

The Branch School Bears are Readers!

June 2020

The Branch School encourages summer reading. Children who read during the summer return to school with their reading level at least maintained and often advanced. The goal of the summer reading program is to encourage children to read books they enjoy and to have fun reading. A grade-specific summer reading list is available on the Houston Area Independent Schools website, www.haisln.org, if you need helpful ideas on grade-appropriate books. Each TBS class (K-8th) also has a specific reading list with required books. These books count on the Reading Log and should be listed.

Reading Log. Each child is encouraged to fill out a reading log specific for the grade level he/she will be entering in the fall. Once a book is read, record the required information on the reading log. Continue doing this for each book that is read, and keep track of how many books you read this summer!

Fun Activities to Encourage Reading. Included in this packet are several fun activities that children can do on their own or with an adult. The activities may require art/craft supplies commonly found at home and can be as simple or as involved as you wish. Some of the activities involve writing, another skill that benefits from summer practice. Please have your children bring back to school any activities that they have completed so we can share them.

Don't miss out on the fun – read this summer!

Suggested Activities to Encourage Summer Reading:

1. **Creative Book Marker:** Make a bookmark featuring a favorite character from a favorite book. Cut an interesting shape, use unique materials, and be creative. Bring the bookmark to be displayed at school.
2. **Book Designer:** Re-design the cover of a favorite book. Draw or paint on a sheet of paper to make a new cover for the book. You can also use a brown grocery bag or freezer paper and cut it slightly larger than the book and fold it over the existing cover. Then, use the cover for the new book design. Bring the cover to school and we will display them in the library.
3. **Story with a Twist:** Take two characters, each from a different book, and write a story where the characters meet. We will display the books and read the stories when we come back to school next year.
4. **Make a Recipe:** Create and make a recipe that follows the theme of a favorite book or character. What would Flat Stanley eat for breakfast? Does Mrs. Who have a favorite snack? Write your recipe on a recipe card and bring it to school. If we get enough of them we could publish a Reading Recipe book!
5. **Comic Strips:** Choose a scene from a favorite funny book. Cut a sheet of paper into a 4" x 11" sheet and have the children divide their strip into three or four cells. They can use crayons, colored pencils or markers to illustrate a comic strip of the scene. Or have them make up their own comic strip. Bring it to school and we can make our own funny page, just like in the newspapers.
6. **Reading Reviews:** Write a review of a book. Describe what is good about the book. Would you recommend it to another person?
7. **Author Study:** Go on the Internet to investigate a favorite author. Find out what other books he/she has written and possibly read some or all of those books. Read about his/her life. See if there are any interviews with the author discussing his/her books or the writing process. Write a report or draw a story about what you have discovered.
8. **Sign Up for Other Summer Reading Programs.** Houston Public Library, Harris County Public Library, and Barnes and Noble also have summer reading programs.
9. **Read Around The World.** Select books that take place in different countries and cultures. Get a world map so that you can mark the places you have "been."
10. **Poetry.** Write a poem about a favorite book or character. Illustrate the poem using watercolors or vibrant colors, depending on the "mood" of your poem.

The love of reading is one of the best gifts you can give your child. The educational value of this habit can't be stressed too much. Here are some simple, fun ways to make sure the children in your family are reading this summer:

1. Take a family "field trip" to your local library regularly – once a week or once every two weeks. If your child is not an enthusiastic reader, help her/him choose books. And while you're at the library, survey the books on tape/CD with summer road trips in mind. Make this expedition to the library extra fun by stopping for ice cream or some other treat afterwards.
2. Be sure your child is spending at least as much time reading as playing video games and watching TV. Reading time should equal or exceed time spent in front of a screen. Consider letting your student "earn" screen time each day by spending time reading first.
3. Set aside time at night – or in the afternoon if a parent is home then – during which your child is expected to be reading. (After lunch might be a nice time for this.) Encourage your child to find a comfortable spot, surround himself/herself with books, and settle down for some quality reading time.
4. Choose a book the whole family can enjoy and then, several nights a week, pop some popcorn, gather the family together, and listen to an adult read it aloud. This can be a time of family togetherness, sharing in the joy of a good book, and you may be surprised to discover how much even the older children enjoy this activity.
5. Subscribe to a magazine your child would enjoy. Some popular children's magazines are *Cricket*, *Highlights*, *National Geographic Kids*, and *Sports Illustrated for Kids*.

Here's what one writer said about the importance of connecting children with books: "Children who read widely understand more about the world; they have a foundation for making better decisions. They think..."

"If a child is going to grow into a truly special adult—someone who thinks, considers other points of view, has an open mind, and possesses the ability to discuss great ideas with other people—a love of reading is an essential foundation." Author Rafe Esquith, Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire