

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2017

South-Western City Schools



Book Picks

■ *The Templeton Twins Have an Idea* (Ellis Weiner)

It's double trouble in this mystery about the disappearance of twins John and Abigail Templeton. Their dad is an inventor and the kid-nappers are college-age twins who want to cash in on his invention. The first book in the Templeton Twins series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Eight Dolphins of Katrina: A True Tale of Survival* (Janet Wyman Coleman)

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina swept eight dolphins from their Mississippi aquarium home into the Gulf of Mexico. Your child can read about the dangers the dolphins faced and how their trainers never gave up on rescuing them.



■ *Next Best Junior Chef: Lights, Camera, Cook!* (Charise Mericle Harper)

A multicultural cast of tweens competes for top chef honors on a reality TV show. This fictional tale captures the contestants' nervousness and excitement as they navigate cooking challenges. The first story in the Next Best Junior Chef series.



■ *Sonia Sotomayor* (Barbara Kramer)

Sonia Sotomayor is America's first Hispanic Supreme Court justice—and only the third woman to serve on the nation's highest court. This easy-to-read biography describes Sotomayor's rise from a humble background, her early interest in the law, and obstacles she overcame.



Boost reading comprehension

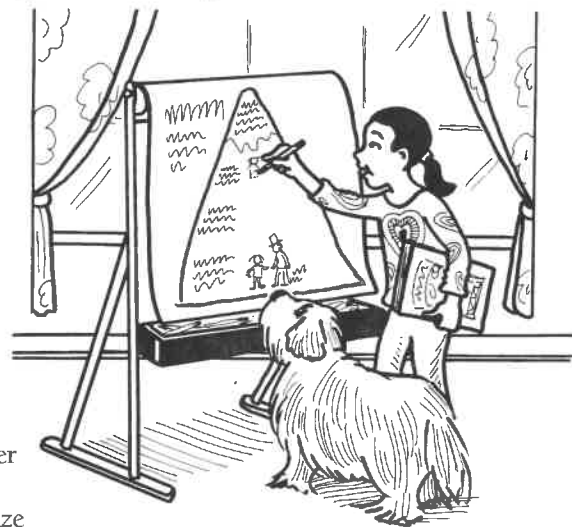
Your child can talk, write, and draw her way to better reading comprehension. Try these fun activities to help her understand and remember what she reads.

Talk

Did you know that talking about books can improve your youngster's comprehension skills? Invite her to retell stories and share details about what she reads. Ask open-ended questions like "Why do you think...?" or "What did you like about...?" Describing the story in her own words will prompt her to think through what she read and to organize her thoughts.

Write

Encourage your youngster to jot down insights and questions while reading. The process of asking and answering "How does Jamal really feel about having a baby brother?" lets her monitor how well she is understanding what she reads. *Tip:* Sticky notes are ideal for writing notes and marking passages, or she could use a small notebook.



Draw

Like a mountain, the plot of a story builds to a peak. Have your child draw a mountain on a sheet of paper and illustrate it with characters, places, and objects from the story. On one side of the mountain, she can write about the characters, setting, and problem. At the top, she could summarize the most critical part. And on the way down, she might explain how the problem was solved.

Three cheers for writing!

When your youngster shows you his summer vacation essay or book report, you have a chance to recognize his writing accomplishments. Here are three ways to celebrate.

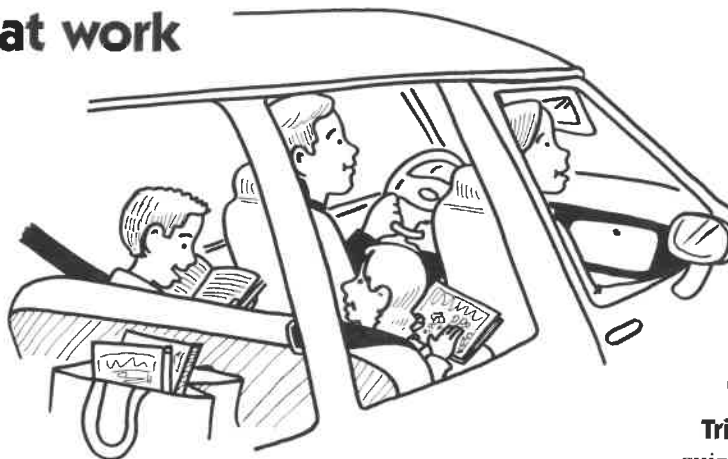
- 1. Display.** Reserve a wall in the hallway or family room to hang writing samples. You might even frame them like the masterpieces they are.
- 2. Arrange a read-aloud.** Encourage your child to read his writing to grandparents, aunts, and uncles when they visit—or during a video call.
- 3. Create a coffee table book.** Let your youngster decorate a binder to fill with his favorite stories or reports. Place it on a coffee table so visitors can enjoy his work.



Reading rituals that work

Establishing regular routines helps busy families find more time to read. Fit more reading into your child's day with these clever ideas.

Breakfast broadcasts. Morning reading can be as easy as bringing the newspaper to the table. Your youngster might read movie reviews, sports columns, or comics. Or ask him to check the weather page and announce the forecast.



Road-trip reads.

In the car, keep a stash of books that includes short items—perhaps an almanac, a book of world records, a volume of poetry, or a joke book. Your child could pull out a variety and read to everyone.

Trivia time.

Cards from quiz games (*Trivial Pursuit Junior*, *Beat the Parents*) offer fun ways to get kids reading—and learning new facts—any time of day. Put a batch of questions in a tote bag, and quiz each other after dinner or in a waiting room.

Parent & Parent Loving the school library

My daughter Lily loves library day at school, but last year she kept forgetting to return books. This year, we have a plan to help her remember so she can check out new books each week.



I asked Lily to find a special place for library books. She covered a cardboard box with wrapping paper and put it on the counter with her books inside. Then, she added a sign that says “Thursday: Books go in backpack” on one side and “Friday is Library Day!” on the other.

Now Lily flips the sign to the front on Thursdays and to the back on Fridays. Hopefully our new plan will remind Lily to return books throughout the year—and enjoy the new books she brings home each Friday.

Fun with Words

Pop goes the spelling word!

Give your youngster's spelling study time a fun burst of energy with this active balloon game.

1. Blow up one balloon for each spelling word on your child's list. Have her use a permanent marker to write a word on each balloon.

2. Now the action starts! She and her friends take turns picking a balloon and saying the word that's written on it.

3. Players bat the balloon back and forth. Each time someone hits it, that person calls out one letter in the word in order. The player who finishes spelling the word by shouting the last letter gets to pop the balloon with a pin.

4. The “popper” chooses another balloon and starts the next round. Repeat until all the words have been spelled and all the balloons have been popped.



Q&A Brainstorming story starters

Q For homework this year, my son has to write a weekly journal entry on a topic of his choice. He's already saying he doesn't know what to write about. How can I help?

A Your son may be surprised to discover that an ordinary event like a soccer game or a family picnic can inspire an interesting story.

Chat with him regularly about his week—what was exciting, surprising, or funny? He might say, “Even though my team

lost, I made a great save,” or “I love picnics because Dad packs surprises like spicy mustard with pretzels.”

After these conversations, your son could write story ideas on slips of paper (“Soccer save,” “Picnic treats”). Put them in an envelope for easy reference. Do this together frequently, and he'll soon develop a knack for brainstorming story ideas all by himself!



OUR PURPOSE

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

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