

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2013

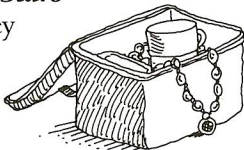
Haywood County Schools
Title 1 Program

Book Picks

■ What Came from the Stars

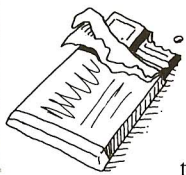
The key

to winning an alien war may be the necklace that landed in Tommy Pepper's lunch box. The trouble is that Tommy doesn't know how important the necklace is. He'll have to unlock its power to save the world in this science fiction adventure by Gary D. Schmidt.



■ Chocolate: Riches from the Rainforest

Where does chocolate come from? And what do parrots have to do with chocolate production? This nonfiction book by Robert Burleigh teaches readers about the history of chocolate, from its early origins to today's candy bars. Includes fascinating facts and mouth-watering photos.



■ Mary Poppins

When the Banks family was looking for a new nanny, they never expected someone like Mary Poppins to show up. This classic tale by P. L. Travers follows the children's adventures with their magical caretaker. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ Jim Ugly

Jake's father is presumed dead. Did he run off with a missing treasure? With the help of his dad's unruly dog, Jim Ugly, Jake must avoid a bounty hunter and other outlaws who are looking for his father. A tale of the American West by Sid Fleischman.



Meeting a reading challenge

As your child reads more difficult books and articles, he may sometimes struggle to understand the material. Here are practical tips to help him overcome hurdles and become a better reader.

Begin at the end. Have him skim a chapter summary or a novel's back cover. Getting an idea of what the selection will be about may make it easier for him to understand it.

Say what it means. Suggest that he read for several minutes and look away. Then, he can try to finish one of these statements: "I think this part is about _____" or "This section is trying to say _____." Putting the text in his own words may clarify the meaning.

Read out loud. Your youngster can try slowly reading the selection aloud. This will provide extra time for the ideas to sink in. Also, his comprehension is likely to improve by seeing *and* hearing the words.



Take a break. If he doesn't understand what he is reading, he can step away and come back to it. He might go for a walk or work on another assignment. Perhaps it will make more sense when he looks at it with a fresh eye.

Finish it. Encourage him to read all the way to the end of the section. A later sentence or paragraph may clear up his confusion. Then, he can go back to the beginning and read it again. ■

Straight from the source

Interviewing people can boost your youngster's conversation and research skills. Whether she's writing a report about gardening or about economics, have her use these suggestions to interview an expert:

- Encourage her to write down questions ahead of time. Point out that she'll get more detailed information from her source if she asks open-ended questions—ones that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer.
- Explain that an interview is like a conversation. Rather than thinking ahead to the next question, she should listen carefully so she can ask follow-up questions. The person's answers may lead her to other ideas.
- Your child will need to write down what her source says. Let her know it's okay to ask the source to repeat an answer. Also, she can read part of her notes back to the person to make sure they're right. ■



Practice for writing tests

During a standardized test, your youngster may be given a “writing prompt”—a statement or question designed to get her thinking and writing about a certain topic. Help her prepare with these activities.

Speaking prompts

In the car, have each family member answer a prompt like “Which is your favorite season? Why?” Ask questions that will encourage your child to give specific details, just as she’ll need to do on her test.



Persuasive notes

Have her put requests in writing and back them up with facts. This will help her respond to prompts that ask for her opinion on an issue. Say she wants spaghetti for dinner. She could write, “We haven’t had spaghetti in two weeks. Also, tomato sauce is a good source of vegetables, and ground turkey has lots of protein.”

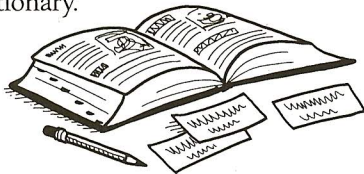
Written summaries

To help her practice for prompts that require her to summarize an article or essay, ask her to write about a movie she saw or a concert she attended. She can post her summary on the refrigerator so other family members can decide if they’d like to go, too. ■

Fun with Words

Dictionary games

These two contests can help your child learn about words and become more comfortable using a dictionary.



1. For this guessing game, your youngster picks an unfamiliar word from the dictionary and reads it out loud. Then, he copies its definition on a slip of paper while everyone else writes what they think the word means. Next, he collects the definitions and reads them to the whole family, and each player guesses which one is correct. Let another person pick a word, and play again.

2. In this competition, players try to think of words with multiple meanings. For example, *merriam-webster.com* lists six definitions for *plane*. Each person thinks of a word and writes it down. Then, they take turns looking up their words in the dictionary and reading the definitions aloud. The person whose word has the most different meanings scores a point. ■

Parent 2 Parent

Read around the world

I thought our town’s multicultural fair would be fun for me, but I had no idea that my son Devon would enjoy it, too. He liked sampling the interesting foods and hearing a variety of languages and styles of music. And when we left, he said he wanted to learn more about other cultures.

So during our next trip to the library, I suggested that he read about different countries. The librarian helped him find books of games, recipes, crafts, and folktales from around the world.

We checked them out and tried some of the things we learned. Devon read the instructions for *manuhan*, a game from the Philippines, and taught us how to play. Then, I helped him make Greek *tiropita* (feta cheese pie) for dinner. Finally, we took turns reading folktales aloud to each other. We were surprised to find some that were similar to tales we already knew, like versions of *Little Red Riding Hood* from China and *The Tortoise and the Hare* from Ghana. ■



Q&A

Critical thinking

Q When my daughter reads, she just zooms through to the end of the book. How can I encourage her to think more about what she is reading?

A Learning to think critically while reading is a skill your daughter will need throughout life. You can get her thinking by asking her to tell you about the books she reads.

One possibility is to have her describe one of the book’s themes, or “big ideas.” For example, she might say that *Tuck*

Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt is about doing the right thing.

Or you could ask your daughter about the characters. What traits make the heroes good and the villains bad? To get other suggestions, look for discussion questions in the back of the book or on the author’s website.

You might even read the same book that she’s reading and discuss it as you go. You’ll give each other ideas on how to think about books when you read! ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5583