

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Pollard School Reading Room
Ms. Tozier and Mrs. Rockwell

Reading contributes to test success

Being a strong reader helps a child succeed on tests, even if it's just to read instructions. To prepare your child for tests:

- **Talk with the teacher** about your child's progress. Ask how you can help at home.
- **Read a variety of materials** with your child. Pose questions such as, "How do you think the story will end?"
- **Keep a list of words** your child doesn't understand. Look them up in the dictionary together and have fun using them.
- **Practice following directions.** Have her help you read a recipe, for example, and make a special snack together.
- **Enjoy reading as a family.** Visit the library often so everyone can pick interesting books.
- **Use the Internet.** The teacher or librarian may be able to recommend good reading websites.

Source: Tori Mello Bachman, *Prepare Your Child for Reading Tests* (International Reading Association, 302-731-1600, www.reading.org).



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Share interesting nonfiction with your child

When your child grows up, he will probably read many nonfiction items, such as newspapers and magazines. He can begin practicing and enjoying this skill now.

Reading interesting nonfiction may:

- **Introduce him to new kinds of writing.** He may try using different writing styles himself.
- **Help on standardized tests,** because both fiction and nonfiction passages are used in these exams.
- **Boost excitement about reading.** If your child loves one book he reads, he may decide to read others.

To enhance your child's nonfiction reading, ask questions that provoke thought: "What do you think about that?" Connect reading to real life, too: "Let's try that soccer kick you read about."

Source: V. Susan Bennett-Armistead and Nell K. Duke, "Nonfiction Reading in the Intermediate Grades," Scholastic.com, http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/classmags/files/NonFict_Intermediate.pdf.

Reading aloud to your child makes reading more exciting



If your child isn't excited about books, reading to him might help. Why? Because you can:

- **Show enthusiasm** for the story you're reading.
- **Expose your child** to new words and ideas.
- **Learn more** about your child's interests.
- **Make reading fun.**

If your child is receptive, choose a book that's easy for him to read. Then take turns reading together. Try reading a page then having your child read the next.

Source: Elizabeth Kennedy, "Resources for Reluctant Readers," About.com, <http://childrensbooks.about.com/cs/reluctantreaders/a/reluctantreader.htm>.



Reading tip

Did you know that pictures in books do more than just entertain? They also provide clues about the story. If your child isn't sure about a word, looking at a picture might clarify things for her.

Source: Barbara Rowley, "The joy of reading," CNN.com, www.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/08/24/joy.of.reading.par/index.html.

Parent support helps build children's reading skills



Teachers do an excellent job of teaching kids to read. But parents are a key part of the process. In addition to reading at home and helping with reading homework, offer to read aloud to your child's class, if possible. When parents read with kids, everyone benefits.

Reading can boost writing skills

Can you imagine *writing* a book without ever *reading* one? How about a letter or even an email? Reading is an excellent way to teach about writing. For example, reading:

- **Builds vocabulary.** If your child reads a new word and understands its meaning, she may use it in writing.
- **Introduces styles.** It's fun for kids to see different kinds of writing—such as humorous, persuasive and suspenseful. This provides inspiration!
- **Increases knowledge.** Reading helps students learn about new topics and favorite subjects. It's exciting to write about new ideas.
- **Is personal.** When kids read, they explore at their own pace. This is a relaxed chance to learn and think. Writing can be an extension of this.

Source: Linda Williams Aber, *101 Ways to Boost Your Writing Skills*, ISBN: 0-8167-3835-9 (Troll Communications).

Learn a word a day to build your child's vocabulary

To build your child's vocabulary at home, have him learn a new word each day. Who knows, maybe you'll learn some new words, too! Here are some ideas:

- **Assign a new word** each morning. Post it on the refrigerator. Have your child look it up in the dictionary.
- **Have each family member** use the word during the day and come up with a synonym for it.
- **Discuss the word** of the day over dinner. How many times did your child use the word today?



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"Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are."

—Mason Cooley



Q: My child's teacher suggested using "mnemonic devices" for studying. What are these?

A: These are tricks people use to remember things. For example, ROY G. BIV stands for the colors in the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet). "I before E except after C" helps with spelling words, such as *thief*, although there are exceptions, especially words that sound like *neighbor* or *weigh*.

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.



For lower elementary readers:

Below, by Nina Crews (Henry Holt and Co.). Young Jack's toy falls through a hole in the stairs. His journey to retrieve it requires—and inspires—imagination.

The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor, by Joanna Cole (Scholastic Press). Ms. Frizzle's class needs to learn about the ocean. With a silly lifeguard along for the ride, they head underwater.

For upper elementary readers:

The Snow Baby: The Arctic Childhood of Admiral Robert E. Peary's Daring Daughter, by Katherine Kirkpatrick (Holiday House). What is it like to be the child of an explorer? This biography provides the answer with intriguing words and photos.

To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel, by Siena Cherson Siegel (Atheneum/Richard Jackson). Children who enjoy graphic novels will fly through this book, which describes a young ballerina's struggles and triumphs.

Build your child's fluency

Being a fluent reader means being able to read quickly, accurately and with feeling. It helps kids concentrate on meaning. Try this activity:

1. **Read to your child** something that she can read, too.
2. **Have your child read** the material silently. Then she can read it aloud to you several times.

Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, "What Works in Fluency Instruction," Reading Rockets, www.readingrockets.org/article/72; Partnership for Reading, "What is Guided Oral Reading?" Reading Rockets, www.readingrockets.org/article/67.

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