

Building the stamina and skills to read challenging fiction, nonfiction, and other materials is fundamental in 4th grade. Your child will continue to learn about the world as well as build vocabulary skills by reading more complicated stories and poems from different cultures and a range of books on history, science, art, and music. Fourth grade students also will make important strides in their ability to explain plainly and in detail what a book says — both explicitly and what is implied from its details. By 4th grade, your child will be writing effective summaries, book reports, and descriptions of characters or events that use correct grammar and punctuation.

### Skills Your Child Will Be Working On

- Describing the basic elements of stories — such as characters, events, and settings — by drawing on specific details in the text
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles: these include understanding the main and supporting ideas; being able to compare and contrast information; and explaining how the author uses facts, details, and evidence to support particular points
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures
- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples
- Independently conducting short research projects on different aspects of a topic using evidence from books and the Internet
- Paraphrasing and responding to information presented in discussions, such as comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support particular points
- Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details
- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (*synonyms*) and to their opposites (*antonyms*)

### Learning Activity to Use at Home

#### READING ACTIVITY

Have your child attentively listen to a television news broadcast, ask him or her to take notes on the issues and key points being discussed. After the segment is over, have the child paraphrase or summarize the key points being presented on the topic. What evidence has been provided to support various positions, opinions or viewpoints? Ask questions like: What facts and evidence were provided? What questions do you still have about what has been presented? Do you agree or disagree with the viewpoints being provided? Why or why not?

#### WRITING ACTIVITY

Recently in the news there has been a lot discussion about how American children are more prone to obesity and other health problems, such as diabetes. Collaborate with your child to interview the family doctor, pediatrician, or school nurse to talk more about this issue. Alternatively, discuss with your child how as a family, you can make some changes to live a healthier life style. Next, have your child create a detailed opinion piece on why it is important that your family ‘make these healthy changes’ through exercise, healthy diet, etc. Make sure to include convincing reasons to support the ideas. Together, as a family, create a health contract for every family member to sign in order to participate with these changes. Follow up a few weeks later and discuss as a family how everyone is doing. If necessary, consider modifying the ‘health contract’ to help keep everyone on track!

**Teacher and Parent Conferencing** - Topics for ongoing conversations throughout the school year with your child’s teacher.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In fourth grade, these include:

- Is your child producing clear and coherent writing assignments that are well developed, organized, purposeful and grade level appropriate
- Is your child participating and engaged in collaborative discussions with his/her peers and building on other’s ideas and expressing his/her own

Ask to see a sample of your child’s work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?