

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2015

Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania



Book Picks

■ *The Illuminating World of Light with Max Axiom, Super Scientist* (Emily Sohn)

Real science meets graphic novel in the Graphic Science Series. In this episode, Max Axiom takes readers on a journey explaining the science of light. Your child will learn about different types of light, how light moves, and ways it affects everyday life. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Fish in a Tree* (Lynda Mullaly Hunt)

Ally is a whiz at math and art, but the sixth-grader has a secret she's embarrassed about: She has dyslexia. To keep people from getting close enough to find out, she pretends to be a troublemaker. Will her act keep her new teacher from learning the truth—and helping her?



■ *Nuts to You* (Lynne Rae Perkins)

When a hawk grabs Jed the squirrel, his friends set out to rescue him. Soon



they're on a mission to relocate an entire squirrel community

before its habitat is destroyed. Humor and adventure combine with a cast of resourceful squirrels in this tale of friendship.

■ *What Is the Statue of Liberty?* (Joan Holub)

The statue's real name is "Liberty Enlightening the World," but you may call her "Lady Liberty" for short. This book explores the Statue of Liberty from head to toe, including how it arrived in New York in 1885 in 214 crates!



Be a reading family

Did you know that children read more when their parents are readers, too? Consider these ways to get your family excited about reading together.

Collect frequent-reader "miles"

A trip around the world covers almost 25,000 miles. Let one book = 2,500 miles, and have a race to see who will be the first to read her way "around the world." *Bonus:* Your youngster will practice math skills, too, as she tallies her miles.



Become super-sleuths

Encourage your child to draw conclusions by reading short mysteries aloud. Try a book like *Five-Minute Mini-Mysteries* (Stan Smith), or read online at kids.mysterynet.com. Before revealing the solution, let each person make a prediction and tell what clues tipped her off.

Crank up some karaoke

Help your youngster find song lyrics online, or use the liner notes from her favorite CDs. Then, put on music, and

read the words as you sing along together. *Note:* Your child will add words to her vocabulary by looking up unfamiliar ones in a dictionary.

Play reading games

Give your youngster practice at reading aloud accurately and with expression. You might hold a contest while reading from a book of tongue twisters. Or make up fill-in-the-blank stories (like *Mad Libs*), and try to read the results aloud without laughing! 📖

Speaking up in class

Participating in class discussions builds speaking and listening skills, which your child will use to communicate and collaborate with others throughout his school career and beyond. Try these three tips.

1. Suggest that he listen first, then piggy-back his thoughts onto what the last person said. ("I agree with Madison that Hollis Woods is protecting herself, and I think Hollis is protecting Josie, too.")
2. Let your youngster know that asking questions in class is just as important as answering them. What he asks may prompt others to share ideas, too.
3. Remind him that it's okay to disagree, but he needs to be polite and to explain his reasons. He could begin, "I hear what you're saying, but I think..." 📖



Back-to-school writing fun

Your youngster can get off to a good start this school year by putting his thoughts down on paper. Here's how.

Recipe for a great year. Show your child recipes in cookbooks, online, or in the newspaper so he sees how they're written. Then, let him write one that tells how to whip up a fabulous year. He could list ingredients (five science experiments, a dash of soccer). Next, he should add step-by-step instructions. ("Stir together reading,



writing, science, math, and social studies. Sprinkle in soccer games and piano lessons.")

Letter of introduction.

What does your youngster want the teacher to know about him? Here's his chance to share those things in a friendly letter. He should start with a salutation ("Dear Mr. Jones") and add a few paragraphs about himself. He might

write one paragraph about his likes and dislikes ("I love fall weather, but I don't like raking leaves") and another about his dreams ("I want to be a pilot when I grow up"). When he finishes, he can deliver the letter to his teacher. ■

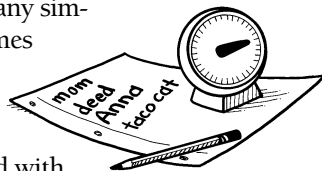
Fun with Words Aha... palindromes!

"Was it a car or a cat I saw?" That's not just a question, it's a *palindrome*—a word or phrase that reads the same forward and backward. Enjoy playing with language, and build your child's thinking skills, with these ideas:

- See how many simple palindromes everyone can list. Short words that begin and end with the same letters make a good starting place (*mom, deed, Anna*). Next, branch out into phrases (*Noel sees Leon*).

- Brainstorm challenges to try. Who can write the longest palindrome? The funniest? The most names that are palindromes? Let your youngster pick a challenge, set a timer for 10 minutes, and get to work! When time is up, read your results aloud, and choose another challenge.

Tip: Begin a family palindrome collection. Keep a running list on the refrigerator, and add palindromes as you find or create them. ■



Parent 2 Parent Creative writing club

My daughter Phoebe participated in a children's writing workshop at our community center last spring. She was sad when it ended, so I suggested that she start her own writing club.

Phoebe got together with a few buddies from the workshop, and now they take turns hosting a weekly meeting. Since the workshop leader had provided "writing prompts" to inspire them, they decided that each week's host would bring a prompt. So far, the prompts have included a magazine picture, a list of 10 words to use in a poem, and Phoebe's favorite, a story that had to open with "I heard a bell ringing in the dark."

The kids spend the first part of every meeting writing. Then, they read their work aloud and give each other ideas to improve their stories. Phoebe is enjoying her club—and I'm glad to see her enjoying writing! ■



Q&A Stay on top of assigned reading

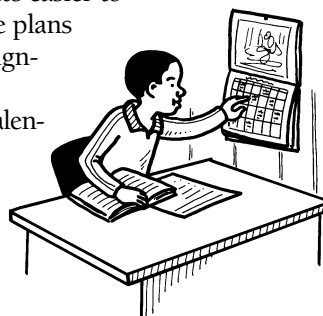
Q Last year, my son procrastinated on his reading assignments and fell behind. How can I help him do better this year?

A Your child will find it's easier to stay on top of things if he plans ahead and breaks his assignments into chunks.

Suggest that he use a calendar or student planner to record his assignments. Then, he should craft a plan and write each piece of it on the appropriate day. For example,

if he has four days to read 100 pages of *Bunnicula* (Deborah and James Howe) for a book report, he would write "Read 25 pages of *Bunnicula*" on each of the next four days in his planner. He can do the same for his other reading assignments as he gets them.

Remind your son to set aside a specific time every day for his assigned reading. He might schedule it at the beginning of homework time or before basketball practice, for instance. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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