

The Central Valley Chronicle

November 2020

Inside this issue:

Music.....Page 2
Mrs. Shafer Notes.....Page 3
4th Grade.....Page 4
School Closings.....Page 5
CV Honor Roll.....Page 6
Central Valley Drama...Page 7
Girls Night Out.....Page 8

Other inserts included in the hard copy newsletter are the menus and activity calendars. Please be sure to check the calendars online as changes may occur.

REMINDER

Parents/Guardians:
Please update the student forms in powerschool. Call 308-428-3145 with any questions!!

Fit in some exercise



Physical fitness contributes to school success. Regular activity is linked to both higher self-esteem and attentiveness.

Get creative and find fun ways to get your child moving. Suggest games like tag or Simon Says. Turn on some fast music and race to finish a chore. Or just stop by the playground on the way home.

From the Desk of Mr. Todd Beck, Principal



For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email (david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)

NEBRASKA STUDENTS CONTINUE TO OUT-PERFORM PEER STATES ON ACT

Nebraska achievement levels remained steady and on pace with the national average on the ACT entrance exam that measures college readiness in English, reading, mathematics, and science.

For the third year, nearly 100 percent of Nebraska graduates took the ACT as part of the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS). Nebraska's average 2020 ACT composite score is 19.9, down one tenth of a point from last year. The national average is also down one tenth of a point to 20.6 and only 49 percent of students take the ACT nationwide. The highest possible ACT score is 36.

Nebraska started offering the ACT for free to all juniors in 2017 and continues to score well compared to the 15 states with 100 percent of graduates taking the ACT. Only Utah at 20.2 and Wisconsin at 20.1 scored better. This is significant as states that test a high percentage of graduates tend to have lower averages as the scores include more students who are not on a college course-taking track.

Since 2017 scores have remained stable while the number of graduating seniors who take the ACT has risen by 5,980. This year, 24,973 graduates took the ACT, up more than 200 students from the previous year.

The following are among the other key findings from this year's Nebraska ACT data:

- Nebraska students scored an average of 19.2 in English compared to 19.4 in 2019 and 19.9 nationally. In reading, Nebraska students scored an average of 20.2 compared to 20.3 in 2019 and 21.2 nationally. In math, Nebraska students scored an average of 19.7 compared to 19.7 in 2019 and 20.2 nationally. And in science Nebraska students scored an average of 20.0 compared to 20.2 in 2019 and 20.6 nationally.
- Compared to the 15 states where 100 percent of graduates took the ACT, Nebraska tied for the second highest percent of students meeting the English benchmark, the third highest percent meeting the math benchmark, the fourth highest percent meeting the science benchmark and tied for fifth highest percent meeting the

Continued from Mr. Todd Beck, Principal

science benchmark and tied for fifth highest percent meeting the reading benchmark.

- Nebraska's STEM score—a combined measure of math and science designed to predict readiness for success in STEM majors in college—was down one tenth of a point at 20.1 compared to 20.2 in 2019.
- There has been an increase in the total number of students and the number of minority students taking the ACT. However, achievement gaps between Hispanic, African American, and Native American students and their white and Asian American counterparts remain substantial. While white students had an average composite score of 21.3 and Asian students scored 20.7, the averages fell considerably for Hispanic students at 16.9, Native American students at 16.2, and African American students at 16.1.

The national and state ACT press release and reports can be viewed and downloaded on the ACT website at: <https://leadershipblog.act.org/2020/10/act-grad-class-2020-achievement-data.html>.

Music by Mrs. Mindy Smith, Instructor

The Central Valley Music Department will be involved in several upcoming performances. The first will be the annual Veterans Day Program in the Central Valley high school gym on Wednesday, November 11 at 2:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend, but please be aware masks are highly recommended. The program will also be televised on the Central Valley Cougars YouTube channel or Facebook Live, if you would rather not attend. The 7-12 band and high school choir are honored to be involved in this program which recognizes the veterans of the area.

Christmas concerts are scheduled as follows: 7-12 Christmas program will be held on Tuesday, December 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Valley Auditorium. It includes High School Choir, 7-12 Band, 7th Grade Choir and various solos and small groups.

The Central Valley Elementary Christmas concert will be held on Friday, December 11th in Scotia at 7:00 p.m. It includes all students from grades kindergarten through sixth grade.

For both these programs, it will be recommended that you wear masks, sit with your family, and try to social distance. In lieu of attending in person, these will also be on the Central Valley Cougars YouTube Channel or on Facebook live. The music department appreciates everyone's cooperation during this Christmas season.



Principal's Desk
Central Valley Elementary
Mrs. Connie Shafer

November is here! Parent-Teacher Conferences were held virtual using Zoom this year, some were held on the phone and a few in person. We had a great response. It is so important to connect with your child's teacher. The connections between home and school are so very important! Working in partnership is the best way to help our children reach their potential! I hope you are enjoying the new SeeSaw app that teachers are using to communicate information and activities in your student's classroom.

Congratulations to all the elementary students that have reached their AR goal for the first quarter. I love hearing the students' comments that they share with me whether it is that they have reached their goal or they just want to share something about their book to me as I wander in and out of their classrooms throughout the day. Many students are enjoying their independent reading time.

As I write this, I am viewing out the window our first snowfall of the season. The unpredictability of the weather is here. Please make sure that warm clothing is sent to school with your child. It is not a bad idea to make sure that warm jackets, stocking hats, gloves/mittens are being sent with your child to school. Now that snow is likely, make sure that boots and snow pants are making the trip with your child as needed. We will continue to go out for recess during cold weather, so please help in making sure that proper clothing is sent with your child.

We will not host a Veteran's Day program at the elementary school this year due to COVID. Teachers will be instructing and talking about Veteran's Day with their students, and how

important it is to give thanks to all of the veterans who have and are currently serving our country.

This year we have sensory paths added to the hallways, outside on the track, and on the sidewalks near our recess grounds. We also have one in the gym on the cement floor. These paths have been used by all students. All students were taught the Zones of Regulation, a social-emotional curriculum that is the basis for these sensory paths. This curriculum teaches students to be aware of their own emotional state, a zone, and to identify what steps to take to make sure they stay in their ready to learn zone. We have kicked off this extra resource with the help of our awesome OT, Chris Salber, and look forward to continuing to teach kids about emotions and about how to handle them. This in turn helps in our students' academic success.

Supporting your child's education begins at home. Consider these everyday ways to talk about school, and deepen your child's learning.

Foster a positive attitude. If you're enthusiastic about school, your youngster is likely to be as well. Ask him about his projects and be sure to listen closely, and follow up with questions or comments.

Try to tie learning to his/her world. Show your child how what he learns is useful outside of school. If he's studying clouds, ask him to identify types you see in the sky and try to predict whether you'll need an umbrella. Or challenge him to spot vocabulary words on window signs or package labels, and talk about how they're used in different ways.

*Continued from the Elementary Principal's Desk,
Mrs. Connie Shafer*

Stay up to date. Be aware of what's happening in your child's classroom. Read newsletters, check homework folders, SeeSaw app, and web-sites. Put important dates on your calendar. It will show your child that school is a priority.

Dates to remember:

- ◆ **November 4**
Teacher In-service, school dismissed at 1:30
- ◆ **November 26 and 27**
No School, Thanksgiving Break

Thank you for all that you do and allowing us to work with your child. I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving.

Instilling Pride Inspiring Others!



Mrs. Tier Kokes

I cannot believe we have been back in session for over two months! The time has really flown by! I am grateful to be back to school with the kids and hope we do not experience another shutdown.

In Science class, we have been learning about energy. We've figured out that all energy comes from a source and we have put on our engineer caps to try to figure out what is causing a town blackout. So far, we've come to find out that the town does not have enough energy in the system so the 4th graders have put their brains together and used tape, scissors, paper plates, popsicle sticks, a pencil, a push pin, and plastic cups to build wind turbines. So far, we have not built one

to match the criteria so we have offered feedback to other groups and are going through the redesign process since scientists never stop learning. I have a great group of engineers!

I hate to say it, but I think the winter weather is among us. Please send winter coats, hats, and gloves to be sure your kids stay warm while outside. We'll continue to hope for a safe and healthy school year!



Link options to outcomes

The best way for students to learn to make good decisions is through practice. Offer your child plenty of choices. Just be sure that all options are acceptable.

Children don't always connect outcomes with the choices they've made, so help your child think about the consequences of his decisions.

School Closings/Delays



At various times during the school year, the administration is called upon to make decisions to cancel or delay the start of school due to inclement weather. Regardless of the information sources the superintendent utilizes, this continues to be one of the most difficult decisions to make each year. In making weather related decisions, the superintendent always weighs the educational necessity of having students in attendance on a regular basis against the potential safety risks of having students in school when the weather is inclement. The superintendent will always attempt to error on the side of student safety. As a parent, you can always exercise your right to keep your child at home if you feel the weather conditions cause an unacceptable safety risk for your child. Please contact the school, as soon as possible, if you make the decision to keep your child home due to weather related safety concerns.

Whenever school has a non-scheduled closing, early dismissal, or a late start, parents/students will be contacted through our school alert system, which also includes Facebook, Twitter and is posted on the news section on the CV Home Page. We will also use this communication tool if we need to provide important information to parents and students regarding school operations. We have found this system to be very effective in communicating with parents and students in a very timely manner.

The superintendent will always attempt to make a weather related school closing or late start prior to 6:00am. If possible, the superintendent will attempt to make this information available for the 10:00pm news broadcast prior to the effected day.

Weather related school closing information will be carried on television stations WOWT 6 News NBC Omaha, KOLN/KGIN Channels 10/11, NTV/KFXL Channels 13 and 4, Channel 8 KLKN-

TV and KNLV Radio Station. Please call the school at (308) 428-3145 or 245-3201 with any concerns or questions.



Keep social media safe, fun

Social media is a big part of many students' lives. It can have positive effects, but used recklessly it can damage self-esteem and academic performance. Monitor your child's social media use, and remind her that

- Nothing is private. Even if she only communicates with people she knows, they can share her posts with others.
- Social media makes it easy to hurt someone. Posting negative things about people is a form of bullying.



To Refer a Child Please Call:
308-728-7955 or 800-689-7131

Bus Drivers Needed!



Central Valley Schools is in need of bus/van drivers for the District. Please complete an application and return to the office.

If you would have questions, contact Mr. Randy Dutcher, Transportation Director at 308-428-3145.

Central Valley Quarter 1



SENIORS

Larista Barner
Taryn Barr
*Cayton Butcher
Trevor Cargill
Demi Daniels
McKenzie Johnson
*Jackson McIntyre
Kyle Nekoliczak
Ty Nekoliczak
Jackson Pedersen
Lexi Schaffert
*Danielle Wadsworth
*Audrey Wood
*Ashlyn Wright



JUNIORS

Kayla Boutin
*AiraLee Evans
*Carly Johnson
*Neleigh Poss
*Dilynn Wood

SOPHOMORES

*Chance Ackles
Connor Baker
*Taya Engel
Cohen Grossart
*Kennady Holley
*Tamryn Klein
Bo Pokorny
*Morgan Rosander
*Kalli Schumacher
*Zandar Wolf

FRESHMEN

*Kendra Cargill
Dylan Beaty
Mia Butcher
*Alexis Johnson

Freshmen continued:
*Dierks Nekoliczak
*Natalie Poss
Dylan Rogers
Piper Shepard
Treyven Straka

EIGHTH GRADE

*Emma Corman
Canon Holley
*Grady Kelly
Morgan Johnson
Taesian Soto
Zaden Wolf
*Boston Wood

SEVENTH GRADE

*Ky Cargill
*Taylor McIntyre
*Katlyn Oakley
Hugh Thompson
Zavyer Wolf

*Denotes All A's



Promote regular organizing

Take notes in class won't help your teen if he can't find them when he needs them. Organization routines make studying easier. Have your teen:

- **Clean out his backpack** on Fridays. He should file school papers in a different colored folder for each class.
- **Attach sticky notes** to books and items that he needs to remember to bring home from school.
- **Organize at night.** Everything he needs to take to school—lunch, gym shoes, earbuds, etc.—should go into his backpack the night before.



Positivity beats defeat

A student who has had several failures in a row is at risk for learned helplessness, or avoiding a task because she believes it will be impossible for her to complete.

If this sounds like your child, encourage her to think positively. If she gives her best effort, she's more likely to succeed. To build her confidence, suggest that she try starting homework sessions with easier tasks.

Central Valley Drama

call 308-219-0320 for tickets or member list

Quilt Raffle

\$1 a ticket
\$5 for 6 tickets
\$10 for 15 tickets

Drawing 11/17 at 7:30pm
Need not be present to win!



To purchase tickets, see a One-Act member or attend the Drama & Dessert 11/17 @ 7pm, CV Aud.

Happy Thanksgiving

CENTRAL VALLEY COUGARS

as IT is

IN HEAVEN

a play by ARLENE HUTTON

Central Valley Drama



PERFORMANCES AND COMPETITIONS

- CV FESTIVAL-TUES. NOVEMBER 10TH-SCOTIA 8AM
- YORK FESTIVAL-FRI. NOVEMBER 13TH-1:30PM
- CV PERFORMANCE-TUE. NOVEMBER 17TH-GREELEY 7PM
- ELBA FESTIVAL-WED. NOVEMBER 18TH-12PM
- KEARNEY FESTIVAL-SAT. NOVEMBER 21ST-1:15PM
- CONFERENCE-TUE. NOVEMBER 24TH-9AM
- DISTRICT-SAT. DECEMBER 5TH-LOUP CITY-11AM
- STATE-THUR. DECEMBER 10TH-NORFOLK-10AM



It's the
11th Annual Central Valley Girls' Night Out,
and
we'll be Gnome for the Holidays!!

Saturday, November 14th
Central Valley Elementary Gym - Scotia
6pm - 8:30pm
Get your tickets in advance from a CV Junior!
\$10 in advance or \$15 at the door



Visit our Facebook page to bid on Silent Auction items!!

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2020

Central Valley Elementary School

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *Big Red Lollipop* (Rukhsana Khan)

Rubina is excited about going to a birthday party. But then her mother insists that her little sister Sana tag along, and Sana eats Rubina's party favor! Later, when Sana is invited to a party, she makes it up to Rubina. Based on a true story from the author's childhood.



■ *The Secret Explorers and the Lost Whales* (SJ King)

A diverse group of young adventurers must rescue a pod of humpback whales in this first book of the Secret Explorers series. Your child will learn facts about whales as marine-life expert Connor and his fellow explorers try to successfully complete their mission.



■ *How to Read a Book*

(Kwame Alexander)

This vivid picture book presents reading as an experience to savor. It begins with suggestions for finding a great spot to read, compares opening a book to peeling a juicy clementine, and encourages readers to take their time and enjoy every word.

■ *Good Night, Mr. Panda/Buenos Noches, Sr. Panda* (Steve Antony)
Mr. Panda is ready for bed, but each of his friends has forgotten to complete a task in their nighttime routine. As he reminds them what to do, he realizes that he can make an occasional



mistake, too. This bilingual English-Spanish book is part of the Mr. Panda series.

A growing vocabulary

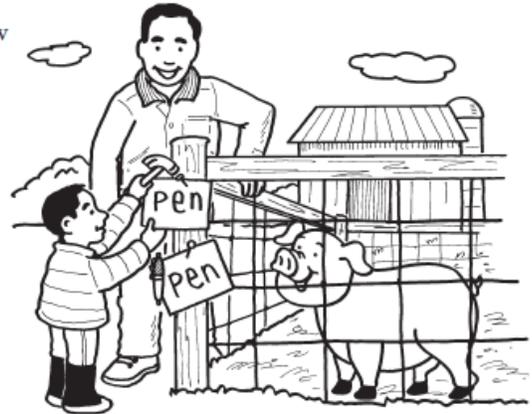
Hearing, learning, and using new words can make them a permanent part of your youngster's vocabulary. Try these strategies to increase the number of words he knows.

Weave in words

When you talk with your child, try using a few words he may not know. If you're gardening together, you could say, "These beets are a nice color. Can you think of anything else that's *magenta*?" or "The sky is *overcast* today. Look at all those clouds." Hearing new words on a regular basis will naturally expand his vocabulary.

Draw pictures

Illustrating new words will make it easier for your youngster to remember them. When he hears one (say, *parched*), tell him what it means (very thirsty), or look it up in a dictionary together. Then, help him write the word on a sheet of paper and suggest that he draw a picture. For *parched*, he might draw himself reaching for a big glass of water. *Idea*: Suggest that he staple his drawings



together to make his own vocabulary booklet.

Multiple meanings

Pick an everyday word that has two totally different meanings, such as *pen* (a writing tool or a place for pigs). Say one definition, and ask your child to come up with the other. *Additional ideas*: *ball* (a round toy or a big dance), *star* (a shining object in the sky or a celebrity), *foot* (a unit of measurement and a body part). How many can your youngster think of?♥

Write an ode

Your child can show gratitude during the Thanksgiving season—and enjoy writing poetry at the same time—with this activity.

Explain that an ode is a poem that expresses emotion toward a person, place, or thing. Ask who or what she's thankful for. She might choose a grandparent or a teacher, or perhaps your home or dog. Have her think of what she appreciates about the person or object.

Now help your youngster write the ode as if she's addressing the person or object—and include specific details she's grateful for. *Example*: "Oh, Grandma / How I love your silly jokes! / Your smile is always bright / Playing games with you makes my night."♥



Explore plot patterns

Predictable books follow a pattern—and noticing patterns can help your child follow the story. Here are popular patterns along with craft projects that will boost your youngster's comprehension.

Repetitive story. Read a book with a repeated refrain, such as *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* (Charles G. Shaw). Afterward, your youngster could glue cotton balls on blue paper to show each cloud in the book. Have her repeat



the refrain—"Sometimes it looked like"—and point to each cloud. Also try: *Goodnight Moon* (Margaret Wise Brown), *The Little Red Hen*, and *The Gingerbread Man*.

Circular plot. These stories end the same way they began. Read *If You Give a Moose a Muffin* (Laura Numeroff), and help your child make a paper chain. On separate strips of paper, she can draw and label something the moose was

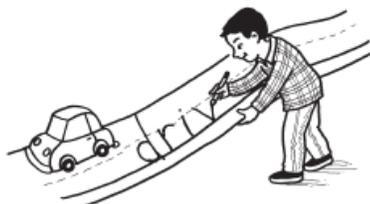
given. Have her tape the ends of each strip together, linking all the loops in a circle.

Now she can use the chain to tell the story. Also try: *The Mitten* (Jan Brett), *The Relatives Came* (Cynthia Rylant), and *Stephanie's Ponytail* (Robert Munsch).♥

Q&A Lowercase first?

Q When I was in school, we learned to print capital letters first. Why is my son starting with lowercase letters?

A Lowercase letters appear more frequently in books than capital letters. And since learning to write letters also teaches your child to recognize them, knowing the more common ones first will make reading easier.



The trickiest part of writing lowercase letters is remembering where to write different parts of each letter.

Try this: Draw a "road" (with a dotted line between two solid lines) and add a line below it for the road's "shoulder." Now your son can write letters with each part in its own "lane." For *d*, he would put the circle under the dotted line and the stick extending to the top solid line. And for *p*, the stick would go down to the shoulder.♥

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



Parent to Parent

Reading diverse books

My daughter Andrea recently found a library book about a little girl whose family came from Guatemala—just like ours. Andrea seemed proud and excited to recognize Spanish words sprinkled throughout the book and to see pupusas on the family's dinner table.

I asked the librarian for more books with Spanish-speaking characters. She was happy to help, and said children feel comforted and valued when characters remind them of themselves. The librarian also explained that kids learn to appreciate diversity when they read about characters whose lives are different from their own.

Thanks to this advice, Andrea and I have also read books about families from Mexico, Peru, Nigeria, and Japan. My daughter is discovering that she has a lot in common with children who speak or eat differently than she does—from the games they play to the way their parents tuck them in at night.♥



Fun with Words

Terrific tongue twisters

Tongue twisters are tricky-talking-tremendous teachers! They help your child hear sounds in words and pronounce words more clearly. Here's how he can say and create his own tongue twisters.

1. Recite familiar tongue twisters such as "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?" Ask your youngster to tell you what sounds are repeated (*w* and *ch*).



2. Together, brainstorm a list of words that start with the same sound, like *penguin*, *park*, and *purple*.

3. Now your child can use the words to make up a tongue twister. ("The playful penguin went to the park to play on the purple playground.") Have a silly time together saying his tongue twisters. What a fun way for him to hear and say the sounds!♥

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

November 2020

Central Valley Elementary School

Book Picks

■ *Liberty Porter, First Daughter* (Julia DeVillers)

Liberty's life changes when her dad is elected president of the United States. Follow along as she gets used to living in the White House, attending a new school, and following all the rules that come with being the president's child. Book 1 in the First Daughter series.



■ *Ostriches* (Rachel Poliquin)

From the Superpower Field Guide series, this nonfiction book is filled with fascinating facts about ostriches. Your child will meet an ostrich named Eno and learn how this grumpy two-toed animal survives in the African savanna,



what special features he has, and much more. Includes illustrations and a glossary with science terms.

■ *Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes* (David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad)

Young readers are introduced to a famous African American poet in this illustrated collection. The compilation contains Hughes's poems about hopes and dreams, plus an introduction and a biography of his life.

■ *The Vanishing Coin* (Kate Egan)

When fourth-grader Mike and his new friend Nora discover the local magic shop, owner Mr. Zerlin teaches Mike his first magic trick. From that point on, Mike is hooked! Find out how Mike's life changes—and learn magic tricks—in this first book in the Magic Shop series.



Subject-area writing

When your youngster answers questions in her social studies book, explains how she solved a math problem, or completes a science lab report, she needs strong writing skills. Encourage her to practice writing with these at-home activities for each subject.

Social studies

Suggest that your child interview a relative or family friend about a historical event she studied in class. A grandparent, an aunt, or an uncle might remember watching the first moon landing or the fall of the Berlin Wall. Your youngster could write about the event through that person's eyes and include details like names, dates, and places.

Math

Hooray! Your child figured out the math problem that had her stumped. Before she moves on to the next one, have her write a step-by-step description of how she did it. She'll practice explaining her math thinking and putting her



thoughts in logical order. Plus, she'll have a handy reference when she needs to solve similar math problems.

Science

Which brand of stain remover or lint roller works best? Ask your youngster to do a science experiment using household products. She can write an explanation of her procedure and record the results, just like she does in science class. *Tip:* Let her post the write-up, complete with photos, on the refrigerator so family members can learn which product "won." 📌

Hooked on classic fiction

Spark your child's interest in fiction by steering him toward tales you enjoyed at his age or ones he liked listening to when he was younger. Here are two ideas.

1. Read classics. Suggest books from your childhood. He might like Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story* or Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller*, for instance. Perhaps he'll be inspired to read more classics and find his own favorites.

2. Rediscover fairy tales. Different cultures have their own versions of various fairy tales. Have your youngster type a familiar title (*Cinderella*) into a library database. He may be surprised by the differences in *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* by Ai-Ling Louie or *The Rough-Face Girl*, an Algonquin Indian version by Rafe Martin. 📌



A reading checklist

Good readers use many different strategies to help them understand books. Share this checklist with your child. He can monitor his comprehension—and get back on track if things don't make sense.

Before I begin reading, I ask myself what I already know about the topic. I use this knowledge to help me learn new information in the text.

When I read difficult material, I stop and think after each paragraph or section to make sure I understand it. I might summarize it in my head or on paper.

Mark it, flag it

A bookmark that's also a tracking tool? We have just the thing! Your youngster can make this simple bookmark and use it to learn and get ideas from what he reads.

First, have him cut a bookmark-size strip from cardboard and decorate it with crayons or markers. Then he could glue a small pad of sticky notes to the top. As he reads, he can use the sticky notes to:



- Write down unfamiliar words to look up later.
- Flag passages to share in class.
- Think of character names or details for a story of his own.
- Mark names of cities or countries he'd like to visit.
- Note a new sport or hobby to try.
- Jot down a personal experience, a movie, or another book that he's reminded of. 📖

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



I reread parts that are confusing. If I'm still stuck, I ask a teacher or parent for help.

I read between the lines to figure out events or information that the author didn't come right out and explain.

I jot down questions when I read nonfiction. I check to see whether my questions are answered later in the text.

I predict what's going to happen next in a novel. Then I read on to see whether my prediction was accurate. 📖



Q&A How to give—and get—feedback

Q During “writing workshop,” my daughter's classmates give each other feedback on their stories. Nicole feels uncomfortable giving and receiving criticism. How can I help?

A Encourage your daughter to think of feedback not as criticism but as making the writing the best it can be. It's a good idea to start by saying something nice about her classmate's story, such as, “I really like this plot twist.” Then, if she sees something that could be improved, she might try, “I got confused here” or “I'm not sure what you meant when you said ...”

Meanwhile, *getting* feedback will show your child how others view her writing. If a classmate says, “I don't understand why your character would do that,” Nicole may decide to change the character's action. With time, she'll get more comfortable giving and getting feedback—and see its value. And this experience will serve her well in the future, since giving and receiving criticism is often part of a job. 📖



Fun with Words Don't make a word!

Force your opponent to add the last letter to a word in this game that boosts spelling and vocabulary skills.

To start, think of a word (*moment*), and write the first letter (*m*) on a sheet of paper. Your child should come up with a word that begins with *m* (it will probably be different from yours) and write the second letter of her

word (add *a* to *m* for *match*). On your turn, think of a word that starts with *ma* and add the next letter (*r* for *marble*).

Continue until a player is forced to complete a word that has four or more letters. For example, if your youngster adds *e* to *mar*, she spells *mare* and loses.

Note: A player must have a real word in mind when adding a letter. If someone is challenged, she has to say the word she's thinking. 📖

