

# Home & School

CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

February 2021



Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

## SHORT NOTES

### “How-to” writing

Here’s a fun way for your child to practice writing explanations. Ask him to list step-by-step instructions for creating something out of play dough—without telling you what the object is. Follow his directions exactly as written. Is your object the one he intended?

### Apologies in action

When your youngster needs to apologize, explain that taking responsibility for her actions means more than just saying “I’m sorry.” For instance, if she loses pieces to her brother’s board game, she might use her own money to replace the game or offer to make homemade game pieces.

### DID YOU KNOW?

People blink less than usual while staring at a computer screen. And that can lead to dry eyes and eyestrain. Encourage your child to take “blink breaks” when he’s online. He might look away from the screen and blink several times while he waits for a program to open, for example.

### Worth quoting

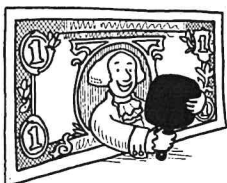
“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.”

Amelia Earhart

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What’s the easiest way to double a dollar?

**A:** Put it in front of a mirror.



## The nitty-gritty on grit

Children who have grit are able to overcome setbacks and stick with challenges. Nurture your youngster’s persistence with these ideas.

### Be independent

Let your child do as much as possible for herself. Maybe her smoothie is lumpy or the gift she wraps is messy, but resist the urge to fix them. You’ll show her that you believe in her—and that will help her believe in herself.



### Find “lightbulb” moments

A comic-strip artist might draw a lightbulb to show that a character has a “bright” idea. When your youngster struggles to learn something (say, how to juggle), suggest that she draw a lightbulb and fill it with steps to success. *Examples:* “Learn to juggle scarves first.” “Juggle one ball at a time.”

### Declare a “do-over”

Remind your child that a setback simply means she needs more practice. For instance, if she’s showing you how she can do a cartwheel but doesn’t land on

her feet, declare a “do-over.” She’ll learn that it’s okay to try again and again.

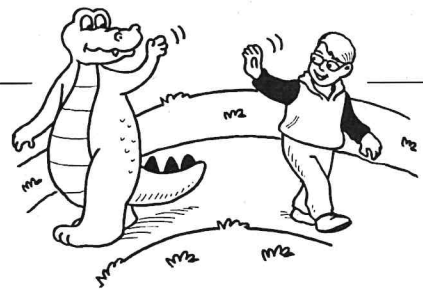
### Use self-motivation

Kids tend to stick with things they’re interested in, and that teaches them the rewards of perseverance. Steer your youngster toward projects that fit her passions. If she wants to design video games someday, you might help her find a coding class or an online tutorial.♥

## Attention, please!

These kid-friendly activities can stretch your child’s attention span:

- Play “Spot the Difference.” Draw two nearly identical pictures. Perhaps you’ll sketch two pizzas with a pepperoni in a different spot or a different number of mushrooms. Tell your youngster how many differences there are. Can he find them all?



- “See you later, alligator.” “After ’while, crocodile.” With your child, take turns thinking of ways to say “goodbye”—each should rhyme and mention an animal. *Examples:* “Gotta go, armadillo.” “In a few, kangaroo.” How long can your youngster stay focused as you go back and forth?♥

## Big project, big success

School projects give your child a chance to be creative as he shows what he has learned. Share these tips for successful projects from start to finish.

**Make a connection.** Your youngster will learn more—and be more motivated to work hard—if he picks a topic he cares about. Say he’s asked to write a report on pioneer days. He might focus on daily life as a pioneer kid or on popular games from that time.

**Break it down.** Suggest that your child think of a big project as a series of smaller



assignments. He can set a deadline for each step, including researching, writing, and revising. Remind him to leave some wiggle room in case a task takes longer than he anticipated.

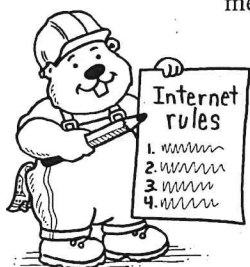
**Add flair.** How could your youngster make his project stand out? Encourage him to include extras like models, posters, or audio or video clips. Maybe he’ll make a cardboard model of a one-room schoolhouse like those many pioneer children attended. If his project includes a class presentation, he could demonstrate a game from the time period like jackstraws (similar to pick-up sticks).♥

### PARENT TO PARENT

## Online safety 101

My daughter Peyton does many things online these days—from going to school to hanging out with her friends. I was worried about her safety, so I found an online cyber safety course at [sos.fbi.gov/en/](https://sos.fbi.gov/en/), and we took it together.

We were both surprised by what we learned. For instance, online contests can be used to collect names and email addresses. And who knew that social media quizzes can trick you into sharing your birth month or pet’s name to help hackers figure out your passwords?



After our class, Peyton made an illustrated list of rules to keep by the computer. Her rules include blocking sites that aren’t kid friendly, not sharing passwords with friends, and asking my permission before downloading anything. Now, both of us are more careful when we work and play online.♥

### Q & A

## Handling cheating

**Q:** My son got caught giving his friend answers during a test and received a zero. How should I handle this at home?

**A:** Start by asking your child why he cheated. If he says he just wanted to help his friend, explain that cheating is always wrong—regardless of the reason. Also, it doesn’t actually help anyone. Your son got a zero on his test, and his friend didn’t learn that studying is the right way to earn a good grade.

Or if your youngster felt pressured to share the answer, help him plan what to do the next time someone asks him to cheat. He might simply say, “Sorry, I can’t,” and keep his eyes on his own paper. Later, he could suggest they study together for the next test.

Finally, let your child know what the consequences will be at home if he cheats again (say, losing electronics for a certain period of time).♥



### ACTIVITY CORNER

## Math squares: A brain workout

Boost your youngster’s spatial reasoning—an important part of success in geometry—with this fun brainteaser.

**1.** Have your child cut out five squares, all the same size, from construction paper.

**2.** Now she can position the squares to form different *pentominoes*: arrangements of five squares in which each square shares

at least one side with another square. Can she find all 12 possible pentominoes? (If she gets stuck, help her search online for “pentominoes.”)

**3.** After your youngster makes each pentomino, she can draw it on graph paper so she remembers which ones she has found.

**Challenge:** Ask your child to cut out the pentominoes she drew on graph paper. Now she can arrange all 12 into a big square with a square hole in the middle.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • [rfeustomer@wvlterskluwer.com](mailto:rfeustomer@wvlterskluwer.com)  
[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)  
ISSN 1540-5621

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2021

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* (Kat Zhang)

All Amy wants is to make a perfect *bao*—a steamed Chinese bun—just like her family makes. But each *bao* is either too big or messy, until a helpful idea pops into her head. Includes a recipe that you and your child can use to make *bao* together.



### ■ *A Little Calm Spot: A Story About Yoga and Feeling Focused* (Diane Alber)

A cute little character named Calm Spot explains yoga to young readers. Your youngster will learn how yoga helps people relax and concentrate. Includes basic yoga poses, breathing techniques, and positive words. Part of the Spot series.



### ■ *Press Here* (Hervé Tullet)

Find a surprise on every page of this interactive book, starting with a simple yellow “button” to press. Readers will follow instructions like “Try shaking the book” and “Clap your hands once” to discover what their actions do to the dots on the page.

### ■ *¡Vámonos! Let's Go!* (René Colato Laínez)

There are many noises to encounter on an adventure through the neighborhood, from the bus's screech to a horn's honk. This adaptation of “The Wheels on the Bus” introduces different vehicles and sounds in English (*choo choo choo*) and Spanish (*chucu chucu chu*).



## Build a story character

Who will star in the next story your child writes? Share these ideas for creating fun and interesting characters that will bring her stories to life for her readers.

### Draw pictures

Invite your youngster to draw a picture of a character she'd like to write about, perhaps a turtle or kangaroo. Then, ask questions to help her develop the character.

*Examples:* “Where does the turtle live?” “What does it like to play?”

Maybe she'll draw a pond in the background of her picture and add a soccer ball for the sports-loving turtle to kick around.

### Act out scenes

Suggest that your child get to know her character by stepping into its role while you play together. She might pretend to be a turtle and move her game token s-l-o-w-l-y around the board. Also, carry on a conversation so she gets



a feel for its personality and ideas for dialogue. Perhaps she'll imagine a kind, friendly turtle telling a kangaroo, “Congratulations on winning your game!”

### Write a story

Now your child is ready to write. Encourage her to include descriptions to help her readers picture the character. For instance, she might begin, “Taylor the turtle was little and green. She watched the faster animals play soccer. She wished she had a friend.”♥

## What doesn't the book say?

Learning to *infer*, or “read between the lines,” is a strategy your youngster can use to understand what he reads. Try this activity to help him make inferences:

- Gather three household items related to a specific task. For example, you might choose a hairbrush, toothbrush, and shirt for getting ready in the morning. Can your child use these “clues” to infer what your task is?
- Read a book aloud, without showing your youngster the pictures, and encourage him to make inferences. If you read “As it got dark, the sky turned shades of red, orange, and purple,” he might infer there's a pretty sunset.♥



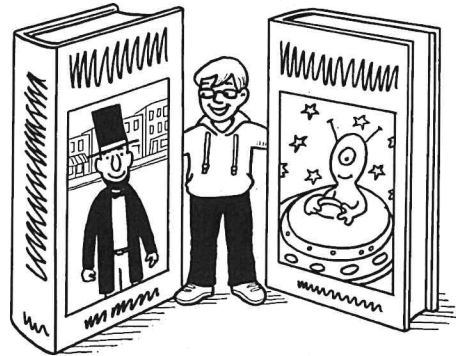
# Blending fact and fiction

Some books are nonfiction, and some are fiction. Other types of books combine both! Here are two popular examples for your child to read and learn from.

## Historical fiction

**What it is:** A made-up story based on historical facts.

**What to do:** Help your youngster separate historical fact from fiction. He could make a chart with two columns, one labeled “Fact” and the other “Fiction.” Read a historical fiction book like *Players in Pig-tails* (Shana Corey). Then, he could list examples from



the book of facts (“Some people said women shouldn’t play baseball”) and fiction (“Katie Casey is a made-up character”).

## Science fiction

**What it is:** A fictional tale that includes futuristic science ideas.

**What to do:** Read a picture book like *Harry and Horsie* (Katie Van Camp). Then, encourage your child to draw a picture of his own design for a bubble machine like Harry’s Bubble Blooper. You could also help him make a bubble solution by exper-

imenting with different amounts of water, dish soap, and corn syrup. Now suggest that he design a totally different machine that people might use in the future. ♥

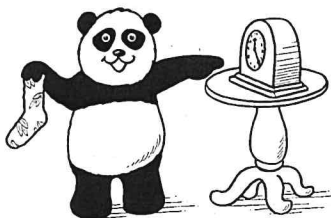


## Fun with Words

### Rhyme time!

Send your youngster on these rhyme hunts to help her hear sounds in words:

- Ask your child to find things in your home that rhyme. Hand her an item that has a one-syllable name, such as a *sock*, *shoe*, or *book*. She can walk around with the object and try to spot rhymes. For a *sock*, she might see a *clock* and a *lock*.  
*Idea:* Try this activity outdoors, too.



- Give your youngster old magazines and catalogs. She could make rhyming collages by cutting out pictures of things that rhyme and gluing them on paper. For one collage she might cut out pictures of a *car*, a *bar* of soap, and a *jar* of peanut butter. Ask her to say the rhyming words to you. ♥

## Q&A Dinnertime chats

**Q** How can I liven up our family’s dinner conversations and encourage my daughter to practice speaking?

**A** Carrying on conversations over family meals can improve your child’s vocabulary and speaking skills—and help everyone stay close. Luckily, there are lots of ways to switch things up each day to keep your talks exciting.

One idea: Think of witty questions to ask each other! You might ask, “Would you rather ... ?” questions. Or try superlative questions (ones with words ending in *-est*), like “What is the silliest thing you’ve ever done?” or “Who is the bravest person you know?”

Each person can also bring something to the table to talk about, like a photo or favorite toy. When someone finishes sharing their object, others can ask questions or make comments about it. Try this once or twice each week to spark new conversations—and introduce new vocabulary. ♥



## Write a math book

“I have 6 colored pencils and 4 regular pencils.  $6 + 4 = 10$  pencils.”

With these three steps, your child can work on writing and math as he creates a book of story problems.

1. Suggest that your youngster look for opportunities throughout the day to make up problems. While playing with his marble run, he

might say, “I had 17 marbles. I dropped 10 into my marble run. How many marbles were left?  $17 - 10 = 7$  marbles.”

2. Now help your child write and illustrate each story problem on a separate sheet of paper. He can also write the number sentence that goes with each problem on the facing page.

3. Finally, your youngster could staple the pages together into a math book and read it aloud to you. ♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5648

# Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2021

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

## Book Picks

### ■ **Maker Lab: 28 Super Cool Projects** (Jack Challoner)

Get your STEM on with this book of science and engineering projects. Using things found around the house, your child can create a DNA model, make monster marshmallows, build a soap-powered boat, and much more. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ **Coo** (Kaela Noel)

A unique 10-year-old girl named Coo was raised by pigeons,

and a rooftop is the only home she's ever known. But now she must enter the human world to get help for her flock. Follow along as Coo learns about friendship and family in this heartwarming tale.

### ■ **Noah Webster: Weaver of Words** (Pegi Deitz Shea)

Noah Webster is most famous for his dictionary, but in this biography, readers will discover other ways he shaped our language. He wrote books teaching children to read and spell, and he influenced American English—changing British spellings like *colour* and *traveler* to *color* and *traveler*.

### ■ **Poptropica: Mystery of the Map** (Jack Chabert)

Three friends take a ride in a hot-air balloon that crashes on a mystery island, and their adventure begins! Welcome to Poptropica, filled with Vikings, extinct animals, and other surprising discoveries. The first book in the Poptropica graphic novel series.



## What's it about?

Students who think about what they're reading tend to understand and remember the material. Encourage your youngster to put on his thinking cap when he reads with these tips.

### Discuss

Talk with your child about books. For example, you could have him tell you why he thinks a book is interesting (the main character lives in Africa) or how it makes him feel (happy, curious). When he's finished reading, ask him if he would recommend the book to a friend. Why or why not? Discussing what he reads will help him understand the plot and characters better.

### Visualize

Picturing the plot or a concept in a book can strengthen your youngster's comprehension. He may want to sketch a scene or character from a chapter book. If he's reading a textbook, he might draw a plant or an atom and label its parts.



He'll learn to visualize when he reads, even if he doesn't draw every time.

### Summarize

Suggest that your child write in response to books. He can practice summarizing a plot by writing a book review to share with the whole family. He could even submit it to a magazine like *Stone Soup* ([stonesoup.com](http://stonesoup.com)) or an online bookstore. Or he can show how he feels about a book by writing a poem about it. ■

## A shortcut to reading fun

What kind of book has many plots and dozens of characters? A short-story collection! Consider these reasons for your child to try this type of fiction:

- Action usually moves quickly in short stories. A fast-paced tale can motivate a reluctant or struggling reader.
- Some collections allow children to sample different authors. After your youngster reads one, visit the library for titles by the writers she liked best.

● A book with various topics is bound to have something for everyone. If your child doesn't like one story, she might enjoy another. ■



# Memories of me

Inspire your youngster to enjoy writing nonfiction by focusing on a topic she's an expert on: herself! Here are suggestions to help her turn her memories into a memoir.

**Narrow the focus.** A memoir often zeroes in on one slice of the writer's life. For example, your child might write about the first thing she remembers clearly, such as making pierogies with Grandma when she was little. Or perhaps she wants to describe a turning point in her life, like becoming a big sister.



**Choose a format.** Memoirs can take different forms. If your youngster likes poetry, suggest that she write a series of poems. Or she could create a picture book memoir with text and drawings. Another idea is to tell her tale in graphic novel format.

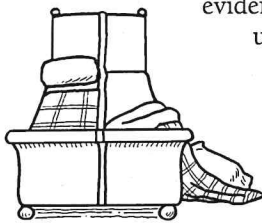
**Dig deeper.** An interesting memoir goes beyond simply stating what happened. As your child writes about an event ("We went strawberry picking on a beautiful spring day"), remind her to weave in her thoughts and feelings ("I was surprised that the strawberries grew so close to the ground").

## Let's debate

With this family debate, you'll actually encourage your child to argue with you. She'll get better at making logical arguments and backing them up with evidence—skills she needs for school assignments.

**1. Pick a topic.** You might debate about whether people should make their beds every day or about which way to put toilet paper into the holder.

**2. Prepare notes.** Have each person jot down her opinion ("Making your bed seems pointless") and supporting evidence ("You just unmake it every night"). Family members should also write ways to rebut—or argue



against—the opposite view. How will your youngster respond if someone says an unmade bed looks messy? *Example:* "Yes, but you can close your door so no one sees it."

**3. Debate.** Take turns making your cases and rebutting opposing arguments. Then, try to decide who made the most convincing case—whether you agree with that person or not.



## Fun with Words

### Fill in the part of speech

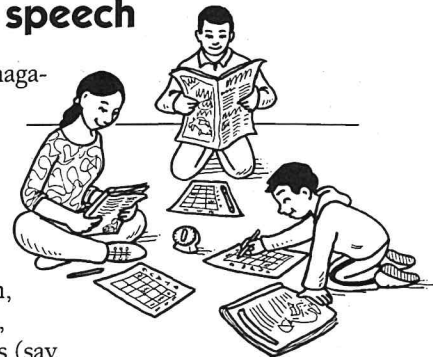
Dive into a newspaper or magazine, and race to find parts of speech in this game.

**Materials:** pencils, paper, newspaper or magazines, timer

Have each player draw a 3 x 5 grid on his paper and write a part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) above each column. Then, let your youngster pick five random letters (say, S, T, A, V, and G), and write one to the left of each row. Give each person a section of the newspaper or a magazine, and set a timer for three minutes.

Players race to fill their grids with words from the newspaper or magazine. For example, your child might fill his S row with *sunshine* (noun), *sell* (verb), and *superior* (adjective).

When time is up, check the grids, and cross out any words that are in the wrong column (use a dictionary if you're not sure). The player with the most words remaining wins.



## Parent 2 Parent

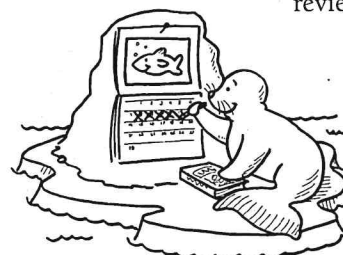
### Manage reading assignments

My son Oliver likes to read, but only when he gets to choose the book. He has always struggled to finish assigned reading that he thinks is "boring."

I remembered having the same problem at his age. What helped was reading a few pages each day rather than leaving the whole assignment until the last minute. So I suggested that Oliver divide the number of assigned pages by the

number of days. He writes each day's page numbers on his calendar and crosses them off as he finishes.

Also, I encouraged Oliver to learn as much as possible about a book before he opens it. He enjoys online reviews, and reading goes more smoothly once he has an idea of what a story is about. To his surprise, he has even discovered a few new favorites along the way!



#### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5583