

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2018

Book Picks

■ *Cosmic*

(Frank Cottrell Boyce)

Twelve-year-old Liam is tall for his age, and he and his friend Florida think it's funny to pretend they're father and son. They go so far as to use this joke to win a trip to outer space. When their rocket veers off course, everyone expects "Dad" to save the day—not knowing he's just a kid. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Dara Palmer's Major Drama*

(Emma Shevah)

Dara wants to star in her school's production of *The Sound of Music*.

When she's not cast, she thinks it's because she's adopted from Cambodia and doesn't look the part. In this coming-of-age story, Dara learns to take pride in her heritage.

■ *A Child Through Time: The Book of Children's History*

(Phil Wilkinson)

How did children live in the past? This book takes young readers on an exciting journey from the Ice Age to modern times. Profiles of 30 children deliver kid-friendly information on the games, food, and clothes from different historical eras.

■ *The Mayor of Central Park*

(Avi)

Oscar isn't your typical mayor. He's a squirrel, and he's also the manager of Central Park's baseball team. When rats invade his park, Oscar must stop

them before they drive out the other animal residents. Fans of animals and baseball will enjoy this tale.



Synthesizing from start to finish

Your youngster's understanding and opinion of a book he has just started reading may be very different from the way he thinks and feels when he's finished. That's because readers *synthesize*, or adjust their thinking, as they digest a story or topic. Try these activities to help your child notice how his thinking changes as he reads.

Make a jigsaw puzzle

Synthesizing is like putting together a puzzle—you don't see the big picture until you're done. Have your youngster draw lines to divide a poster board into 8–10 puzzle pieces, number each piece, and cut them apart.

Then, he could write about his growing comprehension of a story on separate puzzle pieces. The first piece might say, "This book seems to be about two kids who have nothing in common and don't like each other." And the final piece may read, "Now I know that the story was actually about accepting differences." Each time he fills out a piece, he adds it to the puzzle. When he finishes the book, he can read his puzzle in order.

STORY NEWS



Be a newscaster

Invite your child to pretend he's reporting on a "developing story." He can give you updates that reflect his latest understanding as he reads several nonfiction books on the same topic.

Say he's researching the Titanic. His original "broadcast" could be: "A ship sank, and there weren't enough lifeboats to save everyone." As he reads on and discovers that there's more to the story, perhaps he'll report: "Many more passengers would've been saved if the lifeboats had been filled to capacity." ■

Experiment with point of view

One fun part of being an author is that you get to decide which character will tell the story. Help your child see how interesting a change in perspective can be!

● Encourage your youngster to rewrite a familiar story. For example, she might have Babe the Blue Ox tell the tale of Paul Bunyan. The original version makes the lumberjack's feats sound pretty amazing—is Babe in awe of his owner, or tired of his antics?

● If a visitor from the distant future came to your town, what would he think of it? Suggest that your youngster draw one comic strip showing a day from her point of view ("We rode the school bus"), and another showing the time traveler's ("We traveled in a rickety yellow capsule and stayed on the ground the whole time"). ■



Poetry writing made easy!

Poems are a great way for children to express themselves and practice writing. Use these ideas to spark your youngster's interest in poetry.

Acrostic "selfie." Have your child write her name vertically down the left side of a sheet of paper. Now she could begin each line of a poem about herself with a letter of her name:

*Each day brings new adventures
Middle child and only girl
In dance class I love to twirl
Living in a little town
You know I love to be a clown!*



Shape poem. This idea encourages your youngster to choose words that will fit specific line lengths. Suggest that she draw the outline of an object,

perhaps a ladybug or a flower. Then, she can write a poem that fills the space inside. For instance, the first and last lines of a poem about ladybugs would be shorter than the middle lines:

*Bright
speck of red
on a green leaf;
cute little ladybug
with polka-dots.
Fly away
home!*

**Fun
with
Words**

Sentence scramble

Encourage your child to think about sentence structure and grammar with this cooperative game.

1. Secretly write a sentence from a book on a sheet of paper, and cut the words apart. Mix them up, and place them in a bowl on the ground.



2. Have two or more players line up 15 feet from the bowl.

3. On "Go," the first player runs to the bowl, grabs a word, and returns to the line.

4. He tags the next player, who runs to pick up a word, and so on.

5. Once the players collect all the words, they rebuild the sentence together. *Tip:* Suggest that they find the subject, add the verb, and then look for ways the remaining words could fit into the sentence.

6. Play again using a new sentence from the book. ■

**Parent
2
Parent**

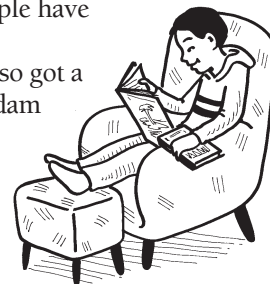
The perfect pair: Fiction and nonfiction

My son Adam loves adventure novels. Reading these stories has made him curious about things like exotic locations and extreme sports. When he asked questions I couldn't answer, it reminded me of how his teacher wants kids to read more nonfiction.

So when he wondered how many people have climbed Mt. Everest, I suggested that he look for a nonfiction book about the mountain. Adam borrowed a school library book and learned that more than 4,000 people have reached the summit.

Then, when he checked out a story set in Antarctica, he also got a nonfiction book about scientists living and working there. Adam said that knowing which events and details in the story were based on facts made the book even better for him!

Now Adam often reads fiction and nonfiction that are related. He's picking up a lot of new facts—and reading more books, too. ■



Q&A

Building your child's book collection

Q I've heard it's good for kids to have books of their own, but we're on a budget. Any tips on building a home library for my daughter?

A You're right. Having books at home is one of the best ways to improve reading achievement. And kids love seeing old favorites on their shelves to read whenever they like.

Now that spring is here, consider going to yard sales or flea

markets with your child to pick out books. The school book fair is another place to stock up on low-cost books. And don't forget year-round opportunities like used bookstores, thrift shops, and discount online bookstores.

Finally, friends and relatives may have chapter books or children's nonfiction books they're finished with. Let them know your daughter would love to inherit them—you could even offer to pick them up. ■



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