

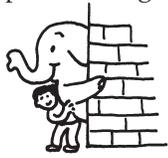
Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

Book Picks

■ *The Magician's Elephant* (Kate DiCamillo)

Peter is an orphan looking for answers about his missing sister. He turns to a fortune-teller, who proclaims that an elephant will help Peter, setting off a chain of events that the boy never could have imagined. But will it lead him to his sister—or to more questions? (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Dewey the Library Cat: A True Story* (Vicki Myron and Bret Witter)

On a cold morning, librarian Vicki Myron discovers a freezing kitten in the book drop. This is her true story of Dewey, who found a home at the library. He attended story hours, napped among the stacks, and eventually became famous around the world.



■ *Young, Gifted and Black* (Jamia Wilson)

These 52 short biographies introduce your child to important people in black culture. She will learn about the childhoods, struggles, and accomplishments of historical figures as well as present-day people. Features civil rights leaders, athletes, musicians, and others.

■ *Lola Levine Is Not Mean!* (Monica Brown)

Lola accidentally hurts a classmate during a soccer game, and the other kids start to call her “Mean Lola Levine.” Lola feels terrible and wants to show everyone she’s not mean! She turns to her best friend, her family, and her passion for writing for help. The first book in the Lola Levine series.



Understanding fiction

Charles is a strong reader. He follows complicated plots, and he gets to know story-book characters so well that he often correctly predicts what they’ll do next. Help your child be a strong reader, too, with these fun ways to boost reading comprehension.

Basic facts	Traits	Actions
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~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~		



Create a storyboard

Filmmakers use a series of drawings called a “storyboard” to write movies. Let your youngster try this idea to visualize a book’s plot. Have him divide a sheet of paper into eighths and sketch simple pictures (one per box) as he reads. *Tip:* Drawing arrows from box to box will show the sequence. With the storyboard, he can retell the story or write a summary.

into three columns: one for basic facts (name, age), one for traits (shy, brave), and one for actions (goes to the beach, makes the softball team).

Map the characters

Understanding a book’s characters will help your youngster grasp the story. Encourage him to make a character chart while reading. He could divide it

Predict the future

To forecast what will happen in a book, your child has to think about what has taken place so far. Ask him to make predictions as he reads and jot down his ideas (best friend will move away, pitcher will win the game). Suggest that he write his own ending about two-thirds of the way through. He’ll enjoy seeing how it compares with the real one! 📖

Replace it

“The cake was really *good*! It had *good* chocolate icing.” Your child will write fresher, more original stories if she finds alternatives for words she uses often, such as *fun*, *went*, and *good*.

Have each family member flip through books and copy a few sentences to jazz up or make more precise. Pick one, and circle the word to avoid. (“Wayside is a small village.”)

Set a timer for three minutes. Everyone writes as many alternatives as possible—replacing just one word or maybe changing the whole sentence. (“Wayside is a tiny village” or “If you weren’t paying attention, you could travel through the village of Wayside without noticing it.”) Now when your youngster catches herself using a word too many times in a story, she’ll remember this game. 📖

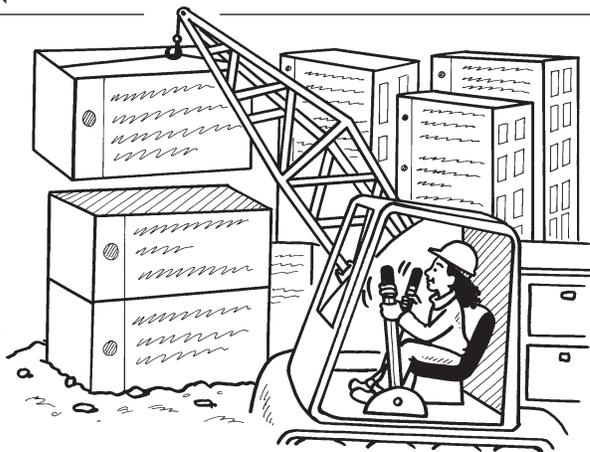


Build stronger essays

Encourage your child to approach her next essay as if she's building a tower. Here's how she can succeed from the first "brick" to the last.

1. Lay the foundation. A strong essay begins with a solid introduction. Your youngster should think about what her essay aims to accomplish and state her main idea. For example, will she inform readers about childhood in Colonial America? Or will she try to persuade readers to follow recycling rules?

2. Construct the framework. Have her think of each paragraph as a floor of her building. She might include one



paragraph about school in the Colonies, another on chores, and a third on play. Under each heading, she could write supporting facts and details. ("Education was considered more important for boys than for girls.")

Fun with Words Humorous homophones

Boost your youngster's vocabulary with this silly homophone activity. Start by talking about what homophones are, and end by writing sentences that pair the words in ways that make everyone laugh out loud.



Homophones are words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings, such as *night/knight*, *peek/peak*, *hare/hair*, and *their/there*. Work together to list as many homophones as possible. You might look for them in books or online.

Now, take turns writing silly sentences using several pairs of homophones. *Examples:* "Have I told you the *tale* of my *dear* dog who chases his *tail* every time he sees a *deer*?" "Do you *see* the *aisle* in the *sea*? It's between that *isle* and the other *isle*!" Read your sentences aloud, and vote for the funniest one!

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A

Are comic books "real reading"?

Q My son reads mostly comic books. Is this okay?

A It's wonderful that your son enjoys reading. And comic books often have complex storylines and well-developed characters, which strengthen reading skills.

Let your child explore a variety of comic books so he encounters new vocabulary and plots. He might choose a historical fiction series or a comic book retelling of classic children's literature. Also, many comic book fans like graphic novels, such as the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series (Jeff Kinney) or the *Dog Man* series (Dav Pilkey).

Finally, since your son will be expected to read a variety of books for school, consider helping him branch out. Suggest that he set a goal to read one new type of book each month. Perhaps he'll try a biography in September, a science fiction novel in October, and a mystery in November.



Parent 2 Parent

Partner with the reading specialist

My daughter Mia was recently diagnosed with dyslexia. I had a good meeting with the reading specialist at school, and she said the best way to support Mia is to read aloud every day. Fortunately, that's something Mia and I have always enjoyed together.

The reading specialist gave me titles that are a little more challenging than Mia can read by herself.

Reading harder books, she said, will help Mia stretch her comprehension skills.

She also asked that I listen to Mia read the books she recommends for her each week—but not to correct her immediately if she struggles. Instead, I should suggest she try strategies she's learning like using context clues or breaking

words into "chunks." So far it's going well. Mia likes following along as I read aloud to her, and she's excited to show me how she can read the books she's assigned.

