

LET'S WRITE A BOOK

It's fun to be an author! Writing books is a great way to bring together all kinds of things your youngster is learning about in school, whether it's letters of the alphabet, shapes, or science experiments. Here are eight ideas for books he could make, along with tips for illustrating and binding his work.

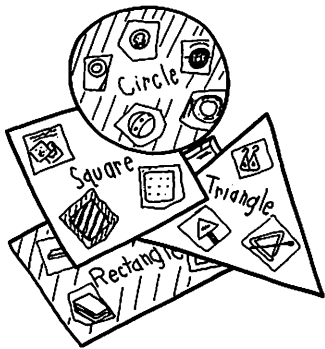


ABC BOOK

From armadillo to zebra or avocado to zucchini, this 26-page book lets your child practice beginning sounds. To start, he should print every letter of the alphabet on a separate sheet of paper. Then, he can draw pictures of things that begin with each letter. Help him label the drawings (*alarm clock, bagel, camel*).
Tip: Suggest that your youngster choose a theme for his ABC book, such as animals, foods, or favorite activities.

SHAPES ALL AROUND

Here's a fun project for learning about shapes. Have your youngster cut large shapes out of construction paper and label them (*Circle, Square, Triangle, Rectangle*). Next, help her cut out magazine pictures to match and glue them on the correct shapes. For example, she might put photos of a rug and a box of crackers on the rectangle page. Ask her to "read" her book by naming the shapes and counting the sides and corners of each object. ("The rug is a rectangle. It has 4 sides and 4 corners." "The window is a circle. It has no sides or corners!")



WHAT'S MAGNETIC?

Let your little scientist explore magnets (or another scientific topic) and write about his results. First, he could carry a magnet around the house to see what it sticks to. Help him take notes as he experiments. Then, he can write a two-part book. In the first section, tell him to draw and label objects that are magnetic (*refrigerator, toaster*), and in the second part, items that aren't (*coffee table, curtain*). Suggest that he trace and label his magnet, too.

MY FAIRY TALE

Encourage your child to explore characters, settings, and plots by writing her own version of a fairy tale. She could replace each character with someone she knows. How about her cousin Bella as Goldilocks? Or her little brother starring in *Jack and the Beanstalk*? She might also try different settings. For instance, maybe Goldilocks will sample porridge in a city apartment rather than in a cottage in the woods. While your youngster writes (or dictates) her tale, she can decide how her changes affect the plot.

ILLUSTRATION IDEAS

As your child looks through picture books, she'll see that illustrators use various materials and techniques. She'll enjoy trying ones like these for her own books.

- **PAINT.** Have her experiment with watercolors, poster paint, and glitter paint. What effect does each one create?
- **CHALK.** Your youngster could write her story on white paper and tape it to larger pieces of dark paper. Then, suggest that she draw with pastel-colored chalk on the dark sheets.
- **CUTOUTS.** Suggest that your child cut shapes (a tree trunk, branches, leaves) from colored paper and glue them into one picture.
- **PHOTOS.** Real-life scenes make a fun addition to any book—especially nonfiction. Let your youngster use your cell phone or a camera to snap pictures for her book.



continued



SNACK RECIPES

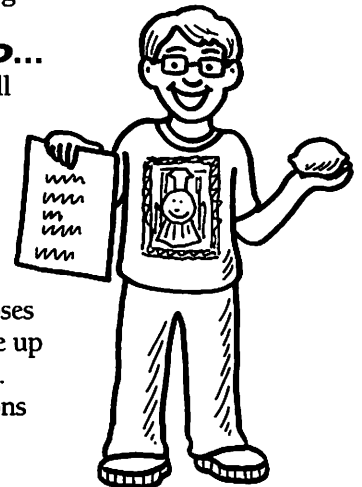
With this yummy idea, your youngster will add his own cookbook to your family bookshelf and work on writing step-by-step instructions. Make a snack together, and after each step, he can write (or dictate) what he did. For instance, if you're making English muffin pizzas, his first step might be, "Split an English muffin in half." Suggest that he illustrate the steps, too. Then, he could add another recipe during snack time tomorrow.

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES

Let your child glue mementos she has collected into a photo album. She might include a program from her class play, a swim meet ribbon, or ticket stubs from a movie. She can take a walk down memory lane as you help her write a caption for each one. Adding lots of details will give her practice in descriptive writing.

ROSES ARE RED...

Your youngster will explore rhymes by making this book as a gift for a friend or relative. On each page, help him write one line of a rhyming verse. He could start with the traditional "Roses are red," or maybe he'll come up with his own colorful rhyme. ("Lemons are yellow / Dragons are green / You're the coolest person / I've ever seen.")



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

What is your youngster an "expert" on? Perhaps she loves T-ball or she's crazy about geckos. Ask her to share her knowledge by creating a nonfiction book—she'll practice writing what her teacher calls "informational pieces." On each page, she could write a fact about her topic. *Examples:* "You can't steal bases in T-ball" or "Geckos can walk on ceilings!" Have her illustrate each page and read her book to your family.

"PUBLISHING" TIPS

Share these steps for putting the finishing touches on a homemade book.

1. THINK OF A TITLE. Design a cover featuring the title and the author's (your youngster's) name.

2. INCLUDE A DEDICATION PAGE. Authors often dedicate their books to important people in their lives and sometimes tell why they're special. ("For my father, who is the best dad in the world.")



3. ADD AN "ABOUT THE AUTHOR" PAGE.

Your child can write a short biography of himself, perhaps saying where he lives, his favorite school subject, and what he likes to do for fun.

4. BIND THE BOOK. Help him staple the pages together. Or he could punch holes along the left edges, thread colorful yarn through, and tie. Another option is to cut a piece of duct tape the same length as the book. Carefully press the tape along the left side of all pages to seal.