

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

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Redbank Valley Intermediate School

Cheryl McCauley, Principal

Book Picks



■ *Joey Fly Private Eye in Creepy Crawly Crime* (Aaron Reynolds)

In the first book of the Joey Fly, Private Eye series, this graphic novel mystery stars an all-bug cast. Joey Fly is a detective who wants to protect Bug City. His latest case: Find Delilah the butterfly's missing diamond pencil case.

■ *The Thrifty Guide to Ancient Rome* (Jonathan W. Stokes)

Your child will become a "time traveler" in this guidebook that transports readers to Ancient Rome. A humorous book from the Thrifty Guide series, it weaves in historical information and introduces young readers to an important period in history. Includes maps and illustrations, and advises travelers on where to stay, what to wear, and more.



■ *Sarai and the Meaning of Awesome (Sarai #1)* (Sarai Gonzalez and Monica Brown)

Sarai has always lived close to her cousins and grandparents. When their rented home goes up for sale, her mission is to raise money so they don't have to move. She sells cupcakes and lemonade, and even enters a dance contest. Book 1 in the Sarai series. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *10 Plants that Shook the World* (Gillian Richardson)

How much trouble can a simple plant cause? Plenty! This book gets to the roots of 10 plants that started wars, helped medicine, and altered history. Fun facts, history, and anecdotes show how something as small as a plant can change the world.



Fall for nonfiction

Reading about the real world is fascinating! Whether your child is already a nonfiction reader or is new to these books, you can help him fall in love with "reality reading." Try these tips.

Discover interesting people

Biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and diaries are often popular with youngsters. Encourage your child to find books about athletes, inventors, or presidents. Just one good story can get him hooked on nonfiction.

Use fiction as inspiration

Sometimes the setting or subject of a novel can lead to new nonfiction reading. Talk to your youngster about fiction he reads, and suggest topics he might look into. Was he fascinated by New York City or the Roaring Twenties in a recent story? He could ask a librarian to recommend nonfiction books that give him the real scoop.

Keep up with the news

The newspaper is a regular source of nonfiction. Hand your child a section,



and invite him to read alongside you. He can try different parts to find a favorite—and to discover various kinds of nonfiction. For instance, he could read factual accounts in the news section and persuasive pieces on the opinion page. *Tip:* Share news websites, too.

Explore a school subject

Perhaps your youngster is studying the solar system in science class or Greek mythology in social studies. Have him type that topic into the library database and look for nonfiction books. They can deepen his knowledge and offer new insights that will help him in school. ■

Unraveling words

Your youngster is reading and comes to a word she doesn't know the meaning of. What does she do? These strategies can help her figure it out:

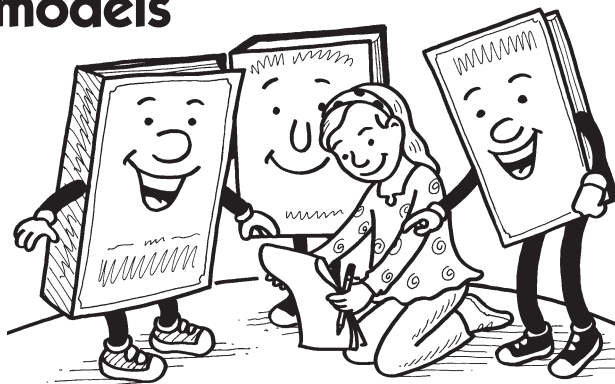
- Reread the sentence, and try to substitute a different word that would make sense. The context might make the unfamiliar word clear.
- Study the word for clues. Does she recognize any part of the word, such as a *prefix* (beginning), *suffix* (ending), or *root* (base word)?
- Write down the word. Then, look up its meaning and synonyms in a dictionary or a thesaurus. Seeing synonyms for the word can help her remember its definition in the future. ■



Authors as role models

The pages of your child's favorite book hold more than a good tale. They contain examples of writing techniques she can use in her own stories. Encourage her to watch for these.

Transitions. Good writing flows smoothly from one event to another, and transition words and phrases make that happen. Suggest that your youngster look closely at how an author switches the action to a different place ("Meanwhile, back at the villain's lair ...") or time ("Later, while Mom fixed dinner ..."). Ask her why clear transitions are important (they lead the reader through the story).



When she writes a story, suggest that she circle places where the action changes. Then she can come up with interesting transitions.

Tense. An author may choose to write in the past or present tense. Have your child look for books with examples of each and try reading a sentence or two in the opposite tense. *Example:*

"The leaves are falling from the tree" (present) vs. "The leaves fell from the tree" (past). Which does she

prefer? What effect does each have? The present tense may make her feel like the story is happening right now, for instance. Encourage her to experiment with each technique in her own stories. ■

Make reading fun(ny)

Psst! Want your youngster to spend more time reading? Tickle her funny bone! Consider these three hints.

1. Keep joke books and volumes of silly poems on the coffee table, in the bathroom, and in the car for quick reading any time.
2. Help your child find humorous stories at the library. She could ask her teacher, the librarian, or cousins and friends for funny authors they like. (Two to try: Tom Angleberger and Jeff Kinney.)



3. Look up comic books at the library. Also, when you read a funny comic strip or cartoon in the newspaper, cut it out to share with her, or email your youngster ones that you find online. ■

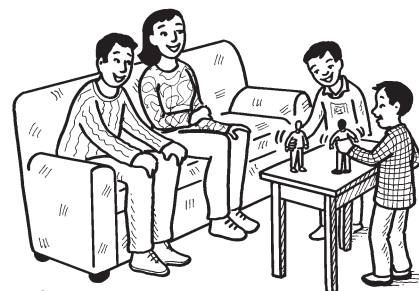
Parent 2 Parent

Act it out

When my son Steven had trouble following story plots, the reading specialist suggested that we take advantage of the fact that he likes to perform in school plays. She said they were acting out reading material during resource sessions at school, and she thought this approach would work at home, too.

The funny thing is, it has turned out to be a great activity for our entire family. To "see" the action in the novel he was reading for class, we used his little brother's action figures as characters from the story.

While I read, Steven and Timmy moved the figures around on the table according to the description from the book. Then, the two boys acted out the chapter themselves. As Steven made up the dialogue, I could tell that he understood what had happened in the story. Now reading time has turned into acting time! ■



Fun with Words

What's in a contraction?

Contractions such as *it's*, *she'll*, and *wouldn't* add variety to our language and help to make writing flow smoothly. These activities will show your youngster how language sounds without contractions and help him learn to spell them.

Talk and listen

Announce that no contractions are allowed at dinner! During conversations, your child will need to choose his words carefully. He might say, "I will have some peas" instead of

"I'll have some peas." Everyone must listen closely to see if anyone uses a contraction. Who can go the longest without saying one?

Read and write

Ask your youngster to read a short newspaper article out loud, replacing each contraction with the two words that form it. For example, if he sees *you're*, he would say *you are*. Then, have him write each contraction on one side of an index card and the two words that form it on the other side. This will help him remember the correct spelling. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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