Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2021

Seneca Valley School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao*** *(Kat Zhang)*

All Amy wants is to make a perfect *bao*—a steamed Chinese bun—just like her family makes. But each bao is either too big or messy, until a helpful idea pops into her head. Includes a recipe that you and your child can use to make bao together.

■ ***A Little Calm Spot: A Story About Yoga and Feeling Focused*** *(Diane Alber)*

A cute little character named Calm Spot explains yoga to young readers. Your youngster will learn how yoga helps people relax and concentrate. Includes basic yoga poses, breathing techniques, and positive words. Part of the Spot series.

■ ***Press Here*** *(Hervé Tullet)*

Find a surprise on every page of this interactive book, starting with a simple yellow "button" to press. Readers will follow instructions like "Try shaking the book" and "Clap your hands once" to discover what their actions do to the dots on the page.

■ ***¡Vámonos! Let's Go!*** *(René Colato Laínez)*

There are many noises to encounter on an adventure through the neighborhood, from the bus's screech to a horn's honk. This adaptation of "The Wheels on the Bus" introduces different vehicles and sounds in English (*choo choo choo*) and Spanish (*chucu chucu chu*).

Build a story character

Who will star in the next story your child writes? Share these ideas for creating fun and interesting characters that will bring her stories to life for her readers.

Draw pictures

Invite your youngster to draw a picture of a character she'd like to write about, perhaps a turtle or kangaroo. Then, ask questions to help her develop the character. *Examples:* "Where does the turtle live?" "What does it like to play?" Maybe she'll draw a pond in the background of her picture and add a soccer ball for the sports-loving turtle to kick around.

Act out scenes

Suggest that your child get to know her character by stepping into its role while you play together. She might pretend to be a turtle and move her game token s-l-o-w-l-y around the board. Also, carry on a conversation so she gets a feel for its personality and ideas for dialogue. Perhaps she'll imagine a kind, friendly turtle telling a kangaroo, "Congratulations on winning your game!"

Write a story

Now your child is ready to write. Encourage her to include descriptions to help her readers picture the character. For instance, she might begin, "Taylor the turtle was little and green. She watched the faster animals play soccer. She wished she had a friend."♥

What *doesn't* the book say?

Learning to *infer*, or "read between the lines," is a strategy your youngster can use to understand what he reads. Try this activity to help him make inferences:

- Gather three household items related to a specific task. For example, you might choose a hairbrush, toothbrush, and shirt for getting ready in the morning. Can your child use these "clues" to infer what your task is?
- Read a book aloud, without showing your youngster the pictures, and encourage him to make inferences. If you read "As it got dark, the sky turned shades of red, orange, and purple," he might infer there's a pretty sunset.♥

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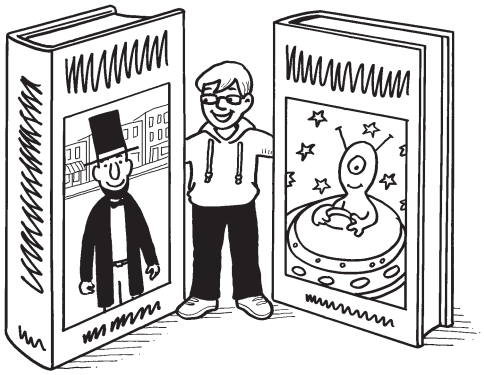
Blending fact and fiction

Some books are nonfiction, and some are fiction. Other types of books combine both! Here are two popular examples for your child to read and learn from.



Historical fiction

What it is: A made-up story based on historical facts.

What to do: Help your youngster separate historical fact from fiction. He could make a chart with two columns, one labeled "Fact" and the other "Fiction." Read a historical fiction book like *Players in Pigtails* (Shana Corey). Then, he could list examples from the book of facts ("Some people said women shouldn't play baseball") and fiction ("Katie Casey is a made-up character").

Science fiction

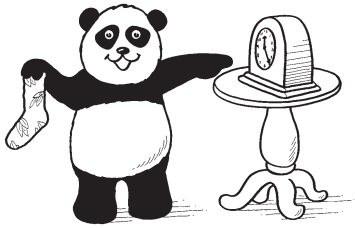
What it is: A fictional tale that includes futuristic science ideas.

What to do: Read a picture book like *Harry and Horsie* (Katie Van Camp). Then, encourage your child to draw a picture of his own design for a bubble machine like Harry's Bubble Blooper. You could also help him make a bubble solution by experimenting with different amounts of water, dish soap, and corn syrup. Now suggest that he design a totally different machine that people might use in the future.♥

Fun with Words — Rhyme time!

Send your youngster on these rhyme hunts to help her hear sounds in words:

● Ask your child to find things in your home that rhyme. Hand her an item that has a one-syllable name, such as a *sock*, *shoe*, or *book*. She can walk around with the object and try to spot rhymes. For a *sock*, she might see a *clock* and a *lock*. *Idea:* Try this activity outdoors, too.



● Give your youngster old magazines and catalogs. She could make rhyming collages by cutting out pictures of things that rhyme and gluing them on paper. For one collage she might cut out pictures of a *car*, a *bar* of soap, and a *jar* of peanut butter. Ask her to say the rhyming words to you.♥

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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Q&A — Dinnertime chats

Q *How can I liven up our family's dinner conversations and encourage my daughter to practice speaking?*

A Carrying on conversations over family meals can improve your child's vocabulary and speaking skills—and help everyone stay close. Luckily, there are lots of ways to switch things up each day to keep your talks exciting.

One idea: Think of witty questions to ask each other! You might ask, "Would you rather … ?" questions. Or try superlative questions (ones with words ending in *-est*), like "What is the silliest thing you've ever done?" or "Who is the bravest person you know?"

Each person can also bring something to the table to talk about, like a photo or favorite toy. When someone finishes sharing their object, others can ask questions or make comments about it. Try this once or twice each week to spark new conversations—and introduce new vocabulary.♥

Write a math book

"I have 6 colored pencils and 4 regular pencils. 6 + 4 = 10 pencils."

With these three steps, your child can work on writing and math as he creates a book of story problems.

1. Suggest that your youngster look for opportunities throughout the day to make up problems. While playing with his marble run, he might say, "I had 17 marbles. I dropped 10 into my marble run. How many marbles were left? 17 – 10 = 7 marbles."

2. Now help your child write and illustrate each story problem on a separate sheet of paper. He can also write the number sentence that goes with each problem on the facing page.

3. Finally, your youngster could staple the pages together into a math book and read it aloud to you.♥