

# BUILDING READERS®

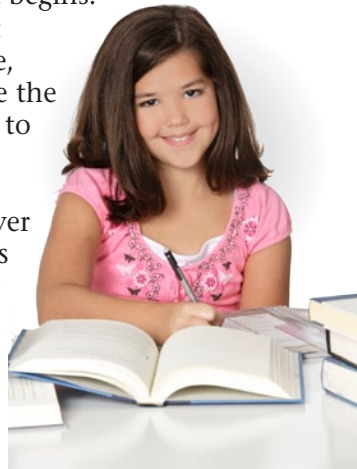
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Danville Elementary School

## Provide plenty of book-report support

Book reports motivate kids to read, especially when parents offer encouragement. To help your child write a fantastic report:

- **Let your child pick a book** that interests her. As she reads, she can use sticky notes as bookmarks. She should jot down key points, 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.** When looking over the rough draft, make sure it meets the teacher’s guidelines. Give your child a chance to fix mistakes before you correct them. And be sure to compliment all of her hard work!



**Source:** “Helping Your Child Write a Book Report,” Kids.gov, [www.kids.gov/articles/bookreport\\_parents.shtml](http://www.kids.gov/articles/bookreport_parents.shtml).

“So it is with children who learn to read fluently and well: They begin to take flight into whole new worlds as effortlessly as young birds take to the sky.”

—William James

## Build comprehension with encouragement

“This book is stupid!” your child yells. You’re tempted to respond, “No, it’s not.” Instead, consider that your child may be frustrated. Complaining is often a kid’s way of saying, “I’m having trouble understanding this” or “This book is too hard for me.” To help your child through challenging reading assignments:

- **Talk with the teacher.** Ask if the material is at your child’s reading level. Get tips for how to help him at home.
- **Divide assignments into parts.** Encourage your child to read small sections of his assignment. Before he moves on, ask him to review what has already happened.
- **Encourage thinking.** Discuss what new words mean. Ask questions such as, “Why do you think he did that?” See if your child can relate the story to his own experiences.

**Source:** “Target the Problem! Comprehension,” Reading Rockets, [www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/comprehension/](http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/comprehension/).

## Combine reading and math to multiply your child’s learning

Want to get an extra boost out of reading time? Choose a book about math. Early readers enjoy books about counting, such as *Curious George Learns to Count from 1 to 100*, by H.A. Rey. Older readers can handle more complex material, such as Greg Tang’s *Math-terpieces: The Art of Problem-Solving*.



## Virtual libraries provide research fun

Is your child a strong reader who likes to do research? Check out the Kentucky Virtual Library! At [www.kyvl.org/kids/homebase.html](http://www.kyvl.org/kids/homebase.html), kids can use a fun, interactive chart to help them research almost any topic—and write a great report. It even includes games!



## Explore reading 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 fun.

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

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



## Revising is a critical part of completing the writing process

Your child has finished writing a paper. "I'm done!" he proclaims! Not so fast. Part of the writing process involves reading and editing. To help with this:

- **Offer to read or listen to the report.** Give lots of compliments—and a little constructive criticism, if necessary.
- **Encourage a new perspective.** What if your child were the teacher? What would he suggest adding, removing or changing? What would he leave just as it is?
- **Supervise revisions.** Let your child improve the report. Watch—and celebrate—as it goes from rough draft to final version!



Source: S. Peha, "The Writing Process Notebook," Teaching That Makes Sense, [www.ttms.org/PDFs/04%20Writing%20Process%20v001%20%28Full%29.pdf](http://www.ttms.org/PDFs/04%20Writing%20Process%20v001%20%28Full%29.pdf).

## Have a literary adventure at an art museum

Plan a visit to a child-friendly art museum. This is an opportunity to combine important reading skills with your child's creative observation and imagination skills.

Before you go:

- **Build excitement** by visiting the museum's website together.
- **Plan your trip** with easy reading activities from brochures or maps of the museum.
- **Check out art books** from the library about the museum's exhibits.

During and after your visit:

- **Read the museum notes** about the artwork with your child.
- **Challenge your child** to find artwork he saw in the museum, or pieces by the same artist, in books from the library.



Source: "Artistic Adventures: How Appreciating Art Can Promote Literacy," Reading is Fundamental, [www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/articles/artistic-adventures-how-appreciating-art-can-promote-literacy.htm](http://www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/articles/artistic-adventures-how-appreciating-art-can-promote-literacy.htm).



**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 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 fun things like, "If I could design a school, I would ..."; "If I could have one superpower it would be ..."; or "The next big invention should be ..."

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Learning sight words makes reading easier



Young readers often sound out words. But some words are used so often that kids need to memorize them. Other words are simply unnatural to sound out. To speed up your child's reading, ask her teacher for a list of these sight words. Make sight-word flashcards together. The word *one* can include an image of the number 1. The word *family* might have a picture of your family next to it!

## For lower elementary readers:

- **Randy Riley's Really Big Hit** by Chris Van Dusen (Candlewick). Randy loves science and baseball, although he has trouble at bat. What will he do when a fireball heads for Earth?



- **Clink** by Kelly DiPucchio and Matthew Myers (Balzer+Bray). Clink is an old, rusty robot. Is there a family who will want to take Clink home with them?

## For upper elementary readers:

- **Bongo Fishing** by Thacher Hurd (Henry Holt and Company). A friendly alien named Sam takes young Jason fishing for bongos and shows him a whole new world in space. But when Jason's cat disappears, the adventure changes.
- **Guys Read: Funny Business** edited by Jon Scieszka (Walden Pond Press). This collection of humorous short stories is designed for boys—including those who avoid reading. But girls will enjoy it, too!

### Building Readers®

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