

# Building Readers<sup>®</sup>



Pollard School Reading Room  
Ms. Tozier and Mrs. Rockwell

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

## Be creative about family reading

Many families read together at night, and this is a wonderful tradition. To make reading an even bigger part of your routine:

- **Bring books anywhere** your child may need entertainment (in the car, in line, etc.).
- **Read favorite books** before school at the breakfast table.
- **Give books as gifts.** Let your child pick some he'd like to share.
- **Visit the library** every week and fill a special bag with new books to read.
- **Plan a book-themed** birthday party. Hand out books as favors.
- **Hang a paper "reading tree"** on the wall. Add a leaf for each book your family reads.

**Source:** "Family Reading Traditions," Family Reading Partnership, [www.familyreading.org/i-traditions.htm](http://www.familyreading.org/i-traditions.htm).



### Tip

Parents can make a big difference in preparing kids for spelling tests. Say each spelling word aloud in a sentence. Then encourage your child to imagine the word before writing it down. Also, give "practice tests" the same way the teacher gives real tests.

**Source:** "Help Your Child Ace His Next Spelling Test," FamilyEducation, <http://school.familyeducation.com/homework/spelling/38538.html>.



## Simple activity teaches about adjectives

To teach about adjectives, think of one with your child, such as "beautiful." Then have her write it in a way that shows its meaning. For example, your child could use soft colors, cursive writing or pretty decorations.

**Source:** Marilyn B., "Adjectives and Art," Pro Teacher, [www.proteacher.net/archive/posts/2003/01/24/53836.html](http://www.proteacher.net/archive/posts/2003/01/24/53836.html).

## Make reading a tempting option

Research shows that when parents are reading role models, kids benefit. Show that you read for fun. Keep books around you'll want to read—and do the same for your child. List irresistible topics (dinosaurs, sports, etc.), and then find books or articles about them. Leave them in relaxing spots, such as on a couch or bed, for you and your child to enjoy.

**Source:** Beverly B. Swanson, "How Can I Improve My Child's Reading," KidSource OnLine, [www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/improve.reading.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/improve.reading.html).



**Q:** The teacher says my child needs to work on reading comprehension. How can I help?

**A:** Talk with your child about what she reads. Make sure she understands it. Discuss all kinds of things, such as characters, plot and word definitions. Link reading to her life. Does she relate to characters or situations? Ask the teacher for suggestions too.

**Source:** "Target the Problem! Comprehension, Reading Rockets," [www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/comprehension](http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/comprehension).



Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Using resources

Grammar isn't boring in "The Grammar Gorillas" at funbrain.com ([www.funbrain.com/grammar/index.html](http://www.funbrain.com/grammar/index.html)). Kids choose a beginner or advanced version of the game. Then they find parts of speech (such as nouns and verbs). Correct answers win bananas!

## Reading's benefits are endless

Perhaps your child has asked why reading is so important. Or maybe you've wondered yourself. Why does reading get so much attention? Some reasons include:

- **Reading helps** in every school subject.
- **Reading builds** vocabulary easily.
- **Reading encourages** imagination.
- **Reading for fun boosts** test scores.
- **Reading can improve** writing and spelling.
- **Reading makes** you a better reader!



Your child doesn't have to read complicated novels. Magazines, comic books and series books are fine. Try to find at least one series your child enjoys—and keep her returning to it.

**Source:** Cheryl Feuer Gedzelman, "Practice Makes Perfect: The Benefits of Reading for Pleasure," *Washington Parent*, April 2006 (Knollwood Publications, Inc., 301/320-2321, [www.washingtonparent.com](http://www.washingtonparent.com)).

## Reading and math are related



Some people think of reading and math as opposites. Yet they're both ways of communicating. Both words and numbers represent things. To help your child connect reading and math:

- **Read books** related to math.
- **Notice how numbers** are used in stories.

- **Ask math-related questions** about readings.
- **Put events** from a story in sequence.
- **Use diagrams**, charts and graphs to illustrate a reading.
- **Make predictions** about stories.
- **Find data** that supports an idea.
- **Research** a math concept by reading.

**Source:** Andrea K. Balas, "The Mathematics and Reading Connection," *ERICDigests.org*, [www.ericdigests.org/2000-1/math.html](http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-1/math.html).

### For Lower Elementary readers:



***Ace Lacewing Bug Detective***, by David Biedrzycki (Charlesbridge Publishing). What's

better than a mystery about bugs? A mystery about bugs with funny pictures! That's just what kids will find in this well-reviewed tale.

***Feeling Thankful***, by Shelley Rotner (Millbrook Press). There is so much to be thankful for, as all kinds of kids describe in this book. Use its words and photos to begin talks about what your child appreciates.

### For Upper Elementary readers:

***Whittington***, by Alan Armstrong (Random House). This Newbery Honor Book has both animal and human characters, including a boy who struggles with reading. It may especially appeal to kids who like cats and history.

***Princess Academy***, by Shannon Hale (Bloomsbury USA Children's Books). A prince's search for a bride changes a young girl's life in this suspenseful story, recommended for advanced readers. This, too, is a Newbery Honor Book.

## Reading term of the month

### Metaphor

A **metaphor** is a way of describing one thing in terms of something else, without being literal: "She's a breath of fresh air."

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"If we encounter a man of rare intellect, we should ask him what book he reads."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Questions help children read critically



It's important for children to think critically about what they read. Help your child by asking questions such as:

- **What does the title tell us** about the book?
- **What do you think** is going to happen next?
- **How do you think** the story might end?
- **Did that character do** the right thing?
- **What would you have done** in that situation?
- **What caused that** to happen?
- **What was the effect** of that choice?

Don't ask too many questions at once. Keep conversation natural and casual so your child enjoys talking!

**Source:** "How to Help Your Children with Reading," University of Maryland, [www.education.umd.edu/EDCI/readingcenter/HELP.HTM](http://www.education.umd.edu/EDCI/readingcenter/HELP.HTM).

### Building Readers®

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