

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

Eisenhower Middle School  
Lee Nittel, Principal

## Book Picks

### ■ *The Million Dollar Kick*

Whisper once humiliated herself while playing soccer. Now she can't stand the game. Faced with a contest to win a million dollars with a single kick, can she regain her self-confidence and win the cash? Readers will find out in this tale by Dan Gutman.



### ■ *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup*

Granny Torrelli does more than make soup. When Rosie and her best friend, Bailey, have an argument, Granny shares stories of her own life to help Rosie learn how to solve her problems. A heartwarming tale of family by Sharon Creech. (Also available in Spanish.)

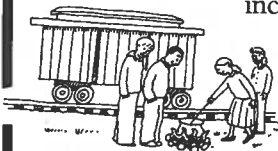
### ■ *A Collection of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories*

How did the camel get its hump? Why do kangaroos hop? Where did the rhinoceros get his skin? Readers can explore the fanciful answers to these and other questions in eight classic fables by Rudyard Kipling. Beautiful illustrations by Christopher Corr and others make this volume a delight to look at as well as to read.



### ■ *The Boxcar Children Cookbook*

Fans of the Boxcar Children series will eat up this title by Diane Blain. The book gives simple recipes for foods eaten by the Alden children during their adventures. Most recipes include an excerpt from one of the Boxcar Children books.



## Active read-alouds

Reading aloud with older children can be a great time for talking, relaxing, and just being together. Here are several ideas to get a read-aloud discussion going:

- Help your children check their understanding of what they're reading. Try asking, "Does that make sense to you?" or commenting, "This part sounds important. I'm going to read it aloud again."
- Encourage your youngsters to think about what they read with questions like, "Do you think that could really happen?" or "What do you think the author wants us to learn?"
- Finally, value your children's comments. You could say, "That's what I was thinking!" or "Now I see what you're saying." ■



## Flights of fantasy

Fantasy literature does more than stretch your youngster's imagination. Fantasy books also teach...

### Science

Artificial intelligence, lasers, and space travel are just a few of the topics covered in science fiction. Titles like Rebecca Rector's *Tria and the Great Star Rescue* encourage your child to explore the world of science.

### Geography

Maps in fantasies like *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin help the reader trace the characters' paths. Your youngster will work on map skills as he enjoys the stories.

### Foreign languages

Some fantasies, like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, introduce made-up languages. Figuring out the new words can help your child develop an interest in learning another language. ■



# Write about you!

Writing an autobiography is a fun way for a child to talk about himself and practice his writing skills at the same time.

Begin by discussing what an autobiography is—a story you write about your own life. (A biography, on the other hand, is your life story written by someone else.)

How should your youngster get started on his own story? One easy way is for him to write down



possible topics. Here are several examples:

- my earliest memory
- my favorite things to do
- the most important people in my life
- the most exciting thing I've ever done

You could show your child his baby book, along with photos of him growing up. Also, talk about things that happened in the family when he was little. He can make notes as you go.

Encourage your youngster to add drawings to illustrate his story. When he's finished, he can make a cover out of construction paper and staple the pages together. Then, have him read it aloud to the entire family. 📖

## Q&A Vocabulary practice

**Q** My son has a tough time with vocabulary quizzes. What can I do to help?



**A** Try sneaking in a little extra vocabulary practice. The more your youngster uses the words, the easier it will be for him to remember them.

▲ **Do puzzles.** You can turn vocabulary words and their definitions into simple crossword puzzles at <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>. Select "Criss-Cross" from the puzzle menu in the middle of the screen.

▲ **Hunt for treasure.** Encourage your child to find and circle vocabulary words in newspapers and magazines and to read the sentences aloud. Seeing the words used in context will help him learn their meanings.

▲ **Use synonyms.** List your youngster's vocabulary words. Then, beside each one, have him write words with similar meanings. He can use a thesaurus from the library (try Scholastic's *Children's Thesaurus*, or search at [www.wordsmyth.net](http://www.wordsmyth.net)). Hang the list on the refrigerator where he can review it. 📖

## Other Picks

### GAMES

#### ■ Hit or Miss

This list-making game is never the same twice. Players have 45 seconds to write as many words as possible in a given category. Then, they guess which of their words is the most popular—or the most original. *Gamewright*

#### ■ Loaded Questions

##### Junior

Test how well you know your opponents by guessing how they answer questions. This game contains 300 conversation-sparking questions in four categories that make it fun for the whole family to play together. *All Things Equal*



### WEB SITES

#### ■ Kids Web Japan

Tour Japan to learn about its people and culture. Read about technology like electronic paper, discover what goes into kids' lunch boxes, and even learn how to write Japanese letters. A travel section lets youngsters take 11 different online trips through Japan. <http://web-jpn.org/kidsweb/index.html>

#### ■ Netsmartz Kids

Encourage your children to learn about Internet safety at this fun site. They'll enjoy playing games, listening to songs, sending e-cards, downloading screen savers, and watching videos. Topics include instant messaging, e-mail, and computer viruses. [www.netsmartzkids.org](http://www.netsmartzkids.org)



## Parent 2 Parent

### Family reading fun

Last year, my daughter Emma came up with a great idea for beating the winter blues—a family reading party.

She called it a Fiction Freeze-Out and invited all of us to bring books having to do with winter.

On party night, we pitched in to make popcorn and hot cocoa. Then,

we snuggled in sleeping bags and took turns reading our favorite winter stories to each other.

Emma's Fiction Freeze-Out was such a success that we have made it an annual tradition. We've even decided to add a summer version! In a few months, look for us sitting on beach towels, sipping lemonade, and sharing books about summer fun. 📖



## 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](mailto:rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com)  
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