



Raising Readers Newsletter
December 2013

Check out this newsletter for some great reading tips and resources!

Four Ways to Bring Books Into the Holiday Season

G: GIFT A BOOK

New children's books range from \$5 to \$20, depending on format (board, paperback or hardcover). To see what titles are trending, consult the children's category of the New York Times Best Sellers List for bestselling picture, chapter, and paperback books as well as books in a series. Don't overlook the bookseller giant Barnes & Noble. Online and in-store, they do an exceptional job of showcasing the popular titles in juvenile literature, and they also highlight various "Best Books" lists.

I: INVEST IN LITERACY

Looking for a cause to support this holiday season? Consider donating to an organization that supports early literacy. "Many kids don't have libraries in their own homes," explains Alan Taylor, vice president of professional education and training for Southwest Human Development. "Reading is the single most important thing parents can do for their kids," Taylor says. "It stimulates imagination, expands vocabulary and promotes the development of analytical thinking."

V: VOLUNTEER

Many places are in need of a helping hand during this time of year. Reading to others provides so much fun and entertainment that one might guiltily wonder if it even qualifies as volunteer work. Being a steward of literacy and offering an enthusiastic presence can render a profound and positive effect on others. There are plenty of locations where you can ask about storytelling opportunities. Check with your local library or bookstore to see if they permit volunteers to read picture books during preschool storytime. Assisted living centers also might welcome your family's reading talents. Even if a child is not old enough to read, watching a grandparent, parent or older sibling bring some holiday cheer via stories sets a great example. Older kids, still refining their own reading skills, might explore afterschool programs or nonprofit agencies where they can mentor and read to younger children.

E: ESTABLISH (OR ENHANCE) YOUR HOME LIBRARY

Creating or adding to a child's personal library prompts motivation to read—and may even increase the amount of time your child spends in school. A 20-year study from The University of Nevada revealed a link between the number of books in the home and a child's educational attainment. A 500-book library advances children 2.4 years in their educational attainment. According to the study, even having just 20 books in the home has educational benefit. While 500 books may seem like an incredible quantity, the study refers to the number of books in the entire household. Reading is family act. So build your library together and over time. Try purchasing a few books each month to expand the collection. Start a tradition of adding a holiday title or two to your library each year—classic stories that your children will never outgrow and will only become sweeter with each year's retelling. And remember, the public library is a great place to supplement your child's library. Even when you set the books aside, literacy learning moments will magically appear—as you plan the holiday menu together, fill out gift tags or craft those letters to Santa. During those moments, cherish the memories you are making with your child while knowing you are also developing their literacy skills. The joy of reading can be passed down for generations to come and is truly the gift that keeps on giving.

-<http://www.raisingarizonakids.com/2012/12/this-season-give-the-gift-of-literacy/>

Considering books as gifts? Check out page four of the newsletter to get some excellent recommendations!

Focus on the Super 7: Making Inferences

A different comprehension strategy will be focused upon each month. This month the focus will be on Making Inferences. Here is a link to an overview of all of the Super 7 Comprehension Strategies that will be focused upon in the upcoming months.

https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5fzT_9S7dvZWDhDvWIGY0YyWEU/edit

Observations occur when we can see something happening. In contrast, inferences are what we figure out based on an experience. Helping your child understand when information is implied, or not directly stated, will improve her skill in drawing conclusions and making inferences. These skills will be needed for all sorts of school assignments, including reading, science and social studies. Inferential thinking is a complex skill that will develop over time and with experience.

Families can create opportunities to practice inferential thinking. Below are a few ways to help familiarize your child with this way of thinking and learning:

- * Explain to your child that we make conclusions about things and draw inferences all the time. Draw a conclusion together and then talk about what clues were used to come to that conclusion. For example, Erin played outside today. How can we tell? Muddy shoes, jump rope on front porch, water bottle out. Dad seems tired tonight. How can we tell? He's rubbing his eyes, he's on the couch, he was yawning at the dinner table.
- * Paper bag mystery person: Put a few items into a brown paper bag. Tell your child the bag belongs to a certain type of person. Their job is to tell you something about the person. Then, take out each item one by one and talk about it.

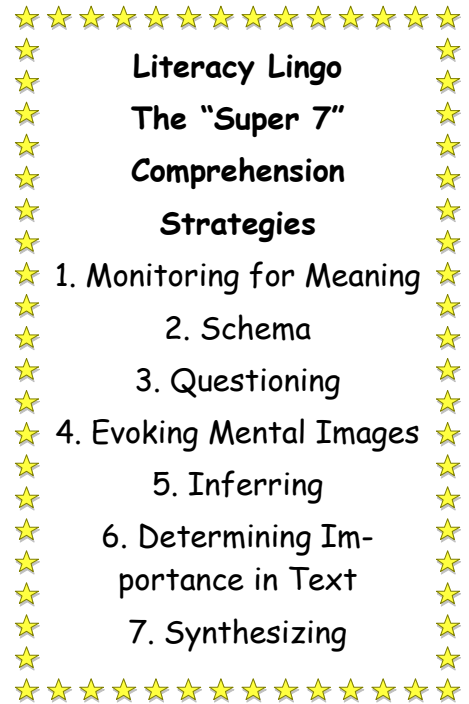
Example #1: goggles, a swim cap, a swim ribbon, a stop watch

Example #2: a bookmark, a library card, a stuffed animal, a book

- * Wordless picture books provide your child with practice using clues to create meaning. There are no wrong stories with wordless picture books, only variations based on what the "reader" sees and puts together.
- * Play twenty questions! This familiar word game helps build inference skills. As your child develops skill with the game, encourage him to avoid asking direct questions like, "Is it a dog?" Rather, encourage him to ask broader questions, "Does it walk on four feet?" Then, when your child figures it out, ask him to tell you the clues that lead to the right answer.
- * Create scenarios in which your child must use what they already know to predict an outcome. For example, growing seeds. Present your child with various scenarios (a seed will be given water and sunlight, a seed will get no water, a seed will be in a dark room). Ask your child to predict whether the seed will grow. Help your child become aware that she used information she knew about growing seeds, combined with new information, to fill in information about the seeds.

Learning to draw conclusions and inferences is a skill that develops over time. The skill requires children to put together various pieces of information, and relies on good word knowledge. Help your child develop skill by providing experience with inferential information, making implied information more clear, and helping your child draw conclusions based on the evidence.

www.readingrockets.org



Literacy Lingo

The "Super 7"

Comprehension

Strategies

1. Monitoring for Meaning

2. Schema

3. Questioning

4. Evoking Mental Images

5. Inferring

6. Determining Importance in Text

7. Synthesizing

Focus on the Big 5: Phonics

A different essential component of reading will be focused upon each month. This month will focus on phonics. Here is a link that includes an overview of the Big 5 essential components of reading instruction that will be focused upon in the upcoming months.

https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5fzT_9S7dvZZ2l2V2R6Q1Z5c0E/edit

Plain and simple, phonics is the relationship between letters and sounds in language. Phonic instruction usually starts in kindergarten, with kids learning CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words by the end of the year. Words such as hat, cat, and pot are all CVC words. But CVC is just the beginning. The bulk of phonics instruction is done in first grade. Students usually learn consonant blends (-gl, -tr -cr), consonant digraphs (-sh, -ch, -qu), short vowels, final e, long vowels, r-controlled vowels, and diphthongs. From second grade on up, phonics continues to build fluency and teach multisyllabic words. Interest peaked, but don't know where to begin?

Here are some basic phonics rules to keep in mind as your child learns to read:

- * **Short vowels:** When there is a single vowel in a short word or syllable, the vowel usually makes a short sound. Short vowels usually appear at the beginning of the word or between two consonants. Examples of short vowels are found in the words: cat, pig, bus.
- * **Long vowel:** When a short word or syllable ends with a vowel/consonant /e combination, the vowel is usually long and the "e" at the end of the word is silent (this rule doesn't apply in all cases). Examples of vowel/consonant/e combinations are: bake, side, role. Here's another rule with long vowels: when a word or syllable has a single vowel and it appears at the end of the word or syllable, the vowel usually makes the long sound.

Examples are: no, she.

- * **Consonant blends:** When two or three consonants are blended together, each consonant sound should be heard in the blend. Some examples of consonant blends are: **black, grab, stop.**
- * **Consonant digraphs:** A combination of two consonants sounds that together represent a new sound. Examples of consonant digraphs are: **shop, chin, photo.**
- * **R-controlled vowels:** When a vowel is followed by the letter "r," the vowel does not make the long or short sound but is considered "r-controlled." Examples are: **bird, corn, nurse.**
- * **Vowel diphthongs:** The term "vowel diphthong" refers to the blending of two vowels sounds – both vowel sounds are usually heard and they make a gliding sound. Examples include: **moon, saw, mouth.**

Phonics are the building blocks to reading. And while they're not always intuitive, once you know the rules, they can help quite a bit. So learn the basics. Not only will you be helping your child, but you'll finally understand what the teacher is talking about!

www.education.com



Give the Gift of Reading!



As we dash our way through this festive season, let's take a moment to conjure up warm and fuzzy feelings for... reading. Okay, maybe reading isn't at the top of your to-do list as shopping, get-togethers and special events vie for your attention, but this time of year is the perfect opportunity to shine light on the importance of literacy while creating experiences and traditions that will leave an indelible impression on your kids and others.

Here are some excellent book recommendations!

Book recommendations for children of all ages created by Random House:

<http://www.socialmoms.com/entertainment/holidayreading/>

Sometimes it just takes one wonderful book to turn a kid into a reader!

Here is a list of books for ages 5-9 created by Reading Rockets:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/booksbytheme/>

Here is a list of books for ages 6-7 created by Scholastic:

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/book-lists-and-recommendations/ages-6-7>

Here is a list of books for ages 8-10 created by Scholastic:

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/book-lists-and-recommendations/ages-8-10>

Here is a list of books for ages 11-13 created by Scholastic:

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/book-lists-and-recommendations/ages-11-13>

Promoting Literacy Through Games

After eating a large holiday meal, how about play a game that promotes literacy and is fun for all!

Scrabble

This traditional board game builds both literacy and math skills and can be adapted to fit the needs of your child. Challenging your child to explain how the word connects to the topic develops language skills, builds vocabulary and promotes critical thinking skills. For younger children, ask your child to use the word in a sentence to strengthen literacy skills and assess understanding. To develop math skills, focus on calculating scores.

Guesstures

This delightful game requires children to read four different words and act them out before the timer drops their cards. A round or two of this game is sure to bring on the giggles while teaching important language skills.

Guess Who

Guess Who provides loads of fun while developing visual discrimination, critical thinking and both expressive and receptive language skills. Players ask questions about the appearance of the "suspect" to eliminate those who do not match the description.

Clue

One of the favorites of children's games, Clue develops critical thinking skills, deductive reasoning, and both expressive and receptive language. For those who have outgrown Guess Who, Clue is the natural extension.

Pictionary

Although this game does require the ability to draw object to represent concepts, older children enjoy this game. It encourages quick connections between visual stimuli and verbal responses.

Try these games that promote play with words!

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/blogs/scholastic-parents-raise-reader/5-favorite-games-play-words>

Most children learn best when they are doing something for a real purpose and because they want to, so playing games is an easy way to support their learning. Here are some great suggestions for activities and games you can do at home or out and about.

Check out this website for some great ideas!

<http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading-owl/fun-ideas>

Reading Tips Sent to Your Phone or E-mail!

WHAT IS REMIND101 AND WHY IS IT SAFE?

Remind101 is a one-way text messaging and email system. With Remind101, all personal information remains completely confidential. Teachers will never see your phone number, nor will you ever see theirs.

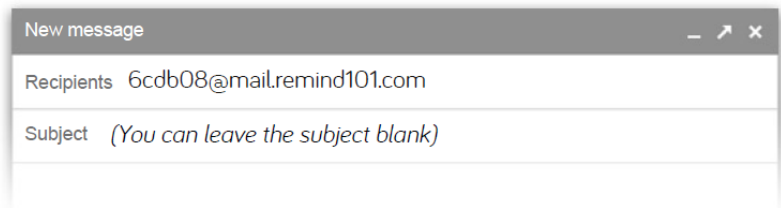
Visit www.remind101.com to learn more.

To receive messages via text, text @6cdb08 to (317) 456-7266. You can opt-out of messages at anytime by replying, 'unsubscribe @6cdb08'.



*Standard text message rates apply.

Or to receive messages via email, send an email to 6cdb08@mail.remind101.com. To unsubscribe, reply with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.



Notes: 2-3 reading tips will be sent out each week. If you ever want to unsubscribe, follow the instructions listed in the pictures above. **Standard text message rates apply!**

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