

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2010

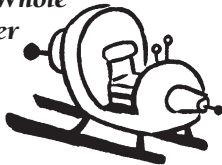
Literacy Support Team



## Book Picks

### ■ A Whole Nother Story

The Cheesehead children want a normal life. But their father invented a time machine, and they must escape spies who are trying to steal it. Their dog uses his psychic powers to help them outwit the would-be thieves. A hilarious tale by Dr. Cuthbert Soup.



### ■ Operation Redwood

When some of the oldest redwoods in California are threatened, Julian and his friend take action. Together they come up with a plan to save the trees from loggers—who include Julian’s uncle—in this adventure by S. Terrell French.

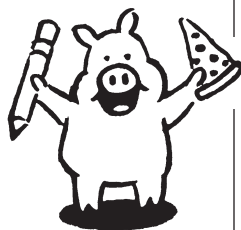


### ■ How to Train Your Dragon

A boy named Hiccup picks out a baby dragon to train. Unfortunately, “Toothless” doesn’t behave very well, and Hiccup’s training methods are unusual. Find out how the two become heroes in this series opener by Cressida Cowell. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem

Writing poetry is fun! Your youngster will learn all about writing his own verses with this hands-on guide from children’s poet Jack Prelutsky. The poet explains how he wrote some of his own funny poems. Then, he offers writing tips and suggests prompts that can inspire readers to start writing.



## What’s it about?

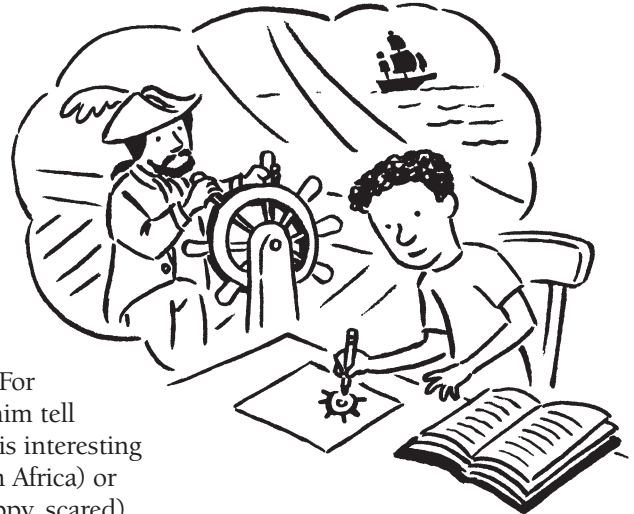
Students who think about what they’re reading tend to understand and remember the material. Encourage your youngster to put on his thinking cap with these reading tips.

### Talk

Talk with your child about the books he reads. For example, you might have him tell you why he thinks a book is interesting (the main character lives in Africa) or how it makes him feel (happy, scared). When he’s finished, ask him if he would recommend the book to a friend and why or why not. Talking about what he’s reading will help him understand the plot and characters better.

### Draw

Picturing what he reads can strengthen your youngster’s comprehension. He may want to sketch a character or scene from a chapter book. If he’s reading a textbook, he might draw and label a plant



or an atom. He’ll learn to visualize when he reads, even if he doesn’t draw every time.

### Write

Suggest that your child write in response to what he reads. He can practice summarizing a plot by writing a book review to share with the whole family. He could even submit it to a magazine like *Stone Soup* or an online bookstore such as [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com). Or he can show how he feels about a book by writing a poem about it.

## “This year, I will...”

Setting goals can help your child grow as a reader and writer. Share these steps for a successful year:

1. Ask her to list things she’d like to improve. Perhaps she wants to get higher spelling grades, add details to stories, or read at least one challenging book every month.
2. Encourage your youngster to display her goals. She can divide a poster board into a separate section for each goal and fill it with signs of progress. Hang up the poster as a reminder of her goals and achievements. Then, suggest that she add to it throughout the year. For instance, she might tape a good spelling test to it or write titles of books she reads.



## Writing together

Unleash the writer in your child with these activities that will encourage her to write regularly. Writing in her spare time will help her words flow more easily when she's assigned a report or story in school.

- Start a conversation journal by writing a sentence or two in a spiral notebook ("Guess who I saw at the store today"). Pass the journal to your child or leave it in an agreed-upon spot (kitchen counter, coffee table). She can respond ("Was it



one of my teachers?") and give it back to you. Continue the discussion as long as possible. Encourage her to start your next conversation on a new page.

- Ask relatives to take part in a pen pal exchange. Your youngster can put names in a hat and draw one each month to be her pen pal. In her letters, she can ask about what's going on in the person's life ("Are you going to play hockey this year?") and share her own news ("I have my first piano recital this week").



## Fun with Words Don't make a word!

Force your opponent to add the last letter to a word in this game that builds spelling and vocabulary skills.

To start, think of a word (*moment*) and write the first letter (*m*) on a sheet of paper. Your child should come up with a word that begins with *m* (it will probably be different from yours) and write the second letter of her word (add *a* to *m* for *match*). On your turn, you have to think of a word that starts with *ma* and add the next letter (*r* for *marble*).



Continue coming up with words and adding letters until a player is forced to complete a word that has four or more letters. For example, if your youngster adds *e* to *mar*, he spells *mare* and loses.

*Note:* A player must have a real word in mind when adding a letter. If someone is challenged, she has to say the word she's thinking.

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## Read, write, and get involved

Did you know that your youngster can gain reading, writing, and speaking skills by joining after-school activities? Suggest that she check out extracurriculars like these.

**Student government.** Your child will practice writing when she composes speeches, creates campaign posters, or takes minutes at meetings. And giving speeches is good experience for oral presentations in class.

**Publications.** Working on a school newspaper, yearbook, or literary magazine offers lots of reading and writing opportunities. Your youngster will write questions to ask people she interviews, conduct research for articles, and write stories or poems.

**School plays.** Memorizing her lines and saying them with expression can make your child a smoother reader. She'll also become familiar with dialogue, narration, and stage directions, which will help when she reads plays in class.



## Other Picks SOFTWARE

### Smart Steps

Available in fourth- and fifth-grade versions, these programs include hundreds of activities in different school subjects. Your youngster can track his progress and earn points to win stationery and other printables. *SelectSoft Publishing*

### Super Solvers Midnight Rescue!

Players use reading and thinking skills to keep Morty Maxwell from making Shady Glen School disappear. This game lets children practice important reading comprehension skills. *The Learning Company*



## MAGAZINES

### Baseball Youth

From articles about youth teams to interviews with major league players, your child can read all about baseball in this bimonthly magazine. Each issue includes trading cards and a poster, along with tips to help young players improve their game. [www.baseballyouth.com/magazine](http://www.baseballyouth.com/magazine)



### Cobblestone

American history is an adventure in this award-winning magazine. Published nine times a year, it includes descriptions of historic sites and excerpts from diaries and letters written by famous people. [www.cricketmag.com/ProductDetail.asp?pid=15](http://www.cricketmag.com/ProductDetail.asp?pid=15)