacher conference, the teacher asked if I had questions about my son's reading progress. I couldn't think of any off the top of my head, but at home later, I came up with several I wished I had asked.



This year, I'm going to the conference more prepared. So far, I've listed questions about which reading group Anthony is in and whether he participates in discussions about books. I'm also going to ask if the teacher has recommendations for books that he can read at home.

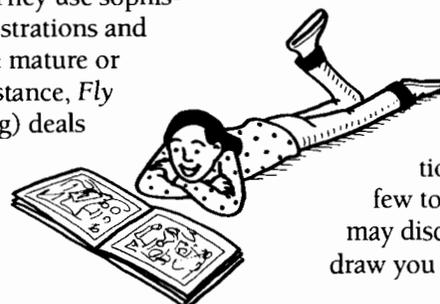
Having a list makes me feel more confident about the conference, and I'm sure I'll walk away with information about how Anthony is doing with reading and how I can help him succeed. 📖

Q&A Get the picture (book)

Q My daughter recently brought home a picture book from the school library. Aren't these too easy for children her age?

A It might surprise you to learn that some picture books are written especially for older readers. They use sophisticated language and illustrations and sometimes address more mature or complex themes. For instance, *Fly Away Home* (Eve Bunting) deals with homelessness, and *Most Loved in All the World* (Tonya Cherie Hegamin) tells a story about slavery.

Ask your daughter what she likes about picture books. Maybe they remind her of when she was younger, or she likes being able to read an entire book in a single sitting. Or perhaps she uses them to understand science or history concepts—they're great for explaining complicated ideas.



Then, the next time you're at the library together, explore the picture book section and take home a few to read together. You may discover stories that draw you in, too! 📖

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2016

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Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ **Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle** (Brian Dennis, Kirby Larson, and Mary Nethery)

In Iraq, Marine Brian Dennis formed a bond with a wild dog, sharing rations and standing watch. This touching read-aloud tells of the pair's determination to be together against all odds.



■ **The Box of Holes** (Carmen Gil)

A child's imagination turns a cardboard box into an adventure. Andrea's mother scolds her for buying an empty box, but the little girl discovers that it's full of "holes" that lead to magical characters. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ **Alphabet Rescue**

(Audrey and Bruce Wood)

Your youngster can learn uppercase and lowercase letters with this colorful ABC book. The lowercase letters want to help the capital letters

on their fire truck, but the big ones say no. After the little

ones fix a broken-down fire truck (little *p* gets paint, little *t* finds new tires), they prove they're big enough to perform rescues.

■ **The Tooth Book: A Guide to Healthy Teeth and Gums** (Edward Miller)

This colorful how-to book encourages youngsters to take good care of their teeth. Your child will see the parts of a tooth, find out why she loses baby teeth, and learn about what happens at the dentist's office.



I can use big words!

Many youngsters are familiar with big words like *stegosaurus* and *abracadabra*. If they're able to say those words, they can also learn long words like *investigate* and *summarize*. Try these ideas to help your child find and use big words.

Read new words

Reading is an ideal way to build vocabulary. Your youngster will hear bigger words when you read aloud to him from more challenging books. Encourage him to listen for unfamiliar words, and help him figure out their meanings. Because children need to hear the same word many times to really learn it, weave the words into conversations throughout the day.

What's in the category?

Each week, ask your child to post a category ("Animals," "Foods," "Things that are shiny") on the refrigerator. Everyone looks for words to add that match the category. For instance, watch a science program about animals to hear words like *orangutan* or *gazelle*. Or your youngster



could scan grocery ads for food words, such as *nutritious* or *gorgonzola*.

Make trading cards

Have your child make trading cards for new words he encounters. During a walk, you might say, "How many kinds of *transportation* can we spot?" At home, help him write *transportation* on an index card, and let him illustrate it (perhaps with a car and a bus that he saw). Suggest that he keep his cards in a zipper bag and practice using them. Friends or relatives can start their own decks and trade with him—your youngster will discover even more new words.♥

Read a book, write a math problem

Combine reading, writing, and math by having your child make up word problems based on her favorite books. Here's how.

If she reads *The Rainbow Fish* (Marcus Pfister), she could write (or dictate to you) a story problem like, "Rainbow Fish had 10 colorful scales. He gave 9 away. How many are left?" Or after reading *The Gingerbread Man* (Jim Aylesworth), your youngster might make up a word problem such as, "The gingerbread man ran from 3 people and 3 animals. How many chased him in all?"

Idea: Have your child read and act out the story problems. She could use household items like foil scraps for fish scales or toy people and animals.♥



Enjoy nonfiction

As your youngster gets older, she'll spend more time reading nonfiction in school. Consider these ideas for letting her discover the joy of learning new facts and exploring the interesting features in children's nonfiction books.

Know what's real. Some information books for kids blend fiction and nonfiction. For example, a talking animal might state real facts, or a mythical creature may narrate a true story. Help your child distinguish fact from fiction by asking how she knows a picture or an event is real or not real.



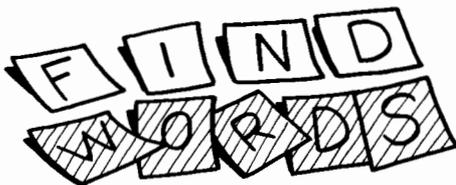
Take your time. Give your youngster a chance to explore all the features on a page. She may want to look at a time line or a diagram before you read the main text to her. Then, she could study the photos while you read the captions aloud. She'll become familiar with the features in nonfiction, which will prepare her to read textbooks in school.♥

Fun with Words

Hide, seek, and spell

Combine hide-and-seek with spelling practice, and watch your child have fun learning his spelling words.

First, ask him to write each word on a strip of construction paper, using a different color paper for every word. Then, he should cut each strip into individual letters.



Choose one or two words, and hide the slips around the house. Tell your youngster how many to look for (say, five blue and four red), and send him hunting! His job is to find the letters and spell the words. He might wait until he has every letter, or he could spell as he goes.

Check to make sure he spelled his words correctly. Now he can hide letters for you.♥

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a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
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Q&A

Understanding reading levels

Q When I get my son's progress reports, they include his reading level in addition to his grade. What does the level indicate?

A Usually, a letter, number, or word (such as *emergent* or *novice*) on a progress report tells what level book a child can read independently. A parent-teacher conference is a great opportunity to find out more about your son's reading abilities and to see examples of books that are at his reading level.

In general, though, the important thing is that your child's reading level improves steadily over time. At home, focus on how much fun it is to read with him rather than on the level of the book he's reading. His excitement about books will motivate him to try hard—and he'll be likely to make progress.♥



Parent to Parent

A parent-child notebook

My daughter Rebecca received a cute notebook and a pack of colored pens for her birthday. I thought the notebook would make a great diary, but she had an even better idea. She asked if we could use it to write notes to each other.

Sometimes I work late, and I love coming home to drawings

and notes from Rebecca. If she's asleep when I get in, I write a note for her to find in the morning. We write about our days and leave questions for each other to answer. And sometimes we'll put in a funny joke or an interesting tidbit we heard that day.

It has turned out to be a great way for Rebecca to practice writing—and for us to stay connected on our busy days.♥

