

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *Too Many Tamales*

Maria feels grown-up when she helps make tamales for the Christmas party—and gets to wear her mother's ring. But she loses the ring, and there's only one place it could be! This book by Gary Soto is also available in Spanish.



### ■ *I Know a Rhino*

What kind of house contains rhinos that drink tea and giraffes that take bubble baths? A child's house! Charles Fuge's book portrays the magic of children's imaginations.



### ■ *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*

The pigeon knows he's not allowed to drive the bus, but he begs, bargains, and argues. This hilarious story by Mo Willems is great to read aloud. Let your children tell the pigeon, "NO! You CAN'T drive the bus!"

### ■ *Miss Nelson Is Missing*

How can the students in nice Miss Nelson's class be so mean to her? The kids in Harry G. Allard's popular classic don't know how good they have it until a grumpy substitute teacher takes Miss Nelson's place. Your child will delight in solving the book's mystery—and will learn an important lesson, too.



## Tips for reading aloud

Why is reading aloud to your children the number one suggestion from reading experts across the country? Because it builds the desire to read—in only 15 or 20 minutes a day!

Whether your youngsters are already reading on their own or haven't yet begun, now is the perfect time for reading aloud regularly. Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of your time together.



### Get comfortable

Offer your children soft mats or pillows to sit on. Give them blankets to snuggle up in on cold days, or sit near a cool breeze when the weather is warm. Let them have a snack or drink before you start.

### Remove distractions

Make your reading spot as quiet as possible so your youngsters can focus on the story. Turn off the television and consider ignoring the phone to avoid interruptions.

### Encourage participation

Children are apt to enjoy reading more when they're invited to join in. Let them take turns choosing a book and turning the pages. If there's repetition in a story, challenge them to recite the key phrases with you.

### Keep it appropriate

If your kids have trouble following the language or

plot of a story, it may be too difficult for them. Look for books that are closer to their reading levels. *Tip:* Ask a librarian or your children's teachers for suggestions. ♥

## Fun with Words

### Dictionary games

You can help your child practice dictionary skills and build vocabulary with these activities.

**Word race.** Write down several words, and time your youngster to see how fast she can find each one in the dictionary.

**Word of the week.** Ask your child to find one word each week that's new to her. Post the word on the refrigerator, and challenge her to use it as often as possible during the week.

**Mixed-up definitions.** Write down a new word. Then, write out two phony definitions for it, along with the true meaning. Read the three choices to your youngster, and see if she can guess which definition is the real one. ♥



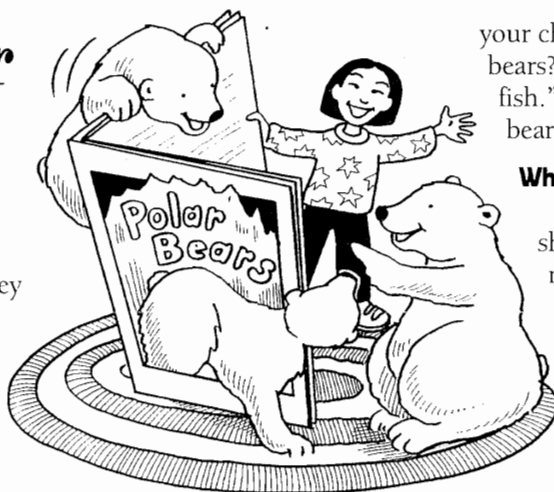
# Reading for meaning

*Who? What? When? Where? Why?* Experienced readers ask themselves these questions as they read. Finding the answers helps them understand the story.

To boost your child's comprehension, ask a few simple questions before and after reading.

### What do you know?

Together, look at the cover of the book before you begin reading. Read the title and talk about the cover's picture. For example, a book called "Polar Bears of the Cold" may have a picture of a mother polar bear with her baby. Ask



your child, "What do you already know about polar bears?" She may say: "They are white. They eat fish." This gets your child thinking about polar bears before she starts to read the story.

### What do you want to know?

Have your youngster think of questions she has about the story. She might ask: "How much do polar bears weigh?" "How do they keep warm in icy water?" "Do they teach their babies to fish?" By deciding what she wants to know, she has set a goal to reach by reading.

### What did you learn?

Ask your child questions about the story after you've finished reading it together.

*Examples:* "Did you find out what you wanted to know about polar bears?" "Did you learn some new things? What were they?" This will reinforce what she has learned. ♥

## Parent to Parent

### The family chat book

With our family's busy schedule, we needed a way to communicate. I was thrilled when my husband came up with the idea for a family chat book.

We keep a spiral notebook, and a pencil attached with a string, on the kitchen counter. That way, the pencil doesn't get lost!

The notebook is for family messages. For example, we send each other notes to say thanks, ask a favor, apologize, or share jokes. It's been a big hit.

The old notebooks are great fun to browse through from time to time. It's always interesting to read about things we used to do. And the kids enjoy seeing how their writing—and their handwriting—has improved over the years. ♥



## Q&A

### Playing with sounds

**Q** My son's teacher told me that to learn to read successfully, Michael needs help recognizing the sounds that letters make. Any suggestions?

**A** Try playing games with letter sounds. Here are several ideas:

- ◆ Put three different objects on a table. *Example:* an apple, a fork, and a sock. Ask your youngster, "Can you guess what starts with the sound that the letter 's' makes?" (Say the sound—"sssss"—rather than the name of the letter "s.")
- ◆ Substitute beginning sounds in words (cap, lap, map, nap, rap, sap, tap, zap).
- ◆ Ask your child to say a word without the first sound. *Example:* "Bat" without the "b" becomes "at." ♥



### See me read!

It's a fact of life—children watch what their parents do. To encourage your kids to read, let them see that you like to read, too. Try these suggestions.

**Make it easy.** Keep good books, magazines, and newspapers around the house for all of you. You'll give everyone plenty of opportunities to read.

**Let's hear it.** Read interesting things aloud: news stories, funny jokes, a delicious recipe, or words to a song. You'll boost your kids' excitement for the written word.

**Do it.** Let your children see you read for pleasure every day. You'll set a good example for them to follow. ♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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