

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

November 2013

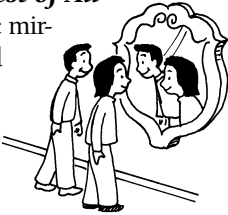
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## Book Picks

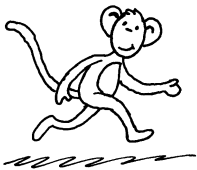
### ■ *Whatever After: Fairest of All*

A magic mirror pulls Abby and Jonah into Snow White's fairy tale, and their presence changes everything. Now they have to fix the story, or the princess won't live happily ever after. The first book in Sarah Mlynowski's *Whatever After* series.



### ■ *Summer of the Monkeys*

The reward money being offered for catching escaped circus monkeys is just what 14-year-old Jay Berry Lee needs to help his family. But the monkeys are tricky, and catching them may be harder than he thinks. A heartwarming tale by Wilson Rawls.



### ■ *Tree: From Seed to Mighty Forest*

Fold-out pages and other fun features let readers explore how trees grow and how they affect the environment. David Burnie's book covers everything from pollination to different types of forests. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *Write This Book:*

#### *A Do-It-Yourself Mystery*

A big dose of humor accompanies the instructions in this how-to book by Pseudonymous Bosch. Readers are invited to write a mystery, and in the process, they have to solve the mystery of the missing author!

## A robust vocabulary

The more words your child knows, the easier it is for her to read, write, and participate in discussions. Encourage her to find and explore words with these ideas.

### Keep track

Suggest that your youngster write down every new word she reads or hears for one day. Then, help her figure out what they mean. She could look at parts of a word for clues. ("*Chronological* has *chrono*, which has to do with time.") Or she might think about the context. ("*Boundary* was written on a map, so it probably has to do with geography.") Finally, she can look up the words in a dictionary.



### Group words

Finding similarities among words makes their meanings easier to remember. When your child studies vocabulary words, have her write them on separate index cards and sort them into groups. For instance, she could put words related to places (*plantation, urban*) in one group

and those having to do with people (*indentured, legislator*) in another.

### Use in a story

Encourage your youngster to use new words in her writing. She might choose five and weave them into a story. "If the bike's tire had not been *defective*, Macy wouldn't have crashed and broken her arm." Working with words can make them a permanent part of her vocabulary.

*Idea:* Suggest that she write a new word with its definition on a sticky note. Have her post the note above her desk—once she knows the word, she can take it down. 📌

## New reading and writing standards

If you've heard about the Common Core State Standards—new education guidelines that are being used in most states—you might be wondering how they will change the way your youngster learns to read and write. Here are a few things to expect:

● **Reading:** Your child will read and discuss more nonfiction. You can help at home by steering him toward nonfiction books and magazines about topics he likes (trains, fossils). Ask him to tell you what he learns.

● **Writing:** Look for him to do more writing in response to things he is reading. He may write an explanation of a book plot or his opinion about a current event, for example. At home, you could encourage your youngster to keep a notebook for writing his thoughts about books he reads. 📌



# When reading is a struggle

Reading is a pleasure for many kids. But when a child struggles, that can take the joy out of it. If your youngster has trouble with reading, try these three tips.

**1. Get help.** Talk to his teacher or reading specialist about what kind of help he needs (or is already getting) in school. She might show you what to do when you listen to him read, like have him reread a difficult passage or ask him questions about the book.



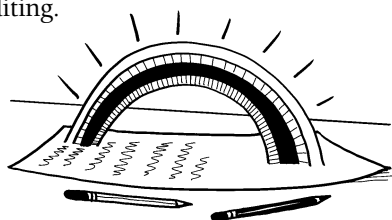
**2. Read together.** If your child wants to read a popular novel that his friends are talking about, read it to him or with him. That way, he will be exposed to more challenging material—even if he can't read it entirely on his own yet.

**3. Use picture books.** Textbooks can be especially tough for a struggling reader. Go to the library with your

youngster, and look for nonfiction picture books on topics that he is studying. He may discover that simple machines or ancient civilizations really are interesting when he can understand what he's reading. And the knowledge he gains may make reading his textbook easier. ■

## The never-ending sentence

Write sentences as a team, and your youngster will learn the benefits of editing.



First, have your child begin a sentence by writing any word (*Rainbows*). Then, write a word beside it (*are*). Go back and forth, adding one word at a time. At any point, instead of a word, you can add punctuation like a comma or a quotation mark.

After a few rounds, your sentence might look something like this: "Rainbows are pretty, and Mom said, 'I saw one yesterday at work,' so I knew it rained and then the sun came out..."

When you're finished, let your youngster read the "run-on" sentence aloud. Ask her to edit it into separate sentences by adding periods and capital letters and removing connecting words (*and*, *but*, *or*, *so*). Let her read the sentences aloud to see how much better they sound now. ■

## Q&A E-books: Yes or no?

**Q** My daughter wants to read e-books, but I'm concerned she'll spend more time playing games than reading. Should she stick with print books instead?

**A** Children today are surrounded by technology, so your daughter's interest in e-books is only natural. But you're right—games can be distracting. Try having her use a plain e-reader like Kindle, Nook, or Kobo. Or you could install an app on a tablet or smartphone that sets a time limit on games but allows unlimited reading. This sends the message that books are more important than games.

If your daughter tries e-books, encourage her to compare them to print books. Does she find one format more fun or easier to read? Whatever she prefers, remember that reading is good for her, no matter what kind of package it comes in. ■



## Parent Snapshot stories

My son Derrick loves photography. He'd rather take pictures than do almost anything else. And he likes to show us his photos and tell the stories behind them, which gave me an idea for encouraging him to write more.

When he took a picture of his friends playing football, I suggested that he write about the game. He liked that idea, so he wrote a story telling who played which position,

who scored the winning touchdown, and how they went out for milkshakes afterward.

Later, I surprised him by framing his story alongside the photo for his bedroom wall. Now Derrick often chooses pictures to write about and frame. His new hobby has turned into a great way to practice writing—and decorate his room! ■



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5583