

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

December 2013

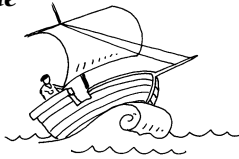
Waller Independent School District

4th Grade, 5th Grade, 6th Grade, 7th Grade, 8th Grade

Book Picks

Explore! The Most Dangerous Journeys of All Time

Your child will learn about 20 explorers in this real-life adventure book by Deborah Kespert. There are accounts of the voyages of Marco Polo, David Livingstone, Mary Kingsley, and others. Also includes interesting facts about how people can survive in extreme conditions.



Bridge to Terabithia

Jess's new next-door neighbor beats him in a race, knocking out his hopes for becoming the fastest runner in school. Despite this rocky start, the two create an imaginary world and a thriving friendship. A Newbery Honor winner by Katherine Paterson. (Also available in Spanish.)

The New Way Things Work



Does your youngster wonder how cell phones work? What about lasers? David Macaulay's

illustrated reference book starts with simple machines, like levers and pulleys, and moves on to the inner workings of modern inventions.

Hiding Out at the Pancake Palace

In this story by Nan Marino, tween superstar Elvis Ruby suffers from an embarrassing case of stage fright on a reality show. Now he's hiding from the paparazzi by working in a restaurant. Elvis thought being famous was tough—until he tried being anonymous.



Read a book, do an activity

Pairing books with fun activities can inspire your child to read more often. Here are ways he might use books to try new projects, learn fascinating facts, and visit interesting places.



Do an art project

Suggest that your youngster get art books from the library and choose something to try. He could pick sculpture, cubism, or pop art, for example. Then, he can look at the pictures and read about the technique and the materials needed. *Idea:* His art teacher may be able to recommend a good book.

to display with them. ("The cheetah is the fastest mammal.")

Display a collection

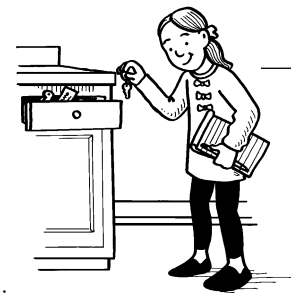
Whether your child collects trading cards or toy animals, his reading skills can help him set up an exhibit. Have him find a collector's guide or another nonfiction book, and encourage him to dig for facts about the items in his collection. He can arrange the objects on a table and write the facts on index cards

Take a field trip

Let your youngster pick a fun spot for your family to visit that's related to a book he has read. For instance, he might read *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl) and find a local plant that gives tours. During the outing, ask him how the real-life experience is similar to and different from the one he read about.

Places to find story ideas

Does your family's junk drawer tell a story? Or is there a story behind a lost-and-found ad or a song on the radio? When your youngster has a creative writing assignment or wants to write for fun, suggest that she find an idea in one of these places:



- **The junk drawer.** Let her pick a few random items, such as an old key and a business card. She could imagine that the key unlocks a secret room at the address on the card.

- **Classified advertisements.** Have your child use a newspaper ad as inspiration. She might write about a lost dog being reunited with his owner, for example.

- **The radio.** Your youngster can use a line or a verse from a song to make up her own story. For instance, a love song may prompt a modern-day fairy tale.

Organize before writing

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

1. Get focused. The first step is pinpointing the main idea of her paper. If her teacher assigns a report on the Underground Railroad, her main idea could be “The Underground Railroad helped many slaves become free.”

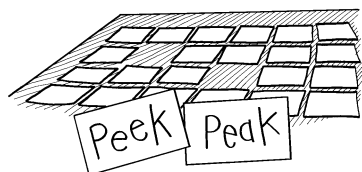


2. Choose subtopics. As your youngster does research, suggest that she write each fact on a separate index card. Then, she can sort the cards into subtopics (“Leaders,” “Routes,” “Opposition”). She might label an envelope for each category and store the cards in the appropriate one.

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 Homophone match-up

Your or you’re? Its or it’s?
Play this card game to help your youngster learn homophones—words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings.



You’ll need 24 index cards. Together, brainstorm nine pairs of homophones (*peek, peak; affect, effect*) and two sets of trios (*there, their, they’re; to, too, two*). Note: Google “homophones” for more examples. Then, have your child write each word on an index card. Shuffle the cards, and lay them facedown in six rows of four.

On your turn, flip over three cards. If two are homophones—or if you get a trio—use each word correctly in a sentence, and keep the cards. (Put back the third card if it’s not part of a trio.) If they don’t match or if you misuse a word, flip all the cards back over, and your turn ends. Once all of the matches have been collected, the person with the most cards wins.



Q&A Gifts for readers

Q My nephew is a bookworm. I always give him books as gifts, and I’d like to surprise him with something different this year. Any suggestions?

A It’s great that your nephew loves to read! Keep the new reading material coming all year long with a magazine subscription to match his interests. For example, he may enjoy *Sports Illustrated Kids* if he’s a sports lover or *Odyssey* if he’s into science.

Many bookworms also like word games and activities. Try a board game such as *Last Word* or *Word on the Street*, a set of storytelling dice or poetry magnets, or a book of crossword puzzles or word searches. Other ideas include bookmarks, a book light, or bookends.



Read and imagine

Strong readers naturally form “movies” in their minds as they read, which helps them understand the material. These strategies can help your child sharpen her visualizing skills.

Casting

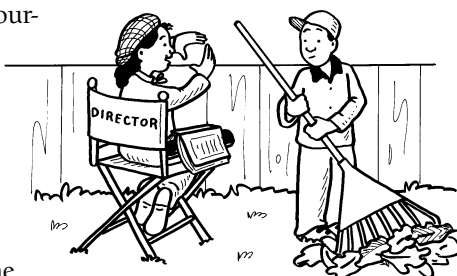
If your youngster were directing a movie based on a book, who would she cast? Encourage her to picture each character and choose a famous person or someone she knows who would be just right for the part. She might think about the

author’s descriptions of the character’s appearance, personality, and mannerisms to make her selection.

Location

Suggest that your child look for passages in the story to help her decide where her movie should take place.

Then, she could close her eyes to picture a setting for each scene. If the book is about a journey in a covered wagon, she might imagine the “flat stretches of earth” and “endless blue sky.”



OUR PURPOSE

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

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