

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

December 2014



## Book Picks

### ■ National Geographic Myths Busted!

(Emily Krieger)

What do George Washington's wooden teeth and a goldfish's three-second memory have in common? They are both myths that have been repeated so often people believe they're true. Packed with fascinating facts, this trivia book uncovers more than 100 myths.



### ■ Worth (A. La Faye)

Eleven-year-old Nate is jealous of his father's new farmhand, John. Before Nate's crippling accident, he was the one who got to help his dad. But when ranchers try to take over the farm, Nate must get past his anger and team up with John to fight them.

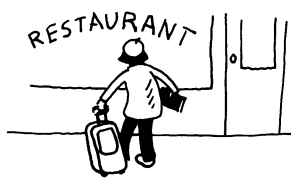


### ■ Latin Americans Thought of It: Amazing Innovations (Eva Salinas)

In photos and words, this colorful nonfiction book takes young readers on a journey of Latin American culture and innovations. Your child will learn about the origins of coffee, chocolate, sombreros, piñatas, and more. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ All Four Stars (Tara Dairman)

A letter-writing assignment turns into an adventure when sixth-grader Gladys Gatsby writes to a food editor and lands a job reviewing a New York City restaurant. Now all she has to do is hatch a plot to get there!



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## Reading between the lines

When your child reads, she needs to take what the author writes ("Sally jumped up and down with a grin on her face") and understand what the author means (Sally is very happy). Teachers call it *inferring*, but when your youngster practices with these activities, she'll call it fun!



### While shopping...

In line at the grocery store, your child can look quietly at the items another customer places on the belt. On the way home, ask her to tell you what she inferred from the person's purchases. Perhaps she noticed a gallon of milk and a small jug of soy milk (someone is allergic to regular milk), a bulk package of chicken (it's a big family), and a box of diapers (they have a baby). She'll be using evidence to make inferences.

### While waiting...

Take advantage of time spent in a waiting room by posing a mysterious situation to your youngster. For example: "There's garbage on the floor, and the dog is under the bed. What happened?"

After she answers ("The dog got in the trash"), ask how she knew. Explaining her reasoning will help her with uncovering authors' clues in books.

### While reading...

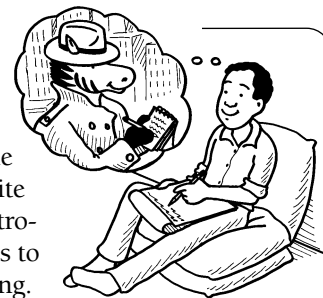
Point to a newspaper photo, and ask what the article could be about. If a football player is walking off the field with his helmet in his hand and looking upset, your child might say, "He just threw an interception." Or stop during a read-aloud so she can infer. A line like "She arrived at her mansion in a sleek limousine" may hint that the character is rich. Your youngster will learn she can use both pictures and words to make inferences. 📖

## A change of scenery

Writing a story gives your youngster a chance to decide when and where the action will take place. Here are ways he could experiment with the setting.

● **Time.** Should he set his tale in the Old West or in the future? Well, that depends on whether he wants to write about wagon trains and cowboys or spaceships and astronauts. As he switches time periods, he'll see that he has to change details like transportation, clothing, and housing.

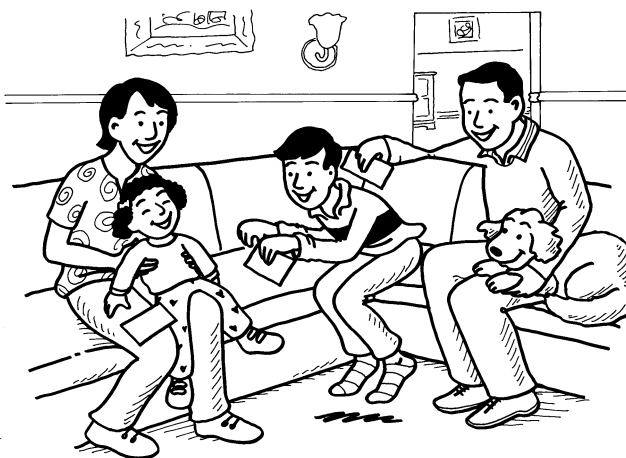
● **Place.** Will he put his characters in a city, a suburb, or the country? If the main character is a zebra detective, should he solve mysteries in Africa or in a zoo? Your child can try different versions to see which location he likes best. 📖



# Happily ever after: Storytelling fun

Storytelling is a great way for your youngster to stretch his imagination and practice his thinking and speaking skills. Entertain each other with these clever ideas for telling stories out loud.

**Create a backstory.** Brainstorm a list of sayings like “The early bird catches the worm” or “Keep your chin up.” Let your child print them on separate slips of paper, put them in a bowl, and mix them up. Then, have each family member draw a slip and tell a story about how the saying came to be. (“Little Bluebird was the first in his nest to wake up. Far below, he saw a fat green worm poke through the ground.”)

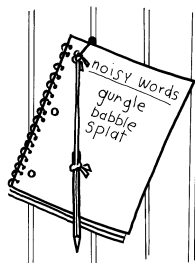


his white horse.”) The next person takes a card and continues, “In the distance, he spotted the forbidden castle.” Keep going until all the cards are used—and the characters live happily ever after! 📖

## Fun with Words Word diary

Get the entire family involved in making a word diary, and watch your child's vocabulary grow.

Once a week, help your youngster pick a category of words to collect from books, mail, billboards, or anywhere else. The category can be silly or serious. *Examples:* words with double consonants, words related to soccer, “noisy” words.



Let her write the category at the top of a page in a notebook. Then, invite everyone in the family to add at least one word that fits the category. For instance, noisy words could include *gurgle*, *babble*, and *splat*. *Idea:* Suggest that your child call or email relatives and ask them to contribute, too.

After a week, read the word diary together, and look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. Now your youngster can pick a new category to use next week. 📖

## Q&A Read and write about science

**Q** I think my daughter might want to be a scientist when she grows up! How could we use her love of science to help her with reading and writing, too?

**A** It's great that your daughter enjoys science so much. Try getting books of science experiments for her from the library. She can read them and pick out experiments to try at home. She may enjoy reading science fiction, too. Ask her to point out inventions or technology in the story that are based on real science or that she thinks could be possible in her lifetime.

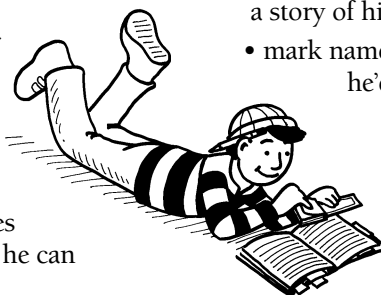
You might also suggest that she start a science journal. She could record the results of her experiments there. Or she can take it when you go for walks together and write about what she sees, such as animal tracks in the mud or icicles hanging from a roof. 📖



## 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 flag things he finds interesting as 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 he wants to try; or
- jot down a personal experience, 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.

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