

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

May 2019

School District of La Crosse

Book Picks

■ *Samantha Spinner and the Super-Secret Plans* (Russell Ginns)

When Samantha's uncle disappears, he leaves her with a rusty red umbrella—and a lot of questions. Join her on a worldwide adventure where she must solve puzzles to figure out what the umbrella is for and save her uncle.



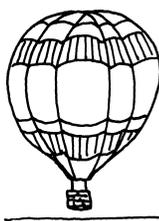
■ *Cricket in the Thicket: Poems about Bugs* (Carol Murray)



In this book of nonfiction poetry, readers explore many types of bugs. Each page includes a short poem, interesting facts, and realistic graphics. Your child will learn about cicadas, ants, daddy longlegs, and more!

■ *The Twenty-One Balloons* (William Pène du Bois)

While flying his hot-air balloon, Professor Sherman lands unexpectedly on a volcanic island full of diamonds and spectacular inventions. But once the professor learns the wealthy residents' secrets, he finds himself unable to leave.



■ *Two Truths and a Lie: It's Alive!* (Ammi-Joan Paquette and Laurie Ann Thompson)

Each chapter of this book includes three sections—two are true and one is false. It's up to readers to use their research skills to figure out which part is made up. Includes an answer guide and research tips. Book one in the Two Truths and a Lie series.

A summer full of books

Children who read for fun build background knowledge, learn new vocabulary, and become better writers. Here are ways to make reading an everyday part of your youngster's summer.

Keep reading materials available

When reading is convenient, your child will be more likely to read for pleasure. Leave a pile of magazines on the coffee table, keep graphic novels on the nightstand, put the newspaper on the kitchen table, and stash books in the car.

Try a reading challenge

Have your youngster check libraries, bookstores, or parks and recreation departments for free summer reading programs. Many sponsor contests or book clubs, too. Help her stick with the plan by setting a goal, perhaps to read a certain number of pages per week or books per month. *Tip:* She might even



start her own challenge and invite friends to join.

Tie books to activities

Summer outings can be a springboard for reading. After a fair, concert, or carnival, your child can visit the library to find related books. A trip to a state fair could encourage her to check out books about raising rabbits. Watching a fireworks display may lead her to read about the science of colors. ■

Storytelling tips

Family storytelling night boosts your child's imagination and his speaking skills. It's also a great way to bond. These tips can help you get started.

● **Tall tales.** Ask each person to name a family memory. Then, take turns telling a story that exaggerates what actually happened. ("The road trip took so long, everyone had a birthday before we got home.")

● **Myths.** Encourage your youngster to think of a weather event (flood, volcano), and work together to invent an explanation for how it came about. ("Many years ago, a great blue whale got a very bad cold. He passed it to other whales around the world. Now when they sneeze, there's a flood.") ■



Put memories in writing

Your child can make a book of summer memories—and practice writing all summer long. Start with a three-ring binder, and consider these suggestions.

Journal. Have your youngster create a separate page for each of his summer activities (stargazing, baseball, fishing). He could write brief diary entries with the dates and a few sentences telling what happened. *Example:* “June 25. Took a night hike with Dad. I counted 50 fireflies!”



Memorabilia. Encourage him to paste ticket stubs, maps, and programs from special events into his memory book. He can write a caption for each one. (“These tickets are from a baseball game we went to. Our team hit two home runs!”)

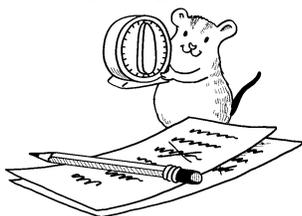
Objects. Have your child fill zipper bags with summer treasures, such as seashells, pebbles, and leaves. Suggest that he include

an index card describing the items. For instance, he might write, “These are seashells I found at Myrtle Beach with Grandma.” Then, he could tape each bag to a page in the binder. ▮



3, 2, 1 vowels

This three-minute game will stretch your child’s vocabulary and improve her spelling.



Get a timer, or use a watch with a second hand, to time each one-minute round. In round one, each player lists all the words she can think of that have three different vowels (the same vowels may occur more than once). *Examples:* *reaching, capitol, information.* For round two, write words that use just two different vowels (*classmate, separate, textbook*). And in the final round, list words that repeat the same vowel (*September, Alabama, tiring*). *Note:* Each word must contain at least two syllables.

When time runs out, compare lists, and cross off duplicate and misspelled words. Score one point for each word left on your list. The player with the most points wins. ▮



Be a tour guide

If you travel this summer or you’re expecting visitors, make your child the official family tour guide. These ideas will let her do research and read for information:

- Get brochures from a hotel lobby. She can learn about tourist sites (museums, factories that offer tours) and activities (miniature golf, parks). Suggest that she make a list or spreadsheet with columns for prices, hours, and other details.
- Have your youngster read the extended forecast on a site like *weather.com*. She could recommend a packing list of clothes that are appropriate for the weather.
- Encourage her to check newspapers, local magazines, and the visitor center website for coupons. She might find discounted tickets for theme parks, shows, or other attractions. ▮

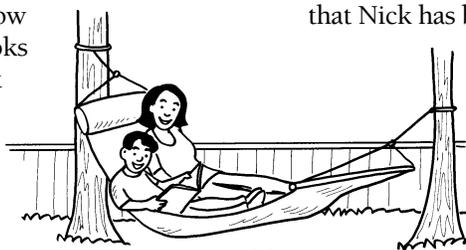


Improving comprehension

When my son Nick struggled with reading comprehension tests, I met with his reading specialist to learn how I could help him at home.

Mr. Stephens suggested “Hi-Lo Books,” which Nick can check out from the school library. He said these

“high interest–low vocabulary” books have stories that older children enjoy and are written at a lower reading level.



The reading specialist also suggested that we play vocabulary games at home—he said a big vocabulary helps with comprehension. In our favorite game, I say a word like *home*, and Nick names synonyms, or words with similar meanings, such as *house* and *apartment*.

Mr. Stephens’s ideas are working. Now that Nick has books he can understand and enjoy, he reads more often on his own. And his grades improved this quarter—not only in reading, but in social studies and science, too. ▮

OUR PURPOSE

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

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