

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

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Enge-Washington Intermediate School

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Book Picks

■ **Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery on Museum Mile** (Marcia Wells)

Sixth-grader Eddie Red has a photographic memory and a talent for drawing. Will that be enough to outsmart art thieves in New York City? The first book in the Eddie Red series.



■ **Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert** (Marc Aronson)

This true story describes the plight of copper miners trapped for 69 days in 2010. As the miners slowly ran out of food, water, and fresh air, rescuers from all over the world worked to save their lives.

■ **The Lemonade War**

(Jacqueline Davies)

Sibling rivalry and lemonade take center stage in this opening book of the Lemonade War series. The friendship



between a sister and brother is put to the test when she skips a grade and winds up in his fourth-grade class. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ **How Cities Work**

(James Gulliver Hancock)

Readers watch a city grow from a tiny village to an enormous metropolis in this nonfiction book. Each page is filled with detailed drawings and simple explanations about the buildings and people it takes to make a city thrive.



Keys to nonfiction reading

As your child gets older, he will do more reading in subjects like science, social studies, and math. Here are strategies for helping him use clues in textbooks and other nonfiction to understand what he reads.

Remember the three "Bs"

Encourage your youngster to scan for information in boldface, boxes, and bullet points. In a science chapter on weather, he might see the word *storm chasers*, a box on how rain forms, and a list of the world's windiest cities. Previewing these parts will alert him to what the chapter covers (storms, rain, wind)—and what to look for as he reads.

Examine an image

This activity can help your child observe details in pictures. Let him select any photo, illustration, or diagram in a textbook. Together, gaze at it for 30 seconds. Close the book, and write as many facts about the picture as you can. For a diagram of the earth, he could write, "The earth has four layers" and "The core is the innermost layer." Take



turns reading your facts aloud, and check the picture to verify them.

Guess the graphic

The secret to grasping charts, graphs, and tables is to read the words *and* the numbers. Even the design may offer hints. Choose a graphic, and cover the heading. Can your youngster figure out its purpose? Perhaps you selected a pie chart that looks like an apple pie, its slices labeled with state names and percentages. He might deduce that it shows top apple-growing states. Now let him pick a graphic for you. ■

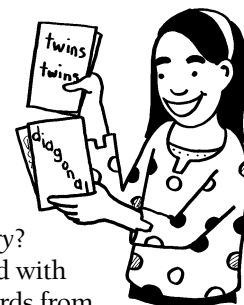
Fun with Words

Picture that word

This activity makes vocabulary building fun! Have your youngster create her own deck of vocabulary cards that show definitions at a glance.

Together, brainstorm playful ways to write words so their meanings are illustrated. For example, she might write *backward* as *drawkcab* or print *twins* twice. Or perhaps she'll stack the letters in *vertical* or write *diagonal* at a slant. What could she do with *staircase*, *bubbly*, or *symmetry*?

Suggest that your child write each word on an index card with brightly colored markers or pens. Encourage her to add words from her vocabulary lists and textbook chapters, too. Studying will be easier with visual cues like these. ■



Persuade me!

Next time your youngster asks for a pet hamster or a bigger allowance, suggest that she put her request in writing. She'll practice persuasive writing and give you time to think about your answer. Share these steps for writing a convincing case.

1. State your case. A good argument is specific and clear. Ways to start may include "I believe" or "In my opinion." ("I believe having a pet makes a kid more responsible.")



Tip: Let your youngster know you'll consider her position and get back to her! ■

2. Provide reasons. Explain that your child's reasons should appeal to her audience—in this case, you! That means putting herself in your shoes: "I know you're worried I won't clean the cage. I'll write out my cleaning schedule and post it so I won't forget and you will know what to expect."

3. Add supporting facts. These could include a quote from an expert or information from a website or a magazine article. Or she might mention survey results about pet ownership and responsibility.

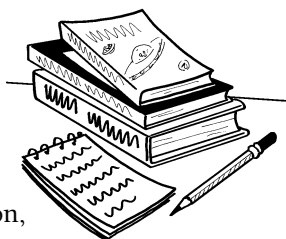


Author habits to follow

It takes hard work to become a published author. You can guide the budding author in your household with these real-life habits of successful writers.

Read a lot

Encourage your child to read often and to read a wide variety of material—fiction, biographies, science fiction, graphic novels, and newspapers. He'll pick up ideas for his own writing.



Keep tools handy

Suggest that your youngster always keep a small notebook nearby (even in his pocket). He can jot notes or begin a story whenever inspiration strikes.

Create a goal

Authors often set targets for themselves, perhaps writing for a certain number of hours a day, or writing a set number of words or pages. Ask your child to pick his own daily goal (write for 20 minutes, write five sentences or until he fills a page). ■

Parent 2 Parent

Partner with the reading specialist

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

The reading specialist gave me titles that are a little more challenging than Simon can read by himself. Reading harder books, she said, will help Simon stretch his comprehension skills.

She also asked that I listen to Simon read the books she sends home each week—but not to correct him immediately if he struggles. Instead, I should suggest he try strategies he's learning like using context clues or breaking words into "chunks." So far it's going well. Simon likes following along as I read aloud to him, and he's excited to show me how he can read the books he brings home. ■



Q&A

Get comfortable with public speaking

Q My daughter's first class presentation of the year is next month. She's a little nervous—how can I help her prepare?

A Encourage your daughter to practice, practice, practice! If she feels confident about what she's going to say and how she'll say it, she will feel more comfortable.

One way to prepare is by observing good public speakers in action, such as her principal

leading an assembly or game show hosts on TV. What does she notice? She may see that they look at the audience, smile, speak clearly, and avoid glancing at their notes too often. Then, she can keep these tips in mind during her own presentation.

Finally, your daughter will feel more confident if she knows what she sounds and looks like as she presents. Offer to videotape her—she can practice and play it back until she feels ready. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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