

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark curly hair and a young girl with long dark hair sitting together on a couch. The woman is smiling warmly as she looks at an open book held by the girl. The girl is looking down at the book with a focused expression. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a living room setting.

Reading
for Meaning

ACTIVITIES GUIDE

FOR PARENTS

Reading for Meaning

Welcome, story supporter!

**We hope that you and your child
have fun extending stories with
these activities.**

**Nurturing and supporting
your child is important for
their physical, emotional and
academic development.**

**ZERO
DROP/OUT**

**Part of the Zero Dropout campaign working towards
halving the rate of school dropout by 2030.**

We all know how challenging it can be to know exactly how to support our children with their school work.

Knowing how to spot if your child's reading needs extra support is hard, even as an attentive parent.

If you're unsure whether your child needs a little extra support with their reading skills, we have designed some fun exercises for you to try at home.

At the end of these activities, you will have a good sense of whether your child is getting the attention they need to perform at their best in school.

We'll guide you through some activities that you can try at home. **They are divided into four categories, so you can choose which one to try first. We hope you try them all!**



READING ALOUD



WRITING ACTIVITIES



GAMES



ARTS & CRAFTS



READING ALoud

This helps children to develop their reading skills. It also makes it easier for a parent or caregiver to know when a child is having trouble sounding out a word and understanding its meaning.

Reading
for Meaning

Let's read aloud

WHAT TO USE

Download one of our stories from WhatsApp or get a storybook that you have at home

WHAT TO DO

- Sit down in a comfortable space with your child to read.
- Next, ask your child to read the story aloud in a clear voice that is loud enough to hear.
- Be patient with them and encourage them to have a picture in their mind of what is happening while reading.
- If they get stuck, try to help them with words that they don't understand.

- Make it a joint activity by reading some parts of the story with them.
- Once they've read the story, ask them to explain the story to you in their own words.
- If you're comfortable taking the activity to the next level, you and your child can write a poem, a rhyme or a rap song based on the story, and then read it aloud.



WRITING ACTIVITIES

These exercises help children to be able to think openly, be creative and improve their writing skills.

Reading
for Meaning

Write a letter to a character

WHAT TO USE

Story/book, paper, pen or pencil

WHAT TO DO

- Start by reading a story with your child like you did in the reading activity.
- Next, choose one character from the story and ask your child to write a letter to them in any language (a character is a person, animal or thing in a story).
- They should tell the character what they think of the story and ask questions about what happened in the story.

- Once your child is finished writing the letter, ask them to read the story for a second time and think of a different ending.
- Ask them to write a new ending for the story, and then to explain why they chose that ending.

Be a book writer

WHAT TO USE

Story/book, paper, pen or pencil

WHAT TO DO

- Start by reading a story with your child like you did in the reading activity.
- Choose a character that isn't the main character and ask your child to create a story around that character.
- They should give the character a name, a place to live, and an occupation.
- They then build a short story around this character with the help of other characters.

- Encourage your child to be imaginative and creative.
- They could also write a song or poem about the character or the story.

Write like a person who writes newspapers

WHAT TO USE

Old newspaper, paper, pen or pencil, crayons

WHAT TO DO

- If you have newspapers at home, show them an article in the newspaper.
- Next, ask them to write a newspaper article or story about the storybook characters.
- They should copy the style of the newspaper article by making sure their version also has a headline and a byline with the journalist/author's name.

Write a book review

WHAT TO USE

Paper, pen or pencil

WHAT TO DO

- To help your child to think openly, ask them to make a written list of the things they like about the story.
- Next, ask them to write a list of things they don't like about the story.
- Now, ask them to write a book review explaining why they think the book is good or not.
- They should include the list of things they

like and don't like in their book review.

- If your child is finding it difficult to write the review, help them out by coming up with five questions about the story.
- Discuss the questions with your child so they can come up with possible answers. This exercise will help them to develop their own questions later on.
- Here's an example of how you could do it: "I don't like this story because..." or "I like the story because..."

Preparing for a birthday party

WHAT TO USE

*“The Feast” from our collection of stories,
paper, crayons, paint, old magazines, scissors,
glue stick*

WHAT TO DO

- Together with your child, start by reading “The Feast” from our story collection.
- Ask your child to imagine that it’s their birthday party in a few weeks time. They must think of what they would like the birthday party to look like - what decorations and food they want and what clothes they want to wear.

- Ask them to create a menu for their birthday party. They must also make a list of things they will need to buy.
- Help them create an invitation card for friends to attend the party, and draw a birthday cake.



GAMES

Role play helps your child to explore their creative imagination. These activities also help with critical thinking skills.

Reading
for Meaning

Act it out!

(Five fun games to try)

WHAT TO USE

Toys, props lying around the house, costumes or clothes to use for dress up

WHAT TO DO

- #1** After reading the story, encourage your child to act out the story using props (things that you can collect such as outfits, toys and other things available at home).
- #2** Ask your child to imagine a different ending to the story and then ask them to narrate the story to you with the new ending.

- #3** Ask your child to imagine that they are in a debate competition with you. Choose a part of the story that you find most interesting and have a debate about it (a debate is when two or more people argue about something and they come up with facts to prove that what they are saying is correct). You can get other members of the family to join in.
- #4** Have you ever tried making a story chain? If you have three or more people in the house, you can ask them to play along. Each person tells a part of the story until everyone gets a chance and the story is complete.
- #5** You can also play the charades game! One person acts out a scene without saying the words out loud and the other person has to guess what the action means.

Reporting live from the scene...

WHAT TO USE

Spoon as a microphone, any object that they can use as a camera

WHAT TO DO

- Ask your child to pretend to be a news reporter explaining what happened in the story, live on television. They can use a spoon as a microphone and if you have more than one person at home, you can ask them to be the person holding the 'camera'.
- They start by introducing themselves and telling the viewers where they are and what is happening at the scene. Have fun!

Be a newsreader

WHAT TO USE

Story/book, paper, pencil or pen, table, chair

WHAT TO DO

- Start by reading a story. After reading the story, ask your child to pretend to be a newsreader.
- They can start by writing the news on a piece of paper with headlines.
- They can then dress up for this activity. Encourage them to use a table and a chair at home. You can help them by acting like the camera person recording the news.

Talk show host

WHAT TO USE

Spoon to use as a microphone, chairs, question cards

WHAT TO DO

- Ask your child to pretend to be an interviewer, and you can be one of the characters in the story.
- Encourage your child to interview you about what happened in the story just like they do on television talk shows - like Oprah inviting people to come and talk to her on TV.



ARTS & CRAFTS

These activities help with creative thinking and fine motor skills.

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Let's get creative!

WHAT TO USE

Empty egg cartons, buttons, paint, sticks, cardboard, play dough, anything else available

WHAT TO DO

- Start by asking your child to use different craft items to create some of the characters in the story that you have read.
- They can drench the empty egg cartons in water and then mould them into characters. Let them use sticks to make arms, or loose buttons to make eyes. Allow them to get as creative as they want - let them tell you all about the characters they have created!

Let's draw!

WHAT TO USE

Story/book, old magazines, glue stick, scissors

WHAT TO DO

- Start by reading a story, and then encouraging your child to draw their favourite person in the story on a piece of paper or use cut-outs from an old magazine.
- They can then paste the cut-outs on a plain piece of paper and write the names of the characters next to their pictures.

Create a poster

WHAT TO USE

Paint, crayons, paper or blank cardboard, pencil

WHAT TO DO

- Start by asking your child to read you a story. Ask them to think of things they would say to advertise the book if they wanted people to buy it or to attend a book launch.
- They are now going to get creative. Why not ask them to design a poster to advertise the storybook? The poster can have a picture/drawing of the book cover and a short description of what the book is about.

Designing a book

WHAT TO USE

Two blank A4 papers (colour if you have), glue stick, crayons, glitter, paint, scissors

WHAT TO DO

- Start by asking your child to think of a story they would like to write. If they have done one of the writing activities, they can use the story they created to make a book.
- They can design their own storybook. They do this by folding the pieces of paper in half so that they have a front and a back cover to draw on, plus two inner pages.

- They can use the glue stick to stick the book together.
- Encourage them to be creative. How about they use the scissors to cut out a unique shape for their book?
- Ask them to write their own story on the inner two pages of the book.
- Encourage them to create a colourful cover for the story and come up with a new title.
- They can also design a bookmark for their storybook (a bookmark is something used to mark a page in a book).

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