

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2019

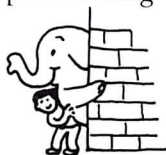
Pick Elementary School



## Book Picks

### ■ *The Magician's Elephant* (Kate DiCamillo)

Peter is an orphan looking for answers about his missing sister. He turns to a fortune-teller, who proclaims that an elephant will help Peter, setting off a chain of events that the boy never could have imagined. But will it lead him to his sister—or to more questions? (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *Dewey the Library Cat: A True Story* (Vicki Myron and Bret Witter)

On a cold morning, librarian Vicki Myron discovers a freezing kitten in the book drop. This is her true story of Dewey, who found a home at the library. He attended story hours, napped among the stacks, and eventually became famous around the world.



### ■ *Young, Gifted and Black* (Jamia Wilson)

These 52 short biographies introduce your child to important people in black culture. She will learn about the childhoods, struggles, and accomplishments of historical figures as well as present-day people. Features civil rights leaders, athletes, musicians, and others.

### ■ *Lola Levine Is Not Mean!* (Monica Brown)

Lola accidentally hurts a classmate during a soccer game, and the other kids start to call her "Mean Lola Levine." Lola feels terrible and wants to show everyone she's not mean! She turns to her best friend, her family, and her passion for writing for help. The first book in the Lola Levine series.



## Understanding fiction

Charles is a strong reader. He follows complicated plots, and he gets to know story-book characters so well that he often correctly predicts what they'll do next. Help your child be a strong reader, too, with these fun ways to boost reading comprehension.

Basic facts	Traits	Actions
~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	~~~~~ ~~~~~	
~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~		



### Create a storyboard

Filmmakers use a series of drawings called a "storyboard" to write movies. Let your youngster try this idea to visualize a book's plot. Have him divide a sheet of paper into eighths and sketch simple pictures (one per box) as he reads. *Tip:* Drawing arrows from box to box will show the sequence. With the storyboard, he can retell the story or write a summary.

into three columns: one for basic facts (name, age), one for traits (shy, brave), and one for actions (goes to the beach, makes the softball team).

### Map the characters

Understanding a book's characters will help your youngster grasp the story. Encourage him to make a character chart while reading. He could divide it

### Predict the future

To forecast what will happen in a book, your child has to think about what has taken place so far. Ask him to make predictions as he reads and jot down his ideas (best friend will move away, dad will recover). Suggest that he write his own ending about two-thirds of the way through. He'll enjoy seeing how it compares with the real one!

## Replace it

"The party was really *fun*! We played *fun* games." Your child will write fresher, more original stories if she finds alternatives for words she uses often, such as *fun*, *went*, and *good*.

Have each family member flip through books and copy a few sentences to jazz up or make more precise. Pick one, and circle the word to avoid. ("Wayside is a small village.")

Set a timer for three minutes. Everyone writes as many alternatives as possible—replacing just one word or maybe changing the whole sentence. ("Wayside is a tiny village" or "If you weren't paying attention, you could travel through the village of Wayside without noticing it.") Now when your youngster catches herself using a word too many times in a story, she'll remember this game.

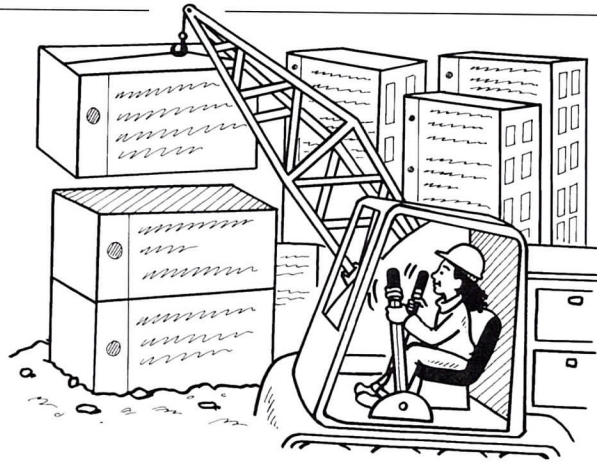


# Build stronger essays

Encourage your child to approach her next essay as if she's building a tower. Here's how she can succeed from the first "brick" to the last.

**1. Lay the foundation.** A strong essay begins with a solid introduction. Your youngster should think about what her essay aims to accomplish and state her main idea. For example, will she inform readers about childhood in Colonial America? Or will she try to persuade readers to follow recycling rules?

**2. Construct the framework.** Have her think of each paragraph as a floor of her building. She might include one



paragraph about school in the Colonies, another on chores, and a third on play. Under each heading, she could write supporting facts and details. ("Education was considered more important for boys than for girls.")

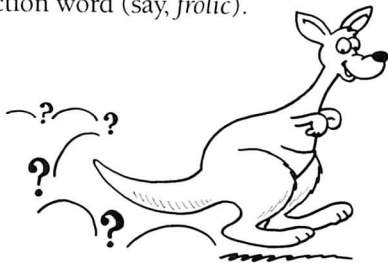
**3. Top it off.** A building isn't finished until it has a roof. Similarly, a strong conclusion finishes off an essay. Maybe your child will refer back to her introduction. ("Following the rules for what and how to recycle makes our planet a cleaner place to live.") Or perhaps she'll ask a question. ("What changes will you make to the way you recycle?")

**Fun with Words**

## Name the mystery word

This word game helps to strengthen your youngster's vocabulary and critical thinking skills.

First, make one person the "word master." His job is to think of a mystery action word (say, *frolic*).



Then, players take turns asking questions to figure out the word—substituting the word *book* for the mystery word. The word master answers "Yes" or "No" and adds a clue to lead players to his word.

If someone asks, "Have you *booked* today?" the word master could reply, "Yes, I *booked* at recess." Another person may say, "Did you *book* down the slide?" ("No, I *booked* on the grass.") If a player asks, "Do animals *book*?" his reply might be "Yes, rabbits and kangaroos do."

The first person to identify the mystery word gets to pick the next one.



**Q&A**

## Are comic books "real reading"?

**Q** My son reads mostly comic books. Is this okay?

**A** It's wonderful that your son enjoys reading. And comic books often have complex storylines and well-developed characters, which strengthen reading skills.



Let your child explore a variety of comic books so he encounters new vocabulary and plots. He might choose a historical fiction series or a comic book retelling of classic children's literature. Also, many comic book fans like graphic novels, such as the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series (Jeff Kinney) or the *Dog Man* series (Dav Pilkey).

Finally, since your son will be expected to read a variety of books in school, consider helping him branch out. Suggest that he set a goal to read one new type of book each month. Perhaps he'll try a biography in February, a science fiction novel in March, and a mystery in April.

**Parent 2 Parent**

## An audiobook station

My daughter Jackie loves the listening center in school, where students listen to audiobooks. So she asked if we could set one up at home.

We went to the library, and Jackie checked out a few books on CDs along with the print versions. At home, she put the CDs and books into a basket beside an old CD player I found in the basement.

Now Jackie enjoys listening to at least a chapter a day while she follows along in the book. It's great because she can hear the pronunciations of harder words while she sees them in print.

I told my sister-in-law about our listening station. Now she and her son are going to set one up using their smart speaker!



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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