

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2013

Haywood County Schools

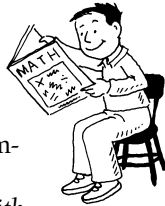


Book Picks

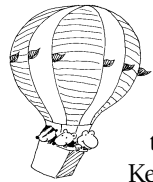
■ Go Figure! A Totally Cool Book About

Numbers

Your child can learn how people counted in ancient times, use math to predict the number of petals on a daisy, and even imagine life without math. This nonfiction book by Johnny Ball includes mathematical history, brainteasers, quizzes, and more in a colorful layout filled with diagrams and illustrations.



■ Return to the Willows



Fans of *The Wind in the Willows* can join Mole, Rat, Badger, and Toad on new adventures in this sequel by Jacqueline Kelly. Whether they're hot air ballooning or battling weasels, the friends must be brave and use their wits to save the day.

■ Al Capone Does My Shirts

It's 1935, and Moose Flanagan's family is moving to Alcatraz, where his dad will work at the prison. Gennifer Choldenko's story is about Moose's struggle to live a normal life on an island known for its prison—while helping a sister with special needs. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ The Aviary

Twelve-year-old Clara Dooley has spent nearly her entire life cooped up in Glendoveer Mansion. Then one day, Mrs. Glendoveer's beloved birds start talking. Suddenly, all is not as it seems, and Clara must learn the mansion's secrets. A mystery by Kathleen O'Dell.



Writing lessons from authors

Did you know that your youngster's favorite authors can help her become a better writer? When she reads, encourage her to pay attention not only to what the book is about, but also to how it is written. Here are some things she might notice and try when she has a writing assignment.



Comparisons

Authors use comparisons to create vivid images. For example, a *simile* states that one thing is like another ("Snow covered the ground like a thick cotton blanket"), and *personification* gives human qualities to an object or animal ("The alarm clock screeched impatiently"). Suggest that your child keep a list of her favorites when she reads. She can use them for inspiration in her own writing.

Format

Ask your youngster to think about how a book is organized. An author might use very short chapters or tell a story through diary entries or letters. And some of today's books are told in comic-strip form. Your child could pick

a format that she enjoys reading and try it herself.

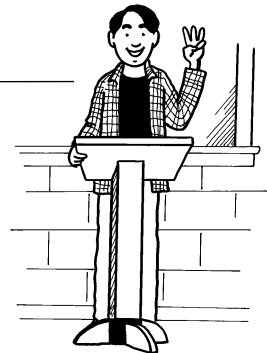
Point of view

Each time your youngster starts a new book, she can notice whether it's written in the first person (using "I") or in the third person (using "she" or "he"). The next time she writes a story, she might write the opening paragraph both ways ("Slowly, I turned. I saw lightning streak the sky," and "Slowly, she turned. She saw lightning streak the sky"). Then, she can write the rest of the story from the point of view she likes best. ■

Successful oral presentations

When your child gives an oral presentation in school, he practices communication skills that he will use for everything from casual conversations to job interviews. These ideas can improve his delivery:

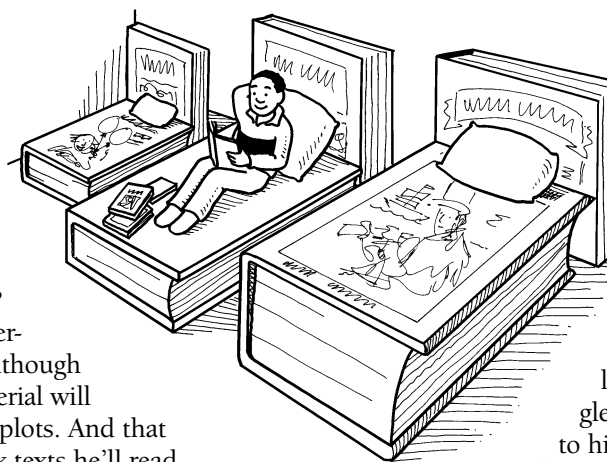
- **Chin up!** Remind your youngster to make eye contact with his audience. *Tip:* Suggest that he choose a friend to glance at from time to time as he speaks.
- **Speak up!** Encourage him to talk clearly and at an appropriate pace and volume. To practice, let him record his presentation and play it back to find things he can improve.
- **Act up!** Have your child use gestures for emphasis. For example, if he is counting off important points, he might hold up a finger for each one. ■



"Just right" books

To grow as a reader, your child needs the right books. That means that most of the time, reading shouldn't be too easy or too hard. Ask him to read aloud to you, and then help him find the perfect fit with these tips.

Too easy? Does your youngster read quickly? Can he recognize every word and easily understand the plot? The book may be too easy. Although that's fine sometimes, more challenging material will offer new vocabulary and more complicated plots. And that will prepare him for the increasingly complex texts he'll read in school.



Too hard? Is his reading slow and choppy? Does he stumble over several unfamiliar words per page? Is he confused about what's happening? These are clues that a book is too difficult right now. Ask his teacher or a librarian to help him find books at his level. *Note:* If he often struggles with assigned reading, talk to his teacher to see if he needs extra help.

Just right! Can your child read most of the text smoothly? Did he find a few new words? Can he understand what's going on with a little thought? His book sounds like a good fit—it provides enough of a challenge without frustrating him. ■

Fun with Words

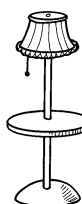
Invent new words

What do you get when you combine the words *breakfast* and *lunch*? *Brunch*, of course!

A *portmanteau* is a word made by combining parts of two words. Encourage your child to think about word parts and meanings—and expand her vocabulary—by making up her own portmanteaus.

First, brainstorm a list of portmanteaus you already know (*chill* + *relax* = *chillax*, *jazz* + *exercise* = *jazzercise*). Once she has the hang of it, it's time to create new words. Have everyone look around the room and think of related words to combine. Then, give a definition for each word you think of. Maybe a *blurtain* (*blind* + *curtain*) is a curtain that you can pull up and down, and a *queet* (*quilt* + *sheet*) is a thin, fitted quilt for a bed.

Idea: Give each other portmanteau riddles to solve. You might say, "What do you call an outdoor meal for children?" (A *kidnic*.) ■



= LAMBLE



Parent 2 Parent

Keyboarding skills

My daughter, Kayla, dreaded typing. She used a hunt-and-peck method to email and message friends, but it didn't work well for school assignments. It was slow, and she made a lot of mistakes.

I did a quick online search and found typing games that count words per minute and deduct points for errors. Kayla loves competition, so I suggested that we both play the game and see how much we could improve our speed and accuracy. Once she had learned proper finger placement on the keyboard, she picked up the pace quickly. I also found things she could type for practice, like thank-you notes and recipes.

After a month, my speed had improved by 7 words per minute, and Kayla's had increased by 12! When she typed her latest school paper, she said it was easier to focus on what to say since she didn't have to think about finding each letter on the keyboard. ■



I predict...

Your youngster can build reading comprehension skills by making predictions on a regular basis. Help him practice with these activities:

- Before you cook dinner, let him read the list of ingredients and predict the finished dish. "Tomatoes, lettuce, cheese, beans, and tortillas. I predict we're having burritos or tacos."

- Ask your child to read the description of a movie or TV show that your family is about to watch.

Encourage him to make as many predictions about the plot as he can. How many were accurate?

- Look at a photo from the newspaper, and have your youngster predict what the article is about. He can look for clues in the picture. "The firefighter has his helmet off and is smiling. I bet he put out a fire." Then, suggest that he read the article to check his prediction. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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