

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2009

Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts

## Book Picks



### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ *Snowmen at Night*

What do snowmen do while people sleep? When a little boy wakes up to find his snowman outside looking “droopy,” he decides they must stay up all night. He pictures them skating, racing, and throwing snowballs. A fun wintry tale by Caralyn Buehner.



#### ■ *Who Is the Beast?*

A friendly tiger wonders why the animals are hiding from an unseen “beast.”



Eventually, he realizes they’re afraid of him. He can’t understand why, since he has so much in common with them: whiskers like the fish, green eyes like the snake. A story about similarities and differences by Keith Baker. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ *Northern Lights A to Z*

What causes the aurora borealis? Readers will discover facts and legends surrounding the colorful sky show in this alphabet book by Mindy Dwyer. It explains the science behind the phenomenon and tells about the ancient stories that were invented to explain the northern lights.

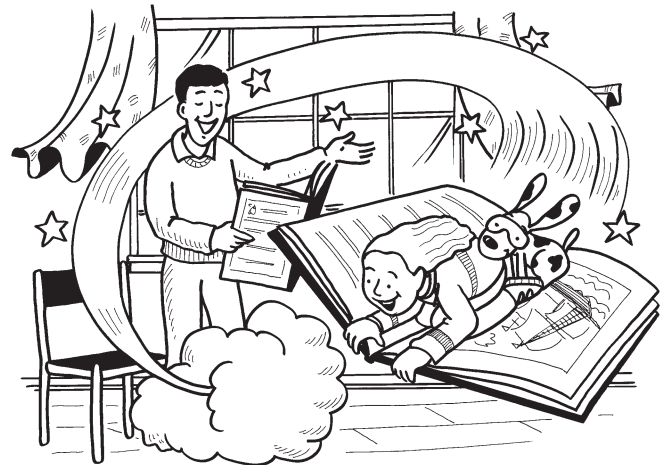
#### ■ *The Ballad of Valentine*

Youngsters will enjoy singing along to Alison Jackson’s Valentine version of “Clementine.” A man tries to declare his love to his sweetheart, but his messages never arrive. After a cyclone erases his skywriting and a pigeon delivers his letter to Madagascar, how will he ever get his point across?



## Exciting read-alouds

Your child probably loves to listen to her teacher read aloud. Hearing her read smoothly and with expression makes a book magical! Help your child learn to be a “fluent reader,” too, with these ideas.



#### Hold a story hour.

Take turns reading aloud. When it’s your turn, set an example. Smile and raise your voice during exciting parts. Frown and read quietly when a character is sad. On your youngster’s turn, remind her to use a “reading voice.” For instance, when she sees quotation marks, that’s a clue to speak like she thinks the character would sound. *Tip:* She can practice story hour by reading to siblings or dolls.

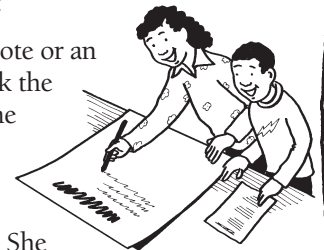
**Make a book on tape.** Ask your child to choose a story, and record yourself reading it slowly on one side of the tape. On the other side, read at a normal pace. Your youngster can practice reading along with the book on the slow side first. When she’s comfortable, she can flip the tape over and read along more quickly.

**Give extra help.** If your child is a new or struggling reader, ask her to copy a sentence from a story onto a big strip of paper. Use different colored highlighters to emphasize words. Then, have her read the sentence and stress the highlighted words. You might also read one page of a story and let your youngster read it right after you, mimicking your expression.♥

## How can I help?

If you’d like to help support the reading program at your child’s school but aren’t sure you have time, try these ideas:

▲ Send a note or an e-mail to ask the teacher if she has take-home projects you can do. She might send instructions and materials to make classroom games (spelling bingo, vocabulary tic-tac-toe). Or she may ask you to copy poems or vocabulary definitions onto poster board.



▲ Volunteer in the classroom once a month. You could read with children one-on-one or help them make their stories into books.

▲ Get involved after school hours. Offer to help students prepare for a spelling bee in the afternoon, or join conversation clubs for families learning English.♥

# Family times

Creating a family magazine will build your child's writing skills and creativity. Help him follow these steps to "publish" a magazine he'll be proud to share.

**1. Pick a theme.** If your family loves singing and playing instruments, your youngster might design a music magazine. A child who enjoys hiking and camping could choose an outdoor theme.

**2. Design a cover.** Have him write the magazine's title on construction paper and add a photo. *Example:* "Camping Coopers" might show your family toasting marshmallows over a campfire.



**3. Write articles.** Your youngster can pretend to be a reporter and interview family members. He might ask, "What is your favorite song?" or, "Where are the best camping spots?" Help him type articles based on their responses.

**4. Create a photo spread.** Suggest that your child arrange several family pictures on a piece of paper and write captions. *Examples:* "Mom and Jeff play the piano together." "Dad and Kendra build a campfire."

**5. Publish.** Hole-punch the pages and tie them together with a colorful piece of yarn. Display your youngster's magazine on a bookshelf for everyone to enjoy! ♥

# Prefixes and suffixes

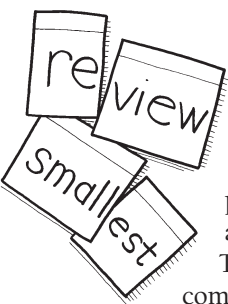


Knowing about prefixes and suffixes can help your youngster learn longer words. She will become a better speller and her vocabulary will grow when she practices using these common word beginnings and endings.

Together, brainstorm a list of prefixes and suffixes. For example, you might write down *re-*, *un-*, and *mis-* for prefixes and *-est*, *-ful*, and *-ly* for suffixes. Then, help your child come up with words that

contain each one. For the prefix *re-*, you could list *rewind*, *review*, and *restart*. For the suffix *-est*, she might think of *smallest*, *fastest*, and *coldest*.

Finally, have your youngster write each word on a separate index card and cut off the prefixes and suffixes. Mix all the cards up, and have her put the words back together. See if she can make new words, too! ♥



## Parent to Parent

### Buddy writing

When my neighbor mentioned that her daughter enjoyed writing in her journal, I wished my child would keep one, too. We decided that if we encouraged the girls to write to one another, they'd both get extra practice.

We gave them a sparkly notebook to share and a few colored pens of their own. Then, we asked that each girl keep the journal for one week, write as much as she wanted, and trade it on Monday morning.

To get them started, we sat down together and filled the first page with a list of ideas like "Start a story for the other to finish" or "Write a friendly letter."

Soon, the girls began passing their journal more than once a week. When it was full, I got them a second one so they could keep on writing! ♥

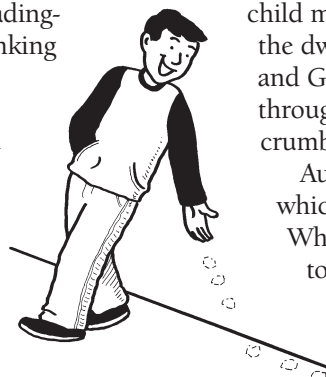


## Fun with Words

### Fairy tale charades

An evening of family fairy tale fun can improve your child's reading-comprehension and thinking skills.

Get a volume of fairy tales such as *The Golden Book of Fairy Tales* (Marie Ponsot) or *Classic Fairy Tales* (Scott Gustafson). Read stories together, and write each title on a slip of paper.



Then, take turns picking a title to act out silently. For "Snow White," your child might act sleepy and grumpy like the dwarves. If he chooses "Hansel and Gretel," he could pretend to walk through a forest, throwing bread-crumbs over his shoulder.

Audience members try to guess which fairy tale is being performed. Whoever guesses correctly gets to act out the next story. Your youngster will have so much fun, he'll be reading happily ever after. ♥

### 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 Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5648