

# Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

December 2012



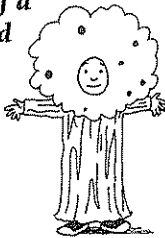
Woodrow Elementary School  
Vickie Briscoe, Principal

## Book Picks

### Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Middle

schooler Greg Heffley is small for his age. In this illustrated diary, he describes his struggles, including dealing with bullies, enduring a PE wrestling unit, and playing a tree in *The Wizard of Oz*. The first book in Jeff Kinney's popular series. (Also available in Spanish.)



### Hattie Big Sky

In Kirby Larson's historical fiction novel, 16-year-old Hattie goes west alone to claim land she inherited from her uncle. Once there, she must struggle to keep the land and to understand the prejudice among her neighbors during World War I.

### Chronal Engine

What if you could travel back in time to the days of the dinosaurs? When



Emma is kidnapped by a time traveler, her brothers,

Max and Kyle, must hop in their grandfather's time machine and bring her back from the Cretaceous period. Science fiction by Greg Leitich Smith.

### The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids, Volume 4

Your child can learn about predicting weather, growing vegetables, and even training chickens in this colorful almanac. She'll also find a dozen craft projects and read interesting facts on topics like astronomy, holidays, and the seasons. From the editors of *The Old Farmer's Almanac*.



## Vocabulary boosters

A good vocabulary goes hand in hand with strong reading and writing skills. Help your child learn more words with ideas like these.

### Alphabet soup

Your youngster can discover words in your house with this activity. First, each person writes the alphabet on a piece of paper. Then, walk around the house, and look for a word that starts with each letter. She might find *potassium* on a cereal box and *hypoallergenic* on a soap bottle. When everyone has a word for every letter, take turns making up sentences that use as many of your words as possible. Cross out each word as you say it—how many sentences does it take to use them all? *Tip:* Have your child look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary.



tiles needed to spell it. Then, mix up the letters, ask your child to unscramble them, and read the definition to her. After she figures out your word, let her pick one to scramble for you.

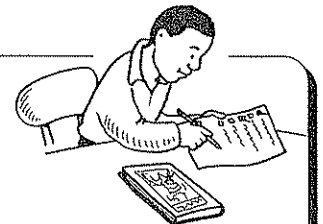
### Start a collection

Let your youngster collect words when you go places. In a paint store, she might jot down color words (*vermillion*, *chartreuse*). At the grocery store, she could write the names of pasta shapes (*rotini*, *farfalle*). *Idea:* Encourage her to use her words when she writes stories and poems—her work will be full of interesting word choices!

## Use a writing checklist

Small errors in writing assignments add up—and take away from your youngster's final grade. Share this writing checklist that can help him catch mistakes:

- Read the paper out loud. (He might "hear" mistakes he didn't see.)
- Check spelling—start at the end of the paper and read backward slowly.
- Make sure every sentence ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point. *Tip:* Remind him not to overuse exclamation points—they'll lose their punch.
- Look for capitalized words. Does every sentence and proper noun start with a capital letter?
- Read one sentence at a time. Is each sentence complete? Does it make sense?



# A season for reading

Give your youngster real-life reasons to keep reading during winter break. Try these suggestions.

**Find events.** Local newspapers and websites list plenty of things to do this time of year. Your child might read about a community orchestra concert or a First Night celebration. Have him write his favorites on a calendar, and try to attend a few. *Idea:* After an event, ask him to look for an article about it in the newspaper and read it aloud to you.



**Research products.** Let your youngster take part in selecting gifts for friends and family. Give him a list of items to research, and have him read product descriptions and reviews online. When he's finished, he can recommend the best deals based on what he learned.

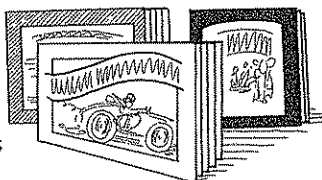
**Share reading.** Visiting with relatives gives your child the perfect opportunity to practice his reading skills. Ask him to look for a few seasonal books he can read to younger family members. Or suggest that he check out a book of winter activities (crafts, games) from the library and try some with his cousins or siblings.

## Fun with Words

### Do you remember?

This game can help your child become a better listener and improve her concentration and memory. Here's how to play.

1. Each player gets a favorite book.
2. The first person chooses one paragraph from her book and reads it aloud while everyone listens carefully.
3. After she reads, she gets to ask each listener a different question about the paragraph. She should think of questions that would be hard to answer if players weren't paying attention. *Examples:* "Do you remember what color the door is?" "How many times did Jack knock?" Players score a point if they answer correctly.
4. The next person reads a paragraph from her book and asks questions.
5. After everyone has had two turns to read, the player with the most points wins.



## Parent 2 Parent

### Our family newsletter

In our house, we put together a family newsletter to send out at the end of each year. It's our way of sharing news with friends and relatives who live far away. I've always done most of the work, but last year, I invited my daughter Shelby to help.

Together, we brainstormed news we could share about each member of our family. Shelby remembered that her dad caught a huge fish that summer and that her little brother started playing soccer. We each picked a few events to write about. Shelby typed our articles on the computer, added some family photos, and printed out copies of the finished newsletter for us to mail.

The best part was reading the comments we received from friends and family. They loved it! Having an audience has really motivated Shelby to write—she's already working on this year's newsletter.



## Q&A

### Organizing information

**Q** My son is a good reader, but sometimes he struggles to understand textbooks. How can I help him?

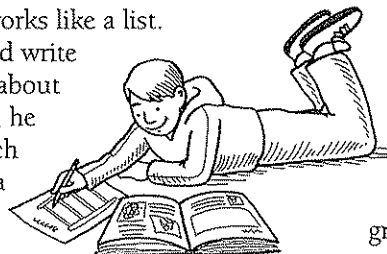
**A** Reading a textbook is different than reading a story—and this difference can take some getting used to. Suggest that your son create graphic organizers to collect information while he reads.

A ladder organizer works like a list. To make one, he should write the topic he's reading about on the top rung. Then, he can add a detail on each rung underneath. For a chapter about plant cells, a ladder might

include rungs with definitions of vacuole, chromosomes, and mitochondria.

If your child needs a more detailed organizer (say he's reading a history chapter with a lot of names and dates), suggest that he try a "5W" chart. Have him write "Who," "What," "Where," "When," and "Why" down the left side of a sheet of paper. Then, he can make a column for each historical figure or event and fill in the answers as he reads.

*Idea:* He might ask his teacher for other graphic organizers to try.



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated  
 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
 540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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