

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2017

Komarek School District 94
Mrs. Bagdzius, Reading Specialist

Book Picks

■ *Phoebe and Her Unicorn* (Dana Simpson)

Phoebe dreams of being special. When she befriends a unicorn, she thinks she's found her chance. But she soon discovers that being friends with the magical creature is tougher than it looks. The first book in the graphic novel series, *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*.



■ *Looking Back: A Book of Memories* (Lois Lowry)

The Newbery Medal-winning author of *The Giver* and *Number the Stars* describes her memoir as a book "about things that happened, which caused other things to happen." Lowry shares personal stories and family photos, and she describes what inspired her to write novels.

■ *Flying Lessons & Other Stories* (Edited by Ellen Oh)

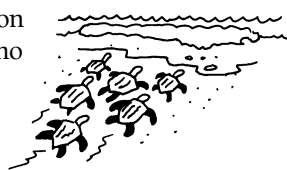
This book of short stories pulls readers into the lives of diverse characters.



From the basketball player with a disability to the poor girl trying to fit in among wealthy kids, readers learn that although we are each different, we are also the same.

■ *Tortuga Squad: Kids Saving Sea Turtles in Costa Rica* (Cathleen Burnham)

Here's nonfiction for children who are concerned about endangered wildlife. The book follows a group of youngsters dedicated to rescuing sea turtles. Each hatching season, the young volunteers protect turtle eggs and help baby turtles reach the ocean safely.



Which book to choose?

Fiona walks into the library looking for a new book to read. But surrounded by rows of books and thousands of titles, she isn't sure how to find one she will like. Sound familiar? Use tips like these to help your child locate her next great read.

Narrow the field

Have your youngster make her own "book search" bookmark. On a strip of sturdy paper, she can write her favorite topics, types of books, and authors. For example, her list may include soccer, animals, mysteries, and authors Shannon Hale and R. L. Stine. Then, your child could browse the library shelves, bookmark in hand, for books that match her list.

Sample the new arrivals

Uh-oh. That book your youngster planned to read is checked out. Now what? Invite her to "taste test" books on the new-arrivals display. She might pull one out that catches her eye and read the front flap, the back flap, and the first few pages. If it snags her interest, she can check it out.

Get recommendations

When your child knows what she likes and wants to find something similar, encourage her to ask a librarian for help. If your youngster mentions a few books she enjoyed, the librarian will guide her toward similar titles. *Tip:* Librarians often feature their personal favorites in a "recommended reads" section—another good place to look for books to take home. 📖



Beyond the books

Books may be what libraries are known for, but they have so much more to offer! Your youngster could consider free options like these:



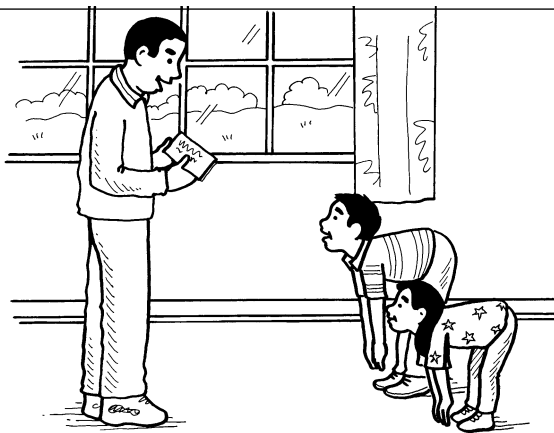
- Join a young writers group.
- Sign up for a theater club, and put on plays and skits.
- Share in a family mystery night.
- Take a workshop to learn Internet search techniques.
- Attend a "meet the author" event.
- Watch a film series based on books.
- Take part in a foreign-language conversation class.
- Drop in for homework help.
- Participate in arts and crafts classes.

Tip: If you live in an area with more than one library branch, check them all out. 📖

Listen “actively”

Children who are *active listeners* absorb more of what’s said—an important skill for understanding lessons, taking notes, and following spoken directions. To listen actively, your youngster needs to concentrate fully on the speaker so he can remember and respond. Try these fun ways to practice.

Outrageous declarations. Start by making three silly claims. “My dog is green. I eat spaghetti with a straw. I’ve got furry purple feet.” Your child repeats



them and adds three of his own. “Your dog is green, you eat spaghetti with a straw, and your feet are furry and purple. I like polka dot asparagus. I’ve been to the moon twice. I have night vision.” Take turns repeating the last three claims and trying to top them with three new ones.

Crazy directions. Together, write 20 random instructions on separate index cards. (“Take two steps left.” “Touch your toes.” “Wink your right eye.”) Shuffle the cards. Draw five cards, and read them aloud to your youngster. He waits until all the directions are read, counts to 10, and acts them out in order. If he succeeds, he scores a point. If not, you score the point. Trade roles, and play again. The winner is the first person with 10 points. ■

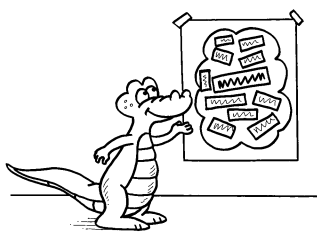
Fun with Words

Cloudy with a chance of words

Let your child channel her inner artist with a vocabulary-building “word cloud.” With this fun project, she’ll think of words that are connected in some way and then display them in a colorful cloud-shaped image.

First, she’ll need a subject (friendship, a famous person). Have her brainstorm words related to her choice. Words for *friendship* might include *laughter*, *loyalty*, *confide*, and *understanding*.

Next, she’ll write the words in various sizes, colors, and styles (or type them



in different fonts) to indicate their importance. She might use large letters and a bright color for *loyalty* and smaller letters and a pale color for *laughter* to show she thinks *loyalty* is more important.

Finally, she can cut out the words and glue them into a big cloud on a sheet of paper. She may want to decorate her room with a wall of word clouds! ■

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Use a proofreading checklist

Encourage your child to proofread writing assignments carefully before she turns them in. This checklist will help.



- I capitalized...** the first word in every sentence and the first letter in proper nouns.
- I punctuated...** every sentence with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point. I checked commas, apostrophes, and quotation marks, too.
- I checked for misused words...** like *its/it’s*, *there/their*, and *you’re/your*. And I double-checked words I often misspell.
- I examined my sentences...** each one has a subject and a verb. There are no missing words.
- I looked for confusing passages...** and made sure that what I wrote makes sense and is easy to understand.

Hint: Suggest that your child take a break (20 minutes or more) between writing and proofreading so she can see her work with fresh eyes. ■

Q&A

Supporting independent readers

Q When my son was starting to read, helping him was easy. How can I support him now that he reads on his own?

A One way is just to talk about what he’s reading. Have him describe books he reads at school and for pleasure. Telling you about the plots in a novel or the facts in a nonfiction book gives him an opportunity to



think more deeply about their content—and lets you gauge his understanding.

You could also look through his textbooks and library books and ask a question or two. For instance, you might say, “What’s the most important part in this section on fossils?” or “What happened to the knight in this chapter?”

Also, occasionally touch base with your son’s teacher about his reading progress. The teacher can share strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for supporting your child at home. ■