

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2019

Weakley County School System

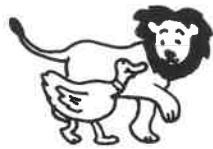
Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



How to Be a Lion (Ed Vere)

Some lions believe there's only one way to be a lion and that Leonard is not doing it right. He's gentle and quiet, and his best friend is a duck!



When the other lions try to bully Leonard into changing, he must stand up for himself.

A Ticket Around the World (Natalia Diaz and Melissa Owens)

Where would your child go if he had a ticket to any place in the world? The little boy in this book

invites readers to explore 13 countries with him—and learn about languages, food, geography, cultures, and more along the way.



Anne Arrives (Kallie George)

The Cuthberts plan to adopt an orphaned boy to help on their farm, and they're disappointed when they get Anne instead. But Anne is determined to prove herself. The first book in the Anne series, in which *Anne of Green Gables* is adapted for beginning readers.

Light Makes a Rainbow (Sharon Coan)

Learn all about rainbows in this non-fiction book. Simple explanations and colorful photos make it easy for readers to understand what makes rainbows appear. Includes hands-on activities. (Also available in Spanish.)



Winter literacy traditions

Keep your youngster's language arts skills strong during winter break. Fit reading, writing, speaking, and listening into family traditions with these activities.

Celebrate reading

Give books a starring role on special days by holding read-a-thons while you sip hot chocolate. For instance, you might read winter-themed books on the first day of winter (December 21). Or on December 31, read about different ways people celebrate New Year's Eve around the world.

Share news

Help your child launch an annual family newsletter. He could ask relatives to submit short articles about important events during 2019 and then write an article or two of his own. Have him add headlines, draw illustrations, and write captions to complete the first edition!



Tell stories

Swapping family stories during gatherings builds your youngster's speaking and listening skills. Pull out photos to spark ideas, perhaps ones taken at a wedding or reunion, and invite your youngster to contribute details as everyone reminisces. What songs were played at the reception? What games did he play with his cousins? ♥

Inspired to write

Fill a basket with items that will give your child writing practice. Here are ideas for creating an "inspiration station."

● **Greeting cards.** Let your youngster cut cards in half and turn the fronts into post-cards. She can write messages on the blank sides and mail the cards to relatives.

● **File folders.** Ask your child to glue a magazine picture on one inside panel of each folder. Help her write a story about the picture and glue it on the other inside panel. She could add a title on the front.

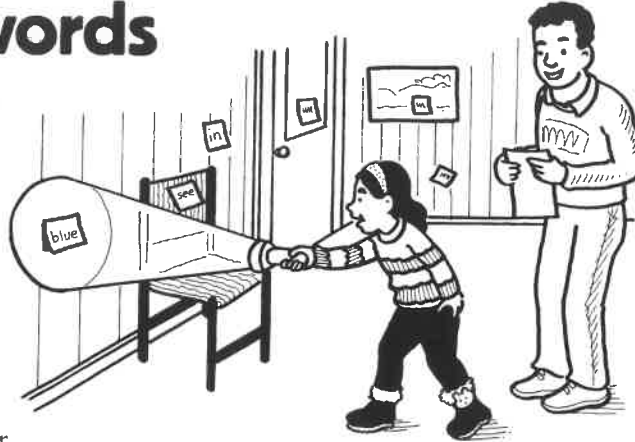
● **Homemade writing paper.** Have your youngster decorate the borders of plain white paper with stickers or stamps. Use a ruler to draw lines she can write on. ♥



100 “magic” words

Did you know that just 100 words in the English language account for about half of the words beginning readers encounter? Ask your youngster’s teacher or search online for a list of these *high-frequency words*, and use them to play the following games.

Word search. Arrange Scrabble tiles in an 8 x 8 grid, spelling several of the words vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Give your youngster a list of the words you hid. Can she find them all?



Flashlight tag. Pick 10 of the words and have your child copy them onto separate sticky notes. Place them randomly around a room. Hand her a flashlight, turn off the lights, and call out the words one by one. It’s her job to shine her “spot-light” around the room looking for the word. Ask her to read each correct word out loud when she finds it.

Note: Encourage your youngster to look for high-frequency words when she reads. She may be surprised how common they are—and by how many she can read all by herself.♥

Fun with Words Spot the comma

When you’re out and about with your child, try to spot as many commas as possible! You’ll help him learn where commas belong and what jobs they do.



See a comma? Read the words it goes with, and tell why it’s there. For example, your youngster might read “lettuce, tomato, and cheese” on a restaurant menu and say that those commas separate words in a series. Or maybe you’ll spot “December 12, 2019” on a newspaper (a comma goes between the date and year). Can he find a place where a comma should be or a comma that’s used incorrectly?♥

Parent to Parent Five-finger retelling

At school, my son Noah retells stories that he reads so the teacher can see how well he understands them. He recently learned a new retelling strategy that we’re enjoying at home: the five-finger retelling.

We read a story together, and Noah holds up each finger as he retells a different part. For his thumb, he introduces the main character. Then, he holds up a second finger and describes the setting. When he holds up his third, fourth, and fifth fingers, he explains what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

This has really helped Noah retell stories in sequence, and it works for more than books. We’ve used five-finger retelling to talk about everything from Noah’s day at school to sporting events we’ve attended.♥



Q&A Reading at the “right” level?

Q My daughter often wants to read books that are too hard or too easy for her. Shouldn’t she stick to books at her reading level?

A Reading levels help teachers select books that challenge kids just enough to make them better readers. But your child can also enjoy and learn from books that are above or below her level.

When she reads easier books, she gains confidence, becomes a more

fluent reader, and develops a love of reading. More difficult books challenge her vocabulary and comprehension skills and give her a sense of accomplishment—even if she doesn’t “get” everything.

Encourage her to explore any book she’s excited about. If she struggles with a book, offer to read it aloud. She’ll be more motivated to read, and the more she reads, the stronger her skills will grow.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks

■ **Moo** (Sharon Creech)
City kids Reena and Luke experience culture shock when their family moves and they have to help out on a farm. Told in a blend of poetry and prose, this novel follows the siblings as they make new friends and bond with the animals—even a stubborn cow named Zora.



■ **Money Sense for Kids!**
(Hollis Page Harman)

This book introduces youngsters to basic economics, offers advice for earning and managing money, and explains how banks and stock exchanges work. Readers will also learn the history of U.S. currency. Each chapter includes a practical activity, such as budgeting allowance money.



■ **The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science** (Joyce Sidman)

Maria Merian's unique approach to studying insects led her to create beautiful art and become one of the first scientists to draw the life cycle of butterflies. This biography describes how Maria dedicated her life to entomology, or the science of insects.



■ **The Year of Billy Miller**
(Kevin Henkes)

Billy is a sometimes misunderstood second-grader who spends the year navigating school challenges, friendships, and sibling squabbles. The story of his life is told in four chapters: "Teacher," "Father," "Sister," and "Mother."

A family book nook

A cozy place to curl up with a book or magazine can inspire your child to read more. Use these steps to carve out a special book nook for your family.

- 1. Create.** Even the smallest space can become a reading zone. Together, choose a quiet spot away from distractions. For example, your youngster might suggest a corner of the family room or basement, or a space between two bookcases in the living room. Let her add a comfortable seat (favorite chair, beanbag, big pillows) and a lamp.
- 2. Organize.** Help your child collect containers to hold reading materials. Maybe she'll put magazines in cereal boxes, small paperbacks in shoeboxes, and bigger books in baskets. She can cover the boxes with construction paper and label them ("Science magazines,"



"Mysteries," "Biographies"). *Tip:* Include a special box for library books, and have her add sticky notes with due dates.

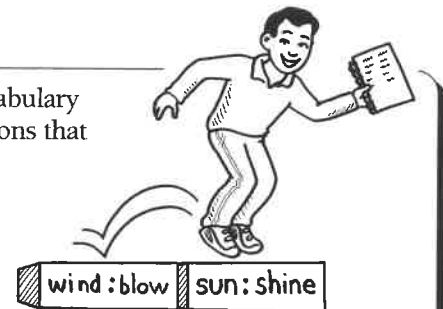
- 3. Enjoy.** Make using the book nook part of your family's daily routine. You might read the newspaper there in the morning. Your youngster can use the spot for reading assignments after school. And family members might take turns relaxing there on evenings and weekends to read novels or listen to audiobooks. ■

Analogy challenge

Build your youngster's reasoning and vocabulary skills by playing with *analogies*, or comparisons that show how two things are similar.

Analogies encourage your child to think about relationships. Here's an example: "Top is to bottom as in is to ____." Ask your youngster to think about the relationship between *top* and *bottom* (opposites) to determine the missing word (*out*, the opposite of *in*).

Take turns making up analogies and discussing how to solve them. Say you write, "Wind is to blow as sun is to ____." Your child can think about how *wind* and *blow* are related (the wind blows) and then consider what the sun does (shines, rises). For more practice, have him try analogies at factmonster.com/analogies. ■



Spice up your writing

Encourage your youngster to view creative writing assignments as opportunities to try new ideas. The following tips can improve his stories and make writing even more fun.

Foreshadowing

Authors sometimes drop hints about what's going to happen later in a book. If a big thunderstorm will be important in your child's story, he might mention his character's fear of storms early in his tale.



Titles

Have your youngster consider different titles for his story. One way to create an eye-catching title is to refer to an exciting aspect of an event. Instead of "My Summer Vacation," his title could be "Trapped in the Treehouse."

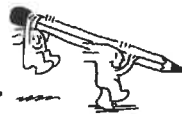
Flashback

Rather than starting his tale at the beginning, your youngster might begin at the end. Perhaps the main character is finishing his first year at a new school. Your child could write about the character spending time with friends he has made, and then go back and describe his struggle to fit in at first.

Parent & Parent

Math stories

When my son Kieran was struggling with math homework, I remembered a strategy my fifth-grade math teacher taught me. She had me turn equations into stories, and this really helped me visualize and solve the problems.



I mentioned this idea to Kieran and helped him make up a story to go with the first problem, 6×24 . He wrote, "Six buses traveled to the museum. Each bus held 24 students. In all, 144 students went on the trip." Then he decided to connect all the problems into one big story. For 8×45 , he continued: "The museum had 8 exhibits. Each had 45 artifacts. There were 360 artifacts altogether."

When Kieran finished, he read his story to me. He agreed that the activity helped him picture the math and come up with the right answers. I think it also strengthened his storytelling skills!

Fun with Words

Comically speaking

Stretch your child's imagination with this activity that lets her practice writing dialogue—the conversations characters have with each other.



Choose comics. Let your youngster cut some of her favorite comics from the newspaper or print some from the internet. She can put small pieces of masking tape over the conversation bubbles to block out the existing words.

Write new dialogue. Each of you can pick one of the comics, think about what's going on in the pictures, and write lines for the characters on the pieces of tape.

Share your versions. Take turns reading your dialogue aloud. Then, choose new comics and make up conversations for those characters.

Q&A

Reading and writing gifts—on a budget

Q I'd like to give my daughter gifts that will keep her reading and writing during winter break—and when it's over. My budget is tight. Any suggestions?

A You'll both keep reading when you create coupons good for library visits together. These make great gifts for your child, and they're free! Another idea is a magazine subscription related to her interests (perhaps *National*

Geographic Kids, *Fun for Kidz*, or *Ask*). Many magazines offer deep discounts this time of year.

For a writing-related gift, you could visit a craft shop or dollar store and fill a gift bag with fun writing

treats. You can find notepads in different shapes and sizes, colorful pens, and pencils with interesting erasers. Also consider a diary, as well as books of crossword puzzles, word searches, or *Mad Libs*.



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