

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

May 2013

Woodrow Elementary School

Vickie Briscoe, Principal

Book Picks

■ A Perfect Time for Pandas

Siblings

Jack and Annie visit China and meet giant pandas in Mary Pope Osborne's 48th Magic Tree House book. While on a quest to break a magic spell, their mission becomes more dangerous when a historic earthquake strikes.

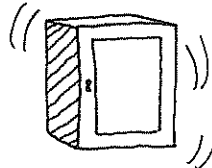


■ The Gollywopper Games

Inside the fun-filled warehouse of a famous toy company, children compete for prizes in the Gollywopper Games. Gil is more determined than most—if he wins, his family can afford to move and escape false rumors that his dad embezzled money. A tale of perseverance by Jody Feldman.

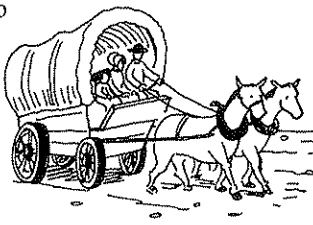
■ The Indian in the Cupboard

Omri is disappointed when he gets an old medicine cabinet as a birthday gift. But in this classic book by Lynne Reid Banks, the little boy turns a key and discovers the cabinet can bring his toy figurine to life. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ A Little House Traveler

Journal entries and letters from three of Laura Ingalls Wilder's trips across the country are collected in this book. Children who love the Little House series can read Wilder's diary entries and notes to learn about life in the early 20th century.



Boost reading stamina

As your child gets older, he will be asked to read for longer stretches of time. Suggest that he use his free time this summer to build his "reading stamina." These tips can get him started.

Find books you love

Getting lost in a book is a surefire way to enjoy reading for an extended period. Encourage your youngster to look for a series with characters who share his interests. For instance, if he's a sports fan, he might try Matt Christopher's Sports Classics. If he enjoys outdoor adventures, he could read the Everest trilogy by Gordon Korman.

Read for a reason

A child who has a specific purpose for reading will probably want to keep going. Perhaps your youngster would like to start a lawn mowing business or learn to do magic tricks. He might read a story about a young entrepreneur or a manual of magic tricks.



Work up slowly

Have your child gradually increase the amount of time he reads. Say he normally reads for 15 minutes a day. Let him set a goal of 30 minutes a day and eventually work up to 45 or 60 minutes.

Get comfortable

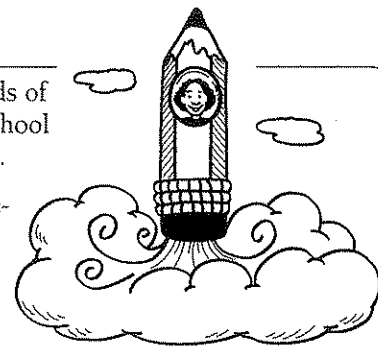
Staying focused on a book will be easier if your child has a comfortable, well-lit spot that's free of distractions. He could also try reading at various times of day to find which works best for him.

Writing experiments

Encourage your youngster to try different kinds of creative writing this summer. She'll go back to school with fresh ways to approach writing assignments.

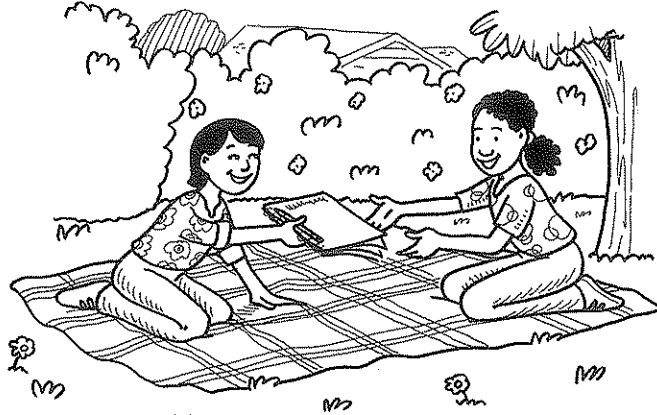
● **Science fiction.** Have her keep a list of science-related topics. She might write an outer space tale inspired by a falling star she spots in the night sky or an underwater adventure about sea creatures she sees at an aquarium.

● **Postcard fiction.** Can your child fit an entire story on a postcard? Let her pick out postcards that interest her and write stories based on the pictures on the front. She can save them to refer to when she needs story ideas in class.



Learning with friends

When you're a kid, everything is more fun with friends! Here are ways for your youngster to keep her reading and writing skills strong while she socializes.



Write a never-ending novel. Your youngster and a friend can pass a notebook back and forth to write a story together. The first person might start with, "Stella the princess lived in the forest," and then hand the notebook to her friend to write the next part. Can they keep the story going all summer?

Start a read-aloud club. Suggest that your child and her friends read aloud to younger kids in the neighborhood. They could set up a regular meeting place and time. For instance, they might get together in your backyard every Saturday morning.

Run a theater. Encourage your child and her friends to turn a book into a play by writing dialogue and adding stage directions. Or they could write an original script. Let them use household items as props and perform their play for you. ■

Fun with Words Outdoor word games

Take advantage of warm weather and sunshine to build your child's word skills. Try these contests.

Volley-word

The first person says any random word (*spaghetti*) and serves a volleyball. The next player says a related word (*meatballs*) and returns the ball. If you miss the ball, the other player scores 1 point—and chooses a word to start the next round. Play to 15 points. Your youngster will need to consider how words are related and think fast on his feet.

Bowling for words

Cut 10 strips of masking tape, and write a word on each. Stick them to the bottoms of half-filled water bottles. Then, let your child set up the bottles like bowling pins. Take turns "bowling" with a tennis ball or softball. Read the words on the pins you knock down, and try to write a sentence that includes as many as possible. Score 1 point for each word you use—after 10 rounds, the person with the highest score wins. Write new words, and play again! ■



Q&A Vacation at the library

Q I would like my sons to take advantage of the public library this summer while school is out. What's the best way to do this?

A Try putting library visits on your family calendar. You might go every two weeks, for example. As your children finish books they've borrowed, they can put them in a prominent spot (say, in a basket near your front door) as a reminder that library day is coming up.

Also, have them sign up for the library's summer reading program. The reading lists can help them find age-appropriate books, and they'll have a good reason to visit the library.

Finally, encourage your sons to explore free and low-cost activities that your branch offers. They might research your family tree in a genealogy workshop or write poetry and attend readings. ■



The family instruction book

Your youngster may not realize it, but she probably knows many things that she could teach others. She can put that knowledge to use and practice informational writing with these suggestions:

- Have her think of something she enjoys (baking, cheerleading). She might write tips for decorating the perfect layer cake or doing cheerleading jumps.
- Let your child create an instruction book for

the electronics in your house—this can come in handy for babysitters or visiting grandparents. She could list steps for using your television, DVD player, or remote control, or she could explain how to connect to the Internet.

- Ask her to make a guide for a pet sitter or house sitter to use while you are on vacation. Encourage her to include directions about what to feed your pet and where to walk him or how to take care of your plants. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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