

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

May 2020

Birmingham Public Schools

## Book Picks



### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ **Say Something!** (Peter H. Reynolds)

Every voice matters. This picture book shows how kids can make a difference in the world—through words and actions. Readers will be inspired to do good deeds, stand up to bullying, and more. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ **Little Owl's Night**

(Divya Srinivasan)

Little Owl is happy in the forest at night. He and his animal friends gaze at the moon and stars. But he's curious about daytime, so one night, he tries to stay awake until the sun comes up. Will he get to see what happens when night ends?



#### ■ **The Post Office Book: Mail and How It Moves** (Gail Gibbons)

Everyone knows that mail starts its journey at the post office and gets delivered to its destination. But what happens in between? Your youngster will discover what it takes to move mail from place to place and get it in the correct mailbox.



#### ■ **Tap the Magic Tree**

(Christie Matheson)

This story asks your child to tap the pictures, shake the book, clap his hands, and more. After he does each movement and turns the page, "magic" happens—the bare tree grows leaves, apples drop to the ground, and snowflakes fall from the branches!



## A fairy tale summer

Castles and giants and talking animals, oh my! Fairy tales invite your child into magical worlds—and they're filled with opportunities to strengthen her reading comprehension. Enjoy these activities together.

### Design a house

What kind of house would be best for the three bears? Read a fairy tale to your youngster, and let her design a home for the characters using recyclables and craft supplies. What was the problem in the story? What design features could solve it? For example, the bears had an uninvited visitor (Goldilocks), so your child might make a home security system using string and a bell.

### Create a map

After reading a fairy tale, suggest that your youngster draw a giant map of its setting on the sidewalk or driveway. She could draw the Gingerbread Man's path through the countryside or map Hansel and Gretel's route through the forest. Invite her to walk through the map, retelling the story as she goes.



### Read and compare

Together, ask a librarian to help you find multiple versions of fairy tales like *Cinderella* or *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Read them with your child, and talk about how they're similar and different. Maybe they take place in different countries or an author retold a story from the villain's point of view. *Idea:* Suggest that your youngster pick a fairy tale and write her own version.♥

## Write a story for a pet

This fun idea gives your youngster practice writing for a specific audience: pets!

First, let your child choose a pet, such as his goldfish or a neighbor's puppy. Next, help him decide what the animal might like to read about. The fish would probably appreciate a story about a sunny lake, while the puppy may enjoy a how-to book on walking his person.

Remind your youngster to think about his audience as he writes. What other fish live in the lake that the goldfish could play with? What important rules does the puppy need to know? Now have him read his story aloud to the pet—and to you.♥



# Have a ball with wordplay

Throw, catch, and shoot! Get a ball, and head outside with your child for these games that combine wordplay with physical activity.

**Word catch.** Work on beginning and ending sounds. Say a random word (*fireworks*), and toss a ball to your youngster. If he catches the ball and says a word starting with the last letter of your word (*sunshine*), the game keeps going. How many words can you string together before someone misses the ball or can't think of a word?

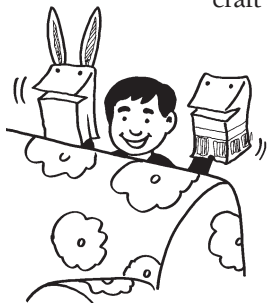


**Spelling basketball.** Play H-O-R-S-E with these twists. Take turns trying to sink a basket, but instead of getting a letter for missed shots, earn one for each shot you make. Start by using any six-letter word. For a game of F-R-I-E-N-D, players would get an F for the first shot made, R for the second, and so on. The first player to collect every letter picks the word for the next game. ♥

## My puppet show

Putting on a puppet show lets your youngster work on speaking and telling stories. Here's how.

First, let your child choose a familiar story to act out, such as *The Tortoise and the Hare*, and make a puppet for each character. He could draw faces on paper lunch bags or construction paper taped to craft sticks.



Now your youngster can hide behind a couch or chair and hold up his puppets to put on a show for your family. Encourage him to use a different

voice for each character—and for a narrator. When the tortoise crosses the finish line, the fox puppet can announce, “Slow and steady wins the race!”

*Idea:* Suggest that your child keep his puppet theater open all summer and put on shows using other stories. ♥

## Q&A Read and write poetry

**Q** My daughter is excited about the poetry unit her class is doing. How can we enjoy exploring poetry outside of school?

**A** It's no wonder your child is excited—poetry is a lot of fun! Start at the library, and check out volumes of children's poetry. Then, hold a family poetry night where you take turns reading poems aloud. Work together to write your own poem, and your daughter can read it to everyone.

When you pick out greeting cards, look for ones that contain poems, and let your youngster read them aloud. Suggest that she make cards and write poems inside for friends and relatives.

Finally, listen to music in the car—can your child hear that song lyrics are often poems, too? Say your favorite lines or verses. Your daughter might even be inspired to write lyrics that rhyme. ♥

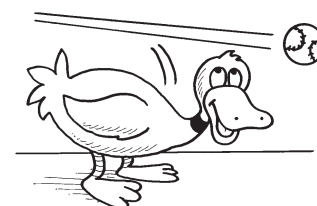


## Fun with Words One word, two meanings

“Duck!” That’s a word your youngster can say if she’s pointing out a duck swimming in a pond—or warning someone to dodge a flying object. Strengthen her vocabulary by having her make a comic book about words with two meanings.

**2.** Have your child draw two comic panels for each word—with the illustration and caption showing the word in different ways. For *play*, she could draw an actress on stage and write “This girl starred in the school *play*.” Then she might draw a checkerboard and write “I like to *play* checkers.”

**1.** Together, list words that can be both a noun (person, place, or thing) and a verb (action word). For instance, trees have *bark* (noun), and dogs *bark* (verb). Other examples: *play, fly, run, jam, wave, color*.



**3.** Staple the pages together to make a book, and let her read it to you. Encourage her to keep an eye out for new words to add. ♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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