Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2020

Seneca Valley School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Earmuffs for Everyone! How Chester Greenwood Became Known as the Inventor of Earmuffs*** *(Meghan McCarthy)*

Chester Greenwood is credited with inventing earmuffs. But he wasn't the first person who designed a product to keep our ears warm. This book shows how inventors often stand on the shoulders of those who came before them.

■ ***Smashy Town*** *(Andrea Zimmerman and David Clemesha)*

Follow Mr. Gilly on an eventful day of work at a construction site as his machines crush buildings to make room for new ones. Colorful illustrations and onomatopoeias (words like *vroom* and *hiss* that sound like what they describe) make this an exciting story for budding readers.

■ ***Outside In*** *(Deborah Underwood)*

Nature isn't just something that's only outside. From houseplants to sunlight streaming through windows, nature is indoors, too. This inspiring story describes how nature can be a friend to people and encourages readers to appreciate it wherever it's found.

■ ***Thank You, Omu!*** *(Oge Mora)*

Omu means *queen* in Igbo, the language of the author's parents, and it's the name she called her own grandmother. In this story, Omu can't wait to eat her delicious stew. But when visitors follow their noses to her door, Omu shares every drop. A final knock brings a special surprise. (Also available in Spanish.)

Let's tell stories

Add excitement to story time by making up your very own stories. Not sure where to start? These activities will turn anyone into a storyteller—and build your child's speaking skills and creativity.

Read and tell

What would happen if Wilbur the pig from *Charlotte's Web* met the Three Little Pigs? Read two familiar books with your youngster, and together, make up a story that combines elements of each. Maybe the little pigs will live on Wilbur's farm, safe from the Big Bad Wolf. Your child will stretch her reading comprehension as she thinks of ways to connect the two plots.

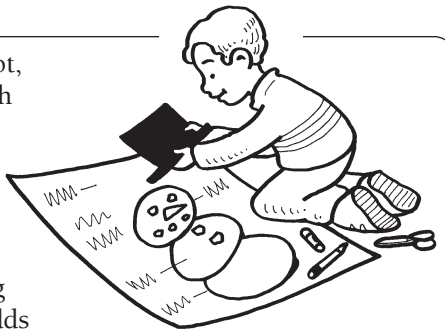
Share family tales

Children love to hear stories about when they were "little"—and these tales of her past are nice examples of nonfiction. Ask your youngster to pick a memory (say, her first trip to the beach), and begin a story: "Stella saw the ocean for the first time when she was five years old." Now take turns adding details. ("She built a big sandcastle.")

Make story dice

Let your child make three giant "dice" out of empty cardboard boxes. Help her write nouns (*cereal*, *house*) on one die, verbs (*fly*, *dance*) on another, and adjectives (*tasty*, *striped*) on the third. Take turns "rolling" the dice and telling a short story using all three words you roll. ("Once upon a time, I got to *fly* over my *house* in a *striped* hot-air balloon.")♥

How to build a snowman



Whether it snows where you live or not, your youngster can build a snowman with this idea for writing instructions.

First, have your child cut snowman parts out of construction paper: three circles for the body and head, plus eyes, nose, mouth, buttons, and hat. Now he can build his snowman by gluing the parts on a big sheet of paper. As he adds each one, help him write an instruction beside it for building a real snowman. ("Step 1: Roll up a big snowball." "Step 2: Put a smaller snowball on top." "Step 3: Add an even smaller snowball for a head.")

Then, if it snows, he could use his instructions to make a snowman outside!♥

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All kinds of lists

List making lets your youngster practice writing and recording his thoughts. Here are different types of lists he might create.

Favorites journal. Have your child fill a notebook with lists of his favorite things. He could write a different topic (books, foods, animals, toys) at the top of each page, then add items as he thinks of them. *Idea:* Suggest that he invite a friend or relative to do the same, and they can compare lists to see what they have in common.

Screen-time alternatives. Show your youngster that lists are practical. Listing screen-free activities he likes can help him cut down on using electronics. He might include "Collect acorns and pinecones," "Make a maze in the hallway with streamers," and "Read a book to the dog."

Questions collection. Encourage your child to keep a list of questions he has, like "Why are clouds different shapes?" or "Why do our eyes close when we sneeze?" He could use his list to pick out library books that might have the answers or post his list by the computer so you can research his questions together online.♥

Q&A Virtual read-alouds

Q *My daughter's favorite part of school is when her teacher reads books in class or on video chat. Now she wants to watch more online read-alouds. Any suggestions?*

A Consider setting up virtual story times for her with grandparents, aunts, and uncles. She'll get to hear different reading voices, and everyone will discover it's a great way to stay in touch!

Also, the internet is full of high-quality read-alouds these days. Your local library may offer online story hours—call or visit the website to find out.

Your child might also watch authors read aloud online. Some children's writers, like Dav Pilkey, Mo Willems, and Susan B. Katz, provide free virtual readings on their websites or social media pages. Help your youngster search for specific book titles or authors followed by "read-aloud."♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ISSN 1540-5648

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Fun with Words Alphabetical order

Send your child on these missions that will encourage her to read words around the house and arrange them in ABC order. *Bonus*: She'll help to keep things organized!

Organize the pantry

Let your youngster sort foods in the kitchen by type of container (boxes, cans, bags, jars), and arrange each section in alphabetical order. When you need an item, ask her to use her ABCs to find it: "I need a can of beans—where would it be?" She might say the ***b**eans* are between the ***a**rtichoke* hearts and the ***c**arrots*.

Arrange colors

Ask your child to put crayons or markers in ABC order. She'll need to look beyond the first letter of each color word (***bla**ck*, ***blu**e*, ***br**own*). As she puts each crayon in its spot, she can say the first letter and read the color word. ("G is for *gree*n.")♥

Parent to Parent Neighborhood book exchange

One day my son Aiden and I found a book on our porch. A note from our neighbor was attached: "My son just read this and thought Aiden would love it!" And with that, our neighborhood book exchange was born.

Aiden and I emailed neighbors to see who would be interested in lending and borrowing books. Several people replied with book titles they were willing to share—for children *and* adults—and I helped my son type titles we could lend. Now anyone can request a book from someone else and have it delivered to their porch.

Aiden and I enjoy reading new-to-us books, and it feels good to share with neighbors. Sometimes, before we return a book, my son writes a note to tuck inside. He'll thank the person for the "share" and tell what he liked about the story.♥