

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2021

Gene Dillon Elementary

Book Picks

■ *Paint the Wind* (Pam Muñoz Ryan)

When 11-year-old Maya's grandmother dies, the little girl goes to Wyoming to live with relatives she's never met. There she enjoys new freedom and the friendship of a wild mustang. After the mustang saves Maya's life, she must decide whether to keep the horse or set her free. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Tiny Stitches: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas* (Gwendolyn Hooks)

In this inspiring biography, readers will learn about African American surgical pioneer Vivien Thomas. Unable to go to medical school, he landed a job in a research lab at an all-white college. There, he helped to pave the way for children's open-heart surgery.

■ *Professor Astro Cat's Deep-Sea Voyage* (Dominic Walliman)

Follow along as Professor Astro Cat explores the deep sea. Blending fiction and non-fiction, this book includes facts about shipwrecks, coral reefs, sea creatures, and much more. Contains illustrated diagrams and maps plus a glossary with ocean terms. Part of the Professor Astro Cat series.



■ *The Hero Revealed* (William Boniface)

Meet Ordinary Boy. In his hometown of Superopolis, he's the only resident without superpowers. Then, he gets to help his favorite superhero and learns that even regular people can be heroes. This humorous book is the first in the Extraordinary Adventures of Ordinary Boy series.



Creative study guides

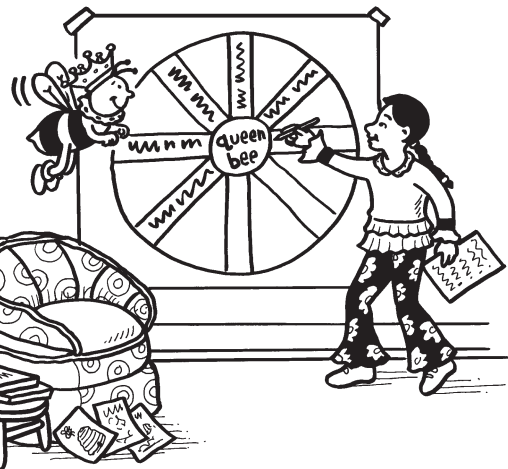
Reading for information is a skill every student needs. Suggest that your child create a study guide to use for her next test. In the process, she'll practice reading closely for key ideas and details. Here are formats she could try.

Details, details

For each section of a textbook chapter, have your child draw a wheel (a circle with spokes, coming out from its center in all directions). In the hub, she can write the topic (*queen bee*). On each spoke, she could write a detail about that topic (one queen bee per colony, lays up to 1,500 eggs per day).

Color-coding

Let your youngster choose a different-color pen or font for each kind of fact. For instance, if she's reading about the American Revolution, she could use blue to write notes about people (George Washington, Benjamin Franklin), red for dates (1775, 1783), and green for places (Bunker Hill, Yorktown).



Color-coding will help her remember the information.

Q&A

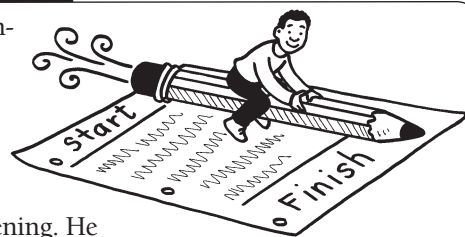
Ask your youngster to pretend she's an expert on a topic she's studying and that a news reporter has interviewed her. She can write an "interview transcript" and use it as a study guide. First, she should rewrite each topic as a question. For instance, "The Importance of Protein" might become "Why is protein important?" Then as she reads, she can fill in the answers to create her transcript. ▮

Strong starts, fine finishes

It takes practice to write effective beginnings and endings for essays or reports. Share these tips with your youngster.

● **Introduction:** The opening sentence welcomes the audience and hints at what's to come. Encourage your child to experiment to find the most inviting opening. He might pose a question ("When was the first robot built?") or present a fact ("The earliest known robot had wings").

● **Conclusion:** The last sentence offers a snapshot of the ideas presented. Have your youngster reread his paper and ask, "What do I want readers to remember?" Then, he can write a line with that in mind. ("Robots may seem like new technology, but history shows they've been around for a long time.") ▮



Combine books with crafts

Crafty activities can encourage your child to think more deeply about books—and make reading more enjoyable. Spark his imagination with projects like these.

Design graffiti boards. Have your youngster decorate poster boards with drawings and words related to a book. For example, if he's reading a mystery, he could draw a part of the setting, write clues from the story in a giant question mark, and fill the margins of the poster with his favorite quotes from the book. He'll



have to read carefully to pay attention to what's important.

Build models.

Let your child use household materials to make 3-D creations that match a book. If he's reading about roller coasters, he might engineer one with cardboard tubes

and straws. Or for a tale

about forest animals, he could sculpt creatures out of clay. Have him dig for details in the text and examine the illustrations so he can make accurate models. ■

Parent 2 Parent Be a better speller

My son Elliott has been struggling with spelling, so I shared rules I used at his age, like “i before e, except after c.” But he said he'd learned that many words don't follow those rules. So I asked his teacher for better ways to help him at home.

The teacher suggested that Elliott keep a list of words he frequently misspells and post it over his desk. For example, she pointed out that he tends to put *-able* at the end of words that should have *-ible*. So Elliott made a list that included *collectible*, *edible*, *flexible*, and *visible*.

She also said that while rules can be useful, looking for exceptions might be a fun way to help Elliott remember difficult spellings. When he found *e* before *i* in a “neighborhood meeting” notice and on a “weigh produce here” sign in the store, he decided that words with *igh* have their own rule: *e* before *i* if it sounds like *a*. Now, he's looking for exceptions that don't include *igh*. ■



Q&A Read and write about science

Q I think my daughter might want to be a scientist when she grows up!

How could we use her love of science to help her with reading and writing, too?

A It's great that your child enjoys science so much. Try getting books of science experiments for her from the library. She can read them and pick out experiments to do at home—following the instructions will give her good reading practice.

Your daughter may enjoy reading science fiction, too. Ask her to point out inventions or technology in the stories that are based on real science or that she thinks could be possible in her lifetime.

You might also suggest that your child start a science journal. She could record the results of her experiments or write about what she spots during walks, such as animal tracks in the mud or flowers sprouting from the ground. ■



Fun with Words Once upon a time

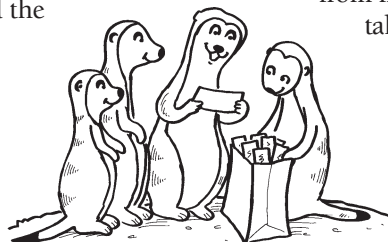
Give your youngster's speaking skills a boost with this family storytelling game.

1. Have each player write 10–20 random words (*feud*, *crucial*, *magical*) on separate slips of paper. Fold the slips in half, put them in a bag, and shake.

2. Let your child pull out a slip and begin telling a story that uses the word she drew. “Once upon a time, there was a *feud*

between two kings who just happened to be brothers.” Then, the next person draws a word and continues the story. “One king thought it was *crucial* to build a moat to keep his brother's knights from invading.” Continue taking turns picking slips and adding to the story.

3. The person who chooses the last word gets to wrap up the tale. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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