



Psssst!

Want some tips for helping children learn to read while making it fun?

If so, you've come to the right crocodiles. Crocodiles? Yes!
When we are not starring in a book, we are school principals!
If you read *Snow Day!* you'll see.



As principals, we have some experience with the teaching of reading – for first time readers AND for young readers learning English as a second language!

So, if you're a teacher or a parent or just a good buddy wanting to share a story, here are two reading tips we'd like to share before you begin:

1. Everyone has a unique way to teach and to learn. Trust your instincts!
2. Whatever your approach, have fun and your listeners will too!

And, if we say so ourselves, our books – *Snow Day!* *Beach Day!* *Rainy Day!* and *Camping Day!* – will make reading fun and a great way to learn. Why? Because the words we use in all of our stories have **really big decoding hints**. Here they are:

The words may rhyme because they have the same root endings

- like Sam with Pam and Will with Jill

The words may rhyme because the endings make the same sounds

- like these two sentences from *Rainy Day!*:

“Who’s there?” cried Sam.

“A bear!” cried Pam.

The words may be repeated in sentences

- like these from *Snow Day!*:

“They put on their scarves.

They put on their helmets.

They put on their goggles.”

- or these from *Beach Day!*:

“They slept past one.

They slept past two.

They slept past three.

They slept past four.”

The words used in sentences may have repetition **and** rhyme

- like these from *Rainy Day!*:

“They each took a look.

They each took a book.

They each took a nook.”

The words may be decoded because terrific illustrations accompany them.

- like “Long undies” from *Snow Day!*
- like “Pickles” from *Beach Day!*
- like “A pirate ship...” from *Rainy Day!*

So, ready to begin? Let's go! Of course it all starts with holding up the book's front cover and posing a few questions. Here are some possibilities:

Who are the characters?

Where might the story take place?

What might happen?

Then, jump right in, read and share the story in a way that works for you. You may want to read it aloud yourself. Or, read part of a sentence and let the youngsters offer the sentence endings – or a bit of both.

What happens if some readers just can't decode a word?

Well, that's the part that can be tricky!

When a word is misread, there may be a **very good reason** why the reader made that choice. So, here are some tips to correct the reader **and still** keep their reading confidence level high!



1. Think closely about the word they offered.
2. Does their word have the same ending as the correct word? [Like book and look] Or, is the reverse true – the beginning is the same but has a different ending? [Like slip and slam]
3. Is the word shape similar? Would a box drawn around the misread word have the same outline as the correct word? For example, tall letters at each end and two small letters in the middle? [Like book and bark, or tall ones at the beginning and small letters at the end like three and their.]
4. Does the misread word fit the context and might be a synonym? Here is an example from *Rainy Day!*: “Just what was this scary place?” A reader may say “spooky” instead of “scary.”
5. Is the reader just learning English? If so, the misread word may have some similarity to a word in the reader’s first language.
So, along with word help, a really BIG compliment may be in order.
For example, you may say, “That was a clever choice because both words have the same [point out the similarities].”
6. What if you can’t see the thought process behind their choice?
Just tell them the correct word and go on with the story. Chances are there will be other places where you can compliment their decoding skills.



Illustrations can also give greater meaning to the story. So, once the story has been read, take a closer look at the illustrations in our books! Here are some things to think about:

- 1.** How does the illustrator tell readers even more about us? Look at our clothes, our expressions, and the objects in our rooms for clues.
- 2.** How do the shadows shown in *Beach Day!* show time passing?
- 3.** Look at each of the drawings in all of our books. How are you looking at each scene – close up to the action or from high above the action? Why do you think the illustrator changes the views?
- 4.** If you could change us from crocodiles, what animals would you want us to be?



Now let everyone's imagination go wild and extend the idea!

1. What kind of *Day* would you create for us? Write your own Sam, Pam, Will and Jill story with words and pictures. Where would you take us? What words would we say?
2. Create a musical reading of any of our books.
Here's how: Have someone read the story out loud. While the story is being read, use a different instrument to signal what each of us says. For example, every time the person reads, "*said Sam*," it could be represented by a tinkling triangle sound. "*Said Pam*" could be a crashing symbol, etc. That is for all of you to choose.
3. Create a play or puppet show from one of our stories or better yet – from one of the newly created Sam, Pam, Will and Jill stories written by a reader.



Credits:

This guide was created and written by Patricia Lakin. Text © by Patricia Lakin.

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