

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

October 2018

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District
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Book Picks

■ **Brand New School, Brave New Ruby** (Derrick Barnes)

The youngest of four kids, Ruby sets out to prove she can keep up with her smart (and sometimes mischievous) older brothers. She has just started at a new school, and she's ready to make a name for herself. The first book in the Ruby and the Booker Boys series.

■ **Get Coding!** (Young Rewired State)

Your child can learn and use coding skills to complete the "missions" in this how-to book. She'll read about how to build a web page, design an app, create a game, and more—all in a guide designed for beginners.



■ **Word of Mouse** (James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein)

Isaiah is a little blue mouse who can read, write, and talk. It's hard for a talking mouse to fit in, but when he meets Hailey, a girl who knows what it's like to feel lonely, they both learn how valuable friendship can be.



■ **Behind the Canvas: An Artist's Life**

(Blanca Apodaca and Michael Serwich)
Explore what it's like to be a real artist in this *Time for Kids* nonfiction book. Young readers will learn about various types of art and get an inside look at an artist's studio. Includes an interview with an artist and a glossary of art terms. (Also available in Spanish.)



Books boost critical thinking

Did you know that reading is a great way to help your child think critically? Sharpen his thinking by encouraging him to imagine these twists as he reads.

Imagine where

Ask your youngster to pretend the story he's reading takes place somewhere different. What would change or stay the same if the characters lived in outer space instead of on a farm? The kids might still go to school, but maybe they ride there on a "rocket bus" or wear spacesuit uniforms.



develop if the characters could communicate with distant relatives by Skype, navigate their journey with GPS, or film funny videos along the way?

Imagine when

How about if a story were set in another era? Perhaps your child is reading a novel about a wagon train journey in pioneer days. He might move it to the present day—with computers, cell phones, and other modern technology. How does he think the plot would

Imagine who

What if a different character told the story? Your youngster might change the narrator from a sloth to a cheetah, for example. Then, instead of hanging out in a tree all day, the main character would speed through the jungle and discover exciting new adventures. ■

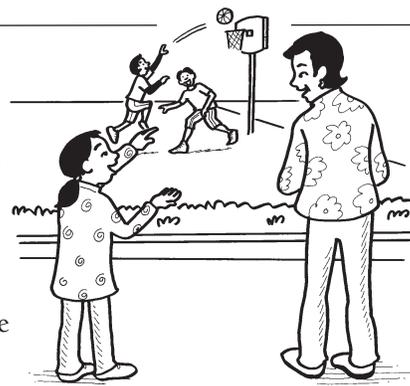
On-the-go conversations

When you're out and about with your youngster, build her speaking skills with these everyday conversation starters.

● **Jobs.** Pay attention to businesses you pass, like a yoga studio, newspaper office, or day-care center. Talk to her about what jobs people might be doing inside.

● **Nature.** Wonder aloud about plants and animals you spot, such as why leaves change color or what horses grazing in a field are thinking about.

● **Sports.** Look for people being active—walking their dogs, playing basketball, or riding bikes. What are your favorite physical activities, and what do you like best about them? ■



The best word for the job

Ran or dashed? Small or miniature?

There are so many words out there for your youngster to choose from when she writes. Try these activities to help her use precise words—the ones that really get across her meaning.

Find new verbs. Encourage your child to go through her writing and circle all the verbs (action words). Then, suggest that she replace general ones with more targeted options. For instance, “She ran through



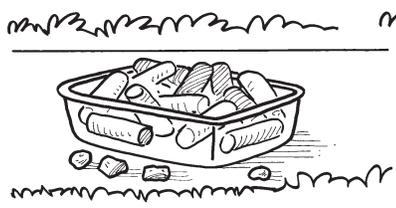
the forest” might become “She dashed through the forest.” Or “I put cinnamon on my toast” could change to “I sprinkled cinnamon on my toast.”

Discover adjectives. This game will help your youngster think of interesting adjectives (descriptive words). Have her pick an object (say, an orange). Set a timer for 3 minutes while each of you lists as many words as possible to describe it (*round, bumpy, tasty, delicious, sweet, juicy*). When

Fun with Words Sidewalk spelling bee

Play this outdoor spelling game to motivate your youngster to study his words each week.

1. Have your child use sidewalk chalk to write his spelling words randomly on a sidewalk or playground blacktop.



- Let one player toss a pebble and announce the word it lands on or nearest to.
- The other person, without looking, has to spell the word. If he gets it right, he writes his initials beside it. Then, it's his turn to toss the pebble and say a word for his opponent to spell.
- When all the words have been claimed, the player who spelled the most words correctly wins.

Variation: Write words with markers on large sheets of paper, and toss a penny toward them.

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
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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5583



time's up, take turns reading your lists aloud, and cross off any duplicates. The person with the most remaining words selects the next item to describe.

Q&A Better book reports

Q My son has to present a book report, and it's up to him to choose the book and the format. How can I support him?

A Begin by helping him find a great book to read. You might go to the library together, or share titles of books you loved when you were his age. Then, suggest that he get an early start so he has plenty of time to read before writing his report.

Next, encourage him to explore various formats. Does he have a flair for the dramatic? He might want to reenact a scene from the book. If he likes to draw, he could design a book jacket with key quotes from the story and a summary on the back. Or he might create a scene in a shoebox and tape his report to the side.

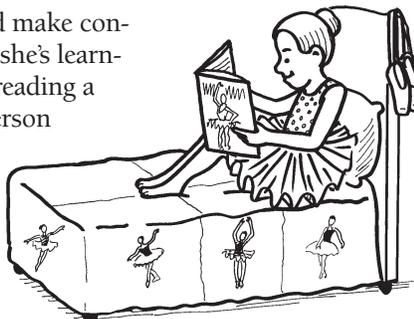
Finally, invite him to practice reading his report to you. He'll feel more prepared and confident presenting it in class.



Learning with biographies

Reading biographies is a fun way to explore subjects like science, history, music, and art through the eyes of real people. Here are ideas:

- Help your child make connections to what she's learning in school by reading a biography of a person she's studying. Ask her to share facts from the biography that she remembers



from class—as well as new information she discovers.

- Suggest that your youngster look for similarities to her own life. Maybe she's reading about a ballet dancer who came back from an injury. That could remind her of when she sprained her ankle and couldn't dance in her recital. She'll better understand the person's feelings and actions if she can relate to them.