

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2020

Weatherly Area Elementary School

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



### ■ *It's Only Stanley* (Jon Agee)

The Wimbledon family is trying to fall asleep, but every time they do, Stanley the dog wakes them up. First he howls, then there are clanks, buzzes, and other random sounds. What's all the noise about? Stanley is up to something wonderful in this rhyming story.



### ■ *Starring Jules* (As Herself)

(Beth Ain)

Second-grader Jules Bloom is in a panic. She has an audition for a commercial that she's sure will lead to fame. But she's going to need the help of her ex-best friend and a potential new best friend to make it happen. This early chapter book is the first in the Jules series.



### ■ *Little Libraries, Big Heroes*

(Miranda Paul)

How did Little Free Libraries get their start? Readers will find out in this biography about Todd Bol. He created the first Little Free Library to share his mother's love of reading with others. Since then, the movement has spread, turning Todd into a reading hero for people all over the world.

### ■ *I Am Earth* (Rebecca and James McDonald)

Earth itself "narrates" this nonfiction book about gravity, changing seasons, orbits, and more. Information on keeping the planet healthy is woven in, and comic-style illustrations and speech balloons make the book easy to read. (Also available in Spanish.)



## Clever decoding strategies

What goes through your child's head when he's reading and comes to a word he doesn't know? Encourage him to think like a detective by asking himself these questions that will help him "decode" unfamiliar words.



### "Does it remind me of a word I know?"

Once your youngster learns to read a word, he can use it to read other words. For practice, take turns picking a word and saying words it makes you think of. See a stop sign? Your youngster might say *stop* starts like *step* or rhymes with *top*. Now have him use this strategy when he reads. *Example*: "*S-t-o-m-p* looks like *stop*. But there's an *m* in it. *Stomp!*"

### "Is there a part I recognize?"

Even if your child doesn't know a long word, chances are there are small words inside it that he can read. Choose a long word in a book, and see who can find the most words in it. In *window*, your youngster may see *win* and *wind*. Or maybe he'll notice that *macaroni*

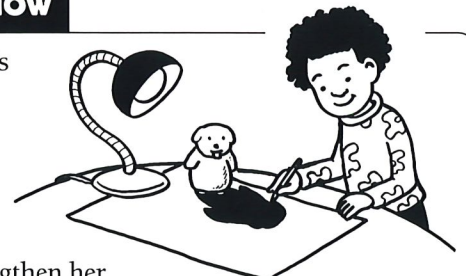
contains *car* and *on*. Putting together the familiar parts can help him read the whole word.

### "Does it have a pattern?"

What do *cake*, *lime*, and *note* have in common? They all follow the pattern consonant / long vowel / consonant / silent *e*. When you read with your child, encourage him to look for words that fit patterns he is learning in school. Spotting the pattern might help him correctly read *mine* instead of saying *min*, for instance. ♥

## Trace the groundhog's shadow

Will the groundhog see his shadow this Groundhog Day? The groundhog in this activity will—and by tracing the shadow, your youngster will give her "writing muscles" a workout.



● **Sculpt.** Let your child use clay or play dough to make a groundhog. She'll strengthen her fingers as she rolls and shapes the dough.

● **Trace.** Have your youngster trace her groundhog's shadow to work on hand coordination. Lay a sheet of paper under a lamp. She can position the groundhog so the light casts a shadow on the paper. Then, she could use a crayon to trace around the shadow's outline. ♥

# Write to learn

As your child learns to write, she can also use writing to learn. Here are a few ideas.

**“What I know” journal.** Encourage your youngster to start a notebook about what she’s studying in school. After a science experiment with magnets, she might list things that she discovered are magnetic, then test household objects and add to her list. Or if she’s learning to solve story problems in math, she could make up her own problems and illustrate them.



**Character interviews.** What would your child ask a famous person or a fictional character? She can use her imagination by writing pretend interview questions and making up answers. Maybe she’d ask, “What’s the hardest thing about being a dragon?” and reply: “Hiding under the bed!”

**Reading log.** Suggest that your youngster keep track of books she reads. She could practice summarizing by writing a sentence or two about each title. She may even rate each book with 1–5 stars—she’ll practice critical thinking as she compares books and decides which ones she liked more or less than others.♥

## Q&A Silent reading

**Q** My daughter has started reading silently. What is my role now?

**A** The ability to read silently shows that your child is becoming more independent as a reader. Still, she’ll benefit from the same kinds of things you did when she was just beginning to read.



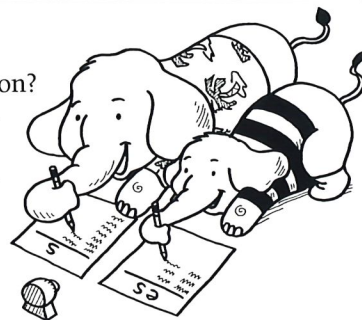
For example, make sure she has plenty of reading material. Take regular trips to the library, and encourage your daughter to choose a variety of books. Also, set aside time to read. You might snuggle up and read your own book alongside her—you’ll show her that reading is a lifelong pleasure.

Finally, talk about books with your youngster. Ask her about what she reads in school and at home, and tell her what you’re reading. The two of you might even read the same book and discuss it when you’re finished.♥

## Fun with Words

### Play with plurals

What do *s* and *es* have in common? They turn singular words into plural ones! Play this game to help your youngster discover guidelines for choosing the correct ending when he writes.



1. Have your child label two sheets of paper, one with *s* and the other with *es*. You take one sheet, and he gets the other.
2. Set a timer for three minutes. Each of you should look through a book and write plural words you find with the ending on your sheet. For *s*, your youngster might list *arms*, *birds*, and *cups*. For *es*, you could write *dishes*, *couches*, and *boxes*.
3. When time’s up, have your child count the words on each sheet. Which ending “wins” (is most common)? He’ll see that most plural words end with *s*.
4. Ask your child what he notices about the *es* words. He may realize that many have *ch*, *sh*, *s*, *o*, *x*, or *z* before the *es*, while other words take an *s*. Then, suggest that he keep the lists handy when he writes so he can refer to the examples.♥

## Parent to Parent

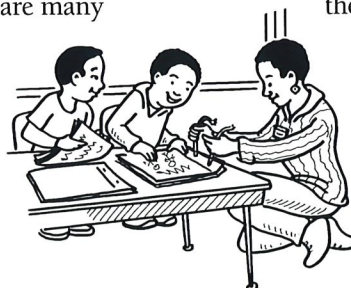
### Be a reading volunteer

I wanted to support the reading program at my son Ricky’s school. Since I stay at home with my infant twins, I emailed the teacher to ask if she had take-home projects I could do.

I found out that there are many ways I can help. Sometimes the teacher sends home instructions and materials for me to make classroom games like spelling bingo and vocabulary tic-tac-toe. Other

times, she has asked me to write poems or sentences on poster board. The projects are fun, and Ricky is always interested in what I’m doing.

I’ve also volunteered in the classroom a couple of times while my mom watched the twins. One morning, I read with small groups, and another day, I helped students turn their stories into books. Ricky likes seeing me in his classroom, and I like that I’m making a difference at his school.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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# Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

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Weatherly Area Elementary School

## TOOLS & TIDBITS

### Cook with fractions

Let your child begin to explore fractions when you cook together. Say your recipe calls for 1 cup flour. Give him a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup measure, and ask how he could make 1 cup (fill the  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup twice). Also, show him fractions like  $\frac{1}{3}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  in recipes. Can he find the cup or spoon with the matching fraction?



### Talk like a scientist

Pretend your youngster is a scientist on a TV show! Interview her about an experiment she did in school or at home. Pose questions like "What did you predict would happen?" "Was your prediction accurate?" and "What did you learn?" Explaining the science in her own words will help her understand it better.

### Book picks

In *100 Days of School* (Trudy Harris), your child will read rhyming word problems and learn different ways to make 100.

Your youngster can learn how animals use tools like rocks and sticks in *Tooling Around: Crafty Creatures and the Tools They Use* (Ellen Jackson).

## Just for fun

**Q:** Since two's company and three's a crowd, what are four and five?

**A:** Nine.

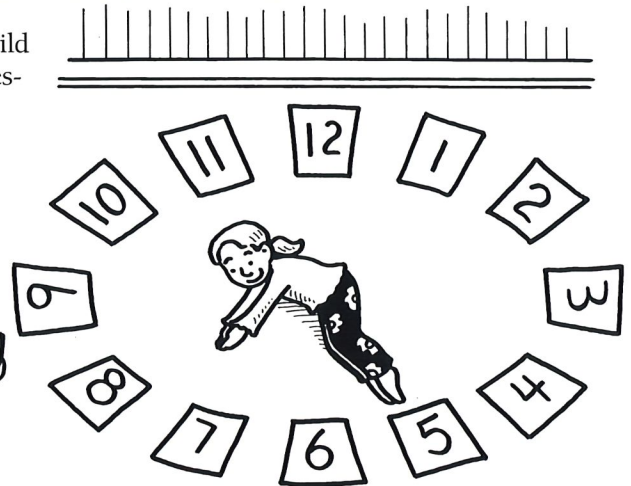


## Learning to tell time

"What time is it?" Your child can answer this common question when she learns to tell time. Try these activities to help her use both analog and digital clocks.

### Life-sized clock

Tick-tock...your youngster's arms and legs can be the hands of a clock! Have her number sheets of paper 1-12 and arrange them in a circle on the floor. Now call out times for her to "set" the clock to. For 7:25, she would lay on her left side with the "hour hand" (her arms) pointing at 7 and the minute hand (her legs) pointing at 5. *Idea:* Take pictures so she can see how her body shows the times.



She might put 6:45 beside "Eat breakfast" and 8:30 by "Go to bed."

### Matching times

Your youngster will see analog and digital clocks side by side with this idea. Ask her to create a clock face on a paper plate and cut a straw into two "hands" (one longer than the other). Now set a digital clock (say, the one on the microwave) to a random time, such as 2:10. Can she show the same time on her clock? Then, trade roles.

### Daily schedule

Suggest that your child list things she does every day. *Examples:* "Wake up." "Go to school." "Eat dinner." Beside each one, she could draw a digital clock showing what time she normally does it.

## My cardboard binoculars

Inspire your youngster to take a closer look at nature with a pair of homemade "binoculars."

Help your child tape together two empty toilet paper tubes. Punch a hole in each side, help him string yarn through, and tie a knot.

Now head outdoors so he can use his binoculars, and take along a notebook and colored pencils for sketching observations. He might spot a crow perched on a power line, a pinecone on the ground, or a holly bush by the mailbox.

Ask him to describe what he sees. Zeroing in on one thing at a time will make it easier for him to notice details like feathers on a crow, scales on a pinecone, and berries on a bush.



# Let's subtract


Your youngster can use subtraction to find missing numbers or figure out the difference between two numbers. Use these hands-on ideas to help him practice.

**What's missing?** These ladybugs are missing some dots—and subtraction will tell your child how many. Have him draw 10 ladybugs and write a different number (1–20) on each one's head. Now you pick a ladybug and think of a subtraction problem that begins with that number (for 15, you might think  $15 - 7$ ). Draw the number



of dots equal to the answer (8) on half of the ladybug's body. Can your youngster find the missing number (7) and draw that many dots on the other half?

**What's the difference?** To find the difference between two numbers, your child needs to subtract. Make a number line to help him see the difference. Put a piece of duct tape or masking tape on the floor from one side of a room to the other. Let him write the numbers 1–20, evenly spaced.

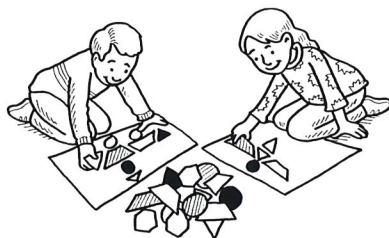
Now give him a "difference" subtraction problem: "What's the difference between 11 and 5?" He can stand on 11 and hop on the numbers until he gets to 5, counting his hops. ("The difference is 6, so  $11 - 5 = 6$ .") 

## MATH CORNER


### Shape art

This art project is made entirely of geometric shapes. Your child will discover that he can combine two or more shapes to make completely different shapes.

First, help your youngster cut several of each of these shapes from construction paper: circles, triangles, trapezoids, pentagons, hexagons. Then, he can decide what picture he'll create with them (perhaps a robot or a house).



How could he form all the shapes he needs? Perhaps he'll combine two triangles to make a square or use two trapezoids plus two triangles for a rectangle. Ask questions about his picture. How many triangles are there? What shapes are in that rectangle?

**Idea:** Encourage your child to rearrange the shapes again and again. How many different pictures he can make? 

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## Q & A

### Should my child use a calculator?

**Q:** My daughter has discovered calculators, and she likes to play with them. I often use them for math—is it okay for her to do so, too?

**A:** It's great that your child is interested in exploring math on a calculator when she plays. However, have her put it away when she does homework or practices math facts.

Encourage your daughter to solve everyday problems with paper and pencil or mental math. She'll master basic facts and do math in her head. For example, in the car, tell her how many miles away your exit is (maybe 7) and how many miles the exit is from your home (5). How many miles do you have left to drive? (Answer: 12, because  $7 + 5 = 12$ .)

Finally, when you use a calculator (say, to figure out how much to tip), invite her to "solve" the problem by telling her which buttons to push. It's good for her to see more complex problems that she can look forward to solving one day. 



## SCIENCE LAB

### Taste and smell

Give your child an appetite for science with this experiment that shows how her sense of smell is related to her sense of taste.

**You'll need:** two foods with similar textures but different flavors, such as strawberries and pickles or oranges and lemons

**Here's how:** Have your youngster close her eyes, pinch her nose, and taste each food. Can she name the foods? Then, she should taste the foods again, with her eyes closed but without pinching her nose. Does she think she

identified them correctly the first time? Now have her open her eyes to check.

**What happens?** Even with her eyes closed, it's easier to identify the food when she doesn't pinch her nose.

**Why?** We smell and taste foods at the same time because our nose and mouth use the same airway. When your child pinches her nose, she no longer smells the food's unique scent, so she only notices its texture and gets a general sense of whether it's sweet, salty, sour, or bitter. That's why food doesn't taste as good when she has a stuffy nose! 