

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2006

North Middle School  
Dianne Tilson, Principal

## Book Picks

### ■ Project Mulberry

Julia and her friend Patrick decide to raise silkworms for the state fair. But silkworms need mulberry leaves, and Julia's mother doesn't want her to visit the only neighbor who has them. A story about prejudice by Newbery Medal winner Linda Sue Park.



### ■ The Kids' Allowance Book

Should kids earn an allowance for doing chores? How much? Amy Nathan asked more than 150 children questions like these, and her book reveals their answers. Includes tips for youngsters on spending *and* saving their money.



### ■ Macaroni Boy

Mike's family is having financial problems. On top of that, his grandfather suddenly becomes ill. With the help of his best friend, Mike tries to find out what is making Grandpap so sick. Katherine Ayres' story is set in Pittsburgh during the Depression.

### ■ Salsa Stories

When Carmen Teresa gets a blank book for New Year's, her relatives help her fill it with stories of family traditions and the special foods from their childhoods. Author Lulu Delacre's book includes Latin-American recipes. (Also available in Spanish.)



## Talking games

From giving an oral report in school to going to her first job interview, your child needs to communicate effectively. Try these fun family games to build speaking and listening skills for school—and life.



**Family favorites.** The whole family can practice the art of persuasion with this game. Together, brainstorm categories of favorite things, such as books, television shows, or songs. Ask everyone to choose five favorites in each category. Encourage them to give reasons for their opinions. The object is for players to defend their choices and then everyone agree on a family top five in each category.

**Story in a bag.** For a challenging storytelling game, collect five or six objects in a paper bag. *Examples:* rubber band, bottle cap, rock, photograph, spool of thread. Then, pass the bag around to family members, and let them take turns making up a story that includes every object. You might be surprised at how many variations they come up with!

**Running dictation.** You'll need two teams of two players each for this dictation game. Copy a few sentences or a short paragraph from a book or textbook onto two sheets of paper (one for each team). Hang them on a wall opposite the players. One player from each team must rush to the paper, memorize the text, and return to dictate the lines for his teammate to write down. The first team to correctly produce all of the text, word for word, wins. 📖

## Making words plural

Most of the time, writing the plural of a word means simply adding an "s." *Example:* "tree" = "trees." But for some words, forming the plural is more complicated. Share these guidelines with your child:

■ For most words that end in "sh," "ch," "x," "s," "ss," "z," or "zz," add "es" (bush/bushes, fizz/fizzes, box/boxes).

■ For most nouns ending in "o" preceded by a vowel, add "s" (zoo/zoos). When they are preceded by a consonant add "s" or "es" (memo/memos, hero/heroes).

■ For most words that end in "y" preceded by a consonant, change the "y" to "i," and add "es" (puppy/puppyes). When they're preceded by a vowel, just add "s" (valley/valleys).

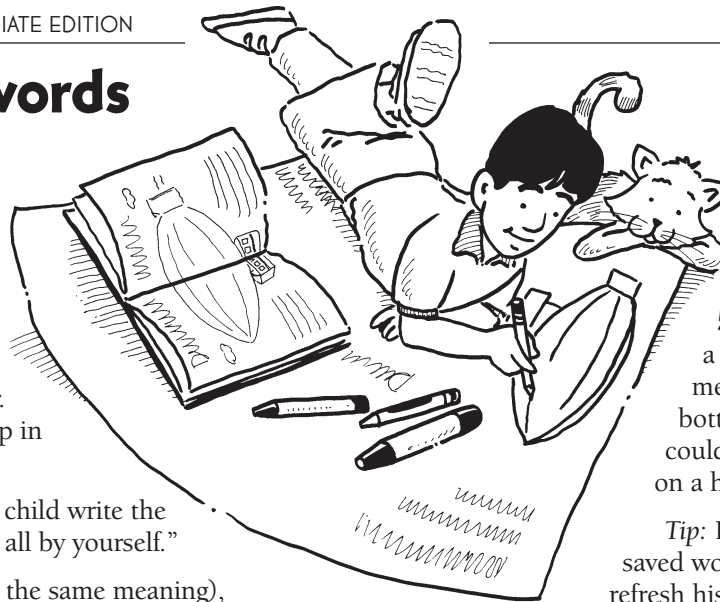
*Tip:* For more plural rules, visit [www.uvsc.edu/owl/handouts/revise%20handouts/grammar%20and%20usage/plurals.pdf](http://www.uvsc.edu/owl/handouts/revise%20handouts/grammar%20and%20usage/plurals.pdf). 📖



# Mapping new words

The more words your child knows, the better reader he will become. You can help your youngster learn a new word “from top to bottom” by showing him how to make a word map.


1. Start by writing the word in the center of a blank sheet of paper. *Example:* “solo.” Together, look it up in the dictionary.
2. In the top left corner, have your child write the definition in his own words. “Solo: all by yourself.”
3. List synonyms (words that have the same meaning), such as “alone,” in the top right corner. List antonyms too (words that have opposite meanings). For example,



an antonym of “solo” is “together.”

4. In the bottom left corner, use the word in a sentence. *Example:* “John played the trumpet solo.”

5. Have your child draw a picture that illustrates the meaning of the word in the bottom right corner. For “solo,” he could draw a person standing alone on a hill.

*Tip:* Encourage your child to review saved word maps from time to time to refresh his memory. 




## Q&A Speedier reading

**Q** My son reads very slowly.

Is there anything I can do to help him read more quickly?

**A** Start by watching him read. Is he whispering or moving his lips as he reads? Trying to pronounce one word at a time will slow him down. Give him a gentle reminder every time you notice that he’s saying the words to himself.



Pointing to each word can also cause your youngster to read slowly. To help him, cut a rectangular hole the size of three or four words out of an index card. Suggest that your youngster slide the card over the sentences as he reads, revealing only a few words at a time. 

## Other Picks

### SOFTWARE

#### ■ Zoo Vet

Take a virtual journey through the world of animal medicine with this program. Your youngster can care for 25 different kinds of animals while practicing problem solving and exploring science.



Legacy Interactive

#### ■ Spelling Made Easy

Become a contestant on Mike McGee’s game show, and learn the secrets to spelling success. Players practice their skills while the program tracks strengths and weaknesses and charts progress. DK Multimedia

### WEB SITES

#### ■ Math Cats

Measurement, geometry, decimals, logic ... kids can find almost anything they need to know about math here. This award-winning Web site helps children explore math through projects, quizzes, crafts, and contests.

[www.mathcats.com](http://www.mathcats.com)

#### ■ Web Genies!

If your child is ready to jump into Web design, here is a great place to learn the basics. Step-by-step instructions help your child create a Web site from scratch.

[www.webgenies.co.uk](http://www.webgenies.co.uk)




## Parent 2 Parent

### Magazines for motivation

Every day when the mail comes, my daughter Megan rushes to see if her monthly magazine has arrived. I began subscribing to a magazine for her a few years ago. It was one that I noticed she regularly browsed through at the library. As Megan grew older, she switched to her current favorite—a science and history magazine. A friend recommended it when they saw it one day at the bookstore.

The magazines are giving her lots of reading practice. Because they cover her favorite subjects and contain colorful photographs and cartoons, Megan can’t wait to read them. And they keep her up-to-date on science and history news.

An added bonus is that when we go to the library, my daughter has started checking out books on topics she has read about in her magazines, such as oceanography. 



## 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.

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ISSN 1540-5583