

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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North Elementary School
Paula Burgoyne - Reading Specialist

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ Pop! *The Invention of Bubble Gum*

Almost 100 years ago, after much trial and error, a candy factory worker came up with a recipe for bubble gum. Walter Diemer's product was a huge success, and it saved the failing company. This non-fiction book by Meghan McCarthy includes fascinating facts about gum.



■ Owl at Home

One cold winter night, Owl is home alone. He wonders whether, if he runs fast enough, he can be both upstairs and downstairs at once. He's also curious about the two bumps under his covers—why do they move when he moves his feet? A cozy read-aloud by Arnold Lobel. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ Tap the Magic Tree

This story by Christie Matheson asks your child to tap the pictures, shake the book, clap his hands, and more. After he makes each movement and turns the page, "magic" happens—the bare tree grows leaves, apples drop to the ground, and snowflakes fall from the branches.

■ How To

Author Julie Morstad will delight your youngster with creative and silly methods for doing everyday activities. Wash your socks by stomping in a clean puddle, or watch where you're going by following your shadow. Your child might be inspired to come up with her own clever ways of doing things!



Mealtime Literacy

What's for dinner? Along with chicken and carrots, serve up a side of reading and writing. Use these mealtime activities to build your child's skills in a tasty way!

Read a recipe

Give your youngster the recipe for a dish you're going to cook, and help him read it aloud. Then, ask him to line up the ingredients and utensils in the order that they appear in the recipe. This is good practice for thinking about what happens first, next, and last in a story.

Cook a storybook meal

Read a book about food, and together, write a recipe based on it. After reading *Soup Day* (Melissa Iwai), your child might want to make vegetable soup. With *Blueberries for Sal* (Robert McCloskey), your youngster could help you bake blueberry muffins. Preparing recipes based on books will help him connect what he reads with real life.



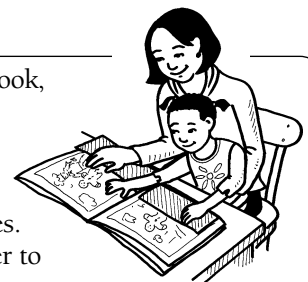
Write a menu board

On a chalkboard or white board, help your child write the menu for your family's meal. Encourage him to work on descriptive writing by making each food sound tempting—just like on a restaurant menu board ("Juicy turkey burgers," "Creamy mashed potatoes," "Crisp green beans"). *Idea:* For more writing practice, have your youngster make place cards or placemats for the table with family members' names. ♥

Reading words and pictures

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but in a book, pictures and words work as a team. Here are ways your youngster can use illustrations to understand books:

- Take a "picture walk." Before your child reads a book, flip through the pages and talk about the pictures. This gives her an overview of the story and prepares her to understand the plot.
- Cover up the words on a page, and ask your youngster to predict what the text is about based on the picture. Or hide the illustration, read the text, and encourage her to draw a picture. She'll see how illustrations and words are related.
- Your child can look for clues in pictures to help her read new words. For instance, if she sees a spotted animal on the page, she may figure out that an *ocelot* is similar to a leopard. ♥

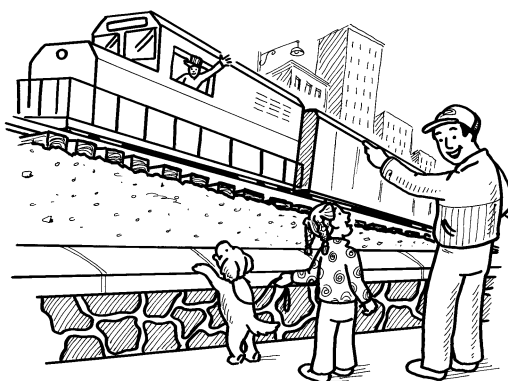


More knowledge = better writing

“I held the string and ran, and it rose into the sky!” If your youngster has ever flown a kite, she might be able to write a sentence like that.

Background knowledge—the collection of information that comes from everyday experiences—can give your child topics to write about and make her writing more detailed. Consider these tips.

Go places. Walk through a different neighborhood or part of town, and point out things your youngster could include in a story. Explain what an invisible fence is, stop in an antiques shop and let your youngster see a rotary phone, or talk about what a freight train might be carrying. Also, look for free-admission days at museums and zoos.



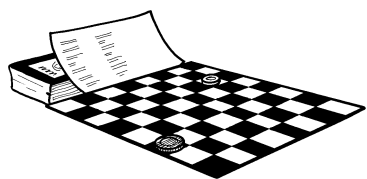
Talk to people. Ask relatives to tell your child about countries or states they’ve been to. One of the places could be the setting for your youngster’s next story. Or have a neighbor or a shopkeeper describe his job—perhaps your child will write about a character who is a police officer or a baker.

Read. At the library, check out books on topics your youngster can’t experience first-hand. Through reading, she can imagine what it’s like to play in the snow even if she lives in a warm area, attend a one-room schoolhouse from a century ago, or travel in outer space.♥



Spelling checkers

Spelling practice is more fun when you turn it into a game. Try this twist on checkers.



Ask your child to get his list of spelling words. Then, let him look through the dictionary and pick more difficult words for you to spell. Each player gets a checker and places it anywhere on his first row. To play, take turns calling out words to one another.

If you spell your word correctly, move forward or diagonally one space. If you’re wrong, go back a space (stay put if you’re in your first row). The first person to reach the other side wins. *Note:* Players can’t share a space or jump each other.

Variation: Play in teams. Each team member gets a checker, and you take turns spelling the words your team is given.♥

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
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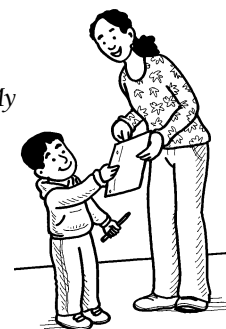
Q&A Everyday grammar

Q When I was little, we had a grammar textbook. My son doesn’t have one—do kids still study this subject in school?

A Yes. Although your son might not have a book that’s just about grammar, he learns correct English every day.

For example, the teacher may have students figure out what parts of speech their vocabulary words are. If she writes a “morning message” on the board, perhaps she’ll call on children to circle the adjectives. Or the teacher may show them how to capitalize proper nouns (America, Saturday) or use past-tense verbs (“I went” rather than “I goed”).

As your son gets older, he may get more formal grammar assignments. If you have questions about what he’s working on now, you could ask his teacher. Maybe she’ll even offer ideas to try at home—no textbook required!♥



Parent to Parent Rub-a-dub words

Recently a friend gave me an easy recipe for washable finger paint. Her kids use it to paint in the bathtub, and I decided it would be a fun way for my daughter Leila to practice writing.

Leila squirted shaving cream into several plastic cups. Then, she stirred a few drops of food coloring into each one until the paints were the shades she wanted. During her bath, she dipped her

finger in the cups to paint a rainbow on the tile by the tub. I suggested that she add a sentence about her picture, so she wrote, “I saw a rainbow.”

Now, Leila writes every time she takes a bath. Once she wrote the alphabet, and another time she listed her cousins’ names. She’s having fun writing—and it’s easy for her to wipe off the paint with a wet washcloth when she’s finished.♥

