

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Westview Elementary School
Mr. Alan Buttimer, Principal

Ask your child's teacher for help with setting reading goals

When it comes to reading, it can be hard to set goals. You may not be sure what or how much your child should be reading. Consult the teacher about your child's:

- **Reading level.** Is your child meeting expectations for her grade? What kinds of materials are best for her? How can you tell if a book or magazine is too hard, too easy or just right for your child? How can you help her improve?
- **Reading habits.** Many teachers expect students to read for a certain number of minutes each day. By working as a team (perhaps by making a plan to communicate weekly about your child's progress), you and your child's teacher can support habits that make a big difference.



"The only way to do all the things you'd like to is to read."

—Tom Clancy

Provide plenty of book report support

Book reports provide an opportunity for students to explore a variety of books—and practice writing as well. To help your child make progress on his report:

- **Suggest a book** that interests him. As he reads, encourage him to use sticky notes as bookmarks. He can jot down key points on the notes, such as, "Here's where the conflict begins."
- **Discuss the book.** Ask questions that help your child think. For example, "Where is the story set?" "Who are the main characters?" "What happens to them?" "What do you like and dislike about the book?"
- **Offer to proofread.** Give your child a chance to find and fix mistakes before you point them out. When you look over the rough draft, make sure it meets the teacher's guidelines. And be sure to compliment all of his hard work!

Source: "Helping Your Child Write a Book Report," Kids.gov, niswc.com/bookreports.

Have fall fun with word games

Play a fall-themed version of a classic word game. To start, have your child think of any fall word—but not say it out loud! Then he should:



1. **Draw an outline of a pumpkin.** Under it, have him write a blank for each letter of his mystery word.
2. **Ask other players** to take turns guessing letters in the word. Your child should write the correct letters in their spaces. For each incorrect guess, add an eye, nose or mouth to the pumpkin until it's a jack-o'-lantern!

Listening to stories is always important

No matter how well your child reads, she can benefit from listening to stories.

Choose books with some challenging words. Hearing them in a story is a great way for her to boost her vocabulary!



Learning sight words makes reading easier

Sight words are words your child should be able to recognize on sight. Some sight words are used so frequently that it is helpful to memorize them. Others are difficult to sound out.

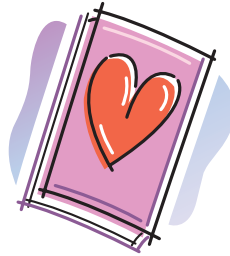
To speed up your child's reading, ask her teacher for a list of sight words and then make flash cards together. Have your child write the words on the cards, and go through them together often.



Build comprehension with encouragement

It is unlikely that your child will get anything out of reading, let alone enjoy it, if she doesn't understand the material. To help your child comprehend challenging reading assignments:

- **Divide assignments into parts.** Encourage your child to read small sections at a time. Before she moves on, remind her to review what she has already learned.
- **Encourage critical thinking.** Discuss what new words mean. Ask questions such as, "Why do you think the character did that?" See if your child can relate the story to her own experiences.
- **Talk with the teacher.** If your child is unable to understand the material, ask her teacher if it is at your child's reading level. Get tips for how to help her at home.



Source: "Comprehension," Reading Rockets, niswc.com/understanding_reading.

Engage in conversations about reading

Even if your child is reading independently, he can still benefit from talking to you about the book he is reading. When having conversations with your child about reading:

- **Read the same material** as he does so you can have informed discussions.
 - **Ask questions** about what your child is reading and what he thinks about it.
- To encourage your child to talk to his peers about what he is reading, you can suggest that he:
- **Form a book club** with some friends.
 - **Attend reading-related events** at the library.



Q: I gave my child a journal, but she doesn't want to use it. How can I encourage her to write in it?

A: Journals are great for building reading and writing skills, but some kids don't want to write about their daily activities and feelings. They may respond, however, to "prompts." Suggest that your child start entries with interesting sentences like, "If I could design a school, I would ..." or "If I could have one superpower it would be ..."

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Explore genres at the library

Your child has probably heard of *fiction* and *nonfiction*. But what about more specific kinds of books? Learning about *genres* can make reading more interesting.

At the library, go on a search and find at least one:

- **Mystery.**
- **Autobiography.**
- **Book of poetry.**
- **Work of historical fiction.**
- **Fantasy story.**
- **Science fiction tale.**



For lower elementary readers:

- ***The Apple Orchard Riddle*** by Margaret McNamara (Schwartz & Wade Books). On a field trip to an apple orchard, kids in Mr. Tiffin's class attempt to solve a tricky riddle.



- ***Itsy Mitsy Runs Away*** by Elanna Allen (Atheneum Books for Young Readers). Itsy Mitsy despises bedtime, so she decides to run away. But first, she must pack up all the essentials.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Grandmothers' Stories: Wise Woman Tales from Many Cultures*** retold by Burleigh Mutén (Barefoot Books). Enjoy a collection of folktales from all over the world, including Senegal, Germany and Japan.
- ***Eliza Bing is (Not) a Big, Fat Quitter*** by Carmella Van Vleet (Holiday House). Eliza is determined to take a cake-decorating class. But first, she must convince her parents that she can follow through with an interest.

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