

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Baldwin-Whitehall School District

Celebrate 2018 with literacy resolutions!

Ring in the New Year by helping your child make resolutions that will strengthen her reading skills. Suggest that she resolve to:

- **Read more.** Your child could aim to read one book each week or each month. If she is already an avid reader, suggest she try reading a new genre each month.
- **Write more.** Ask your child to set aside time each day for some writing. She could write a poem, a letter, an entry in her journal—or anything else! If she has writer's block, show her a picture and ask her to write about it.
- **Learn more.** Challenge your child to learn (and use) one new word a day. She doesn't need a fancy "word of the day" calendar; a dictionary will do. By the end of the year, she'll have 365 new words under her belt.



"Children should learn that reading is pleasure, not just something that teachers make you do in school."

—Beverly Cleary

Teach your child to attack tough words

What should your child do when he sees a challenging word? Attack it! *Word-attack strategies* help readers figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Encourage your child to:

- **Notice pictures.** Photographs and illustrations can give him clues about unfamiliar words.
- **Identify chunks.** Have him look for familiar sounds—or "chunks"—within words, such as "call" and "ing" in *calling*.
- **Keep reading.** He should try reading the sentence again. Or read the next sentence for more information.
- **Make connections.** If the unfamiliar word reminds your child of another word, the two words may be related.

Source: "Reading and Word-Attack Strategies," Reading A-Z, nswc.com/br-es-wordattack.

Include reading in your child's daily schedule

Teachers expect their students to read at home every day. To help your child take responsibility for this, make it part of his daily routine. He might read during homework time, for example, or in bed each night. Whatever time he chooses, make sure he's consistent. Keep interesting materials handy to build excitement. Enjoy a book yourself, too. Show your child that reading is a family priority.



Check out children's magazines

Next time you're at the library, browse the magazine section with your child. Look for age-appropriate magazines, such as *Time for Kids*, *Highlights* or *National Geographic Kids*. Your child will learn more about a variety of topics—while building her reading skills at the same time.



Reading aloud has endless benefits

There are so many reasons to read aloud to your child—even if he can already read beautifully! Reading aloud:

- **Reminds** your child how pleasant reading can be.
- **Improves** vocabulary and listening skills.
- **Helps** your child enjoy new literature.
- **Gives** you and your child chances to discuss stories and how they relate to real life.

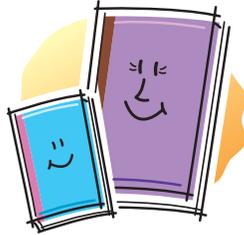


Source: "How to Read Aloud," Education World, nswc.com/br-es-aloud.

Have fun with synonyms and antonyms

As your child's vocabulary grows, she'll learn more about *synonyms* (words with the same meaning) and *antonyms* (words with opposite meanings). Challenge your child with this game that reviews them. All you need is one sheet of paper per player, some pencils and your brains!

- 1. Together, pick a word** that you both know that has several synonyms and antonyms (such as *good*).
- 2. Write down as many synonyms** for the word as you can think of in a minute (*great, wonderful, marvelous*).
- 3. Flip your paper over.** Write as many antonyms as you can think of in a minute (*bad, terrible, horrible*).
- 4. Whoever has the most words** written down wins and gets to pick the next word!



Focus on fluency

To increase your child's reading *fluency*, or the ease with which he reads:



- **Encourage him to reread** books out loud so words become more familiar.
- **Don't correct incorrect words** right away. Ask if the word made sense when he read it in the passage. Then look at it again together.
- **Read advanced books** together. Just hearing more difficult vocabulary will help your child build fluency.

Use daily errands to build vocabulary

Talk about what you see when you're out doing errands with your child. Ask him questions about what he sees. The more he talks about his surroundings, the more his vocabulary will grow! When you're:

- **Traveling from place to place**, talk about transportation. Point out things such as a *bus stop* and a *traffic circle*. Can your child name the traffic signs he spots?
- **At a bank**, talk about *safety deposit boxes* and *bank tellers*. What words does your child see on signs around the bank?
- **At the grocery store**, ask your child to look for a specific fruit. Can he spot a *cantaloupe* or a *pomegranate*? Later, look up where these foods are grown.



For lower elementary readers:

- *Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beaty (Harry N. Abrams). Ada is a natural born scientist who likes to question everything. Find out what she discovers when she investigates an unpleasant smell.
- *A Piece of Home* by Jeri Watts (Candlewick). Hee Jun has a hard time adjusting when his family moves from Korea to America. Will he ever feel like he fits in?



For upper elementary readers:

- *The Littlest Bigfoot* by Jennifer Weiner (Aladdin). When twelve-year-old Alice Mayfair arrives at a new boarding school, she makes an unusual friend named Millie. Will Alice be able to keep Millie's secret? She will have to if they are going to survive!



Q: My fourth grader says she hates reading. I bring home books on the things she used to love reading about, but she says they're boring. What can I do?

A: As children get older, their interests change. Your daughter may have loved horses in second grade, but now she may see them as "little kid stuff."

Think about the topics your child talks about now and look for reading material on those topics. Share them with your child, but don't force her to read them.

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

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The 2017–2018

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Book List

Recommended Books for Elementary School Children

The Misadventures of Sweetie Pie by Chris Van Allsburg (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). A hamster's adventures begin when he is taken home from the pet store. Sweetie Pie experiences a number of different owners and homes before he is taken to a school, where even more new things occur. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Robot Zot! by Jon Scieszka (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers). When Robot Zot finds himself in a kitchen on Earth, he must fend off various machines and robots—such as the blender and the toaster. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

President of the Whole Fifth Grade by Sherri Winston (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers). Brianna Justice is determined that the only way she will achieve her dreams is to become the president of her class at Orchard Park Elementary. She sets to work tirelessly ... until a new girl comes to school and challenges Brianna in the election. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

Dear Tabby by Carolyn Crimi (HarperCollins). Tabby D. Cat is an advice columnist who helps other pets in need. Tabby offers advice to animals everywhere, from a spoiled cat whose owners continually dote on him to a hamster who is stuck on a hamster wheel. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

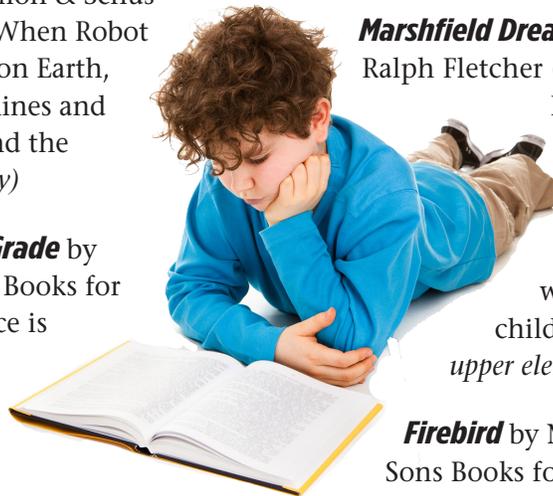
Teddy & Co. by Cynthia Voigt (Alfred A. Knopf). Teddy and the rest of a group of toys live together and take care of each other. As he wakes each morning, Teddy looks out the window and dreams of living outside. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

Sector 7 by David Wiesner (Clarion Books). While visiting the Empire State Building, a boy befriends a cloud, who takes him on a journey to see where clouds are made. There, the boy devises some unique clouds. Readers can add their own interpretations to this award-winning wordless picture book. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Marshfield Dreams: When I Was a Kid by Ralph Fletcher (Square Fish). Author Ralph Fletcher grew up in Marshfield, Massachusetts, as the oldest of nine children. In this poignant memoir, he tells funny, sad and heart-warming stories about his childhood adventures. (*biography, upper elementary*)

Firebird by Misty Copeland (G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers). In this book based on her own life, ballerina Misty Copeland speaks to a young African American ballet student, offering encouragement and motivation in a difficult field. The advice given by Copeland reflects the famous ballet by Igor Stravinsky, *The Firebird*. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Blackie: The Horse Who Stood Still by Christopher Cerf (Welcome Books). Although Blackie did not run around with the other horses, he managed to make himself quite useful and well known—he had a career as a rodeo horse, he lived at Yosemite National Park, and more. What Blackie enjoyed most, however, was stopping to take in all that was around him. (*nonfiction, lower elementary*)



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Crunch by Leslie Connor (Katherine Tegen Books). Dewey’s parents leave him and his siblings in charge of the family store, The Bike Barn, while they’re away. But when circumstances delay his parents’ return, Dewey’s responsibility to his family is greater than ever. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

Meow: Cat Stories from Around the World by Jane Yolen (HarperCollins Publishers). Cats are found in folktales and fables worldwide. This collection includes “The King of the Cats” from Germany and Britain, “Why Tiger is Angry at Cat” from Burma and “Rambé and Ambé,” from Tibet (*folktale, lower elementary*)

The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors by Drew Daywalt (Balzar + Bray). Ever wonder about the origins of the game Rock Paper Scissors? In this hilarious book, readers will learn the true story of the legendary characters behind the game. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

The Potato Chip Puzzles: The Puzzling World of Winston Breen by Eric Berlin (Puffin Books). Winston Breen is a puzzle expert. When he and his friends are invited to a puzzle contest at a local factory, Winston sets out to prove he’s the champion of puzzling. Readers will enjoy solving the puzzles along with Winston. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

One Giant Leap by Robert Burleigh (Philomel Books). In July of 1969, the spaceships *Eagle* and *Columbia* set out into outer space. While the command module *Columbia* orbited around, the *Eagle* was headed for the moon. Illustrated with beautiful paintings, this book offers a step-by-step look as the first astronauts set foot on the moon. (*nonfiction, lower elementary*)

Something Out of Nothing: Marie Curie and Radium by Carla Killough McClafferty (Farrar Straus and Giroux). From her youth in Poland in the late 1800s through her years learning at the Sorbonne in Paris, Marie Curie constantly impressed those around her with her brilliance. This biography chronicles her life’s accomplishments, particularly her discovery of radium and polonium. (*biography, upper elementary*)

Punctuations Take a Vacation by Robin Pulver (Holiday House). What happens when punctuation marks are tired of being ignored? The periods, question marks and the rest of the crew are tired of being forgotten or misused by the writers in Mr. Wright’s class, so they decide to take a trip. The young authors soon learn just how important those punctuation marks are. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Liberty Porter, First Daughter by Julia DeVillers (Aladdin). When Liberty’s dad is sworn in as president of the United States, she prepares herself for life in the White House. As excited as she is for the new adventure, she is nervous about the responsibility that she’s about to take on. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

National Geographic Readers: Seed to Plant by Kristin Baird Rattini (National Geographic Society). Young scientists will enjoy the detailed photographs and facts about the transformation of seeds into plants. This book includes everything from what a plant needs to grow to fun facts about plants and silly jokes about plants. (*nonfiction, lower elementary*)

Iggy Peck, Architect by Andrea Beaty (Abrams Books for Young Readers). As far back as anyone could remember, Iggy Peck built extraordinary structures. Iggy used whatever he had on hand to express himself. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

