

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2007

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Autumnblings*

Everything is “fall”ing in Douglas Florian’s clever poems—colorful leaves, ripe apples, and even temperatures. Made-up words like “autumnatically” and “owlphabet” add fun to the verses, which are sure to remind your youngster of crisp fall days.



■ *The Upside Down Boy*

Juanito speaks Spanish while everyone else at school speaks English. He’s confused, so he plays at lunch and eats during recess. But when his teacher discovers his talent for painting, singing, and poetry, Juanito’s confidence soars and he no longer feels “upside down.” A book with text in English and Spanish by Juan Felipe Herrera.



■ *Not a Box*

Although the rabbit appears to be sitting in a box, standing on a box, or wearing a box, he keeps insisting, “It’s not a box.” That’s because in his imagination, it’s a race car, rocket, robot, and more. Antoinette Portis’s story and drawings encourage readers to use their imaginations, too.

■ *A Turkey for Thanksgiving*

Mrs. Moose wants a turkey for Thanksgiving. When her husband catches one, he can’t understand why the poor bird is scared. After all, the moose want the turkey to sit *at* their table, not *on* it. See how the misunderstanding is cleared up in this funny story from Eve Bunting.



Writing for real

Nonfiction writing can be fun! Show your child how with these three ideas. She’ll practice writing to describe, persuade, and instruct—valuable skills for when she has school papers to do and essay questions to answer.

Mini-report

Have your youngster choose a topic she’d like to learn more about, such as her favorite animal. Help her look for information in library books, on Web sites, or in brochures from a local zoo or nature center. She can use these facts to write a paragraph describing the animal. When she has finished, suggest that she illustrate her paper and share it with a friend or relative.

Book jacket

Teach your child how to persuade people with her writing. Show her the inside flaps and back cover of a book, and discuss how they encourage someone to read it. Then, let her pick a favorite storybook and make her own book jacket. She can write a few sentences summarizing the story for the inside jacket. For the back cover, have her write a quote or two telling why she likes the book.

Instructions

Your youngster can practice explaining things and putting ideas in order by

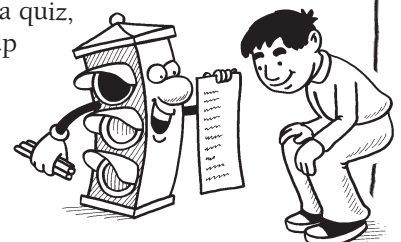


writing out directions. For example, she could tell how to jump rope: “Hold the rope behind you with one end in each hand. Swing it over your head, and jump as the rope goes under your feet.” What else can she give instructions for? ♥

Spelling all week long

Five days to learn 20 spelling words? No problem! Use these steps to help your youngster sail through spelling practice:

1. When your child brings home spelling words, give him a practice test. Underline words he spells easily with a green crayon, those he gets after a few tries with yellow, and misspelled words with red. Suggest that he focus on the red and yellow words.
2. Practice words together at dinner each night. Ask your youngster to call one out. Then, the person beside him says the first letter, the next person says the second letter, and so on.
3. The night before a quiz, take turns making up sentences with the words. After each turn, have your child write the spelling words that were used. ♥

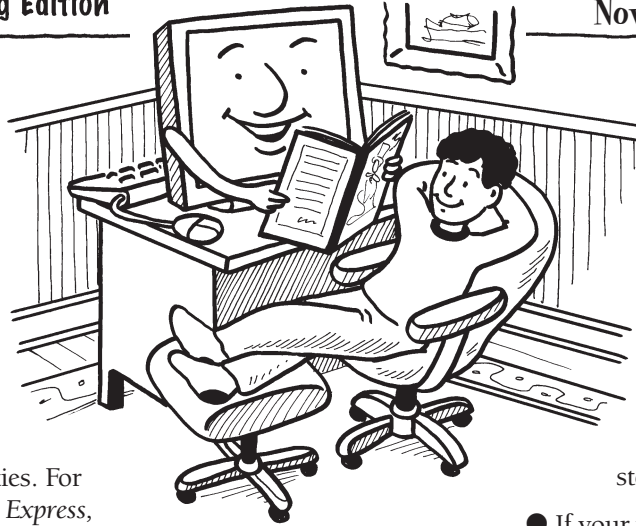


Off the page

Ways to enjoy books online

It's storytime any time on the Web! Invite your child to curl up with a good book—at the computer—where he can listen to stories or read them himself. He'll build both reading and technology skills.

- Celebrities do the reading at Storyline Online (www.storylineonline.net). Each book comes with comprehension-boosting activities. For example, have your child listen to *The Polar Express*, discuss his favorite part, and write a poem about a holiday.
- At Starfall (www.starfall.com), your beginning reader will get help sounding out words. Then, he can listen to or read stories and play the learning games that go along with them.



- Not sure what a word means? Your child can hear definitions of highlighted words while reading stories at PBS Kids' Between the Lions (<http://pbskids.org/lions/stories.html>). This site also lets kids play educational games, download activity pages, and print out stories to read later.

- If your youngster is ready to read on his own, try the International Children's Digital Library (www.childrenslibrary.org). He'll enjoy choosing from almost 2,000 online books—in 39 languages—listed by reading level, country, or topic.♥

Fun with Words

Sew-a-word

This creative activity teaches letter and word recognition while youngsters work on fine-motor skills.

Materials: index cards, permanent marker, pencil, yarn, scissors, tape



Use a permanent marker to write a word on each card. With a pencil, poke holes ¼ inch apart in every letter. Cut a

piece of yarn about 2 feet long. Wrap tape around one end to make it into a needle, and tie a knot in the other end.

Now your child can sew up the word! Let her weave the yarn through the holes in the letters so the word appears to be written in yarn.

Ideas: For a new reader, make cards for words starting with each letter of the alphabet so she can practice beginning sounds. For a more advanced reader, write a variety of words to use in making sentences.♥

Q&A Seeing clearly

Q I got a letter from the school nurse saying that my daughter Alexa needs an eye exam. How should I prepare her for this?

A Tell Alexa that the doctor wants to know how well she can see, both up close and far away. He'll ask her to read letters on a chart, and he'll use special instruments to look at her eyes. Explain that the exam won't hurt, but the doctor might put drops in her eyes that will make her see "funny" for just a little while.

You can mention that the doctor might decide she needs glasses. Then, tell Alexa that she'll have fun picking out ones she likes.

Note: Ask your pediatrician to recommend an eye doctor. If you don't have vision insurance, check with your local health department for low-cost options.♥



Parent to Parent Bedtime reading

For a few nights in a row, our son Peter said he wanted to skip his bedtime stories. We realized he was getting bored with the routine, so we tried some new ideas to keep him excited about reading.

Sometimes we have a "guest reader," like his older sister or his grandmother. Other times he listens to an audio-book—either one

that we've borrowed from the library or a tape that my husband or I have recorded. Peter likes following along with the book as he listens. Finally, we vary the routine by making him the reader rather than the listener. On those nights, he reads a book of his choice to us.

I think we've put the fun back into our read-aloud ritual. Now Peter enjoys bedtime stories as much as he did when he was younger.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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