

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

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Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District

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Book Picks

■ *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute* (Jarrett J. Krosoczka)

Three students discover that their lunch lady is a secret agent who's investigating a new teacher. The agent and her assistant use special gadgets—like an apron that's really a cape—to help them crack the case. Book one in the Lunch Lady graphic novel series.



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■ *Our Story Begins* (edited by Elissa Brent Weissman)

Get a glimpse into the childhoods of 26 favorite children's authors and illustrators in this collection of their earliest works. Readers will find stories, poems, artwork, and more—and may even be inspired to get creative themselves!



■ *Who Was Rosa Parks?* (Yona Zeldis McDonough)

In this biography, readers will learn about the heroic woman who bravely refused to give up her seat on a bus. The book describes Parks's childhood and the changes she inspired. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *A Boy Called Bat* (Elana K. Arnold)

Bat, a boy who has autism, bonds with a baby skunk his veterinarian mother brings home. He names the skunk Thor and wants to keep him as a pet, but he has to convince his mom. This story about acceptance and friendship is the first book in the Bat series.



Motivated to read

Reading for pleasure is one of the most important ways for your child to build the skills he needs for school success. Get him into the reading habit this year with these ideas.

Find an "in"

Choose a book you think your youngster will enjoy—say, one about a boy his age who is short like he is. Read the first chapter or two aloud to him, and then ask him to read the next one. Don't be surprised if he gets hooked on the story and finishes reading it on his own!

Become a team

Pick a new hobby to try with your child, and team up to learn everything you can about it. The two of you might get into stamp collecting or photography. Check the library for collectors' guides or how-to books related to your hobby.

Use pictures

Colorful illustrations make picture encyclopedias and coffee-table books



hard to resist. Your youngster can explore kid-friendly topics like animals and sports. Leave the books around the house, perhaps on your child's nightstand or an end table. The pictures may spark his interest in reading the words.

Think outside the book

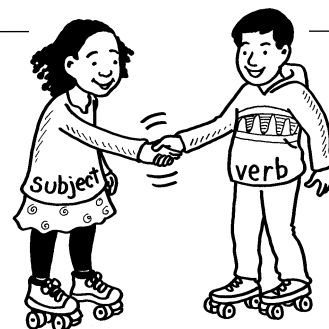
Reading doesn't always have to mean books. Is your youngster a movie buff? Let him read film reviews before you head to the theater. Does he like board games? Steer him toward trivia games that require players to read and answer questions. 📖

Let's agree!

It's important for subjects and verbs to agree—just as it's important for your child to get along with others! Share these tips and strategies to help your youngster choose the correct verb:

- A singular subject (except *I* and *you*) gets a singular verb. Have your child pick a sentence from a book and read it with and without the *s* at the end of the verb. Example: "John *skates* around the rink," "John *skate* around the rink." The subject (*John*) is singular, so the verb (*skates*) is singular, too.

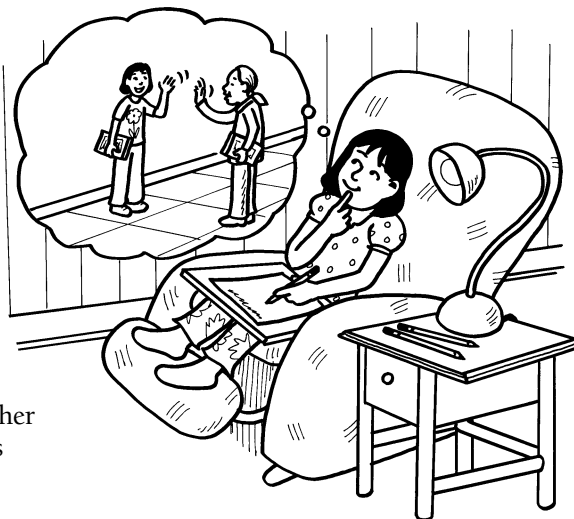
- Even if the subject and verb are separated by other words, they still have to agree. Suggest that your youngster ignore the words between the subject and verb to make sure she selected the right verb: "The ~~boy with the dogs~~ *walks* by our house every day." 📖



The elements of a story

Your youngster has been asked to write a story. She has a topic in mind but isn't sure how to begin. Sound familiar? Have her consider these story elements to get her creative-writing juices flowing.

Theme. The theme is the “big idea,” which is different from the topic. For example, if your child's story is about a girl who is new at her school, the theme could be courage or perhaps



friendship. Keeping the theme in mind will help her dig deeper into her topic.

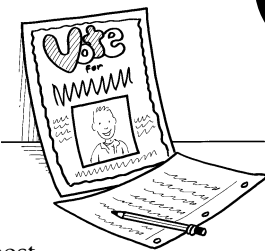
Tone. Will your youngster's story be suspenseful or funny? For a horror story, she might choose words that keep readers in suspense. If she wants to write a funny story, she could think of dialogue that will make readers laugh.

Read, write, and get involved

Did you know that your youngster can gain reading, writing, and speaking skills by joining after-school activities? Suggest that he check out extracurriculars like these.

Student council

Your child will practice persuasive and explanatory writing when he composes speeches, creates campaign posters, or takes minutes at meetings. And giving speeches is good experience for oral presentations in class.



Publications

Working on a school newspaper, yearbook, or literary magazine offers lots of reading and writing opportunities. Your youngster will write questions for interviews, conduct research for articles, or write stories or poems to be published.

School plays

Memorizing his lines and saying them with expression can make your child a smoother reader. He'll also become familiar with dialogue, narration, and stage directions. ■



child decide when her story will take place. During a specific period of history? A season of the year, such as winter? She can bring her story to life by including details about things like the clothing that characters are wearing and the weather outside. ■

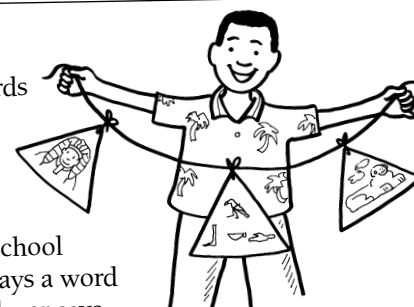


Create word chains

Making “chains” of related words is a fun way to stretch your child's vocabulary. Play this game together, and see how many words you can link!

Have your youngster think of a category that's related to something he's learning in school (say, ancient Egypt). To start the game, he says a word that fits his category (*pyramid*). The next player says another word that goes along with the category. But there's a catch! Each new word has to begin with the last letter of the one before it.

A word chain for ancient Egypt, for example, could be: “*pharaoh*, *hieroglyphics*, *sphinx*.” Continue calling out words until someone can't think of a new one. The last player to come up with a word picks the next category. ■



Making sense of graphics

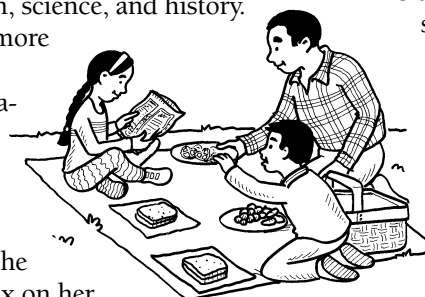
Q My daughter tends to skip over graphics, such as charts and diagrams, when she reads a textbook. What do you suggest?

A Point out that graphics work as a team with words to help her understand subjects like math, science, and history. She can become more comfortable with these textbook features by reading and using graphics that appear in everyday life.

For example, the nutrition-facts box on her

favorite snack contains a chart with useful information. Suggest that she slide her finger across rows and down columns to keep her place as she reads. Explain that she'll need to read the whole thing — “120 calories per serving” is useful only if she knows the serving size.

Also, have her practice using diagrams at home by following them to build toys or to help assemble furniture. She'll see that a visual image makes it much easier to understand the instructions. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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