

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2015

Book Picks



■ *Ava and Pip* (Carol Weston)

In this diary-style novel, fifth-grader Ava plans a party to help her shy sister Pip be more outgoing. When a popular girl ruins the party, Ava writes a story about it that wins a library writing contest—but gives her a whole new problem to solve.



■ *The Kids' Book of Weather Forecasting* (Mark Breen and Kathleen Friestad)

What is extreme weather? What does a colorful sunset signify? With this hands-on guide to meteorology, your child will learn to observe the sky, make and use weather instruments, and predict the weather.

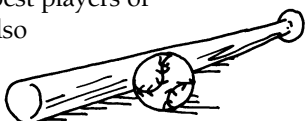


■ *The Hero Revealed* (William Boniface)

Meet Ordinary Boy. In his hometown of Superopolis, O Boy is the only resident without super powers. Then, he gets to help his favorite superhero and learns that even regular people can be superheroes. This humorous book is the first in the Extraordinary Adventures of Ordinary Boy series.

■ *Jackie Robinson: Baseball's Great Pioneer* (Jason Glaser)

Fans of graphic novels and baseball will enjoy this biography of Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play major-league baseball. When he debuted as a Brooklyn Dodgers first baseman, he faced angry crowds. But Robinson persevered and became one of the best players of all time. (Also available in Spanish.)



Allan Composite School
Nadia Breckner, Principal Kelly Wandler, Vice Principal

What's that word?

An unfamiliar word can stop a reader in her tracks and make it harder to understand a novel or textbook. If a word stumps your child, suggest that she ask herself these questions.

Am I pronouncing it correctly?

Your youngster might know the word *delicate* when she hears it spoken, but misread it as *de-LIE-kate* in a book. When a word seems unfamiliar, she can check its pronunciation in a dictionary. *Tip:* Some online dictionaries have audio, too. She may be surprised to discover that she knows the word if she hears it (and now she'll know how to spell it, too).

Do I know a similar word?

Sometimes a new word will remind your child of a word that she recognizes. For example, she might read *herbivore* and think of *carnivore*. She could say, "A *carnivore* is a meat eater and an herb is a plant, so an *herbivore* must be a plant eater." Then, have her reread the



sentence with that meaning in mind to see if it makes sense.

Are there clues in the text?

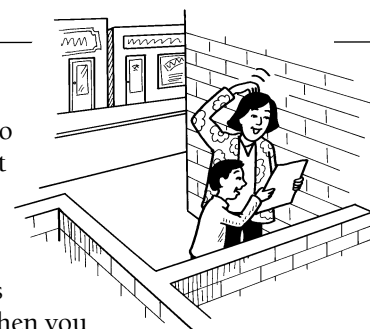
Examples, explanations, synonyms, or antonyms can help your youngster understand words. If she reads, "To advance in a *profession* like fashion design, it helps to take classes," she could realize that fashion design is a career. Therefore, *profession* means *career*. Or she may notice the synonym *job* later in the same paragraph. ("Staying on top of the latest information is important in any *job*.")

Giving directions

Writing instructions is easy, right? Not necessarily. Here's a fun way to show your youngster how much thinking, writing, and revising go into technical writing—like the how-to manuals that come with furniture or electronics.

Ask your child to write directions for walking to school or to a neighbor's house. Then, follow the directions together, exactly as written. If they aren't correct, it will be clear when you take a wrong turn or end up in the wrong place.

Let your youngster revise his instructions as you go. He will see how important it is to write accurately and clearly.



Terrific titles

A good title can catch a reader's eye and draw him into a story. These tips will help your youngster write attention-grabbing titles for his stories and papers.

Use names. He might put the name of a character or a place from his story into the title. *Examples:* *The World of Jeremiah* or *On the Way to Miracle Island*.



Be catchy. Suggest that your child consider a title that rhymes (*Lucky Ducky*) or has alliteration (*The Crazy Cookie Caper*).

Vague or specific? To add intrigue, he may go with *The Elusive Fish* rather than *Fishing on Spring Break*. Or he could be specific (but still interesting) with *How Not to Catch a Fish*.

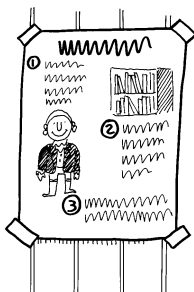
Take a vote. Getting feedback can help your youngster understand what will hook an audience. Let him list five titles. Then, he could ask family and friends to read his piece and vote for their favorite.

Idea: Have your youngster try out a title by saying it aloud. If he likes how it looks *and* sounds, it might be a good choice. 📖

My grammar poster

Which grammar rules give your child trouble? This colorful poster can help her remember them at a glance.

Maybe your youngster struggles with the difference between *your* and *you're*. Or perhaps she forgets which kinds of clauses are separated by commas. Suggest that she look over graded assignments to spot her most common errors. She can also look in her class notes and her English book for rules on commas, apostrophes, capitalization, and pronouns, for instance.



On poster board, she could write the rules in colorful markers and add fun illustrations. Say she's giving the rule for plurals vs. possessives. She might draw a bookshelf and write, "Books fill the shelves" and then sketch an open book saying, "The *book's* pages have small print."

Have her hang the poster above her desk as a handy reminder. 📖

Q&A Discuss books together

Q I've heard that talking to my daughter about books we read is a good thing, but I don't know what to say. Can you help?

A First, there really is no wrong way to discuss books with your youngster. By talking together, you'll show your interest, and you'll encourage her to think about what she's reading.

Try talking about the characters. You might discuss how a character's actions got him into—or out of—trouble, for example. Ask your child what she would do differently if she were the character. Or ask which character she'd like to be friends with and why.

Another idea is to explore how the story is the same as or different from other books you've read together. Your daughter might say a science fiction novel reminds her of a historical fiction book she read because both involve traveling to new and unknown places. 📖



Parent 2 Parent Reading the news

My son Max recently did a current events project in social studies class. He had to choose a news topic, collect five articles about it, and write a report.

At first I was concerned about all the scary news out there. Then, Max showed me the kid-friendly sources



his teacher had listed. I was glad to see the great sites where children can read the news in a way that they can understand and that is less frightening for them.

After doing this project, my son has become more interested in reading the news. He's following *kidscoop.com* and *timeforkids.com*, and he's also enjoying the kids' section in our daily newspaper. 📖

OUR PURPOSE

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

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