

# COMPREHENSION BOOSTERS

Strong readers visualize story events, predict what might happen next, and draw conclusions based on what they've read. They also use their own experiences to understand stories. Try the following activities to build comprehension skills that can help your child become a better reader.



## DRAW A CONCLUSION

In this guessing game, your youngster will use your hints to draw conclusions. Have her read a book such as *An Egg Is Quiet* by Dianna Hutts Aston.

Then, secretly pick a character or an object (say, a sea turtle egg) from the book, and give your child a hint ("I'm thinking of one of the eggs") and see if she can tell which one you chose by asking yes-or-no questions. *Examples:*

"Does it have spots?" "Is it a bird egg?" She can use the pictures or words in the book to think of questions. When she figures out your secret, let her choose one for you to guess.



## MAKE AN INFERENCE

Here's a fun way to give your youngster practice figuring out something that isn't said directly. It will help him when he needs to read "between the lines." Tell him you're pretending to be a book character who is talking on the phone. You might pick Nate from *Nate the Great* (Marjorie Weinman Sharmat). It's his job to listen and then tell you what the other person could have been saying. For example, you could say, "Hi, Rosamond.... Oh, no! Have you looked under the bed? ... Try setting out a bowl of milk. If that doesn't work, call me back." Your child might infer that Rosamond's cat is missing and she wants Nate to help her find it. Then, trade roles and let him "talk" on the phone while you infer what his conversation is about.

## PREDICT WHAT HAPPENS

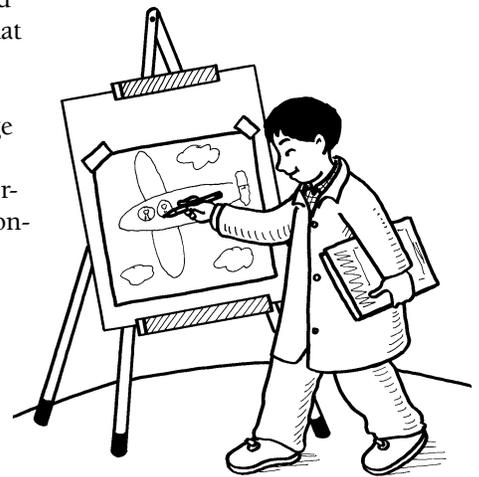
The goal of this game is to make predictions while reading. Have your youngster write, "Aha!" on a plastic bottle cap. Take turns reading from a book that she isn't familiar with. When

she thinks she knows what will happen next, she shouts "Aha!" and makes a prediction. If you're reading *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* (Doreen Cronin), she might say, "Aha! I think Farmer Brown will be mad when he reads the note from the cows." Next, she passes the cap to you, and it's your turn to predict. After each pass, read to find out if the prediction was correct. Keep reading, predicting, and passing the bottle cap until the story ends.

## SHARE A CONNECTION

When your child reads something that reminds him of his life, he can use his personal knowledge to understand the book better. Encourage him to make connections with this activity. Together, read a book.

Then, each of you should draw pictures of something the book reminded you of. For example, if you read *The Flyer Flew!* (Lee Sullivan Hill), your youngster might draw himself flying in an airplane to his grandmother's house. When you're both finished, share your drawings and explain your connections to the book.



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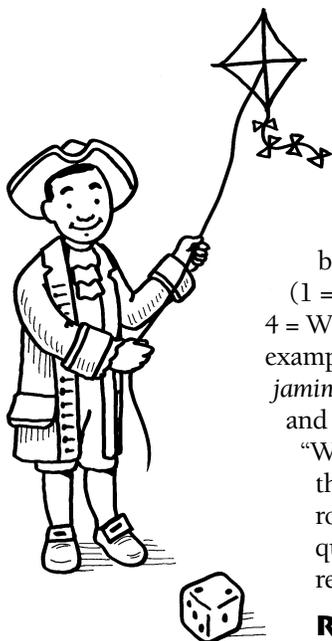


**PUT THE STORY IN SEQUENCE**

Strong reading comprehension skills can help your youngster put story events in a logical order. Have her practice by reading a book and then writing or drawing five events on separate index cards. For example, if she read *Caps for Sale* (Esphyr Slobodkina), her cards might include the peddler walking with the caps on his head, the peddler stopping to take a nap, and the peddler waking up to find that the monkeys had stolen his caps. Mix up the index cards, and have your child put them back in the right order.

**USE QUESTIONS**

Asking and answering questions while reading is a great way for your youngster to think carefully about the material. When you read a story together, stop at the end of each page or chapter, and have your child roll a die. Ask him a specific type of question based on the number he rolls.



(1 = Who? 2 = What? 3 = Where? 4 = Why? 5 = When? 6 = How?) For example, if you read *The Story of Benjamin Franklin* (Patricia A. Pingry) and he rolls a 2, you might ask, “What did Franklin invent?” After the next page or chapter, you can roll the die and let him ask you a question. Take turns rolling and reading until you finish the book.

**RETELL A STORY**

Retelling a story can help your youngster decide which details matter most. Use stuffed animals to encourage him to practice retelling his favorite tales.

First, read a book together. Afterward, let him tell the story in his own words by making his animals act out the characters’ roles. If you read *Tawny Scrawny Lion* (Kathryn Jackson), he could make a stuffed lion chase his other stuffed animals.

**CAN YOU IMAGINE?**

A good reader uses her imagination to picture characters and story events in her mind. Here are fun ways for your child to practice visualizing as she reads.

**USE YOUR SENSES**

Encourage your youngster to use all her senses with this activity. Read a storybook aloud, and ask her to describe what she sees, hears, smells, tastes, or feels. For example, if you read *Fritz and the Beautiful Horses* (Jan Brett), she might describe how she “sees” the horses’ shiny coats, “hears” the “clomp clomp” of their hooves, and “feels” the softness of Fritz’s mane.



**IMAGINE WITH ADJECTIVES**

Your child can use adjectives, or descriptive words, to help him visualize details. Together, find words in a story that describe people, places, or things. Say you’re reading *The Very Best Pumpkin* (Mark Kimball Moulton)—he might spot “juicy,” “crisp,” and “plump.” Have him choose one of the words to print at the top of a sheet of paper. He can fill the page with pictures cut from old magazines or catalogs that go with the word. For example, if he picks “juicy,” he might include photos of strawberries and peaches.

**DESIGN A COVER**

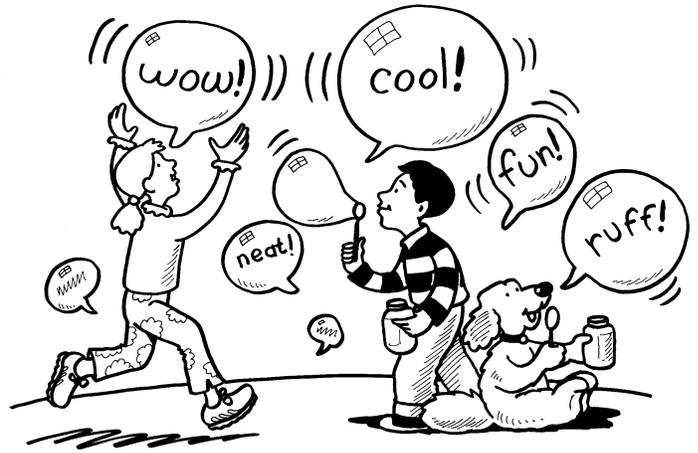
Read a story to your youngster without showing her the cover. Then, have her pretend to be the illustrator and draw a cover that captures the main idea of the story. For example, if you read *The 100th Day of School* (Angela Shelf Medearis), she might draw a classroom with a calendar on the wall and write “100” on one of the squares. Then, show her the real cover and have her compare it with her creation.

# The Wonder of Words

Words, wonderful words! We need them to have conversations, tell jokes, send birthday cards, and write stories and poems. They're fun to play with, too.

Here are some games and projects that will build your child's vocabulary—and help her learn to love words.

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## Fishing for letters

Your youngster is sure to get hooked on this spelling game, which will remind him that every word has a vowel. While he isn't looking, use magnetic letters to make five words. Bury the letters in a large bowl of dry beans or rice.

To play, take turns "fishing" out one letter at a time using kitchen tongs. When a player can arrange his magnets to spell a word, he reads it out loud. Continue until all the letters have been pulled out. The player with the most words wins. *Tip:* Point out that A, E, I, O, U, and Y are valuable—he'll soon realize he can't make a word without at least one of them!

## Word scrapbook

This project will build your child's phonics skills and stretch her creativity. Together, cut common consonant combinations from magazine headlines. *Examples:* *sh, bl, st, cr, th, gl, sp, tr, ch.* Glue each one on a different page of a notebook or photo album.

Then, let your youngster find magazine pictures to put on the appropriate pages (a *tree* under *tr*; a *child* under *ch*). Encourage her to add stickers, words, photos, and drawings to her scrapbook. A *star* sticker, for instance, could go on the *st* page, or she could doodle a *spiral* on the *sp* page.



## Finding nouns

What better place to look for words than in books? Here's an activity that will help your child listen closely to words while you read. Before you open a book, ask him to look at

the cover, and help him jot down five nouns (people, places, or things) he thinks might be inside. For example, if you're reading *The Napping House* (Audrey Wood), he might list *bed, dog, sleep, and rain.*

As you read aloud, he can check off each word he hears. How many did he predict accurately? After you read, have him make up several sentences using the words on his list.

## Guess my word

This game inspires creativity while encouraging children to think about what words really mean. Take turns looking around the house for a word to act out. Your youngster might find one on a food label, a message board, or a toy package.

Players should try to make others guess their words through gestures only. For example, if your child finds the word *elephant* on a toy zoo package, she might bend forward and walk while clasping her hands together and swinging her arms like an elephant's trunk. How would she act out *hot* or *library*? The first person to guess the word goes next.

## Alphabet cards

This hide-and-seek game gives your child practice with beginning sounds. Start by having him write each letter of the alphabet on a separate index card.

Let your youngster choose a card, and ask him to look around the house for an object beginning with that letter. For example, if he picks an E, he might find an *envelope* or an *eraser*. Keep the cards in a shoebox so he can play anytime. *Idea:* Take the box along in the car so he can look for objects as you drive. (Ask for "stop sign" or "sub shop.")



## Pour-a-poem

Turn a poem into a word puzzle. Ask your child to pick a short poem from a book such as Jack Prelutsky's *A Pizza the Size of the Sun* or a Web site like [www.poetry4kids.com](http://www.poetry4kids.com). Help him write each word on a separate slip of paper. Then, have him put the slips in a container with a lid, shake it up, and dump them out. Can he put the poem back together?

*Variation:* For a fun twist, your youngster can create his own version of the poem by replacing some of the words. *A Pizza the Size of the Sun* might become *A Garden the Size of the Galaxy* or *A Baseball the Size of the Moon*.



Make a bingo card for each family member: divide sheets of paper into three rows and three columns. Each person copies the names of the objects in random boxes on his or her card. Using the extra set of index cards, the caller announces each item. Players cover the words with pennies on their bingo cards as they're called out. If your youngster isn't sure how to read a word, he can go look at its label and find the word on his card. Three in a row wins.

## Best Word Award

Encourage family members to nominate words for a household Best Words Award. First, come up with categories such as longest, most unusual, coolest sounding, and silliest. Your child will need to do a lot of reading to find the best words!

Each time she reads a story, have her choose a word for one of the categories. Encourage other family members to nominate words, too. You can post a sheet on the refrigerator where everyone can write words under the category headings. At the end of the week, discuss your nominations and vote. Then, have your youngster make certificates for the winning words.

## Labeling the house

Help your child write the names of nine household objects on two sets of index cards. Tape one set of cards to the appropriate items (sofa, dresser, refrigerator). Then, play bingo to help him memorize the words.

## Rhyming dominoes

An old set of dominoes is perfect for working with rhymes. Cover one side of each domino with a piece of masking tape, and draw a line across the center. On both halves, write a word containing one of these sounds: *at, an, et, it, in, ot, un*. For example, you might write *pat, bat; pan, tan*. (Be sure to have eight of each sound. Repeat words as needed.)

Put the dominoes facedown. Let each person draw five, and turn one faceup in the center. On each turn, a player tries to match one of her dominoes to a rhyming word on the table. For instance, she could play "pot" or "lot" next to "dot." If she can't make a match, she draws a domino, and her turn is over. The first player to use up all her dominoes wins. *Variation:* Use paper rectangles instead of dominoes.



## Create a word-making station

Set aside a spot in your home where your child can play with words. Get started with these suggestions:

- Fill an ice cube tray with letter beads from a craft or dollar store. Place two to three letters in each section. Include string so your child can make word necklaces and bracelets.
- Keep index cards, an alphabet stencil, and colored pencils in a zipper bag. Your youngster can use the stencil to make words.

- Collect old board game pieces that have letters (tiles, letter dice, cards). Store them in a large envelope, and encourage your child to spell words with them.



- Put paints, thin brushes, and construction paper in a box for her to paint words.
- Provide a children's dictionary so your youngster can look up words.

# Books Kids Love



Reading with your child is one of the most important things you can do to help her succeed in school. This collection of books is full of laughs, information, and tender moments. Find a comfortable chair, snuggle up, and enjoy them together.

## **Tacky the Penguin** by Helen Lester

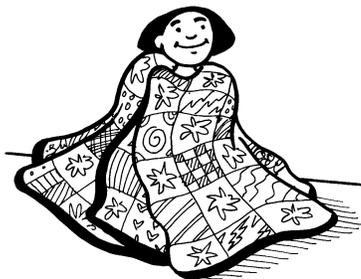
Tacky is an odd bird. He wears Hawaiian shirts, has trouble walking in a line, and sings songs like “How Many Toes Does a Fish Have?” However, as his companions Goodly, Angel, Neatly, and Perfect learn, when the penguin hunters come, Tacky’s differences make him a good bird to have around. (Available in Spanish.)

## **The Patchwork Quilt**

by Valerie Flournoy

Tanya’s grandmother starts making a quilt using old clothing, Halloween costumes, and snips of fabric from special outfits the family has outgrown.

When Grandma gets sick, Tanya asks her family to help finish the masterpiece. A touching story of family and traditions.



## **Our Earth** by Anne Rockwell

From deserts, oceans, and rain forests to volcanoes, glaciers, and caves, this simple book introduces children to geography and geology. The illustrations will prompt youngsters to ask questions about the planet Earth.

## **Love You Forever** by Robert Munsch

“I’ll love you forever/I’ll like you for always/As long as I’m living/My baby you’ll be.” A mother sings this song to her son—when he’s a baby, a toddler, and a teenager, and when he grows up and moves away from home. (Available in Spanish.)

## **Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa** by Erica Silverman

This is the first book in a series about Kate and her horse, Cocoa. As the two work on a ranch together, their friendship grows. Kate fluffs up Cocoa’s straw and gives him carrots and water at bedtime. And Cocoa helps Kate count cattle and sings her a lullaby when she can’t sleep.

## **A Very Important Day** by Maggie Rugg Herold

Families from Mexico, Russia, Vietnam, India, and other countries are busy preparing for an important day—becoming American citizens. In spite of a heavy snowfall that morning, everyone makes it to the courthouse and takes the oath of citizenship. Beautiful watercolors portray different cultures.

## **Puff, the Magic Dragon** by Peter Yarrow and Lenny Lipton

Little Jackie Paper and Puff embark on a magical trip in the land of Honalee, sailing on a boat and meeting royalty and pirates along the way. Children and parents will love this book that’s based on the popular song by Peter (the book’s author), Paul, and Mary.

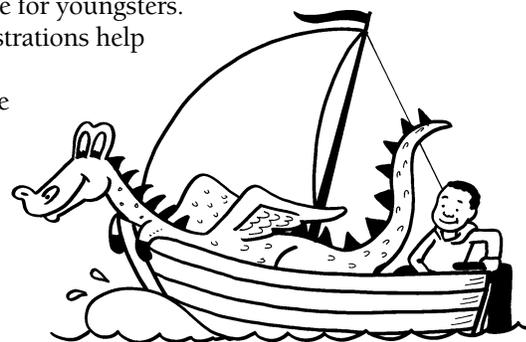
## **It’s Spring!/It’s Summer!/It’s Fall!/It’s Winter!**

by Linda Glaser

Pussywillows, rainbows, colorful leaves, snow angels . . . these four books in the Celebrate the Season series make the seasons come alive for youngsters.

Cut-paper illustrations help tell the stories.

Includes nature activities such as creating a seed mosaic and looking for four-leaf clovers.



**Noisy Nora** by Rosemary Wells  
 Nora, the middle child in a family of mice, is tired of waiting for her time with Mom and Dad. No matter how much noise she makes, she can't get their attention. But when the clatter stops, the rest of the family wonders what happened to Nora. (Available in Spanish.)

**Where the Sidewalk Ends** by Shel Silverstein  
 These hilarious poems have delighted youngsters for years. Read about a little boy who uses a toilet plunger for a hat, and learn how to give an armadillo a bath. Black-and-white drawings add to the book's appeal.

**Trout Are Made of Trees** by April Pulley Sayre  
 In this introduction to the food chain, a father and his two children explore a stream together. Beginning with a leaf falling into the water, simple words and collage-like illustrations follow the life cycle of a trout.



**Tom** by Tomie dePaola  
 Tommy is named after his grandfather, Tom. The two read, sing, and make up stories together, and Tommy helps his granddad in his butcher shop. Your youngster will enjoy laughing at their antics.

**Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli** by Barbara Jean Hicks  
 Monsters eat trees, cars, sharks, stop signs, and even rocket ships. But "Fum, foe, fie, fee, monsters don't eat broccoli." Could the trees they love to eat really be broccoli? A fun story with a lesson in nutrition.

**Lost in the Woods** by Carl R. Sams II and Jean Stoick  
 When a baby deer roams around alone, the other animals assume he's lost and take turns watching him until his mother comes back. The book is filled with striking photographs of a tree frog, a red-winged blackbird, and other animals. Children will enjoy the animal-hunt activity at the end.

**Johnny Appleseed** by Stephen Kellogg  
 This book tells the story of Johnny Appleseed, combining facts from his real life with legends told about him. Life on the frontier is depicted through beautiful paintings of Native Americans, pioneers, and animals. A map helps children "see" his journey scattering apple seeds throughout the land.

**Morris Goes to School** by B. Wiseman  
 This I Can Read book will have your little one rolling with laughter when Morris the Moose starts first grade. Morris has a little trouble at first, but with the help of his teacher and classmates, he learns to read and count.

**Mother Goose Numbers on the Loose** by Leo and Diane Dillon  
 The nursery rhymes in this collection all contain numbers, including the well-known "1, 2, Buckle My Shoe" and the less familiar "Gregory Griggs Has 27 Wigs." Your child can practice rhyming while he counts people, animals, wigs, and more.

**"What should I read?"**

Children who know how to select good books are on their way to becoming lifelong readers. Help your youngster learn how with these ideas:

- When picking books, suggest that she look at the cover and read the description on the back. This will give her an idea of what the book's about. Then, she can flip through the pages and look at the illustrations. Does she think she would enjoy it?
- Tap into her interests. If she's excited about rocks or car racing, have her ask the librarian for help finding books on those subjects.
- Together, think of books your youngster has enjoyed, and make a list of the authors. Help her look for more of their stories at the library or a used bookstore.
- Encourage her to discuss books she likes with her friends—and to ask them what books they like. She'll get suggestions for new books or might even trade favorites with her friends.



# The Write Stuff



Why is it important to encourage children to write? Writing allows youngsters to explore their creativity and share events, ideas, and thoughts with others. Writing also develops reading skills—along with self-confidence.

You can bring out the writer in your child with these simple low- or no-cost activities that will make writing practice fun!

## Time Travel Journal

Take off on a writing adventure with your young traveler.

**Materials:** paper, pencil

Ask your child to pretend she has been given a ticket to travel in time. Will she travel back to the pioneer days of the 1800s? Or forward to the year 3000? To use her ticket, she'll need to describe her adventures.

Have your youngster write a journal entry about her trip. She can describe the clothing she wore, what she ate, or an exciting event. *Example:* "March 15, 3000—Today I rode a spaceship to the moon. When I got there, hundreds of people were waiting to see me!"

## Mouthwatering Menus

Your child can practice creative writing with this scrumptious family menu.

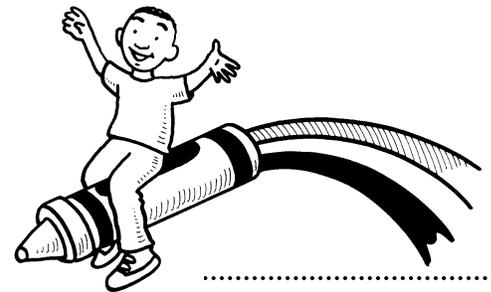
**Materials:** cookbooks, magazines, paper, pencil, crayons or markers

Help your youngster create a menu for your family's "restaurant." Start by looking through cookbooks and magazines for tasty



dishes. Have him choose foods your family might like for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Fold one or two pieces of paper in half. Let your child decorate the outside. On the inside, have him write tempting descriptions of the menu items. *Example:* "These golden pancakes are so fluffy, they might float up to the ceiling."



## Rainbow Writing

Help your youngster make writing a colorful experience.

**Materials:** crayons, two sheets of paper, paper clips, ballpoint pen

Have your child use crayons to heavily color a blank sheet of paper. (*Hint:* Use several different colors.) Place the crayoned side of the paper on top of a blank sheet of paper. Use paper clips to hold the two sheets together.

Let your youngster write anything she'd like on the clean side of the crayon paper. *Ideas:* spelling words, the alphabet, a short story. Tell her to press firmly with a ballpoint pen. When she's finished, separate the sheets. The blank sheet will be covered with her writing—in rainbow colors!



## It's Story Time

With this game, story writing is in the bag!

**Materials:** small plastic or paper bags, magazines, scissors, pencils, paper

Give each player a bag. Then, ask them to cut five pictures of people, places, and things from magazines.

Have each person write a short story using as many of the pictures as possible. *Example:* "The COW ran across the FIELD. The FARMER tried to stop the cow, but his TRACTOR got stuck in the mud!" Suggest they make up different styles of stories—funny, scary, or adventurous. *Hint:* Younger children can tell their stories instead of writing them.

Give one point for every picture used. The player who uses the most pictures to tell a story wins. Then, trade bags, and play another round.

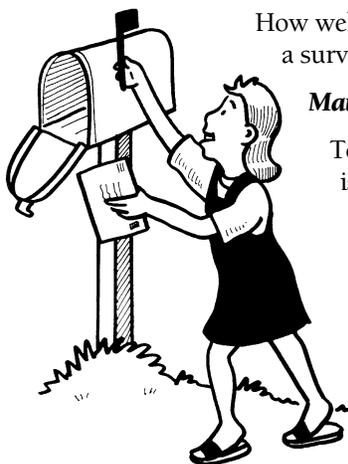
## Letters, Letters—Everywhere!

Here are three letter-writing activities for your child to try.

**Materials:** paper, pencil, envelopes, stamps

1. Does your youngster ever ask you questions, such as how the mail is delivered or how bagels are made? Suggest that she write a letter to the post office or bakery and ask for a tour.

2. Help your child write to a favorite author, sports figure, community leader, or teacher. In the letter, he can explain how the person has influenced him. And it gives him a chance to say thanks to someone special.

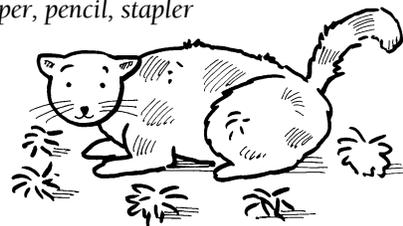


3. Have your youngster send a question to a friend or relative. *Example:* "How will you spend your summer vacation?" At the bottom of the note, add the names and addresses of several other friends. Then, add your child's address to the end of the list. Ask the recipient to write his answer on the note and send it to the next person on the list.

## What Should I Do?

Almost everyone likes to give advice. With this activity, your youngster can create her own advice column.

**Materials:** paper, pencil, stapler



Think of several problems for your child to solve. Have each one end with the question, "What should I do?" *Example:* "My cat is shedding. What should I do?" Ask your youngster to write down the answers on sheets of paper. Encourage funny responses, such as "You could gather the fur and make a pillow!"

Collect the papers, and staple them together into a book. Then, when you need a laugh, read a few of the questions aloud together.

*Variation:* Younger children can answer the questions aloud, and you can write down their answers.

## Super Survey

How well does your child know her family? She can take a survey to find out!

**Materials:** paper, pencil

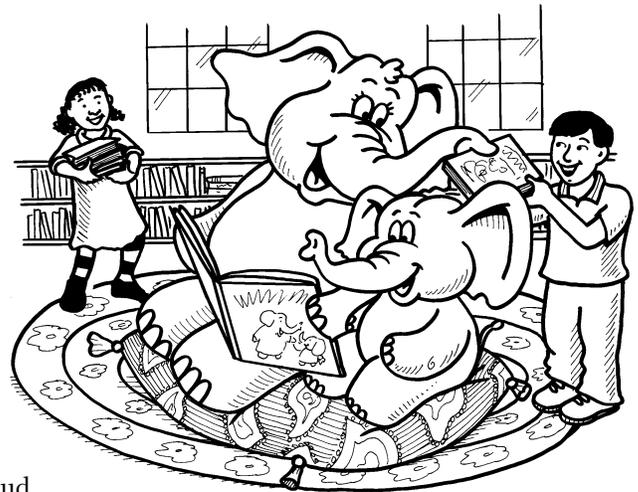
Together, make a list of questions. *Examples:* "What is your favorite food?" "Which animal is the perfect pet?" Help a young child make a list of yes-or-no questions, such as "Do you like french fries?"

Help her set up a "survey booth" at the kitchen table. Invite each family member to the booth to answer the survey. Your youngster can write their answers under each question. After everyone has answered, let them guess each person's likes and dislikes—the results might surprise them!

# Read Aloud!

It's a gift every parent can give: reading aloud to a child before he can read on his own. And once a youngster can read alone, continuing to read aloud can build his vocabulary and keep him excited about books.

Here are ideas for helping your child get the most from story time. We've also included titles that are especially good for reading out loud.



## Three parts of reading aloud

From choosing a book to talking about what you've read, you can fit learning and fun into every minute of story time.

**1. Before.** Let your youngster pick a story, even if she always reaches for the same one. Familiar stories are comforting, and she'll recognize more words each time she hears a story. To introduce her to new titles, you can choose the next story.



Read the title and author before you open a book. Look at the cover picture, and predict what the story might be about. ("This is *Corduroy*, by Don Freeman. Look—that bear is missing a button. I wonder what happened to it.")

**2. During.** Allow your child to set the tone. She may want to point out rhyming words, ask questions, tell you something the story reminds her of, or turn

back to an earlier page to look at a picture again. This lets her participate in reading aloud.

You can draw her attention to pictures of objects by pointing out things mentioned in the story: "See—he thinks that's his button on the bed." Talking about a book builds comprehension and makes reading aloud more fun. *Tip:* Relax while you're reading. Laugh and let your child see how much you enjoy books.

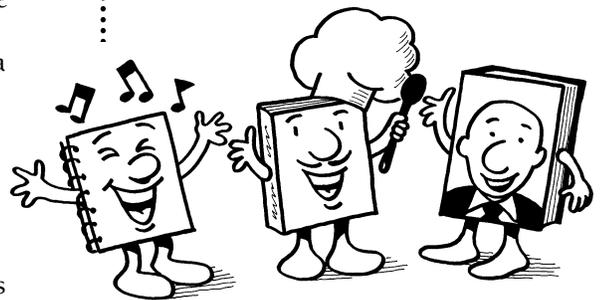
**3. After.** Have your youngster show you her favorite page and explain why she likes it. Compare the book with another story you have read to help her make connections between books. ("*Corduroy* reminds me of *Home for a Bunny* because they both have a character that needs a home.") Ask your child questions about the characters' feelings so she can learn to read between the lines. ("How do you think Corduroy felt when the girl came back?")

You might also help her start a read-aloud journal. Your youngster can draw a picture of her favorite part, write words describing how it made her feel, or write sentences telling the plot. She'll pay closer attention as you read when she knows she'll be drawing and writing in her journal.

## Books and more

Use read-aloud time to introduce your child to a wide variety of book types. For example, he can learn about a person, a place, or an animal when you read biographies or nonfiction books. Or read a choose-your-own-adventure story and take turns picking paths for the characters to follow.

Think outside the book, too. Ask your child to read a recipe as you cook or to read directions for playing a board game or putting a toy together. Poems, song lyrics, and plays are fun to read out loud and are great for showing expression. You can also read stories that your youngster has written!



continued

## Read everywhere

Experts recommend that you read to your youngster for at least 20 minutes each day. Many parents do this at bedtime, but you can also surprise your child with books at unexpected times and places.

For example, pack books and a picnic lunch, and head to a park or out to the backyard. On a hike, take a break to read a chapter while sitting under a tree together. Carry along a magazine to the swimming pool and read articles or jokes aloud. If you're going out to eat, tuck a book into your bag and pull it out while you wait for your food. Reading aloud is also a good way to pass time on an airplane, a bus, or a train.

## Sharing read-alouds

Build a bridge to independent reading by asking your youngster to help you read. You might have her read the words along with you, or you can take turns reading every other page. Try passing a story around the table and having each family member read one page.

It's also fun to read with a friend. Suggest that your child invite a friend to bring a book over. They can read aloud



to each other. Or they might arrange to meet at the library, where they can select books to share.

## Guest readers

Hearing other adults read aloud exposes your child to various reading styles and many new books. Attend story hours at libraries and bookstores. Leave books for babysitters and ask them to read to your youngster. See if relatives will call your child for long-distance read-alouds.

You can be a guest reader, too. Ask your youngster's teacher if you can read to the whole class, a small group, or individual children. In addition to helping out the teacher, you'll help your youngster make the connection between reading at school and reading at home.

## Recorded books

Any time is story time with a book on tape, a CD, or an MP3 player. By listening to a recording and following along in a book, your youngster will learn to read new words and practice reading at a good pace.

You can borrow audiobooks from the library or find low-cost options in book club catalogs sent home from school. Or download audiobooks from an online bookstore.

Another great option is to record yourself reading your child's favorite books—she will love hearing your voice! Use a tape recorder, or put a recordable CD in your computer and read a story aloud into the microphone. Label the recordings, and store them with your youngster's book collection.



## Book Picks

### Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

If cows could communicate, what would they ask for? The ones in Doreen Cronin's story can type, and



they leave Farmer Brown a note requesting electric blankets. When he doesn't bring any, they go on strike! (Available in Spanish.)

**Koala Lou** Everyone loves adorable Koala Lou, especially her mother. But when her siblings are born, she's no longer the center of attention. Of course, the little koala soon discovers she's loved, no matter what. A sweet story by Mem Fox.

**A Seed Is Sleepy** This nonfiction book explains how seeds turn into plants. Dianna Hutts Aston uses science vocabulary in simple rhymes that encourage children to listen. The illustrations identify seeds, and charts show the steps they go through to become plants.

**Honey, I Love** Eloise Greenfield's poems are about things the little girl narrator loves, like riding down a

country road with her family or jumping into a swimming pool. A lively look at family life.

**Humphrey the Lost Whale** This true story by Wendy Tokuda and Richard Hall tells of a humpback whale that accidentally ended up in the Sacramento River. Humphrey was lost for nearly a month before he was rescued and led back to the Pacific Ocean.

**The Teddy Bears' Picnic** In Jimmy Kennedy's picture-book version of this classic song, teddy bears plan a special picnic in the woods. There are games, balloons—and honey. The story's rhythm and repeated lines make it a nice read-aloud.