

Story Time - How to get the most from any story while you read to your kids

1. Show kids that the words you are reading are the text on the page. This seems obvious, but kids can think you're making it up from the pictures. Let them know it's mostly the text that carries the meaning. Follow the words with your finger as you read.
2. Show them the cover and title page. Announce the name of the author and illustrator. This is to let them know that real people wrote this story. It might inspire them to make a book of their own. It will also help them find more books by the same writer.
3. Show them that books start at the front, and go through to the end; that you read from top to bottom, and from left to right. Point out page numbers to kids learning to count.
4. Read the story aloud with enthusiasm. Be the world's greatest actor! Do silly voices.
5. Stop from time to time to ask questions about what might happen next.
6. Let them interrupt to ask questions, even if they're jumping ahead in the story. This shows they are involved in what you're reading.
7. Let the kids see any pictures. Ask them if they can tell the story from the pictures.
8. See if they can read familiar words or the names of characters when they appear in the text.
10. Change part of a story that they might know by heart, and see if they notice. Or, in a new story, swap in a word that's wrong, and let them correct you. Did Laura Ingalls Wilder really move to a little spaceship on the prairie?
11. If your story has rhymes, obvious pictures or recurring words or phrases, stop to let them guess the end of a line. Ned, Ted and Fred fell out of... what?

After Story Time - How to get the most from any story after you've read to your kids

1. Ask them to summarize the story. See if they can tell you what happened at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. Give lots of praise and support where necessary.
2. Ask which characters they liked or didn't like. Maybe write a simple book review or book report with them. Kids can write words or draw pictures for the review.
3. Ask them to think about different points of view. How might different people in the story feel about what happened?
4. Talk about how the story could be changed. If the stepsisters were nice to Cinderella, the fairy godmother would never have shown up!
5. In our stories, Lionel and Leona sometimes change the endings. Look at your child's favorite stories and imagine different endings together.
6. Read true-life stories and talk about other people's lives. For example, imagine what life was like for Laura Ingalls Wilder in the Little House books.
7. Find similar books to encourage different explorations of the same topic.

8. Imagine the story slightly changed. If the pigs had fifty more brothers, could the wolf have blown down fifty-three houses? What would a story called Goldilocks and the Three Hairs be like?
9. Read books that offer a different version of familiar stories, and discuss the differences with your kids. There are lots of different stories about the three little pigs, for example.
10. Talk about the themes in the book you read. How do they relate to your real-life.

**Inside or outside, reading a good book makes a day brighter-
be sure to check your local library for suggestions.**

Baby-Preschool

Big Bird Brings Spring to Sesame Street (Jellybean Books) by Lauren Collier Swindler

The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring by Lucille Clifton

Pooh's Favorite Things About Spring by Kathleen Zoehfeld

It's Spring, Blue! (Blue's Clues) by Adam Peltzman, illustrated by Jenine Pontillo

Spring Fever (Jellybean Books) by Sarah Albee

Spring Has Sprung! (Bear in the Big Blue House) by Kiki Thorpe

Spring Story (Brambly Hedge) by Jill Barklem

AGES 4-8

Clifford's Spring Clean-Up (Clifford) by Norman Bridwell

Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble by Cynthia Rylant

Hopper Hunts for Spring (A North-South Paperback) by Marcus Pfister

Leaves from a Child's Garden of Verses by Robert Louis Stevenson

My Spring Robin (Aladdin Picture Books) by Anne F. Rockwell

Poppleton in Spring by Cynthia Rylant

That's What Happens When It's Spring! by Elaine W. Good

When Spring Comes (An Owlet Book) by Robert Maass

AGES 9-12

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

Leaves from a Child's Garden of Verses by Robert Louis Stevenson

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett