

Book Picks

■ *The Nora Notebooks: The Trouble with Ants* (Claudia Mills)

Nora dreams of being a scientist like her parents. Her current fascination? Ants. When she's given a persuasive writing assignment in school, she decides to present scientific facts to convince others that ants are as interesting as she thinks they are.



■ *Kid Athletes: True Tales of Childhood from Sports Legends* (David Stabler)

Explore the childhoods of famous athletes like gymnast Gabby Douglas, basketball player Yao Ming, race car driver Danica Patrick, baseball player Babe Ruth, and others. Before they were world-renowned athletes, they were just kids who went to school and dealt with daily challenges—like your child does.



■ *The Time Machine* (H. G. Wells)

What will life be like in the future? In this classic science fiction novel, a man travels in a time machine. He discovers a society without disease, poverty, or war—but the people have also lost the qualities that make each person unique. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Pass Go and Collect \$200: The Real Story of How Monopoly Was Invented* (Tanya Lee Stone)

Learn all about how one of the most famous and beloved board games was invented by Lizzie Magie in the 1800s. The history of Monopoly is told in this nonfiction book that includes a trivia section and Monopoly Math problems for readers to solve.



Nonfiction family fun

Biographies...science... history...nonfiction books not only give your youngster practical reasons to read, they're fun and interesting, too. Use these ideas to encourage her to enjoy and learn from nonfiction.



Explore art

Ask each family member to read a biography of a famous artist. Then, talk about the artists' lives and how they created their art. Each person can choose her favorite and do an art project based on that artist's style. If your child picks Georges Seurat, she can try *pointillism*—Seurat's technique of making entire pictures with tiny dots.

Discover nature

Field guides and other nature books have detailed photographs and descriptions of trees, birds, and flowers. They can introduce your youngster to new vocabulary and spark her interest in science. Plus, they'll get the whole family outdoors. You might find one at the

library and use it to identify plants and animals in your neighborhood.

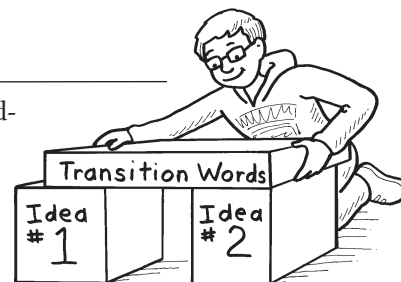
Delve into history

Read about family trees in a book like *Climbing Your Family Tree* (Ira Wolfman). Gather photos and information from relatives (full names, dates and places of birth), and make your own family tree. Or pick a local landmark, such as a historic home or battlefield. Then, read about it in your library's local history section, or research it online. 📖

Transition words

Writers use transition words to help readers move smoothly from one idea to the next. Show your child these ways to use them when he writes.

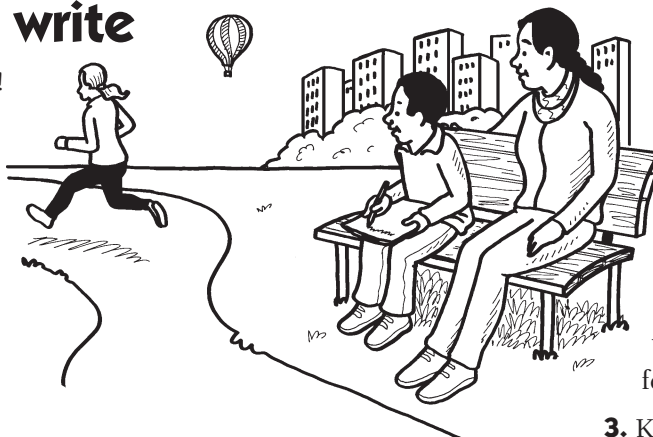
- **To indicate order:** *first, second, next, then, finally, last.* (First, Josie unlocked the door. Then, she opened it. Finally, she peeked inside.)
- **To compare ideas:** *like, unlike, however, instead, still, also.* (Unlike spiders, which have eight legs, bees have only six legs.)
- **To indicate cause and effect:** *because, since, as a result, therefore, so.* (Since it's getting late, we have to go to bed.) 📖



Stop, drop, and write

Anytime is a great time to write! Spark your child's enthusiasm for writing with these spur-of-the-moment activities.

1. Bring a spiral notebook along for writing on the go. He can choose three things he spots, say a jogger, a hot-air balloon, and a park bench. Then, ask him to write a news report that uses all three. When he finishes,



he can pretend to be a TV or radio reporter and “broadcast” his story to you.

2. Hang a poster board on your child's bedroom door, and let him use markers and colored pencils to cover it with “graffiti.” He could write interesting quotes, compose poems, or draw comic strips. When the board is full, he's ready for a new one.

3. Keep index cards on hand for “writing breaks.” A family member can hand out cards and ask everyone to stop and write about what they're thinking or doing. *Idea:* Exchange cards and take turns reading one another's words aloud. 📖

Parent ² Parent Speak confidently

My son's teacher told me that Jeremy tends to mumble and look down when he talks. She explained that this will affect his grades as oral presentations become more important in school.

Mrs. Ross suggested that I give Jeremy opportunities to practice at home. We started with phone calls. I had him RSVP for a family reunion and make his own dental appointment. Then he worked on face-to-face communication. He practiced making eye contact as he ordered at restaurants or asked store clerks where to find items.



When Jeremy's next presentation rolled around, he rehearsed speaking clearly, looking at his audience, and using gestures. He said it went well—and he told me the practice helped him feel more confident. 📖

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
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5583



Habits of good readers

A good reader doesn't necessarily know every word or immediately understand everything she reads. But she does know strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words and understanding tough material. Your youngster can use this checklist when she reads:

- Before I read, I skim the book cover, inside flap, table of contents, or chapter subheads so I know what to expect (and look for) when reading.
- I pause while I'm reading to visualize a story event or jot down information. This helps me understand and remember what I read.
- I slow down when a book gets confusing so I don't miss anything important. If necessary, I go back and slowly reread difficult material. 📖



Fun with Words Digging up roots

Has your child ever wondered how spelling bee contestants learn all those long words?

One of their secrets is understanding word roots. For example, the root *geo* means *earth* (*geography*), *voc* means *word* (*vocabulary*), and *sub* means *under* (*submarine*). Help your child learn more about roots with this game.

Find a list of roots in a dictionary or online. Then, let your youngster choose one and read

its definition. Now take turns calling out a word with that root. The twist? Your word can be real or made up. For *phon* (*sound*), she might say *xylophone* (real) or *cellophone* (made up).

The other person has to say if the word is real—and, if so, give its definition. Then, look it up in the dictionary to check. If she's right, or she correctly identified the word as fake, she picks a new root for the next round. 📖

