

# Around the World With Your Newspaper



**The newspaper can serve as a “window to the world” for you and your child. Often the first section of the newspaper will include articles about events happening in distant lands, or across the border. By sharing this section with your child, you can expand your family’s horizons and work on reading skills at the same time.**

★ **Where’s the Date?** Although sometimes the “date-line” of an article will contain the date, it primarily identifies where the article originated. Look for the dateline at the beginning of several articles (often it appears in capital letters). With your child, try to find some of the locations listed on a world map or globe. Help your child pronounce or sound out the names of the different cities and countries.

★ **Keep It Brief!** The newspaper often reports some national and world news in a section of brief updates.

Look for a brief article to read aloud to your child.

Encourage your younger child to draw a picture about the article.

★ **Something New.** Look through the articles in the World section of the newspaper for descriptions of items from different cultures. Talk about what these items might taste like or look like. Make a list.

★ **Pictures and Words.** Cut out several pictures from the World section, and also cut out the headlines from the articles in which the pictures were found. Help your child match the pictures to the headlines. Talk about why your child chose a particular headline to go with a particular photo. With younger children, help them paste a photo on a sheet of paper and ask them to describe what they think is happening in the photo. Write the story on the sheet of paper under the photo, and read it back to your child.

★ Point out pictures, shapes, colors and page numbers.



# Be a Good Sport!

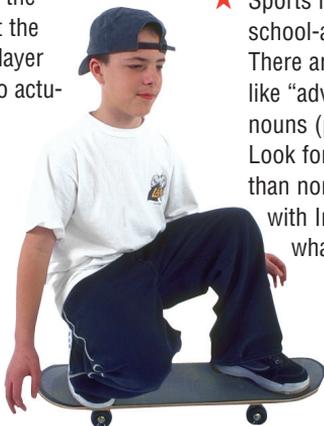
**The newspaper's Sports section is a great sharing opportunity for parents and children. Most everyone has a team or sport they associate with—a peewee league or a professional team—and a favorite sport or player to follow.**

- ★ The Sports section is full of numbers—scores, averages, statistics. What better place to help your preschooler practice number recognition? Ask her to help find the numbers for 1-10, or higher if she's ready.



Elementary school children can practice their math skills by comparing winning and losing scores. How many more points would the losing team have needed in order to be the victor? Older children might be interested to know how their favorite player compares with others in the league, or they could figure out the ratio of how many times that player attempted to score compared to actual times scored.

- ★ Even children who aren't avid readers can often find something of interest in the Sports section. Ask your teenager to



read a sports writer's critique of his favorite team or player. Talk with him about why he agrees or disagrees with the writer. Adolescents might enjoy creating a scrapbook for their favorite team or player.

- ★ Children of all ages enjoy searching for articles about a favorite team or their school's team. Help young readers understand what all the abbreviations stand for—ERA, RBI, etc. Create a graph with older children to track the statistics of a favorite team or player.
- ★ The Sports section usually features lots of names. Help your preschooler look for a player's name that's the same as hers or that starts with the same letter. You could also try to find a name for each letter of the alphabet.
- ★ Sports headlines are a great way to help school-age children identify parts of speech. There are usually many action words (verbs like "advances" and "trounces") and proper nouns (player names, cities, college names). Look for phrases that use words in ways other than normally intended—"Penn State Riddled with Injuries" or "Cats Declawed." Talk about what the expressions mean.



# What's New in Health And Science

**Newspapers cover a wide range of topics and interests. Many contain a health and science page or section. Sharing this information with your child can be a great way to build reading skills. It can also reinforce healthy lifestyles.**

- ★ **Look for opportunities to compare and contrast information.** Cut out articles about several types of diets or exercise programs. Talk to your child about the benefits and disadvantages of each. Make a chart to show your comparisons. If your teenager has expressed interest in joining a gym, help him create a table comparing the costs, hours and services offered at several local exercise facilities. Which offers the best deal?
- ★ **Recipes provide a great opportunity for learning.** Read the list of ingredients out loud. Talk about what  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a cup or  $\frac{1}{2}$  a teaspoon mean. Let your preschooler help you fill the cup to the required level. Talk about “more” and “less” and “bigger” and “smaller” as you work. With middle

schoolers, talk about the amounts of ingredients you would need if you doubled the recipe or if you cut it in half. Talk about the sequence of the steps in the recipe and how important it is to follow the steps as they are given.

- ★ **Look for an article about hygiene or exercise.** Read it out loud together, then practice the activity it describes—the correct way to brush your teeth, or doing stretching exercises. Make up a song that describes the activity, or sing a favorite song as you move in rhythm.
- ★ **What topics does your child study in science class?** Look for articles relating to that topic or another topic of interest to your child. Read them together, and ask your child if she learned something new from the article, or how it compared to what she learned in class. Start a folder to keep articles that may be of use later in writing a report for school.



# What's Happening Locally?



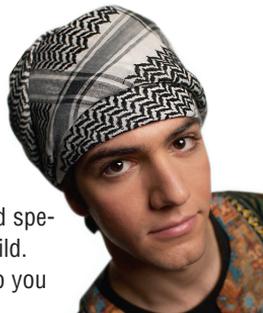
**When parents and children interact with local news, they build a sense of community connection, awareness and involvement. It could be the starting point for a lifelong voyage of commitment to others. The metro or community section in your newspaper can be the springboard for lively discussions and literacy building.**

- ★ Ask your preschooler to identify a familiar building (school, church, store) in the newspaper and tell you what she knows about it. “Who goes to that church?” “What’s the name of the man who helps us in that store?” Talk about why the picture is in the newspaper. “Did you know the school is building a new gymnasium?” When you connect learning to everyday experiences, it helps your child understand that print has meaning.
- ★ Point out announcements involving people your elementary school child knows. Ask questions that increase vocabulary development—“What does it mean that Mr. Jones got promoted?” “What kind of work can Sally do with a



degree in education?” Talking together is one of the best ways to expand your child’s vocabulary.

- ★ Read the list of weekend special events with your child. “What kinds of crafts do you think they’ll have at the school flea market?” “How long will the white Bengal tiger be at the zoo?” “If all of us go to the matinee, what will it cost us?” Decide together what event your family would most enjoy.
- ★ Look through the community pages for organizations that need donations or volunteers. Maybe your teenager and his friends would like to help by spending one day a month serving meals at a homeless shelter or helping clean up a local playground. Younger children can make a plan for your family’s collection of products to donate to a local service agency. Perhaps you and your children would enjoy working for a few hours at a local animal shelter. There are probably many ways your family can get involved in your community, and the newspaper keeps you connected!



# A Feast of Fun and Learning!

**Who doesn't love food? Our lives often revolve around food, it seems, between holidays and sports events and other family gatherings. Make a family gathering out of exploring the weekly Food section in your local paper.**

- ★ **Kids Cook Night:** It's every Mom or Dad's dream—a night off from cooking! Make it a weekly event and engage your child in the planning, shopping and preparation of the meal. Explore the Food section in your local newspaper and pick out a recipe together. Read the recipe, check the pantry for ingredients, and make a shopping list. Use grocery ads to help plan, and clip coupons from the newspaper to save money.
- ★ **Family Recipe Book:** Keep a collection of recipes used for Kids Cook Night in a Family Recipe



Book or scrapbook. Have parents and other family members record their comments about the meal in the book. Mark family favorites for future Kids Cook Nights.

- ★ **Restaurant Reviews:** Read restaurant reviews and food inspection notices for local restaurants with your child. Talk about why reviews and inspections are in the paper. Develop review criteria for your family's favorite restaurants—for example, your neighborhood "Dairy Creamery" restaurant might be a "five spoon" establishment.
- ★ **Interview with a Chef:** If you see interviews with chefs at local restaurants, read one together with your child. Talk about the career path the chef followed and what education he or she needed to earn credentials in the profession. This is also an opportunity to explore careers your child is interested in.



# Freedom of Speech— And Print!



**You'll find the Op-Ed page opposite ("Op") the Editorial ("Ed") page. Anyone can write a letter to the editor or submit an opinion essay about a topic that is important to them.**

**Newspapers often post opinion pieces from syndicated writers, but many also will accept and publish the opinions of local citizens. Young writers can practice their writing skills and feel success when they see their work published!**

★ **Have an opinion?** Most children do! Explore the Editorial and Op-Ed pages with your middle or high school-age child. What topics are currently being covered in your local paper? Discuss these issues with your child. Make it a habit to explore the opinions of others in your community and find a time to talk about them.

★ **In their own words.** Encourage your child to

write an opinion piece of his own. Find a topic your child is passionate about, something he really wants to express to others. Research how to write an opinion piece on the Internet or at your library. What is the main message your child wants to convey? Can he think of a hook to place at the beginning to draw the reader in?

★ **Where and how to submit?** Find out which newspapers accept opinion pieces and what the procedures are for submitting. The library has guides for writers who want to submit work to various publications. Or, encourage your child to call or e-mail the Op-Ed editor of the paper to ask about submission procedures. Often the editor's name and e-mail address will appear on the Op-Ed page.

★ **In print!** Once your child submits her essay, watch to see if it's printed. Seeing your name in print is an exciting experience for all writers. Celebrate!

Discuss the piece with family members and hang the essay in your child's room, or another area of your home. If it doesn't make it in, tell your child that not all pieces are published and then try again!



# Reading the Classifieds

**The classified section of the newspaper contains a wealth of information. And provides many fine opportunities to practice literacy skills!**

- ★ **Dare to dream!** Think about the features of your dream home. Would it have a garage? A big backyard? Now look through the “Homes for Sale” section for your “perfect” house. List your reasons for selecting that house and compare your dream with others in your family.
- ★ **Name that picture.** Even young children can “read” the classifieds. Many papers use simple graphics to illustrate different sections (for example, a picture of a dog might appear in the “Pets” section). Ask your child to help you identify the different sections of the classifieds by looking at the pictures. Ask your child if she can find a picture of a truck in the vehicle ads.

- ★ **How much is that doggie?** Visit the pet section of the classifieds. Ask your child to look at all the ads about dogs. How many different breeds can he find? The classifieds are a great way to work on math skills, too. Ask your child to figure the average age of the pets listed in that day’s ads, or to figure out the difference between her piggy bank and the price of the horse that is listed in the Livestock section.
- ★ **Every letter counts!** Make a list of all of the abbreviations found in the classifieds and write out their full meaning (for example, “b/w” stands for black and white, “bsmt” is an abbreviation for basement). Make a family game of guessing what each means.
- ★ **Map it out.** The yard and garage sales section may have items of interest to the entire family. Using a map of the community (the real estate section of the newspaper and most telephone books have maps), highlight a logical route to the sales that you think have the best items.



# That's Entertainment!

Many children are drawn to the Arts and Entertainment section. Older teenagers often plan weekend events using the concert guides, while younger ones may be interested in the movies. Even the youngest children can enjoy the whimsical or exaggerated photographs that often appear in this section.

★ **That's Your Opinion.** Talk about the difference between fact and opinion. Then read together a review of a movie, play, book or music CD that's of interest to your child. What is the reviewer's opinion of the work? Look for clues in the kinds of words the writer uses, especially adjectives (good, bad, boring, exciting, fast-paced, colorful, etc.). What other sections of the newspaper might offer opinion-based articles?

★ **Oh, the Drama!** Hearing different language sounds helps your child develop critical listening skills. And what better place for oral silliness than within the Entertainment section? Read an interview with an actor or artist out loud, using a different voice for the quota-



tions. Or read the movie advertisements out loud, emphasizing the dramatic slogans—"A first-rate thriller!" or "The year's best action comedy with a twist!"



★ **Show Time.** Use TV or movie listings to help your child understand time. "If you could watch television for a total of one hour on Tuesday, what programs would you watch?" Help your child figure out how long a movie is by looking at the different show times listed. For example, if the first show is at 1 pm and the next show 3 pm, you know the movie is no more than two hours long.

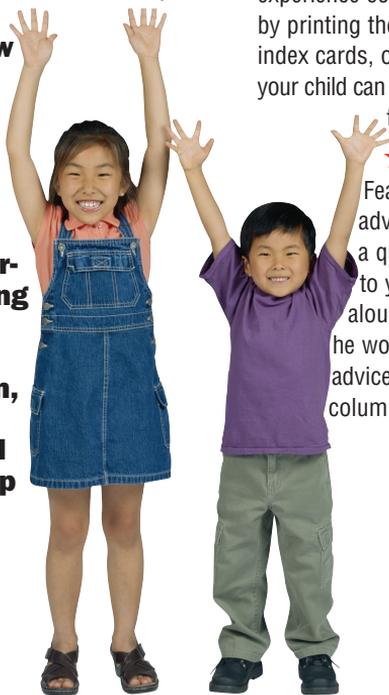
★ **Artistic Inspiration.** The pages of the Arts and Entertainment section are filled with creative opportunities. After reading about an artist, invite your child to draw or paint his own picture. Don't just read that music review—sing it! Cut out the photographs throughout the section and help your child make a collage of dancers, writers, actors and musicians.



# Fun with Features



**The Features section in your local newspaper can be an exciting place for your family to explore—you never know what you'll find! Celebrity news, articles about popular culture, tips for the home, comics and restaurant critiques are just a few of the topics you can uncover. Sometimes the Features section offers information specifically for teens, describing upcoming events or trends of particular interest to young adults. In addition to reading the Features section for information, here are some activities you and your child can do together to help build literacy skills.**



- ★ **What's the difference?** Feature articles are usually written in a more casual manner than other news articles and tend to have a more light-hearted tone. Read the first few paragraphs of a story from the Features section out loud to your adolescent or teenager. Now read the first paragraph of an article from the front page of the newspaper. Talk about the different styles of writing. Point out that the first paragraph of a news article usually answers the questions “who,” “what,” “where,” “when” and “why.”
- ★ **Mix 'em up.** You may find the Word Jumble in the Features section. While this is already a fun puzzle to work on together, make the learning experience come alive for your younger child by printing the letters of the Jumble on large index cards, one letter per card. Now you and your child can physically move the letters around to try to form the correct word.
- ★ **What's your advice?** The Features section often includes an advice column. Scan the column for a question that's appropriate to pose to your child. Read the question aloud and ask your child what advice he would offer. Now, compare his advice to the advice given by the columnist.

