Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2021

Seneca Valley School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***12 Ways to Get to 11*** *(Eve Merriam)*
Oh, no—where did number 11 go? Your youngster can tag along with the numbers 1 through 10 on a hunt for the missing number. She'll discover 12 different ways to make 11, like 9 pinecones + 2 acorns or 1 mother pig + 10 piglets.

■ ***A Tree Is Nice*** *(Janice May Udry)*
What can you do with a tree? This book is full of fun—and practical—purposes for trees. Your youngster might nap in its shade or jump into piles of its leaves, for example. The story encourages readers to appreciate and care for trees. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art*** *(Barb Rosenstock)*

When Vasily Kandinsky painted, he didn't just see colors and shapes—he heard sounds and music, too! As he grew older, he was determined to make art that reflected his uniqueness. This nonfiction book tells the story behind his revolutionary creation of abstract art.

■ ***The Magician's Hat*** *(Malcolm Mitchell)*
The children are excited when a magician shows up at the library's family fun day. Little do they know that the magician can make their dreams of becoming a dentist or football player come true. But the enchantment truly begins when your child discovers what actually makes the magic happen.

Get outside and write!

Writing doesn't have to happen at a desk or table. As the weather warms up and the flowers bloom, let your youngster take writing outside with these suggestions.

"Paint" with water

Encourage your child to dip a paintbrush in water and use it to write letters or words on a sidewalk, driveway, or fence. She could even leave a message for passersby. ("Happy Friday!")

Make rock sentences

Have your youngster use a fine-tipped marker to write sentences on rocks—one word per rock. Then, she can mix up the rocks, and you try to put the words in the correct order. Switch roles by writing a rock sentence for her to unscramble.

Play nature bingo

Let your child make a bingo card filled with things to find on a walk, such as a yellow flower, a tree with fruit, a pond, and a turtle. Head out and see how many items she can cross off her card.

Write stories and letters

Suggest that your youngster use nature as inspiration for a story or a friendly letter. She might write a story from the point of view of a squirrel or cactus. Or she could write a letter to the sun or sky.

List outdoor activities

Sit outside together, and help your child write a list of activities to try. If she spots a bird feeder in a neighbor's tree, she might write, "Make a bird feeder and watch birds."♥

My book cover

Designing a book cover is a fun way to build reading comprehension. Ask your child to pick a book and follow these steps.

1. Talk about what the book cover includes (title, author's name, picture). Then, read the story together.

2. Have him fold a piece of construction paper in half to make a new jacket for the book. On the front, he can write the title and author, then illustrate something from the story. He might draw his favorite part, for instance.

3. On the back, help him write a summary. He could describe the main character and tell what happens to him. *Tip:* If he isn't writing yet, he can dictate his summary to you.

4. Let your youngster hang his cover near his bookshelf. Then, suggest that he make covers for other stories to display with it.♥

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Celebrate poetry

April is National Poetry Month. Make the most of it by checking out books of children's poetry from the library and enjoying these ideas together.

Poetry picnic. Pack food *and* poems for a picnic! For instance, put peanut butter sandwiches and pickles in your picnic basket in honor of "Peanut-Butter Sandwich" and "Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too" (Shel Silverstein). Enjoy reading the poetry along with your food! You might even make up your own food poems as you eat.

Poetry charades. Take turns secretly choosing a poem and acting it out. Everyone else looks through the book and tries to figure out which poem you picked. For "I Am Growing a Glorious Garden" (Jack Prelutsky), your child might pretend to weed, plant, and water. To make it more entertaining—and easier for others to guess the poem, he could use props. He might wear a sun hat, pretend to dig with a shovel, and "sprinkle" from an empty watering can.♥

Fun with Words: Syllable sort

What do the words *teacher* and *pizza* have in common? Each has two syllables! This sorting activity helps your child hear syllables, which can make her a better reader and speller.

Ask your youngster to choose a book, perhaps *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (Kevin Henkes). Read it together, then go back through and let her pick out a dozen words (*purple*, *purse*, *chocolate*, *porridge*). She can write each word on a separate slip of paper.

Now encourage your child to say the words aloud and sort them into piles according to the number of syllables. For example, *purple* and *plastic* go in a pile of two-syllable words, and *chocolate* and *artistic* belong in the three-syllable pile. When they're all sorted, she could look for more words in the book to add to each pile.♥

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
800-394-5052 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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Parent to Parent: Write about family history

I've been researching our family's ancestry, and my son Brian became interested in my project. So I asked him to help me add notes to our family photo album by interviewing his grandparents. It turned out to be a nice way for him to practice writing.

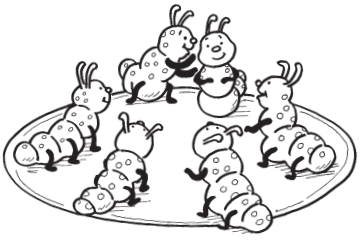
First, we brainstormed questions, such as "What did you do for fun when you were my age?" "What did your school look like?" "What sports did you play?"

Then, Brian called his grandparents to ask the questions. I helped him write their answers, and together, he and I wrote the highlights in our album. Under a photo of Grandma doing gymnastics, we wrote, "She won a gold medal on the balance beam." My son loved hearing the stories, and he enjoyed using writing to help me with my research project.♥

Q&A: Build listening skills

Q *My daughter's attention seems to trail off mid-sentence when I'm talking to her. What can I do to help her become a better listener?*

A Playing games is an excellent way for your child to practice listening skills. For example, try a classic game of Telephone. Have family members sit in a circle. One person whispers a sentence to the person next to her. Pass it on around the circle, and the last person says the sentence aloud. Is it the original sentence? If not, try again!



Or ask your youngster to cover her eyes as you make noises like flicking a light switch, running water from the tap, or turning the pages of a book. How many sounds can she identify?

Note: If your daughter continues to have difficulty paying attention or listening, mention your concerns to her teacher so the two of you can work together to help her.♥