

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

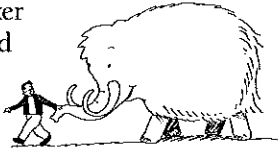
April 2012

Oakview Elementary School  
Title I Reading

## Book Picks

### ■ The Boy at the End of the World

When Fisher wakes up, the world has been destroyed. He and his robot caretaker set out to find other survivors. Along the way, they encounter some unlikely companions, including a woolly mammoth and a talking prairie dog. A science fiction novel by Greg van Eekhout.



### ■ Meet the Dancers: From Ballet, Broadway, and Beyond



Amy Nathan introduces readers to 16 dancers through a series of short biographies. Learn about their childhoods and careers in

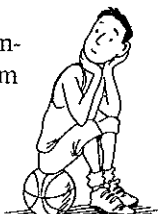
ballet, modern dance, jazz, and hip-hop. The dancers also offer advice on choosing the right style and how to juggle practices and schoolwork.

### ■ Secrets at Sea

In Richard Peck's funny adventure, four mice siblings stow away on a ship to Europe. They cross a big ocean, visit Buckingham Palace, and see royalty. They also face dangers from cats and people, and it's up to the oldest mouse to keep her little sisters and brother safe.

### ■ Taking Sides

Lincoln Mendoza loves his basketball team in the poor part of town. But when his family moves to the suburbs, he has to change teams. Can Lincoln compete against his old team without losing friends? A book about loyalty by Gary Soto. (Also available in Spanish.)



## Rarin' to read

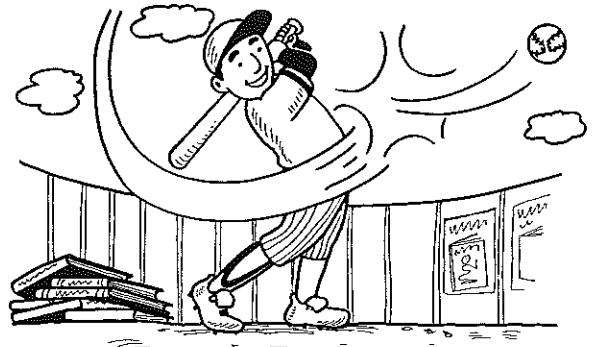
Children who read for pleasure tend to be higher achievers overall. Get your youngster reading by encouraging him to find books he likes, to set aside time to read, and to track his progress. Here's how.

### Find books

Suggest that your child read reviews by students his age, since they may have similar interests and tastes. He can look for reviews at sites like [spaghettibookclub.org](http://spaghettibookclub.org) and [teacher.scholastic.com/activities/swyar](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/swyar). He might also ask a librarian where to find lists of award-winning books. **Tip:** Encourage him to give a new book a fair shot. If he doesn't like it after a couple of chapters, he can try something else.

### Set goals

Setting goals can help make reading a habit. For example, your youngster might aim to finish one book per week or to read a certain number of pages or chapters each day. **Tip:** Help him create a reading spot that's free from distractions



so his book isn't competing with a TV, a computer, a cell phone, or noisy siblings.

### Record progress

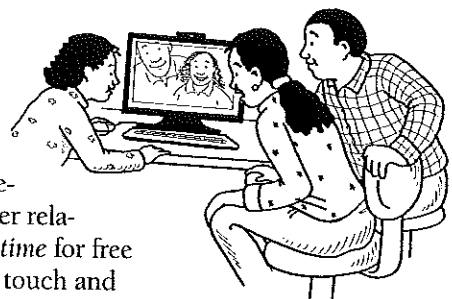
Have your child think of a fun way to keep track of his reading. If he likes baseball, for instance, he might draw a baseball diamond. Each time he starts a new book, he writes the title on a sticky note and puts it in the batter's box. When he finishes the book, he moves it to first base, and a new title steps up to bat. As he completes each book, the previous one moves to the next base. After the fourth one, he'll have a "run." **Tip:** Have him see how many runs he can score each month. 📖

## Family chats

Did you know that talking with your child can help her express ideas clearly and contribute to class discussions? Give her something to talk about with these ideas:

- Hold weekly conference calls on the telephone or online with grandparents or other relatives. (Try [skype.com](http://skype.com) or [apple.com/mac/facetime](http://apple.com/mac/facetime) for free video calls.) This is a great way to keep in touch and encourage your child to join a conversation.

- Ask an "If you..." question to get everyone thinking. **Example:** "If you could have a superpower, what would it be?" Have each person share her answer and explain her reasoning. Then, let your child pose a new "If you" question. 📖



## Attention to detail

Vivid details make your youngster's writing more interesting. And getting a first-hand look at something she's describing can help her be more specific. Share these strategies for her to use when she writes stories.

### No names allowed

Can your child describe a character, a setting, or an object without telling what it is? If the topic is her redecorated bedroom, for example, she might sit on the floor, look around her, and write, "The soft, pink carpet reminded me of fluffy cotton candy."

### Specific verbs

Suggest that your youngster think of active verbs that illustrate what she sees, rather than using uninteresting verbs like



"was" or "went." When she's outside, she might notice how a tractor moves along a road. Later, she can incorporate the details into a story about a girl living on a farm: "The tractor crept slowly along the dirt road" (instead of "The tractor went down the road").

### My five senses

Have your child use at least one of her senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch) in her description. If she's writing about making s'mores, you might toast marshmallows together so she can notice how it smells and tastes. *Example:* "A sweet, toasty scent filled the air as my marshmallow turned golden brown." ■

## Fun with Words

### Words in a cloud

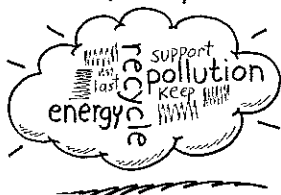
What kind of cloud can help your child think about words that she reads? A word cloud!

After reading a textbook chapter, ask her to list 20–25 words used. Then, have her rank each word by importance. In a chapter about the environment, for instance, she might put words like *bio-dynamic* and *pollution* at the top of her list and words like *keep* and *use* at the bottom.

Next, let her draw the outline of a big, puffy cloud on a piece of paper.

Inside, she can write the words vertically, horizontally, or diagonally and in different colors and sizes—making the most important words stand out. When she looks at her cloud, she'll have a snapshot of the chapter.

**Tip:** Have her type a paragraph of the text into [wordle.net](http://wordle.net) to see what the computer does with it. ■



## Q&A

### Keeping a journal

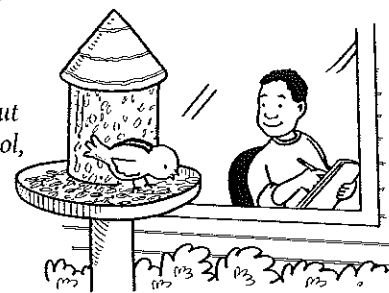
**Q** My son likes to make up stories, but when it comes to writing reports for school, he's not as comfortable. How can I help?

**A** Encourage your youngster to keep a journal on a subject he likes. He'll discover that nonfiction writing can also be interesting.

For example, if he likes science, he could write everyday observations about animals, plants, and weather in a notebook. He might sketch birds that he sees in the backyard and write about their features or what they're doing. Or he could record the weather daily and make predictions for the following week.

If he enjoys history, suggest that he write down two or three facts about something he learns each day in school ("Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific Ocean on November 24, 1805"). Then, he might use those facts to create diary entries for the explorers, or he could draw and label a map of their expedition.

Talk to your child about what kind of journal he might like to keep. Knowing that he can write about anything he wants might help him learn to enjoy nonfiction writing more. ■



## Parent 2 Parent

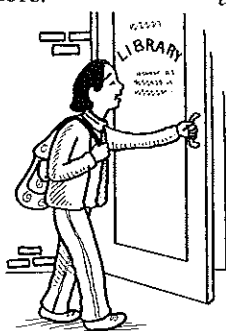
### Rediscover the library

When my daughter Adrienne was little, we went to the library on Saturday mornings. But as she got older, she decided the library wasn't "cool" anymore.

I wanted to keep her interested in reading and thought going to the library was a good way to do that. I asked the children's librarian for ideas, and she suggested showing Adrienne the list of events for her age group and letting her choose a few to do with friends.

On a rainy Saturday morning, I took her and her best friend to the library's Readers' Theater Club meeting. The librarian passed out copies of a book, and each child picked a character to play. Another week Adrienne and her friend tried the library's world record scavenger hunt.

After the meetings end, we spend a little time looking through the shelves for books. My daughter seems to be enjoying the activities, and I'm happy that she's back in the library! ■



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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