

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2020

Weakley County School System

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *It's Only Stanley* (Jon Agee)

The Wimbledon family is trying to fall asleep, but every time they do, Stanley the dog wakes them up. First he howls, then there are clanks, buzzes, and other random sounds. What's all the noise about? Stanley is up to something wonderful in this rhyming story.



■ *Starring Jules* (As Herself)

(Beth Ain)

Second-grader Jules Bloom is in a panic. She has an audition for a commercial that she's sure will lead to fame. But she's going to need the help of her ex-best friend and a potential new best friend to make it happen. This early chapter book is the first in the Jules series.



■ *Little Libraries, Big Heroes*

(Miranda Paul)

How did Little Free Libraries get their start? Readers will find out in this biography about Todd Bol. He created the first Little Free Library to share his mother's love of reading with others. Since then, the movement has spread, turning Todd into a reading hero for people all over the world.

■ *I Am Earth* (Rebecca and James McDonald)

Earth itself "narrates" this nonfiction book about gravity, changing seasons, orbits, and more. Information on keeping the planet healthy is woven in, and comic-style illustrations and speech balloons make the book easy to read. (Also available in Spanish.)



Clever decoding strategies

What goes through your child's head when he's reading and comes to a word he doesn't know? Encourage him to think like a detective by asking himself these questions that will help him "decode" unfamiliar words.



"Does it remind me of a word I know?"

Once your youngster learns to read a word, he can use it to read other words. For practice, take turns picking a word and saying words it makes you think of. See a stop sign? Your youngster might say *stop* starts like *step* or rhymes with *top*. Now have him use this strategy when he reads. *Example*: "*S-t-o-m-p* looks like *stop*. But there's an *m* in it. *Stomp!*"

"Is there a part I recognize?"

Even if your child doesn't know a long word, chances are there are small words inside it that he can read. Choose a long word in a book, and see who can find the most words in it. In *window*, your youngster may see *win* and *wind*. Or maybe he'll notice that *macaroni*

contains *car* and *on*. Putting together the familiar parts can help him read the whole word.

"Does it have a pattern?"

What do *cake*, *lime*, and *note* have in common? They all follow the pattern consonant / long vowel / consonant / silent *e*. When you read with your child, encourage him to look for words that fit patterns he is learning in school. Spotting the pattern might help him correctly read *mine* instead of saying *min*, for instance. ♥

Trace the groundhog's shadow

Will the groundhog see his shadow this Groundhog Day? The groundhog in this activity will—and by tracing the shadow, your youngster will give her "writing muscles" a workout.

● **Sculpt.** Let your child use clay or play dough to make a groundhog. She'll strengthen her fingers as she rolls and shapes the dough.

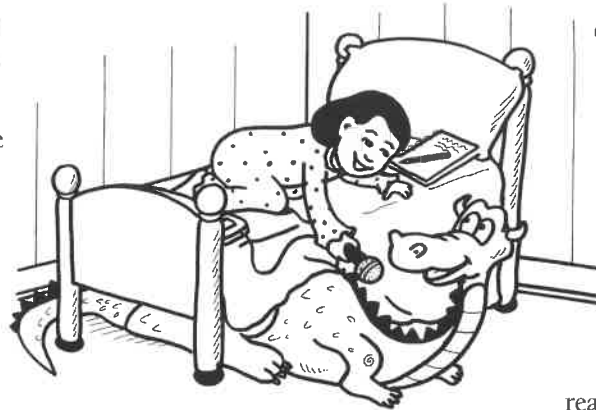
● **Trace.** Have your youngster trace her groundhog's shadow to work on hand coordination. Lay a sheet of paper under a lamp. She can position the groundhog so the light casts a shadow on the paper. Then, she could use a crayon to trace around the shadow's outline. ♥



Write to learn

As your child learns to write, she can also use writing to learn. Here are a few ideas.

“What I know” journal. Encourage your youngster to start a notebook about what she’s studying in school. After a science experiment with magnets, she might list things that she discovered are magnetic, then test household objects and add to her list. Or if she’s learning to solve story problems in math, she could make up her own problems and illustrate them.



Character interviews. What would your child ask a famous person or a fictional character? She can use her imagination by writing pretend interview questions and making up answers. Maybe she’d ask, “What’s the hardest thing about being a dragon?” and reply: “Hiding under the bed!”

Reading log. Suggest that your youngster keep track of books she reads. She could practice summarizing by writing a sentence or two about each title. She may even rate each book with 1–5 stars—she’ll practice critical thinking as she compares books and decides which ones she liked more or less than others.♥

Q&A Silent reading

Q My daughter has started reading silently. What is my role now?

A The ability to read silently shows that your child is becoming more independent as a reader. Still, she’ll benefit from the same kinds of things you did when she was just beginning to read.



For example, make sure she has plenty of reading material. Take regular trips to the library, and encourage your daughter to choose a variety of books. Also, set aside time to read. You might snuggle up and read your own book alongside her—you’ll show her that reading is a lifelong pleasure.

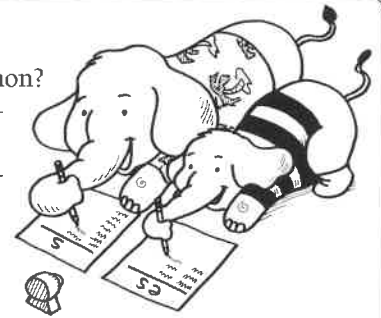
Finally, talk about books with your youngster. Ask her about what she reads in school and at home, and tell her what you’re reading. The two of you might even read the same book and discuss it when you’re finished.♥

Fun with Words

Play with plurals

What do *s* and *es* have in common? They turn singular words into plural ones! Play this game to help your youngster discover guidelines for choosing the correct ending when he writes.

1. Have your child label two sheets of paper, one with *s* and the other with *es*. You take one sheet, and he gets the other.
2. Set a timer for three minutes. Each of you should look through a book and write plural words you find with the ending on your sheet. For *s*, your youngster might list *arms*, *birds*, and *cups*. For *es*, you could write *dishes*, *couches*, and *boxes*.
3. When time’s up, have your child count the words on each sheet. Which ending “wins” (is most common)? He’ll see that most plural words end with *s*.
4. Ask your child what he notices about the *es* words. He may realize that many have *ch*, *sh*, *s*, *o*, *x*, or *z* before the *es*, while other words take an *s*. Then, suggest that he keep the lists handy when he writes so he can refer to the examples.♥



Parent to Parent

Be a reading volunteer

I wanted to support the reading program at my son Ricky’s school. Since I stay at home with my infant twins, I emailed the teacher to ask if she had take-home projects I could do.

I found out that there are many ways I can help. Sometimes the teacher sends home instructions and materials for me to make classroom games like spelling bingo and vocabulary tic-tac-toe. Other

times, she has asked me to write poems or sentences on poster board. The projects are fun, and Ricky is always interested in what I’m doing.

I’ve also volunteered in the classroom a couple of times while my mom watched the twins. One morning, I read with small groups, and another day, I helped students turn their stories into books. Ricky likes seeing me in his classroom, and I like that I’m making a difference at his school.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks

■ **The Nora Notebooks: The Trouble with Ants** (Claudia Mills)

Nora dreams of being a scientist like her parents. Her current fascination? Ants. When she's given a persuasive writing assignment in school, she decides to present scientific facts to convince others that ants are as interesting as she thinks they are.



■ **Kid Athletes: True Tales of Childhood from Sports Legends** (David Stabler)

Explore the childhoods of famous athletes like gymnast Gabby Douglas, basketball player Yao Ming, race car driver Danica Patrick, baseball player Babe Ruth, and others. Before they were world-renowned athletes, they were just kids who went to school and dealt with daily challenges—like your child does.



■ **The Time Machine** (H. G. Wells)
What will life be like in the future? In this classic science fiction novel, a man travels in a time machine. He discovers a society without disease, poverty, or war—but the people have also lost the qualities that make each person unique. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ **Pass Go and Collect \$200: The Real Story of How Monopoly Was Invented** (Tanya Lee Stone)

Learn all about how one of the most famous and beloved board games was invented by Lizzie Magie in the 1800s. The history of Monopoly is told in this nonfiction book that includes a trivia section and Monopoly Math problems for readers to solve.



Nonfiction family fun

Biographies...science... history...nonfiction books not only give your youngster practical reasons to read, they're fun and interesting, too. Use these ideas to encourage her to enjoy and learn from nonfiction.



Explore art

Ask each family member to read a biography of a famous artist. Then, talk about the artists' lives and how they created their art. Each person can choose her favorite and do an art project based on that artist's style. If your child picks Georges Seurat, she can try *pointillism*—Seurat's technique of making entire pictures with tiny dots.

Discover nature

Field guides and other nature books have detailed photographs and descriptions of trees, birds, and flowers. They can introduce your youngster to new vocabulary and spark her interest in science. Plus, they'll get the whole family outdoors. You might find one at the

library and use it to identify plants and animals in your neighborhood.

Delve into history

Read about family trees in a book like *Climbing Your Family Tree* (Ira Wolfman). Gather photos and information from relatives (full names, dates and places of birth), and make your own family tree. Or pick a local landmark, such as a historic home or battlefield. Then, read about it in your library's local history section, or research it online.

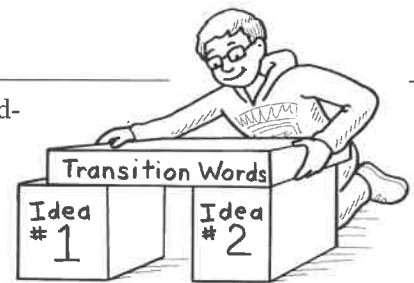
Transition words

Writers use transition words to help readers move smoothly from one idea to the next. Show your child these ways to use them when he writes.

● **To indicate order:** *first, second, next, then, finally, last.* (First, Josie unlocked the door. Then, she opened it. Finally, she peeked inside.)

● **To compare ideas:** *like, unlike, however, instead, still, also.* (Unlike spiders, which have eight legs, bees have only six legs.)

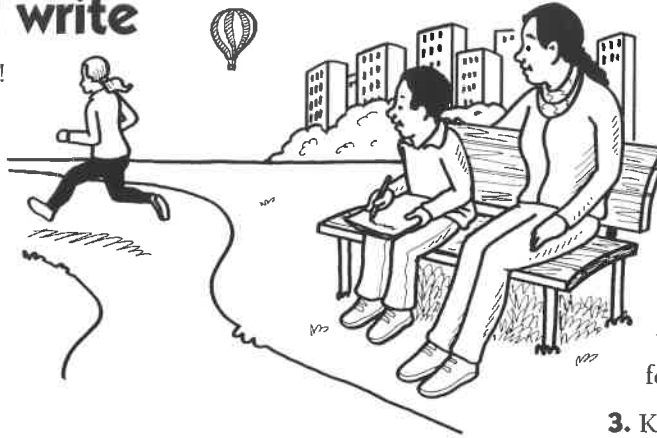
● **To indicate cause and effect:** *because, since, as a result, therefore, so.* (Since it's getting late, we have to go to bed.)



Stop, drop, and write

Anytime is a great time to write! Spark your child's enthusiasm for writing with these spur-of-the-moment activities.

1. Bring a spiral notebook along for writing on the go. He can choose three things he spots, say a jogger, a hot-air balloon, and a park bench. Then, ask him to write a news report that uses all three. When he finishes,



he can pretend to be a TV or radio reporter and “broadcast” his story to you.

2. Hang a poster board on your child's bedroom door, and let him use markers and colored pencils to cover it with “graffiti.” He could write interesting quotes, compose poems, or draw comic strips. When the board is full, he's ready for a new one.

3. Keep index cards on hand for “writing breaks.” A family member can hand out cards and ask everyone to stop and write about what they're thinking or doing. *Idea:* Exchange cards and take turns reading one another's words aloud. 📖

Parent ² Parent Speak confidently

My son's teacher told me that Jeremy tends to mumble and look down when he talks. She explained that this will affect his grades as oral presentations become more important in school.

Mrs. Ross suggested that I give Jeremy opportunities to practice at home. We started with phone calls. I had him RSVP for a family reunion and make his own dental appointment. Then he worked on face-to-face communication. He practiced making eye contact as he ordered at restaurants or asked store clerks where to find items.



When Jeremy's next presentation rolled around, he rehearsed speaking clearly, looking at his audience, and using gestures. He said it went well—and he told me the practice helped him feel more confident. 📖



Habits of good readers

A good reader doesn't necessarily know every word or immediately understand everything she reads. But she does know strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words and understanding tough material. Your youngster can use this checklist when she reads:

- Before I read, I skim the book cover, inside flap, table of contents, or chapter subheads so I know what to expect (and look for) when reading.
- I pause while I'm reading to visualize a story event or jot down information. This helps me understand and remember what I read.
- I slow down when a book gets confusing so I don't miss anything important. If necessary, I go back and slowly reread difficult material. 📖



Fun with Words Digging up roots

Has your child ever wondered how spelling bee contestants learn all those long words?

One of their secrets is understanding word roots. For example, the root *geo* means *earth* (*geography*), *voc* means *word* (*vocabulary*), and *sub* means *under* (*submarine*). Help your child learn more about roots with this game.

Find a list of roots in a dictionary or online. Then, let your youngster choose one and read

its definition. Now take turns calling out a word with that root. The twist? Your word can be real or made up. For *phon* (*sound*), she might say *xylophone* (*real*) or *cellophone* (*made up*).

The other person has to say if the word is real—and, if so, give its definition. Then, look it up in the dictionary to check. If she's right, or she correctly identified the word as fake, she picks a new root for the next round. 📖



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