

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

May 2008

W.A. Cunningham Intermediate School 234

Susan Schaeffer, Principal

Book Picks

■ *Falling Up*

What would happen if you tripped on your shoelaces and fell up instead of down? Shel Silverstein's funny poems look at life in unusual ways. Pigs take "people-back rides," and a girl screams so loud her eyebrows steam. (Also available in Spanish.)

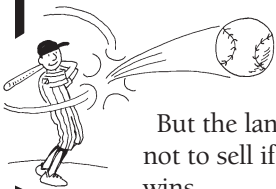


■ *Alanna: The First Adventure*

Alanna would rather be a knight than a lady. So she trades places with her twin brother, Thom, and trains to become a knight. Can she save the kingdom—and keep her identity a secret? Book one in Tamora Pierce's fantasy/adventure *Alanna* series.

■ *The Boy Who Saved Baseball*

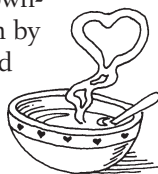
In this novel by John Ritter, the future of Dillontown rests on a baseball game between the local team and its all-star neighbors. Developers want to build houses on the property where the town ballpark is located.



But the landowner agrees not to sell if the home team wins.

■ *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul*

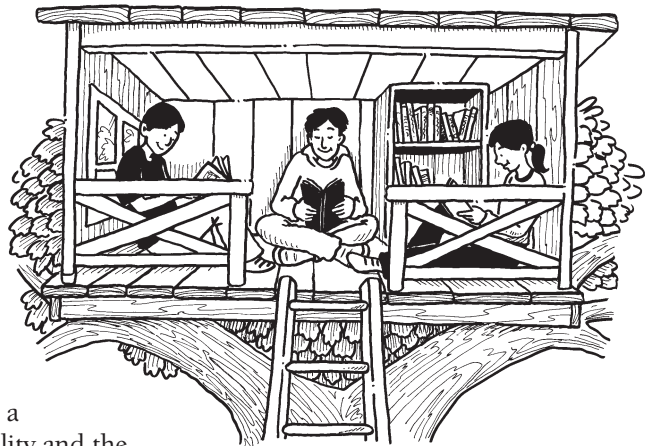
Like the adult series, this book is filled with inspiring and heartwarming short tales. Topics include family, friendship, love, and more. While some stories come from famous grown-ups, most were written by kids for kids. Compiled by Jack Canfield.



Summer series reading

Want to keep your youngster reading all summer long? Try getting him hooked on series books. He'll enjoy familiar formats, grow to love favorite characters, and be anxious to find out what will happen next.

Here are ideas for using series to launch your own summer reading program.



Set goals

Help your child decide on a goal based on his reading ability and the series he chooses. For instance, he could read a book a week from R. L. Stine's *Goosebumps* series. Or he might need two weeks for one of P. B. Kerr's *Children of the Lamp* books. Have him write his goals on a calendar and check off each one he meets.

Recognize progress

Choose reading-related rewards for achieving goals. Your youngster might earn a special bookmark, or a book light

for his bed, along with the privilege of staying up later to read. Or let him buy his favorite book in a series he completes.

Enlist others

Invite cousins and friends to join your reading program. Each person picks a series and keeps a log. Ask them to write a sentence or two about each book and rate it on a scale of 1–5. Hold an end-of-summer picnic, and share the lists. Your child can use others' recommendations to select new books. ■

An activity a day

Keep your child's language skills from going on vacation this summer. Fill a zipper bag with slips of paper listing quick activities. Each day, have her draw a slip and do what it says. Here are a few you might include:

- Play hangman.
- Read online about famous people who share your birthday.
- Write the opening paragraph of a story. Add a new paragraph each day.
- Make a list of outdoor summer games.



- Look up the meaning of your name.
- Follow a favorite recipe.
- Host a family spelling bee.
- Write a new verse for the national anthem.
- Read a book to a grandparent over the phone or in person. ■

Scrapbooks + kids = learning fun!

Part art project, part writing, scrapbooks offer a great way for children to learn. Plus, they teach organization and planning. Use these tips to guide your youngster's project.

Plan it out

Help her choose a topic. Her scrapbook might cover a long period of time ("My Fifth-Grade Year") or one event ("My Gymnastics Competition"). Then, have her gather keepsakes such as invitations, photos, schoolwork, or ticket stubs. She can write a description of each item on a small piece of colored paper.

Tell the story

A scrapbook is more than a photo album—it tells a story. Help your child brainstorm ideas for presenting her information. For example, she might use speech balloons to show dialogue among the people in her pictures. Or suggest that she find a poem that goes with her topic.

Dress it up

Encourage creativity. Stickers, colored pens, and decorative borders bring pages



to life. Your youngster might "hide" a photo or a paragraph underneath a small flap of paper or place memorabilia in envelopes glued to the page.



Parent 2 Parent Mailbox of memories

Coming home after a vacation used to be a letdown for our kids. But last year, we started a tradition that gives them something to look forward to.

Every day of our trip, the children pick out a postcard. They write the date and something that happened, and we mail the cards home.



When our trip ends, we have a mailbox full of good times to read to each other.

Last year, our son described flying kites on the beach, while our daughter wrote about our hike in the woods.

We display the postcards on our family bulletin board in the kitchen where everyone can see them. They're the perfect vacation souvenir!

Other Picks

GAMES

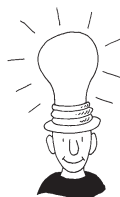
■ Hit or Miss

This list-making game is never the same twice. Players have 45 seconds to write as many words as possible in a given category. Then, they guess which of their words is the most popular—or the most original. *Gamewright*

■ Brain Quest

Put on your thinking cap and get ready to show off your knowledge. This question-and-answer game allows each youngster to compete at his own level. Questions are based on school subjects such as math, history, grammar, and science.

Workman Publishing



WEB SITES

■ Kids Web Japan

Tour Japan to learn about its people and culture. Read about technology like electronic paper, discover what goes into kids' lunch boxes, and even learn how to write Japanese letters. A travel section lets youngsters take nine different online trips through Japan.

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/index.html>

■ Netsmartz Kids

Encourage your children to learn about Internet safety at this fun site. They'll enjoy playing games, listening to songs, sending e-cards, downloading screen savers, and watching videos. Topics include instant messaging, e-mail, and computer viruses.

www.netsmartzkids.org



Q&A Learning to listen

Q My daughter's coach told me that Rachel doesn't listen when he gives instructions to the team. How can I help her be a better listener?

A Listening takes practice. In addition to having regular conversations, sharpen your child's ears with these activities:

1. Have her close her eyes. Make four noises (rustle paper, jingle keys, snap your fingers, stomp your feet). Name one

sound and ask her if it came first, second, third, or fourth.

2. Let her listen to a song and then write down the words. She can compare what she wrote to the actual lyrics. (Find lyrics online by typing the song title into a search engine such as Google.)

3. Have a discussion in which each of you repeats the last sentence said before speaking. For example, if you asked, "How are you?" your youngster would say, "How are you? I'm hungry."



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.

128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

ISSN 1540-5583