Vocabulary & Writing Activities

- Newspaper Activities
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- Writing Activities & Resources
• Clip out an interesting news story and cut the paragraphs apart. Ask your child to read the paragraphs and put them in order.

• Ask your child to read a short editorial printed in your local newspaper and to underline all the facts with a green pencil and all the opinions with an orange pencil.

• Pictures fascinate children of all ages. Clip pictures in the newspaper. Ask your child to tell you about the picture or list adjectives to describe the picture.
“Conversations—or oral language—provide a foundation for children's reading, writing, and vocabulary. Make time to chat every day. Ask about the day’s events and share your own experiences. Whether at the dinner table, at breakfast, or before bedtime, these moments reinforce the emotional health of a child.”

~Gabriel Miller, vice president of education and literacy programs at Reading is Fundamental
Vocabulary Tips

• **While talking:**
  – Ask open-ended questions to illicit discussion.
    • What do you think….?  
    • How do you think….? 
    • Why do you think….?

• **Use Synonyms**
  – “really big” = “extremely large”
    • When children are introduced to synonyms on a regular basis, they are given opportunities to practice using their inference skills to figure out language on their own, and they are also allowed opportunities to become familiar and comfortable with a wide range of words.
Vocabulary Tips

• **While reading:**
  – Stop and think about what you just read. Say things like, “Hmm..I wonder why the author used the word enormous to describe the mountain?” The mountain is really, really big. I guess the word enormous means “really big.”

  – **Ask questions:** “Why do you think he described that as being gigantic? What do you think gigantic means?”
Vocabulary Tips

• Use new and interesting words to describe daily summer activities.
• Talk about the things you see during summer day trips.
• Introduce new words when describing the summer weather.
• Discuss summer adventures you and the kids could experience together.
• Read books with interesting words related to the beach or other summer destinations.
• Read books with descriptions of summer activities in different parts of the world.
• Talk about and describe places around the world that you and the children could visit on a summer vacation.
Building a strong vocabulary, including a wide variety of descriptive words, will help your child improve their reading skills as they encounter increasingly complex texts. You can play these simple games on your summer road trip or when you’re hanging out at home.

“What’s another word for….?” Your child gets points for every synonym they can come up with. Ask your child, for example, “What’s another word for couch?” They’ll likely suggest ‘sofa’ or ‘futon.’ To help them build their vocabulary, you can add ‘divan’ and ‘settee.’

Sentence building. Special educator Jennifer Little, PhD, recommends constructing sentences to help your child enhance and use their descriptive language. Start with a flower, for example, and ask your child the color of the flower. Then create a full sentence (“The flower is red,”) and ask them to repeat it. Ask for more information about the flower. If your child says that the flower has green leaves, help them incorporate that detail into the sentence: “The red flower has green leaves.” Keep building until your child has created a long sentence, for example, “The red flower with green leaves grows under the trees in my backyard.”

Board games. Boggle, Scrabble, Bananagrams, and other word games provide hours of entertaining word play. You can create a system of bonus points for longer words, or words your child has recently learned. Have a tournament and get the entire family involved! 

http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/summer-reading-activities-for-learning-disabilities/
More freshmen entering degree-granting postsecondary institutions take remedial writing courses than take remedial reading courses (NCES 2003).
• Ask your child to write a weekly letter to his or her grandparents, relatives, or friends.

• Have her write the family's grocery list.

• Organize a secret pal writing project for adults and kids at your church or in your community.
• Help your child make his or her own storybook. Make funny drawings, or glue photos of family members onto silly magazine pictures. A younger child can dictate the story; older children can write it themselves. Let creativity rule!

• Cut out words from a newspaper or magazine and make your own telegram.

• Use index cards and label all of the furniture in your child’s room.

• Have your child write letters to family members. For younger children, you can have them dictate, while you write. Leave blanks for them to fill in some words that they can manage.
Keep your Child Writing

• Start a travel journal. For each place you visit over the summer, the local pool, the zoo, or a trip to visit relatives, take some pictures and let your child add captions or a journal page. At the end of the summer, they will have a great chronicle of their summer to share with their friends at school.

• Write to celebrities. Let them write a fan letter to their favorite T.V. character or actor. Many celebrities will send back a postcard, picture, or autograph.
Get a pen pal. This can be via email or snail mail, depending on your child’s preferences. This can be Grandma, a friend that moved away, or someone who lives just down the street. Writing letters provides the additional learning of how to address an envelope and format a letter.

Start small, with just a little note at first, and watch the excitement as the letters come in the mail. Make sure the pen pal you choose will write back!
Letter Writing Campaign

• There are many issues out there that affect schools and extracurricular activities. If your children are of an age to where they are affected by this, take some time to discuss these issues. Find out what they think about them. Once they realize what certain issues could mean for their schooling, encourage them to write letters to their state legislators. While not yet getting them deep into political thought, you’ll be encouraging them to put their own views into words and showing them how important it is to take a stand in something they believe in.
1. **Travel Reporter.** Whether you're heading to the beach or the backyard, bring along a pad and markers for your child to record the experience. Remember, her first step in writing is drawing what she sees!

2. **Water Writing.** A refreshing way to write is with a paintbrush and water or an ice cube with a craft stick handle. Your child can make letters, words, and pictures by moving the ice cube along a paved surface. Then, she can watch as her writing dries and disappears.

3. **Sticks and Stones.** Give your child a stick, and the beach or sandbox suddenly becomes a huge writing pad! She'll enjoy drawing and writing in the sand or earth with sticks or stones — and erasing her work before starting all over again.

Growing Young Writers

- Nature Journals
- Create a Poetree
- Recipe Share
- Review It!
- Explain It!
- Write Like a Journalist
- Write to Your Favorite Author

http://www.startwithabook.org/summer-writing
LEARNING CARDS


Make dinner for the family. Find a recipe, gather and measure out ingredients, and make something delicious.

Go for a walk after dark and identify constellations.

Find a recipe online for homemade ice cream and make some for your family.

Make your own comic book or cartoon flip book.
Describe the weather today.

Count the number of windows and doors in your house and write a "number" sentence that describes what you discovered.

Make a list of “ou” and “ow” words.

Write as many words as you can think of using the letters from the word “VACATION.”
Summer Writing Ideas for Kids

http://imaginationsoup.net/2015/05/19/summer-writing-ideas-for-kids/
Apps for the Six Traits of Writing

https://www.weareteachers.com/awesome-apps-for-the-six-traits-of-writing/

- Story Wheel
- The Brainstormer
- A+ Writing Prompts
- Simple Mind+
- Storybuilder for iPad
- Sock Puppets
- SpeechPrompter
- Talking Tom Cat
- Sentence Maker
- Dragon Dictation
- Mad Lips
- Bluster!
- Same Meaning Magic
- Vocabador
- Grammar Jammers
- Painless Grammar Challenge