

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2021

Gene Dillon Elementary

Book Picks

■ *Lost and Found* (Andrew Clements)

What happens when twins Ray and Jay Grayson pretend to be the same person at a new school? Things get a little out of hand! In the end, they learn a lesson: Trying to be someone else doesn't work, and people who care about us appreciate what makes us different.

■ *Eruption! Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives*

A sleeping volcano in Colombia suddenly erupted in 1985, killing 23,000 people. Were there clues that could have prevented this tragedy? This volume from the Scientists in the Field series describes how U.S. Geological Survey scientists work to uncover early warning signs of an eruption.

■ *Akissi: Tales of Mischief*

(Marguerite About)

In book one of the Akissi graphic novel series, readers will meet a young girl from Ivory Coast. Akissi takes us along on her days filled with hilarious mishaps and silly adventures—like when she has to chase a cat up a tree for stealing her fish! Based on the author's own childhood in West Africa.

■ *The Crayon Man: The True Story of the Invention of Crayola Crayons*

This illustrated nonfiction book tells the story of Edwin Binney and how he invented the famous Crayola crayons. He started by creating a special kind of chalk and eventually brought the colorful crayons to life. Includes a section with photographs showing how crayons are made in factories today.



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 1 book = 2,500 miles, and have a race to see who will be the first to read his way "around the world." *Bonus:* Your youngster will practice math skills as he tallies his 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). Before revealing the solution, let each person make a prediction and tell what clues tipped him off.

Crank up some karaoke

Help your youngster find song lyrics online. Then, play the song, and read

the words as you sing along together.

Tip: Encourage your child to add words to his vocabulary by looking up unfamiliar ones in a dictionary.

Play reading games

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



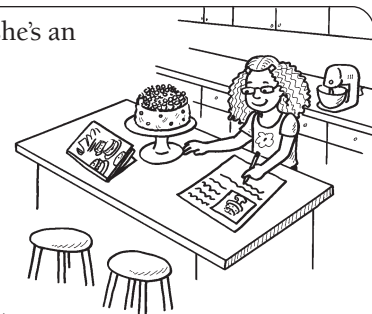
Write about what you like

Encourage your child to write about a topic she's an expert on: herself! Suggest these three ways.

1. Perhaps your youngster enjoys painting pottery or decorating cakes. She can write descriptions of her finished products. Encourage her to be specific (for example, describe materials or colors) so she'll learn to use details in her writing.

2. Suggest that your child create a monthly newsletter for family and friends about her favorite sports teams. She can practice summarizing by writing a few sentences after each game she watches.

3. A youngster who loves hiking might keep a trail journal. She'll learn to record observations as she keeps track of different trails you hike together. ("The Red Trail at the park can be really muddy after the rain.")



Understanding cause and effect

The ability to recognize cause and effect boosts your child's reading comprehension whether she's reading fiction or nonfiction. These fun ideas will give her practice.

Mix and match. Together, write sentences involving cause and effect. (*Hint:* Cause-and-effect sentences use “signal words” like *if, then, because, since, so, consequently, as a result, and the reason for.*) First, brainstorm 10 “real” cause-and-effect sentences, such as “Because Mars has no atmosphere, nothing lives there,” or “The kids were bored, so Sam invented a game.” Then, pair each cause with a different effect to make



illogical—and funny—combinations. “Because Mars has no atmosphere, Sam invented a game.”

Show a chain reaction. Suggest that your youngster make a paper trail to track the causes and effects in a story she reads. She could write each cause on one color of paper and each effect on another color. *Cause:* “Hansel and Gretel are left in the woods.” *Effect:* “As a result, Hansel and Gretel become lost.” *Cause:* “They have no food.” *Effect:* “They’re hungry, so they eat the gingerbread house.” As your child lays down her paper trail, she will see how cause and effect drive the plot. ■



Q&A In a reading rut

Q My son keeps starting books and not finishing them. He can't seem to find one he likes. Do you have any advice?

A Suggest that your son give books a fair chance before abandoning them. Depending on their length and his reading ability, he might want to read at least 25–50 pages of a book to decide whether he likes it. He may discover that it gets better as he reads.

Also, it's possible your son is tired of the kinds of books he normally selects. Encourage him to browse the library for something different. If he usually reads mysteries, he could try fantasy or short stories, for instance.

Finally, encourage him to get recommendations from people who share his interests. Ideas from friends or relatives just might supply the spark he needs. ■



Fun with Words Comma quest

Play this game to help your youngster remember the sometimes tricky rules about when and where to use commas.

Materials: index cards, pencil, books, magazines, newspapers



1. On separate index cards, have your child write rules for using commas. He might find the rules in a textbook, in class notes, or online. *Examples:* Use a comma after introductory phrases (“In the morning, we broke camp”). Use a comma before a conjunction when it joins two independent clauses (“He wanted to read, but he had no books”).
2. Shuffle the cards and spread them out facedown. Take turns flipping one over. Then, race each other to find an example of the rule in one of the books, magazines, or newspapers.
3. The winner reads the sentence and the rule aloud and claims the card. The person with the most cards at the end is the comma champ! ■

Parent 2 Parent Expressive read-alouds

My daughter doesn't use much expression when she reads aloud. Her teacher suggested that I could help Melissa improve by doing this activity together.

On separate sticky notes, Melissa drew faces showing different emotions, such as happy, sad, mad, excited, and surprised. Then, she read a book aloud to me, and I used the sticky notes to help with expression. For instance, after she used a flat voice to read

“He couldn't believe it when he finally won a race,” I held up the surprised note. She laughed and repeated the sentence in an enthusiastic voice.

Melissa has started keeping her sticky notes nearby to refer to when she reads aloud at home. She won't always need them, but for now, they're a good reminder for her to adjust her tone to match how characters are feeling. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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