

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

December 2020

Gene Dillon Elementary

Book Picks



■ *The Dragon with a Chocolate Heart* (Stephanie Burgis)

In this magical tale, Aventurine the dragon breaks her family's rules and sneaks away from her cave. When she's offered a sip of hot chocolate, the brave dragon is turned into a human girl. With no dragon powers left, she has to figure out how to survive as a human.



■ *Earth Verse: Haiku from the Ground Up* (Sally M. Walker)

Science and poetry come together in this beautiful book of haiku. Readers will learn about Earth, minerals, rocks, fossils, volcanoes, and more with haiku, illustrations, and a fact-filled section at the end.



■ *The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Susy)* (Barbara Kerley)

This biography of author Mark Twain is based on the journal entries of someone who knew him well: his 13-year-old daughter, Susy. The author weaves together Susy's original writings with information about the lives of both father and daughter.

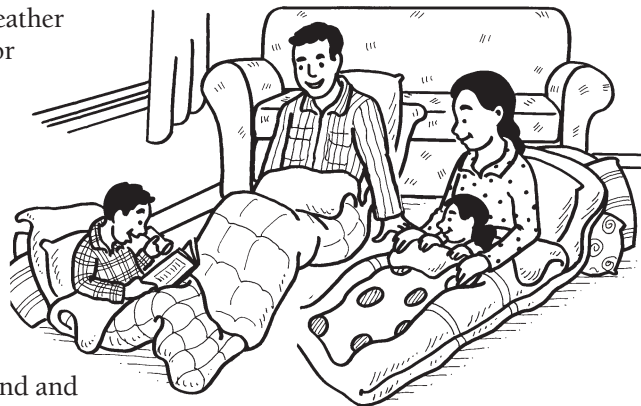
■ *Comeback Catcher* (Jake Maddox)

Meet Eddie Jackson from the Jake Maddox Graphic Novels series. He's in a band and also plays baseball. But baseball becomes tricky for Eddie when he gets nervous every time he's up to bat. Find out how Eddie overcomes his fears. Includes a glossary with baseball terms. (Also available in Spanish.)



Winter reading traditions

Short days and chilly weather make reading a great indoor winter activity. Use these suggestions to encourage your child to snuggle up with good books.



Pajama party

On a weekend night, put pillows and sleeping bags in the living room and share a book of short stories. Pass the book around and take turns reading to each other by flashlight. Or use the cozy time for everyone to read their own books. *Tip:* Ask a librarian or your child's teacher for book recommendations based on your family's interests.

have each person try to recite the poem from memory. The family member who comes closest to the original chooses the next poem.

Game night

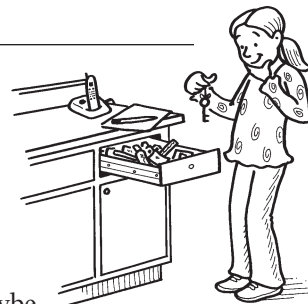
Suggest that your child invent games that involve reading. For example, he might suggest a poetry contest. One person could pick a short poem from a book and give everyone five minutes to memorize it. Then, close the book and

Comedy fest

Read jokes for an evening of laughter. Have each family member find a book of jokes or riddles from the library, browse through them, and mark favorites to share. Everyone can vote for the funniest jokes. *Idea:* Your youngster could write his own jokes and do a stand-up comedy set. ■

Story ideas: Look here!

Does your family's junk drawer tell a tale? Is there a story behind a lost-and-found notice or a song on the radio? When your youngster has a creative writing assignment or writes just for fun, suggest that she find inspiration in one of these places.



- **The junk drawer.** Let her pick a few random items, such as an old key and a business card. Maybe she'll imagine that the key unlocks a secret room at the address on the card.
- **Online posts.** Show your child posts on neighborhood forums. She might write about a lost dog being reunited with his owner or a girl who starts a successful snow-shoveling business.
- **The radio.** Your youngster can use a line or a verse from a song to make up her own story. For instance, a song about traveling on a plane may prompt a tale of a trip to a desert island. ■

A guide to taking notes

Being able to take notes quickly and accurately is a skill your child needs now. Plus, it'll come in handy in later grades as well as in college and on the job. Share these strategies for your youngster to become a first-rate note taker.

Before. Have your child prepare to take notes on new material by reading the previous day's notes. At the beginning of class, she should label her notes with the date and topic (12/11/20, American Revolution) so it's easier to put them in order for studying.



During. Suggest that your youngster use abbreviations and symbols for faster note taking. *Examples:* T for *the*, V for *every*, > for *more*. Point out that she should always write down dates, formulas, and definitions exactly as they're given. When the teacher says, "This is an important point," your child could highlight that section in her notes. Finally, she might leave extra lines so she has room to add comments or questions later.

After. Encourage your youngster to go over her notes and underline main points. If the notes are hard to read, it's a good idea to rewrite or type them. Copying them not only makes the notes more legible, it will help her remember the information better. 📖

Parent & Parent

Editing out loud

My son Lucas used to rush through writing assignments and make a lot of careless mistakes. When I asked his teacher what to do, she suggested that we have Lucas edit his work by reading it aloud. She said hearing his words out loud would help him hear his mistakes.



We started by having Lucas read his writing to me. I pointed out what I liked about it and asked questions about parts I didn't quite understand. And Lucas noticed that he used some of the same words over and over and caught a couple of grammatical errors. Then, he used our feedback to edit his paper.

Now Lucas regularly reads his papers aloud to himself. He seems to be catching more mistakes—and he's getting better grades on his written assignments. 📖



An occasion for reading

Turn gift giving into an opportunity for your child to read. Here are some ideas:

- Book reviews will help her choose novels as gifts for others. Your youngster can look at library book lists or newspaper reviews. Encourage her to check for words and phrases such as "a must-read" or "action-packed."
- Suggest that your child make a craft for someone. She might create finger puppets, a mosaic, or a bracelet. To find possibilities, she could look through craft books (*The Best Craft Book Ever* by Jane Bull) or check online (craftsforkids.com) and then read them as she follows the instructions.
- Young bakers can use cookbooks to prepare homemade treats like cookies and muffins. Let your child select recipes and write a grocery list. Then, remind her to carefully read recipes again before she starts baking. 📖



Fun with Words

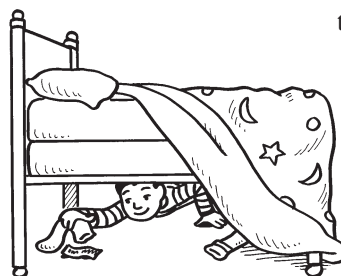
Read the clues, find the treasure

Treasure hunts are fun for all ages. And figuring out the clues will help your youngster learn to infer, or read between the lines.

First, hide a treasure (a new book, a small toy). Then, hide a set of clues that will lead your child to it. The first clue should give instructions for finding the second clue, which should lead to the third, and so on, until your youngster discovers the treasure.

Try to come up with clues that give hints—but make your youngster think. For example, if you want him to look under his bed, you might write, "Find the next clue in a place socks like to hide." Or get him to open an end-table drawer with "Look under the lamp and coasters."

Once your child tracks down the treasure, have him create a treasure hunt for you or a sibling. 📖



OUR PURPOSE

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

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