INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2021

Title I

Book Picks

■ ***Maker Lab: 28 Super Cool Projects*** *(Jack Challoner)*

Get your STEM on with this book of science and engineering projects. Using things found around the house, your child can create a DNA model, make monster marshmallows, build a soap-powered boat, and much more. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***Coo*** *(Kaela Noel)*
A unique 10-year-old girl named Coo was raised by pigeons, and a rooftop is the only home she's ever known. But now she must enter the human world to get help for her flock. Follow along as Coo learns about friendship and family in this heartwarming tale.

■ ***Noah Webster: Weaver of Words*** *(Pegi Deitz Shea)*
Noah Webster is most famous for his dictionary, but in this biography, readers will discover other ways he shaped our language. He wrote books teaching children to read and spell, and he influenced American English—changing British spellings like *colour* and *traveller* to *color* and *traveler*.

■ ***Poptropica: Mystery of the Map*** *(Jack Chabert)*
Three friends take a ride in a hot-air balloon that crashes on a mystery island, and their adventure begins! Welcome to Poptropica, filled with Vikings, extinct animals, and other surprising discoveries. The first book in the Poptropica graphic novel series.

What's it about?

Students who think about what they're reading tend to understand and remember the material. Encourage your youngster to put on his thinking cap when he reads with these tips.

Discuss

Talk with your child about books. For example, you could have him tell you why he thinks a book is interesting (the main character lives in Africa) or how it makes him feel (happy, curious). When he's finished reading, ask him if he would recommend the book to a friend. Why or why not? Discussing what he reads will help him understand the plot and characters better.

Visualize

Picturing the plot or a concept in a book can strengthen your youngster's comprehension. He may want to sketch a scene or character from a chapter book. If he's reading a textbook, he might draw a plant or an atom and label its parts. He'll learn to visualize when he reads, even if he doesn't draw every time.

Summarize

Suggest that your child write in response to books. He can practice summarizing a plot by writing a book review to share with the whole family. He could even submit it to a magazine like *Stone Soup* (*stonesoup.com*) or an online bookstore. Or he can show how he feels about a book by writing a poem about it.

A shortcut to reading fun

What kind of book has many plots and dozens of characters? A short-story collection! Consider these reasons for your child to try this type of fiction:

- Action usually moves quickly in short stories. A fast-paced tale can motivate a reluctant or struggling reader.
- Some collections allow children to sample different authors. After your youngster reads one, visit the library for titles by the writers she liked best.
- A book with various topics is bound to have something for everyone. If your child doesn't like one story, she might enjoy another.

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Memories of me

Inspire your youngster to enjoy writing nonfiction by focusing on a topic she's an expert on: herself! Here are suggestions to help her turn her memories into a memoir.

Narrow the focus. A memoir often zeroes in on one slice of the writer's life. For example, your child might write about the first thing she remembers clearly, such as making pierogies with Grandma when she was little. Or perhaps she wants to describe a turning point in her life, like becoming a big sister.

Choose a format. Memoirs can take different forms. If your youngster likes poetry, suggest that she write a series of poems. Or she could create a picture book memoir with text and drawings. Another idea is to tell her tale in graphic novel format.

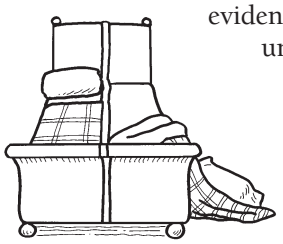
Dig deeper. An interesting memoir goes beyond simply stating what happened. As your child writes about an event ("We went strawberry picking on a beautiful spring day"), remind her to weave in her thoughts and feelings ("I was surprised that the strawberries grew so close to the ground").

Let's debate

With this family debate, you'll actually encourage your child to argue with you. She'll get better at making logical arguments and backing them up with evidence—skills she needs for school assignments.

1. Pick a topic. You might debate about whether people should make their beds every day or about which way to put toilet paper into the holder.

2. Prepare notes. Have each person jot down her opinion ("Making your bed seems pointless") and supporting evidence ("You just unmake it every night"). Family members should also write ways to rebut—or argue against—the opposite view. How will your youngster respond if someone says an unmade bed looks messy? *Example:* "Yes, but you can close your door so no one sees it."



3. Debate. Take turns making your cases and rebutting opposing arguments. Then, try to decide who made the most convincing case—whether you agree with that person or not.

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 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

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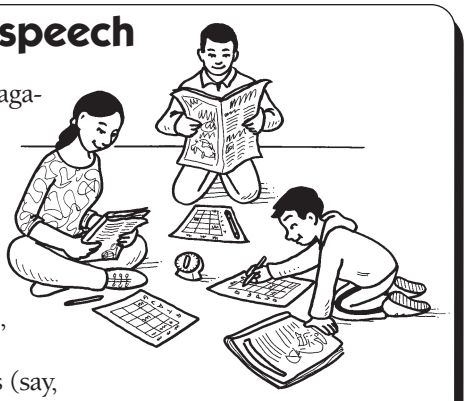
Fun with Words: Fill in the part of speech



Dive into a newspaper or magazine, and race to find parts of speech in this game.

Materials: *pencils, paper, newspaper or magazines, timer*

Have each player draw a 3 x 5 grid on his paper and write a part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) above each column. Then, let your youngster pick five random letters (say, *S*, *T*, *A*, *V*, and *G*), and write one to the left of each row. Give each person a section of the newspaper or a magazine, and set a timer for three minutes.

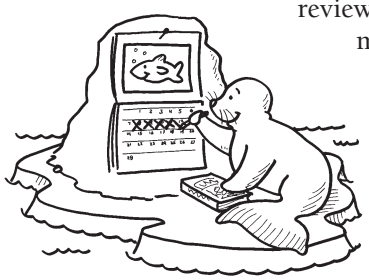
Players race to fill their grids with words from the newspaper or magazine. For example, your child might fill his *S* row with *sunshine* (noun), *sell* (verb), and *superior* (adjective).

When time is up, check the grids, and cross out any words that are in the wrong column (use a dictionary if you're not sure). The player with the most words remaining wins.

Parent 2 Parent: Manage reading assignments

My son Oliver likes to read, but only when he gets to choose the book. He has always struggled to finish assigned reading that he thinks is "boring."

I remembered having the same problem at his age. What helped was reading a few pages each day rather than leaving the whole assignment until the last minute. So I suggested that Oliver divide the number of assigned pages by the number of days. He writes each day's page numbers on his calendar and crosses them off as he finishes.



Also, I encouraged Oliver to learn as much as possible about a book before he opens it. He enjoys online reviews, and reading goes more smoothly once he has an idea of what a story is about. To his surprise, he has even discovered a few new favorites along the way!