

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

November 2019

Harrison Park Elementary
Mr. Jeffrey Swartz, Principal

Book Picks

■ *Wishtree* (Katherine Applegate)

Meet Red, a thoughtful and wise giant oak tree—and the narrator of this story. Red has a lot of rings (which means she's very old) and knows all the people and animals in her neighborhood. When a new family moves in, she helps two children become friends, despite their differences.



■ *Indy Cars* (Carrie A. Braulick)

Readers, start your engines, and learn all about Indy race cars! This nonfiction book offers an in-depth look at Indy car races, how the cars are built, what pit crews do, and more. Includes colorful photographs and a glossary. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Two Dogs in a Trench Coat Go to School* (Julie Falatko)

Stewart's dogs Sassy and Waldo spend all day protecting their house. One day, they decide to sneak into Stewart's school to "protect" him. When they dress in disguise, the students think they have a new classmate. This funny story is the first in the Two Dogs series.



■ *...If You Sailed on the Mayflower in 1620* (Ann McGovern)

What did the pilgrims eat on the Mayflower? What did they do for fun? Each chapter in this nonfiction book answers a question about the pilgrims, from the reasons for their voyage to what daily life was like after they reached their destination.



Dig into reading

The fun isn't over when a story ends—it's just beginning! These creative follow-up activities build key reading comprehension skills your youngster needs, including visualizing, predicting, and summarizing.

Map the setting

Encourage your child to take an imaginary journey through a story's setting by sketching each place mentioned. His map will let him visualize the characters' surroundings and better understand their actions. For instance, he might draw the route a character takes across the country or illustrate the forest where the animals live.

Write a prequel or sequel

What happened before the story started? What happens after it ends? Have your youngster explore the possibilities by adding a chapter to the beginning or end. He might write about how the characters met, or the next challenge they face. Suggest that he refer to the original tale to help him imagine past events or predict future ones.

Build a story pyramid

Help your child learn to focus on a story's most important details and zero in on the main idea. He can practice summarizing by drawing a pyramid and filling it with these five lines:

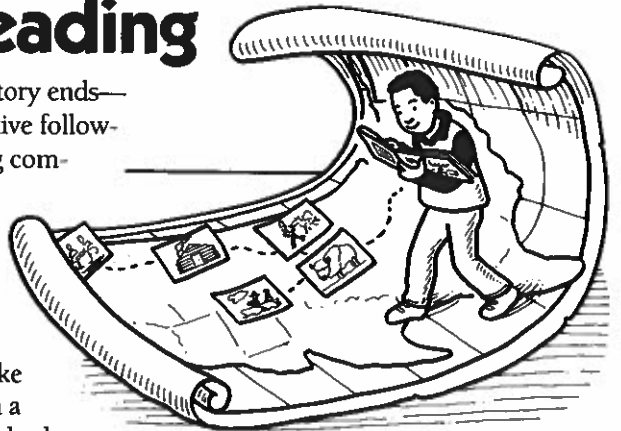
Line 1: The main character's name

Line 2: Two words describing that character

Line 3: Three words describing the setting

Line 4: Four words explaining the problem

Line 5: Five words telling the conclusion



Foolproof proofreading

Spell-check is a useful tool, but it's not a substitute for your child's careful eyes. Share these tips for spotting missing or misused words when she types a paper:



● Take a break between writing and proofreading. A fresh look will let your youngster see mistakes more easily.

● Print it out. Checking it in two formats (paper and screen) might help her find errors she'd otherwise miss.

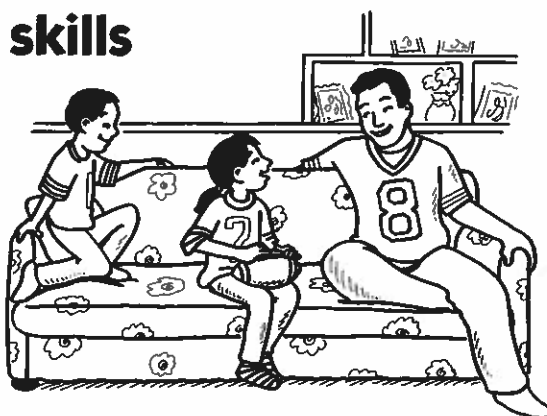
● List problem words (*your/you're, its/it's*). Have her scan her paper for them and double-check their use.

● Read it out loud. To concentrate on each word, your child can hold a piece of paper under each line.

Boost conversation skills

Can something as simple as talking with your child help her in school? You bet! Good conversation skills let her take part in group discussions and listen to other people's ideas. Use these strategies.

Choose a topic. Take turns thinking of subjects that appeal to everyone so nobody feels left out of the conversation. Some possibilities: favorite books, hobbies, sports teams, family history.



Practice listening. Help your youngster pay attention to what others are saying. Suggest that she listen closely and respond to what the other person says. If her brother says, "I had pizza for lunch today," she might reply, "What kind did you get? I had pizza, too, mine was pepperoni."

Keep it going. Encourage your child to ask questions that will keep a conversation going. She can think of question words (*who, what, when, where, why, how*) as prompts. Say your family is discussing football. She could ask, "Who do you think will make the playoffs?" or "Where is this year's Super Bowl?"

Fun with Words

Humorous homophones

Boost your youngster's vocabulary with this silly homophone activity. Start by talking to him about what homophones are, and end by writing sentences that pair the words in ways that make everyone laugh out loud.



Homophones are words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings, such as *night/knight, peek/peak, hare/hair, and their/there*. Work together to list as many homophones as possible. You might look for them in books or online.

Now, take turns writing silly sentences using several pairs of homophones. *Examples:* "Have I told you the *tale* of my *dear* dog who chases his *tail* every time he sees a *deer*?" "Do you *see* the *aisle* in the *sea*? It's between that *isle* and the other *isle*!" Read your sentences aloud, and vote for the funniest one!

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ISSN 1540-5583



Parent 2 Parent

Read around the world

I thought our town's multicultural fair would be fun for our family, but I had no idea it would also lead to research and reading for my daughter Ellie.

After sampling foods and hearing different languages and styles of music, Ellie wanted to learn more about other cultures. So during our next library visit, we checked out books of games, recipes, crafts, and folktales from around the world.

Ellie read the instructions for *Luksong baka*, a game from the Philippines, and taught us how to play. Then, she read a recipe for Greek *tiropita* (feta cheese pie), and we made it for dinner. Finally, we took turns reading folktales to each other. We were surprised to find a version of "Little Red Riding Hood" from China and "The Tortoise and the Hare" from Ghana. Now Ellie is looking forward to going back to the library and researching other countries!



A writer's notebook

Spark your child's creativity by having him collect story ideas in his own "Author's Notebook." Here are some entries he might start with.

All about me

Imagine someone is making a movie of your life. Who would star in it? What would the first scene be?

The perfect meal

Write a menu for your ideal meal. List your special dinner guests, and create an invitation.



Sweet dreams

Record notes about vivid or interesting dreams you have. Use your imagination to write an adventure story or a mystery about them.

My favorite things

List treasured possessions (baseball medal, family quilt) or favorite places (local waterfall, Grandma's house). Build stories about what they mean to you.

Your youngster can add ideas as he thinks of them. When he's ready to write, he'll have lots of choices to pick from!