

# Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2017

Mary Ethel Costello School  
William J. O'Kane, Principal



## Book Picks

### ■ *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary* (Laura Shovan)

Emerson Elementary is closing at the end of the year, and the 18 fifth-graders in Ms. Hill's class want to keep it open. This novel, told in poems from the students' journals, shares their daily struggles with family, friendship, and fitting in, along with their attempts to save their school.

### ■ *The Future Architect's Handbook* (Barbara Beck)

Readers will follow a fictional architect who draws plans for a house.



Detailed illustrations lead aspiring young architects through the process—and may even encourage them to come up with their own designs.

### ■ *White Fang* (Jack London)

Your child will see the world through the eyes of White Fang, a wild wolf-dog, in this classic novel. Can the



wolf-dog leave his wild life behind and learn to love a human?

Read along as White Fang becomes a sled dog and a fighting dog before finally finding a home. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *How to Turn \$100 into \$1,000,000: Earn! Invest! Save!* (James McKenna and Jeannine Glista)

You don't have to win the lottery to become a millionaire. This guide, designed to teach youngsters to be financially smart, offers tips for earning money, setting financial goals, creating budgets, and investing.



## The power of predictions

What will happen next in the book your child is reading? Encourage him to combine clues from the text with what he already knows to make predictions—a powerful strategy for building reading comprehension. Try these steps.



### 1. Predict

Have your youngster pause after each chapter and make a prediction about the following one. Let him use a notebook to jot down his forecast, along with evidence from the book to back it up. For example, he might write, "I predict the prince will get in trouble because he invited a stranger into the castle, and the king forbids that."

### 2. Revise

As your child continues reading, he could gather more evidence and consider whether the new clues make him want to change his prediction. If so, he should note what he has learned and

how his thinking changed. For instance, after he reads that the king's advisor has called a council, he might add, "Now that I know about the council, I expect the prince will stand trial."

### 3. Confirm

When he finishes the book, he will find out if his predictions came true. Since books may contain twists and surprises, some of your youngster's forecasts may not happen as he expected. If so, suggest that he go back and reread for clues he overlooked or that could be interpreted in a different way. 📖

## Write like a scientist

Your youngster may not realize it, but doing science involves a lot of writing. Have her imitate real scientists by documenting her own science experiments at home.



● **Before.** Your child could write an "If/then" statement giving a hypothesis about the outcome. *Example:* "If a plant is left in sunlight rather than artificial light, then it will grow faster."

● **During.** Remind your youngster that scientists write reports so others can repeat their experiments. She'll need to include each step along with her observations. "Day 3: The plant receiving sunlight has more new leaves than the one getting artificial light."

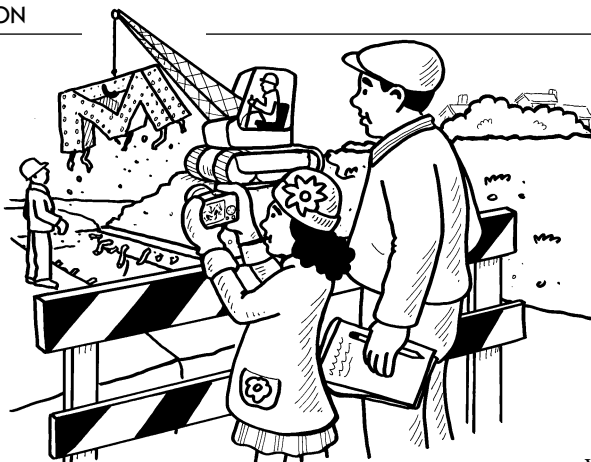
● **After.** Now your child will describe what happened. "The plant grown in artificial light is smaller than the plant exposed to sun." 📖

## Writing for the future

One hundred years from now, who will tell people what it was like to live in 2017? Your youngster, of course! Inspire her to practice writing with that audience in mind as she creates a record for readers of the future.

**Share the latest fads.** Hula hoops and yo-yos were once crazes. What toys or activities does your child love today? Encourage her to write about them in a notebook. She might provide instructions for a popular game and explain why she enjoys it.

**Explore current events.** Today's news is tomorrow's history. Ask your youngster to create news articles about interesting



events like a baby panda born at the zoo or the opening of a new park. Remind her to answer the six questions crucial to information gathering: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

**Think local.** In 2117, your hometown will probably look different. Let your child keep a record

of things that change. If a bridge is being replaced, she could compare and contrast the old and the new to put things in context for future readers. "The historic bridge had only two lanes, and the town needed a bigger one to support more traffic." Suggest that she snap photos to add to her record. 📷



### Name my "whatsit"

Figuring out unfamiliar words from context clues is a key part of reading comprehension—and a skill that gets a workout with this fun activity.

Let your child write a sentence or pick one from a book or magazine, replacing one word with *whatsit*. For instance, "The bandage has *whatsit* that sticks to skin but not the wound."



Use clues from the sentence to determine the word your youngster replaced. Talk out your thinking as you go. "I think *whatsit* is *adhesive* because it's the sticky part of bandages."

If you need more clues, ask your child to write another sentence using the word. "This *whatsit* holds wood together better than white glue."

Once you guess his word, trade roles, and replace a word in a sentence with *whatsit* for your youngster to guess. 📖

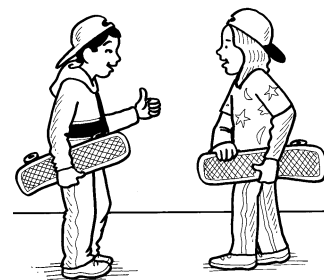


### Strike up a conversation

Good conversation skills prepare your child for group discussions at school. These ideas can help him start and continue conversations.

#### Similarities

To get a conversation rolling, suggest that your youngster talk about shared interests. "I see you're wearing a Colts jersey. I love that team! How do you think they're playing this year?"



#### Compliments

Is there something your child admires about the person? Paying a compliment creates a natural opening for more talk. "That's a cool trick you did on your skateboard. Will you teach me how to do it?"

#### Advice

People love to share their opinions, so asking others what they think is a simple way to start or add to a conversation. "I need to pick out a birthday gift for my cousin in college. What do you think would make a good present?" 📖

### How to help your struggling reader

**Q** My daughter reads below grade level. She meets with a reading specialist once a week, and I'd like to help her at home, too. Any suggestions?

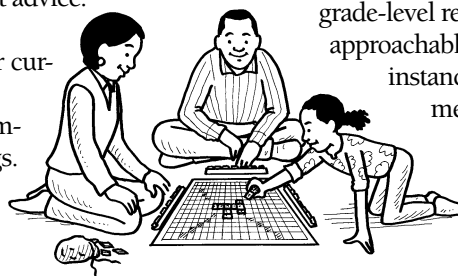
**A** Start by working closely with your child's teacher and reading specialist—they can give you great advice.

Then, encourage your daughter to read at her current skill level for fun, whether it's books, comics, magazines, or blogs. This can help her develop confidence and a love of reading.

Also, use reading and reading-related activities for entertainment. Word games like hangman and Scrabble increase vocabulary and improve word recognition. Reading trivia questions aloud builds fluency.

Ask her teacher for ways to make grade-level reading materials more approachable for your child. For

instance, she may recommend that your daughter listen to an audio version of a novel while she follows along in the book. 📖



#### 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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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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