

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2012

Holyoke Public Schools  
Curriculum Department

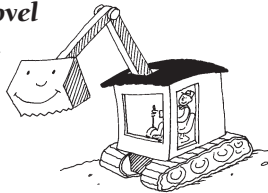
## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*

Mary Anne is a hardworking red steam shovel. Her driver, Mike, is upset because all of the jobs are being given to shiny new trucks that run on gas or electricity. What will happen to Mike and Mary Anne? A classic tale by Virginia Lee Burton. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *I Lost My Tooth in Africa*

Your child might be surprised to discover that the African tooth fairy leaves chickens in exchange for lost baby teeth. Based on a true story, Penda Diakité's book tells of her little sister's exciting experience during the family's visit with relatives in Mali.



### ■ *A Day with No Crayons*

The world is full of art supplies! That's what little Liza discovers after she colors on the walls and her mother takes away her crayons. In this story by Elizabeth Rusch, Liza finds other ways to express her creativity—using mud, flower petals, and even toothpaste.

### ■ *Andy Shane, Hero at Last*

Andy isn't sure he can win a bike-decorating contest against his friend Dolores. But as the children ride their bikes in the town parade, Andy has a chance to be a hero. The latest book in the Andy Shane series by Jennifer Richard Jacobson.



## Fun at the library

Where can your child go to hear a good story, find the latest books and magazines, and surround himself with information about almost any topic? The public library! Here are a few ideas for making the most of your next trip.

**Listen to a story.** Ask a librarian for information about story hour. Some libraries even have special read-alouds that include crafts, puppets, or snacks. You can also have your own story time. Let your youngster choose a few books. Then, find a quiet corner and read to him. Or let him pretend to be a librarian—he can read to you or to a younger sibling.

**Find out what's new.** Look for a "new arrivals" display. Your child can read the latest book from his favorite author or discover a brand-new writer whose stories he might enjoy. (Tip: Put his name on the waiting list for new or upcoming releases you think he'd like to check out.) Also, browse the children's magazines. He can



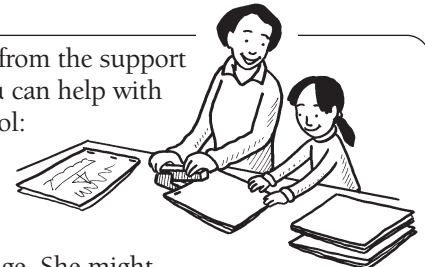
read the most recent issues of *Fun for Kidz*, *Ladybug*, *Click*, *Humpty Dumpty*, and others.

**Read around a theme.** Together, choose a theme for your library visit. You might pick something your youngster is studying in school or another topic that interests him. Then, encourage him to explore different sections of the library as he gathers books that go with his choice. A winter animal theme, for instance, could include a story about a polar bear, a non-fiction book on penguins, and the biography of an Antarctic explorer.♥

## Reading helpers

As children learn to read, they can benefit from the support of as many adults as possible. Here's how you can help with the reading program at your youngster's school:

- Offer to read aloud to the class, small groups, or individual students. You could also listen while students read to you.
- Tell the teacher if you know another language. She might pair you up with a child who speaks that language and is learning English.
- Make books. When students write stories, volunteers may be needed to staple or bind the pages together.
- Help children use computers and encyclopedias to look up information.
- Assist with after-school events such as book fairs or literacy nights.
- Volunteer during your youngster's library time to help students find books they'd like to check out.♥



# Writing: Step-by-step

A writing plan can help your youngster make sure that her story turns out just the way she wants it. Share these steps with your budding author.

### Sketch

Suggest that your child divide her paper into three columns: “Beginning,” “Middle,” and “End.” Then, have her fill each section with sketches that show what might happen in that part of the story.



### Draft

Your youngster can use her plan to write a rough draft. Ask her to say each sentence aloud (“I have a cat named Peanut Butter”), and then help her put the words on paper. This will keep each idea in mind as she writes.

### Check

When your child’s draft is finished, ask her to read it aloud and to stop if she wants to add a detail or if something doesn’t make sense. Help her add capital letters where they belong.

### Share

Finally, let your youngster type her story on a computer or print it neatly on a fresh sheet of paper. Encourage her to illustrate it and read it aloud to your family.♥

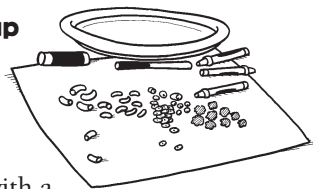
## Fun with Words

### Crafty spelling

Turn spelling time into craft time! Your youngster can learn how to spell common words, and stretch her creativity, with these projects.

#### Alphabet soup

Ask your child to color the center of a paper plate lightly with a crayon to look like a bowl of soup. Then, have her flip through a book and look for *sight words*, or words that are used frequently. *Examples:* “the,” “and,” “like,” “went,” “you.” She can use a dark-colored marker to print them in the “soup.”



## Q&A

### From choppy to smooth

**Q** When my son reads aloud, it sounds choppy. How can I help him read more smoothly?

**A** Reading sounds slow and uneven when a child focuses on one word at a time rather than stringing words together fluently. This can happen if a book is too hard or if he doesn’t have a lot of experience reading out loud.

If your son is stumbling over a lot of words (say, 1 out of every 10 or so), offer him an easier book. But if he knows all the words and still isn’t reading smoothly, he just might need more read-aloud practice.

Encourage him to read the way he talks. Try reading a passage aloud together so he can match your pace. He might also like to record himself reading into a tape recorder or cell phone. When he plays it back, he’ll hear how he sounds. Then, he can practice a few times, make another recording, and compare the two to see how much he has improved.♥



### Cute as a button

Help your youngster gather a variety of craft supplies (buttons, dry noodles or beans, sequins, beads, pom-poms). Have her write words that she is learning in glue on a sheet of construction paper. Then, let her press the objects onto the glue. When it dries, she can run her fingers over the letters—touching them will help her remember how to spell the words.♥

## Parent to Parent

### Solving mysteries

In school, my daughter Ella recently discovered mysteries. Her teacher reads them to the students, and they pretend to be detectives, listening for clues that will help them crack the case.

Ella asked if we could do this at home, so we checked out some from the library: the Young Cam Jansen series by David Adler and A to Z Mysteries by Ron Roy. I gave her a small notepad and told her it was a detective’s notebook.

I suggested that she use it to jot down the clues as I read. For example, she drew a van that appeared to belong to no one and a character who sneaked out of a party without an explanation.

After reading a couple of mysteries, she solved a case before the detective in the story. She was excited, and I think this has been good for her, because it helps her really understand and pay attention to what’s happening in a book.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
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