

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2010

Chesterfield County Public Schools
Johanna Burks, Elementary Language Arts Specialist

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ Turkey for Thanksgiving Dinner? No Thanks!

What happens after E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* ends? In Alma Flor Ada's story, a little spider is inspired by her great-great-grandmother Charlotte, who saved a pig's life. When she meets a frightened turkey, she decides to rescue him from becoming Thanksgiving dinner. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ Odd Velvet

Velvet is different from the other children in her class, but she doesn't care. Her big glasses, hand-me-down clothes, and unusual interests set her apart. Without trying to fit in, Velvet begins to make friends who appreciate her for who she is. A story about acceptance by Mary Whitcomb.

■ When Everybody Wore a Hat

Youngsters will get a glimpse of New York City life nearly 100 years ago in this autobiography from children's author William Steig. In pictures and words, Steig shows today's children what it was like to grow up in a time when horses pulled fire engines and doctors made house calls.



■ Hello, Harvest Moon

On a beautiful night, a full moon lights up cornfields and colorful trees. It's quiet and peaceful, but a lot happens: moonflowers bloom, moths and geese fly, a cat plays. Ralph Fletcher's poetic language and oil-painting illustrations capture the mood of an autumn night.



Fluency: The magic link

A fluent reader recognizes words easily, knows or can figure out their meaning, and comprehends what she reads. Think of fluency as the link between reading individual words and understanding a book—and use these suggestions to help your youngster become a more fluent reader.

Book preview

Set your child up for success by helping her get to know a book before she reads it. Have her flip through the pages and look for words that might trip her up. Ask her to try sounding them out and guess what they mean. If she struggles, help her look them up in a dictionary so she won't get stuck and disrupt the flow of the book.

Punctuation play

Commas, periods, and other punctuation marks give clues about how a sentence should sound. Let your youngster write down a paragraph from a book and use different-colored markers to highlight the marks. She might use yellow for



commas (slow down), red for periods (stop), green for exclamation points (sound excited), and blue for question marks (make her voice go up). Then, have her read the paragraph aloud, using the colors to remind her of the punctuation.

Repeated readings

A new or struggling reader can become more fluent by rereading familiar books. With each read-through, your child will recognize more words instantly—a key to fluency. Tip: Books that repeat phrases are great for building fluency. Try *Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman or *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood. ♥

A reading holiday

November is National Family Literacy Month. Celebrate together with these reading ideas:

- Visit a used-book store, and let each person pick out a book. You'll build your family library, and your child can practice choosing her own reading materials.
- Read a book that has been made into a movie. Watch the movie when you finish. Talk about how the two are similar and different.
- Share reading with others. If you have a youngster in day care, ask if you can read to the little ones. Or if a relative lives in a senior home, offer to read aloud to residents. ♥



What should I write?

Deciding what to write about gives your youngster a chance to be creative. But it can also be a challenge. Here are some fun ways for your child to come up with story ideas.

Listen to music. Put on a CD or the radio.

Ask your youngster what he thinks a song is about or what it reminds him of. He can use his thoughts to write a story.

Pretend to be someone else. Your child might imagine that he is a teacher at his school or an ice cream truck driver. Have him write a story from that point of view.



Read a book. Your youngster can turn his favorite part of a book into a completely different tale. For instance, after reading *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister, he might write a story about a colorful bird who lives in the rain forest.

Talk to a friend. He can call a classmate to brainstorm story topics—putting their heads together may lead to a great idea.

Look at art. A painting can inspire an interesting story. Visit a gallery, go to www.nga.gov/kids, or get an art book such as *Museum ABC (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)*. Suggest that your child choose a picture and pretend it's the illustration for his story as he writes. ♥

Fun with Words Vowel bingo

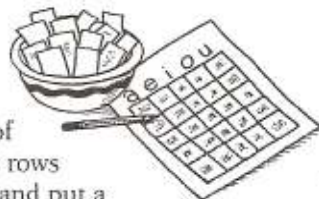


This homemade bingo game will help your youngster learn about vowels.

Together, think of 25 three-letter words—5 each with a different vowel (a, e, i, o, u) in the middle. *Examples:* rap, met, dim, top, sun. Have your child write each word on a separate slip of paper and place the slips in a bowl.

Then, help her make bingo cards.

Draw lines to divide sheets of paper into five rows and columns, and put a vowel at the top of each column. Pull one word at a time and write it under the correct vowel. *Note:* Put the words on different spots on the cards so each one is different.



To play, a caller picks a slip and reads the word aloud. Each player covers that word with a coin. Ask your youngster to listen closely so she'll hear the vowel sound. The first player to get five words in a row calls, "Bingo!" *Idea:* For extra practice, trade cards and play again. ♥

Parent to Parent

Better conversations

My daughter got a nice report card, but her oral language grade was a little low. Celina talks constantly at home, so I was surprised. When I asked her teacher, I learned a lot about the skills her grade was based on.

Mrs. Ross explained that Celina has a good vocabulary and participates in class discussions. But like many children, she is still learning to listen to what others say, take turns talking, and stay on topic.

I asked how we could help Celina at home. The teacher suggested that we encourage Celina to practice listening and taking turns during our regular family talks. She said she gives students gentle reminders—she taps her ear for "listen" and holds up her index finger for "wait your turn." I have been trying these ideas, and they seem to be working. I'm hoping Celina's oral language grade will go up next quarter—and I think all of us are enjoying our family conversations more! ♥



Parts of speech

Help your child learn about different parts of speech with these games that you can play at home or on the go.

- Some words label people, places, and things—they are called *nouns*. Use this activity to teach your youngster to be specific with nouns. Look around you and say a general word for each category you see (*woman, room, tool*).

Ask your child to think of three words that are more exact (*doctor, office, stethoscope*). Play again with new words.

- Tell your youngster that authors pick action words (*verbs*) carefully to make their writing exciting. Observe the

people around you, and take turns saying a word that describes their actions. At a bank, for example, you might watch people *write, wait, count, talk, type, sit, and even fidget*.

- Descriptive words (*adjectives*) make writing more colorful. Have your youngster pick any object he sees and add a word that describes it

(*green curtain*). You repeat his word and add your own (*soft green curtain*). Continue adding descriptive words until you run out of ideas. Then, choose a new item to describe. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
340-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5648