

Reading Aloud: Creating Readers and Writers and Changing Lives
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“THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.”

Becoming a Nation of Readers, a 1985 report by the Commission on Reading

We read to children for all the same reasons we talk with them: to reassure, to entertain, to bond, to inform or explain, to arouse curiosity, and to inspire. But in reading aloud, we also:

- ✓ build vocabulary
- ✓ condition the child’s brain to associate reading with pleasure
- ✓ create background knowledge
- ✓ provide a reading role model
- ✓ instill the desire to read





Reading aloud:

- ✓ offers the language of books, which differs from language heard in daily conversations, on television, and in movies.
- ✓ allows children to use their imaginations to explore people, places, times, and events beyond their own experiences.
- ✓ provides children and adults something to talk about.
- ✓ supports development of thinking skills as children and adults discuss books, articles, and other texts they read. together.

When we take the time to read aloud to the children in our lives, we bond closely with them in a secret society associated with the books we’ve shared. The fire of literacy is created by the emotional sparks between a child, a book, and the person reading. It isn’t achieved by the book alone, nor by the child alone, nor by the adult who’s reading aloud—it’s the relationship winding between all three, bringing them together in easy harmony. ~ Author Mem Fox. Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever. Harcourt, 2001.

Reading Aloud and Fathers

The time a father spends with his child is one of the most consistent links to the development of literacy skills throughout the child’s schooling.

-  Children are motivated when they see their most important male role model, their father, reading and that includes picking up a book and reading it aloud.
-  Fathers tend to take a book to another level as they try to connect what is in the story to something in the child’s life.
-  Bedtime read-alouds create one of the strongest bonding times, especially between fathers and sons. This positive influence is also experienced by their daughters.
-  Reading aloud is a time to relax. Hearing a story not only relaxes a child, it does the same for dad.

A few “Dad” suggestions to read aloud:

The 91-Story Treehouse by Andy Griffiths; illus. by Terry Denton. Feiwel & Friends, 2018.
Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney. Amulet Books, 2007.
The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors by Drew Daywalt; illus. by Adam Rex. HarperCollins, 2017.
Let’s Go for a Drive! (an Elephant and Piggie story) by Mo Willems. Hyperion, 2012.
My Dad Thinks He’s Funny by Katrina Germein; illus. Tom Jellett. Candlewick, 2013.

Creating Readers

‘Getting lost in a book’ starts when we read aloud

- introduces books and literary language
- increases literary experience
- makes books accessible to all readers

Suggested Read-Alouds

Books About Reading

Finding Langston by Lesa Cline-Ransome. Holiday House, 2018.
I Do Not Like Books Anymore by Daisy Hirst. Candlewick, 2018,
Madeline Finn and the Library Dog by Lisa Papp. Peachtree, 2016
Madeline Finn and the Shelter Dog by Lisa Papp. Peachtree, 2019.
The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson. Scholastic, 2018.
We Are in a Book by Mo Willems. Hyperion, 2010.

Humorous Read-Alouds

Ernest, The Moose Who Doesn’t Fit by Catherine Rayner. Macmillan, 2009.
How to Walk an Ant by Cindy Derby. Macmillan, 2019.
The Real McCoys by Matthew Swanson & Robbi Behr. Macmillan, 2017.
The Real McCoys: Two’s a Crowd by Matthew Swanson & Robbi Behr. Macmillan, 2018.

Read-Aloud that Touch the Heart

Because by Mo Willems; illustrated by Amber Ren. Hyperion, 2019.
What is Given from the Heart by Patricia McKissack; illus. by April Harrison. Schwartz & Wade, 2019.
Wish by Barbara O’Connor. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2016.

Series Books

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone by J. K. Rowling. Scholastic, 1999.
The Magic Tree House: Warriors in Winter by Mary Pope Osborne; illus. A.G. Ford. Random House, 2019.
The Princess in Black and the Science Fair Scare by Shannon Hale and Dean Hale; illus. by LeUyen Pham. Candlewick, 2018.
Waiting is Not Easy by Mo Willems. Hyperion, 2014.
Who is Sonia Sotomayor? By Megan Stine. Penguin, 2017.

The paramount thing to remember is not to turn an enjoyable story into a textbook or something that feels like a test. Instead, focus on open-ended questions and give your child time to think about a response. The three questions I generally ask are pretty simple:

📖 What do you think . . . ?

📖 How do you feel (about the story, character, events)?

📖 What do you wonder?

Creating & Inspiring Writers

All the Places to Love by Patricia MacLachlan; illus. Mike Wimmer. HarperCollins, 1994.

Read-Aloud About Places – Real and Imaginary

Aurora County All-Stars by Deborah Wiles. Harcourt, 2007.

A Drop of Water by Scholastic, 2019.

Everywhere Wonder by Matthew Swanson; illus. Robbi Behr. Imprint, 2017.

Going Places by Peter and Paul Reynolds. Atheneum, 2014.

Ideas Are All Around by Philip C. Stead. Roaring Brook, 2016.

The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup and a Spool of Thread by Kate DiCamillo. Candlewick, 2003.

Overcoming Life's Challenges

After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again) by Dan Santat. Roaring Brook, 2017.

The Rough Patch by Brian Lies. Greenwillow, 2018.

The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street by Karina Yan Glaser. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

The Vanderbeekers and the Hidden Garden by Karina Yan Glaser, 2018.

Read-Aloud About Common Experiences

1, 2, 3 Jump! by Lisl H. Detlefsen; illus. Madeline Valentine. Roaring Brook, 2019.

Good Rosie! by Kate DiCamillo; illus. by Harry Bliss. Candlewick, 2018.

The Season of Styx Malone by Kekla Magoon. Wendy Lamb Books, 2018.

Stories About Self-Identity

Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal. Candlewick, 2018.

Bernard's Book by Deborah Underwood; illus. Misa Saburi. Holt, 2019.

The Good Egg by Jory John; illus. Pete Oswald. HarperCollins, 2019.

Hello Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly. Greenwillow, 2017.

Read-Aloud Wondrous Words

Double Take! A New Look at Opposites by Susan Hood; illus. by Jay Fleck. Candlewick, 2017

Lexie the Word Wrangler by Rebecca Van Slyke; illus. Jessie Hartland. Nancy Paulsen 2017.

Lion in the Sky: Haiku for All Seasons by Laura Purdie Salas; illus. Mercé López. Millbrook, 2019.

Snowman – Cold = Puddle: Spring Equations by Laura Purdie Salas; illus. Micha Archer. Charlesbridge, 2019.

Vamos! Let's Go to the Market by Raúl the Third. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019.

“Read it to me is a test. Let me read it to you is a gift”

~ Author Katherine Paterson



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