

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2018

Martinsville City Public Schools

Have a Happy and Productive New Year!!



Book Picks

■ *Martin Luther King Jr.: 10 Days* (David Colbert)

Your child can read about some of the most significant days in the life of the civil rights leader. This biography describes the day King launched a bus boycott, the day he gave his legendary "I Have a Dream" speech, and more.



■ *The League of Unexceptional Children* (Gitty Daneshvari)

The heroes in this story are just average kids. In fact, being ordinary is why the government recruited them to be spies. Their mission: Fix the country's biggest security breach ever and locate a missing vice president! The first book in the League of Unexceptional Children series.

■ *Puppet Mania!* (John Kennedy)

In this how-to book, a professional puppeteer shares his secrets for creating puppets. The text provides step-by-step instructions for 13 puppets, such as a "bottle bug" and a "spoon chicken." Your youngster will also find ideas for making puppets move and talk.



■ *Return to Sender* (Julia Alvarez)

A Vermont farmer hires migrant workers to save his farm after he's injured in a tractor accident. This brings together Tyler and Mari, two 11-year-olds from very different worlds who quickly become friends. A story about cultural understanding. (Also available in Spanish.)



Report-writing tips

A good report is well researched, interesting, and factual. Whether your child is asked to write about an animal, a famous person, or a historic event, here is advice to help her do her best.

Be curious

Curiosity can motivate your youngster to investigate deeper, making her report better. Talk to her about her topic (say, pandas), and encourage her to list questions. *Examples:* "Where do pandas live?" "What do they eat?" As she reads books and websites, she'll probably become even more curious. For instance, she may wonder why pandas eat bamboo if it's hard for them to digest and not very nutritious.

Keep the audience interested

Inspiring quotes, surprising statistics, and "little-known" facts can keep readers intrigued. For a report on an inventor, your child might "grab" her audience by starting with a quote. If she's allowed to include graphics, maybe she'll draw a



diagram of one of the person's inventions and label its parts.

Check the facts

Encourage your youngster to verify each fact in her report by checking at least two trustworthy sources. These usually include library books with recent copyright dates and websites of public libraries, schools, universities, and museums. If she's not sure whether a source is reputable, she could ask her teacher or school librarian. ■

Long reading assignments made easier

As your youngster gets older, he'll be asked to read longer books over several days or weeks. Help him build his "reading stamina" with these ideas.

● **Mix it up.** Using different approaches can motivate your child to stick with a long assignment. He might alternate reading one page silently and the next page out loud. For fiction, he could talk in the voices of the characters. If he's reading nonfiction, let him pretend he's narrating a documentary.

● **Break it up.** Suggest that your youngster divide a reading assignment into shorter sessions. He might read half after school and the other half before bed. Or he could set a timer to read in 20-minute segments with 5-minute breaks in between. ■



Be a word-attack whiz

Unfamiliar words don't have to stop your youngster in his tracks. Encourage him to use these strategies to figure them out as he reads.

Sound it out. Your child can try to pronounce challenging words aloud. If he says *mis-chie-vous* or *com-part-ment*, he may remember that he's heard the word used in conversation.

Cover up familiar parts. Suggest that he look for familiar prefixes and suffixes and cover them up to see what's left. For instance, he could put



his finger over *dis* in *disobey* or *ize* in *generalize*. Isolating *obey* or *general* may help him read the word.

Notice roots. A tricky word might have a root that he knows. If your child is confused by *aquonaut*, perhaps he'll think, "Aqua has to do with water. Maybe an aquanaut explores the ocean like astronauts explore space."

Use context. Suggest that your youngster skip a word he doesn't know and continue

reading to the end of the sentence or paragraph. ("The *frigid* weather made Jack want to stay inside by the fireplace.") The meaning of the passage may make the word clear. ("*Frigid* must mean very cold.")

Fun
with
Words

Ahh, alliteration!

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" is a fun example of alliteration—where two or more words start with the same sound. Play the following game to let your youngster explore this writing technique.

1. Have your child put magnetic letters or letter tiles in a bowl. (Leave out Q, X, Y, and Z.)



2. Your youngster can pull a letter out of the bowl and set a timer for 3 minutes.

3. Each player writes the longest possible sentence using only words beginning with that letter. Sentences may be silly, but they should make sense. For L, your child might write, "Laura Llama licked lovely lavender lollipops."

4. When time's up, read your sentences aloud. Award one point for each word that begins with the chosen letter. After three rounds, the highest score wins.



Parent
2
Parent

Reading around town

My daughter Gabriella and I recently found a way to learn new facts about our town.

It started when we spotted a historical marker during a walk and realized that one of Gabby's favorite authors once lived nearby. Gabby learned that the writer arrived with her family in a covered wagon and wrote several books here. And I learned that this was a good opportunity for my daughter to read for information!

Now we point out all kinds of signs when we're out. Gabby read a plaque on a building and discovered that our town was once known for hat-making. We've also enjoyed reading the map at the commuter rail station, which describes landmarks along the train route—apparently there's an ice-cream factory three stops ahead. We plan to hop aboard soon and look for more things to read along the way!



Q & A

Family discussions for everyone

Q My older son loves chatting at the dinner table, but my younger one doesn't join in very often. Any ideas on how I can balance out the conversation?

A Since good communication involves listening and speaking, your younger child benefits from hearing his older brother talk. But you can encourage him to speak, too, with these suggestions.

Try asking a "Question of the Day." It could be funny ("If you were an amusement park ride, which one would you be?") or straightforward ("What is your favorite family tradition?"). Then, go around the table to give each family member a chance to answer.

Another idea: Before dinner, ask each child what he'd like to discuss during the meal. Your younger son may be excited to participate in a conversation if it's on a topic he suggested.



OUR PURPOSE

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

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