

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

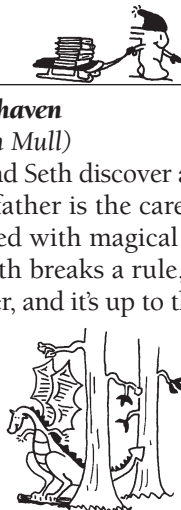
Working Together for Learning Success

January 2020

Book Picks

■ *Fablehaven* (Brandon Mull)

Kendra and Seth discover a secret: Their grandfather is the caretaker of a forest filled with magical creatures. When Seth breaks a rule, everyone is in danger, and it's up to the children to save everyone. Book one in the Fablehaven series. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *The Poetry of US*

(Edited by J. Patrick Lewis)

Organized by regions of the United States, this collection includes poems by Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, and many others. The poems highlight things found in America, from plants and animals to songs and food. Where will the next poem take you?

■ *Crow Smarts: Inside the Brain of the World's Brightest Bird*

(Pamela S. Turner)

In this nonfiction book, your youngster will find facts about brilliant birds who can solve puzzles and build and use tools. Includes photographs and an "Ask the author" section. Part of the Scientists in the Field series.



■ *It's Raining Cupcakes*

(Lisa Schroeder)

Winning a trip to New York City in a cupcake-baking contest is Isabel's only hope for summer travel. But she'll need to beat her best friend, Sophie, and avoid upsetting her mom, who has her own ideas about the contest. A story about following your dreams.



Write around the house

How does writing make your child's life easier and more fun? Show him with these ideas for building writing into your family's routine.

Weekly calendar

Place a calendar in a central spot, and have family members write their activities on it. This encourages your youngster to take responsibility for his schedule and helps everyone plan ahead. *Idea:* Have each person use a different ink color for their calendar entries—you'll be able to tell who has what at a glance!



Grocery list

Post a sheet of notebook paper on the refrigerator where your child can keep a running grocery list. He could list things you're getting low on like whole-wheat pita bread, hummus, or clementines. Before going grocery shopping, see how many items he remembers from the list without looking at it. He'll realize that a written list is a handy tool.

Jokes

Ask your youngster to write down jokes or riddles he comes across. He might look for them on cereal boxes, in joke books, or online. Or he might write his own! Suggest that he read his jokes at dinner or hide them around the house (behind a picture frame, under a pillow) for people to uncover and get a good laugh. 📖

Reading symbols on a map

Symbols are everywhere, from your youngster's math and science textbooks to street signs and electronics. Here are ways your youngster can use maps to practice reading symbols:

- Cover up the key on a map. Point to a symbol, and ask your child to figure out what it represents. *Example:* star = capital city. She can check the key to see if she was right and then pick a symbol for you to identify.
- Suggest that your youngster draw a map of a familiar place (your neighborhood, her school). She could include a key to show what each symbol means, perhaps a slide for a playground and a desk for a classroom.

Idea: Ask your child to read symbols when you're out together. For instance, at the airport, she might see a fork and knife to represent a restaurant or a suitcase for baggage claim. 📖



Tackling longer books

Books with lots of pages stretch your youngster's reading skills—and can teach her about perseverance. Try these tips to motivate her to choose and stick with longer books.

Look for breaks. Help your child find books with short chapters. When each chapter is just a few pages long, the task won't seem so big. Plus, she'll feel a sense of accomplishment with each chapter she finishes.



Follow interests. Check the library for more challenging titles on a subject your youngster loves. If she has some background knowledge about the topic, she may be more likely to try a longer book.

Read together. Read the same book your youngster is reading. Decide on stopping places (maybe every two or three chapters), and discuss what's happened so far. Sharing a book with you will motivate her to read on.

Give it a chance. Suggest that your child read 30 pages of a longer book to give it a solid chance. If she reads that far and doesn't like the book, she can move on to another one. 📖

Parent & Parent Snapshot stories

My daughter Lara loves photography. She'd rather take pictures than do almost anything else. And she likes to show us her photos and tell the stories behind them, which gave me an idea for encouraging her to write more.



When she took a picture of her brother playing football, I suggested that she write about the game. She liked that idea, so she wrote a true story describing the suspense of the winning touchdown run and how the team went out for milkshakes to celebrate.

Later, I surprised Lara by framing her story alongside the photo to give to her brother. Now she often chooses pictures to write about and frame. Her new hobby has turned into a great way to practice writing—and decorate the walls! 📖

Fun with Words

Backward spelling

Your child can practice spelling and creative thinking by playing these two “backward” games.

1. Write a word in reverse order on a piece of paper. For example, *freezer* would be *rezeerf*. Ask your youngster to sound out the backward word, then give it a silly definition. *Example: “rezeerf: The sound screeching tires make.”* Next, let him write a backward word, and you make up a definition.
2. Take turns secretly thinking of a word, writing it backward, and saying it aloud. Can the other person figure out your word? *Tip:* Write down the sounds you hear, then reverse the letters to discover what the word is. 📖



Q&A

A thinking reader

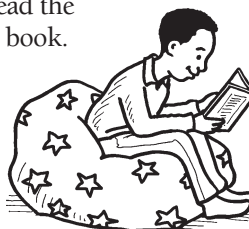
Q When my son has assigned reading, he rushes through and can't always answer the comprehension questions. How can I encourage him to think more about what he is reading?

A Suggest that your child read the questions before he starts the book. He'll get an idea of what he should be thinking about as he reads.

Also, get in the habit of asking him about his reading assignments—and

about books he reads just for fun. One way is to have him describe some of a book's themes, or “big ideas.” For example, he might say that *Tuck Everlasting* (Natalie Babbitt) is about doing the right thing.

Or you could ask your son about the characters. What traits made the hero a hero? What did the main character do that surprised him? *Tip:* Look for discussion questions in the back of the book or on the author's website. 📖



OUR PURPOSE

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

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