

Spot the details

What is an archaeologist? What do bears eat? Nonfiction books have the answers—and if your child reads carefully, he will find them. The following suggestions can help him read for details and boost his comprehension.

Read around the text. The pages of many nonfiction books are covered with “extras” that stories don’t have (headings, photo captions, an index, a glossary). Point out these features. Then, ask your youngster what questions he has about the topic that the book might answer. Say he’s reading *Archaeologists Dig for Clues* by Kate Duke. He might



think, “What tools do archaeologists use?” or “What are fossils?” Help him read the book, and see how many answers he can find.

Pair fiction with nonfiction.

Together, read a story like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (James Marshall) followed by a nonfiction book such as *Bears* (Deborah Hodge). As you read the second book, encourage your

child to look for ways that real bears are different from the fictional ones. For example, he might say that real bears eat things like grass, berries, fish, and insects, while the three bears eat porridge.♥

Fun with Words

Wonderful wordplay

Use these activities to build your child’s phonemic awareness—her ability to hear sounds in words:

- Choose a three-letter word, such as *cap*. Have your youngster substitute different beginning sounds from the alphabet to make new words (*lap*, *map*, *nap*, *rap*, *sap*, *tap*, *zap*). How many can she think of?



- Pick a long word, and tell her to clap once as she says each syllable. For *mozzarella*, she would clap four times: *moz-za-rel-la*.

- Ask your child to say a word without the first sound. *Example*: “Can you say *sit* without the *s*?” (*Answer*: *It*)

- Think of a word, and give your youngster a “sound” clue to figure it out. For instance, “I’m thinking of a word for something that you chew but don’t swallow. The word has an *uh* sound in the middle.” (*Answer*: *Gum*)♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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Vocabulary boosters

A large vocabulary can turn your child into a better reader and writer. Try these everyday ways to help her learn new words.

Keep your ears open

When you and your youngster go places, point out words that people use. Maybe a waiter describes an *entree* or the dentist talks about *molars*. Encourage your child to figure out what the words mean by the way they’re used.

Go beyond nouns

Help your youngster add adjectives and verbs to her vocabulary. Sports and games offer opportunities to use action words. Let your child hear you comment on the softball that *soars* or the runner who *sprints*. When she sends thank-you notes or greeting cards, suggest descriptive words (a *polka-dotted* shirt, a *fantastic* birthday).♥



Parent to Parent

A journal-writing tradition

My grandson Keith saw me writing in my journal and asked what I was doing. I explained that my grandfather got me started writing in a journal when I was a little boy. Keith said he wanted to start a journal, too, so I gave him a notebook.

He asked me what he should write about. I told him that I use my journal mostly to store

memories, but he can do whatever he wants—even draw pictures. He decided to sketch the two of us writing together in our journals, and he had me help him write a sentence about his picture.

Keith has stuck with his journal for a couple of weeks already. Now when he comes to my house, he can’t wait to share what he has written and drawn.♥

