

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

December 2018

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District
Tamera "Tammi" Huffman, Title I Curriculum Coach

Book Picks

■ *Nim's Island* (Wendy Orr)

Nim and her father, Jack, live on a secret island. When Jack's boat is damaged in a storm, Nim is left with only her animal friends for company. Can she rescue her father? Readers will find out in this fantasy adventure. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Writing Radar: Using Your Journal to Snoop Out and Craft Great Stories* (Jack Gantos)

Young writers get first-hand tips from an award-winning children's author in this guide. Gantos explains the importance of keeping a journal, shares stories about his life and career, and offers fun writing exercises for readers to try.

■ *Restart* (Gordon Korman)

A fall from a roof changes everything for Chase. When he hits his head, he still knows his name, but he forgets what kind of person he is. Why do some people love him while others hate him? He's going to figure it out—and decide if the person he was before his accident is who he wants to be now.



■ *What Is the Constitution?* (Patricia Brennan Demuth)

This nonfiction book gives your child a behind-the-scenes look at the writing of the U.S. Constitution. She will discover surprising facts about the heated debates and the many compromises that led to the document we still use today.

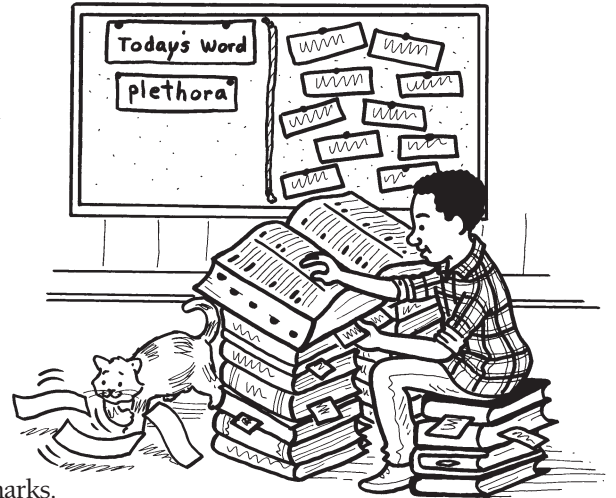


Bigger vocabulary = better comprehension

The more words your child knows, the easier it will be for him to understand what he reads. Share these ways to grow his vocabulary while he enjoys a good book.

Bookmark it

Have your youngster cut out strips of paper to make bookmarks. As he reads, he can write a new word on each strip. Then, he could read on to determine the words' meanings, or look them up in a dictionary, and add the definitions to the bookmarks. Suggest that he use the bookmarks to save his place while reading.



Share it

Saying words frequently will make them a permanent part of your youngster's vocabulary. Each day, encourage him to pick one new word that he read and look for ways to slip it into conversations. During dinner, he might say, "We had a *plethora* of lunch choices in the cafeteria today" or "I'm *astounded* that it snowed this early." 📖

Apply it

Your child can use a word he learns from one book to figure out a similar word in another. Say he discovered that a *prophecy* is a prediction. Then if he reads "She *prophesied* that the animals would escape," he might realize that *prophesied* means "predicted." 📖

Write to a hero

For a rewarding way to practice writing, let your child send a letter to a hero like a soldier, nurse, firefighter, or teacher. Use these steps.

1. Pick a recipient. Your youngster might mail a letter to your local fire station or hospital, or she can find ideas at operationgratitude.com/express-your-thanks/write-letters.

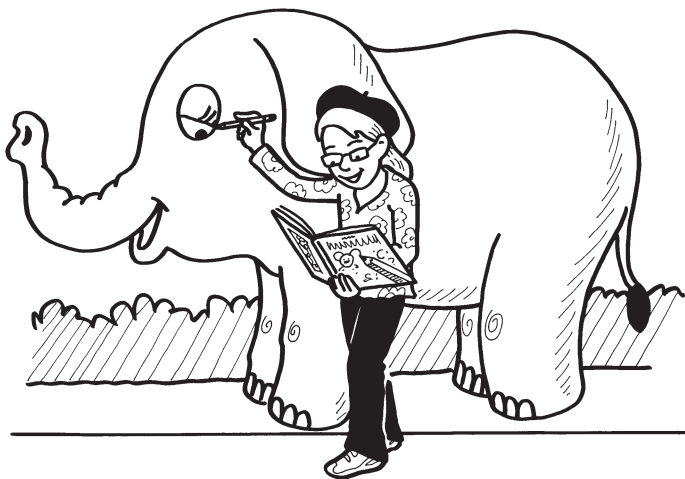
2. Write thoughtfully. Have your child research the person's job and use what she learns to make her letter more personal. If she's writing to a new army recruit, she could say, "Congratulations on finishing boot camp! Thank you for your service." Then, she might add details about herself (hobbies, favorite school subject).

Note: The person may or may not be able to write back—regardless, sending a letter will be a valuable experience for your youngster. 📖



All kinds of nonfiction

When it comes to nonfiction, there are many exciting options for children these days. Becoming familiar with different types of nonfiction will help your youngster read textbooks and other informational books in school. Suggest that she explore these types.



animals, suggest that she read a book on the topic instead. She'll practice reading instructions and referring to diagrams and other graphics. *Idea:* She could watch a video after reading a how-to book. What did she learn from the book that wasn't in the video, and vice versa?

Narrative nonfiction. This kind of nonfiction is told like a story—often with dialogue and rich descriptions—but it's true. For instance, encourage your

How-to books. The next time your child wants to watch a how-to video on making slime, playing chess, or drawing

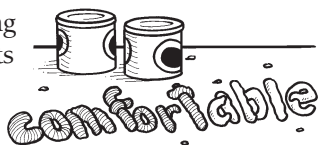
youngster to read a first-person account of a historical event she studied in school. What clues does she see that it's a real-life story? *Examples:* footnotes, excerpts of interviews with sources, quotes from real people. 📖



Q&A Making word study fun

Q My son has weekly spelling tests this year. Can you suggest fun ways for him to study his words?

A Focusing on word parts can help your son learn to



spell them correctly. He could make it more interesting by using different color play dough or yarn to "write" different parts of his words.

For example, if this week's words end in the suffixes *able* and *ible*, he might form each instance of *able* in blue and each *ible* in red. Then, maybe he'll make each word root (*comfort*, *cred*) in yellow. The suffixes will stand out, making it easier for him to learn which words contain each ending.

He may also like to post copies of his spelling list around the house and highlight word parts in different colors. The more he sees his words, the more likely he is to spell them correctly on his test—and when he writes them in the future. 📖

Fun with Words

Follow my rule

Your child can practice writing sentences with this quick game. The object is to construct sentences while following a particular "rule."



Let your youngster pick the first rule ("Every word must have the same number of letters"). Quickly write a sentence that fits ("Will they join your team?"), and put down your pencil. Then, read your sentences aloud. The person who finished first—and followed the rule correctly—gets to pick the next rule.

Here are more rules to try:

- Each word has to start with the same letter. ("Tim takes two tests tomorrow.")
- All the words need to share the same vowel. ("Bob got on top of Bo's roof.")
- The sentence must contain two words that are anagrams—words with the same letters in a different order. ("It's easier to *listen* if you are *silent*.")
- You must include two adjectives and one four-syllable word. ("The big gray rhinoceros drank from the pond.")

Challenge your family to come up with your own creative rules! 📖

Parent 2 Parent

Success with auditory processing

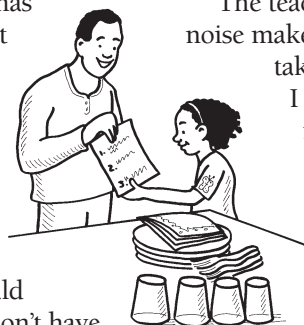
This fall, my daughter Rachel was diagnosed with auditory processing disorder, or APD. The doctor explained that her hearing is normal, but she has trouble understanding what she hears. And now, we have a great toolbox of strategies to help her.

For example, Rachel's teacher suggested that when I need my daughter to do something that requires several steps, I could write down each step. If I don't have

paper and pencil handy—say, when we're in the car—I should speak slowly and ask Rachel to repeat the directions back to me.

The teacher also said background noise makes it harder for my child to take in what's being said. So now I turn off the TV or take Rachel into a quiet room when I need to explain something to her.

Working together, her teacher and I have been able to help my daughter feel more successful in school and at home. 📖



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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