

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2019

Weakley County School System

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *The Big Adventures of Tiny House*

(Susan Schaefer Bernardo)

Tiny is a little house on a big journey. He travels across the country with his friend Big Truck, looking for a place to settle down. Along the way, he meets all kinds of houses and learns that home is anywhere, as long as you feel it in your heart.



### ■ *LOOK I'm a Scientist*

(DK Publishing)

Just like a scientist, your child can ask questions and use her five senses to make discoveries. The experiments in this book call for everyday materials and include easy-to-follow directions for creating bubbles, making slime, learning about sound, and more.



### ■ *Calendar Mysteries: January Joker*

(Ron Roy)

When seven-year-old Bradley Pinto's friends go missing, all the clues point to an alien abduction. But are those mysterious lights and footprints really caused by something from a UFO? Bradley will need to follow the clues to solve the mystery. Book One in the Calendar Mysteries series.

### ■ *Mapping Our World* (Sandy Phan)

This nonfiction book introduces your youngster to maps and globes. He'll begin by exploring map symbols and lines of longitude and latitude before moving on to fun facts about the seven continents. There's even an activity for inventing a new continent. (Also available in Spanish.)



## Fluency: Bringing it all together

As your youngster learns to read, a main goal is for her to become fluent. Fluency happens when all the pieces click into place: recognizing many words instantly, reading smoothly and expressively, and understanding what she reads. Try these tips to help her read more fluently.

### Build word recognition

The more words your child knows at first sight, the more fluently she'll read. Ask her teacher for a list of sight words (frequently used words), and play games with them. She could write them in a hopscotch grid to read as she hops. Or play cooperative "Scrabble." Place all the tiles faceup, and together, make a crossword of sight words.

### Practice with familiar books

Fluent reading sounds like normal speech—not too fast or too slow, but just right. To practice, let your youngster read books she knows well. She won't need to stop to figure out words, so she'll



be free to read at a comfortable pace and focus on the meaning of the story. Also, ask a librarian for books with a refrain—the same phrase repeats on each page.

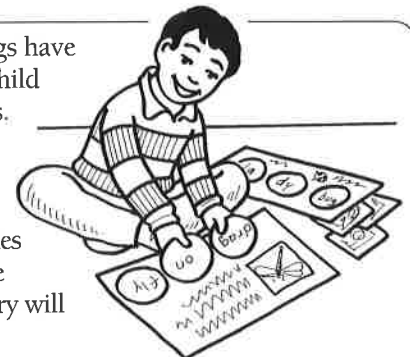
### Use punctuation "clues"

Encourage your child to think of punctuation marks as clues for reading with expression. Commas and periods tell her to pause slightly. For quotation marks, she might change her voice to show a character is speaking. Have her listen to an audiobook and follow along in the print version, noticing how the narrator uses the punctuation. Then, she can read the book to you. ♥

## My sylla-bug book

Dragonfly, caterpillar, bumblebee... many bugs have long names. Making this cute book lets your child spell big words by breaking them into syllables.

1. Help your youngster list bug names (*grasshopper, ladybug, centipede*).
2. Let him trace around a soup can to make circles on colored paper and cut them out. He can write each syllable on a separate circle. *Tip:* A dictionary will show him how to break a word.
3. Mix them all up. Have your child glue the circles for each word back together onto separate sheets of paper. He could draw each bug and write about it. Now staple the pages into a book for him to read again and again. ♥



# Writing: Start with a plan

Before your youngster writes, making a kid-friendly graphic organizer helps him plan what he'll say. And looking at his plan while he writes will remind him of facts or details to mention. Suggest these clever ideas.

**Rays of sunshine.** To plan a report or story, your child could draw a big sun. He can write a report topic ("Hamsters") in



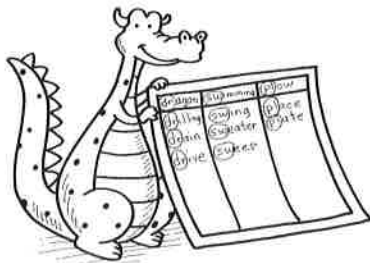
the center and then a fact on each ray ("Sleeps all day," "Stuffs cheeks with food," "Runs on a wheel"). Or before he writes a story, he might put his main idea in a sun ("Visited relatives") and a major plot event on each ray ("Rode a train," "Played with cousins," "Went to a fair").

**Rungs on a ladder.** If your youngster needs to write instructions or explain a scientific process, have him draw a ladder with a rung for

each step. "How to Pack a Suitcase" may include "Choose clothes," "Fold clothes," "Open suitcase," and "Put clothes inside." If he's describing how a seed becomes a plant, his rungs could say "Seed is planted," "Seed sprouts," "Leaves grow," and "Flowers bloom." Let him refer to his ladder to write a thorough explanation.♥

## Fun with Words Spot the consonant combo

Here's a portable activity that will help your child learn consonant combinations like *bl* and *st*—an important part of sounding out words.



First, have her look through a book and choose words that start with two consonants (dragon, twins). Suggest that she draw columns on a sheet of paper, write one of the words at the top of each, and circle the beginning consonants.

Now let her take her paper when you go out. Together, try to spot words on signs that begin with the same combinations, and she can write them in the correct columns. Under dragon, she might write drive, drilling, and drain.

At home, help her read unfamiliar words. Then, she could count to see which combination she saw the most.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## Parent to Parent

### Make your own felt board

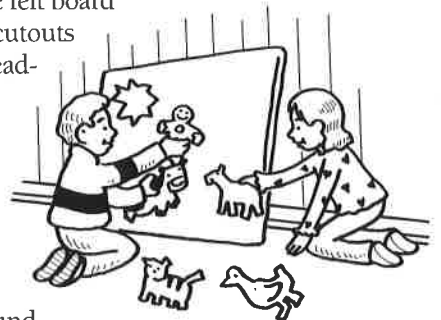
My son Antoine loves the felt board at school. The kids use felt cutouts

to retell stories, which the teacher said boosts reading comprehension. So I decided to make a felt board for Antoine to play with at home.

I stapled felt to a big piece of cardboard. Then I gave my son smaller pieces of felt, and he used them to make the characters from *The Gingerbread Man*. He drew them with a marker, and I cut them out for him.

Antoine had fun moving the characters around on the board as he retold the story. I smiled when I heard him chanting, "Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!"

Now Antoine is eager to make more characters and retell other stories on his felt board.♥



## Q&A "Swap" to find new books

**Q** My daughter wants new books for her shelf, but we're on a tight budget. Any suggestions?

**A** Luckily, you don't need to spend money for your child to get new books.

Consider starting a book swap. Invite friends, relatives, and neighbors with older and younger children to gather at your home and trade books. Your daughter's outgrown books can be passed on to a

younger reader, and she could find ones that are just right for her now.

For another type of book swap, scout your area for Little Free Libraries. These cute mini-libraries let people exchange books for free. Check [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org), and click on "Map" to find ones near you. When your daughter takes a book, it's hers to keep. Just have her leave one in its place for someone else to enjoy!♥



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Working Together for Learning Success

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## Book Picks

### ■ *We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* (Kadir Nelson)

In 1920, Negro League Baseball formed when African American players were not allowed on major league teams. Narrated by a fictional baseball player, this true story shows readers what life was like for players who faced discrimination daily but showed up to do the thing they loved: play baseball.



### ■ *Annie's Life in Lists* (Kristin Mahoney)

Annie makes lists of everything in her life, from what she sees in the mirror to why she gets quiet or feels nervous. When her family moves, she must overcome her shyness to make friends. Follow along in this story written entirely in lists, and see how Annie adjusts to living in her new town.



### ■ *The Word Snoop*

(Ursula Dubosarsky)

Why is the *k* in knight silent? How did American English develop? Turn your child into a word lover with this entertaining look at language. Chapters cover punctuation, word origins, acronyms, word plays, and more. Solve a puzzle or code at the end of each section to spell out a secret message.



### ■ *The Bad Guys* (Aaron Blabey)

A shark, a piranha, a snake, and a wolf go on a high-stakes adventure to prove they're "good guys." This first book in the hilarious graphic novel series tells how the group tries to do good deeds, like freeing dogs from a pound, to save their reputations. (Also available in Spanish.)

## Write to communicate

What do emails, newsletters, and thank-you notes have in common? They all give your child everyday reasons to write. Show him how writing can be easy, fun—and useful.

### A click away

Become email buddies with your youngster. You might write reminders ("Mom is picking you up Tuesday after school for your orthodontist appointment"), discuss plans ("What should we do on Saturday?"), or ask about school ("What words were on the vocabulary quiz?"). Your child will get practical writing experience as he responds.

### Extra, extra!

Put your youngster in charge of writing a family newsletter, and he'll practice taking notes and writing nonfiction accounts. Give him a notebook to track things that happen (a trip to the zoo, birthday parties, books read). At the end of the month, he

could use his notes to write a newsletter to send to relatives.

### Thanks again

Make thank-you notes a part of daily life. Keep a stack of index cards handy so your child can write quick messages to family members. ("Thanks for helping me clean my room. The job went a lot faster.") Let him use cards to write longer notes when he gets gifts. He'll work on writing—and also learn to show appreciation to others.



## Be an inventor

Does your youngster have an idea for an invention? Maybe she wants to walk dogs in the rain without anyone getting wet, or she wants to keep her markers from drying out. Encourage her to read about inventions and then write about her own:

- Together, look for nonfiction books on inventors (try *The Kids' Invention Book* by Arlene Erlbach or *Brainstorm!* by Tom Tucker). She'll read about clever ideas like an edible pet-food spoon invented by a six-year-old girl.
- Suggest that your child write about a product she'd like to invent. She can start with a problem (dogs and dog walkers getting wet in the rain). Then, she could draw and describe a gadget to help (mini doggy umbrellas and a hands-free umbrella for the dog walker).



# Learning with poetry

Poems can tickle your child's funny bone, stretch her imagination, and improve her reading comprehension. Find poems online or check out poetry books from the library, and enjoy these activities together.

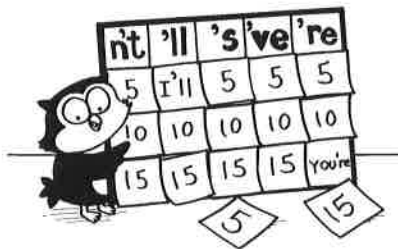
1. Take turns reading verses of a rhyming poem that tells a story, such as "The Swing" by Robert Louis Stevenson. Poems that rhyme will help your youngster read smoothly and with expression. *Tip:* Try having her clap the rhythm as she reads ("How do you like to go up in a swing...").



2. Poems often contain imagery, or words and phrases that paint pictures for readers. Suggest that your child read a poem carefully and then illustrate it. For instance, after reading "Where the Sidewalk Ends" by Shel Silverstein, she might draw a bright red sun, swirls of wind striped like peppermint, and flowers growing from the pavement. Drawing what is happening will help her understand and enjoy poems. 📖

## Fun with Words And the answer is...

This Jeopardy-like game helps your child learn contractions.



Have him make a Jeopardy game board with five columns and four rows. In the top row, he should write *nt*, *'ll*, *'s*, *'ve*, and *'re*. In the rows under each heading, he can write three contractions using that ending. For *nt*, he could write *didn't*, *can't*, and *won't*. Then, ask him to label sticky notes with point values (5, 10, 15) and put one over each contraction.

Players take turns selecting a category and a box. *Example:* Lift up the "5" note under *'ve* and find *we've*. Answer with a question. ("What is 'we have'?") If you're correct, score 5 points and continue. If not, the next person picks a new box.

Play until all the clues have been used, and tally the scores. 📊

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## Q&A Online fact checking

**Q** My son believes everything he reads online. How can I help him figure out what's really true?

**A** Recognizing inaccurate information online can be a challenge for anyone. Encourage your son to ask himself a few questions.

**How current is the information?** Remind him to look for the date an article was posted or updated. (It's often at the bottom of the main page.) In today's fast-paced world, the date should be pretty recent. If it "feels old," it probably is.

**Who published it?** Anyone can post online. Encourage your child to look for reliable sources, such as universities or government agencies on websites that end in *.gov* or *.edu*. Your child can search online for the writer's or the organization's name to find out more. If no author is listed, suggest that he look elsewhere.

**What do other sites say?** If three or more reputable sites contain the same fact, it's more likely to be true. 📖



## Parent 2 Parent My own résumé

When my husband was recently looking for a new job, our daughter Mary became curious about his résumé. We explained to her that a résumé is a summary of a person's job history and skills. Then, we challenged her to write her own.

Mary listed clubs, sports, and classroom projects she had been involved in as well as "jobs" she has held. She included the skills and new knowledge she had

gained from each one. For instance, taking care of our neighbor's goldfish taught her responsibility for living things and keeping a schedule. As secretary of her school's student government, she learned to take minutes at meetings and give presentations.

When Mary finished her résumé, she was pleased with all her accomplishments. Plus, she had gotten some great writing practice! 📖

