

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2020

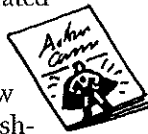
Universal School
In Pursuit of Spiritual and Academic Excellence



Book Picks

Boys of Steel: The Creators of Superman (Marc Tyler Nobleman)

In 1934, high schoolers Jerry and Joe combined their writing and drawing skills to create the celebrated superhero Superman. This comic-style book tells the true story of how the duo convinced publishers to take a chance on Superman and how the character became a household name.



Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring (Angela Cervantes)

Paloma doesn't realize that her love of mystery books is going to come in handy during a visit to Mexico. Siblings Gael and Lizzie are supposed to tutor her in Spanish, but instead they invite her on a search for the missing ring of famed Mexican artist Frida Kahlo.



Science Experiments You Can Eat (Vicki Cobb)

Young scientists will enjoy testing these edible experiments in the kitchen. Make rock candy to explore crystals, whip up salad dressing to see how liquids are suspended in oil, and more. Includes a glossary of science terms.

Sled Dog School (Terry Lynn Johnson)

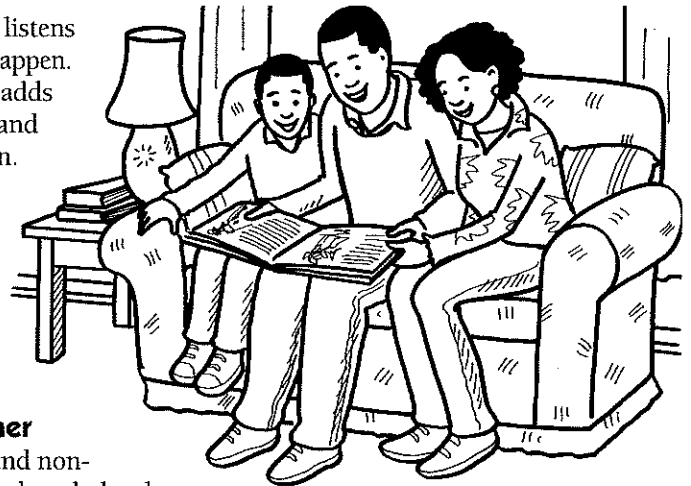
To bring up his math grade, Matt takes on an extra-credit project to start a business. The one thing he's really good at: training sled dogs. Follow along as Matt learns to handle customers and track his expenses while juggling his day-to-day school responsibilities.



Keep reading aloud

When your youngster listens to you read, good things happen. He uses his imagination, adds words to his vocabulary, and boosts his comprehension.

Plus, even though he probably reads on his own now, reading aloud can help your child develop a love of books that will last a lifetime. Try these ideas.



Choose books together

Novels, short stories, and non-fiction books all make good read-alouds. Spark your youngster's interest in listening by having him help you decide what to read. Look at lists of award-winning books at your library or online. Or ask his teacher, a librarian, or a bookseller for recommendations.

Find time daily

Try to read to your child a little every day. When you're reading a long book, a few pages a day can help him remember what's happening. *Tip:* If he has reading to do for class, you might suggest that

he finish it first and then play outside or have a snack before he settles down to enjoy a read-aloud.

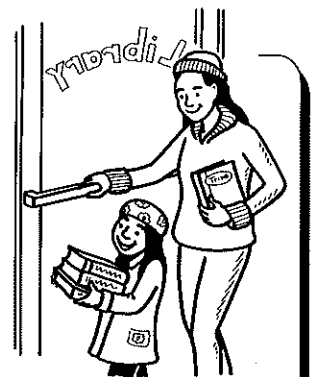
Include the family

Invite everyone to listen when you read to your youngster. Create a relaxed atmosphere by stopping to laugh at funny parts or asking for opinions about a character's decision. At the end of story time, build excitement for the next installment by letting each family member predict what will happen. ■

Be a fact finder

Use trivia as a fun way to get the whole family learning together. Gather almanacs, record books, or trivia books from the library, and do these activities:

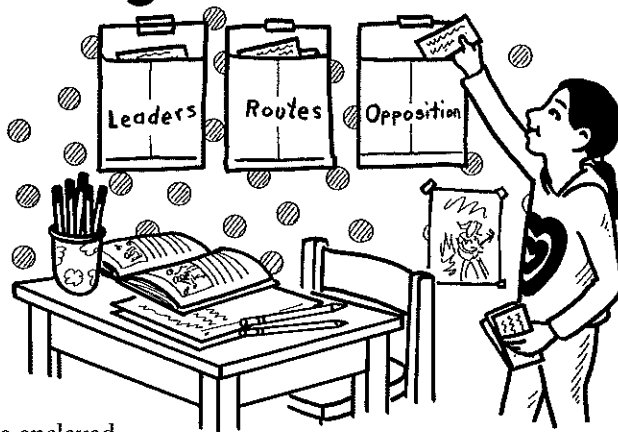
- Let your youngster pose a fact-based challenge. ("Find a fact about outer space.") Everyone searches the books, and the first person to find a fact that fits reads it aloud. ("All planets rotate counterclockwise except Venus and Uranus.") Then, that family member asks for the next fact.
- Play a board game with a twist: To move, answer a question from another player based on a fact from a book. *Example:* "What was Thomas Edison's middle name?" (Alva) The first player to circle the board wins. ■



Organize before writing

Help your youngster set herself up for writing success! She can turn in better reports and essays by organizing ideas and information before she starts writing. Encourage her to use this three-step method.

1. Get focused. The first step is pinpointing the main idea of her paper. If your child's teacher assigns a report on the Underground Railroad, her main idea could be "The Underground Railroad was a secret network that helped some enslaved people escape to freedom."



2. Choose subtopics. As your youngster does research, suggest that she write each fact on a separate index card. Then, she can sort the cards into subtopics ("Leaders," "Routes," "Opposition"). She might label an envelope for each category and store the cards in the appropriate one.

3. Review notes. Before she writes her paper, she should read over the note cards in each category. She can set aside any that don't support her main idea and rearrange those that belong with a different subtopic. Now, she's ready to write. ■



Fun with Words Write a "list poem"

Your child can learn to describe a topic thoroughly by writing a list poem. It's just what it sounds like: a list of words and phrases that go together to make a poem.

First, have your youngster pick a person, place, or thing and write a title for his poem ("My Best Friend," "The Roller Skating Rink," "A Rainy Day").

Next, he can list words and phrases underneath. Encourage him to pick a variety of vivid vocabulary words, such as action words or words that describe colors and senses. Finally, he might wrap up his poem by repeating the title as the last line. Here's an example:

A Rainy Day

Drips, drops, sprinkles
 Gray sky
 Dark clouds
 Lightning flashes
 Thunder booms
 Clouds burst open
 A rainy day. ■



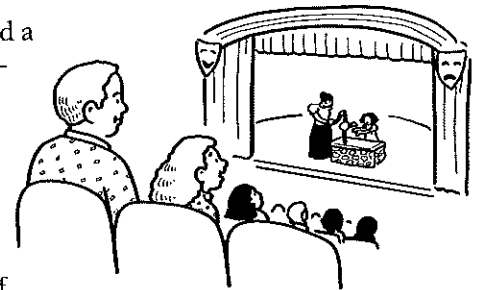
Parent 2 Parent Read a book, see a play

Last spring, I discovered a new way to share my love of theater—and reading—with my daughter Eva.

My neighbor gave our family tickets to her son's high school play. After the performance, Eva surprised me by asking to read the book the play was based on. We borrowed a copy from our neighbor, and by the end of the week, we had both finished reading it.

Now I keep an eye out for plays inspired by books, either at the high school or at our community theater. Sometimes we read the book first. Other times, we see the play first. Then we compare the two versions.

We recently saw *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and next we have tickets for *The Jungle Book*. Eva has already finished reading both books! ■



Q&A Ready for testing

Q My son has standardized tests coming up. How can I help him prepare for the reading sections?

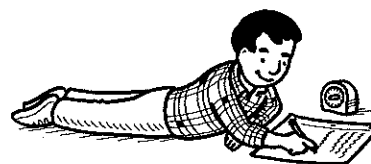
A Start by asking him what kinds of questions will be on the test. He can find out from his teacher or look at sample exams given out in class or posted online. Then, he can use homework assignments as practice.

If the exam will be timed, your child could time himself when he writes an English essay. Or he might use strategies for

reading-comprehension questions when he has history assignments.

For instance, suggest that he start by reading the questions in a handout or a textbook chapter—and then read the relevant passages. This will tell him what information to look for, and he'll be ready to try this technique on test day.

Note: Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast before his test (and every day). ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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