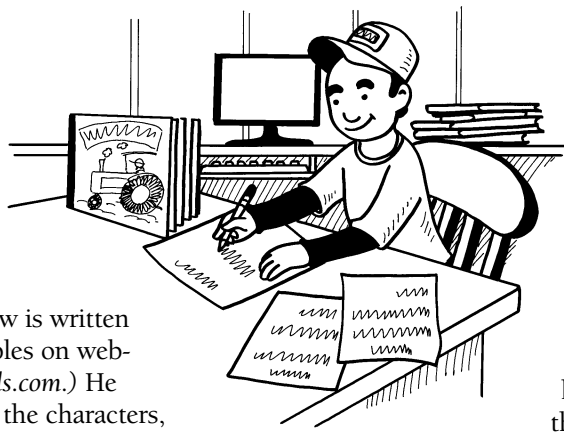




# Reviewing books

“What did you think of *James and the Giant Peach*?” In school, your youngster will be asked to give his opinions of books. At home, he can practice writing opinion pieces by reviewing books for friends and family members. Here’s how.



Examples: “This book is about \_\_\_\_.” “I liked this book because \_\_\_\_.” Have him fill in the blanks, and encourage him to back up his opinion with examples from the story. Maybe he enjoyed it because the main character reminded him of himself or because the author used silly words that made him laugh. *Tip:* He can flip through the book for words and ideas to include.

**1. Read samples.** Show him how a book review is written by reading a few together. (You can find examples on websites such as [spaghettibookclub.org](http://spaghettibookclub.org) and [kidsreads.com](http://kidsreads.com).) He will see that reviews explain the plot, describe the characters, and say whether the person liked the book.

**2. Choose a story.** Ask your child to pick a book to review. Then, write some “sentence starters” for him.

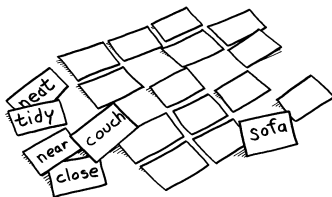
**3. Share your opinion.** Make copies of his review for him to mail to friends and relatives. Or help him type it and email it instead.♥

## Fun with Words

### Match the synonyms

This matching game can teach your child about synonyms, or words that mean the same thing.

With your youngster, think of 10 pairs of synonyms (*neat* and *tidy*, *couch* and *sofa*). Help her write each word on a separate index card.



To play, mix up the cards, and place them facedown in five rows of four cards. Take turns flipping over two cards at a time and reading the words out loud. If they’re synonyms, keep the pair. If not, turn them back over. When all the cards are gone, the player with the most pairs wins.

*Idea:* For extra practice, see if your child can think of more synonyms for each pair that she finds. You can also make a new set of cards and play again.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children’s reading, writing, and language skills.

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## Q&A

### Benefits of graphic novels

**Q** My daughter likes to read graphic novels. They look like comic strips—should she be reading something else instead?

**A** Graphic novels, such as Andy Runton’s *Owly* series and Cari Meister’s *My First Graphic Novel* series, are popular with young readers.

In these books, short chunks of text go with each illustration, just like in a comic strip. This can be motivating for new readers who are intimidated by a lot of text on a page. Plus, your youngster will see how words and pictures work together to tell a story, which can help her use illustrations to understand “regular” books.

Graphic novels also introduce your child to dialogue. She sees a character in the picture, and his words are right above or below him. Don’t be surprised to find her using dialogue in her own writing!

Finally, encourage your youngster to read a wide variety of materials, including nonfiction and poetry. This will prepare her for different kinds of reading assignments in school and make her a well-rounded reader.♥



## Parent to Parent

### Don’t say a word!

At my sister’s baby shower, I discovered a fun game that my son now loves—and it is helping him become a better listener.

The game was that no one was allowed to say the word *baby* while my sister opened gifts. We all started out with one diaper pin, and if you heard someone saying *baby*, you got to take her pin. The guest with the most pins after gifts were opened won a prize.



For our version, I asked my son to pick a word that no one could say during dinner. I told him it should be a word that would be hard to avoid. He chose *pizza* because that’s what we were eating.

The first person to catch someone saying *pizza* would get to choose the next forbidden word.

We found that we went through quite a few words—I guess we were listening carefully!♥