

Tips for Reading Aloud With Elementary-School Children

*Source - Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)

Read aloud so elementary-school children can:

- Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings; learn about words and language; build listening skills; expand vocabularies; talk about the characters, settings, and plot then relate them to their own lives; gain knowledge about a variety of topics.
- Gain exposure to a variety of writing styles and structures.
- Explore social and moral issues and behaviors.
- Become more skilled independent readers.
- Discover which authors and writing styles they like.
- Be motivated to read on their own.

Choose books that elementary-school children like:

- Children are becoming independent readers. Read easy readers that they can reread on their own.
- Children are expanding their language skills, vocabulary, and attention spans. Read chapter books with developed characters, plot twists, and descriptive language.
- Children are learning to monitor their own behavior. Read longer picture books and chapter books with messages about how to handle problems and cope with difficulties.
- Children are curious about the world beyond their immediate experiences. Read reference books that match their interests.
- Children sometimes identify with characters and situations. Read series books featuring the same characters engaged in new experiences.
- Children begin to pay attention to current events. Read junior versions of popular magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, and topical magazines written for children, such as *Ranger Rick*.
- Children develop special interests, preferred types of books, and favorite authors. Read some books that match the child's preferences--mysteries, science fiction, adventure stories, anything Beverly Cleary--and some you love that will introduce something or someone new.

Try these read-aloud tips:

- Set the stage before you begin reading. Discuss what you read yesterday and what might happen next. Take turns reading aloud; for example, each of you can read a page in an easy reader.
- Use the tips for younger children that are also appropriate for this age group.
- Defer questions until after you finish reading, if possible. This helps children get fully engaged in listening to a story.
- Summarize, adapt, or skip parts of books that are too far above a child's level of understanding.
- Relate a book you are reading to one read in the past. Talk about how they are alike and how they differ.
- Ask a child to imagine what he or she might do in a situation similar to that faced by a character.
- Provide materials and activities that let children expand their understanding of a character, historical event, or situation.
- Talk about what you have read. Books often evoke strong feelings that need to be shared. Offer your reactions and invite a child to do the same.
- Stop reading at a suspenseful point in the book. This encourages a child to be eager for tomorrow's read-aloud time.