

I Get It!

Talking, writing, drawing, thinking... children have different ways of making sense of what they read. You can help your youngster improve his reading comprehension skills with these tips and activities.

.....

Comprehension strategies

Strong readers know how to make a book understandable. Share these techniques that your child can use before, during, and after reading.

Make predictions

A book will be easier to understand if your youngster has a general idea of what it's about. The front or back cover or front flap can help. Based on what she sees and reads, what does she think the book will be about? What does she think will happen in the end? If she's reading nonfiction, she can set a goal. For instance, "When I finish this book, I will be able to explain the life cycle of a butterfly."

Call on background knowledge

What does your child already know about the topic? If he's familiar with the respiratory system, for instance, a chapter about anatomy in his science book will be easier to understand. If the subject is new, he may want to look up the bold words in the dictionary first to learn some basic facts.

Use context clues

Your youngster will understand what a story is about only if she knows what most of the words mean. When she comes to one she doesn't know, she should reread the sentence or the paragraph out loud. If she can't figure out a word fairly quickly from the context, suggest that she mark the page with a sticky note to remind her to look it up later so she can continue enjoying the story.



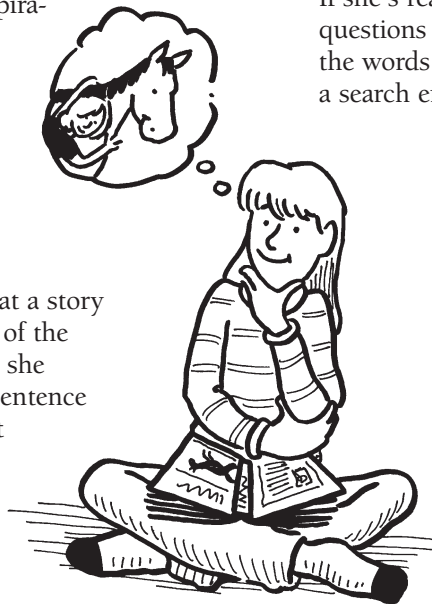
Make connections

Can your child think of another book that has a similar topic or theme? Or he might make a personal connection—maybe he has experienced what the main character went through. How would he feel if he were that character? Connecting personally with a story is a surefire way to understand it inside and out.

Answer questions

If your youngster is reading a textbook with end-of-chapter questions, she can try skimming them before she reads the chapter. That way, she'll know what information to look for. If she's reading fiction, suggest that she look for discussion questions online. Have her type the name of the book plus the words "discussion questions" or "reader's guide" into a search engine like Yahoo or Google.

continued



The five-finger test

When your child finds a book he'd like to read, teach him this trick to figure out whether it's at his reading level. Have him flip to a random page and read it. Each time he comes across a word he doesn't know, he holds up one finger. If all five fingers are raised when he finishes the page, the book may be too hard. In that case, you might offer to read it to him or to read together by alternating pages or chapters.

Reading activities

Encourage your child to have fun with the books she reads. Ideas like these will boost comprehension—and help your youngster enjoy reading more.

Journal

Suggest that your child keep a reading journal to record her thoughts about the books she reads. Together, brainstorm ways she could start her entries (“This book reminds me of the time...” or “The part that surprised me the most was ...”). She can write the list in the front of her notebook and use a different prompt each time she writes in her journal. Encourage your youngster to write down how a book makes her feel, too. And let her know it’s also okay to write about parts of the book that confuse her (“I am not sure why...”). Working out her thoughts on paper can lead to better understanding.

Online book clubs

Your child can build his comprehension by chatting online with kids his age about books. Check your public library Web site to see if there’s an online club for children. Or your youngster could discuss books at sites like www.plcmc.lib.nc.us/bookhive. Then, he can choose a book to read and discuss, like *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo or *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen. **Safety Note:** Use your browser’s parental safety controls, and supervise your child closely while he’s online.



Drama

Acting out a story can help your youngster understand it. Suggest that she and a few friends turn a book (or part of a book) into a play. They can start by choosing the parts, including selecting someone to be the narrator who will read the lines that aren’t in quotes. Then, they can look around the house for props and costumes.

Each time they practice their play, your child will understand more about the plot. When they’re ready to perform, your family can be the audience!



Nonfiction scavenger hunt

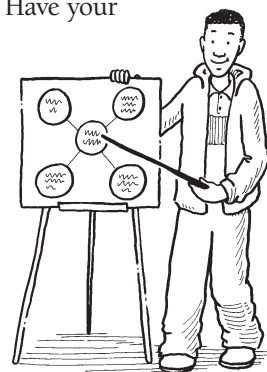
Before your child reads a nonfiction book or a chapter in his textbook, glance through it and jot down a list of things for him to find. **Examples:** graph, photo caption, definition, footnote. Ask him to check off each item as he comes across it. You’ll teach him to pay attention to the different features of nonfiction, which will help him understand the topics.

Book review

Encourage your youngster to write a book review and publish it online at a Web site like www.worldofreading.org or www.bookhooks.com. She’ll practice summarizing a story and writing her opinion. Remind her that her review is important—other readers will use her comments to help them decide whether to buy the book. **Tip:** Have your child proofread her review for proper spelling and grammar before she hits “send.”

Graphic organizers

Story maps and other graphic organizers can help your youngster understand a book. Suggest that he try this for the next book he reads. First, have him write the title in a circle in the center of a piece of paper. Then, he can add lines that connect to four surrounding circles. In each one, he can write about the characters, setting, problem, and resolution. Filling in each circle will help him think through what happened in the book. For nonfiction, an organizer would include the main topic in the center, surrounded by details and supporting facts. **Idea:** Have your child work on the graphic organizer as he’s reading so he can build understanding as he goes.



Family reading time

Setting aside time to read together can encourage your youngsters to talk to you about what they’re reading. You might meet in the living room after dinner each Sunday. Have each person bring something to read, and serve a snack. When you take a break to eat, chat about what you’re reading. Encourage your children to read a favorite passage aloud, tell you what they think will happen next, or ask you a question about something they don’t understand.

All About



A rich vocabulary can help your child be a better reader, writer, and speaker. You can help her expand her vocabulary by encouraging her to investigate new words and learn more about words she already knows. Use the activities and suggestions in this guide to explore the world of words together.

- Help your child learn to use a variety of adjectives. She can look through a book and choose 10 words that describe things or people (*quaint, elegant, extraordinary*). Let her write each word on a sticky note and use them to label pictures in a family photo album or scrapbook.

Collect words

Build your youngster's interest in learning new words with these ideas for helping him collect words:

- Can your child find 20 words about a topic that interests him? He might look at magazines, encyclopedias, or Web sites. For instance, a collection of music words might include *adagio*, *treble*, and *quartet*. Encourage him to read a nonfiction book about his subject to learn more about what the words mean.
- On Monday, post a category on the refrigerator (solar system, holidays, summer). See who can add the most words relating to the topic by Friday. Solar system words, for instance, might include *meteor*, *supernova*, and *constellation*. Have each person use a different color pen to show who wrote which word. Then, family members can read their words at dinner on Friday.



- Suggest that your youngster make a colorful poster of interesting words clipped from newspaper and magazine headlines. He can glue the words on a poster board and use markers to add their definitions.

Picture it

Connecting words to pictures can make the words easier for your youngster to remember. Try these ideas:

- Save pieces of mail that contain photos, such as postcards and advertisements. Ask your child to choose one, and take turns saying a word related to the picture. For a pizza ad, someone might say *convenient*, *doughy*, or *zesty*.
- Suggest that your youngster make a collage for her vocabulary words. She can write a word at the top of a sheet of paper and add pictures cut from old magazines. For *parallel*, she might look for items that have parallel lines, such as a crosswalk, vertical blinds, and train tracks. When she needs to remember *parallel* for a math test, she can visualize her collage.



Play word games

Games can make learning new words fun for the whole family. Here are a few you can play:

- Your child will stretch her knowledge of short words with this game. Ask her to choose a word with four letters (*line*). Take turns saying a word that you can make by changing just one letter (*lone*). Go back and forth, changing one letter at a time (*long*, *song*) until you can no longer make a real word. (Note: Players cannot repeat a word.) Try different words, and see which one keeps the game going the longest.

- Have players write one person's first name vertically down a sheet of paper. Across the top of the page, players write three categories (animals, flowers, jobs). The object of the game is to come up with as many words as possible that begin with each letter of the name for each category. For example, "animal" words for Sara could include **S**quirrel, **A**ardvark, **R**abbit, and **A**pe.

The player with the most words wins the round. Play a round for each family member's name.



Note: Your child can try print dictionaries like *The American Heritage Children's Dictionary*, *Scholastic Children's Dictionary*, or *Merriam-Webster Children's Dictionary*. Or have her use online dictionaries such as Yahoo Kids Dictionary (<http://kids.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/english>), Dictionary.com (<http://dictionary.reference.com>), or Wordsmyth (www.wordsmyth.net).

- In this game, each person chooses three unfamiliar words from the dictionary. Players write real definitions for two of their words and a made-up one for the third. Trade papers and guess which definitions are real. Play five rounds. The winner is the person who can spot the most real definitions.

Use a dictionary

These everyday activities will get your child used to looking up words in a dictionary. She'll learn an important habit that can teach her to spell, pronounce, define, and use new words:

- Suggest that your youngster write down the lyrics to her favorite song and look up words she doesn't know. Reading their definitions will help her understand the song's meaning.

Tip: Show her how to use the dictionary's guide words. The

words on each page fall in alphabetical order between the two words at the top of the page.

- Have your child jot down new words that she comes across while reading.

Later, she can look up the words. *Idea:* Help

her learn how to pronounce new words by showing her the pronunciation key that's usually located in the front of a dictionary. It will explain what accent marks and other pronunciation symbols mean. Some online dictionaries have audio clips so users can hear pronunciations.

- Ask your youngster to find definitions for words that you don't know. You might come across an unfamiliar word while you're reading a magazine, for instance. She'll see that vocabulary building is a lifelong process!



Explore a thesaurus

When your youngster writes a story, poem, or report, a thesaurus can be his best friend. This handy reference offers alternatives to words he uses every day, which will make his writing more interesting:

- Choose a word in a newspaper or magazine. Ask your child to find synonyms for it. Then, have him read the sentence aloud, replacing the original word with each synonym, one at a time. Which word works the best?

He'll see that even similar words can bring whole new twists in meaning.



- Encourage your youngster to go over his writing and circle or underline words that he uses frequently (*good, fun*). Then, he can "target" alternatives by writing each word in the center of a bull's-eye (a small circle surrounded by larger rings). Suggest that he use a thesaurus to fill the outer rings with interesting alternatives for the words. Have him hang the bull's-eyes over his desk to refer to when he's writing.

- Think of a familiar saying ("The shoe is on the other foot"). Write it down, replacing some of the words with synonyms from a thesaurus ("The footgear is on the alternative paw"). Can your child use the thesaurus to guess the original saying? Next, let her "translate" a saying for you to figure out.

Note: Try print thesauruses like *The American Heritage Children's Thesaurus* by Paul Hellweg, *Simon & Schuster Thesaurus for Children*, or *Kingfisher Illustrated Pocket Thesaurus*. Online thesauruses include Thesaurus.com (<http://thesaurus.com>), Merriam-Webster's Word Central (www.wordcentral.com), or Fact Monster Thesaurus (<http://thesaurus.factmonster.com>).

Once Upon a Time

Children who write stories build critical-thinking skills and learn to use their imaginations. They also become better readers, since writing their own tales boosts reading comprehension.

Use the ideas in this guide to give your child the tools she needs to dream up a story idea, imagine a setting, plan a plot, and create colorful characters.

.....

Chapter 1: Finding an idea

What will your youngster write about? Many stories get started when an author asks: “What if...?” Examples: “What if a spider could write?” “What if we could fly?”

Brainstorm ideas with the “What if” game. Have your child ask an interesting or a silly question: “What if people lived in trees?” Then, you ask one: “What if you drew pictures that came to life?” Your youngster can write down each question as you go. Keep asking each other questions until your youngster finds one she wants to use for her story. *Tip:* Have her keep the list to use whenever she needs a new idea.



if she can picture it in her mind. Encourage her to draw a picture of her setting to help her “see” it. If the story takes place in more than one location, she should draw a separate picture of each one. Have her hang the pictures on the wall near her desk—the drawings will inspire her as she writes about each place.

Your youngster can make her setting even more realistic by using all her senses. For example, she might imagine sounds (birds chirping, an audience clapping) or smells (a mom’s perfume, a fragrant flower) and add them to her description.



Chapter 2: Who's who?

Every story needs characters—the main character to work on a problem, friends to help, and people to get in the way. Use this idea to help your child dream up unique people for his story.

First, let him describe how his characters look. Then, have him list details that make each one different. Is the character clumsy? Is he funny? Does he have a pet? Does he listen to country music? To help your youngster flesh out his characters, ask him to pre-



tend to be each one and introduce himself to you. (“Hello. I’m Hank. I’m the main character’s best friend. I like to tell jokes. I’m always losing things. Have you seen my cat?”)

Chapter 3: You are here—the setting

Where does this story happen? Is it on an island? At the park? Sometimes it is easier for your child to describe a place

Chapter 4: Point of view

Point of view refers to who tells the story. Most stories are written in either first person (“I”) or third person (“he,” “she,” “they”).

Help your child choose which one works best by having him tell the beginning of his tale aloud twice. The first time he should use “I,” and the second time he should use “he” or “she.” Which way feels more comfortable to him? Which version allows him to give more details and to make his story more interesting? Remind him that either way is fine—it’s up to him as the author!

continued

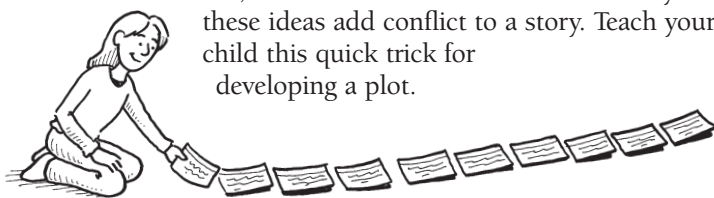
Chapter 5: Hooking the reader

In the opening line of *Charlotte's Web*, Fern asks where her father is going with an axe. Immediately, the reader wants to know, too. This first line is called a "hook." A good hook gets the reader interested in learning what will happen next. Your young author can use these techniques to get readers hooked from the very first line:

- Start with a question: "What was that noise?"
- Begin with an unusual detail: "The sun never rose in Darktown."
- Open the story in the middle of a crisis: "Don't let go!" I shouted. "I'll find a way to get you down."

Chapter 6: The plot thickens

Problems make up a story's plot. Remind your child to think creatively when dreaming up her plot. The main character might cause problems himself, a villain can try to stop him, or a natural disaster could strike. Any of these ideas add conflict to a story. Teach your child this quick trick for developing a plot.

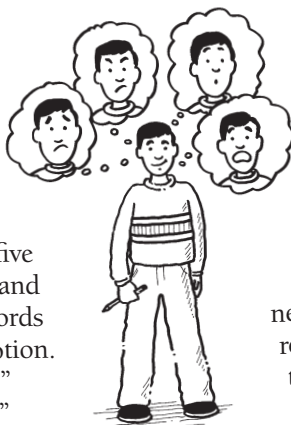


Number 10 index cards 1–10. On number 1, have her write the first thing that happens in the story (the character is shipwrecked). On card 10 she writes the last thing that happens (the character is rescued). For the remaining cards, have her alternate writing new problems and their solutions. *Example:* Card 2 = problem (a storm is coming), 3 = solution (the character finds a cave), 4 = another problem, 5 = solution to that problem, and so on. As your youngster writes, she can go through the cards one by one to keep the story on track.

Dressing up dialogue

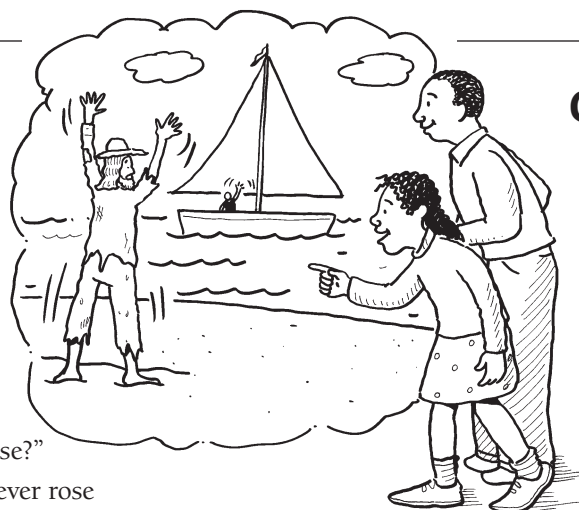
Help your youngster spice up the dialogue in his writing by teaching him to find alternatives to common words like "said."

To start, have him divide a sheet of paper into five columns and label them *happy*, *sad*, *angry*, *scared*, and *surprised*. Next, have him fill each column with words he could use instead of "said" to portray that emotion. For example, under "angry," he might list "yelled," "screamed," and "cried." Words in the "surprised"



column might include "yelped," "squeaked," and "gaspd." You can brainstorm words together, or he might look them up in a thesaurus.

Then, encourage your child to keep the chart nearby while he writes and use it sometimes to replace "said" with stronger words. *Tip:* Suggest that he keep his eyes open for new words to add to his lists anytime he reads.



Chapter 7: Wrapping up the story

There are more ways to end a story than "happily ever after." Before your child writes "The End," encourage him to think of all the different ways he could finish his tale. Here are a few suggestions:

- Use the ending to show the reader how the main character feels. For example,

the shipwrecked character might think about how happy he is to be at home sleeping in his own bed again.

- Show how the character has been changed by the events in the story. Your youngster might say that the day after the shipwrecked character got home, he started planning a new trip—by plane.

- Stop the story early, and let the reader imagine what happens next. Perhaps your child's story will end as the shipwrecked character steps aboard the rescue ship instead of following him all the way home.

Chapter 8: Sharing the tale

Now that the story is complete, suggest that your youngster "publish" it for others to read. First, she should proofread it carefully. Is everything spelled correctly? Does each sentence have correct punctuation (begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point)?

Once your child has corrected any mistakes, she can recopy the story neatly or type it on a computer and print it out. Suggest that she illustrate her story by drawing pictures or inserting clip art and then staple the pages together. Finally, she can leave a copy on the coffee table for visitors to read. Or she can e-mail her story to relatives who live out of town.

Reading Q & A's

You know how important it is for your child to be a good reader. But it is not always easy to know if your youngster's skills are where they should be—or if he has any learning problems that could interfere with his success.

Below are answers to some of the common questions that parents ask about their children's reading ability.



Q How can I tell if my child comprehends what she is reading?

A After your child finishes a short story or a chapter in a longer book, talk to her about what she has read. Ask questions, such as “What is the main character like?” “What happened in that chapter?” and “What do you think will happen next?” Also, look over her homework assignments to see if she understands what she has read.

Q What should my youngster be able to read by now?

A Children in upper elementary through beginning middle grades should be able to easily follow the plot of age-appropriate fiction. They should also be able to use nonfiction books, such as encyclopedias and class textbooks, to find information for school reports.

Q How can I tell if my child is making progress with his reading?



A There are several signs to look for. First, consider whether he is reading fluently (see “Helpful Definitions” on page 2). Second, is he able to read and comprehend fiction, as well as textbooks and handouts for subjects other than reading, such as social studies and science? Does he seem to enjoy reading, or consider it a chore? Be patient if your youngster doesn't read at the highest level in the class, but do look for signs of progress.

Q What kinds of books should I steer my child toward?

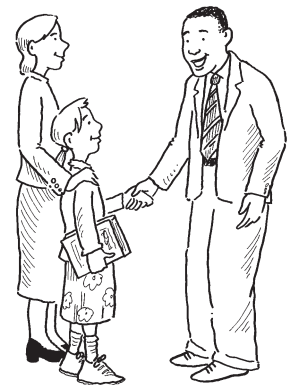
A Children this age tend to love series, where they get to know the characters and follow their adventures. Try the Magic School Bus and the Encyclopedia Brown series. This is also a good age for discovering poetry. Kids often get a kick out of humorous poetry from authors such as Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky.

Q How can I help my youngster choose books that are appropriate to her reading level?

A Enlist the help of the school media specialist or the children's librarian at your local library. They usually have book lists on hand, and by discussing your youngster's interests, you'll be able to find books targeted especially to her. You can also find lists online. Examples: Notable Children's Books at www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncb; Children's Book Awards at <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/awards.html>; Children's Choices at www.reading.org/Resources/Booklists/ChildrensChoices.aspx.

Q What should I do if I suspect a problem?

A The first and most important step is recognizing the problem. Bring it to the attention of your child's teacher. The teacher will probably refer your youngster to a school educational team, which typically includes teachers, reading specialists, special educators, and school administrators. The team will evaluate your child's abilities and, if necessary, conduct diagnostic tests.



Q What are the most typical reading problems?

A Dyslexia is the most common reading disability. Youngsters with dyslexia have problems with word recognition and spelling. Another common reading disability causes children

to have trouble “processing” what they read. They may have problems finding information in the text, remembering what they read, or reading quickly and accurately.

Q My youngster has a reading disability. What can I do to help him?

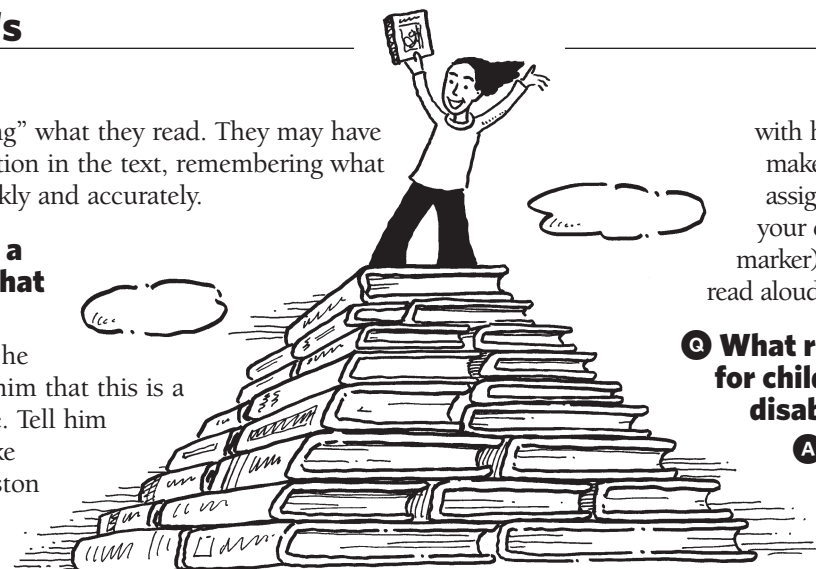
A Support your child as he makes progress. Remind him that this is a problem he can overcome. Tell him about famous people—like Muhammad Ali and Winston Churchill—who had reading disabilities and went on to be great successes. *Tip:* Check out the amusing Hank Zipzer series by actor Henry Winkler (who has dyslexia) about a fourth-grade boy with learning problems—and unusual creativity. To help

Association at 410-296-0232 (www.interdys.org) or the National Center for Learning Disabilities at 212-545-7510 (www.nclld.org).

with homework, try these strategies: make enlarged photocopies of assignments and book pages; have your child highlight (with a yellow marker) words he knows by sight; read aloud along with him.

Q What resources are available for children with reading disabilities?

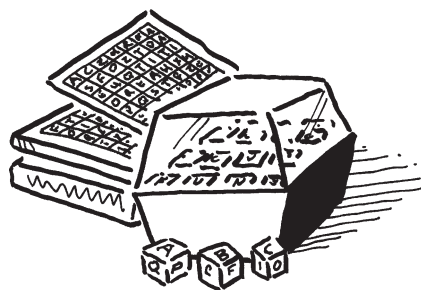
A You can find a list of helpful organizations at www.ldonline.org/ldresources/help.html. Contact the International Dyslexia



10 ways to help your child be a better reader

1. Fill your house with books, magazines, comic books, newspapers—any and all reading materials. A few ideas: Put the newspaper next to your youngster's breakfast in the morning. Use cookbooks together to make dinner. Stack books by your child's bed. Leave magazines in the bathroom.
2. Visit the library regularly. Make a date to get new books and return the old ones every two to three weeks.
3. Organize a parent/child neighborhood book club. Parents read and discuss one book while children read and discuss another. Come together for snacks at the end.

4. Even though your youngster is getting older, bedtime reading does not have to end. Continue reading aloud each night, but with a twist: Take turns reading a page or a chapter.
5. Play games that involve reading, such as Scrabble or Boggle. Encourage cross-word puzzles and other word games.
6. Turn computer time into reading time by suggesting that your youngster read news and information online or play computer word games.
7. Make time to talk about what your child is reading. Talk about what you're reading, too.
8. Have a family reading hour. Schedule a “no TV” reading date every few days.
9. Let your child choose reading material that interests her. Whether it's fiction, comic books, or baseball cards, a youngster who follows her heart will read more often and with more pleasure.
10. Praise your child for reading!



HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Reading fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately and quickly—recognizing words automatically—so your child understands what she reads. When children read word by word (without fluency), they tend to focus on how each word sounds rather than on what the whole text means. Ask your youngster to read a page out loud to you. Does she read it smoothly? Does she read with expression, indicating that she understands what she's reading?

Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear the individual sounds—phonemes—that make up words. In English, 44 sounds are used to form about 1 million words. Children need to recognize these sounds so they can put them together into words as they read.

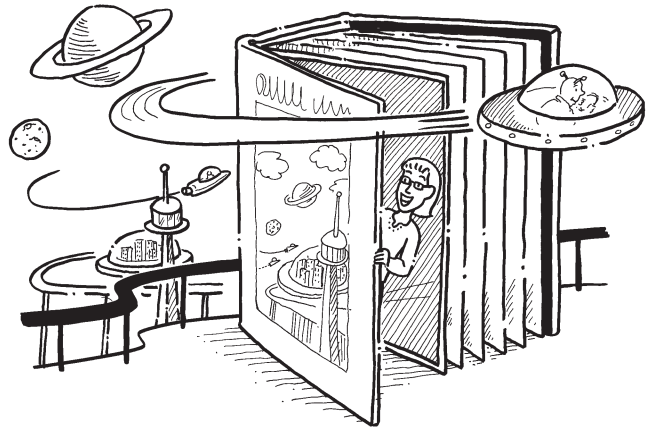
Phonics

Phonics is the relationship between written letters and spoken sounds. When youngsters learn the sounds that individual letters and groups of letters make—and the relationships between those letters and sounds—they can recognize familiar words automatically and “decode” words they don't know.

Books Older Kids Love

An army of whales, a secret kingdom in the woods, a stolen painting ... Did you know that the right books can unlock a whole new world of learning for your child?

From adventure, mystery, and coming-of-age stories to fantasy tales and nonfiction, these titles will capture your youngster's imagination and provide valuable lessons along the way.



Adventure

Ivanhoe by Sir Walter Scott

With England on the verge of civil war, a humble knight named Ivanhoe takes up the cause of King Richard I. This kid-friendly book in the Great Illustrated Classics series captures the spirit of the Middle Ages, complete with jousting tournaments, romance, epic battles, and a quest for honor.

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

Kids often threaten to run away from home, but in this book, Sam Gribble is serious. Leaving New York City for the Catskill Mountains, Sam makes a home in a

hollowed-out tree and learns to live off the land, eating turtle soup and acorn pancakes.

Blizzards and hunters test his survival skills. Will Sam return to his home in the city? (Available in Spanish.)



Whales on Stilts! M. T. Anderson's Thrilling Tales by M. T. Anderson

In this humorous adventure story, Lily and her two best friends are determined to prove that Lily's dad works for a mad scientist who's trying to take over the world. When no one—not even her father—believes the boss is creating an army of 30-foot-tall whales on stilts, the friends take matters into their own hands.

Coming-of-Age

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

After adopting a big, scruffy dog she found in a supermarket, 10-year-old Opal makes friends in her new town. She also learns more about her mother, who abandoned her when she was three. Readers will love the colorful characters and

humor as Opal copes with disappointment and loneliness. (Available in Spanish.)

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson

Jess's dream to run faster than anyone in the fifth grade is dashed when a new girl in town outruns him. But the two neighbors begin an unlikely friendship as they create their own imaginary kingdom in the woods. When tragedy strikes, Jess's world changes forever. (Available in Spanish.)



Dear Mr. Henshaw

by Beverly Cleary

In this story, Leigh is the new kid in town. His parents are separated, and a school lunch thief is always taking his favorite snacks. To deal with his problems, he writes to a famous author who surprises him by writing back and helping him learn to handle his problems. (Available in Spanish.)

Fantasy/Science Fiction

The BFG by Roald Dahl

Children and adults alike will enjoy the black-and-white illustrations sprinkled through this story about a "big friendly giant" (BFG). One night, the BFG kidnaps young Sophie from the orphanage and takes her off to Giantland, where his evil brothers hatch a terrible plot. Will the BFG save Sophie? (Available in Spanish.)

The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles

by Julie Andrews Edwards

Three children on a trip to the zoo meet an eccentric professor and soon find themselves in a magical place called Whangdoodleland. Surrounded by monsters with 10 legs, purple trees,

a Whiffle Bird, and other unusual creatures, the youngsters set off to find a Whangdoodle—a “fanciful creature”—and discover the power of imagination in the process.

The Phantom Tollbooth

by Norton Juster

Bored by his daily life, Milo finds new adventures when a mysterious tollbooth and instructions for its use appear in his bedroom. Not knowing what lies ahead, he pays the toll and enters a new world with strange characters and a special rescue mission designed just for him. (Available in Spanish.)



Number the Stars

by Lois Lowry

Based on a true story, this book portrays the life of a 10-year-old girl during World War II. When the Nazis begin to arrest the Jews in Annemarie’s Denmark community, she and her family take the dangerous step of protecting her best friend from capture. (Available in Spanish.)

The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963

by Christopher Paul Curtis

Byron Watson is always getting into trouble. So his parents take him to visit his strict grandmother in Alabama to get him away from the influence of his city gang. This thought-provoking story teaches a lesson about love and family as an African American family lives through the civil rights struggle of the 1960s.

Nonfiction

Mystery

Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett

After the theft of a famous painting, two sixth-graders join forces to try to recover the piece of art. Petra and Calder, with the help of a teacher and some mysterious letters, solve mathematical puzzles in an effort to find the painting. Readers will enjoy unraveling the clues hidden in the book’s clever illustrations.

Encyclopedia Brown Gets His Man

by Donald Sobol



His father is the local chief of police, but it’s Encyclopedia Brown who solves most of the mysteries in Idaville. From missing blueberry pies to a whistling ghost, 10 mystery challenges put Brown’s sharp mind to the test. The book also gives readers a chance to solve the cases themselves.

Three of Diamonds by Anthony Horowitz

The author of the Alex Rider series introduces the Diamond Brothers Mysteries series. In this book, Nick Diamond sets out to solve three mysteries, including “I Know What You Did Last Wednesday.” Can Nick succeed before his brother, the world’s worst detective, bumbles the cases?

Historical Fiction

Charley Skedaddle by Patricia Beatty

When Charley’s brother is killed during the Civil War, he seeks revenge by joining the Union army. But after several of his friends are killed in battle, Charley deserts his regiment and hides in the mountain home of Granny Bent. There, he learns a lesson about courage.

The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours by Jane Goodall

The much-admired scientist writes a personal account of her experiences with chimpanzees in Africa and her efforts to protect wildlife habitats. With vivid photographs on nearly every page, Goodall describes life in the forest, including teaching chimpanzees sign language and how to use a computer.

A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World by the United Nations Children’s Fund and DK Publishing

Real-life stories, combined with colorful pictures, maps, and charts, give readers a glimpse into the daily lives of children around the world. Featuring more than 180 countries, the book shows that, although people all over the world are different, they have the same needs.

Picasso by Mike Venezia

The life and paintings of the famous artist Picasso are portrayed in this selection from the Getting to Know the World’s Greatest Artists series for young readers. The book uses simple language and Picasso’s drawings to make art come alive for children.

