



# HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF READING TIME WITH YOUR KIDS

Great literature gives you the opportunity to connect with your children. Books open the doors to engage with new ideas, new places, and new vocabulary. Be intentional with the books you choose and the way that you interact with them! Here are some ideas to get you started.



## 1

### CHOOSE THE RIGHT BOOKS

When it comes to choosing books for your children, use Sonlight's seven-part test:

- 1. Are the characters realistic?**  
*Heroes—and anti-heroes—should be complex and nuanced, like real people.*
- 2. Do the characters change & develop?**  
*The protagonist should change for better over the course of the book.*
- 3. Does the content add to cultural literacy?**  
*The book should contribute to a reader's knowledge about world events, cultures, human relationships, or a different way of life.*
- 4. Is the plot intriguing & multi-dimensional?**  
*The book should be engaging and keep the attention of readers.*
- 5. Is the plot emotionally compelling?**  
*Does the book move you?*
- 6. Is The writing verbally beautiful?**  
*The book should allow for fluent reading, silently or aloud.*
- 7. Is the book re-readable?**  
*Do you want to return to it again and again?*

Sonlight's done the work for you and found wholesome, meaningful literature for children of all ages. Find Sonlight's collections of age-appropriate, books at [sonlight.com/book-collections](https://www.sonlight.com/book-collections)

## 2

### START THE CONVERSATION

Reading aloud to your children gives you opportunities for great conversation. Use these questions to get conversation flowing.

**CHARACTERS:** Discuss with your kids...do the characters in the story exhibit traits you'd like to emulate? Traits that you don't? In which ways are their lives like yours, and in which ways are they different?

**PLOT:** Dive a little deeper into the elements of story! Search online for an image of a plot line and discuss how a narrative is structured. Can your kids identify the rising action, climax, and conclusion of the story that you're reading?

**VOCABULARY:** The best way to build a great vocabulary is by reading. Pause at difficult words and take the time to define them. If you aren't completely sure, let your kids look it up in the dictionary!

**CONTEXT:** Books help you connect with a world different from your own. Imagine with your children what it would be like to live in a different time or place, like the characters in the story! Help cement the big picture view by placing the story on a visual timeline and a map. Where does this character's story fit into history? Where can we find them on the globe?

## 3

### BRING BOOKS TO LIFE

Take the book experience even further with a hands-on activity.

**COOK:** Find a recipe for a special type of food enjoyed in the era or region in which the story took place, and whip up a new concoction with your children.

**CRAFT:** Allow your kids to draw or doodle scenes and characters from the story while you read aloud. Or, do an internet search for an easy craft project that goes along with what you're learning.

**RE-TELL:** A great way to build comprehension is through recapping a story, and your children will enjoy revisiting their favorite books by sharing a synopsis with another parent or relative.

**ACT OUT:** Don't be surprised if a book adventure seeps over into creative play. Facilitate this by helping brainstorm a creative costume, or planning a field trip to a museum or location that allows for even more immersion into the story.

