Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2020

Seneca Valley School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Big Red Lollipop*** *(Rukhsana Khan)*
Rubina is excited about going to a birthday party. But then her mother insists that her little sister Sana tag along, and Sana eats Rubina's party favor! Later, when Sana is invited to a party, she makes it up to Rubina. Based on a true story from the author's childhood.

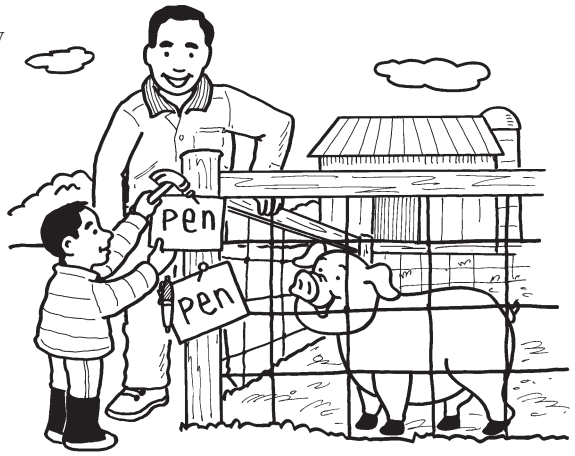
■ ***The Secret Explorers and the Lost Whales*** *(SJ King)*
A diverse group of young adventurers must rescue a pod of humpback whales in this first book of the Secret Explorers series. Your child will learn facts about whales as marine-life expert Connor and his fellow explorers try to successfully complete their mission.

■ ***How to Read a Book*** *(Kwame Alexander)*
This vivid picture book presents reading as an experience to savor. It begins with suggestions for finding a great spot to read, compares opening a book to peeling a juicy clementine, and encourages readers to take their time and enjoy every word.

■ ***Good Night, Mr. Panda/Buenos Noches, Sr. Panda*** *(Steve Antony)*
Mr. Panda is ready for bed, but each of his friends has forgotten to complete a task in their nighttime routine. As he reminds them what to do, he realizes that he can make an occasional mistake, too. This bilingual English-Spanish book is part of the Mr. Panda series.

A growing vocabulary

Hearing, learning, and using new words can make them a permanent part of your youngster's vocabulary. Try these strategies to increase the number of words he knows.



Weave in words

When you talk with your child, try using a few words he may not know. If you're gardening together, you could say, "These beets are a nice color. Can you think of anything else that's *magenta*?" or "The sky is *overcast* today. Look at all those clouds." Hearing new words on a regular basis will naturally expand his vocabulary.

Draw pictures

Illustrating new words will make it easier for your youngster to remember them. When he hears one (say, *parched*), tell him what it means (very thirsty), or look it up in a dictionary together. Then, help him write the word on a sheet of paper and suggest that he draw a picture. For *parched,* he might draw himself reaching for a big glass of water. *Idea:* Suggest that he staple his drawings together to make his own vocabulary booklet.

Multiple meanings

Pick an everyday word that has two totally different meanings, such as *pen* (a writing tool or a place for pigs). Say one definition, and ask your child to come up with the other. *Additional ideas: ball* (a round toy or a big dance), *star* (a shining object in the sky or a celebrity), *foot* (a unit of measurement and a body part). How many can your youngster think of?♥

Write an ode

Your child can show gratitude during the Thanksgiving season—and enjoy writing poetry at the same time—with this activity.

Explain that an ode is a poem that expresses emotion toward a person, place, or thing. Ask who or what she's thankful for. She might choose a grandparent or a teacher, or perhaps your home or dog. Have her think of what she appreciates about the person or object.

Now help your youngster write the ode as if she's addressing the person or object—and include specific details she's grateful for. *Example:* "Oh, Grandma / How I love your silly jokes! / Your smile is always bright / Playing games with you makes my night."♥

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Explore plot patterns

Predictable books follow a pattern—and noticing patterns can help your child follow the story. Here are popular patterns along with craft projects that will boost your youngster's comprehension.

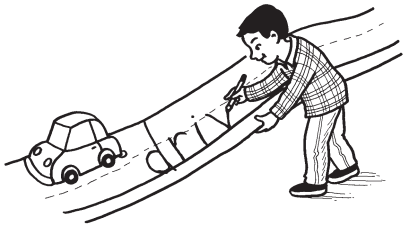
Repetitive story. Read a book with a repeated refrain, such as *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* (Charles G. Shaw). Afterward, your youngster could glue cotton balls on blue paper to show each cloud in the book. Have her repeat the refrain—"Sometimes it looked like"—and point to each cloud. *Also try: Goodnight Moon* (Margaret Wise Brown), *The Little Red Hen*, and *The Gingerbread Man*.

Circular plot. These stories end the same way they began. Read *If You Give a Moose a Muffin* (Laura Numeroff), and help your child make a paper chain. On separate strips of paper, she can draw and label something the moose was given. Have her tape the ends of each strip together, linking all the loops in a circle. Now she can use the chain to tell the story. *Also try: The Mitten* (Jan Brett), *The Relatives Came* (Cynthia Rylant), and *Stephanie's Ponytail* (Robert Munsch).♥

Q&A Lowercase first?

Q *When I was in school, we learned to print capital letters first. Why is my son starting with lowercase letters?*

A Lowercase letters appear more frequently in books than capital letters. And since learning to write letters also teaches your child to recognize them, knowing the more common ones first will make reading easier.



The trickiest part of writing lowercase letters is remembering where to write different parts of each letter.

Try this: Draw a "road" (with a dotted line between two solid lines) and add a line below it for the road's "shoulder." Now your son can write letters with each part in its own "lane." For *d*, he would put the circle under the dotted line and the stick extending to the top solid line. And for *p*, the stick would go down to the shoulder.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent Reading diverse books

My daughter Andrea recently found a library book about a little girl whose family came from Guatemala—just like ours. Andrea seemed proud and excited to recognize Spanish words sprinkled throughout the book and to see pupusas on the family's dinner table.

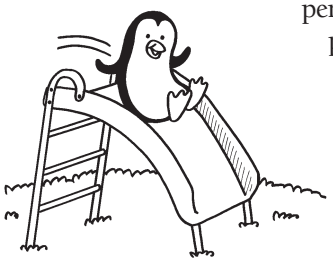
I asked the librarian for more books with Spanish-speaking characters. She was happy to help, and said children feel comforted and valued when characters remind them of themselves. The librarian also explained that kids learn to appreciate diversity when they read about characters whose lives are different from their own.

Thanks to this advice, Andrea and I have also read books about families from Mexico, Peru, Nigeria, and Japan. My daughter is discovering that she has a lot in common with children who speak or eat differently than she does—from the games they play to the way their parents tuck them in at night.♥

Fun with Words Terrific tongue twisters

Tongue twisters are tricky-talking-tremendous teachers! They help your child hear sounds in words and pronounce words more clearly. Here's how he can say and create his own tongue twisters.

1. Recite familiar tongue twisters such as "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?" Ask your youngster to tell you what sounds are repeated (*w* and *ch*).



2. Together, brainstorm a list of words that start with the same sound, like *penguin*, *park*, and *purple*.

3. Now your child can use the words to make up a tongue twister. ("The playful penguin went to the park to play on the purple playground.") Have a silly time together saying his tongue twisters. What a fun way for him to hear and say the sounds!♥