

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2005

North Middle School  
Dianne Tilson, Principal

## Book Picks

### ■ *The Indian in the Cupboard*

Omri didn't think the old medicine cabinet he got for his birthday was a very good present. But when a plastic Indian comes to life inside the cabinet, he has a change of heart. A magical tale by Lynne Reid Banks. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths*



Paired with beautiful drawings, this is the perfect introduction to the heroes and heroines of Greek mythology.

Discover the power of Zeus and the wisdom of Athena from authors Ingrid and Edgar D'Aulaire.

### ■ *NASCAR Now*

Everything fans want to know about the racing scene is explained in this guide by Timothy Miller and Steve Milton. Learn about pit stops, safety, judging, scoring, and racing history. Contains full-color photographs and diagrams.



### ■ *As Long as There Are Mountains*

Iris loves her house in Vermont. But after the barn burns and her father is injured, she may have to give up her dream of growing old in her home. Natalie Kinsey-Warnock's book is set in the 1950s.



## Read and learn

### Using K-W-L

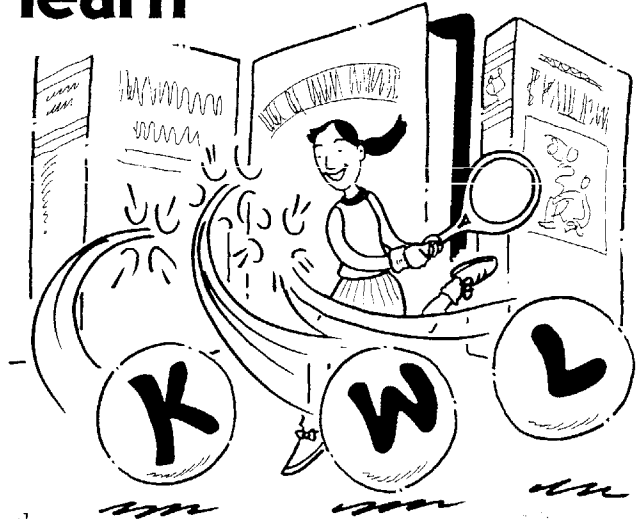
Does your child have trouble understanding the nonfiction that she reads, such as her textbooks? You can help her read faster and remember more with a K-W-L chart.

#### K = What I KNOW

Before your youngster begins reading, have her list everything she already knows about the topic. To start her thinking, write the alphabet in the left-hand column of her chart. Then, see how many letters she can match with a word or phrase. If the subject is reptiles, she could write "A: alligator, B: Born in eggs." By listing what she knows, she'll be able to compare it to the new material as she reads.

#### W = What I WANT to Know

In the second column, ask your child to create his own questions. For example, he might ask, "What kinds of snakes live near my house?" or "Which snakes are poisonous?" Making up questions will



encourage him to read more actively to find the answers. Even if he doesn't discover every answer, he's more likely to stay interested in the topic to satisfy his curiosity.

#### L = What I LEARNED

When your youngster has finished reading, she can complete the chart by listing what she has learned in the third column. She might write, "Warmed by the sun" or "Shed their skin." This column serves as a reminder of all that she has learned—and provides notes for studying later.

## Memory magic

Sometimes your child will need to memorize information for quick recall on a test. Share these easy ways to help cement information in your youngster's memory.

**To recall dates:** Try converting dates to money. The year 1066, when William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings, becomes \$10.66. Or connect a date to one you already know. Maybe Pearl Harbor Day (December 7) is the day after Mom's birthday.

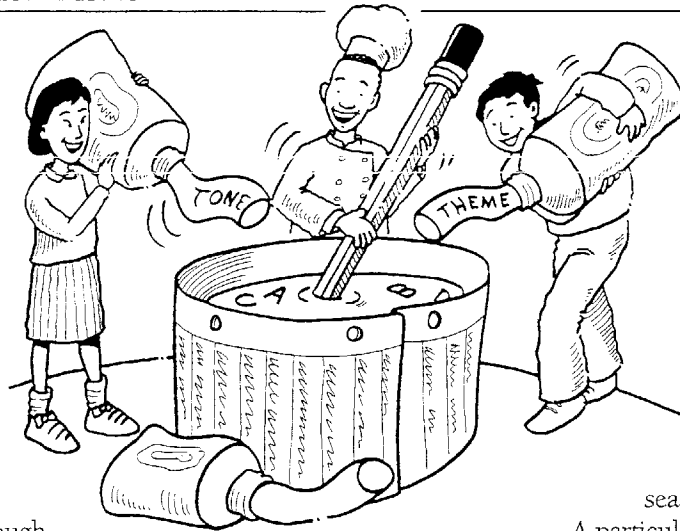
**To remember names:** See if you can recall an outstanding feature of the name, and tie it to an image. For example, to remember that Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt was the 26th president, you could imagine 26 teddy bears.



# Story writing

Your youngster has been asked to write a story. He has a terrific idea but doesn't know how to get started. Sound familiar? Next time your child's creative-writing juices need a jump-start, share these tips on story elements.

● **Theme.** The theme is the main idea, which is different from the subject or topic. For example, the subject of your story might be a family living through the Depression. The theme could be the value of hard work.



● **Tone.** The tone is the attitude you take about the topic. Are you a fan of horror or adventure stories? You could choose words that make your story suspenseful. Do you have a funny bone? You could tell your story in a humorous manner.

● **Time.** Decide when your story will take place. During a specific period of history? A season of the year, such as winter? A particular time of day? Your story can last a few minutes or span a lifetime.

● **Narrator.** Finally, consider who will tell the story. Will the main character be the speaker, or will the narrator be unnamed?



## Parent <sup>2</sup> Parent Table talk

My husband and I have discovered a way to improve our children's speaking and listening skills—at the dinner table! Here's how it works.

Once a week we name a child to be the "conversation starter." She gets to choose what we discuss over dinner.

Our rules are simple. Only one person can talk at a time. We make a point of looking at each other when we talk. And we try to be good listeners. We restate what others say so it's clear that we're paying attention and understand what we're hearing. For instance, when my daughter talked about ways to celebrate her birthday, I said, "So you're saying that a sleepover is your first choice."

Letting the kids pick the topic makes them feel grown-up, and we get a chance to hear what's on their minds.



## Q&A Building reading muscles

Q My son is very active and doesn't like to sit still and read. How can I encourage him to pick up a book?



A If your child is like many kids, he probably prefers fast-paced videos and interactive games over books. These kinds of entertainment can make sitting still for silent reading a challenge.

Short stories are the perfect solution for enticing reluctant readers. Since they can usually be read in one sitting, they're apt to hold your youngster's attention. They're also great choices for a quick read in the car or at bedtime.

Start with *Roald Dahl's Book of Ghost Stories* or *Aesop's Fables* by Jerry Pinkney. Your child may also enjoy stories about growing up in *Guys Write for Guys Read* by Jon Scieszka.

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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### Other Picks

#### MAGAZINES

##### ■ Biography Today

These volumes bring scientists, artists, sports figures, actors, musicians, and other personalities to life. Written with young readers in mind, each issue contains approximately 12 stories. Published three times per year. 800-234-1340, [www.omnigraphics.com](http://www.omnigraphics.com)



##### ■ DC Comics

Comic books contain easy-to-read text paired with colorful drawings. With titles like *The Adventures of Superman*, *Justice League Adventures*, *Green Lantern*, and *Looney Tunes*, they're sure to hook many readers. 800-887-6789, [www.dccomics.com/about/subscriptions.html](http://www.dccomics.com/about/subscriptions.html)

#### WEB SITES

##### ■ Grammar Bytes

Do your kids need helping building grammar skills? Grammar Bytes will give them plenty of practice in word choice, comma usage, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun reference. Includes definitions for grammar terms. <http://chompchomp.com>

##### ■ Science Buddies

Send your children to this site before their next science fair project is due. The wizard helps students choose a topic to study. Then, they can follow the links to read about setting up the experiment and to get help with research. [www.sciencebuddies.org](http://www.sciencebuddies.org)

