

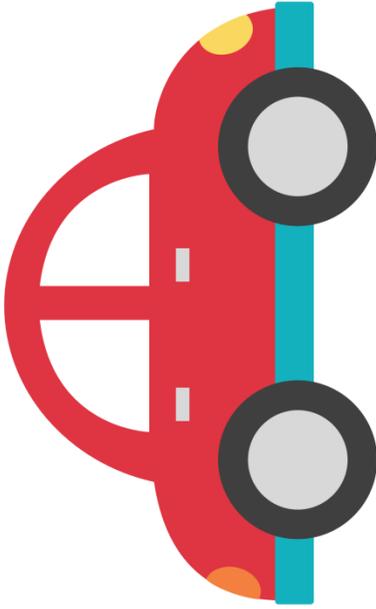
Read and Write on the Road



Games and Activities to Sharpen Literacy Skills While Passing the Miles

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A mix of new ideas and well-known childhood classics, the games and activities in this guide are meant to help you kick start your family "literacy-on-the-road" routine.

As you begin to think of car time as game time, you'll come up with your own family favorites to add.



Happy travels!

Why Read & Write on the Road?

If you spend time on the road with children, commuting, traveling, driving carpool, this guide should travel along with you. These games and activities are...

Portable and versatile

Geared toward preschool through elementary school aged kids, but entertaining for the whole family.

Written in a short and simple format, so you can read them while you're parked and remember the rules long enough to explain them to the kids while driving.

A welcome alternative to listening to kiddie tunes or dealing with backseat brawls.

Best of all, they help you support your child's literacy development with activities that are playful and fun!

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Road Kits

Pack a bookbag full of materials for literacy on the road. Here are some basic ideas to get you going. Obviously contents will vary depending on the child's age and interests.

**If your child gets carsick, maybe just use this kit when you're parked. 😊*
Waiting in line for the ferry, waiting for food at the roadside cafe...

- A variety of books for the reader to enjoy independently. Include fiction, non-fiction, activity books, novelty books, etc.
- A clipboard
- Paper pads (lined and blank), and blank books
- Pencils and erasers
- Drawing boards (like a Magnadoodle)
- Pencil sharpener depending on passenger age and whether you like pencil shavings in your back seat.
- A small set of crayons or colored pencils

Road Kits

(Continued)

Road kit activity ideas:

- READ!
- Make a map of your trip
- Write a story about your trip
- Write a travel log to remember the details of your trip
- Pass notes to other passengers
- Make letters out of Wikki Stix or pipe cleaners
- Make puppets out of Wikki Stix or pipe cleaners and do a puppet show for the other passengers. (Use a favorite story or make up your own.)
- Make a travel BINGO game and play it
- Draw the scenes from your favorite story
- Play "Hangman"
- Write funny thank you notes. (*Dear Lego Guy, You are the best toy ever...*)
- Make bookmarks
- Write a word and draw the object it represents around it. (Think of the PBS show, *Word World*)



ABC Hunt

Learn: Letter recognition & Sound recognition

How to Play:

- Work as a team to locate the letters of the alphabet as you drive, **or** items that start with the letter.
- Find every letter in the alphabet (or word) and you win!

Modifications:

For shorter car trips, find the letters in your name or another favorite word.



*I see an **A** on that "One Way" sign. Here's my **backpack** which starts with the letter **B**.*



Ack, Beep, Beep

Learn: Letter sound recognition

How to Play:

- All players look for something that starts with the letter **A**.
- The first player to spot an **A** object makes up a silly word or sound that starts with the same letter.
- Continue until the sounds start to drive you crazy.

*I see an airplane. Ack ack!
I see a ball. Buzz, Buzz!
I see a cow. Caflooney!*



Adventure Trip

Learn: Storytelling skills

How to Play:

- Take turns telling an outlandish tale of adventure about trip to the library, or school or soccer practice. (Or wherever you're really headed.)
- Describe an alternative series of events that you could encounter on your way.
- Continue until you reach your destination. (Both real and fictional.)

The family started to travel along their usual route to soccer practice, but plans changed when they encountered a snowstorm and a group of giant penguins in their path...



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Alien Visit

Learn: Descriptive language skills / Point of view

How to Play:

- Describe your view from the window as if you are an alien on your first visit to our planet, and you've just sailed into town in your minivan spaceship.
- Pretend to communicate with your leader, describing your observations about this section of Earth.
- Older kids can be particular about what the alien might or might not know. (For example, my alien obviously knows his colors and shapes.) Really the fun is in simply describing items in a different way.

I've just had a successful landing on the planet Earth. Here's what I've observed so far: My spaceship is surrounded by water dripping from the sky. Many two legged creatures are walking near my path. Some are wearing yellow covers or are holding strange small shelters attached to long brown handles...

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Backpack

Learn: Listening skills / Retelling

How to Play:

- The first player picks a destination, like school, grandparents' house, ballet, etc. He tells one thing he will put in his backpack to go there.
- Continue taking turns listing the items to be packed, adding on one new item each time. If someone forgets an item, they're out. The last player remaining in the game is the winner.

Player 1: I'm filling up my backpack to go to school. I'm packing a pencil.

Player 2: I'm packing a pencil and some paper.

Player 3: I'm packing a pencil, a paper and my lunch.

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Billboards

Learn: Persuasive speaking & Poetry

How to Play:

- Pick a sign or a billboard along your drive.
- Make up a clever commercial, slogan or jingle to advertise the store or product.

Who would shop at Jiffy Gas Station?

People who have cars.

What would make them want to buy this kind of gas? Maybe if they didn't have to wait long and the gas prices were low.

Should we say, "Jiffy Gas has fast service and the gas is cheap?"

No, let's do a little song like on the other commercials.

Prices so low your wallet will explode.

Before you know it, you'll be on the road.

So speedy that no time will pass.

Fill your tank at Jiffy Gas.

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Categories

Learn: Categorizing

How to Play:

- All passengers: Pat your knees twice, clap your hands twice, snap your fingers twice, repeat. Keep the beat going: Pat, pat, clap, clap, snap, snap, pat, pat...
- Player 1 picks a category
- Go around the car taking turns naming an item that fits within the category. Say them on the beat.
- If someone can't think of a word on their turn, they're out and the next person starts over with a new category.
- The last player remaining wins.

Categories.. such as.. sports.. baseball.. basketball.. hockey...



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If...Then...

Learn: Recognizing cause and effect / Sequencing

How to Play:

- Pick an event that could happen as you drive.
- Take turns naming the next event in a series, in the style of *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, by Laura Numeroff.
- Try to continue until the story leads back to the original event.

If we hit that big pothole in the road, we might get a flat tire. Then we'd have to play at the park while waiting for Dad to fix it. We would probably see some friends at the park and decide to go out for pizza together. Then we would go to their house to have ice cream for dessert. We might realize that we needed chocolate syrup from the store, so Dad would go out to get some. He would forget to watch out for that pothole, and he would end up with another flat tire...

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Mystery Trip

Learn: Making inferences / Drawing conclusions

How to Play:

- Player 1 thinks of a mystery destination and gives clues to help the other passengers determine the destination.
- Take turns guessing until the destination is discovered. The person who guesses correctly gets to think of the next destination/clues.

Or:

Play "I Spy" and give hints to help players guess, or describe animals, or characters in books...

I am going on a trip. I'll need my swimming suit and a beach ball. I should also bring some fun activities to keep me busy on the plane. It's a long flight. Oh, I'll need my passport, and a Spanish-English dictionary...

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One Minute Speech

Learn: Oral language skills

How to Play:

- Choose a topic. It can be something you see out the window, or anything at all.
- Challenge a passenger to speak about the topic for one minute, non-stop. It's especially fun to see if you can manage to turn an unexciting topic into an interesting speech.
- Other passengers can watch the time.
- When finished, the speaker picks the new topic for another passenger.

Sidewalks are quite handy. They are there so we'll have a safe place to walk, away from the cars on the road. They are smoother than the road, so they're nice for learning to ride a bike or a scooter. Sometimes I like to sit on the warm sidewalk and watch for ants carrying their little bits of food...

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Roadside Attractions

Learn: Storytelling skills

How to Play:

- Pick any object or place along the side of the road. (A park, a bench, a water tower, a school.)
- Make up a creative story that could explain how it came to be built or created. Something that might elevate its status to an official *roadside attraction*.

Extension: When you get home, research and learn the real story of the attraction.



DETOUR

Once upon a time, there was a boy who loved to climb. He had the idea to build a park where he and all of his friends could go and climb together. Here's the amazing story of how he created the best climbing park ever...



Scenery Connect

Learn: Making connections

How to Play:

- Take turns choosing an object you see out the window.
- Tell the other passengers what it reminds you of.
- The next player must then say something that your memory reminds him of.
- Continue until you run out of time, breath or ideas.



That tree over there reminds me of the tree in the park because it has the same shape. The tree in the park reminds me of the book, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom because we like to climb it, and in the book, the letters climb the tree. That book reminds me of...



Tree-Me-Bee

Learn: Sound recognition & Identifying spelling patterns

How to Play:

- The youngest rider picks something he sees out the window. (Start with one syllable words.)
- Go through all passengers from youngest to oldest, naming a word that rhymes with the original word.
- When you can't think of a rhyme, change the word.

Challenge:

Tap a beat and say each word on the beat or you're out. Play until only one player remains in the game. If you're the last player remaining, you win!

*Player 1: There's a cat. My word is **cat**.*

*Player 2: mat Player 3: rat... Player 4:
New word. I see a tree...*



Tour Guide

Learn: Descriptive language skills / Point of view

How to Play:

- Take turns acting like a tour guide on a bus tour of your town. Pretend the other passengers are new to the area, so you need to think about the details and information a traveler might find most helpful.
- Places to highlight might include important buildings, parks, helpful businesses and fun attractions.

Or:

Draw a tourist map of your town. Include major streets and label important buildings and special attractions

Coming up on our right, you'll see the city library. If you need information, or a nice place to curl up with a book, be sure to drop in there. On the left, you'll see the Issaquah Hatchery, where you can learn everything you've ever wanted to know about salmon...

Audiobooks

Perfect for those times when you'd just like a quiet car. I mean, when you want to hear a great story...

Audiobooks are ideal automobile entertainment.

Available from bookstores, your local library or for download on sites like audible.com, you can find a huge selection of short picture books, poetry and longer chapter books.

Here are a few of our family favorites:

- *The Cat and the Hat, and Other Dr. Seuss Favorites*, read by Kelsey Grammer, Dustin Hoffman, Walter Matthau, et al.
- *Henry Huggins*, read by Neil Patrick Harris
- *Frog and Toad* read by Arnold Lobel
- *Curious George Complete Adventures*



The Skills

Good readers and writers use a variety of skills to arrive at their literacy destinations.

- Starting with phonemic awareness, children learn to hear, recognize and play around with word parts.
- Skills like noting details, making connections, and inferring, all help children comprehend text and create their own.
- Storytelling, retelling events and providing information orally are great ways to practice important listening and speaking skills. As children become fluent speakers and storytellers, those skills will transfer when they move on to pencil and paper.
- Playing family games like these often provides opportunities for kids to hear adults and other players "talk through" their thought processes, modeling thinking skills and strategies.



More Ideas

Add Yours Here:



The Skills

(Continued)

Most importantly, good readers and writers like to read and write!

Having fun with literacy activities as a family is one of the best ways to help children enjoy the process as they learn to make a personal connection with literacy.

So in other words, above all...



ENJOY THE TRIP!

Want more ideas for incorporating literacy into your family routines?



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For best results...

- Print pages on cardstock and laminate
- Cut into fourths and arrange
- Hole punch and attach with a binder clip
- Throw it in your glove compartment
- Go!

If you have questions or comments, I'd love to hear from you!

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