

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

October 2019

Book Picks

■ *H is for Haiku: A Treasury of Haiku from A to Z* (Sydell Rosenberg)

Organized alphabetically, this book full of haiku is the perfect inspiration to get readers to write their own poems. Each three-line poem starts with a different letter of the alphabet and covers a familiar topic like toys, weather, or pets.



■ *The Hyena Scientist*

(Sy Montgomery)

Hyenas get a bad rap, but scientists who study them want to change your mind. With this

nonfiction book, readers will learn about the hyenas at a wildlife reserve in Kenya—types of breeds, how they hunt, and even how they play!

■ *Out of Left Field* (Ellen Klages)

Set in the 1950s, this story is about a young baseball player who wouldn't take no for an answer. Katy Gordon is the best pitcher in her neighborhood, yet she can't play Little League because she's a girl. So she heads to the library and uses research to argue that girls belong in baseball.



■ *Knight Kyle and the Magic Silver Lance* (*Adventures Beyond Dragon Mountain*) (Oliver Pötzsch)

Wearing his suit of armor, Knight Kyle joins his helpful band of friends to search for his great-grandfather's missing silver lance. These 13 short stories of joyful journeys in faraway lands will lead your youngster to one exciting ending.



Words in every subject

You know your child needs a strong vocabulary to do well in reading and writing. But did you know that vocabulary is important in math, science, and social studies, too? She can explore words in every subject with these three activities.

1. Find words

Whenever your youngster reads, suggest that she look for words related to school subjects. She might spot science words like *metamorphosis* in a comic book, *sodium* in a food advertisement, and *precipitation* in a weather report. Seeing how the words are used in real life will help her recognize and understand them in her textbooks.

2. Use words

Give your child reasons to say vocabulary words aloud—that will make it easier for her to identify them in textbooks. If she's studying state history, you could visit a state park and talk to a ranger. ("What tribes are *native* to this area?") Or she might practice economics terms

while shopping. ("There must be a high *demand* for these sweaters. They need to increase their *supply*.")

3. Play with words

Games can make words a permanent part of your youngster's vocabulary. Take turns picking a letter (say, C) and a school subject (perhaps math), and set a timer for three minutes. Each player lists terms that begin with the letter and fit the category (*centimeter, calculate*). Compare your lists. The winner is the person with the most words that no one else has.



What should I read?

One key to reading a lot is finding a steady supply of great books! Try these ideas with your youngster:

- Suggest that your child swap favorite books with a friend. He can lend books he liked or recommend that his friend get them from the library. Then, his friend could do the same thing.
- Ask your youngster to list a few books he loves. He can ask the librarian to help him choose similar books to read next.
- Give your child books you enjoyed at his age. You might even reread them so you can discuss them together.



Ways to overcome writer's block

"I don't know what to write. I'm stuck!" If your child's story stalls out, help him get his pencil moving again with these tips.

Keep writing. For 10 minutes, have him write nonstop about anything that pops into his mind. When he reads his "free writing," a possibility for his story may jump out at him.



Add something new. Remind your youngster that a first draft is a "playground" for ideas. He could add another character to the story or give one of his existing characters a new problem to solve. The changes he makes might help him get unstuck.

Skip ahead. Encourage him to fast-forward and write another part of the story. Sometimes taking a detour will trigger an idea about the section that has him stumped.

Take a break. Suggest that your child set the story aside for a little while to go for a walk or read a book. Once he stops thinking so hard, the perfect solution may appear. ■

Learning to study

My daughter Corina struggled with studying last year. She would read her textbook and then say she was done. This year, I reached out to her teacher for advice.



Her teacher said that to study effectively, Corina needs to be an "active reader." That means she should take notes while she reads, talk about the information to help her learn and remember it, and write down the answers to practice tests in textbooks.

Now at dinner, I ask Corina what she studied that day, and then we discuss it. That has led to some interesting family talks.

Also, her teacher recommended that she study a little each night. So Corina starts each session by reviewing what she read the night before and then moves on to that day's material. I feel confident that this will be a better school year for Corina! ■



Fun with Words Awesome adjectives!

There's a whole world full of adjectives out there for your youngster to use when she writes. Help her discover the awesomeness of adjectives with this twist on "I Spy."



The first player picks any object she sees and uses one adjective to describe it. ("I spy a big ball.") The next person repeats the sentence, adding another adjective that is a synonym (a word with a similar meaning): "I spy a big, huge ball." Continue adding synonyms, such as *large*, *whopping*, *enormous*, *immense*, and *giant*.

When you run out of words, the last player who thought of one chooses the next object and starts another round. *Idea:* Have your child keep track of the adjectives in a notebook. She'll have a personal thesaurus to use when she writes! ■

Q&A Reading models

Q I know it's important for our son to see us reading, but my husband and I can't seem to find time to read. What should we do?

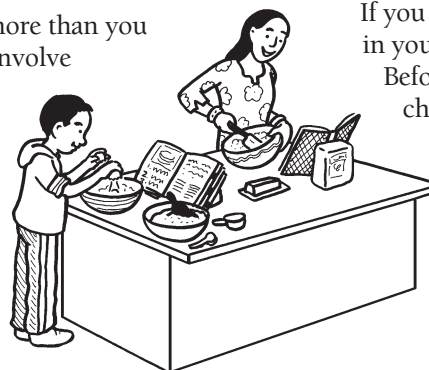
A You probably read more than you think. Most daily tasks involve some reading. Be on the lookout for them, and take every opportunity to let your son notice you reading.

When preparing meals, read recipes

and package directions aloud. During drives, point out road signs or billboards. Let your son see both of you reading the newspaper, magazines, mail, or email.

If you can, find a little time in your day for books.

Before reading to your child every night, you could each read a book silently. Seeing you read may motivate him to follow your example. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5583