Supporting Your Children's and Teens' Home Learning Guide

IOWA

Iowa Reading Research Center

Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration

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About This Guide

This guide is intended to support families with transitioning their children to virtual instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to tips about creating a productive learning environment at home, the guide offers suggested web resources containing online activities, games, and teaching practices to foster literacy development at different grade levels from kindergarten through high school. Resources for two grade bands, kindergarten–Grade 6 and Grades 7–12, are organized by subject area (English language arts, science, social studies, and history). Additionally, there are web resources related to assistive technology for families of children with dyslexia and other reading disabilities.

Additional blog posts in our Supporting Your Children's And Teens' Home Learning series can be found on the Iowa Reading Research Center website. All Iowa Reading Research Center materials and suggestions should be used as a supplement to the lessons offered by schools.
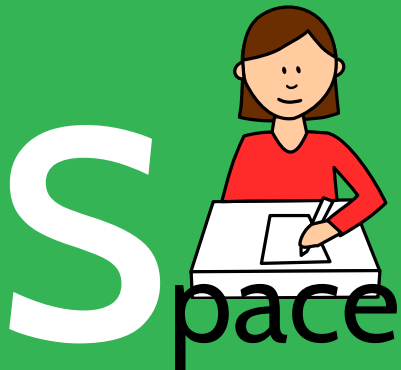
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Table of Contents

3 Ss to Support Learning Areas at Home

Space

Quiet space away from most household distractions

Structured and organized space with needed materials

Supplies

Computer with internet and headphones

Books and audiobooks

Traditional school supplies, such as pencils, notebooks, and folders

Sharing

Collaborate with your child to establish the best time & place to complete schoolwork

Work together to organize the new school schedule

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THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE HOME-BASED LEARNING

1 **2** **3**

1 **SCHEDULE**

Create a weekly or daily schedule with specific times to complete lessons

2 **TEACH**

Guide your child by answering questions as needed

Reach out to your child's teacher for help

3 **MOTIVATE**

Provide modeling and check for understanding

Set attainable goals that are specific and short term

Celebrate growth

Provide incentives for completing lessons and assignments

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Web Resources for Kindergarten-Grade 6

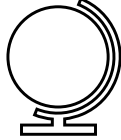| Subject	Online Resource (✷denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
English-language Arts	ABCya	ABCya provides educational games for different literacy skills aligned to the Common Core Standards. Register for a free account on one device by clicking on "Parents and Teachers" in the top navigation panel, and then choosing "Free Subscriber" from the options. The games can be narrowed by selecting a specific grade.	Limited free content with registration
	BrainPOP Jr. BrainPOP BrainPOP ELL BrainPOP Español✷ BrainPOP Français✷	The BrainPOP interactive websites offer reading and writing games and activities. Scroll to the link for "Free Stuff" or use the top banner option to "Request free access" during the COVID-19 closures. An adult must register for an account.	Free for "as long as schools are closed", with registration
	CrickWeb	CrickWeb includes educational games and activities that are designed to enhance spelling, grammar, and narrative development. Select a grade level from the left navigation panel and choose the "Language arts" option in the appropriate box. Then, click on the numbered skills to access the activities. Note that this site is based in England and uses British spelling for some words (e.g., colour = color, realise = realize).	Free

Subject	Online Resource (✷denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	Great Minds	Great Minds provides daily English language arts video lessons for English language arts. Scroll down to select a grade level, and then click on the "Wit & Wisdom" modules.	Free during the COVID-19 school closures
	LibriVox✷	LibriVox offers audiobooks in a variety of languages. Click on the "Catalog" option in the "Listen" box. Then search by author, title, or genre.	Free
	ReadWorks	ReadWorks is an online resource for free literacy content, curriculum, and tools. ReadWorks can also be differentiated to support all students' reading levels.	Free
	ReadWriteThink	ReadWriteThink provides family-friendly literacy resources. Using the left navigation panel and scroll to the section labeled "Parent and Afterschool Resources." There are six categories there: Activities & Projects, Games & Tools, Tips & How-To, Printouts, Podcast Series, and Podcast Episodes.	Free
	Scholastic Learn at Home✷	Scholastic Learn at Home offers four weeks of daily reading lessons that include informational and literary texts and reading challenges. Choose the appropriate grade level to access articles and related activities. The home page also has a "Resources for Families" option.	Limited free content
	TextProject	TextProject provides open-access literacy texts and lessons. Select the "Parent and Tutors" dropdown menu from the top navigation panel and select the desired resources.	Free

Subject	Online Resource (✳denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	The Story Starter Jr.	The Story Starter Jr. generates random story starters for writers of all ages. Students can use the story starter to practice writing skills.	Free
	Unite for Literacy✳	Unite for Literacy provides students free access to more than 400 picture books in English and Spanish. The website also provides audiobooks that are narrated in more than 40 different languages.	Free
	What's Going On in This Picture?✳	"What's Going On in This Picture?" is a writing activity developed by *The New York Times* that offers an engaging image for students to caption. New photos are released daily during the schoolyear.	Free until July 6, 2020
Videos of English-language Arts Lessons	Alphabet Cheer	Students in the video are singing the alphabet without stringing letters together. A visual representation of a hand is printed below certain letters to remind students when to clap their hands.	Free
	Analyzing Poetry: Imagery & Emotions	The purpose of this lesson is to compare and contrast two poems. Students are focusing on imagery, figurative language, and emotion.	Free
	Building Vocabulary with Fruit Haiku	Students use descriptive words to write a poem about a variety of citrus fruits.	Free

Subject	Online Resource (✸denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	C-V-C: Phonemic Awareness	The teacher demonstrates how to provide modeling, guiding, and independent practice during a consonant-vowel-consonant reading lesson.	Free
	Coaching to Improve Instruction for ELLs	This video offers coaching strategies for writing multiple paragraph for students who are English language learners.	Free
	Connecting Sculpture & Writing	This lesson integrates art into a writing lesson. Students sculpt a bust of a professional and write an opinion essay about that profession.	Free
	Monster Match: Using Art to Improve Writing	The purpose of this lesson is to write descriptive paragraphs. First, students draw a monster and then write a descriptive paragraph about their monster.	Free
	Selective Highlighting: Reading with a Purpose	The teacher describes selective highlighting and how it can help students comprehend texts.	Free
	The Writing Recipe: Essay Structure for ELLs	Students use the writing recipe manipulative to draft sections of an essay.	Free
	Vocabulary Paint Chips	The teacher uses paint chips as a strategy for teaching new vocabulary words.	Free
Science	BrainPOP Jr. BrainPOP	The BrainPOP interactive websites offer science games and activities. Scroll to the link to "Get Free Access" or use the top banner option to "Request free access" during the COVID-19 closures. An adult must register for an account	Free for "as long as schools are closed", with registration

Subject	Online Resource (☀denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	Distance Learning Resources from the Smithsonian☀	Smithsonian Learning Lab gives students remote access to all Smithsonian museums, research centers, and Smithsonian's National Zoo. Find the "Distance Learning Resources" in the left navigation panel of the home page.	Free
	Field Museum's Learning Resources☀	Field Museum's Learning Resources include interactive activities. Scroll to the "View All Learning Resources" section and select "Interactive," "Game," "Video," and "Resource" from the dropdown menu for "Resource Type" and apply.	Free
	Great Minds☀	Great Minds provides daily science modules for students in Grades 3-5. Scroll down to select a grade level, and then click on the "PhD Science module."	Free during the COVID-19 school closures
	NASA Kids' Club☀	NASA Kids' Club offers games about NASA and its mission as well as interesting NASA pictures that can be used as writing prompts. Click on the "NASA Audiences" dropdown menu in the top navigation panel, and then select "For Students." From the page displayed, click on the dropdown menu for "Browse Topics for: Students" and make a selection by grade level, type, or subject.	Free
	National Geographic	National Geographic offers engaging educational activities in a variety of sections such as "Learn at Home," "Storytelling and Photography," "Natural Wonders," and more. Students can connect across seven continents to a daily live Explorer Classroom at 2 PM Eastern.	Free

Subject	Online Resource (❄denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	[National Geographic Kids](#)	National Geographic Kids provides engaging games, videos, and information about all types of animals around the world. Choose from the options in the top navigation panel or scroll down to view featured "Brain Booster" content.	Free
	[Nobel Prize Educational Games](#)❄	Nobel Prize Educational Games are based on Nobel Prize-awarded achievements. Simply scroll down and select a game. Note that Adobe Flash is required and not all games will be appropriate for younger students.	Free
	[PBS Design Squad](#)	PBS Design Squad offer interactive videos, projects, and games related to science and health. Activities are categorized by topic and difficulty. Students can choose to play games, choose an idea to draw, or build something. Step-by-step instructions are provided.	Free
	[San Diego Zoo Kids](#)	San Diego Zoo Kids includes educational videos, stories, activities, and games that teach students about the animals at the San Diego Zoo.	Free
Videos of Science Lessons	[Build and Describe](#)	Students try to build a structure based on the description provided by the teacher.	Free
	[Building Science Vocabulary](#)	Students pre-read a text and identify vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar. Students work together to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar vocabulary words.	Free
	[Literacy in Science: Word Clouds](#)	The teacher demonstrates how to use word clouds to identify important vocabulary words in a complex text.	Free

Subject	Online Resource (✸denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	STEM in Early Learning	Students build structures after reading a storybook.	Free
Social Studies	BrainPOP Jr. BrainPOP	The BrainPOP interactive websites offer social studies games and activities. Scroll to the link to "Get Free Access" or use the top banner option to "Request free access" during the COVID-19 closures. An adult must register for an account	Free for "as long as schools are closed", with registration
	Ben's Guide to U.S. Government	Ben's Guide to U.S. Government is designed to teach students about the federal government (e.g., three branches of government, election process, national songs) through interactive learning adventures. Start by clicking on the appropriate age range from the medallion graphics and then choose a topic.	Free
	Distance Learning Resources from the Smithsonian✸	Smithsonian Learning Lab gives students remote access to all Smithsonian museums, research centers, and the national zoo. Find the "Distance Learning Resources" in the left navigation panel of the home page.	Free
	History Classroom	The History Classroom provides free education resources including study guides, biographies, and educational podcasts. New resources are added daily.	Free
	iCivics	iCivics has a "Games" option on the home page that offers a variety of games combining civic learning and literacy skills. Players earn points that can be used to vote for impact projects.	Free with registration

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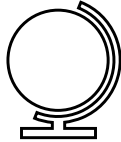| Subject	Online Resource (✸denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	Stop Disasters ✸	Stop Disasters is a game designed to teach students how to prepare for a natural disaster. After clicking "Launch Game," the site presents a scenario, and players build a defense strategy for the incoming natural disaster.	Free
	TIME for Kids✸	*TIME* for Kids is a weekly magazine with content aligned to grade-level standards. Select the grade from the home page to view the appropriate articles. Topics can be selected from the menu by clicking on the three lines in the top left navigation panel.	Free during COVID-19 school closures

Web Resources for Grades 7-12

Subject	Online Resources (❋Denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
English-language Arts	Blue Book of Grammar	Blue Book of Grammar provides helpful grammar and punctuation rules, examples, and quizzes for students. This website is intended for the general public.	Limited free content
	CommonLit❋	CommonLit is an online library of fiction and nonfiction texts. Students can search and filter the library collection by genre, Lexile, grade level, theme, and more.	Free
	Khan Academy Grammar Khan Academy SAT Prep	Khan Academy Grammar offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that help students advance their grammar skills at their own pace. Additionally, Khan Academy offers SAT prep for students in the form of practice questions, videos, lessons, practice tests, and test-taking tips and strategies.	Free with registration
	LibriVox❋	LibriVox offers audiobooks in a variety of languages. Students can search for audiobooks by author, title, or genre.	Free
	New York Times Activities for Students	The *New York Times* Activities for Students include writing prompts, articles and questions, and other activities that are engaging for students. Students can use these activities to practice reading and writing skills while learning about current events around the world.	Free until July 6, 2020

Subject	Online Resources (✸Denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	PBS Learning Media-ELA	PBS Learning Media allows students to browse standards-aligned English-language arts resources through videos, interactive lessons, and more.	Free
	ReadWorks	ReadWorks includes passages and activities for building reading comprehension. Materials can be used digitally or can be printed.	Free with registration
	ReadWriteThink	ReadWriteThink provides family-friendly literacy resources. Using the left navigation panel on the site, scroll to the section labeled "Parent and Afterschool Resources." There are six categories there: Activities & Projects, Games & Tools, Tips & How-To, Printouts, Podcast Series, and Podcast Episodes.	Free
	Scholastic Learn at Home✸	Scholastic Learn at Home offers four weeks of daily reading lessons that include informational and literary texts and reading challenges. Choose "Grades 6-9" to access articles and related activities. The home page also has a "Resources for Families" option.	Limited free content
	The Story Starter Jr.	The Story Starter Jr. generates random story starters for writers of all ages. Students can use the story starter to practice writing skills.	Free
	Vocabulary.com	Vocabulary.com is a resource for vocabulary development. Students learn new vocabulary words while playing games and competing against other students.	Free with registration
	What's Going On in This Picture?✸	"What's Going On in This Picture?" is a writing activity developed by *The New York Times* that	Free until July 6, 2020

Subject	Online Resources (☀Denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
		offers an engaging image for students to caption. New photos are released daily during the schoolyear.	
Videos of English-language Arts Lessons			
	A Descriptive Writing Experience	Students use descriptive words to write about an Oreo.	Free
	Analyze Literature Critically Using the SIFT Method	The teacher implements a strategy that helps students analyze a text.	Free
	Remember It with a Bookmark	Students use reading strategies printed on bookmarks to improve their reading skills.	Free
	Coaching to Improve Instruction for ELLs	This video offers coaching strategies for writing multiple paragraph for students who are English language learners.	Free
	Scaffolding Text Structure for ELLs	The teacher explains how to scaffold text structure for students who are English language learners.	Free
	Selective Highlighting: Reading with a Purpose	The teacher describes selective highlighting and how it can help students comprehend texts.	Free
	Seven Step Vocabulary	The teacher explains a seven-step strategy for pre-teaching vocabulary words.	Free
	Spark Your Persuasive Writing: 3 Simple Prompts	The teacher uses three writing prompts to help students brainstorm persuasive writing topics.	Free
	The Writing Recipe: Essay Structure for ELLs	Students use the writing recipe manipulative to draft sections of an essay.	Free
	Vocabulary Paint Chips	The teacher uses paint chips as a strategy for teaching new vocabulary words.	Free

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Subject	Online Resources (✹Denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
Science	Distance Learning Resources from the Smithsonian ✹	Smithsonian Learning Lab gives students remote access to all Smithsonian museums, research centers, and the national zoo. Find the "Distance Learning Resources" in the left navigation pane of the home page.	Free
	Field Museum's Learning Resources ✹	Field Museum's Learning Resources include interactive activities. Scroll to the "View All Learning Resources" section and select Interactive, Game, Video, and Resource from the dropdown menu for Resource Type and apply.	Free
	Khan Academy Science	Khan Academy offers science practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower students to study at their own pace.	Free with registration
	Learn Genetics	Learn Genetics offers many online learning modules that teach students about a variety of genetic science topics like evolution, genetics, human health, cell biology, neuroscience and more.	Free
	National Geographic	National Geographic offers engaging and educational activities in a variety of sections such as Learn at Home, Storytelling and Photography, Natural Wonders, and more. Students can connect across seven continents to a live Explorer Classroom at 2 PM Eastern daily.	Free
	Nobel Prize Educational Games ✹	Nobel Prize Educational Games provides educational games based on Nobel Prize-awarded achievements.	Free

Subject	Online Resources (☀Denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
	Nova	Nova provides students with access to documentaries, science and education blogs, and the interactive NOVA Labs that promote STEM knowledge and skills. The top navigation bar offers a dropdown menu for "Topics," but also specific resources for Education in the "…" dropdown menu.	Free
	PBS Learning Media-Science	PBS Learning media allows students to explore natural phenomena and scientific practices by selecting Video, Interactive Lesson, Interactive, Media Gallery, or Webpage from the "Type" dropdown menu in the top navigation pane.	Free
Videos of Science Lessons	Literacy in Science: Word Clouds	The teacher demonstrates how to use word clouds to identify important vocabulary words of a complex text.	Free
	Building Science Vocabulary	Students pre-read a text and identify vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar. Students work together to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar vocabulary words.	Free
History	Ben's Guide to U.S. Government	Ben's Guide to U.S. Government is designed to teach students about the federal government (e.g., three branches of government, election process, national songs) through interactive learning adventures. Start by clicking on the appropriate age range from the medallion graphics and then choose a topic.	Free
	Distance Learning Resources from the Smithsonian ☀	Smithsonian Learning Lab gives students remote access to all Smithsonian museums, research centers, and the national zoo. Find the "Distance	Free

Subject	Online Resources (✳Denotes when the websites or resources are available in other languages)	Description	Access
		Learning Resources" in the left navigation pane of the home page.	
	Gapminder	Gapminder provides information interactive resources that promote a fact-based worldview.	Free
	History Classroom	The History Classroom provides free education resources including study guides, biographies, and educational podcasts. New resources are added daily.	Free
	iCivics	iCivics has a "Games" option on the home page that offers a variety of games combining civic learning and literacy skills. Players earn points that can be used to vote for impact projects.	Free with registration
	PBS Learning Media-Social Studies	PBS Learning Media allows students to explore the past and learn about the present selecting Video, Interactive Lesson, Interactive, Media Gallery, or Webpage from the "Type" dropdown menu in the top navigation pane.	Free
	Stop Disasters Game ✳	Stop Disasters Games is designed to teach students how to prepare for a natural disaster. After clicking "Launch Game," the site presents a scenario, and players build a defense strategy for the incoming natural disaster.	Free

Web Resources for Assistive Technology

Online Resource	Purpose
CitationBuilder	CitationBuilder is a free tool provided by North Carolina State University Libraries that allows students to generate reference citations in different styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, and Council of Science Editors).
EasyReader	EasyReader is a chrome extension to make websites or web-based articles more readable by creating a table of contents for headings, changing the font color and size, changing the background color, and changing the color of links.
GCFLearnFree.org	GCFLearnFree.org offers tutorial lessons and videos that introduces students to programs such Microsoft Office, PowerPoint, and Excel.
Google: Search Education	Google Search Education is a tool aimed to improve students' online search skills. Students can access lessons, activities, videos, and more.
Grammarly	Grammarly is an online writing assistant with proofreading features that support clear and effective communication.
Loom (students over 13)	Loom is a video recording tool intended to enhance remote communication. Videos can be shared instantaneously.
Postlight Reader	Postlight Reader is a chrome extension that removes ads and other distractions, leaving only text and images for a clean and consistent reading view on any webpage.
Merriam Webster	Merriam Webster is an online dictionary and thesaurus that also includes word games and quizzes that supports vocabulary expansion.

Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)	Perdue Online Writing Lab offers a variety of writing resources to help students improve or accurately cite their work.
Read&Write for Google Chrome	Read&Write provides accessibility features that assist students with both reading and writing assignments.
Wordle	Wordle generates "word clouds" from text typed or pasted into the entry field. Word clouds help students identify important vocabulary words of a text. Student can personalize the clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes. There is a web-based version as well as downloadable programs for Windows or Mac.
WordReference	WordReference is an online tool that translates texts to many different languages.