

Book Picks



■ Don't Bump the Glump!

Shel Silverstein's playful use of language and silly sense of humor make this book popular with readers of all ages. Each poem introduces an imaginary creature, like the dancing One-Legged Zantz, the sneaky Slithergadee, and the polite Soft-Shelled Phizzint.

■ The Neverending Story

In an antique book-store, Bastian discovers a mysterious book filled with dragons and fairies. When the world inside the book turns out to be real, he must go on a quest to save it. A fantasy tale by Michael Ende. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ The Everything Kids' Cookbook

Dietitian Sandra Nissenberg wrote these 90 recipes for children. With fun names and ingredients kids will like, these dishes can inspire your youngster to be creative in the kitchen. He will also learn about healthy eating and enjoy dozens of food-related puzzles.



■ The View from Saturday

There's something special about the sixth-grade quiz-bowl team in E. L. Konigsburg's story. As your child reads about the teammates, she'll discover how their backgrounds are linked—and why they work so well together. A humorous and touching look at friendship and the differences among people.



Reading on location

Imagine reading a beach adventure while lying by the ocean or enjoying an outdoors mystery after hiking in a park. Experiences like these can help your child make connections between books and real life—a key to better reading comprehension. Try these steps.

1. Make a plan

Help your youngster list places he's likely to visit this summer. Maybe you're planning a vacation to a new city or a trip to the shore. Or he can think about day trips or local outings you might take to a museum, farm, or zoo, for example.

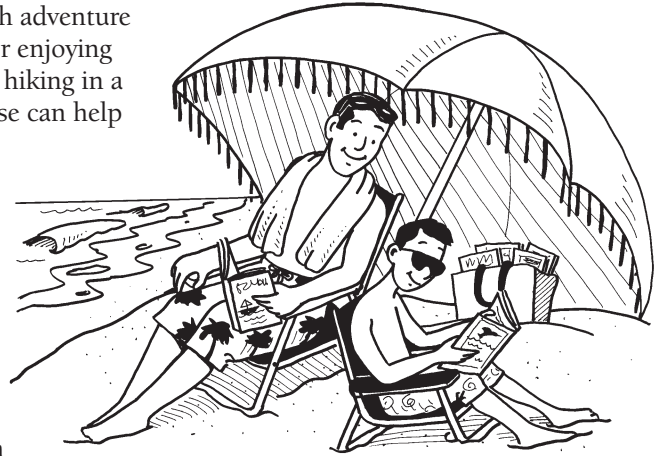
2. Find books

The next time you're at the library, have your child check out books with settings that match those on his list. For example, he might read *Escaping the Giant Wave* (Peg Kehret) on a beach trip. Or he could pair a hike in the woods with *The Growling Bear Mystery* (Gertrude Chandler Warner). Suggest that

he ask the librarian for help finding books that fit his locations.

3. Compare and contrast

Encourage your youngster to think about how the books he reads are similar to or different from his own experiences. He could compare the settings to the actual scenery around him. Or he might think about how he would react if, for instance, a huge wave came in or someone told him gold was hidden in the forest. Ideas like these will help him think more deeply about the books he reads.



Track summer reading

Let your youngster see for herself how many books she can read while school is out. Share these clever ways for keeping track.

● **Create a paper chain.** She could write the title and author of each book on a strip of paper. Then, she can staple each link around the previous one and snake the chain around her room.

● **Make a quilt.** Suggest that your child draw a picture showing her favorite part of each book. She can tape the pages together and hang her growing "quilt" on her bedroom wall.

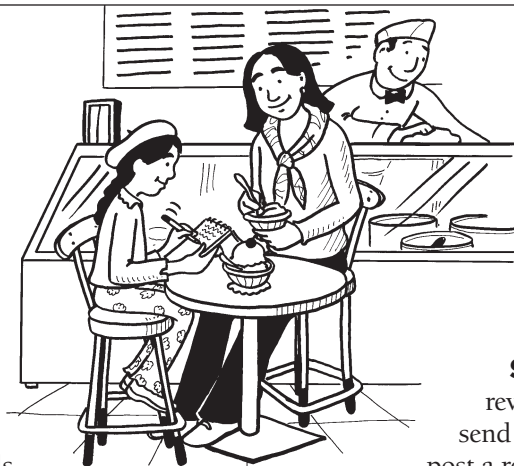
● **String a bracelet or necklace.** Have her put a bead onto yarn or string for every book she finishes.



Be a reviewer

Would your youngster like to be a critic? Suggest that she review restaurants, movies, and products. She'll have fun sharing her views with others, and she'll keep her writing skills from getting rusty during summer break. Here's how.

Take notes. Give your youngster a pocket-sized spiral notepad to write down her thoughts during a meal or movie. This will help her remember details to put in her review. *Example:* "Scoops Ice Cream Shop. Lots of flavors. Love mint chocolate chip. Not enough chunks in cookie dough."



Write. Remind her to include facts ("The Monster from Space sounds like a scary movie, but it's really a comedy") and opinions ("The special effects were great"). *Tip:* Suggest that she read reviews in magazines and newspapers and online to see different ways they can be written.

Share. Encourage your child to share her reviews with others. For instance, she might send weekly e-mails to friends and relatives or post a review on a product Web site. Getting feedback can inspire her to write more. ■

Q&A

Ready for middle school

Q My son starts middle school next year. How can we help him prepare for the reading he'll be doing there?

A In middle school, your son will be asked to do more "critical reading"—which means he'll need to analyze and evaluate what he reads. For instance, he might have to give his opinion and back it up with details from the text. Or he might have to consider an article's purpose and how the author's viewpoint influenced his thinking.

Over the summer, try to talk with your son about things you're reading, and encourage him to do the same. Another idea is to suggest that he join a book club at the library. As he discusses books with others, he'll learn more about reading critically. ■



Fun with Words

Sentence race

This timed race combines reading with outdoor fun.

Plus, it encourages your child to think about sentence structure—a boost for her writing skills.

- 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.
- Have two or more players line up 15 feet from the bowl. Choose another person to time them.
- On "Go!" the first player races to the bowl, grabs a word, and returns to the line. She tags the next player, who runs to pick up a word, and so on. Once the players collect all the words, they rebuild the sentence. *Tip:* Suggest that they find the subject, add the verb, and then look for ways the remaining words could fit into the sentence.
- Play again using a new sentence. Can they beat their time? ■



Other Picks

GAMES

■ Bubble Talk

Match captions with pictures to create hilarious combinations. One player is the "judge" for each round—to win, pick the caption that makes him laugh the hardest. This game encourages reading and a sense of humor. *Techno Source*

■ BrainBox All Around the World

In this geography memory game, players get 10 seconds to study a card containing information about a country. Then, they flip the card over to take a trivia quiz. *Mindware*



MAGAZINES

■ Fun for Kidz

Each bimonthly issue is based on a different theme and contains projects, puzzles, articles, short stories, and more. Recent editions have focused on bees, reading, and starting a business. www.funforkidzmagazines.com/funforkidz



■ Appleseeds

Your child can read about history and culture in this social studies magazine. Upcoming issues will include articles about horses, Colonial times, and ghost stories. Published nine times a year. www.cobblestonepub.com/magazine/APP

OUR PURPOSE

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

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