

# Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

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Martinsville City Public Schools  
Phyllis Hairston, Title I Coordinator



## Book Picks

### ■ *The World According to Humphrey*

(Betty G. Birney)

Being the class pet is a big job for little Humphrey. The hamster helps a shy girl speak up, finds friends for a lonely janitor, and has his own notebook. Then the regular teacher returns, and she hates hamsters. Can he win her over? Book one of the Humphrey series. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *If: A Mind-Bending New Way of Looking at Big Ideas and Numbers*

(David J. Smith)

If 100 coins represented all the money in the world, half of the population would share one coin.



This nonfiction book scales down huge concepts in ways your youngster can understand. She will think about food, water, time, and more in a whole new way.

### ■ *Raymie Nightingale* (Kate DiCamillo)

Raymie thinks that if she can beat her rivals and win the title of Little Miss Central Florida Tire, her runaway father will come home. But something unexpected happens as the competitors prepare for the pageant—they become friends.

### ■ *Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions*

(Chris Barton)

Welcome to the world of Lonnie Johnson, inventor of the Super Soaker. This is the story of a young engineer who kept designing and building despite obstacles in his way. A true story of perseverance and dedication.



## Motivated to read!

Reading is more than a fun way to pass the time—it's also a key to success in school and on the job. Keep your child interested in reading with these ideas.

### Make time

Help your youngster work reading into his day wherever possible. Share jokes over breakfast, put magazines in the bathroom, and slip a book into his backpack to read when he has a few minutes. *Tip:* Visit the library regularly so your child has a steady supply of interesting reading material.



### Build interest

Look for a “hook” that will make your youngster want to read. If he's a natural problem solver, get him the first volume of a mystery series. A child who dreams about outer space might love science fiction. For a budding athlete, try a biography of a sports hero or a book of records. Whatever his passion, there's a book for it!

### Read for a reason

Make your youngster the directions reader or movie-review reader in your

house. You'll give him reasons to read, and he'll feel important. For instance, when you're putting together a bookcase, he can read the instructions aloud. Or he might read reviews to choose a video for family movie night.

### Be an example

The more your child sees you read, the more likely he is to view reading as a part of everyday life. Talk about the novel or nonfiction book you are enjoying and the books you are looking forward to. Then, ask what books he would like to try next. ■

## Polish your writing

A few finishing touches can make the difference between a so-so paper and one that shines. Remind your youngster to review these things before she turns in assignments.

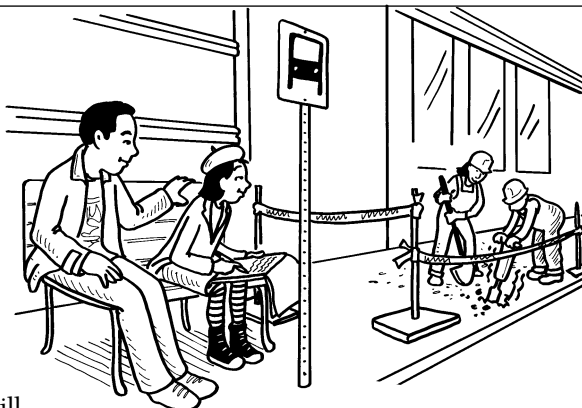
- **Originality.** Encourage your child to double-check that what she has written is her own work. She should understand that copying someone else's words is plagiarism.
- **Clarity.** Have her read her paper out loud, listening to be sure each sentence is clear and makes sense. Are there any fragments or run-on sentences? Did she leave out any words?
- **Grammar.** Misspelled words, missing punctuation, and forgotten capitalization will hurt her grade. Suggest that your youngster reread her work once for each type of error. ■



## Think like a writer

Authors have a keen sense of observation. They notice things around them that may inspire their writing, such as an interesting news story or the scent in the air before a rainstorm. Here are ways your child can see the world like a writer, too.

**Words.** Paying attention to words in books, on signs, or during conversations will help your youngster spice up her own stories and poems. Have her make a three-column list for storing these words as she discovers them: “Unusual nouns,” “Specific verbs,” and “Colorful adjectives.”



### Sights and sounds.

Encourage your child to start a journal of things she sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes. She might describe the clanging and beeping at a noisy construction site, for instance. Later, she can draw on her descriptions to add concrete details to her writing.

**People.** Writers often fictionalize real people. Ask your youngster to imagine people she knows as characters in her stories. She might base a hero on her cousin who is good at fixing things or create a chef inspired by her aunt. Using real-life people as models may make her fictional characters more realistic. ■



**Fun with Words**

## Spelling “hot potato”

When does p-o-t-a-t-o spell *fun*? When your family plays this familiar game with a spelling twist!

Stand in a circle. One player calls out a word from your youngster’s spelling list or the dictionary. Then, he says the first letter and quickly tosses a small toy or beanbag “hot potato” to the player beside him. As each person catches the potato, he gives the next letter in the word and tosses the potato on.



Remind your child to listen carefully so he can think about which letter comes next. Say a wrong letter, and you’re out for that round. When the word has been spelled correctly, the last person spells the entire word aloud. Choose a new word, and play again. ■

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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**Parent  
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Parent**

## Siblings as reading buddies

My older son, Mark, just started fifth grade. As one of the “big kids” in elementary school, he is paired with a kindergarten “reading buddy” who needs help. That gave me an idea. Since my first-grader, Dylan, is struggling with reading, I suggested that Mark and Dylan become reading buddies at home.

I knew Dylan would learn from his big brother — what I didn’t realize was that the arrangement would help *both* boys. Mark typically reads silently, but by reading to his brother, he hears his own mistakes and corrects them. As a result, he is reading more fluently, and he seems to be getting more confident, too.

When it’s Dylan’s turn to read, I smile hearing Mark give his little brother hints about how to figure out big words. And Mark said that now he remembers strategies to use when he’s stuck, even though he’s “older” now! ■



**Q&A**

## After-school literacy fun

**Q** We’re looking for after-school activities for my daughter. Any suggestions for ones that would help her with language arts?

**A** Book clubs, poetry circles, and conversation groups for English-language learners are all great ways for youngsters to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Drama club is a good fit, too. If your child lands a role in the school play, she’ll need to read her lines many times as she memorizes them. And

singing in the chorus requires reading words *and* music. Even a photography club can boost reading and writing skills. Your daughter could read about new picture-taking techniques and write captions for her photos.

Ask about after-school programs at

your youngster’s school, and check with the public library or community center. Then, help your child pick out the ones she likes best. ■

