

Making Reading Relevant: Read, Learn, and Do!

If you are taking a trip to a new place, you may pick up a travel book to learn more about your destination. Reading makes our real-world experiences more meaningful. It gives us historical perspective, a sense of other cultures, and an introduction to the symbols and viewpoints we may encounter. Books help us make sense of what we see around us.

Books do the same thing for children. Fictional stories help children work through fears and desires, and nonfiction helps them understand processes and observe patterns. Every time you pair a book with an experience, you are giving your child an opportunity to learn more about their world.

Here are some suggestions for K-3rd graders:

Art

Fiction: *Scribble*, by Deborah Freedman, or *The Art Lesson*, by Tomie de Paola

Nonfiction: *Frida*, by Jonah Winter, or *Henri Matisse: Drawing with Scissors*, by Jane O'Connor

Activities: Have your child draw a self-portrait, and then have him or her tell you about it. Visit an art museum or a public art show, or find examples of art in your community (such as murals or sculptures) and talk about which pieces you like and find interesting.

Food

Fiction: *Salsa Stories*, by Lulu Delacre, or *Bunny Cakes*, by Rosemary Wells

Nonfiction: *Emeril's There's a Chef in My Soup!*, by Emeril Lagasse, or *Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes: A Cookbook for Preschoolers & Up*, by Molly Katzen and Ann Henderson

Activities: Go to a make-it-yourself pottery studio and decorate a special serving dish, or create your own with a pottery kit. Make a family recipe with your child and talk about where it came from.

Storms

Fiction: *Rainstorm*, by Barbara Lehman, or *The Buffalo Storm*, by Katherine Applegate

Nonfiction: *The Magic School Bus Inside a Hurricane*, by Joanna Cole, or *Twisters and Other Terrible Storms*, by Will and Mary Pope Osborne

Activities: Put together a storm kit with items like a flashlight, extra batteries, and bottled water. Brainstorm some things you could do at home if the electricity went out. Put the list in the storm kit!

For more reading-based activities you can do with your child, visit:

www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c71/

For a great collection of books for kids, organized by theme, visit:

www.ReadingRockets.org/books/booksbytheme

