Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2015

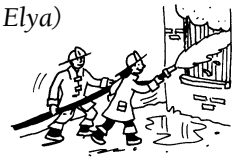
Public School 214 Q

Denise Fuccillo, Principal

Book Picks

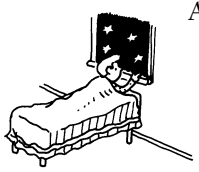
Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Fire! Fuego! Brave Bomberos*** *(Susan Middleton Elya)*



Follow the brave *bomberos* as they race their fire truck, put out a fire, and save a kitty! Learn how the firefighters use the hydrant and hose to battle the flames. This fast-paced rhyming story is told with English and Spanish words and contains a glossary in the back.

■ ***The Dark*** *(Lemony Snicket)*



A little boy named Laszlo is afraid of the dark, but the dark lives in the basement and outside at night. One day, the dark visits Laszlo in his room, and they have a talk. Will Laszlo stop being afraid? Find out in this beautifully illustrated tale.

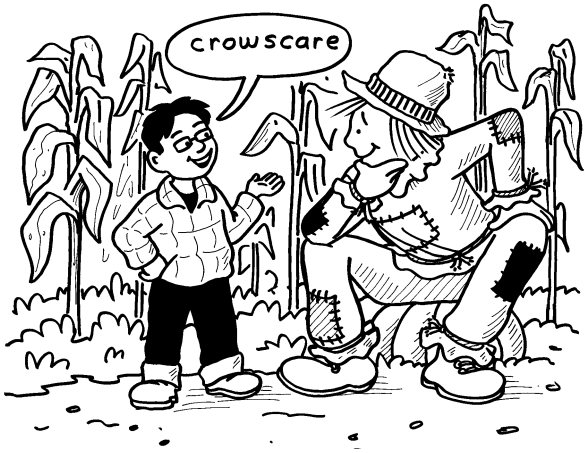
■ ***The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories*** *(Jane Yolen and Heidi E. Y. Stemple)*

Read the stories behind *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and other famous ballets. Perfect for the young dancer, this book also includes historical information about classical ballet and tells about performances of each tale.

■ ***The Great Seal of the United States*** *(Norman Pearl)*

Your child has probably seen the United States seal before—an eagle with a shield—but does he know what it means? Ben Franklin narrates the history of the seal and how the design came to be a symbol of America. Every aspect of the seal is explained with pictures and descriptions.

Play with sounds and syllables



What is a *poplolli*? It's a mixed-up version of *lollipop*! Playing with words helps your youngster hear the sounds and syllables within them. Use these clever activities to build his *phonological awareness*—an important predictor of reading success.

Where in the word?

Let your child pick out a stuffed animal. Then, label one sheet of paper "Beginning," another "Middle," and a third one "End." Now, say a three-letter word (*cup*), choose one letter (*u*), and say its sound (*uh*). Does your youngster hear that sound in the beginning, middle, or end of *cup*? He can show you by hopping the stuffed animal to the right paper.

Rhyming riddles

Ask your youngster to name a category like food or games. Think of a word that fits in the category, and make up a riddle for him to guess it—ending with a made-up word that rhymes with your word. *Example:* "I am green and spicy, and I taste good with chips. I rhyme with *wuacawole*" (*guacamole*).

Scrambled syllables

Take turns secretly picking a word with at least two syllables (*scarecrow*) and saying it with the syllables in the wrong order (*crowscare*). Try to guess each other's word. *Tip:* It doesn't need to be a word your child can spell or read—it could even be *expialisuperfragilisticdociouscali* (*supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*).♥

Writing: Decorate for inspiration

"What should my story be about?" Your child can use these suggestions for dreaming up story topics—and decorating her room.

● **Collect photos.** Encourage your youngster to gather interesting pictures, such as a photo of a stormy night or a camel in a desert. Together, string yarn along a wall and use clothespins to hang the photos from it. Then, she can pick one to write about.

● **Make story sticks.** Help your child write possible story titles on craft sticks. *Examples:* "The Day the Sun Didn't Set," "The Lonely Polka-Dotted Zebra." She can decorate a jar, add sand, and insert the sticks. Let her put the jar on her dresser and choose a stick when she's ready to write.♥

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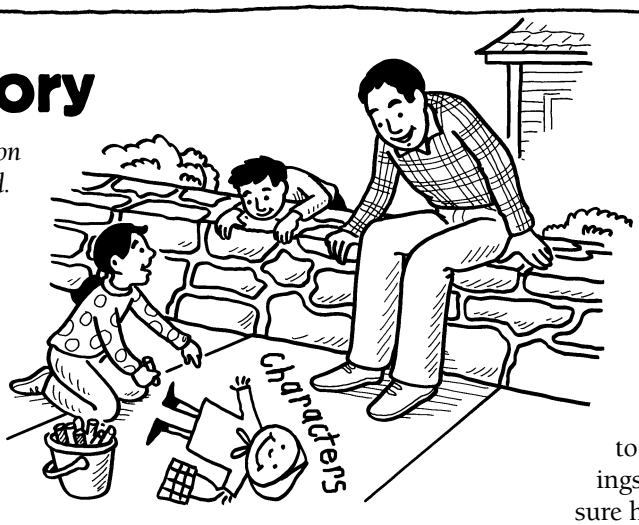
Q&A Retell a story

Q *This year, my daughter will be tested on how well she can retell books she has read. Why is this, and how can I help her do a good job?*

A Retelling a story lets the teacher know how well your daughter understands what she read. During a test, she'll need to identify the characters and setting, and she'll have to describe major plot events in the right order.



Here's a fun idea: Go outside together, and help her write "Characters," "Setting," "Problem," and "Solution" in chalk on separate sidewalk squares or on paper plates scattered in the grass. She can draw a picture for each part, then jump to each square or plate as she retells the story.

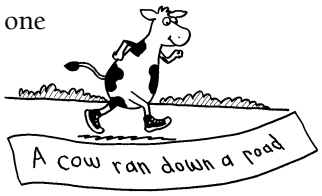
If your daughter doesn't seem to know what to say during retellings, talk to the teacher to make sure her reading-comprehension skills are on track.♥

Fun with Words Super sentence strips

Teachers use sentence strips to help students practice writing good sentences. Together, cut sheets of paper into strips at home, and try these ideas.

Shared sentence

On a strip, one person writes an opening word for a sentence ("I"). The next person reads that word and adds another ("like"). Keep going to fill the entire strip. When you get close to the end, the last person has to think of a way to end the sentence so it makes sense. ("I like to jump in leaves when I rake.")



Forbidden vowel

Your youngster can practice choosing words carefully as he writes a sentence. Pick a vowel, and work together to make up a sentence that does not include that letter. For example, if the vowel is *e*, he might use *a* or *an* instead of *the*, or *road* instead of *street*. ("A cow ran down a road.")♥

A listening treasure hunt

If you ask a little one to put on his coat and grab his backpack, he may get the backpack and forget the coat. That's because it's challenging for young children to follow multi-step directions.

This fun treasure hunt can boost your youngster's listening skills and increase the number of steps he can handle at once.

1. Hide a small "treasure," such as a colorful eraser, a spinning top, or a bouncy ball.

2. Give your child directions, one step at a time, to find the treasure. You might say, "Walk to the couch." When he gets there, say, "Look under the middle cushion."

3. After he spots it, hide a new treasure, and give two-step directions this time. ("Open the cabinet door, and look behind the DVDs.")

4. Once your youngster is comfortable with two-step instructions, try directions with three or four steps.♥

Parent to Parent Get hooked on a series

I loved series books when I was little—I could hardly wait to find out what would happen in the next installment. Now that my daughter is reading, I wanted to help her find series books to fall in love with, too.

Our librarian was happy to help. She said kids feel comfortable reading books in a series because the characters become familiar to them. She recommended a new series by Herman Parish about Amelia Bedelia when she was a little girl. She also suggested Owl Diaries by Rebecca Elliott, and Fly Guy by Tedd Arnold.

Maya started with Owl Diaries. By the time she finished the first book, *Eva's Treetop Festival,* she felt like Eva the owl was her friend. Now, she wants to read on to see what Eva does next. And when she finishes that series, she has a whole list of new ones to try.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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