

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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Winfield Elementary School  
Jillian Alonzo, Principal

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *The Princess in Black*

(Shannon Hale and Dean Hale)

Princess Magnolia has a secret. When monsters appear, she becomes a superhero. But hiding her identity is tough, especially with Duchess Wigtower snooping around. The first book in the Princess in Black series. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *There's No Place Like Space! All About Our Solar System*

Dr. Seuss's Cat in the Hat stars in this fact-filled book about space. Readers can jump aboard his rocket ship and travel from planet to planet to explore our solar system.



### ■ *Drawn Together*

A little boy and his grandfather speak different languages, eat different foods, and prefer different TV shows.



But when they discover that they both like to draw, they find a way to connect and communicate.

This sweet tale is told almost entirely through pictures.

### ■ *Bat Count: A Citizen Science Story*

Facts about bats, conservation, and citizen science are woven into this story. When Jojo's family notices the bats around their home are disappearing, she and her family volunteer to help scientists count the animals. (Also available in Spanish.)



## Tap into what your child knows

Everything your youngster does, sees, or reads gets filed away in his memory as *background knowledge*. Here are ways to help him use and build on this information to understand what he reads.

### Jog his memory

Before you read, ask your child what he knows about the book's topic. This gets his brain ready to take in new information. For a nonfiction book on bees, he may say the insects buzz and sometimes sting. *Idea:* Suggest that he draw bees on a sheet of paper and write and illustrate a fact on each bee. After you read, he can add more bees with things he learned.

### Pair outings with books

A trip to a craft store or the dentist can fill your youngster's tank of knowledge. Read library books related to upcoming outings, and discuss what you might see (pottery, hygienist). When you get home, reread the book. It may be more meaningful now that he has



real-life experience. ("That's right, the hygienist cleans your teeth before the dentist checks them.")

### I know that!

Help your child draw a stop sign on paper, cut it out, and glue it on a craft stick. Keep the sign nearby when you read. Each time he hears something familiar, he can hold up the stop sign. Stop reading to let him share what he knows. ("We have a pet hermit crab at school. When he outgrows his shell, he crawls into a new one.")♥

## According to this expert...

Let your child teach *you* something. By writing instructions for you, she will share her expertise and practice informational writing.

First, she could choose something she's good at, such as making s'mores or drawing animals. Have her list each step in the process. Her first step might be "For each s'more, get 2 graham crackers, 1 square of chocolate, and 1 marshmallow."

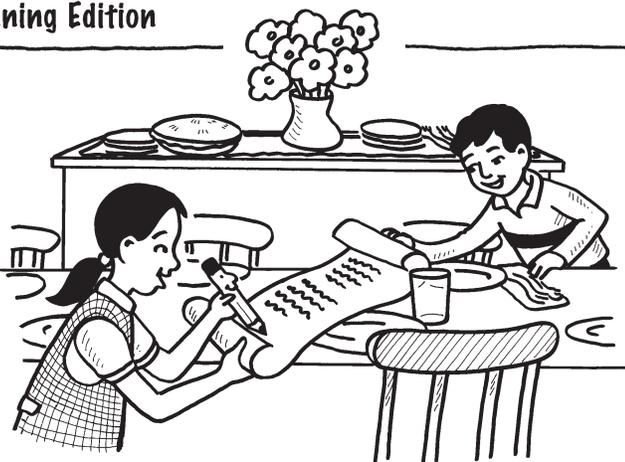
Now follow your youngster's instructions exactly. Can you complete the task? If not, ask her what's missing. ("Oops, you need to toast the marshmallow *before* you put it between the graham crackers.")♥



# Thanksgiving poetry

Everyone's a poet with these family writing activities that will make Thanksgiving even more special!

**Rhyming menu.** What's for Thanksgiving dinner? Help your child write the name of each food (turkey, green beans, sweet potatoes) on a separate slip of paper. After she puts the slips in a bowl, have each family member draw one and write two rhyming lines of



can collect the cards and write a *list poem*—by listing the ideas and adding descriptive words. Invite her to read it to everyone before you eat. *Example:*

poetry about the food. For instance, "Mashed potatoes are so *creamy*. With Mom's gravy, they're just *dreamy*." Now she can combine everyone's lines into one poem and make a copy to put beside each guest's plate.

**List of thanks.** Let your youngster hand out index cards and ask guests to write what they're thankful for. Then, your child

*We're thankful for  
Loving family  
Yummy food  
Good health  
Cute pets  
That's what we're thankful for!♥*

## Q&A Too easy?

**Q** My son's teacher sometimes sends home books that seem too easy for him. Why is this?

**A** The books your child brings home are probably at his *independent* reading level—easy enough for him to read all by himself without getting frustrated.

It's likely that he reads more challenging books in school. Those books, at his *instructional* reading level, are ones he can read and understand with a little help from his teacher.

Also, keep in mind that reading involves more than just recognizing words. Your son needs books that build comprehension skills, too. For example, say he's learning to infer, or read between the lines. The teacher might assign a book that appears easy but actually requires deeper thinking to really get the meaning.

If you still have concerns, talk to the teacher. She'll be able to explain your son's reading level and how she decides which books to send home.♥



## Parent to Parent

### Books for life's lessons

My daughter Sophia was jealous of her new baby brother from the day we came home from the hospital. When I talked to our pediatrician, he recommended several books to read to her, including *The New Baby* by Mercer Mayer and *I Am a Big Sister* by Caroline Jayne Church.

Sophia loved the books. After we read them a few times, I caught her reading one aloud to the baby. I realized that not only was she getting in some reading practice, she was also bonding with her little brother.

Sophia is sometimes still jealous of all the attention her brother needs. But she's enjoying reading about characters she can relate to. And I'm happy I've discovered that reading is one way to help my daughter handle challenges she faces.♥



## Fun with Words

### Name games

When does n-a-m-e spell fun? When your youngster uses names to practice spelling. Together, list the names of everyone in your home (pets, too!), and play these games.

and drive the cars around to scramble the letters. Then, ask him to "park" the cars in order to spell the name. *Hint:* He could refer to the list if he needs help.

#### Draw and guess

Take turns secretly picking a name and drawing a picture of something that starts with each letter.

For *Paul*, you could draw a pickle, an apple, an umbrella, and a lion. Can your youngster figure out the name you chose?♥



#### Park and spell

Let your child choose any name from the list and write each letter on a separate square of masking tape. Now he can stick each square on the roof of a separate toy car

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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