

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2021

Book Picks



■ *Bug Boys* (Laura Knetzger)

Welcome to the world of Bug Village, where your child will meet two beetle buddies, Rhino-B and Stag-B. Join their adventures through caves and beaches and learn about their friendship in the first book of the Bug Boys graphic novel series.



■ *Dancing Home* (Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel M. Zubizarreta)

Margie has always tried to downplay her Mexican heritage. So she's embarrassed when her cousin moves to America and is put in her class. Lupe doesn't speak English or dress like Margie. In alternating chapters, each girl tells what it is like to struggle to fit in—and to take pride in what makes you unique. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics* (Steve Jenkins)

How loud is a lion's roar? How many species of insects have scientists discovered? Your youngster will find the answers to those questions and more in this nonfiction book full of colorful infographics.



■ *Laugh-Out-Loud Jokes for Kids* (Rob Elliott)

Aspiring comedians can find hundreds of jokes packed into this volume. Your youngster will get plenty of giggles while sharing funny stories, silly poems, knock-knock jokes, and tongue twisters. Book one in the Laugh-Out-Loud series.



Inquiring readers want to know

Strong readers ask themselves questions—and answer them—while they read. Bring out your child's inquisitive side and boost his comprehension with these questions that will encourage him to think deeply about fiction.

Ask: "What would I do?"

Your youngster can connect with the story by comparing himself to the characters. Say the main character decides to follow a unicorn into a forest. Your child might consider if he would have done the same thing and why or why not. This strategy will help him get inside characters' heads and understand their motives.

Ask: "What will happen next?"

It's fun to predict the next plot twist or turn. Suggest that your youngster pay attention to details that hint about what's to come. He could list his predictions and add check marks to the ones that come true. *Note:* If his predictions are way off base, he can look back to



see if he missed a detail or was confused by a section—or if the author just threw in a surprise!

Ask: "What do I wonder?"

When your child finishes a book, have him write questions that it raised for him. He may wonder whether a fictional invention would work in real life or if the main character was trustworthy. Then, he could use his answers to write a prequel or sequel. ■

Interest + involvement = success

Showing interest in what your youngster is doing in school can lead to big gains in her reading and writing skills. Here are simple ways to play a part in her learning:

- Browse through her schoolwork and textbooks to get an idea of what your youngster is being taught. Comment on things you find interesting, and ask her to tell you more about them.
- If your child brings home a story or poem she wrote, ask if you can read it. You could also help her brainstorm ideas for future creative writing projects.
- When she's preparing for a presentation, offer to be her audience. You might also record it so she can watch herself and make improvements. ■



Back-to-school writing

As your youngster eases back into her school routine, she can practice writing instructions and friendly letters. Share these activities.

Recipe for a great year. Show your child recipes in cookbooks, online, or in the newspaper so she sees how they're written. Then, let her write one that tells how to whip up a fabulous year. She could list ingredients (five science experiments, a dash of soccer). Next, she should add step-by-step instructions. ("Stir together reading, writing, science, math, and social studies. Sprinkle in soccer games and piano lessons.")



leaves") and another about her dreams ("I want to be a pilot when I grow up"). When she finishes, she can deliver the letter to her teacher. ▣

Letter of introduction. What does your youngster want the teacher to know about her? Have her share information in a friendly letter. She should start with a salutation ("Dear Ms. Jones") and add a few paragraphs with details. She might write one paragraph about her likes and dislikes ("I love fall weather, but I don't like raking

Fun with Words Discover the mystery word

Making and playing this two-person word game will stretch your youngster's vocabulary.

First, each player chooses a six-letter mystery word, such as *meteor*. Then, he thinks of words that begin with each letter in that word (*melt*, *elevate*, *turban*, *envelope*, *octopus*, *recite*).



On a piece of paper, he can draw blank lines (hangman-style) for the letters in each word and write its definition. So for *melt*, a player would write "_____ to turn to liquid." *Note:* Keep a dictionary handy to help with definitions.

Now trade papers. Can the players use the definitions to fill in the blanks and solve the puzzle? When they circle the first letters of each word, they'll find the mystery word! The first to finish wins that round. Now come up with new words, and play again. ▣

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A Finding time to read

Q As my son gets older, he says he has less free time to read for fun. What are some ways he can fit it in?

A With a little creativity, your child can work reading into even the busiest of schedules. Suggest that he get into bed 15 minutes early to read at night. Or if he's more of a morning person, he might wake up 10 minutes early to read before school. Also, remind him to tuck a book into his backpack so he'll have it for silent reading time in class or while he's waiting for the bus or for an activity to start.

Another idea is to make reading a family affair. For example, keep books of short stories on your coffee table. Instead of watching TV after dinner, family members can each pick out a short story to read aloud. Or carry an outdoor-themed book on a family hike. Each time you stop for a break, a different person can read aloud. ▣



Dive into biographies

Biographies are like people—no two are alike. Your child can try the following ideas for learning about the lives of famous folks.

Create a time line

The story of a person's life is often told in chronological order. Suggest that your youngster make a time line to help her keep track of events as she reads. She can write each event and the date on a sticky note and arrange them in order across a piece of paper or taped to

string. Putting events in sequence will strengthen her reading comprehension.

Connect to a school subject

Encourage your child to read biographies related to her studies. If she's learning about physical science, she could read up on scientists who developed theories of force, motion, and energy. Or if she's studying a particular country in history, let her look for biographies of real people who lived there. ▣

