

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2019

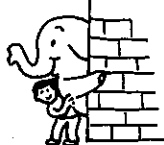
Oxford Public Schools
Title I



Book Picks

■ *The Magician's Elephant* (Kate DiCamillo)

Peter is an orphan looking for answers about his missing sister. He turns to a fortune-teller, who proclaims that an elephant will help Peter, setting off a chain of events that the boy never could have imagined. But will it lead him to his sister—or to more questions? (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Dewey the Library Cat: A True Story* (Vicki Myron and Bret Witter)

On a cold morning, librarian Vicki Myron discovers a freezing kitten in the book drop. This is her true story of Dewey, who found a home at the library. He attended story hours, napped among the stacks, and eventually became famous around the world.



■ *Young, Gifted and Black* (Jamia Wilson)

These 52 short biographies introduce your child to important people in black culture. She will learn about the childhoods, struggles, and accomplishments of historical figures as well as present-day people. Features civil rights leaders, athletes, musicians, and others.

■ *Lola Levine Is Not Mean!* (Monica Brown)

Lola accidentally hurts a classmate during a soccer game, and the other kids start to call her “Mean Lola Levine.” Lola feels terrible and wants to show everyone she’s not mean! She turns to her best friend, her family, and her passion for writing for help. The first book in the Lola Levine series.



Understanding fiction

Charles is a strong reader. He follows complicated plots, and he gets to know story-book characters so well that he often correctly predicts what they’ll do next. Help your child be a strong reader, too, with these fun ways to boost reading comprehension.

Basic facts	Traits	Actions
~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	~~~~~ ~~~~~	



### Create a storyboard

Filmmakers use a series of drawings called a “storyboard” to write movies. Let your youngster try this idea to visualize a book’s plot. Have him divide a sheet of paper into eighths and sketch simple pictures (one per box) as he reads. *Tip:* Drawing arrows from box to box will show the sequence. With the storyboard, he can retell the story or write a summary.

into three columns: one for basic facts (name, age), one for traits (shy, brave), and one for actions (goes to the beach, makes the softball team).

### Map the characters

Understanding a book’s characters will help your youngster grasp the story. Encourage him to make a character chart while reading. He could divide it

### Predict the future

To forecast what will happen in a book, your child has to think about what has taken place so far. Ask him to make predictions as he reads and jot down his ideas (best friend will move away, dad will recover). Suggest that he write his own ending about two-thirds of the way through. He’ll enjoy seeing how it compares with the real one! ■

## Replace it

“The party was really *fun*! We played *fun* games.” Your child will write fresher, more original stories if she finds alternatives for words she uses often, such as *fun*, *went*, and *good*.

Have each family member flip through books and copy a few sentences to jazz up or make more precise. Pick one, and circle the word to avoid. (“Wayside is a small village.”)

Set a timer for three minutes. Everyone writes as many alternatives as possible—replacing just one word or maybe changing the whole sentence. (“Wayside is a tiny village” or “If you weren’t paying attention, you could travel through the village of Wayside without noticing it.”) Now when your youngster catches herself using a word too many times in a story, she’ll remember this game. ■

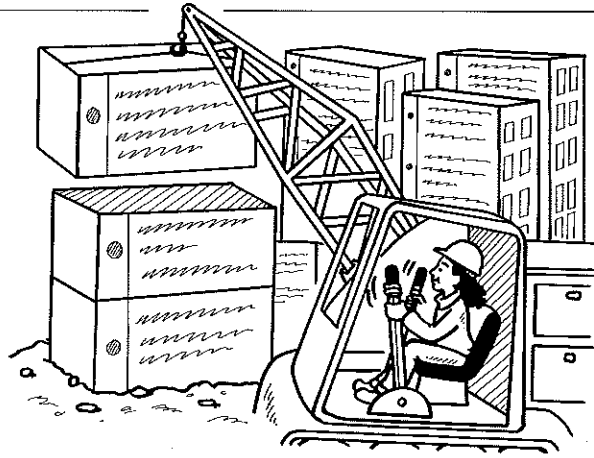


# Build stronger essays

Encourage your child to approach her next essay as if she's building a tower. Here's how she can succeed from the first "brick" to the last.

**1. Lay the foundation.** A strong essay begins with a solid introduction. Your youngster should think about what her essay aims to accomplish and state her main idea. For example, will she inform readers about childhood in Colonial America? Or will she try to persuade readers to follow recycling rules?

**2. Construct the framework.** Have her think of each paragraph as a floor of her building. She might include one



paragraph about school in the Colonies, another on chores, and a third on play. Under each heading, she could write supporting facts and details. ("Education was considered more important for boys than for girls.")

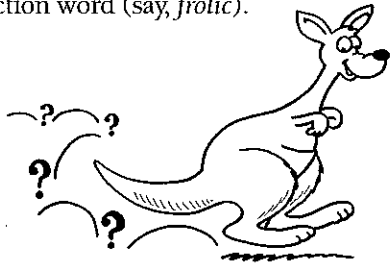
**3. Top it off.** A building isn't finished until it has a roof. Similarly, a strong conclusion finishes off an essay. Maybe your child will refer back to her introduction. ("Following the rules for what and how to recycle makes our planet a cleaner place to live.") Or perhaps she'll ask a question. ("What changes will you make to the way you recycle?")

**Fun with Words**

## Name the mystery word

This word game helps to strengthen your youngster's vocabulary and critical thinking skills.

First, make one person the "word master." His job is to think of a mystery action word (say, *frolic*).



Then, players take turns asking questions to figure out the word—substituting the word *book* for the mystery word. The word master answers "Yes" or "No" and adds a clue to lead players to his word.

If someone asks, "Have you *booked* today?" the word master could reply, "Yes, I *booked* at recess." Another person may say, "Did you *book* down the slide?" ("No, I *booked* on the grass.") If a player asks, "Do animals *book*?" his reply might be "Yes, rabbits and kangaroos do."

The first person to identify the mystery word gets to pick the next one.



**Q&A**

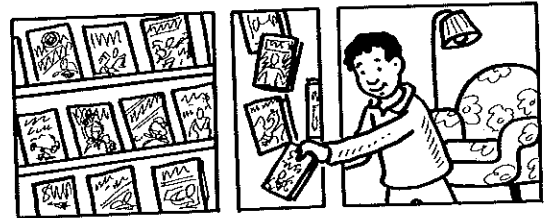
## Are comic books "real reading"?

**Q** My son reads mostly comic books. Is this okay?

**A** It's wonderful that your son enjoys reading. And comic books often have complex storylines and well-developed characters, which strengthen reading skills.

Let your child explore a variety of comic books so he encounters new vocabulary and plots. He might choose a historical fiction series or a comic book retelling of classic children's literature. Also, many comic book fans like graphic novels, such as the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series (Jeff Kinney) or the *Dog Man* series (Dav Pilkey).

Finally, since your son will be expected to read a variety of books in school, consider helping him branch out. Suggest that he set a goal to read one new type of book each month. Perhaps he'll try a biography in February, a science fiction novel in March, and a mystery in April.



**Parent 2 Parent**

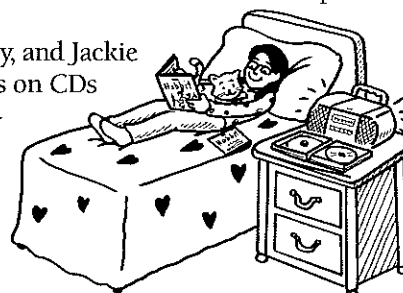
## An audiobook station

My daughter Jackie loves the listening center in school, where students listen to audiobooks. So she asked if we could set one up at home.

We went to the library, and Jackie checked out a few books on CDs along with the print versions. At home, she put the CDs and books into a basket beside an old CD player I found in the basement.

Now Jackie enjoys listening to at least a chapter a day while she follows along in the book. It's great because she can hear the pronunciations of harder words while she sees them in print.

I told my sister-in-law about our listening station. Now she and her son are going to set one up using their smart speaker!



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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 ISSN 1540-5583

# Math+Science Connection

Intermediate Edition

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

February 2019

Oxford Public Schools

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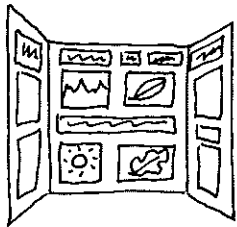
## INFO BITS

### Clocks with hands

An analog clock helps your child understand elapsed time. Have him use one when he's getting ready in the morning. Ask how long it took him to eat breakfast or how many minutes are left until the bus comes. He'll develop a sense of what 5 minutes, 15 minutes, or 30 minutes looks like on a clock.

### Go to a science fair

Visit your school district's website for announcements about upcoming middle and high school science fairs. Then, plan to attend one with your youngster. Seeing what big kids do will get her excited about science, and she may discover experiments to try at home.



Then, plan to attend one with your youngster. Seeing what

### Web picks

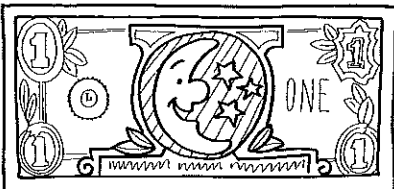
Your child can practice math facts by playing games like Archery Arithmetic or Marlan's Magical Maths Mission at [mathsframe.co.uk](http://mathsframe.co.uk).

Visit [earthcam.com/events/animalcams/](http://earthcam.com/events/animalcams/) to watch live feeds of meerkats, otters, eagles, lions, and other animals.

## Just for fun

**Q:** How is the moon like a dollar?

**A:** They both have four quarters.



## The shape of things

Whether your child is eating hexagon-shaped soup crackers or spots a sign with an acute angle, she can explore geometry. Share the terms in the box below as you try these ideas.

### Name me

Take turns giving each other clues to figure out a mystery shape. If your child chooses a trapezoid, she might say: "I'm a quadrilateral. One pair of my sides is parallel. I can have two acute angles and two obtuse angles, or two right angles, one acute angle, and one obtuse angle. What am I?"


### Find me

Take your youngster and her friends on a search for shapes and their attributes. Give them each a list, such as: "Triangle, obtuse angle, quadrilateral, perpendicular line." Challenge them to find the items and sketch them on their lists.

### Draw me

Ask your child to draw a building, an object, or a landscape using as many different shapes and attributes as she can think of. She might draw the Eiffel



Tower with lots of triangles and parallel and perpendicular lines. Have her label each shape. 

## Geometry vocabulary


- **quadrilateral:** a shape with four sides
- **parallelogram:** a quadrilateral with two pairs of parallel sides
- **right angle:** a 90° angle
- **acute angle:** an angle that measures less than 90°
- **obtuse angle:** an angle that measures greater than 90°
- **parallel lines:** lines that never cross
- **perpendicular lines:** lines that intersect (or meet) at 90° angles

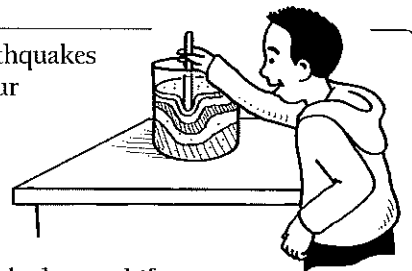
## Rocks reveal the past

Colorful rock layers tell scientists when earthquakes occurred. Enjoy the following activity with your youngster to see how this works.

Have your child layer colored sand in a clear bowl by pouring in one color at a time. Ask him to pretend the layers of sand are layers, or *strata*, of rock. Now let him slide a butter knife down the side of the bowl and watch the layers shift.

An earthquake creates breaks in the strata. One layer of rock continues to form higher than the spot where it began. Scientists know how long rocks take to form, so a break reveals when an earthquake took place.

*Note:* No colored sand? Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar with 3–4 drops food dye. 

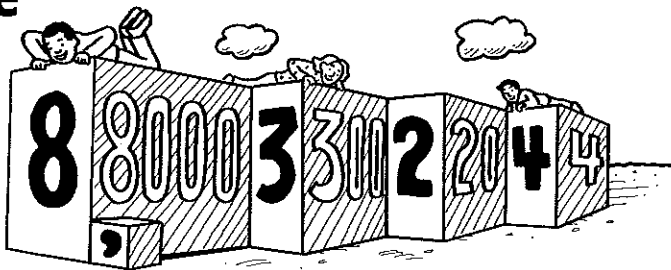


# Play with place value

Understanding that the 8 in 8,324 is worth 8,000, the 3 = 300, the 2 = 20, and the 4 = 4 is what place value is all about. As your youngster plays this game, he'll pay attention to the value of each digit.

**Materials:** 4 index cards, paper and pencil, coin

1. Have your child write "ones," "tens," "hundreds," and "thousands" on separate index cards. Shuffle the cards, and stack them facedown.
2. To play, each person writes a four-digit number like 4,365 or 7,134 on his own paper.
3. Next, your youngster draws an index card (say, "hundreds") and tosses a coin.



4. Take turns calling out the value of the hundreds place in your number. So a player with 4,365 would say 300. If the coin landed on heads, the person with the highest value scores a point.

For instance, 4,365 beats 7,134 because 300 is greater than 100. But if the coin landed on tails, the player with the lowest value gets the point. (In a tie, no one gets a point.)

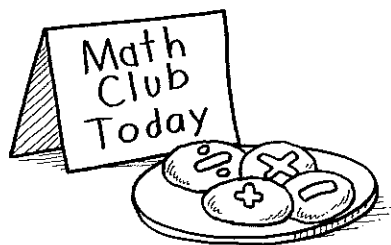
5. Play until all four index cards have been drawn. Write new 4-digit numbers, and start a new round. The first player to 10 points wins. 🎲



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Start a math club

When my teenage daughter and her friends decided to start a book club, it gave me an idea for my younger daughter, Julie. Since she likes math, I thought she could start a math club. She was excited about the idea and immediately called her two best friends.



The girls met at our house last week to plan activities for their weekly meetings. For example, they're going to play games involving math, such as Yahtzee, Uno, and Set. They also want to have a Sudoku contest. Plus, they're talking about filming math videos. Their plan is to put on a play that helps little kids understand concepts like fractions or division. I can't wait to see what they come up with! 🎲

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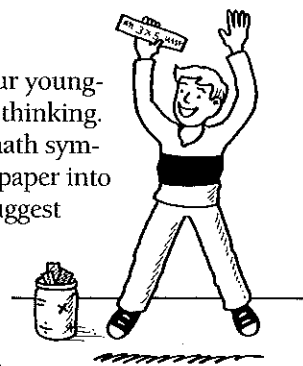
## MATH CORNER

### My multiplication jar

A "multiplication jar" will give your youngster practice with solving problems—and explaining his thinking.

Let him decorate a clear jar by writing numbers and math symbols in permanent marker. Now he can cut construction paper into strips and write a multiplication problem on each one. Suggest problems with fun instructions ("Do 3 x 5 jumping jacks"), multiple steps ("6 x 2 x 7 = ___"), and double digits ("25 x 4 = ___").

Each day, have him pull out a slip, solve the problem, and explain how he got his answer. For the jumping jacks problem, he might do 3 sets of 5 jumping jacks and call out the number after each set ("5, 10, 15—the answer is 15"). 🎲



## SCIENCE LAB

### Fluffy pancakes—or not?

A chemistry lesson is only one breakfast away! Help your child make pancakes two ways and observe a chemical reaction.

**You'll need:** pancake ingredients (see recipe to the right), measuring cup, spoon, 2 bowls, stove, skillet, spatula

**Here's how:** Together, make two batches of pancake batter, but omit the baking powder (the leavening) in one. Cook two pancakes by pouring  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup batter from each batch onto a hot, oiled skillet. Flip both pancakes when bubbles pop on one.

**What happens?** Bubbles form in the batter with baking powder, and the

#### Pancake recipe

Stir 1 cup milk, 1 egg, and 1 tbsp. vegetable oil. In a separate bowl, mix 1 cup flour, 2 tbsp. sugar, 1 tbsp. baking powder, and 1 tsp. salt. Combine the wet and dry ingredients.

pancake becomes fluffy. The other batter doesn't have bubbles, and the pancake is flatter and denser.

**Why?** The milk in the batter causes the acid and alkali in baking powder to react with each other, forming small carbon dioxide bubbles. The bubbles make the pancakes light and fluffy. 🎲

