

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2018

Book Picks

■ *Grand Canyon* (Jason Chin)

Follow a father and daughter as they hike the Grand Canyon. This illustrated story presents facts about the spectacular landform's geology, plant and animal life, and more. A detailed map shows an overhead view of the canyon.



■ *Taking Sides* (Gary Soto)

Lincoln Mendoza loves playing on his school basketball team with his best friends. But when his family moves to the suburbs, he has to change teams. Can Lincoln compete against his old team without losing friends? (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Out of Wonder*

(Kwame Alexander with Chris Colderley and Marjory Wentworth)

In this poetry collection, three poets come together to celebrate their favorite poets. They pay homage to those who inspired them to begin writing poetry—Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, and Gwendolyn Brooks, to name a few.

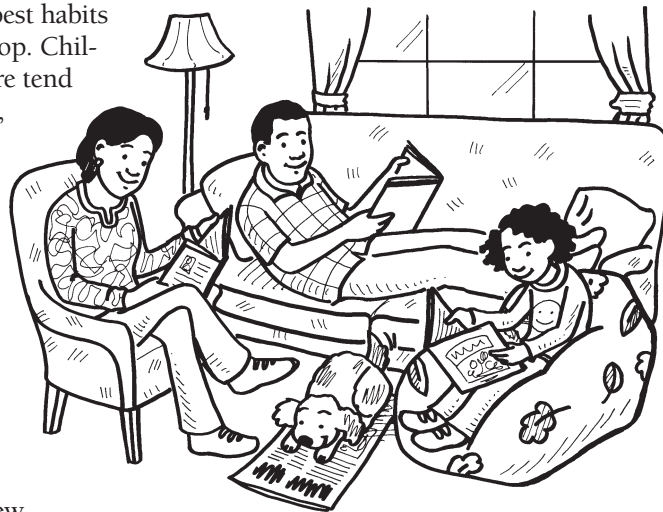
■ *Lemons* (Melissa Savage)

Lemonade Liberty Witt's life is turned upside down when she has to move in with her grandpa. Her new town is the Bigfoot Capital of the World, and Lem befriends Tobin Sky, who is obsessed with finding Bigfoot. Find out how Lem turns lemons into lemonade in this story about overcoming struggles.



A love of reading

Reading is one of the best habits your youngster can develop. Children who read for pleasure tend to have higher test scores, bigger vocabularies, and better reading comprehension. Steer your child toward a lifetime of reading with these ideas.



Choose books wisely

Suggest that your youngster find books that will hold her interest. Have her read the back cover and the first few pages to see if the book grabs her. It often helps if she has something in common with a story's main character. For instance, a child fascinated by machines may enjoy Roz the robot in *The Wild Robot* (Peter Brown).

Make time for reading

Between homework, friends, and activities, it's not always easy to fit in reading. Try setting aside a time when the entire family reads (after dinner, before bed). Also, encourage your

youngster to put books in the car so she can read during errands or while waiting in a dentist's office.

Meet other readers

Reading is contagious! If your child finds friends who like to read, they may share books and enjoy discussing them. Perhaps she'll notice kids who read after they finish a class assignment, or she could pay attention to which books her classmates choose in the library. She can strike up a conversation later: "Do you have a series to recommend?"

A prewriting toolbox

Before writing a report or an essay, your child needs to organize his information. A graphic organizer is just the ticket! Consider these formats.

● **Flowcharts** work well for book reports or history essays where one event follows another. Encourage your youngster to write each event in a separate box ("found stray dog," "made flyers") and draw an arrow from one box to the next.

● **Venn diagrams** compare and contrast two things. Say your child's report is about things that fly. He would first draw two overlapping circles. Then, he could list facts specific to hot-air balloons ("carry people") in the outer part of one circle. Facts exclusive to kites ("steered by string") go in the other circle's outer section. And shared traits ("made of nylon") belong in the overlapping space.



Beginnings and endings

The way your child starts and ends a writing assignment can make a big difference in his finished product. Help him create a good first—and last—impression with these suggestions.



● **Set a scene.** “A line of camels marches across the desert. The air is dry and hot, and there’s no water in sight.”

Memorable conclusions

The ending should wrap things up in a way the reader will remember. A good conclusion shows how all the information in a paper fits together. Here are some possibilities:

Attention-grabbing introductions

A powerful beginning pulls the reader in. Your youngster might:

- **Kick off with a question.** “Did you ever wonder why camels have humps?”
- **Use an interesting fact.** “Camels have three eyelids and two rows of eyelashes per eye.”

● **Summarize the main points.** “Its large hump, unusual eyes, and big feet make the camel the best form of transportation in the desert.”

● **Echo the introduction.** “A camel isn’t just interesting to look at. Its unique features help people travel in a hot, dry climate.”

● **Close with instructions.** “If you visit the desert, take a ride on a camel. His hump, eyes, and feet will get you where you need to go.”



Fun with Words

What doesn't belong?

Hammock, swimming, hammer, aluminum, summer... which word doesn't belong? (*Aluminum*, because it's the only one without a double *m* in the middle.)

Play this game with your child to help her look closely at words and learn their spellings or parts of speech.



1. Ask her to bring home a list of vocabulary or spelling words. Or she could make a list of words from the dictionary.
2. Choose three or more of the words that have something in common (vowel sound, prefix, suffix, part of speech, number of syllables).
3. Write the words down, along with a word from your youngster's list that doesn't fit your sorting rule. Then, she tries to name your rule.
4. Trade roles, and let her give you a set of words to figure out.

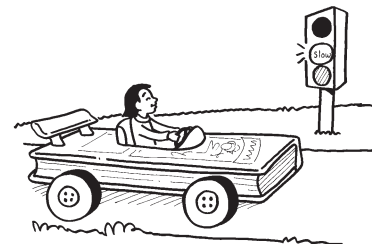
Q&A Slow down

Q My daughter reads so fast that she sometimes misses important facts. How can I help her slow down?

A Start by showing your child that reading too fast causes her to skip information. Try having her read a section, and then you read it aloud to her. Ask your youngster to hold up a finger each time she hears something that she doesn't remember reading.

Next, help your child find a way to focus while she's reading. When she has a textbook assignment, encourage her to break it up. If she has three science chapters to read in a week, she might read one a night for three nights instead of doing them all in one evening. She will slow down and concentrate better if she doesn't feel overwhelmed.

Finally, suggest that your youngster skim the text once and then carefully read it a second time. The second reading will help her catch things she missed the first time and let her see how reading more slowly helps.



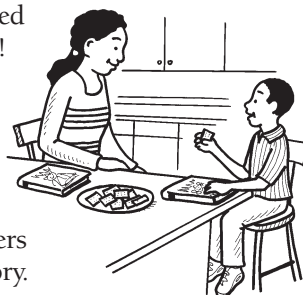
Parent 2 Parent Speaking of reading

Last year my son started reading more advanced books in school. I recognized some of the titles from when I was a child, and others were new to me. I leafed through one that he was finished with. I got hooked and ended up reading the whole thing!

What I didn't realize was that reading the same book as Jonas did would give us something new to talk about. We discussed our favorite characters and the best parts of the story.

Now we try to read a book together about once a month. We take turns picking a title, and then we check out two copies from the library.

When we've both finished, we sit at the kitchen table with a snack and talk about the story. Sometimes we find discussion questions online, usually on the book publisher's website. Since we started this tradition, we're both enjoying reading new books—and talking about them together!



OUR PURPOSE

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

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