Literacy at Home

Reading & Writing Activities for Family Time

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How to Use this Book

This book is a collection of literacy activities to use during family time. They are designed to be both fun and engaging and to support children becoming better readers and writers. Activities have been included for both younger and older children.

There are 40 activities in this book. You can use them in any order you choose. For example, you might use one per week for the entire school year or you might set aside time on any schedule that works for your family. The important thing is to make the time you spend together fun and stress free. For your convenience, the Activity List located on the table of content pages have hyperlinks embedded within each title. This feature will allow you to advance directly to a specific activity.

A list of free online books has also been included at the end of the book and by clicking the link, direct access is provided. These resources are available at no cost and can used to supplement and enrich your family activities.

Just remember, family is the first and most important teacher.

Note to Teachers:
These activities are part of a book developed as a comprehensive plan for schools to conduct a series of family literacy workshops. If you are interested in a program of this kind, Family Literacy Workshops: A Research-Based Approach is available for download at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292407572_Family_Literacy_Workshops

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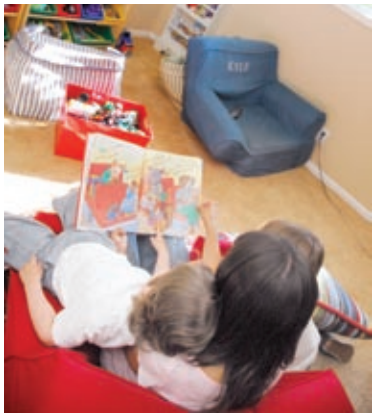
Tips for Parents

Helping Your Child Succeed at School

There are many things that as a parent you can do to make your child more successful at school. What you do and what you say about school and learning can be very important.

Remember, you are the most important adult in your child's life.

Tips to Support Reading



1. Read to and with your child.

Reading to your child is important at any age. This reading could be from books, magazines, and even the newspaper. Children become better readers by listening to and enjoying the reading of an adult. Reading with your child will also help them develop the skills they need to read on their own.

2. Model reading by being a reader yourself.

Many families set time aside each day to read. This lets children know how important reading is at home as well as at school. Children copy what they see and if they see you reading, they will understand the value of reading.

3. Provide your child with material to read.

Having material in the home to read is very important. The kind of reading material is not as important as its availability. The public library is a valuable source of free reading material.

4. Help increase vocabulary.

Children learn words from what they hear and from the words they use. Children can only read and understand words they know. Try to include your children in discussions about every home activity. Encourage your child to write words he or she knows.

Every family event can be a learning event. Children learn about their families and family traditions during these events. It is important to include your child in the interactions of the adults in the group.

You can make a difference and your child will benefit.

Take-Home Activity

Same or Different?

In this activity, the family will share a story, movie, or TV show and complete the *Same or Different?* diagram.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions

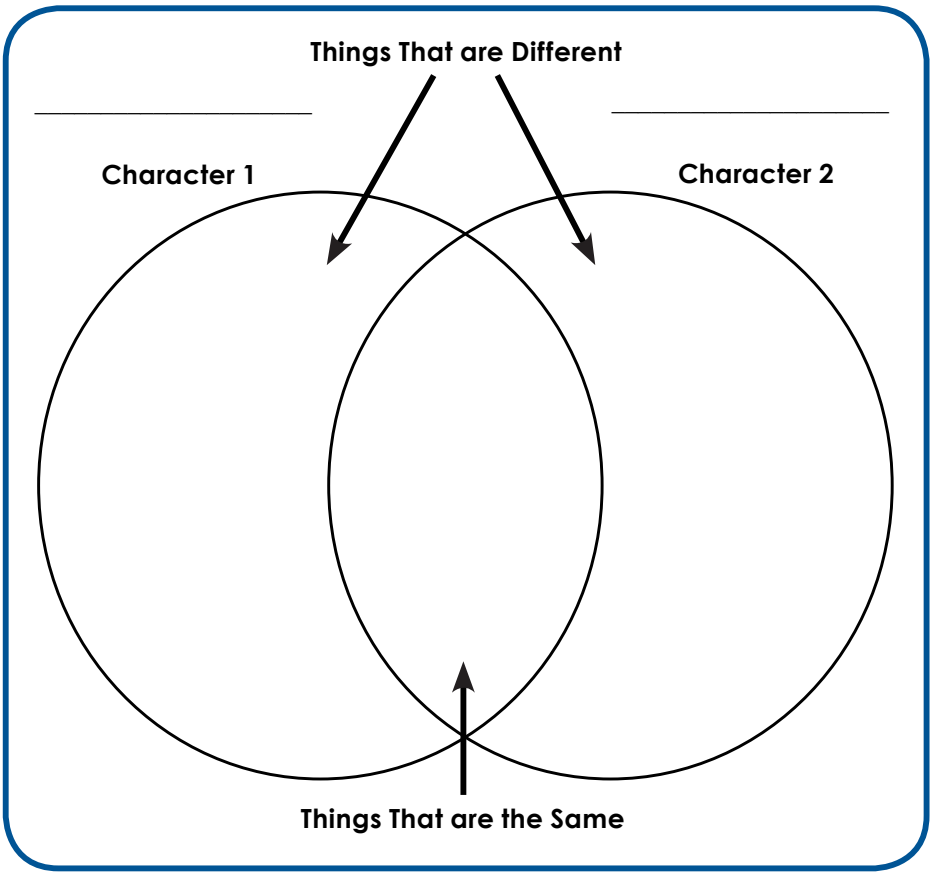
Step 1: Choose a story to read, or watch a movie or TV show together with your child.

Step 2: Choose two of the main characters to discuss and, using the diagram below, write their names above the two overlapping circles

Step 3: Ask your child what is the same and what is different about the characters.

Step 4: Differences should be listed in the larger sections of the circles, and things that are the same should be listed in the area where the circles overlap.

NOTE: With younger children, focus on obvious features of the characters, like age and appearance. For older children, focus more on the actions, feelings, and emotions of the characters.



Take-Home Activity

Make a Family Book

In this activity, the family will work together to draw pictures and construct a story about a special time spent together.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Stapler or hole punch and yarn

Directions:

Step 1: Get your family together and begin the "thinking process." Decide on a topic and title for your book. One idea might be "Our Weekend," where each family member can add a detail about what happened over the weekend.

Step 2: Ask each family member to draw a picture that goes with the topic of the book on his or her own piece of paper. Look at the drawings together and have each member of the family talk about his or her picture, describing what is happening.

Step 3: Above or below their pictures, have the family write down their part of the story. It can be a single sentence or a few sentences. Younger children may dictate their sentence while someone else writes it for them. Older children may write a short paragraph to go with their picture. Decide as a family what order the pages should go in.

Step 4: To construct the book, put all the pages together in the order you have decided. Add a blank page on top for the cover. Staple or tie all the pages together using a hole punch and yarn. Write the title on the cover and, as a family, draw a picture that illustrates what the book is about. Don't forget to include the authors and the date at the bottom of the cover so you can look back and remember this time that you spent together.

Step 5: Read the book together as a family. Read it by yourself and have your children read it by themselves. Start a library of family-created books. These will be books that the whole family can enjoy and read together many times over.

Take-Home Activity

Envelope Stories

This activity encourages story development, writing, and the comprehension needed to match text to pictures.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Six pieces of paper, one envelope
- Pencils, pens
- Glue or tape, scissors
- Newspapers, magazines, or anything with pictures that can be cut out

Directions:

Step 1: As a family, look through pictures in the newspapers and magazines you gathered to come up with an idea for a story. Once you decide on a story, cut out six different pictures that are related to that topic. For example, if your story is "Going to the Grocery Store," cut out six pictures of different food items or products you would buy at the store.

Step 2: Glue or tape each picture on its own piece of paper.

Step 3: Look at the pictures and discuss how each one fits into your story. Based on this discussion, have your child write words or sentences under each picture that describe the story. Younger children may dictate these words or sentences as you write them.

Step 4: Using scissors, separate the pictures and sentences from each other. Mix them up and ask your child (with or without your help, depending on their ability) to match the correct sentence with the picture. Once everything is matched, have your child read the story to you or read the story together.

Step 5: Store the pictures and sentences in an envelope so that none of the pieces are lost. This story can now be used by your child for practice alone or with another family member.

Take-Home Activity

Reporting Live from… (4 pages)

Asking questions and putting questions and answers together in written form are important skills. It is the same set of skills that newspaper reporters use to interview people and write stories. In this activity, your children will find out about good things that have happened to other people. The children will have an opportunity to talk to people and report on what they have learned.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils and pens

Preparation (for parents):

Step 1: Investigate! Find the story! Help your child find out who has good news. Work together to come up with questions that she can ask neighbors or other family members. For example:

- What good news do you have to share?
- Please tell me about something exciting that has happened recently.
- Do you expect something wonderful to happen soon? What is it? When will it happen?

Step 2: Accompany your child as she visits neighbors or family members to interview them.

Directions (for child):

Step 1: Remember to first ask the people being interviewed for permission to write up a "news story" about their good news. With permission, begin the interview. Get all of the details and necessary facts needed to make the story interesting.

Step 2: Write down a quote or two from the people you are interviewing. This way you can include the exact words they used when you talked to them. For example, "I am so excited to see that all five of the puppies are healthy and active," Grandma said.

Step 3: Write your news story based on the facts you gathered from your interviews. Below is a description of the components in a news story and some tips on how to write a good news story.

- **Headline:** Develop a headline for your story. The headline tells your reader what your story is about in a short, exciting way that grabs the reader's attention. For example:

  Grandma's Dog Has Puppies

- **Lead Paragraph:** Develop the first paragraph for your story. This paragraph is often called a "lead." The lead should include all the important who, what, where, when, and how information. For example:

  Last Tuesday afternoon, at approximately 4:00 p.m., Grandma's dog, Millie, had a litter of five puppies on her back porch.

Reporting Live from... *(page 2 of 4)*

- **Body of the Story:** This is where you include information that explains the details of the story, as you introduced it in the lead. Stick to the facts! Be concise and clear. Use short sentences. For example:

  Grandma has had Millie for about four years. She was surprised to find out that Millie was going to have puppies! When Grandma found out, she was pleased.

  "I am so excited to see that all five of the puppies are healthy and active," Grandma said.

  Grandma decided to find homes for the puppies before they were even born. She asked her friends and neighbors if they would like to have a puppy. While several said no, she found four people she trusted who said yes. Grandma explained that it was important for her to know who would be taking care of Millie's puppies. She wanted to make sure they went to good, loving homes.

- **Closing Paragraph:** The closing paragraph sums up the information you presented and tells the reader what will happen next. For example:

  When the puppies get a bit older, they will be ready to leave Millie and go to their new homes. Grandma's friends are so excited to get their new puppies! Grandma is happy, too, because she has decided to keep the fifth puppy with her.

Step 4: Read your story to your family. Practice reading with fluency — at about the same rate as you speak. Spread the good news!

Reporting Live from... *(page 3 of 4)*

Reporting Live From... Worksheet

Reporter's Notebook

Source (person you are interviewing) _____

Good news to be shared: _____

Questions to Ask

(remember to think of your questions before you start interviewing):

Question 1: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question 2: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question 3: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Reporting Live from... *(page 3 of 4)*

Question 4: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question 5: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question 6: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

_____

Question 7: _____

_____

Answer: _____

_____

Quotes or other special things you want to make sure you remember in your article: _____

_____

_____

Take-Home Activity

Write Your Own Read Aloud (2 pages)

Using the illustrations provided, create a read aloud that you and your family can enjoy.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Nine pieces of paper
- Eight story illustrations (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Stapler or hole punch and yarn to hold the book together
- Scissors and glue

Directions:

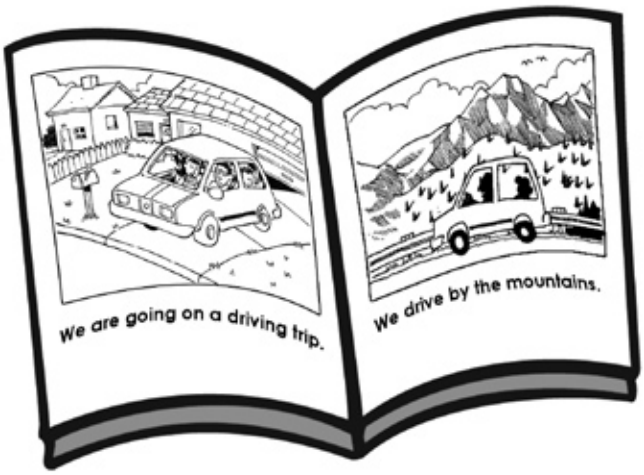
Step 1: Cut out the eight illustrations provided for you and paste each one on its own piece of paper.

Step 2: As a family, create a story using the illustrations as a guide. Under each picture, write down the part of your story that matches. If your child is younger, have him or her dictate the story to you as you write it down. Older children should write the story themselves with your support and involvement.

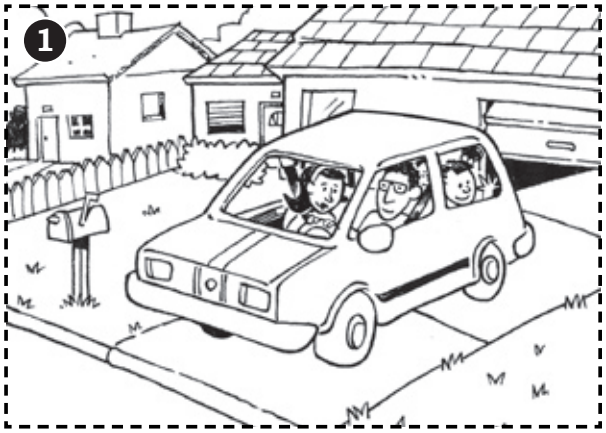
Step 3: When your story is complete, create the book. Add a blank page on top for the cover, then staple all the pages together or punch two holes in the pages and tie them together with yarn.

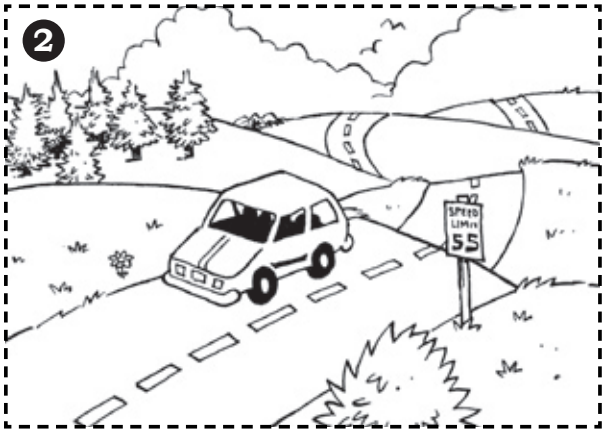
Step 4: Think of a title for your story and write it on the cover, along with your names as the authors. Work together to create a cover illustration for your book. Have your child color in the story illustrations.

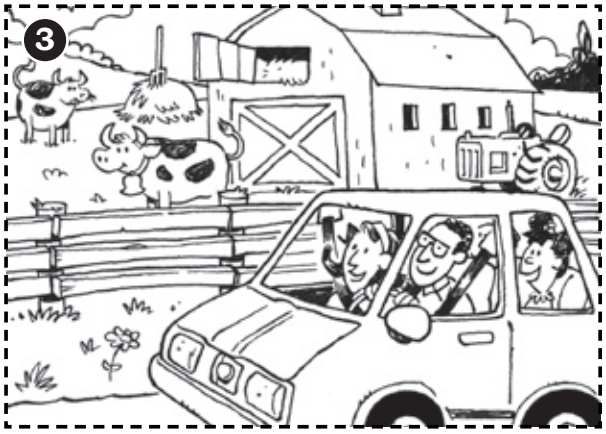
Step 5: Read the book aloud with your child or have your child read the book to other family members. Add this book to your family library.

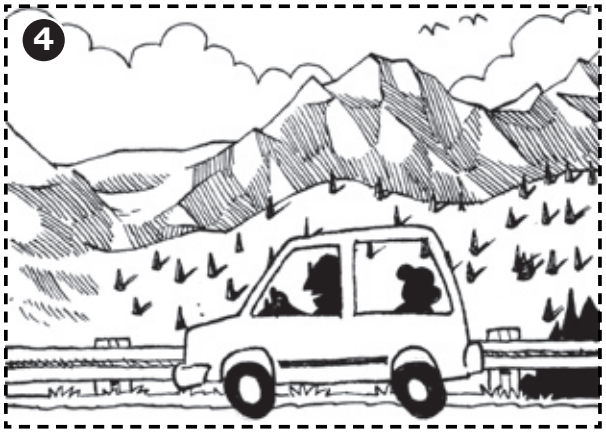


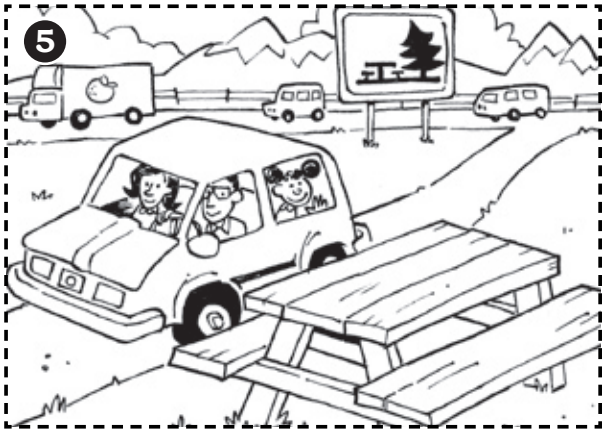
Write Your Own Read Aloud *(page 2 of 2)*











Take-Home Activity

Illustrate Your Own Read Aloud (2 pages)

Using the story provided, illustrate a read aloud that you and your family can enjoy.

- **Appropriate for younger children**

Materials:

- Eight pieces of paper
- *Family Vacation* story (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Stapler or hole punch and yarn to hold the book together
- Scissors and glue

Directions:

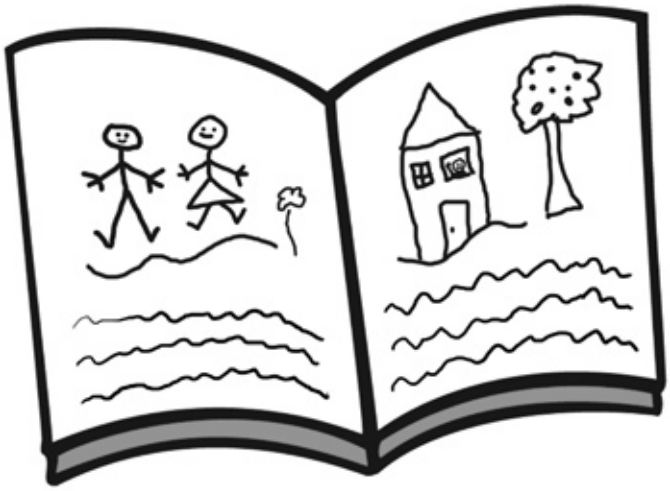
Step 1: Using the provided story, *Family Vacation*, cut out the sentence strips and glue each one on its own page.

Step 2: Read the story to your child and talk about what pictures could be drawn to help tell the story. Let your child draw pictures to illustrate the story being told.

Step 3: When your story is complete, create the book. Add a blank page on top for the cover, then staple all the pages together or punch two holes in the pages and tie them together with yarn.

Step 4: Write the title *(Family Vacation)* and the author *(By Daniel P. Swartz)* on the cover. Also add your child's name as the illustrator. Work together to create a cover illustration for the book.

Step 5: Read the book aloud with your child or have your child read the book to other family members. Add this book to your family library.



Illustrate Your Own Read Aloud *(page 2 of 2)*

Family Vacation

By Daniel P. Swartz

It was the first day of summer. My family and I packed the car for our yearly trip to the lake. We have taken this vacation every year for as long as I can remember.

We packed everything we needed. We packed our clothes, reading books, paper and pencils to write and draw with, and games for our long car ride.

We had plenty of snacks for our road trip and, as usual, I wanted to eat right away. We brought fruit, cookies, juice, and my favorite, licorice. However, they told me to wait.

For lunch, we stopped at one of my favorite restaurants. They make the best chocolate milkshakes in the world. We didn't stay long because we wanted to get to the lake before dark.

While riding in the car, my brother and I read and played games with each other. Mom liked to sleep along the way because the trip seemed shorter, while Dad listened to his favorite music.

We arrived just before dark and were too tired to unpack. We hopped into bed and fell asleep. My brother was first to wake up in the morning and got us all ready for boating on the water.

The four of us skied, swam, and fished. For dinner, we always ate the catch of the day. Summer at the lake was the best time of the year for our entire family.

Take-Home Activity

Finger Puppet Theater (4 pages)

Creating finger puppets will help you and your family retell a story in theater fashion. This is a great way to bring stories to life.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Puppet templates and *The Three Little Pigs* story (provided)
- Scissors
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Tape or glue

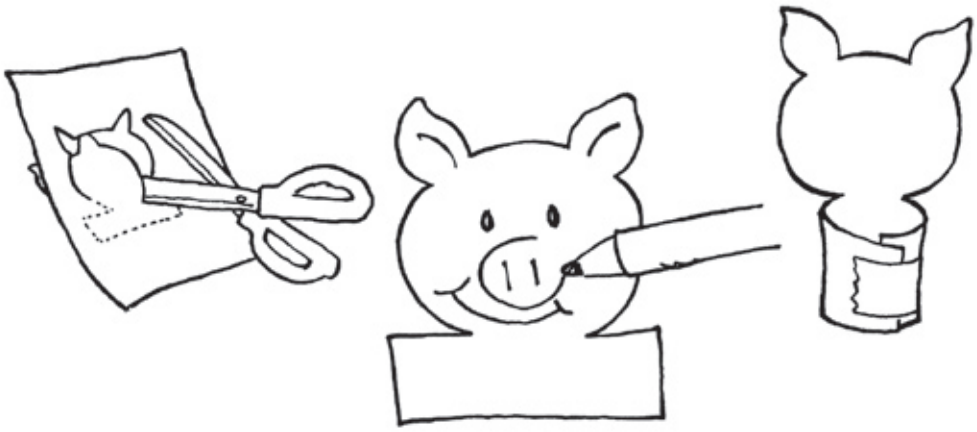
Directions:

Step 1: Using the puppet templates provided, have your child draw faces on and color in the puppets.

Step 2: Cut out the puppets and the strip of paper that will be used as the finger hold. Tape or glue the finger hold together around your finger.

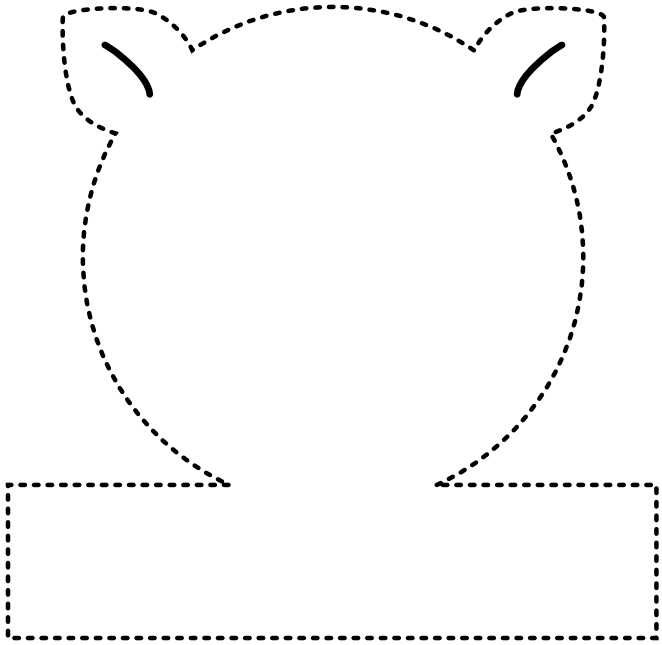
Step 3: There are four characters in the story — three pigs, a wolf, and a narrator. Choose who will play the characters in your retelling.

Step 4: Read *The Three Little Pigs* using your puppets and the script provided. The whole family can participate in this story. Younger children at first may just sit and watch. They can participate as the story becomes more familiar.

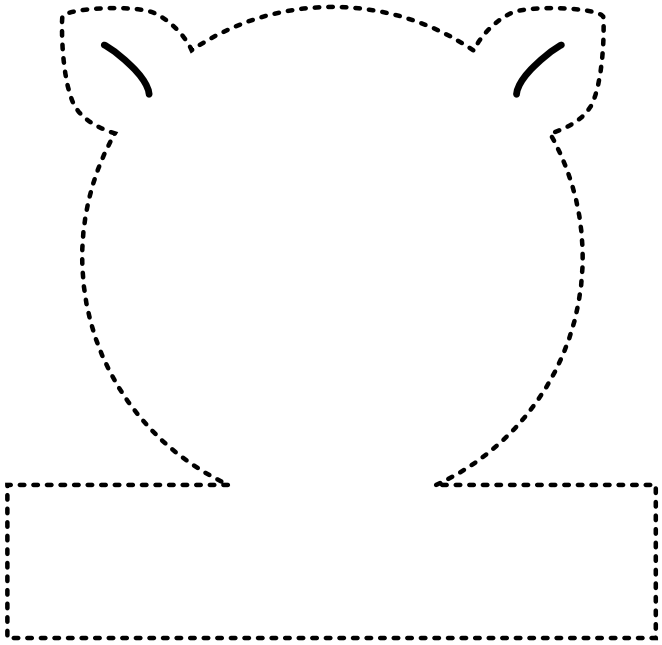


Finger Puppet Theater *(page 2 of 4)*

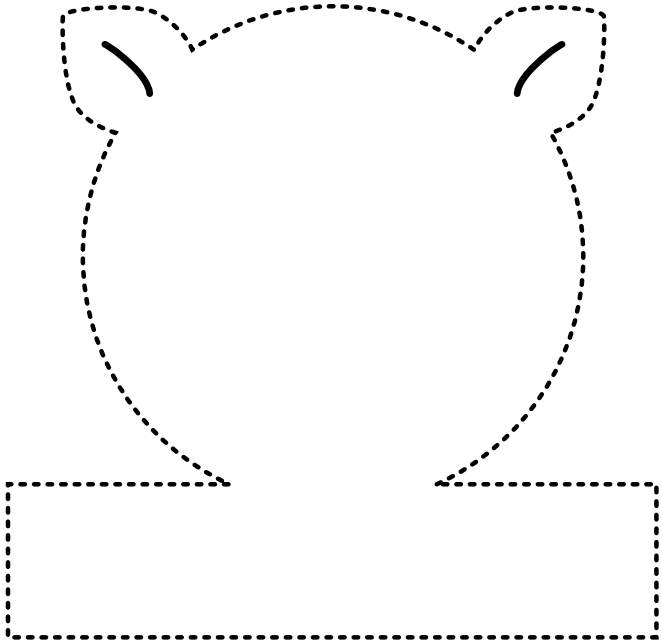
Finger Puppet Template



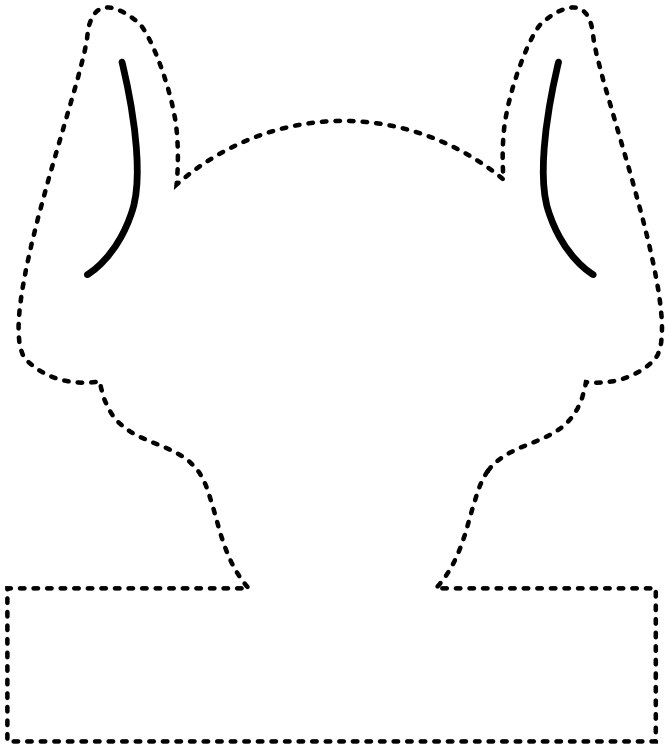
Pig 1



Pig 2



Pig 3



Wolf

Finger Puppet Theater *(page 3 of 4)*

The Three Little Pigs

Characters: *Larry the Lazy Pig, Amos the Average Pig, Silas the Smart Pig, Wolfgang "Wolfie" the Big Bad Wolf, and a Narrator*

Narrator: Once upon a time, there were three little pigs who lived at home with their mother. Their names were Larry, Amos, and Silas. One day, their mother told them they were old enough to move out on their own and start their own lives. But, she said, they had to be careful because the world could be a dangerous place. So the three little pigs left and went out into the world. As they were walking along, they met a man carrying straw.

Larry: I think I'm going to build my house out of straw. It doesn't look like it would be hard and I am pretty lazy. I just want a place to live, not a bunch of work to do. Can I have some of your straw?

Narrator: The man obliged. So the first little pig had everything he needed and started working. The other two pigs both wanted to build stronger houses than Larry the Lazy Pig. As they kept walking, they met a man carrying sticks.

Amos: I think I'm going to build my house out of sticks. I don't mind doing an average amount of work, but I don't want to spend all of my time working. Can I have some of your sticks?

Narrator: The man obliged. So the second little pig had everything he needed and started working. The third little pig wanted to build a house stronger than Larry the Lazy Pig and Amos the Average Pig. He continued walking and met a man carrying bricks.

Silas: I'm going to build my house out of bricks. I like to work with my hands, and I know that if I work hard and build my house out of bricks, it will be strong and last forever. Can I have some of your bricks?

Narrator: The man obliged. So the third little pig had everything he needed and started working. Building houses was hard for the three little pigs, but they knew their mother was right and they needed to seek their own fortune in the world and start their own lives. Larry was very lazy and put his house together quickly. It didn't amount to much, but it was a house. Amos put in an average amount of work. It wasn't too easy, but it wasn't too hard. It was obviously not a mansion. Silas was smart and a hard worker. His hard work paid off. His house was sturdy and very nice. He did a great job!

Narrator: One day, a big bad wolf wandered into the neighborhood. His name was Wolfgang, but everyone called him Wolfie. The first little pig saw him and ran into his straw house and slammed the door. The wolf walked up and knocked on the door.

Wolfie: Little Pig, oh Little Pig, won't you let me come in?

Larry: Not by the hairs on my chinny chin chin.

Narrator: This made the wolf very angry. So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the house down. Larry ran for cover. He ran all the way to Amos's house to tell him what had happened.

Larry: Wolfie came and blew my house over and tried to eat me. I guess I should have put more work into my house.

Narrator: The wolf continued walking through the neighborhood. He was hungry because he had not eaten the first little pig. The big bad wolf came to Amos's house where he and Larry were outside playing. They both saw the wolf and ran into the stick house and slammed the door. The wolf walked up and knocked on the door.

Wolfie: Little Pigs, oh Little Pigs, won't you let me come in? Please!!!

Finger Puppet Theater *(page 4 of 4)*

Amos and Larry: Not by the hairs on our chinny chin chins.

Narrator: This made the wolf very angry. So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the house down. Amos and Larry ran for cover. They ran all the way to Silas's house to tell him what had happened.

Larry: Wolfie came to my house and blew it over and tried to eat me. I didn't put much work into my house, but I didn't think someone would come over and blow it down.

Amos: Then Larry came to my house to tell me what happened and the wolf did the exact same thing. I put in an average amount of work, but I didn't think someone would come over and try to blow it down either.

Narrator: Silas knew he had built the strongest house he could. He had spent a lot of time working on his house while his brothers were relaxing and playing all day.

Silas: My brothers, do not worry because my house is very strong, and I have built it to withstand anything.

Narrator: So after all his hard work, Silas finally got to play outside with his brothers. Then the big bad wolf came again. The three pigs ran into the brick house and slammed the door. The wolf walked up and knocked on the door.

Wolfie: Listen, Little Pigs, I've been at this all day. So please, oh please, Little Pigs, won't you let me come in?

Narrator: Wolfgang was very hungry at this point in the day. He hadn't eaten anything but a bowl of cereal since the morning.

Larry, Amos, and Silas: Not by the hairs on our chinny chin chins.

Narrator: This made Wolfie furious. So he huffed, and he puffed, and tried to blow the house down, but nothing happened. So he took a deeper breath and he huffed and he puffed and he blew as hard as he could. But nothing happened again. By now, Wolfie was enraged.

Silas: I'm bored. I need something to do.

Larry: All this running from the wolf has made me hungry.

Narrator: So Silas put a kettle of water in his fireplace to boil because they wanted to cook some vegetables. The fireplace had taken an extra couple of days to build but was well worth it.

Wolfie: I've got to come up with a plan. I'm just starving. The only way inside this strong, brick house is down the chimney.

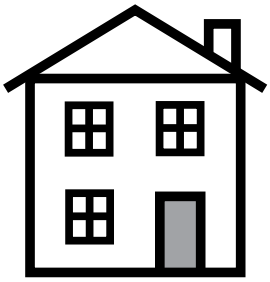
Narrator: So Wolfgang climbed up on the roof of the house and started to make his way down the chimney. The wolf, not being the smartest guy, and being so hungry that he was letting his stomach do all of the thinking, didn't notice the smoke and heat from the chimney and continued making his way down when he slipped and fell into the pot of boiling water. The water was so hot that the wolf screamed.

Wolfie: Yahoooooooo-eeee!!! Why-yai-yai!!! Owie-Owie-Owie!!!! Wow-Wow-Wow!!!! My tushy is on fire!!!

Narrator: The wolf flew back up the chimney and ran off never to be heard from again. The three little pigs decided they worked so well together that they would all stay in the brick house forever. In the end, being lazy didn't work so well for Larry because he took the easy way out. And being average didn't work so well for Amos because he wanted something that wasn't too easy, but wasn't too hard. But Silas was smart. He knew that bricks might have been hard work but his house was built to last, and it paid off in the long run.

The End

Take-Home Activity



Media Madhouse (2 pages)

Often, knowing why the author wrote an article or story helps make the meaning clearer. This activity will provide practice in identifying why the author wrote the article or story.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Collection of newspapers and/or magazines (If you do not have access to a newspaper or magazine, ask your child's teacher.)
- Media Madhouse worksheet (provided) or a blank piece of paper
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Newspapers and magazines are full of messages to their readers. As readers, it is important for us to think about not only what we are reading, but why it was written. For example, it is important to notice when you are reading facts or when you are reading opinions. There are several forms of writing that are often included in any newspaper or magazine. They include:

- **Information** – facts about people, places, and things
- **Entertainment** – amusing information that typically fascinates the reader
- **Persuasion** – text that is written in order to persuade the reader to think the same way as the author
- **Opinion** – text that explains not only what happened, but also why someone thinks it was important
- **Stories about people and places around the world** – text that tells about people and how they live

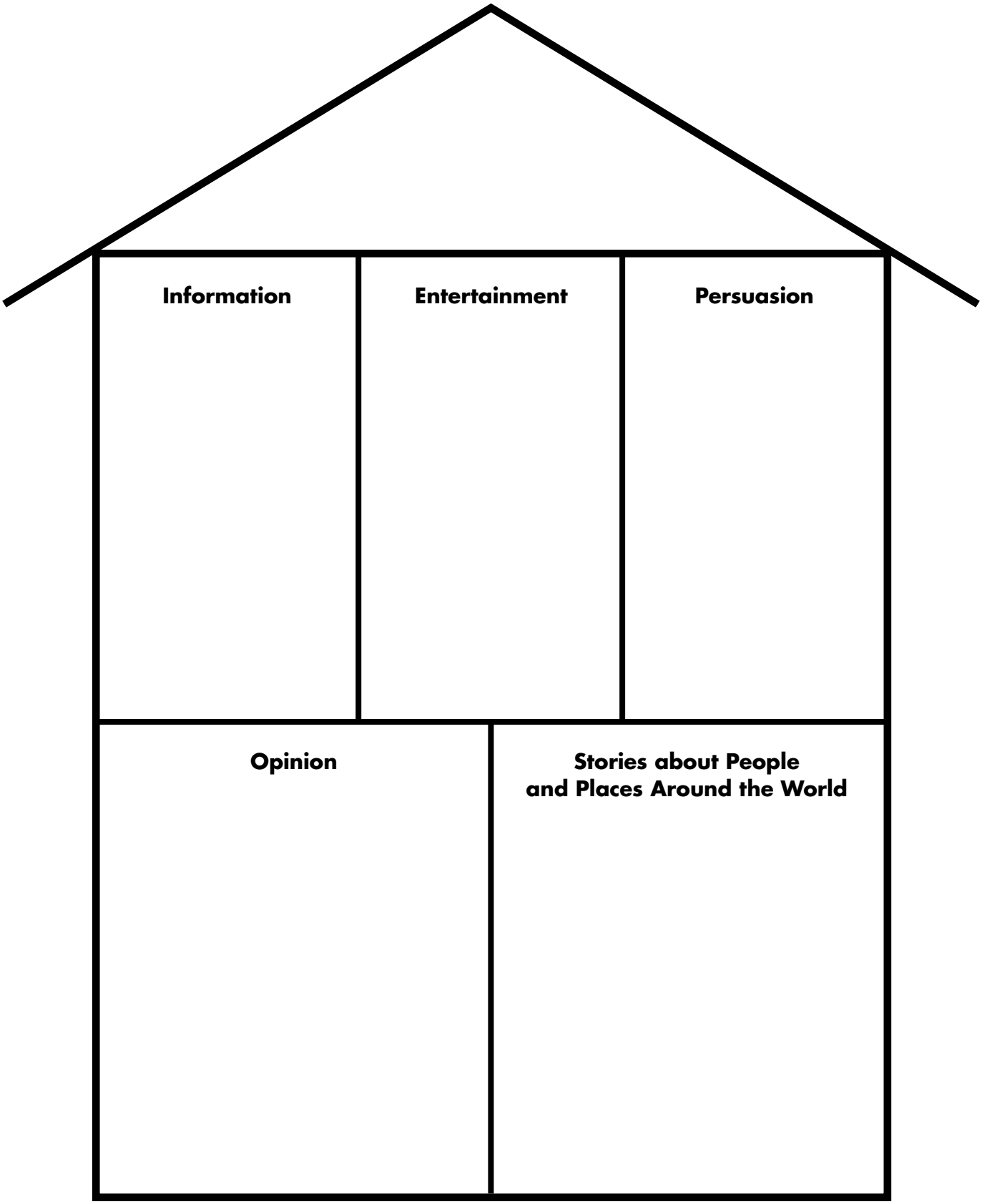
Step 2: Collect at least five newspaper or magazine articles. As a family, read them together. Have a discussion regarding what messages are in the article. Is the article based on facts or opinions? Is the article attempting to entertain or inform? Decide with your family why the article was written.

Step 3: There are five sections on the Media Madhouse worksheet, each labeled with the forms of writing listed above. Write down the titles of each article you discussed in the section you think it belongs to. Review and discuss your choices.

Step 4: Repeat this activity with five new articles. Before discussing as a family, have each person write down on his or her own worksheet, which section each article belongs to. Compare and discuss everyone's answers.

Media Madhouse *(page 2 of 2)*

Media Madhouse Worksheet



Take-Home Activity

Comprehension Concentration (3 pages)

This activity is a fun way to make sure we pay attention to details when we read a story. The object of the game is to match cards using information that is found in the story.

- **Appropriate for younger children**

Materials:

- Hiccups story (provided)
- Game cards (provided)

Directions:

Step 1: Cut out the game cards, shuffle them, and lay them in rows face down on the table.

Step 2: Tell all of the players that you are going to read the story *Hiccups*. When the story is finished, you will play a game to see who can remember the most details from the story.

Step 3: After reading, discuss the story. Ask which character had the best idea to stop the hiccups. Remind your children that it is important to remember the characters and how they made the hiccups go away.

Step 4: Now play the game:

- **Object of the Game:**

  The object of the game is to find matching sets of cards — one card should have a character's name and the other should be the idea he or she had for getting rid of the hiccups.

- **How to Play:**

  Each player takes a turn by turning over two cards. If a match is made, that player keeps the cards and goes again. If the cards do not match, the player turns them back over and it is the next player's turn. The player with the most cards at the end of the game wins!

Comprehension Concentration *(page 2 of 3)*

Hiccups

The day had just begun. Julianne woke up, stretched out her arms, and said, "Hiccup!"

"That's funny," she thought. "I haven't even had my breakfast yet, and I already have the hiccups!" Julianne decided to ask her mother what she should do.

"Drink something," said her mother. She poured Julianne a tall glass of orange juice. Down went the orange juice and then, "Hiccup!" said Julianne.

She decided to ask her brother what to do. "I'll scare you," said her brother. He hid behind the door and jumped out, yelling, "Boo!" Julianne looked back at him and said, "Hiccup!"

So she went outside and found her father. "What should I do to make my hiccups go away?" asked Julianne.

"An easy solution," said her father, "is to hold your breath as long as you can." Julianne took a deep breath and counted to ten. She felt a little dizzy, so she sat down and said, "Hiccup!"

"I see you have a problem," said their neighbor, Mr. Avery. "When I have the hiccups, I always stand on my head. You should give it a try." So Julianne gave it a try, but instead flopped over and said, "Hiccup!"

Julianne saw her friend Caroline across the street. "I've had the hiccups all morning!" said Julianne.

"What do you do when you want to make hiccups go away?"

"Easy!" said Caroline. "I flap my arms and act like a chicken!" So Julianne gave it a try. She flapped and scratched and clucked and strutted back and forth and then said, "Hiccup!"

Feeling frustrated, Julianne looked up to see Grandma arriving. "I sure am glad to see you, Grandma!" said Julianne. "I have the hiccups and no one can help me make them go away!"

"Well," said Grandma, "have you tried drinking something?"

"Yes," said Julianne.

"Has someone scared you yet?" asked Grandma.

"Yes," said Julianne.

"Have you held your breath?" asked Grandma.

"Yes," said Julianne.

"How about standing on your head?" asked Grandma.

"Yes," said Julianne, "and I've even flapped my arms and acted like a chicken! Nothing has worked!"

"Well, there is one more thing to try," Grandma replied.

They went into the kitchen and Grandma took out a spoon and the sugar bowl. "Something sweet and sticky is the best way to calm down hiccups," said Grandma.

The sugar was very sweet in Julianne's mouth. It was sticky and syrupy as it went down. Julianne was ready for another hiccup, but this time all she said was, "Mmmmm, that was tasty, Grandma! And — hey! My hiccups are finally gone!"

The End

Comprehension Concentration *(page 3 of 3)*

Hiccups Game Cards

Mother	Drink something	Grandma
Brother	I'll scare you	Something sweet and sticky
Father	Hold your breath	Mr. Avery
Caroline	Act like a chicken	Stand on your head

Take-Home Activity

Silly Story Time (3 pages)

This activity helps children learn more about parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Parts of Speech Handout (provided)
- Silly Story Time Sheet (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Talk about the different parts of speech with your child. The *Parts of Speech Handout* provides a definition for each part of speech, and provides examples as well.

Step 2: Think of your own examples. Use a dictionary for help if needed. Fill in the blanks at the bottom of the handout.

Step 3: Using the example words you wrote down on the *Parts of Speech Handout*, fill in the blanks (with corresponding numbers) on the *Silly Story Time Sheet* to create your own silly story!

Step 4: Together as a family, illustrate your silly story and read it aloud when it is finished.

Silly Story Time ***(page 2 of 3)***

Parts of Speech Handout

Definitions and Examples

Noun: word that is used to name a person, place, thing

Examples: dog, tree, store, state

Proper Noun: noun that names a unique individual, event, or place

Examples: Javier, Ohio, Thanksgiving Day, Sunday

Pronoun: word that takes the place of nouns

Examples: he, it, they, we

Verb: word that expresses action or existence

Examples: run, be, think, play

Adjective: word used to describe a noun, making it more colorful

Examples: yellow, big, fast, pretty

Adverb: word that is used to describe a verb

Examples: quickly, very, slowly, boldly

Think of your own parts of speech examples and fill in the blanks below:

1. adjective _____
2. adjective _____
3. noun _____
4. noun _____
5. noun _____
6. noun _____
7. proper noun _____
8. noun _____
9. verb _____
10. noun _____
11. verb (with –ing ending) _____
12. noun (plural) _____
13. adjective _____
14. noun _____
15. verb (with –ing ending) _____
16. adverb (with –ly ending) _____
17. verb (with –ed ending) _____
18. adverb _____
19. verb (with –ing ending) _____
20. pronoun _____

Silly Story Time *(page 3 of 3)*

Silly Story

Using the parts of speech that you wrote down on the *Parts of Speech Handout*, fill in the blanks below; the numbers correspond to the numbers next to your examples.

Once upon a time in the **(1)**_____ , **(2)** _____

(3)_____ there lived a(n) **(4)** _____.

This **(5)**_____ was not just any old **(6)** _____.

Everyone called her **(7)** _____. She was an

old, wrinkly **(8)**_____. All day long this person would do

nothing but **(9)** _____ and this would cause many problems;

problems that started to bother the **(10)**_____.

One day after no one could take it anymore they decided to solve this

problem by **(11)**_____. This didn't help much

though and caused more **(12)**_____ . Finally one

(13)_____ **(14)** _____ offered a solution.

Everyone agreed. The only way to solve this problem was by

(15)_____. So they **(16)**_____

(17)_____ into action. Unbelievably it worked and the

problem was solved. **(18)**_____ **(19)**_____

always does the trick. And **(20)**_____ lived happily ever after.

Take-Home Activity

Biography Word Search (3 pages)

This activity allows students to read for meaning and focus on the content vocabulary in a short biography. They will then use a fun word search to locate the content words.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials needed:

- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Informational text and word search (provided)

Directions:

Step 1: Together with your child, read the provided passage on Martin Luther King Jr.

Step 2: Discuss any new vocabulary or unfamiliar ideas. Have a comprehension discussion with your child to check for understanding. Reread the piece together again to ensure full comprehension of the piece.

Step 3: Using the the short answers provided (in parentheses), search for the key words in the *Martin Luther King Jr. Word Search*.

Comprehension Questions

Check for comprehension. Work with your child to answer the following questions. Use full sentences as much as possible to model proper language for your child. If the child struggles with an answer, read through the passage again, until he or she finds the right information.

1. Where was Martin Luther King Jr. born? *(Atlanta)*
2. What did his father do for a living? *(Reverend)*
3. What degree did King earn at Boston University? *(Doctoral)*
4. What did King believe strongly in? *(Equality)*
5. What is the name of his famous speech? *(I Have A Dream)*
6. Where did 250,000 people march to hear his speech? *(Washington, D.C.)*
7. What award did he win in 1965? *(Nobel Peace Prize)*
8. What city was King in when he was shot? *(Memphis)*
9. Who was president at the time of King's death? *(Lyndon B. Johnson)*
10. King's goal was to help people of different what? *(Races)*
11. Name an example of a civil right that King helped people of color gain. *(Vote)*
12. On the steps of what monument did he deliver his famous speech? *(Lincoln)*
13. His March on Washington was the biggest what at the time? *(Protest)*
14. Who was tried for the murder of King? *(James Earl Ray)*
15. What kind of protest did King support? *(Nonviolent)*

Biography Word Search *(page 2 of 3)*

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a leader of the American civil rights movement and a strong political activist. He was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. His parents were Reverend Martin Luther King and Alberta Williams King. King was one of three children. He was a very educated man, who received his Doctoral degree in Philosophy from Boston University.

Martin Luther King Jr. had strong beliefs in the equality of all people, regardless of race or color. He organized marches to help people of color gain basic civil rights such as the right to vote. He was very successful in bringing about change.

King is most well known for his "I Have a Dream" speech that he delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963, during his famous March on Washington. More than 250,000 people of different ethnicities marched in this protest, making it, at the time, the biggest protest in Washington, D.C., history. "I Have a Dream" is still considered one of the greatest speeches in American history.

King supported the concept of nonviolent protests and in 1965 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in honor of his work. He was the youngest person ever to be given such an award.

Not everyone supported Martin Luther King Jr.'s ideas, though. While visiting Memphis, Tennessee, to help black workers in their attempts to earn higher wages and better treatment, King was shot coming out of a motel on April 4, 1968. He died that evening. The nation was in shock. President Lyndon B. Johnson dedicated a national day of mourning just five days later on April 9, 1968. Today, we still honor Martin Luther King Jr. on this date.

More than 300,000 people attended his funeral on April 9, 1968. The shooter, James Earl Ray, was captured two months later and charged with the murder. He was found guilty and sentenced to 99 years in prison. Many theories exist about the reasons why James Earl Ray murdered Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a great man who stood up for his beliefs. He was very influential and had an impact on the way we live our lives today.

Biography Word Search *(page 3 of 3)*

Martin Luther King Jr.

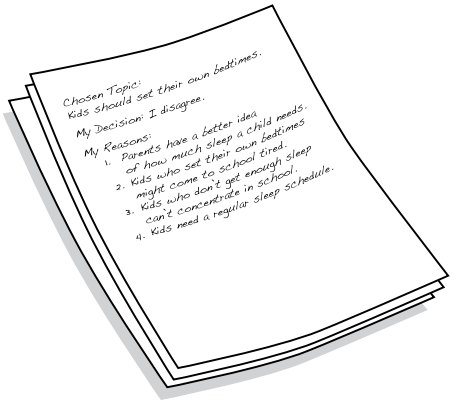
H C R F A B O M T P D J P U N N M M M T
D P V Y J B V Z F A P W K B D Q C J F M
P N X T W S B W Y M H E L V E A X S S O
C X E D W T O N A G C I C Z O X C K W T
B K U R O F K L A S H A I P H K I Q M D
G N B B E B U L K A H R J W O Q R R N W
W P H D M V P B V Q P I P O G C O A I R
L K Y L Y B E E Y E U C N K S L O T M Q
I S Q J E U A R C V Q H J G N Q M N B H
N C G A G D R A D T L J H V T V E N K A
C U I M R E E C N E L O I V N O N T K W
O U Y E A P L Y N D O N B J O H N S O N
L R A S L Q A U M M F M E Y U P H D K V
N M F E K J R N X E Q Z T B R U D E C T
X H B A G A O Z W R M I R O O S I K O G
O O J R S V T W P Y L P T S E C A R P I
N A O L N T C O U A N E H U N U D L H F
T D E R Y Q O K U T S D H I X Y S O P A
M M H A K C D Q P T C Z O T S N H I V E
L J D Y K K E M A A T L A N T A G L C O

Words to Find:

ATLANTA
DOCTORAL
EQUALITY
I HAVE A DREAM
JAMES EARL RAY
LINCOLN
LYNDON B JOHNSON
MEMPHIS
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
NON VIOLENCE
PROTEST
RACES
REVEREND
VOTE
WASHINGTON DC

Take-Home Activity

Convince Me!



A persuasive essay is designed to present information that will make the reader agree with the author. Writing a persuasive essay may be the best way to learn how to identify and interpret one. In this activity, your child will learn how to write an essay to convince the reader to agree with a particular position. It is important that your child know ahead of time what the position of the essay will be.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils or pens

Directions:

Step 1: Choose a topic. Below are some sample topics that your child may choose.

1. Homework is an important part of learning.
2. Parents should tell kids what to wear to school.
3. Sometimes, it is okay to tell a lie.
4. It is important for parents and teachers to know each other.
5. Parents should know what their children are looking at on the Internet.

Step 2: Ask your child to decide how he feels about the chosen topic. Does he agree or disagree with the statement? Why? Create a list of reasons why your child feels that way. For example:

Chosen Topic: Kids should set their own bedtimes.

My Decision: I disagree.

My Reasons:

1. Parents have a better idea of how much sleep a child needs.
2. Kids who set their own bedtimes might come to school tired.
3. Kids who don't get enough sleep can't concentrate in school.
4. Kids need a regular sleep schedule.

Step 3: Now discuss what someone with the opposite view might say. For what reasons would she disagree? Make a list of different possible beliefs or opinions that someone else may have.

Step 4: Get organized to write your essay! Review the different parts of an essay.

- *Introduction:* Get your reader's attention! Provide some information on your topic. End this paragraph with a clear sentence that states your point of view. For example, "I disagree that kids should set their own bedtimes."
- *Body:* Each paragraph in the body of the essay should focus on one point or idea. Be sure to explain the reasons behind your thinking.
- *Opposite View:* After writing about why you feel the way you do about your topic, write a paragraph that explains the opposite view and why you believe it is wrong.
- *Conclusion:* Restate your main idea and main supporting points from your introduction.

Step 5: When your child has finished writing, reread the essay together. Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes. Have your child read the essay with another family member. See if she agrees or disagrees with your child's position!

Take-Home Activity

A Moment in Time

This is a storytelling activity. Pick a moment in your life to tell a story about. It could be happy, sad, or funny. Tell this story to your child and discuss it with her afterward. Then ask your child to do the same by picking a moment from his or her own life and telling that story.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Step 1: Think of an embarrassing story that happened to you and tell it to your child. Below is an example of an embarrassing story from one of our authors:

When I was in 4th grade, I was walking to school just after it had rained. When I was almost there, I slipped in a puddle and landed on my bottom. When I got up, my pants were all wet. I couldn't believe I had to go to school with wet pants on. What were all the kids going to think? I went straight to the bathroom and tried to dry my pants off with paper towels, but it was no use. They were soaked. I walked into class late because I was in the bathroom trying to fix the situation, and a boy right next to the door looked at me as I walked in. He shouted to the rest of the class, "Look! His pants are all wet. Had an accident, did we? Couldn't wait to go pee in the bathroom?!" I was so embarrassed. The whole school called me pee-pee pants the rest of the day — even after the pants dried. I was so upset when I went home. But a few days later, everyone had forgotten about it.

Step 2: Talk about the story with your child, asking questions like:

- Why was I so embarrassed when I got to school?
- How were the other kids mean to me?
- What happened afterward?

Step 3: Follow up the story by asking your child, "Have you ever had an embarrassing situation like that? Tell me about it."

Step 4: Feel free to ask questions throughout the story, as well as at the end, to develop language through the use of more detailed descriptions and higher level language. For example:

- How did you feel when that happened?
- What did others say?
- Where and when did this happen?

Step 5: Repeat this activity using other kinds of stories – happy, sad, exciting, etc.

Take-Home Activity

Cooking with Kids

Cooking is a great time to talk with your children and to include them in a daily activity. Talking about ingredients, measurements, and the cooking process is a valuable oral language development opportunity.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Recipe
- Cooking supplies
- Ingredients

Directions:

Step 1: Choose a recipe together with your child. It could be a favorite food or something new.

Step 2: Begin by reading through the list of ingredients. Work with your child to figure out which ingredients you already have at home and which ones you need to go to the store to buy. *(Going shopping at the store provides another opportunity for oral language interactions as you point out food items and read labels together.)*

Step 3: Once you have all the ingredients, talk with your child about the recipe. What is needed? How many cups? Teaspoons? What's a pinch of salt? Let's see what a raw green pepper tastes like. Do you like it? What does it smell like? Let's try it to see if it's changed flavor after we've cooked it. Do you want to stir the …? When you stir, you …. What does the recipe say next?

Step 4: Once all the cooking is done, you can also make serving part of the activity. Continue the conversation. Now we use the spatula to put the … on the plate. Now we use the tongs….

Step 5: Ask your child to help with the clean-up, again continuing the conversation. Use the scrub brush and dish soap to… and then put that into the dishwasher. Where does that go? What should we do with…?

Take-Home Activity

My Turn, Your Turn Story Time

This is an old-fashioned storytelling time activity. It begins with a prompt from which one person starts telling a story and then at any moment hands the story off to the next person, who continues telling the story in his or her own way. This is repeated among the participating members until the story is finished.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Sample story prompt (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: The first person should begin telling a story based on the story prompt provided below.

Step 2: When the story has reached a point that the first person feels is a good place for someone else to continue, he or she allows the next person to take over the storytelling, going in any direction of his or her choosing.

Step 3: Continue this way until each person has had a chance to add to the story and someone comes up with an ending. An alternative to this oral interaction is to take turns writing the story down until it is complete.

Step 4: Make up your own story prompts and repeat the activity.

Sample Story Prompt

There was a boy who loved school. He was very smart and loved to read. One rainy day, he was walking to school with his best friend when …

Take-Home Activity

Family Tree (2 pages)

Creating a family tree is a great way to discover and preserve your family's unique history. This may take some time and energy, but creating an heirloom that the family can share forever will be well worth it in the end.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Paper or family tree worksheet (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Start by interviewing your parents. Ask them about themselves and then about their parents (where and when they were born, what their names are/were, what your mother/grandmother's maiden name was, and so on). Keep notes on this so that you can create your family tree.

Step 2: Interview other immediate family members such as your grandparents and possibly great-grandparents. Ask them to tell you what they remember about their parents and grandparents.

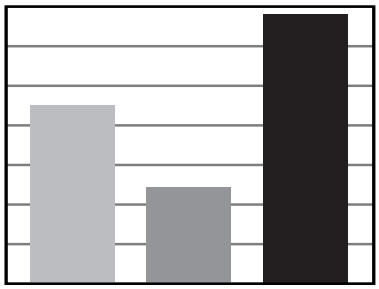
Step 3: Talking with everyone listed so far should allow you to take your family tree back to at least your grandparents, if not your great, or great-great grandparents. The more family members you talk to, the more information you should be able to gather. Record this information and make a couple of rough drafts of your family tree before you make your final draft. Share your finished family tree with family members.

Family Tree *(page 2 of 2)*

Family Tree Worksheet

Take-Home Activity

Check the Chart (3 pages)



In this activity, parents will help children read and understand information on a chart. Children will also learn how to make a chart using information of their own.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Chart of rainfall in Los Angeles (provided)
- Blank chart sheet (provided)

Directions:

Step 1: Look at the chart on the next page that graphs annual rainfall in Los Angeles. Discuss what information the chart is telling you. Review the chart again, making sure that you and your child both understand the information being provided.

Step 2: Answer the questions, referring to the chart whenever needed to find information.

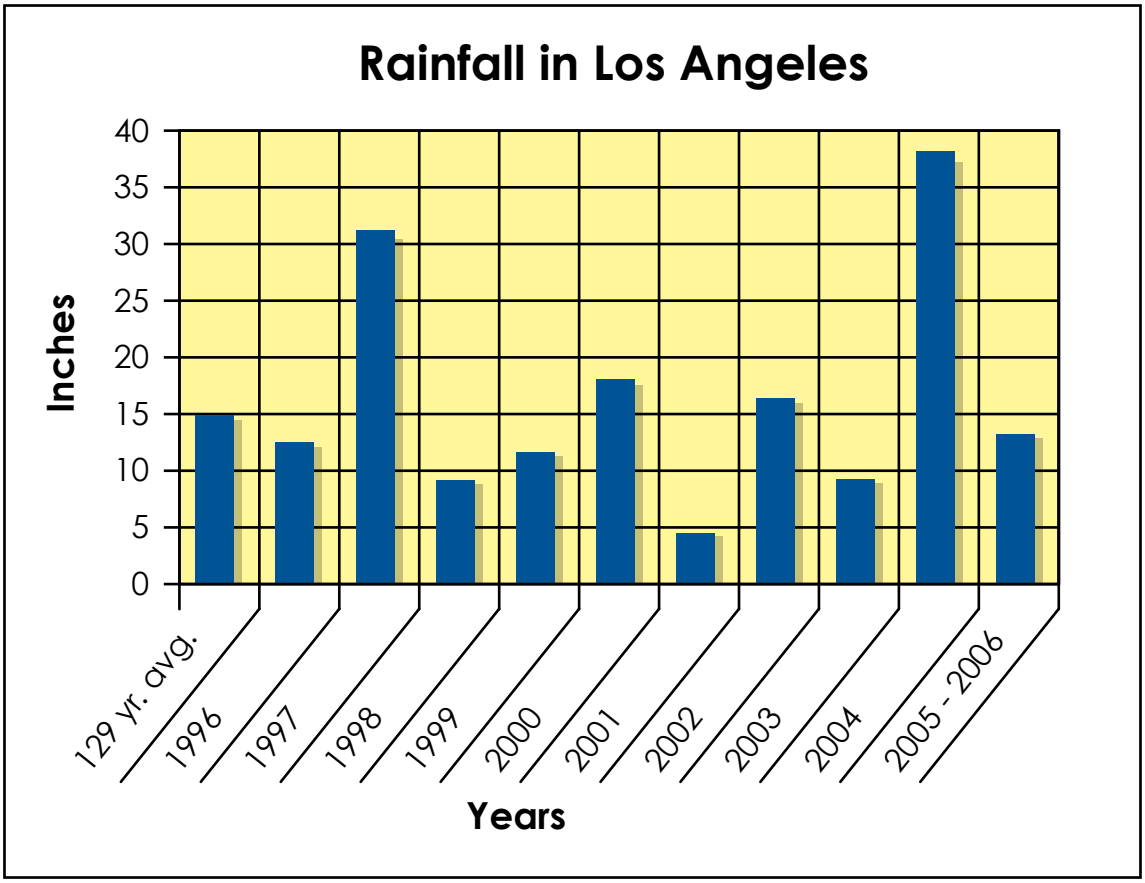
Step 3: On the sheet provided, create a chart with your child using information of your choosing. Some ideas of information to graph are:

- The height of your family members
- The age of your family members
- How many minutes each day you spend reading together

Step 4: Develop questions to accompany your chart. Use the questions from the activity as a guide. Write these questions underneath the chart you create.

Step 5: Look at your chart with your child. Discuss the information you graphed together. Work through the questions you developed, encouraging your child to provide answers as independently as possible.

Check the Chart *(page 2 of 3)*



1. What year had the most rainfall in Los Angeles? _____

2. What year had the least amount of rainfall? _____

3. What was the combined rainfall for the three years with the lowest rainfall? _____

4. Was this more or less than the year with the highest amount of rainfall? _____

5. Rainfall has been measured in Los Angeles since 1877. What is the 129-year-average amount of rainfall? _____

6. What amount of rain fell in 2005-2006? _____

7. What year had the amount of rainfall closest to the 129-year average? _____

8. How much total rainfall was there over the 10 years shown on the graph? _____

Check the Chart *(page 3 of 3)*

Make Your Own Chart

List some questions below that accompany this chart for your child to answer.

Take-Home Activity

Hawaiian Vacation Fantasy (2 pages)

Children will practice answering comprehension questions after reading a nonfiction piece.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Passage and questions on Hawaii (provided)
- Pencil or pen

Directions:

Step 1: Together with your child, read the following passage about Hawaii. Reread it a few times to increase comprehension. Talk about what you read and learned about Hawaii.

Step 2: Work with your child to answer the comprehension questions that go with the passage. Some are multiple-choice, some are fill in the blank, and some are true or false. Encourage your child to refer to the text as much as needed to find the answer.

Hawaii

Hawaii, originally known as the Sandwich Islands, is made up of hundreds of islands located in the Pacific Ocean. The eight largest islands in the chain are known as the "main islands." They are Hawaii (also called the "Big Island" to avoid confusion with the state name), Oahu, Kahoolawe, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai, and Niihau. Hawaii officially became a state in 1959. It is located in the tropics, and is the only state to be completely surrounded by water. Hawaii is often referred to as "the Paradise of the Pacific" because of its beauty, sunshine, vegetation, beaches, volcanic peaks, and surf.

Thousands of years ago, undersea volcanic eruptions formed the islands of Hawaii. The weather is usually beautiful all year long. Temperatures rarely reach above 80 degrees Fahrenheit or drop below 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The climate on each of the islands varies. Some islands receive a greater amount of rainfall while others are windier and drier.

To travel to Hawaii, you must go by either boat or plane. It takes four to six hours to get there by plane from California, which is 2390 miles away. Plane tickets to Hawaii vary in cost, depending on the time of year you go, where you are flying from, and when and how you purchase your ticket. On average, a plane ticket from California might cost between $500 and $800. You also need to make sure that you have a place to stay in Hawaii. There are lots of good hotels. The average hotel room will cost between $150 and $250 a night. There are also more expensive hotels that are located right on the beach.

Hawaiian Vacation Fantasy *(page 2 of 2)*

The most common place to travel in Hawaii is Honolulu, which is located on the island of Oahu. *Honolulu* means "Gathering Place." It is the state capital of Hawaii. Over five million people visit Honolulu and the island of Oahu every year.

When people arrive in Hawaii, they are often given a lei, which is a Hawaiian tradition welcoming you to the islands. The traditional lei is a necklace of fresh flowers that should be worn half down the front of your body and half down the back.

There are lots of fun things to do when you get to Hawaii. Most people spend time on the beautiful beaches where they can lie out in the sun or play in the sand, swim in the warm, blue ocean, and go surfing. But Hawaii is also known for having great areas to snorkel and scuba dive. You should also try the wonderful hiking and bike trails that offer fantastic views of waterfalls and colorful surroundings. And of course, there is plenty of great shopping to do! Hawaii is a truly a wonderful place to visit.

Hawaii Comprehension Questions

1. Hawaii was originally known as the _____.

2. There are _____ islands, known as the "main islands."

   a. 4 b. 6 c. 8 d. 10

3. True or false? Hawaii and Florida are the only two states to be completely surrounded by water. _____

4. Hawaii was formed by _____.

   a. waves washing up sand
   b. breaking off of the continent
   c. undersea volcanic eruptions
   d. people

5. The temperature in Hawaii is usually between _____ and _____ degrees Fahrenheit.

6. What are the two ways to travel to Hawaii?

   a. car and boat
   b. boat and plane
   c. car and plane
   d. swimming and walking

7. True or false? A plane ticket from California to Hawaii is $300-$600. _____

8. True or false? Honolulu is the most common place to travel in Hawaii. _____

9. A lei is _____.

10. Name four things you can do when you visit Hawaii: _____

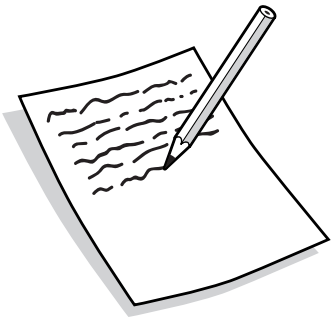
_____

_____

_____

Take-Home Activity

I'm an Author (2 pages)



Parents and children will enjoy reading about sharks while learning how to compose a nonfiction piece and discovering how to be an author!

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Handout about sharks (provided)
- Paper
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Together with your child, read the piece provided about sharks. Discuss what the piece is about and what you learned from the text. Read it again to help with comprehension. The more something is read, the more children will remember.

Step 2: After rereading, talk with your child and select meaningful words from the passage that best describe the content. These words are called the content words. Circle them as you read the piece again.

Step.3: Then write the words in a list down the center of a piece of paper.

Step 4: Using the content words you selected, work with your child to construct sentences putting the words together in a meaningful way that retells what you read.

An example of this activity is provided below, using a short passage from the piece about sharks.

Step 1: Read the passage: "*Sharks live in oceans all around the world. Because of this, sharks are very different from one another. There are hundreds of different kinds of sharks. Some are very gentle while others are fierce.*"

Step 2: Select the content words: "***Sharks*** *live in* ***oceans*** *all around the world. Because of this, sharks are very different from one another. There are* ***hundreds*** *of* ***different*** *kinds of sharks.* ***Some*** *are very* ***gentle*** *while others are* ***fierce****.*"

Step 3: Write the words down on a piece of paper.

sharks
oceans
hundreds
different
some
gentle
fierce

Step 4: Connect these words together, creating sentences in your own words. Try to convey the meaning from the original passage.

Sharks live in the **oceans**.
There are **hundreds** of **different** sharks.
Some are **gentle** and others are **fierce**.

This piece of writing has the same meaning as the first. It uses the same important words, but it is written in a different way.

I'm an Author *(page 2 of 2)*

Now try the activity from the previous page on your own, using the passage below. For younger children, work on it one paragraph at a time (over different days as needed).

Sharks

Sharks live in oceans all around the world. Because of this, sharks are very different from one another. There are hundreds of different kinds of sharks. Some are very gentle, while others are fierce. Some sharks are very small and weigh very little, while others can be huge, measuring over 40 feet long and weighing over 30,000 pounds. This shark is the whale shark and is the largest fish in the world.

Sharks have a great sense of smell and can detect blood from over one mile away. Their sense of hearing is powerful as well. Their eyesight is not as good as their sense of smell or hearing because they have one eye on each side of their head. Like other fish, sharks breathe with gills. When sharks have babies, the babies are called pups. Unlike human babies, pups can already swim and take care of themselves when they are born.

Sharks have a skeleton like we do. Their skeleton is not made of bone but cartilage, similar to what our nose and ears are made of. Sharkskin can be up to eight inches thick. It is covered with rough scales called denticles. Denticles help protect sharks from injury.

Sharks have many rows of sharp teeth, one behind the other. If they lose a tooth or a tooth gets broken, another tooth comes forward and replaces it. In its lifetime, a shark might grow more than 20,000 teeth. The whale shark has tiny hooked teeth that are not used for biting but for trapping small plankton, crustaceans, fish, and squid in its mouth.

Sharks are scavengers, which means they eat dead animals and waste. But sharks also eat live animals such as fish and seals. Some sharks have been known to eat other sharks.

The most dangerous sharks are the Great White shark, Tiger shark, Hammerhead shark, and the Mako shark. But, sharks aren't as dangerous as we think they are. For every 100 shark attacks in the world, only about 10 of them result in death. Sharks don't actually prey on humans. They normally mistake a human for an animal that they do prey on. People, however, prey on sharks, killing thousands a year for sport, food, leather, and oil.

Take-Home Activity

What Doesn't Belong? (2 pages)

This activity encourages conversations after reading. It also develops critical thinking as children identify details that belong or don't belong to a particular story.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials needed:

- Short stories (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Read one of the short stories provided (*Carrie Ann's Garden* or *The School Project*).

Step 2: Choose a person to name four details — three details must come from the paragraph, and one detail must "not belong." It is up to the other participants to identify what doesn't belong.

Bonus: Try this activity using one your favorite books that you read with your child.

Following is an example of how to do this activity:

Step 1: Read the following paragraph.

Once upon a time, there was a Grandma who lived all by herself in a pretty, little house. She had six grandchildren who loved to visit with her, which was funny because there really wasn't that much to do at her house. There were no video games, no cable television, and not very many toys. But to her grandchildren, it didn't matter. Every time they came to her house, there were lots of things to do. Grandma spent every single minute together with them. She told them stories about the old days when lamps were lit with fire. She baked cookies that made the whole house smell like peanut butter. She watched bluebirds with them, and sang quiet songs about those bluebirds when the grandchildren were tired and needed to rest. She was a Grandma that helped her grandchildren really get to know her. And she was loved very, very much.

Step 2: After reading the paragraph above, these four details could be identified: *cookies, bluebirds, laundry and singing*. What doesn't belong? *Laundry.*

What Doesn't Belong? *(page 2 of 2)*

Carrie Ann's Garden

"Oh, how happy I am that my flowers are growing!" said Carrie Ann.

"I see daffodils and lilies and gardenias. I love my garden very much!" Carrie Ann worked hard to make her flowers grow. She planted many seeds and bulbs, and waited for them to grow. She watered the seeds and bulbs and pulled out the bad weeds when they sprouted. She was proud of her work and proud of her garden. One day, Carrie Ann looked out of her window and saw something that made her nervous.

"A rabbit!" she said. "Rabbits are cute and rabbits are cuddly, but they like to eat daffodils and lilies and gardenias."

"Out you go, rabbit!" And she chased that rabbit away.

Write four details from the story here. Make sure that one of them "doesn't belong."

_____

_____

_____

_____

The School Project

Cindy was very excited when she came home from school.

"Guess what?" she asked her dad. "I get to make a project for school. I have to build a model that represents how pioneers lived in the old days. I was thinking that we could do it together, Dad." Dad was pleased. He liked to help his kids.

"What do you have in mind?" he asked.

"Hmmm," said Cindy, "what do you think about using a shoe box?" Dad nodded his head.

"That's a great idea," he said. "Or we could build one together with some wood, a saw, and some nails." Cindy jumped up and gave her dad a big hug.

"I can't wait," she said. "This is going to be the best project ever!"

Write four details. Make sure that one of them "doesn't belong."

_____

_____

_____

_____

Take-Home Activity

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

This activity is designed for children to use their creativity. They have to look at the picture and write a story based on what they think is happening.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Photograph or picture from a book or magazine
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Paper

Directions:

Younger children can dictate the story orally while their parents write it down (modeling writing). Encourage the children to illustrate the story and write labels of words they know in the story.

Older children should write independently, with support and guidance from their parents occurring mostly during the first half of the activity.

Step 1: Find an interesting picture in a book or magazine. Show the picture to your child and discuss what might be happening when the picture was taken. Talk about a few possible story ideas that describe the action in the picture.

Step 2: Separate a piece of paper into three sections with these headings: *Beginning, Middle, End*. Before writing, help your child organize his or her ideas by focusing on what is happening at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the story. Remember that the entire story is to be prompted from the picture. Make notes about the details you discussed on the page you created.

Step 3: Once the ideas are laid out, have your child start writing. Remember that the point of this activity is to encourage the enjoyment of writing, so spelling and punctuation don't have to be major issues.

Step 4: Reread the story together with your child. Ask your child to illustrate the story and keep it with the library of other books you have created during these workshops.

Take-Home Activity

Write a Song

Using a common melody, families will write their own song that rhymes. Songs can be serious, funny, or whatever you want.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

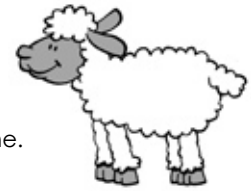
Directions:

Step 1: Read and sing this song with your child. Repeat if the song is unfamiliar.

Twin-kle, Twin-kle, Li-ttle Star
How I won-der what you are.
Up a-bove the world so high.
Like a dia-mond in the sky.
Twin-kle, Twin-kle, Li-ttle Star,
How I won-der what you are.

Step 2: Now sing the *ABC* song and *Baa, Baa Black Sheep*. Notice that the tune is the same for all three songs.

Baa, Baa Black Sheep
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.
One for the mas-ter, one for the dame,
One for the little boy who lives down the lane.
Baa, Baa Black Sheep
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.



Step 3: Using the same melody as the songs above, work with your child to write your own song using the same rhyming pattern as *Twinkle, Twinkle*. For example:

I have a new baby boy,
I will buy him a new toy.
May-be a brown teddy bear,
Bet he doesn't even care.
I have a new baby boy,
I will buy him a new toy.

Step 4: Sing your new song together!

Take-Home Activity

Name Game

This activity encourages you to think creatively about yourself and work with your name in a fun way!

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Everyone in the family should join in this activity. Give each person a piece of paper and have everyone write the letters of his or her name on the left side of the paper, one below the other.

Example: My name is Philip.

P
H
I
L
I
P

Step 2: Choose words that start with the letters of your name to describe who you are.

Example: I used these words to describe me.

Pretty cool
Helpful
Insightful
Lots of fun
Intelligent
Professional

Step 3: Try this with your first, middle, or last name. Have fun! Decorate it and make it as colorful as you'd like.

Take-Home Activity

Secret Code (2 pages)

Before television, radio shows and comic books used to give children secret codes to decipher for fun. These codes would be based on a simple pattern or require a secret decoder ring. Coding is a great way to develop spelling and knowledge of words. As each letter is added, children try to guess the word. This becomes easier as they are able to see more and more of the word.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Computer (optional)

Directions:

Step 1: Decide on a message that you are going to translate using the secret code. Examples could be "I love you" or "The treasure is hidden under the bed."

Step 2: Next, decide what symbols you are going to use for your code. It could be numbers such as **A = 1, B = 2, C = 3** or it could be based on the alphabet backward such as **A = Z, B = Y, C = X**. Be creative. Start easy and make it more difficult as you better understand the activity. Whatever you choose, remember to make a key to help your child translate the code. *(See the examples below.)*

Step 3: When you and your child are familiar with this activity, have your child create his or her own code for you to decipher.

A	✌	1	Z	**J**	☺	10	Q	**S**	♦	19	H
B	👌	2	Y	**K**	😐	11	P	**T**	❄	20	G
C	👍	3	X	**L**	☹	12	O	**U**	✞	21	F
D	👎	4	W	**M**	💣	13	N	**V**	✝	22	E
E	☜	5	V	**N**	☠	14	M	**W**	✠	23	D
F	☞	6	U	**O**	⚐	15	L	**X**	✠	24	C
G	☝	7	T	**P**	⚑	16	K	**Y**	✡	25	B
H	☟	8	S	**Q**	✈	17	J	**Z**	☪	26	A
I	✋	9	R	**R**	☼	18	I				

Examples:

The first example is done with the *Wingdings* font on a computer. The second example is based on numbers, and the third one is the alphabet backward.

Using a computer makes this activity easier, but drawing symbols is fun too. With a computer, you can type out your message, and then easily change it to your secret code font.

Secret Code *(page 2 of 2)*

Practice Decoding the Examples

Example 1:

Example 2:

19 5 3 18 5 20 3 15 4 5

Example 3:

H V X I V G X L W V

Have fun with this and don't be afraid to experiment! Consider how you can make this more challenging, especially for older children. Could your code be based on two or three different patterns? For example, when a code based on the numbers is deciphered, it gives you the alphabet backward; when it is deciphered again, it gives you the wingdings, and then finally the real message itself.

Don't forget to .

Answer: "Include the decoding key so that the receiver can figure out your message."

Take-Home Activity

Changing Informational Text to Poetry (2 pages)

This is a fun activity that helps children understand what they have read. Children are often given a story or passage to read and then they have to write about it. This activity adds a little twist by having children find key content words in a passage and use those words to write their own poem. The structure will be different but the meaning should be the same.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Information text about sea snakes and polar bears (provided)
- Paper and pens

Directions:

Step 1: Together with your child, read the passage *Sea Snakes*. Discuss any new vocabulary and talk about what information is being provided in the text.

Sea Snakes

There are more than 50 species of sea snakes. Sea snakes are reptiles that live in tropical waters. They have a lung for breathing and can hold their breath for two hours. Sea snakes have nostrils with flaps that close to keep out water. They are poisonous and the most venomous of snakes.

Sea snakes eat fish, fish eggs and eels. Some have babies at sea while others lay eggs on the shore. Sea snakes are not very large. They measure about 1 ½ to 3 ½ feet in length. Sea snakes shed their skin every two weeks. They have scales and a flattened tail that make them good swimmers and divers.

Step 2: Reread the piece again and start choosing key content words. Circle these words. Once you and your child have picked all the content words, write them in a list on a separate piece of paper. Write them down the middle of the paper so that when you start writing sentences, you have room before and after the content words.

Step 3: Discuss how the content words can be put together. Rhyming words can be difficult, so be creative and have fun. Rhyming the words will give children a chance to recall vocabulary and really think about what they know about words and word families (snake, bake, cake, make).

Step 4: Work with your child to write a poem based on *Sea Snakes*. Older children should work more independently with support from parents.

Step 5: Try this activity again using the provided passage about *Polar Bears*.

Example of Content Words:

sea snake
50 species
reptiles
tropical
lung
flaps
nostrils
poisonous
fish, fish eggs, eels
1½ to 3½ feet
flattened tail

Changing Informational Text to Poetry *(page 2 of 2)*

Example of Sea Snake Poem

There are **50 species** of the **reptile** known as the sea snake.
They live in **tropical** waters, not just any old lake.

A **lung** is for breathing, fish they use gills.
Sea snakes even have **flaps** to close their **nostrils**.

They use **poison** for defense and meals.
They eat **fish**, **fish eggs**, and even **eels**.

1½ to 3½ feet is as big as they can be.
They have a **flattened tail** for swimming in the sea.

Written by Mr. Philip Swartz's Second Grade Class (2005) — Garfield Elementary School, Bell Gardens, CA

Polar Bears

The polar bear is a species of bear that lives in the Arctic. Polar bears appear to have white- or cream-colored fur, but actually their fur is translucent and their skin is black. The color of their fur allows polar bears to camouflage in the snow and ice of the Arctic. A polar bear's fur also aids the bear in keeping warm by converting sunlight into heat, which is then absorbed by their black skin. Polar bears have blubber — a thick layer of fat located below their skin. The blubber, along with their thick fur, helps protect them from the cold. Polar bears can weigh up to 1300 pounds and can grow up to 10 feet long. Male polar bears are roughly twice as big as females. Baby polar bears are called cubs and may only weigh only one to two pounds when they are born.

Polar bears are carnivores. They feed primarily on seals but will eat other animals such as shellfish, birds, small walruses, and beluga whales if they are hungry enough. Polar bears have even been known to attack humans for food. Polar bears are very good swimmers. They spend large amounts of time in the water hunting and feeding. Some polar bears have been spotted more than 50 miles out to sea. Their blubber not only helps them to keep warm, but also allows them to float easily in the water. This affiliation with the sea has led researchers to classify them as marine mammals.

Take-Home Activity

Alphabetical Inventions (3 pages)

This activity provides different levels of difficulty for putting words into alphabetical order. Depending on the age of your child, decide if you will do just the first part, just the first and second parts, or all three.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Inventors list (provided)
- Activity worksheet (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: This activity is split into three parts. For this first part, work with your child to alphabetize the provided list of inventors. Remember, when we alphabetize people, we use their last name. For example, when alphabetizing Thomas **E**dison, we pay attention to the **E** that begins his last name. Using the activity worksheet provided, make a list with your child as you place the inventors in alphabetical order.

Step 2: Now list the inventions in alphabetical order. Pay attention, as these words do not have starting letters that represent the alphabet in sequence. You must think carefully about which words come next. Write your list down on the worksheet.

Step 3: The last part of this activity is the trickiest. After you have alphabetized the list of inventors and the list of the inventions, combine the two lists together, creating a list of 16 words in alphabetical order. For this part, you will need to consider not just the first letter but possibly the second letter as well. For example, the words ***Adler*** and ***assembly*** are both on the lists. To alphabetize these words, you must pay attention to:

Adler and

assembly

If, by chance there were a third word — for example, astronomy — you would need to pay attention to the **ast** in **ast**ronomy in order to alphabetize it correctly. It would go after ***assembly*** on our list.

Alphabetical Inventions *(page 2 of 3)*

Inventors and their Inventions

Henry Ford	assembly line
Alexander Graham Bell	telephone
Elias Howe	sewing machine
Robert Adler	wireless TV remote
Thomas Edison	phonograph
Bill Gates	software programs
Marion Donovan	disposable diapers
Alexander Cartwright	baseball

Alphabetical Inventions *(page 3 of 3)*

Alphabetical Inventions Worksheet

Part One	Part Two	Part Three
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
		_____
		_____
		_____
		_____
		_____
		_____
		_____

Take-Home Activity

Funny-Faced Fiction (2 pages)

In this activity your child will create little funny faces and bodies by adding facial features, legs, and arms to the circles. Then, a story can be written to go along with the funny-faced creatures.

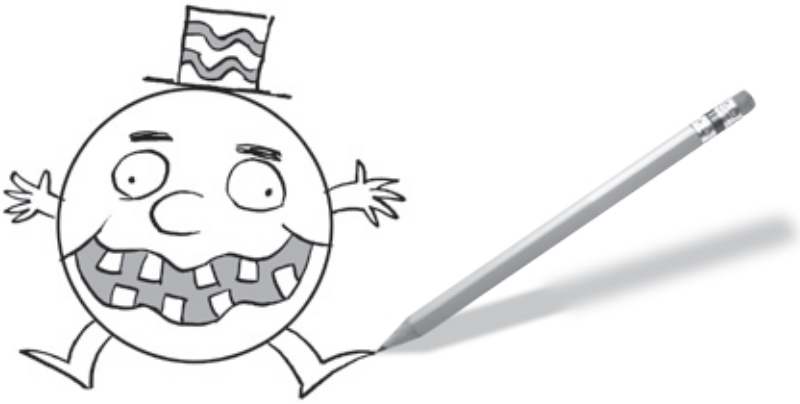
- **Appropriate for younger children**

Materials:

- Page of circles (provided)
- Stapler or yarn
- Scissors
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Create funny-faced creatures by adding facial features, arms, legs, clothing, and other ideas of your own. Decorate all of the circles on the page.



Step 2: Cut the page where indicated and make a book by stapling the pages or tying them together with yarn.

Step 3: Write a story to go along with the funny-faced creatures. Read the story aloud and share it with other family members.

Funny-Faced Fiction *(page 2 of 2)*

Take-Home Activity

Planning a Trip

Learning about new places is an interesting way to learn what is the same or different about that place and where we live. Parents and children will connect new information to something meaningful.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Choose one or more of the following resources:
  - — Internet
  - — Encyclopedia
  - — Library
  - — Map/globe
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Computer (optional)
- Paper

Directions:

Step 1: Ask your children to choose an interesting place they would like to visit (or a place that they have already visited).

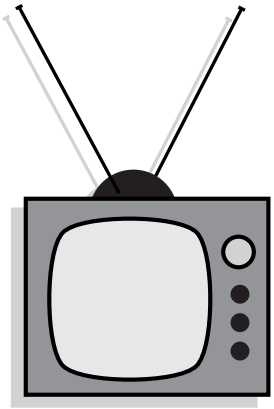
Step 2: Using resources available to you (Internet, books, etc.), work together as a family to research the chosen location and discover information about how to travel there. Prompt your children with questions to help them find out everything they need to know about planning a trip to the chosen destination. Examples of questions to ask are:

1. ***How would you get there?***
   - Plane, train, bus, car, or boat?
2. ***How long would it take to get there? Would it be different if you used a different method to get there?***
   - For example, would it take longer to fly or take a boat?
3. ***What is the weather like?***
   - What kinds of clothes would need to be packed?
4. ***What language or languages are spoken?***
   - If it is a different language, you could try to find a sample of the language on the Internet or on tapes at the local library. Have your children listen to what the other language sounds like. You may also want to show your children what the other language looks like when it is written.
5. ***What kinds of food do people usually eat there?***
   - You could find recipes for some foods common to that area and cook them at home.

Step 3: Have your children share what they learned about this new place with the family. This activity could be done during dinner or while traveling in the car.

Take-Home Activity

TV Time (2 pages)



Television plays a big role in our world today by providing entertainment and information. The question is how we can use television as a tool to help children with comprehension. This activity gives parents and children a chance to make the most out of television regardless of what program they watch.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Television
- TV time question sheet (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

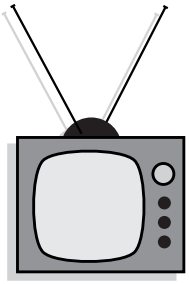
Step 1: Watch a television program or movie with your child or as a whole family. Keep in mind that you need to pay close attention to the program — what is happening, the characters, where the program is taking place, and other details.

Step 2: During commercial breaks, start to have a discussion about what has happened so far, similar to what good readers do as they read. We stop, we ask questions, we think about what we have read so far, we try to clear up sources of confusion. Commercial breaks give us a good time to help with the understanding of what is being watched. If watching a movie, pause it occasionally to check for understanding.

Step 3: After the program or movie has ended, continue the comprehension discussion. Make sure everyone understood what they watched, what they learned, and what the story line was in the program. Then use the TV time question sheet to check for understanding.

TV Time ***(page 2 of 2)***

TV Time Question Sheet



These are general questions that can be asked about different television programs or movies. Not all questions will apply to your particular program, but they can be used as a starting point. Some questions may be better suited for an informational program, while others might be better for a program that has more of a story line.

1. **What was this program or movie about?**
   a. Who were the characters in this program or movie?
   b. Where did the story take place? (What is the setting?)
   c. What was the plot (the plan of events or main ideas) of the program or movie?
   d. Was it fiction or nonfiction? How do you know?
   e. Did this story take place in the past, present, or future? What helped you know?

2. **Was there a problem in the story? What was it?**
   a. What did you learn from this program or movie?
   b. Did you like the program or movie? Why or why not?
   c. Was it worth watching? Explain.
   d. Did you find it interesting? Why or why not?

3. **Was this program or movie a comedy, drama, action/adventure, reality TV, informational, mystery, horror, talk show, etc.? How do you know?**
   a. If it was a rerun and you had seen it before, did you learn or see more this time than the first time? What? Why?
   b. Was this program or movie similar to another program, movie, or book you have read? How?
   c. Will you watch a program or movie like this again? Why or why not?
   d. Was there a moral (a lesson learned) in the story? If so, what?
   e. Did anything take you by surprise? What? Why or why not?
   f. How did this program or movie make you feel? Explain.

Take-Home Activity

Make a Family Alphabet Book

This activity gives your family a chance to create what could become a family heirloom!
Have each family member contribute ideas for the content and for the actual creation of the pages.
Be creative and have fun!

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- 26 pieces of paper — one per letter of the alphabet
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- A folder, notebook, or scrapbook
- Stapler
- Photos or pictures to be glued onto pages
- Dictionary

Directions:

Step 1: Starting with the letter A, talk together about a word that begins with A that represents your family. It can be anything that your family agrees to. For example, you could use the name of your street, the name of your town or city, or the name of a favorite thing.

Step 2: On a piece of paper write down "**A** is for (your chosen word)."

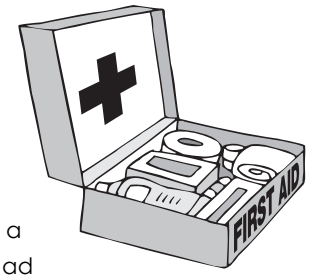
Step 3: Compose a sentence using your chosen word. Write your sentence at the bottom of the page.

Step 4: Decide on how to illustrate your page. You could draw pictures, use photographs, or clip pictures from magazines, etc.

Step 5: Continue making a page for each letter of the alphabet. If you have trouble coming up with a word for a particular letter, use a dictionary to get some ideas.

Step 6: When the pages are complete, bind them together in a notebook or folder or simply staple them together.

Take-Home Activity



Emergency Plan (2 pages)

In case of emergency … are you and your family prepared? If you were at home and there were a tornado or an earthquake and you were trapped without power, what would you do? Or if you had to evacuate, what would you take? Do you have a family meeting place? Are you prepared for a fire? What if you're stranded in your car, do you have survival supplies? In order to help you and your family be prepared if there ever was an emergency, put together an emergency plan and emergency kit.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Family emergency plan worksheet (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Box or bag
- Supplies (e.g., food, water, blankets, matches/lighter, fire extinguisher, first aid kit)

Directions:

Step 1: Sit down with your family and have a discussion about what everyone would do if there was an emergency. If you all were at home, or in different places, would there be a common meeting area? In this case, the smallest details are important. If there was a fire and you had to evacuate the house in only a few minutes, would there be anything that you had to make sure to grab on the way out (family documents, insurance policies, family heirlooms)? If there was an earthquake and everyone was trapped in the house with no power or gas, what would you do? Would you have enough supplies to last you a few weeks?

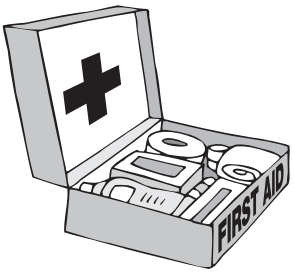
Step 2: Start to write out a plan with your family after you discuss all of these (and more) points. Each of you should have roles in case of an emergency. Write down what would be needed, and put these things in a box or bag that could be grabbed easily in case of an emergency. Start to make a list of what would be needed in the house if you were trapped for a few weeks with no electricity or power. Remember to consider the number of family members and how much food and water each would need on a daily basis. Most emergency plans recommend a gallon of water per person per day. That means a family of four would need 28 gallons of water for one week.

Step 3: Make any necessary changes to your plan and finish your final version. Your plan should be based on what to do in case of an emergency (if there was a fire, earthquake, tornado, flood, and so on), and what everyone's role would be during this emergency (Dad turns off the gas in case of a leak, Mom gets the emergency supplies). Put this plan in a safe, accessible location so in case of an emergency, everyone in the family would be able to get to it. You could tape a copy to the garage or front door for easy access.

Step 4: Put together an emergency supply kit for the home and for the car. This could be the most valuable thing for a family if they are ever stranded or trapped. Use the list that you wrote down earlier. Gather (and buy if necessary) these materials and put them into a box or bag that is easily accessible. Make sure everyone in the family knows where it can be retrieved in case of an emergency. This emergency kit should contain, but not be limited to, food, water, blankets, first aid kit, matches/lighter, fire extinguisher, and so on. This is what would be needed to survive and provide a little bit of comfort, so make sure everyone feels that the kit is supplied with what they need. Develop a kit for the car as well.

Step 5: Revisit the emergency plan and review it with family members so that everyone understands it and what they would do if something were to happen. Check and refresh the supplies in your emergency kit. Most canned goods and water do last a long time, but eventually have a shelf life, as do fire extinguishers.

Emergency Plan *(page 2 of 2)*



Family Emergency Plan

Family Meeting Place:

Family Roles:

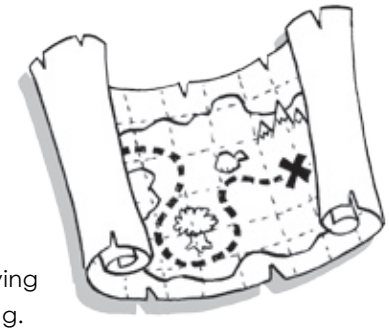
Location of Important Documents/Heirlooms:

Location of the Emergency Kit:

Supplies Last Checked:

Take-Home Activity

Treasure Hunt (2 pages)



As children get older, they begin to learn how to keep secrets and play more advanced games. Reading and deciphering clues is an example of a more advanced problem-solving activity. These types of activities help children develop creative thinking skills and planning. Solving puzzles helps make learning about logical, reasoning skills fun and meaningful.

- **Appropriate for all levels**

Materials:

- Scraps of paper or index cards
- Pictures of clues (optional)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Treasure

Directions:

Step 1: Identify a treasure. The treasure can be a toy or a game, or it can be extra reading time at night or a play date at the park. Hide the treasure.

Step 2: Create four or five clues. Each clue will give a hint about where the next clue can be found. Use index cards or scraps of paper to write the clues. You may use pictures for younger children.

- For example, if the next clue was found in the bathroom, you could draw a picture of a bathroom. For older children, you could write, "where we take a bath."

Step 3: Give your children the first clue. This clue will give them a hint about where to find the next clue. Each clue gives hints about where to find the next clue until the treasure is found. You may play in one day/night or solve one clue each day for a week.

Celebrate as each of the clues is solved and when the treasure is finally found. Praise children's hard work and good thinking skills.

The following is an example of a treasure hunt with four clues:

1. You can sleep or sit on me. (This could be a bed, couch, chair, etc. In this example, the next clue was found underneath the child's bed.)
2. I help you get clean. (This could be a sink, shower, bath, etc. In this example, the next clue was found by the bathroom sink.)

Remember:

Encourage the family to work together to solve the clues. You want your children to think about the task, but you don't want them to get frustrated. If you sense that the clue was too hard or that they are having difficulty, you may give them hints to get them going in the right direction.

- For example, you may want to say "hot" when they are headed in the right direction, and "cold" when they are moving away from solving the clue.

Treasure Hunt (page 2 of 2)

3. I spin around quickly. (This could be a fan, wheel, etc. In this example, the next clue was found by a household fan.)
4. You step on me when you leave for school. (In this example, the treasure was found under the doormat.)
   Look under and find your treasure!

Optional

You may also include a treasure map if you like. Follow the directions below to make the map.

1. Use a paper sack and tear around the edges.
2. Draw the map on the sack. If you like, rub a little olive oil on the sack to make it appear older.
3. Crumple the map to make it look a little more weathered.

Take-Home Activity

Famous People Game

This oral language activity gives children the opportunity to think about famous people they know, and learn about those they don't know. As no materials are needed for this activity, it can be played anywhere — while waiting in line at the store or driving in the car.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Directions:

Step 1: The first player begins by stating the name of any famous person they know – for example, Abraham Lincoln. *If your child is not familiar with the person named, take the time to explain who that person is, and why he or she is famous (and encourage your child to explain if someone who is unfamiliar to you is named).*

Step 2: The next player takes note of the last letter of the last name. "N" is the last letter in the word "Lincoln." Therefore, player #2 must name a famous person whose first name begins with the letter N – for example, **N**elson Mandela.

Step 3: The next player takes note of the last letter in the new name given. "A" is the last letter in the word "Mandela." Therefore, this player must now name a famous person whose first name begins with A – for example, Anne Frank. And so on, and so on …

Step 4: If a player can't name somebody within 15 seconds, he or she is out of the game. This goes on until only one player is left, who is then determined the winner.

Take-Home Activity

Write Your Own Ending (3 pages)

This activity gives your family the chance to rewrite the ending of a well-loved story. Creating alternate endings to stories is a creative and fun way to think about characters and their actions.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* story (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: With your family, read aloud *Goldilocks and the Three Bears.*

Step 2: When you come to the end, read the traditional ending. Then, talk about different ways the story could have ended.

Step 3: After your discussion, read aloud the new sample ending provided. Talk about how the new ending differs from the traditional ending.

Step 4: Now, come up with your own ideas for ending the story. They can be funny or silly, or even sad and scary. Decide as a family how you could end the story differently. Write out your new ending in the space provided. Have your children illustrate the new ending.

Step 5: Reread the whole story, using your new ending.

Step 6: Try this activity with other stories that you and your family are familiar with.

Write Your Own Ending *(page 2 of 3)*

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Once upon a time, there was a family of bears that lived in a little cottage in the woods. There were three bears — great, big Papa Bear; sweet, kind Mama Bear; and little, bitty Baby Bear. They were a happy family and loved doing things together.

One fine morning, Mama Bear had prepared a delicious breakfast of porridge for her family. As she spooned the porridge into each bear's special bowl, she saw steam rising and thought to herself, "My, my, this porridge appears to be too hot to eat!" So, she suggested to Papa Bear and Baby Bear that they take a nice walk in the woods while they waited for their hot breakfast to cool down. The bears gathered up their hats and walking sticks, and off they went.

While they were out, a girl with curly, yellow hair named Goldilocks came upon the house of the three bears. Being a curious child, she decided to peek in the windows. There on the table she saw the steaming bowls of porridge.

"It's my lucky day!" she thought to herself. "I'm so hungry and so tired from walking in the woods, maybe whoever lives here will invite me in!" So, she knocked on the door.

It was quite a surprise to Goldilocks when the door opened as she knocked. She could tell right away that no one was home. So she decided to go inside.

Goldilocks knew that she had not been invited for breakfast. But she decided to help herself anyway. First, she tasted Papa Bear's breakfast. "Ouch! Too hot!" she said. Then, she tasted Mama Bear's breakfast. "Yuck! Too cold!" she said. Finally, she tasted Baby Bear's breakfast. "Yum! This is perfect!" And she ate the entire bowl of porridge.

Still curious, Goldilocks decided to look around the house. Right away, she saw three chairs of different sizes. First, she sat on the big chair. It was too stiff. Then, she sat on the middle-sized chair. It was too lumpy. Finally, she sat on the small chair. It was the perfect size for her — but she must have been too heavy. Plop! The chair broke and down went Goldilocks.

Goldilocks glanced into the next room and saw three lovely beds. Just looking at them made her want to take a nap! First, she climbed onto the big bed. It was too hard. Then, she climbed onto the middle-sized bed. It was too soft. Finally, she climbed onto the small bed. It was not too hard or too soft. It was very comfortable, and she immediately began to doze.

By this time, the bear family was returning from their walk. They were hungry and ready to eat! Papa Bear looked at his bowl. "Someone's been tasting my breakfast!" Mama Bear looked at her bowl. "Someone's been tasting my breakfast too!" Baby Bear looked at his bowl. "Someone's tasted so much of my breakfast that it is completely gone!"

Write Your Own Ending *(page 2 of 3)*

The bear family went into the next room. Papa Bear looked at his chair. "Someone has been sitting in my chair!" Mama Bear looked at her chair. "Someone has been sitting in my chair too!" Baby Bear looked at his chair. "Someone has been sitting in my chair and completely ruined it!"

The bear family was worried. They went into the next room. Papa Bear looked at his bed. "Someone has been sleeping on my bed!" Mama Bear looked at her bed. "Someone has been sleeping on my bed too!" Baby Bear looked at his bed. "Someone has been sleeping in my bed, and she's still here!"

Traditional Ending

Goldilocks opened her eyes. She couldn't believe what she saw. The three bears were looking down at her in disbelief. They couldn't believe what they saw either. Gathering as much courage as she could, she threw back the covers and jumped out of the little bed. She took off toward the open window and out she jumped. As she ran away from the cottage, she thought to herself, "What a foolish thing I have done! I will never ever go back there as long as I live!"

The End

New Sample Ending

Goldilocks opened her eyes and saw the bear family looking down at her with kindness in their eyes. "Hello," she said. "I'm sorry that I came in without asking, but this looked like such a friendly place, I didn't think that you would mind."

"What is your name?" asked Baby Bear.

"My name is Goldilocks. Do you think we could be friends?"

"That would be great," said Baby Bear, "but first, let's help my Mama make some more breakfast. Then, you can help Papa and me fix my chair."

"Oh, thank you," said Goldilocks. "I'm so glad that I've made new friends today."

The End

Write Your Own Ending

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The End

Take-Home Activity

Jumbled Words

Jumbled words can be real brainteasers. Encourage your child to consider how words are spelled. The clues provided also help in figuring out what the word is.

- **Appropriate for all levels**

Materials:

- Jumbled words activity page (provided)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Talk about how difficult it is to figure out a word when it is misspelled. For example:

ellspde is *spelled*
glewig is *wiggle*

Step 2: Talk about how hints can help you figure out the word. For example:

ecrsad
Clue: afraid
The word is *scared*.

Step 3: Try this easy Jumbled Word activity.

tac *(Clue: not a dog)*

__ __ [__]

dorpei *(Clue: end of a sentence)*

[__] __ __ __ __ __

geg *(Clue: from a chicken)*

[__] __ __

wyaa *(Clue: going)*

__ __ [__] __

Step 4: Now take the boxed letters from each word and write them down. Try to unscramble the letters to form a word.

Clue: hold together

__ __ __ __

Check your answers — cat, **p**eriod, **e**gg, aw**a**y; *final answer:* tape

Step 6: Try these more difficult Jumbled Word activities.

Jumbled Words One

dribs *(Clue: feathered friends)*

_ _ [ ] _ _

serumm *(Clue: favorite time of the year)*

[ ] _ _ _ _ _

ockieo *(Clue: not a cake or pie)*

_ _ _ _ _ [ ]

seosh *(Clue: on your feet)*

_ _ [ ] _ _

emoh *(Clue: where the heart is)*

[ ] _ _ _

Now unscramble the letters in the boxes, and answer this —

Clue: a fast animal

_ _ _ _ _

Jumbled Words Two

taruho *(Clue: not the illustrator)*

_ _ _ _ _ [ ]

enqisout *(Clue: answer is the response)*

_ _ _ _ _ [ ] _ _

ademeclix *(Clue: shouted)*

[ ] _ _ [ ] _ [ ] _ _ _

reppear *(Clue: getting ready)*

[ ] _ _ _ _ _ [ ]

vegebear *(Clue: a drink)*

_ _ [ ] _ _ _ [ ] _

Now unscramble the letters in the boxes, and answer this —

Clue: This is something special you get to do. It is not your right. It is a ...

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Answers

Jumbled Words One

dribs = **bir**ds
serumm = **s**ummer
ockieo = cook**ie**
seosh = sh**o**es
emoh = **h**ome
rseoh = horse

Jumbled Words Two

taruho = auth**or**
enqisout = qu**es**tion
ademeclix = **e**xcl**a**imed
reppear = **p**rep**a**r**e**
vegebear = be**v**era**g**e
rieilpevg = pri**v**ile**g**e

Take-Home Activity

Book Clubs

Start a book club with your child! Many books that were popular for adults (for example, *Peter Pan*, *Treasure Island*, etc.) have been rewritten for children. You can find these books online or by visiting your local library. Your librarian can help you find the adult's and child's version of the same book. Involve your child in this process. Encouraging your child's involvement will make it more likely that there will be excitement about the book club.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Adult's and child's version of the same book (ask your child's teacher if you are having trouble locating both versions), or the same book
- Paper/notebook (optional)
- Pencils and pens

Directions:

Step 1: Identify the book that you and your child are going to read together.

Step 2: Set aside a time every night for you and your child to silently read your book together. You could sit next to each other on the couch or curl up together in bed.

Step 3: Designate a time for you and your child to talk about what you have been reading. You could talk about it every day — maybe on the way to or from school, or you could "meet" once a week and have more of a formal book club meeting.

Step 4: During your talks, help clarify the story and answer questions as needed. Encourage your child to make predictions about what will happen next and to talk about why the characters might do some of the things they are doing.

Step 5: Once you have established a book club routine, you and your child may want to start keeping a reading journal. This will help you keep track of and remember questions that you might want to ask your child. Your child will benefit by practicing writing skills and keeping track of questions that come up. With this journal, you can also encourage your child to keep track of predictions that have been made and whether or not they came true.

Take-Home Activity

Match It Up (3 pages)

Parents and children will work together to consider things that match or go together. An important part of this activity is the discussion regarding why the words go together or why they do not. Two lists are provided – List A is for younger children and List B is for older children.

- **Appropriate for all levels**

Materials:

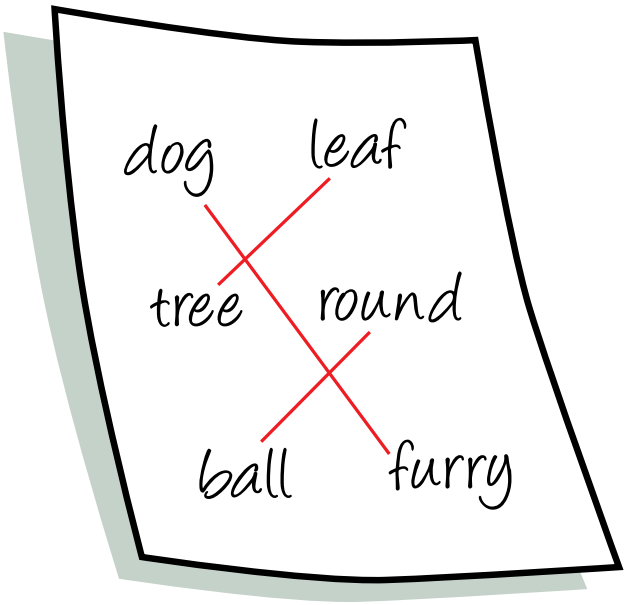
- A copy of List A or B
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Directions:

Step 1: Using either List A or List B, read the words aloud from each column. Ask your child what two words belong together. Have a conversation regarding whether or not you agree and why or why not.

Step 2: When you decide that two words go together, draw a line between them that indicates they match.

Step 3: Make up your own lists for this exercise. Or, choose a word and ask your child to choose a matching word. For example, say, "The word I'm thinking of is ***dinner***. What word can you think of that matches ***dinner***? " Possible answers might be *food, eat, and together.*



Match It Up *(page 2 of 3)*

Match It Up — Handout #1

Match It Up — List A

Column One	**Column Two**
water	fang
rock	desk
rabbit	bread
cold	ball
food	soft
music	branch
game	winter
chair	hard
twig	strings
tooth	wet

Answers:
water/wet, rock/hard, rabbit/soft, cold/winter, food/bread, music/strings,
game/ball, chair/desk, twig/branch, tooth/fang

Match It Up *(page 3 of 3)*

Match It Up — Handout #2

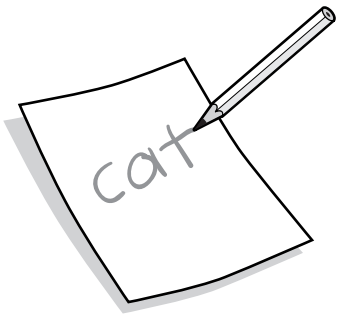
Match It Up — List B

Column One	**Column Two**
light	stitch
cotton	heart
soup	brass
milk	bird
thread	reflection
vegetable	movement
pulse	cloth
wind	corn
trumpet	ladle
egg	mammal

Answers:
light/reflection, cotton/cloth, soup/ladle, milk/mammal, thread/stitch, vegetable/corn, pulse/heart, wind/movement, trumpet/brass, egg/bird

Take-Home Activity

Spelling Words Together (2 pages)



Spelling can be tricky for children and adults alike. Sometimes it is hard to explain why a certain letter is even in a word. Spelling can improve with practice, repetition, and memorization. This activity is a fun way to practice!

- **Appropriate for all levels**

Materials:

- List of words (provided)
- Additional words from other sources (including classroom spelling words) (optional)
- Paper (optional)
- Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils (optional)

Directions:

Step 1: In this activity, parents will spell the first part of the word, and children will spell the last part. It might help to explain the meaning of the word before you spell it. For example, when using the word "right," your child may think it is the word "write." Provide a sentence to help clarify the meaning. You could say, "The word we're going to spell is 'right.' Helping with the dishes is the right thing to do."

Step 2: Explain to your child that you will begin spelling the word, and he or she will finish it. For example, you will say, "Let's spell the word 'right.' I'll start – R – I – G – H - What comes next?" Your child should answer, "T."

***Note:** If your child has difficulty providing the last letter, you can help by making the sound of the letter. It may also help your child to write down the letters as you say them, since some words end with silent letters – as in the word "gave." Practice with the same words several times. This is a good activity to do while waiting in line at the post office or driving in the car.*

Spelling Words Together *(page 2 of 2)*

Spelling Word List

List A	List B
dog	about
big	before
can	gave
hot	here
red	went
up	walk
run	those
six	down
put	read
me	would
old	thank
no	right
he	never
if	own
just	long
on	please
sit	small
cat	they
to	sing
stop	what

Take-Home Activity

Holiday Scramble

This is a fun game that challenges parents and children to make as many words as they can out of one word.

- **Appropriate for all ages**

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils or pens

Directions:

Step 1: For each holiday listed below, see how many new words you can make using the letters in that word. Young children should do this with a parent's help. For older children, the parent and child can work together or make words independently and then check to see who was able to create more. For example:

Using the word "*holiday,*" you can create these words: ***lid, hid, oil, hold, oh, hay, had, lay.***

Can you think of any others?

Try the activity with these holiday words!

New Year's Day

Valentine's Day

St. Patrick's Day

Easter

Mother's Day

Father's Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Halloween

Thanksgiving

Christmas

Hanukkah

Ramadan

Cinco de Mayo

Kwanzaa

Take-Home Activity

Create Your Own Caption

This activity will give your child a chance to rewrite a caption for the newspaper. Captions are usually several sentences found below a newspaper picture that explain what the picture is about. This activity will encourage creative thinking and writing skills.

- **Appropriate for older children**

Materials:

- Newspaper (If you do not have access to a newspaper, ask your child's teacher.)
- Magazine (optional) – You could use the magazine for more picture options.
- Paper
- Tape or other material to stick the newspaper sentences to the paper

Directions:

Step 1: Choose the picture for your child. Have your child talk to you about what he or she thinks is happening in the photo.

Step 2: Have your child look through the newspapers or magazines to find letters and words to write the caption. Children should be encouraged to use as many different letters or words as they need.

Free Books Online

The internet is a tremendous resource for free books, poems, and stories. The websites featured below are arranged by grade level and selected by the authors.

Elementary

OxfordOwl
Expert advice, educational resources, and free eBooks to support learning in primary grades and at home from Oxford University Press.
https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/

Storyline Online
Award-winning children's literacy website, Storyline Online®, streams videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's books alongside creatively produced illustrations. Readers include former Vice-President Al Gore, Oprah Winfrey, Chris Pine, Kristen Bell, Viola Davis, Kevin Costner, Lily Tomlin, Betty White, Wanda Sykes, and dozens more.
https://www.storylineonline.net

Mrs. P.com
Stories read aloud, online learning, and activities included. Read by the charming Mrs. P.
http://mrsp.com/

Aesop Fables
A selection of stories from The Aesop for Children composed by the Library of Congress.
http://www.read.gov/aesop/

Chateau Meddybemps Beantime Stories
Great website for preschool children and beginning readers. Books have good stories and colorful illustrations. These make for great read alouds and bedtime stories. For more proficient readers, stories make for good independent reading.
http://www.meddybemps.com/5.1.html

BAB Books
This site is dedicated to children's stories. There are various levels of stories available in print and some with an audio component.
http://www.sundhagen.com/babbooks/

Lil' Fingers
Lil' Fingers features free original storybooks, games, activities and coloring pages for toddler-age (pre-K) children. The site includes fun stories with audio and animated pictures.
http://www.lil-fingers.com/storybooks/index.php

Starfall
Lots of stories available for beginning and proficient readers on this site, including ABC books, plays, nonfiction, and comics. Lots of other activities are available, such as making a calendar and holiday activities.
https://www.starfall.com/h/

Secondary

Children's Storybooks Online
Illustrated stories for children of all ages. Stories for young children, older children, and young adults. Nice illustrations and interesting stories.
http://www.magickeys.com/books/index.html

Education Place
Interesting website where children can create stories based on parts of speech. They are first asked for different parts of speech, the children fill in the answer, and then are able to read their story. Fun and funny!
http://www.eduplace.com/tales/

American Folklore
This website allows students to read tall tales, spooky stories, myths and legends, and tongue twisters. It has ghost stories, state lore, and Native American stories. Access to a lot of classic stories, especially myths and legends, and tall tales such as Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill.
https://americanfolklore.net

Bibliomania
A great website to find classic fiction by famous authors including Lewis Carroll (Alice in Wonderland), Charles Dickens (A Christmas Carol), Bram Stoker (Dracula), Mark Twain (Huckleberry Finn), and Mary Shelley (Frankenstein). Summaries of the books and biographies of the authors are included.
http://www.bibliomania.com/0/0/frameset.html

Literature.org
A website that has a classic online literature library. Stories by Aesop, the Brontë sisters, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Charles Darwin, and even philosophy by René Descartes and Voltaire. Many authors have multiple titles available.
https://www.literature.org

Smithsonian Tween Tribune
Maintained by the Smithsonian Museum, this online newspaper is designed for students between the ages of 8-15. It is updated daily by the Associated Press and stories are chosen based on relevancy to pre-adolescents.
https://www.tweentribune.com/

For All Ages

Project Gutenberg
Project Gutenberg is an online library for free eBooks with over 60,000 downloadable books in different formats.
https://www.gutenberg.org

Internet Archive
The Internet Archive is a digital library that offers over 20 million free downloadable books and texts. There is also a collection of 1.8 million modern eBooks that may be borrowed by anyone with a free archive.org account.
https://archive.org/details/texts

Google Books
A large selection of books that have been scanned and turned into viewable files. Enter the author or title in the search field, then select the drop-down menu, "Any books" and chose "Free Google eBooks"
https://books.google.com

International Children's Digital Library
Promotes tolerance and respect for diverse cultures by providing access to the best of children's literature from around the world. Available in Spanish, French, Mongolian and Russian.
http://en.childrenslibrary.org/

Open Library
Open Library features a K-12 student library catalog of over one million free books created from images of many public domain, out-of-print, and in-print books. Funded in part by a grant from the California State Library.
https://openlibrary.org/

ManyBooks
ManyBooks offers over 50 thousand free books that can be both downloaded or read online.
https://manybooks.net

Library of Congress
Online books and resources for literacy and reading.
http://read.gov/books

Smashwords
Smashwords is the world's largest distributor of indie eBooks. It is an easy-to-use eBook site with a variety of genres, including poetry, classics, romance, and biographies.
https://www.smashwords.com/shelves/home/1/free/any

Amazon Books
Provides free eBooks of all genres.
https://www.amazon.com/free-ebooks-Kindle-Store/s?k=free+ebooks&rh=n%3A133140011

ReadWorks
ReadWorks provides research-proven tools and support to improve academic achievement. The site allows access to high-quality, free K-12 articles, and a broad range of materials and lessons organized by skill level. ReadWorks also provides leveled non-fiction and literacy passages.
https://www.readworks.org/

Newsela
Newsela's platform takes real and new content from trusted providers and turns it into learning materials that meet most State standards. Content is nonfiction and supports the curriculum in grades K-12.
https://newsela.com/

HathiTrust Digital Library
Offers millions of titles digitized from libraries and research institutions from around the world.
https://www.hathitrust.org

Mama Lisa's World
Children's songs and nursery rhymes that provide the lyrics as well as audio. Poetry is available by Eugene Field, one of America's most loved children's poets. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz with audio is available.
https://www.mamalisa.com

LibriVox
LibriVox provides free audiobooks for download. It aims to make all the books in the public domain available to read for free in audio format.
https://librivox.org

Additional Resources

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
An electronic reference source containing words, along with information about their forms, pronunciations, functions, etymologies, meanings, and syntactic and idiomatic uses.
https://www.merriam-webster.com

Encyclopedia Britannica
Online reference work containing hundreds of thousands of objective articles, biographies, videos, and images.
https://www.britannica.com

Online Free Book Search
http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/stories.html
http://kids.nypl.org/reading/Childrensebooks.cfm

Sample books from the Carousel Readers Book Series

Sunshine, the Black Cat by Stanley L. Swartz
This book features the author's parents, Roy and Lucille Swartz and their pet cat, Sunshine. Read to find out the mischief Sunshine gets into.
http://www.stanswartz.com/sunshine.htm

If Germs Were Purple by Stanley L. Swartz, read by Laila Swartz, and a handwashing demonstration by Kathy Pitchford.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shlfpHmPAZs

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