

# Cook's Corner

September

## Improving Comprehension

Reading comprehension is part of most standardized tests. How can you help your child improve his/her understanding of what he/she reads? Try "paired reading" with your child.

1. First, you and your child silently read the same part of a story, an article, or a textbook. Try two or three paragraphs to start.
2. Next, listen while your youngster summarizes aloud what he/she just read. They might say, "I learned that sedimentary rocks are made from pressure." After he/she finishes summarizing, offer your corrections or additions to what he/she heard. *Example:* "We also learned that igneous rocks come from cooling lava."
3. Then, take turns reading another two or three paragraphs and changing roles. Switch back and forth until the whole story, article, or chapter is read.



**NOTE:** *This activity is a good study aid for subjects like science or history, and it builds listening skills.*

## Vocabulary Practice:

**Q:** *My daughter has a tough time with vocabulary quizzes. What can I do to help?*

**A:** Try sneaking in a little extra vocabulary practice. The more your child hears and uses the words, the easier it will be for her to remember them.

- ☺ **Do Puzzles:** You can turn vocabulary words and their definitions into simple crossword puzzles at <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>. Select "Criss-Cross" from the puzzle menu in the middle of the screen.
- ☺ **Hunt for Treasures:** Encourage your child to find and circle vocabulary words in newspapers and magazines and to read the sentences aloud. Seeing the words used in context will help him/her learn their meanings.
- ☺ **Use Synonyms:** List your child's vocabulary words. Then, beside each one, have him/her write words with similar meanings. He/She can use a thesaurus from the library. Hang the list on the refrigerator where your child can review it often.

## Book Picks

- ***The Million-Dollar Kick***: Whisper once humiliated herself while playing soccer. Now she can't stand the game. Faced with a contest to win a million dollars with a single kick, can she regain her self-confidence and win the cash? Readers will find out in this tale by Dan Gutman.
- ***Granny Torrelli Makes Soup***: Granny Torrelli does more than make soup. When Rosie and her best friend, Bailey, have an argument, Granny shares stories of her own life to help Rosie learn how to solve her problems. A heartwarming tale of family by Sharon Greece.
- ***A Collection of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories***: How did the camel get its hump? Why do kangaroos hop? Where did the rhinoceros get his skin? Readers can explore the fanciful answers to these and other questions in eight classic fables by Rudyard Kipling. Beautiful illustrations by Christopher Corr and others make this volume a delight to look at as well as to read.
- ***The Boxcar Children Cookbook***: Fans of the Boxcar Children series will eat up this title by Diane Blain. The book gives simple recipes for foods eaten by the Alden children during their adventures. Most recipes include an excerpt for one of the Boxcar Children books.

# Active Read-Alouds

Who said only small children like being read to? Reading aloud with older children is extremely important and can be a great time for talking, relaxing, and just being together. Here are several ideas to get a read-aloud discussion going:

● **Help** your children check their understanding of what they're reading. Try asking, "Does that make sense to you?" Or commenting, "This part sounds important. I'm going to read it aloud again."

● **Encourage** your children to think about what they read with questions like, "Do you think that could really happen?" or "What do you think the author wants us to learn?"

● **Connect** the story to other ideas. For example, say, "Does that character's reaction remind you of anything?" Or discuss similarities between the story and a person or even in your child's life.

● **Predicting** is a great way to build comprehension. Ask, "What do you think this part of the story is about?" or "I wonder what would happen if...?"

● **Share** the enjoyment of language by pointing out words that are fun to say. You'll show your children that language can be very powerful.

● Finally, **value** your youngsters' comments. You could say, "That's what I was thinking!" Or, "Now I see what you're saying."

