

School to Home Connections Reading Resources



Tips and Tools to Help Children Find
Reading Success



Presented by:
Allison Venello
Middle School Language Arts Teacher

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The middle school years are a time when students develop the skills necessary to be successful when reading in language arts class as well as in the content areas. Because of this, our goal is to focus on strengthening skills already in place and doing all that we can to provide your children the tools needed to find success. Additionally, it is important for you to work with your child at home to ensure that they remain active readers who are continually working on their skills.

This booklet will provide you with many activities and resources that will help you. These are just a few of the many ways that you and your child can remain active when it comes to reading. Hopefully you find that you and your child enjoy reading together. Please feel free to share any additional reading activities and resources that you and your child like. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about any of the ideas on this list.

Your Partner in Education,
Allison Larsson-Venella
Language Arts Teacher
Penns Grove Middle School
351 Maple Avenue Penns Grove, NJ 08069
(856) 299-0576 ext. 4223
alarsson@pennsgrove.k12.nj.us

Table of Contents

Click on the page number to access page.

Reading Resource: General Tips for Encouraging Reading at Home.....	page 2
Curriculum Connection: Reading Strategies.....	page 3
Curriculum Connection: THIEVES Strategy for Informational Text.....	page 4
Reading Resource: Suggested Book Lists.....	page 5
Reading Resource: Suggested Reading Sites.....	page 6
Activities/Ideas: Suggested Reading Activities.....	page 7
Activities/Ideas: Fluency Activities.....	page 8
Activities/Ideas: NEWS List.....	page 9

**The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.**

-- Dr. Seuss

General Tips for Encouraging Reading at Home

The following tips came from Jay Davidson, author of Teach Your Children Well: A Teacher's Advice for Parents.

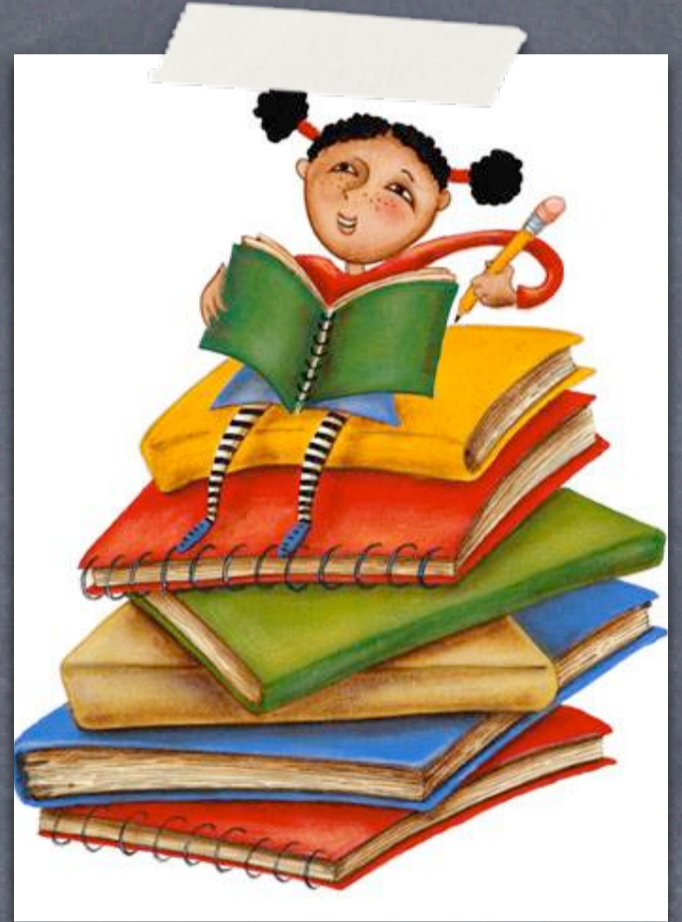
For more information, visit <http://www.jaydavidson.com>.

- Talk about your own reading. Include it in dinner conversation or other shared time. Explain what you find to be fascinating, humorous, or compelling in your own reading.
- Accept what your child considers to be a comfortable position for reading. We may find that sitting upright and in total silence is the best approach for ourselves. Understand that some adolescents may prefer reclining and listening to music while reading.
- Help your child find connections to something personal in the material. This is greatly motivating for all of us. And if the experiences of the characters are vastly different from your child's, talk about how disparate your lives are.
- Read some of the books she brings home from school. This works equally well for non-fiction as for fiction. You can check your child's own understanding of reading material—whether it be a novel, historic period, or scientific information—if you ask her to explain it to you. If there are gaps in understanding, that's your signal to take a look at it together and try to help out.
- Buy your child high-interest magazines. Reluctant readers may be able to have a better appreciation of reading if the subject matter jibes with interests. I do have a few words of caution about this, however: excessive interest in the lives of actors, singers, and pop-culture figures is a good indication that your teenager has made someone else the star of her life.
- Come to an agreement within your family about watching television and videos. Imposing limits may incite rebellion, while rational discussions that involve all family members are more likely to invite cooperation. Be prepared to practice what you preach! If you speak on behalf of limited time in front of the tube, your teen will rightly see you as a hypocrite if you don't walk your own talk!
- Allow your child to put down pleasure reading that is too difficult. If the book is one chosen by the teen, it should be able to be read independently.
- Encourage asking for help when reading is difficult. You bring a lot of wisdom and experience to your reading. You can offer the same to your teen. Be there without criticism if he needs help with reading material.
- Listen to classic literature on tape as a family. This gives you a shared experience as well as the opportunity to explain vocabulary, concepts, or background information that your adolescent may not understand.
- Ask for the newest adolescent literature at the library. Family visits to the library don't need to stop just because a kid is in middle school. Be sure that your teen knows where the new books are displayed and whom to ask for recommended reading. Librarians will be delighted to share their wealth of information with you.

Reading Strategies

Middle school students will work on the following reading strategies throughout the school year:

- **Activating Prior Knowledge**—what do you already know?
- **Building Background**—what do you need to know?
- **Making Connections**—can you connect what you're reading to your own life (Text-->Self); something else you've read (Text-->Text); or to something going on in the world (Text-->World)?
- **Creating Mental Images**—what are you picturing in your mind as you read?
- **Inferring**—can you figure something out about the text from reading between the lines?
- **Reread and Clarify**—can you reread difficult parts of the text to help you try to make sense of something confusing?
- **Use Context Clues**—can you use context clues (words around an unknown vocabulary word) to figure out what it means?
- **Summarizing Using Important Details**—can you determine the main ideas and retell the story using them?
- **Synthesis**—can you think back over all that you've learned about what you've read using the above reading strategies and then come up with new ideas, thoughts, or opinions about what you've read?



Reading like THIEVES:

While we wouldn't want our children to be thieves in real life, when reading informational/nonfiction text it is important to encourage them to use the THIEVES acronym!



- 👁️ **T**—use the **title** to help you make predictions about what you are going to be reading.
- 👁️ **H**—look at the **headings** of each section of the text. They should give you an idea as to the main idea of each section.
- 👁️ **I**—read the **introduction** to the text (section, chapter, book, etc.). This should provide you with some important information about what you are going to read.
- 👁️ **E**—read **every first sentence of each paragraph**. The first sentence of each paragraph normally provides you with the main, organizing idea of the paragraph.
- 👁️ **V**—using **visuals and vocabulary** can help you to get an idea about the text you are reading. Read the captions below any pictures, charts, maps, etc. to help you understand what each image represents. Look at any vocabulary words in bold print. These words are important and can provide you with some key information.
- 👁️ **E**—read through the **end of section or chapter questions**. These will provide you with key information from the text and help you to identify main ideas and important details.
- 👁️ **S**—if applicable, read through the end of section **summary** to review key information.

Suggested Reading Titles

The links below provide some suggestions on what middle schoolers will love to read and some titles to avoid.

- [Can't Miss Middle School Books \(And Ones You Should Skip\)](#)—Scholastic Instructor magazine's article by contributing editor Hannah Trierweiler Hudson providing ideas on what books shouldn't be missed and those that are okay to skip.
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3752276>
- [Bold Books for Teenagers: The Very Best Books for Middle School Readers](#)—This helpful article provides numerous suggestions for student book choices.
<http://www.englishjournal.colostate.edu/Extensions/BoldBooksExtEJ954.pdf>
- [Common Sense Media's Best Books](#)—This website presents numerous lists of books for children. Additional links are provided for the bests films, websites, games, music, and even apps.
<http://www.common Sense Media.org/book-lists>
- [ALA's YALSA's Book Awards & Booklists](#)—The Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association, provides numerous links to book lists for ages 12-18.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.cfm>
- [Accelerated Reader Bookfind Website](#)—The AR Bookfind website will enable you to locate accelerated reader books and find out important information about them including book level and AR points.
<http://www.arbookfind.com>
- [Read Kid Read](#)—sponsored by author James Patterson, this website is dedicated to making kids readers for life!
<http://www.readkiddoread.com/home>



Suggested Reading Sites

The links below provide some sites that middle schoolers will love and are educational too!



- [Read, Write, Think](http://www.readwritethink.org/)—This website provides tons of great ideas for reading, writing, and other literacy activities. Kids will love the student interactive activities.
<http://www.readwritethink.org/>
- [Pro Literacy Education Network](http://www.proliteracyednet.org/)—This website provides numerous ideas for helping students practice reading, vocabulary, writing, and even test skills.
<http://www.proliteracyednet.org/>
- [Wonderopolis](http://wonderopolis.org/)—The National Center for Family Literacy’s site encourages children to learn through discovery.
<http://wonderopolis.org/>
- [Funbrain Reading](http://www.funbrain.com/brain/ReadingBrain/ReadingBrain.html)—The reading section of the popular Funbrain website provides many reading games for middle school aged students, many based on popular books.
<http://www.funbrain.com/brain/ReadingBrain/ReadingBrain.html>
- [Latin and Greek Roots](http://www.wordfocus.com/index.html)—This website helps students to practice Latin and Greek roots to help them build vocabulary.
<http://www.wordfocus.com/index.html>

Ideas/Activities to Encourage Reading at Home

The following ideas and activities can help to encourage children to read outside of school:

— Visit the Penns Grove-Carneys Point Library located on South Broad Street. Membership for students is only \$1.00, and the library is a great place to chill out with a good book on a hot summer day.

— Visit the Salem County Bookmobile. The Bookmobile stops at several spots in the community and has a large selection of books for middle school aged kids.

— Visit Fort Mott Park in Pennsville. This local fort was used by Union soldiers during the Revolutionary War. During your visit, let your child be the tour guide and lead you through the fort by reading the map that is provided free of charge at the entrance gate.

— Encourage your child to start a Book Club. Have them invite several friends and/or family members to read the same book and discuss it. Many books even come with book club or literature circle guides included. Talking about what they're reading helps kids to better comprehend and make connections to literature.

— On an inclement weather day, challenge your child to find all the different things that you have to read in your home. They'll be surprised to find out how many things require reading.

— As a family create a list of "Must Reads" and challenge each other to read all of the books on the list in a certain time period. For some ideas, visit a local bookstore, look online or use the links provided in this booklet for middle school aged kids.

— Read a book that is going to be released as a movie. After reading, go see the movie and then compare and contrast it to the novel.

— Read together. One great way to bond is to read the same book as your child and discuss it. Modeling good reading habits is a wonderful way to encourage your child to embrace reading.



Oral Reading Checklist

Can your child read fluently? Use this checklist to help you?

- Reads with varied expression. Should sound like they are talking to you or a friend with their voice matching the message the text is trying to get across.
- Reads with good phrasing-using punctuation marks as guides, pronouncing words with proper inflection and tone.
- Reads smoothly with some breaks, self-correcting when he/she comes across difficult words, phrases, or sentence structures.
- Reads at a conversational pace-not too fast or slow.



Tips for Improving Fluency

The following ideas and activities can help improve fluency:

- Model fluent and expressive reading by reading aloud to your child.
- Encourage your child to read with an older sibling.
- Have your child read and reread familiar books to build fluency.
- Practice reading high frequency word lists (like the NEWs list included in this booklet-click link to go directly to list).
- Encourage your child to listen to books on tape or podcasts of books online. Hearing someone else read can be a great model for them!

No Excuse Words (NEWs)

The following list of words are considered no excuse (they should be read and spelled correctly by this point):

- a lot
- affect
- almost
- always
- an
- and
- anything
- are
- buy
- by
- bye
- choice
- choose
- chosen
- effect
- herself
- himself
- hour
- how
- I
- in
- myself
- nothing
- of
- off
- our
- ourselves
- ridden
- ride
- right
- road
- rode
- school
- something
- should
- students
- than
- their
- themselves
- then
- there
- they're
- to
- too
- two
- us
- use
- want
- wear
- went
- were
- what
- when
- where
- which
- who
- why
- write
- written
- wrote
- you
- your
- you're