

# BUILDING READERS®

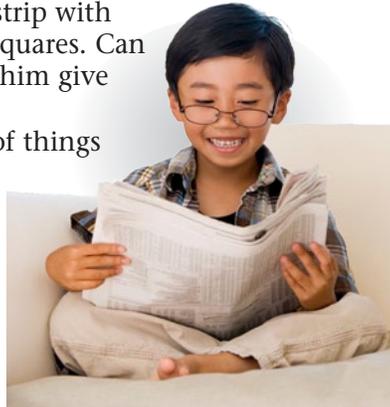
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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Educational Service Unit 10

## Newspapers can inspire reading games

Reading with your child is one of the most important ways to help him in school. For a change of pace to your regular reading routine, try reading the newspaper—either in print or online—or a magazine and playing a few games. For example:

- **Recreate cartoons.** Read a comic strip with your child. Then cut apart the squares. Can he put them back in order? Let him give you the same challenge.
- **Do a scavenger hunt.** Make a list of things for your child to find in the pages of a newspaper or magazine. He might look for a recipe, a food coupon, a sports statistic, a picture of an animal and the name of your town.
- **Retell stories.** Read a short, simple (and interesting!) article aloud. Can your child summarize what it says? Then switch roles with a new story.



Source: "Fun Ways to Encourage Your Children to Read," Family Works, <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/familyworks/school-04.html>.

*"A library card is the start of a lifelong adventure."*

—Lilian Jackson Braun

## Plan family reading activities this summer

Get the whole family involved in reading this summer by planning exciting events centered around reading. With your child, plan:

- **Book trivia.** Choose a book that everyone in your family can take turns reading. Or, read a short book together. Have each person write three to five trivia questions about the story. Take turns quizzing each other to see who remembers the most.
- **Book theme dinner parties.** What do the characters in your child's books have for dinner? Base a meal around a favorite book. If the story takes place in another country or time period, what would the characters eat? Have your child do research and help you decide on the menu. She can also help with themed decorations. Afterward, read the story together.

Source: B. Hyde, "Family Reading Activities," Old Fashioned Living, <http://oldfashionedliving.com/reading4.html>.

## Join a book club with your child

Joining a book club with your child this summer could boost her reading skills. Parents and kids who read together often report feeling closer. Group discussions can improve vocabulary and thinking skills, too. Plus, being in a book club will set a good example for your child! Ask your librarian for some hints on how to set up or join a book club.



Source: "The Benefits of Kids' Book Clubs," PBS Parents, [www.pbs.org/parents/education/reading-language/reading-tips/the-benefits-of-kids-book-clubs/](http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/reading-language/reading-tips/the-benefits-of-kids-book-clubs/).

## Catch up on classics recommended in this summer reading list

Looking for a new summer reading list? Visit the National Endowment for the Humanities. It keeps a "summertime favorites" list for all ages. Find it at [www.neh.gov/news/summertime-favorites](http://www.neh.gov/news/summertime-favorites).



## Turn writing mistakes into grammar challenges

*Can You correct this Sentence!* Ask your child, and watch his grammar skills in action! (Then show him the right answer: *Can you correct this sentence?*) Write some more sentences or a longer paragraph with more mistakes in it. Focus on things he's been learning all year, including punctuation, capitalization and verb tenses. Throw in a few spelling mistakes, too!



## Boost your child's vocabulary skills with synonyms and antonyms games

Synonyms and antonyms sound complicated, but they're not. In fact, they're fun! *Synonyms* are words that mean the same thing, such as *great* and *excellent*. *Antonyms* are words with opposite meanings, such as *good* and *bad*. To have fun with them, play games such as:



- **Opposites.** Try to say everything using antonyms. Instead of saying, "We have to be *quiet* at the library," you'd say, "We have to be *loud* at the library."
- **Concentration.** Write synonyms on pairs of index cards. After mixing them up, see if your child can match each card with its partner.

**Source:** "Synonyms and Antonyms," BrainPop Jr., [www.brainpopjr.com/readingandwriting/word/synonymsandantonyms/grownups.weml](http://www.brainpopjr.com/readingandwriting/word/synonymsandantonyms/grownups.weml).

## Discuss books with your child this summer

Your child is sure to read over the summer. Help her reflect on the stories she reads and improve her comprehension by asking a lot of questions about them! You might ask:

- **Who were the main characters?**  
What did you like or dislike about them? Do they remind you of people you know? Why?
- **What happened in the story?**  
How did the book start? What happened in the middle? How did it end? Has anything like that ever happened to you?
- **If you were the author,** is there anything you'd change



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about the book? What plot would make a good sequel?



**Q:** I've heard that if kids don't keep reading over the summer, they may lose important skills. Is this true?

**A:** Yes. Research shows kids' reading skills can weaken significantly over the summer without practice. So it's critical to do fun reading activities all summer long. Chances are, your local library

has a reading program that can help. Ask your child's teacher about options, too.

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

## 'Show and tell' isn't just for school

A simple way to build your child's oral language skills is to do "show and tell" at home. Think of something your child would love to describe, such as a favorite toy or book. Then ask him to tell you all about it. Be sure to ask questions so he'll keep talking, such as, "If I skip to the last chapter, what will I miss?" The more he talks, the more he's learning to manipulate words, an important component of reading.



**Source:** R. Branstetter, "Strategies for Building Oral Language Skills," Teaching Community, <http://tinyurl.com/brxjyw3>.

## For lower elementary readers:

- **Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same!** by Grace Lin (LB Kids). Ling and Ting are twins. But does that mean they're alike in every way? Six short tales let readers decide.
- **Bink & Gollie: Two for One** by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee (Candlewick). Popular characters Bink and Gollie are back in a new, wonderfully illustrated state-fair adventure.



## For upper elementary readers:

- **Big Whopper** by Patricia Reilly Giff (Yearling). Destiny tells a lie about an ancestor. What if other kids at the Zigzag Afternoon Center find out the truth?
- **Captain Nobody** by Dean Pitchford (G.P. Putnam's Sons). Ten-year-old Newt is rarely the center of attention. But his "Captain Nobody" costume changes that in big ways.

### Building Readers®

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