

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2019

Veterans Memorial Elementary School
"Home of the Patriots"



Book Picks

■ *Heartseeker* (Melinda Beatty)

What if you could "see" lies? In this novel, an eleven-year-old girl named Only Fallow can! Now she must help a king determine who is loyal to him. Along the way, she learns some uncomfortable truths about the kingdom.



■ *National Geographic Kids Brain Games: The Mind-Blowing Science of Your Amazing Brain* (Jennifer Swanson)

Youngsters will explore the human brain in this book of fascinating—and often surprising—facts. It's full of brainteasers and challenges for your child to try and includes an



explanation of the science behind each activity.

■ *The BFG* (Roald Dahl)

In a land of scary giants, the Big Friendly Giant (BFG) is special. Follow the BFG and a little girl named Sophie as they try to stop the not-so-friendly giants from getting up to no good. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Some Writer! The Story of E. B. White* (Melissa Sweet)

This scrapbook-style biography introduces readers to the author of classics like *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*. See photos of animals that White's stories were based on, writing samples from his childhood, rough drafts of his manuscripts, and more.



Strategies for summarizing

"What was that book about?" Listening to your child summarize a book shows her teacher (or you) how well she understood it. And the act of summarizing builds comprehension. Suggest these ideas.

Start with questions

Pretend to be a reporter, and ask your youngster the "5W" questions (who, what, when, where, and why) about her book. She can use her answers to give a brief summary. *Example:* "tiger cub" (who), "adopted" (what), "2018" (when), "India" (where), "orphaned" (why). Her summary could begin, "An orphaned tiger cub was adopted by another mother tiger in India last year."

Rank importance

Can your child convince you to read a book she enjoyed? Record her making a commercial about it. The catch? She has a 60-second time slot, so she must stick to what matters most. Ahead of time, suggest that she list details, then number them from most to least relevant. For instance, clues that helped a detective



solve a mystery belong in her summary, but a description of the detective's clothing probably doesn't.

Draw a picture

A colorful graphic organizer lets your youngster visualize her summary. She might draw an ice cream cone labeled with the book's title and add a different color scoop for each story element: characters, setting, problem, and solution. Now she could fill in details and look at her cone as she summarizes the story. ("A young girl from a small town moved to a big city. She had to learn how to fit in.")

Write a how-to guide

What's a fun way for your child to practice his writing and help someone out? He can write a how-to guide for something he's good at!

Let your youngster choose a topic (say, drawing portraits) and list numbered steps. *Example:* 1. Gather supplies. 2. Find a model. 3. Draw an outline. 4. Refine the outline.

5. Add features. Then, he could expand on each step to explain it thoroughly. "Add features" might become "Add facial features, such as eyes, a nose, and a mouth."

To see if his instructions work, he should follow them step by step. If they don't, he may need to add steps or be more specific.



Tips for standardized tests

Knowing how to approach different types of questions can improve your youngster's performance on state reading and writing tests. Share this advice.

Multiple choice. Your child should read the entire passage and all possible answers before choosing one. There might be several options that seem good but perhaps aren't the best choices.

Short answer. On some standardized tests, your youngster may have to read



passages and write answers to questions. He could highlight or jot down facts or details on scratch paper first. Then, he can refer to the passages or his notes as he writes and include evidence if required.

Essay. Taking his time with each stage of the writing process (planning, rough draft, editing) will make your child's final product better. Encourage him to read the instructions

carefully so he knows what kind of essay he needs to write (narrative, informative, persuasive) and how it will be scored. If sources or samples are provided, he should read through all of them, too. ■

Fun with Words

Vocabulary: Stack the cups

Build towers (and your youngster's vocabulary!) with this cup-stacking word game.



1. Have your child get a textbook or another nonfiction book with a glossary. Together, pick 25 words, and write each one on a separate plastic or paper cup.



2. Take turns choosing any cup, then reading the word and giving its definition. Another player checks the book to see if your definition is correct. If it is, you keep the cup.

3. As players win cups, they stack them to build towers. If the tower falls, they must return all of their cups to the middle of the table.

4. When every cup has been claimed, count to see who stacked the most. ■

Q&A Learning to listen

Q My daughter's gymnastics coach said Rachel doesn't always listen when he gives instructions to the team. How can I help her be a better listener?

A Listening takes practice. In addition to having regular conversations, use these activities to sharpen your child's ears:

- Have her close her eyes. Make four noises (rustle paper, jingle keys, snap your fingers, stomp your feet). Name one sound, and ask her if it came first, second, third, or fourth.
- Let your daughter listen closely to a song and write down the words, pausing or rewinding as necessary. She can compare what she wrote to the actual lyrics. *Tip:* Search for lyrics online. ■



Parent 2 Parent Read aloud with confidence

My son Luke loves to read silently, but he's hesitant about reading aloud. I'm trying different ideas at home to make him more comfortable reading out loud at school.

First, I suggested that he read to his younger cousins when they visit. It was cute watching them have "story time." And the book Luke chose was easier than what he normally reads, so I think that helped him feel confident.

Also, I find opportunities for him to read out loud in everyday situations. For example, I'll ask him to read the list of pizza toppings from a takeout menu. Or when we're driving around town, I'll have him turn on the GPS, mute it, and read the directions to me in his best "GPS voice."

Luke's teacher recently mentioned that he volunteered when she asked for someone to read a poem. I guess the practice at home is helping! ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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