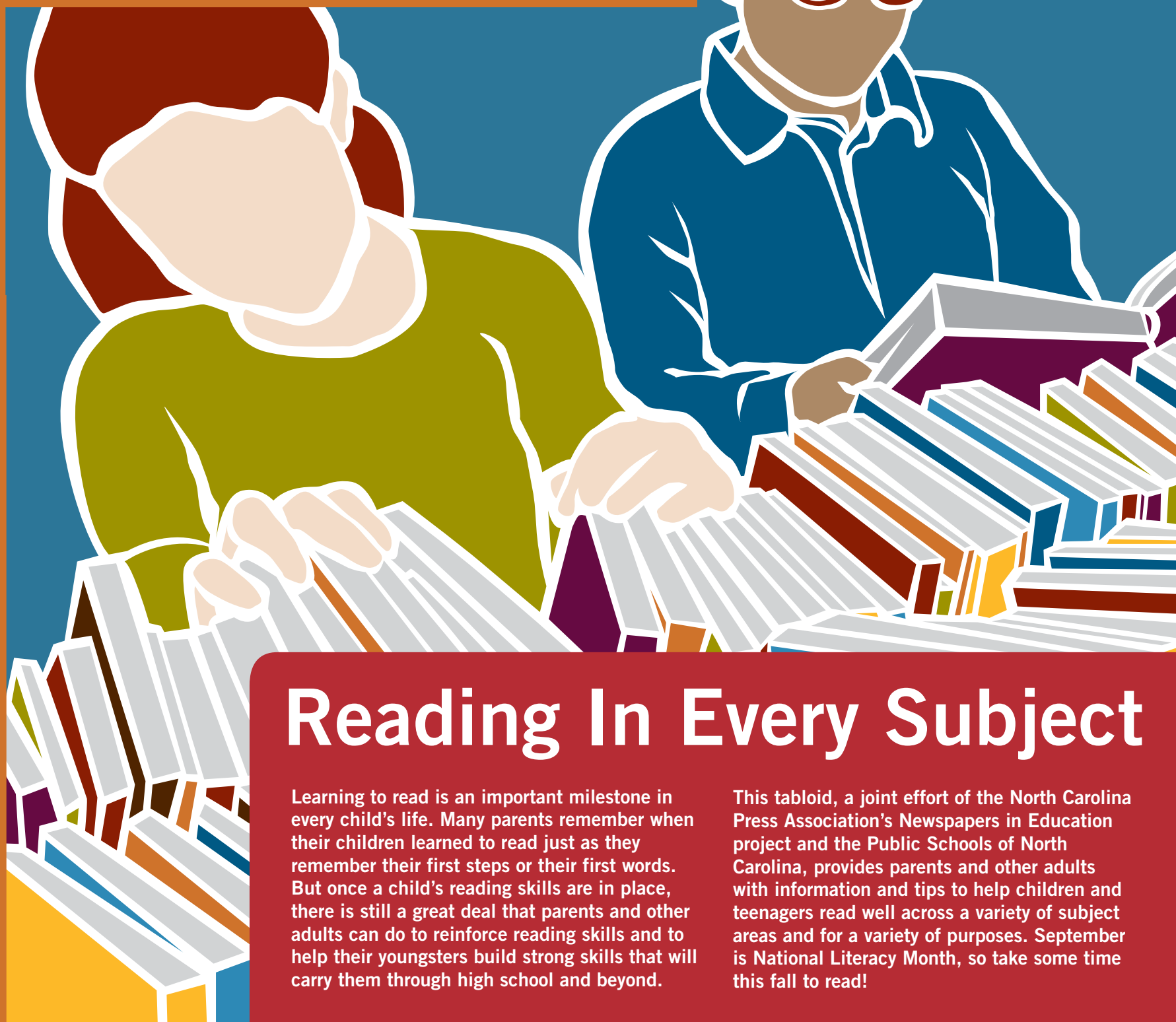


# MAKING the GRADE

FALL 2003



## Reading In Every Subject

Learning to read is an important milestone in every child's life. Many parents remember when their children learned to read just as they remember their first steps or their first words. But once a child's reading skills are in place, there is still a great deal that parents and other adults can do to reinforce reading skills and to help their youngsters build strong skills that will carry them through high school and beyond.

This tabloid, a joint effort of the North Carolina Press Association's Newspapers in Education project and the Public Schools of North Carolina, provides parents and other adults with information and tips to help children and teenagers read well across a variety of subject areas and for a variety of purposes. September is National Literacy Month, so take some time this fall to read!

# WHY WE READ

From reading the labels at the grocery store, to checking your bank statement, to understanding the directions on a prescription, or enjoying the pleasure of a good story, reading is a skill that touches every area of life. For students, reading is necessary in every subject, and it also involves different reading skills and practices depending on the subject or purpose.



As students move through school, they must adjust their reading to meet the demands of different subjects, different purposes and different needs. Through the course of one school year, a typical student will need a variety of reading skills. In history class, reading is an important tool for learning facts or understanding connections and reasons for events and trends. Science reading may involve descriptions of how things work or of specific processes that students need to understand. In science and mathematics, students may need to incorporate reading text with understanding charts, graphs and illustrations. Reading a short story or a poem calls forth a more personal reaction to the tone, style and language the writer uses to tell a story and impart meaning.

Reading in different subjects also means that students work with text and information in a variety of formats. Here is a sampling of the materials that students and other readers may need to understand:

- history textbooks, historical documents and speeches
- mathematics descriptions, explanations, word problems and equations
- essays
- biographies and autobiographies
- news accounts, including newspaper stories, magazine articles and Web news sources
- letters
- novels and short stories
- poetry
- plays
- Web sites
- forms and directions.

## GIVE YOUR CHILD BOTH CHOICE AND GUIDANCE IN SELECTING READING MATERIAL

Motivation is extremely important for developing reading skills, and a love of reading is fostered when children have choices in what they read. Children are more interested in reading when they can choose their reading materials and they are learning that reading is the way to explore new interests.

Variety also is important. Children need to read different types of text – fiction, non-fiction and poetry. In addition, they need to read books, magazines, newspapers and other resource materials. Finally, they need to feel comfortable reading on different topics.

Choice and variety, however, do not have to be mutually exclusive. For example, if your child is interested in sports, guide him or her to newspaper articles, sports magazines, biographies and autobiographies of favorite players or coaches, histories of a favorite game, and short stories and novels that deal with sports and sports figures. These examples are in addition to the more “how to” oriented books on various sports.

Finally, make sure that children have experience in reading for information. Since children often have more difficulty with informational text than with fiction, they need both opportunities to read for information and guidance in understanding what they are reading. Use newspapers as a convenient source of informational text in the home.

### For example, you can use newspapers to:

- help your child understand and prioritize main ideas and details of stories. Point out examples within the stories that support those big ideas.
- talk about how visuals such as photos, maps, graphs and headlines complement the story. Discuss with your child how you can use visuals to predict what the story may be about.
- learn about people in your community, state and nation. Discuss with your child the wide variety of people that comprise a community.

### Following are some additional tips for ways to help guide your child to select a variety of reading materials that are interesting and well written:

- Ask your child’s teacher or school media coordinator to make a list of books he or she would recommend based on their knowledge of your child’s reading ability and interests. Allow your child to choose from the list.
- Explore text with your children. Read (or listen to them read) aloud the first few paragraphs of a book to see how interesting and readable they find it.
- Before you go to the library or bookstore, have your child make a list of their interests and the kind of books, magazines or newspapers they most enjoy. Then, ask a librarian or clerk to make suggestions based on that list.

## CAN YOU RECOMMEND A GOOD BOOK TO READ?

Looking for a good book for your child in a subject area they normally wouldn’t read? Check out this list of recommended books by subject area that has been compiled by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s Instructional Resources Evaluation Services. Reviews of these resources have been shared with the public schools in North Carolina via the print publication, *InfoTech: The Advisory List*. Reviews of recommended resources also are available on the Evalutech Web site, <http://www.evalutech.sreb.org>, hosted by the Southern Regional Education Board, except for the most recent copyrights, which will be available soon.



### SOCIAL STUDIES

**Adler, David A. B.** *Franklin, Printer*. 126 p. Holiday House, 2001. ISBN 0-8234-1675-5 (Grades 6-8)

**Chandra, Deborah.** *George Washington’s Teeth*. 40 p. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003. ISBN 0-374-32534-0 (Grades K-5)

**Giblin, James Cross.** *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*. 246 p. Clarion, 2002. ISBN 0-395-90371-8 (Grades 7-12)

**Maurer, Richard.** *The Wright Sister*. 128 p. Millbrook Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7613-2564-6 (Grades 5-9)

**Murphy, Jim.** *Blizzard!: The Storm That Changed America*. 136 p. Scholastic, 2000. ISBN 0-590-67309-2 (Grades 5-up)

**Philbrick, Nathaniel.** *Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex*. 164 p. Putnam, 2002. ISBN 0-399-23795-X (Grades 7-12)

# NEWSPAPERS ARE A GREAT RESOURCE TO PRACTICE READING STRATEGIES

Newspapers provide children with a great opportunity to practice various reading strategies. Following are some activities parents and children can do together to reinforce the different ways your child reads for information.

## Practicing Different Types of Reading

Parents should first explain to their children that different people do not read at the same pace and that the same person may read at different paces at different times, depending on what they are reading. Memorization is the slowest form of reading. Readers may read and reread a passage to try and recall what they have just read. Learning requires that children remember facts but not straight recall as in memorization. Skimming enables readers to find the main ideas while scanning is the fastest rate of reading.

### SCANNING

Give your child(ren) a list of names to find in the newspapers' front page or sports section or on another page of the newspaper. Have them circle the names they find.

### SKIMMING

Have your child(ren) read headlines and sub-heads of a section they enjoy. After five minutes, have them respond orally to questions about the main ideas expressed in the headlines and sub-heads.

### COMPREHENDING

Have your child(ren) read an article and answer the questions: "What is the action?" "Who is involved?" "Where and when did it occur?" and "Why did it occur?"

### LEARNING

Make up true/false questions about an article or articles your child(ren) read and have them indicate which are true and false.

### MEMORIZING

Have your child(ren) read their favorite comic strip, memorize the dialogue and repeat it back to you.

## Distinguishing Fact from Fiction

Discuss with your child(ren) the difference between fact and opinion. A fact can be verified by objective criteria. An opinion reflects an individual's impression or judgment. Newspapers are expected to keep certain parts of the paper factual while setting aside other parts for expression of opinion. Straight or "hard" news is factual and can be found throughout the newspaper. Quotes within news stories reflect the opinions of those interviewed and not the writers'.

Have your child(ren) read a story in the front section of the newspaper and circle factual statements while underlining opinions. Have them identify the person expressing the opinion. Suggest your child write a letter to the editor expressing an opinion on a current issue and backing up their opinion with facts.

## Using an Outline Approach to Present a Problem

Writers often use the outline approach when presenting a problem: cause(s); effect(s); solution(s); and obstacle(s) to the solution. To introduce the problem-solving outline to your child(ren), use a simple item or feature from the newspaper such as a comic strip. Have your child identify what the problem is and analyze it using the outline. Then have your child(ren) apply the outline to other content. To teach research techniques, have them choose a problem and follow coverage about it over a period of time. Extend the research beyond the newspaper to Web sites, books and magazines.



## PREPARE FOR READING

Before you begin reading, it's important to identify your purpose for reading. Will you be:

- Reading for pleasure?
- Finding information that you will then use?
- Reading carefully for detail? or
- Scanning or skimming quickly for the major ideas?

Monitor your speed according to the type of text you are reading and your purpose for reading. If you are looking for a specific article or fact, you may want to skim or scan the text. These are faster rates of reading. If your purpose for reading is comprehension or memorization, you will need to slow down your reading rate and possibly re-read.

## SCIENCE

**Delano, Marfe Ferguson.** *Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison.* 64 p. National Geographic Society, 2002. ISBN 0-7922-6721-4 (Grades 3-6)

**Ehrlich, Amy.** *Rachel: The Story of Rachel Carson.* 32 p. Harcourt, 2003. ISBN 0-15-216227-5 (Grades 3-5)

**Hurst, Carol.** *Rocks in His Head.* Illustrated by James Stevenson. unpaginated. Greenwillow/HarperCollins, 2001. ISBN 0-06-029404-3 (Grades K-3)

**Kramer, Stephen.** *Hidden Worlds: Looking Through a Scientist's Microscope Scientists in the Field Series.* 58 p. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. ISBN 0-618-05546-0 (Grades 4-7)

**Lasky, Kathryn.** *The Man Who Made Time Travel.* 48 p. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003. ISBN 0-374-34788-3 (Grades 3-5)

## MATH

**Frucht, William, ed.** *Imaginary Numbers: An Anthology of Marvelous Mathematic Stories, Diversions, Poems, and Musings.* 327 p. Wiley, 1999. ISBN 0-471-33244-5 (Grades 9-12)

**Lewis, J. Patrick.** *Arithme-Tickle: An Even Number of Odd Riddle-Rhymes.* 32 p. Harcourt, 2002. ISBN 0-15-216418-9 (Grades 3-4)

**Schwartz, David.** *Millions to Measure.* 40 p. HarperCollins, 2003. ISBN 0688-12916-1 (Grades 1-5)

## HEALTHFUL LIVING

**Haduch, Bill.** *Food Rules: The Stuff You Munch, Its Crunch, Its Punch, and Why You Sometimes Lose Your Lunch.* 106 p. Dutton, 2001. ISBN 0-525-46419-0 (Grades 5-8)

## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

**Rosen, Michael.** *Shakespeare: His Work and His World.* 96 p. Candlewick, 2001. ISBN 0-7636-1568-4 (Grades 6-9)

**Hoberman, Mary Ann.** *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You: Very Short Stories to Read Together.* unpaginated. Little, Brown, 2001. ISBN 0-316-36350-2 (Grades K-2)

**MacLeod, Elizabeth.** *Lucy Maud Montgomery: A Writer's Life.* 32 p. Kids Can, 2001. ISBN 1-55074-487-9 (Grades 3-6)

**Pulver, Robin.** *Punctuation Takes a Vacation.* 32 p. Holiday House, 2003. ISBN 0-8234-1687-9 (Grades 1-3)

## ARTS EDUCATION

**Aliki.** *Ah, Music.* 48 p. HarperCollins, 2003. ISBN 0-06-028719-5 (Grades 1-4)

## READING RESOURCES

Looking for more resources? The following offer additional information, activities and ideas on reading for parents and students.

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/inaword.html>

This is an online guide for parents of elementary readers in North Carolina public schools offering information about the reading section of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

<http://www.ed.gov/index.jsp>

The U.S. Department of Education's Web site includes resources on reading for parents. Look under Education Resources, PreK-13, Reading and Language Arts.

<http://www.rif.org/parents>

Reading is Fundamental is the nation's largest nonprofit children's literacy organization. Its Web site includes tips and activities for parents to use to motivate their children of all ages to read.

<http://www.readingrockets.org>

This Web site, sponsored by public television station WETA in Washington, D.C., is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This site features tips on reading and writing with a special emphasis on teaching children to read and helping those who struggle.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

This is a Spanish-language site developed as a spin-off of the Reading Rockets site above. It is geared to Spanish speaking and reading parents.

### Reading to Learn in the Content Areas

By Judy S. Richardson and Raymond F. Morgan, Wadsworth Publishing, 2003. This book offers insight into how reading varies across different subjects.

## HELP YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO READ



In order to help your child be a competent and skillful reader in a variety of subjects and formats, expose him or her to a variety of reading material. Your local public library can provide good examples of reading in every imaginable format at no cost to you. Examine your own home to see how many types of reading materials are available there. You are likely to find catalogs, cereal boxes, books, magazines and more. Surround your children with the materials readily available in your home and from the library. Your child will feel as though he or she has his or her own personal library.

Help your child understand the many reasons for reading. Not only does it help with schoolwork, but reading helps throughout life. *The Reader's Handbook: A Student Guide for Reading and Learning, Grades 6-8*, by the Great Source Education Group/Houghton Mifflin Company (Copyright © 2002 by great Source Education Group, Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Reprint by permission), lists six good reasons to read:

- 1 ENJOYMENT.** Reading is great entertainment. You read the sports pages, interviews with TV or film stars, mystery novels, and magazine articles because it's fun to read.
- 2 INFORMATION.** Reading helps you understand the world and your life. You read to learn about current events, computers, guitars and much more. Reading gives you information you need.
- 3 MEANING.** Reading brings you things that are meaningful — letters, historical documents, great ideas, new facts. Whatever your interests, reading helps you locate and learn about what has meaning for you.
- 4 DEPTH.** Reading expands your mind. It develops your thinking processes and stretches your imagination. It helps you answer questions about what you believe and the best way to lead your life.
- 5 BEAUTY.** Reading a well-written story, article or poem can be highly pleasurable. Just as you appreciate the colors in a painting, you may like the writing style of certain writers. Writers can create art with words.
- 6 FUN AND EASE.** Reading is almost as easy as talking. You do it almost automatically. You read street signs, headlines in newspapers, names of movies, store display signs and labels on food. It's a habit.

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**North Carolina Newspapers in Education**  
NC Press Foundation  
5171 Glenwood Ave., Ste. 364  
Raleigh, NC 27612  
[www.ncpress.com](http://www.ncpress.com)



**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
301 N. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825  
PHONE :: 919.807.3300  
[www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)

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