

ZONDERkidz™

I Can Read!

100 Tips for Beginning Readers



Meet the exciting characters of **I Can Read!** In this book, you will discover one hundred fun activities and tips to help your child become a proficient, enthusiastic reader. These tips cover the essentials of learning to read; from understanding the connection between letters and the sounds they make, to being able to answer questions about key parts of a story. One of the most important things you can do for your child is shared, interactive reading. As you explore these tips and activities together, you'll make reading a positive, joyful experience. Congratulations on your work to make your child's reading journey a successful one.

*The ZonderKidz **I Can Read** team*



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1 It is never too early to begin reading aloud to your child. Even infants learn the sounds, rhythms, and patterns of language as they sit on your lap, listen to your voice, and watch your face as you speak.

2 The benefits of reading aloud are many! Your child will improve memory retention, and hear language patterns that are not part of his or her everyday life.

3 Don't read too fast! Give your child time to absorb the pictures, the vocabulary, and the concepts of the story.



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4 Read every day. Carve out a consistent time to read with your child, like before dinner or at bedtime. This will help your child develop good reading habits.

5 Make shared reading a fun experience for your child. Set up a reading outing. Bring your child to a café, order a hot chocolate, and read together.

6 Find a place to read that will help your child focus. Turn off the television, radio, cell phone, and computer.

7 Make reading a tactile experience. Trace letters in the sand. Use magnetic letters, wooden blocks, or press-on letters when working with your child on letters and letter sounds.



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8 Encourage your child to learn about symbols like insignias on cars, bulls-eyes, and those famous golden arches. Understanding symbols will pave the way for learning letters!

9 Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make by turning it into a game. For example, “I’m thinking of an object that starts with the ‘mmm’ sound.” Give your child points for any word that starts with M.

10 Play the name game! Ask your child for some of his or her friends’ names. Then sound out the names and talk about the beginning letter. P-at, M-eg, D-an, for example! This will help your child learn to connect the letter to its sound.

11 When reading aloud together, help your child understand that some words begin with the same sound, like **rug** and **run**, and some words end with the same sound, like **hill** and **fill**. Point out these examples every time you read together.



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12 Encourage your child to blend, which is the ability to put together sounds to make words. Point out the word **dog**, for example, and have your child blend together the sounds “d,” “o,” and “g” to figure out the word.

13 Help your child hear the syllables in words by clapping or tapping them out.

14 Encourage your child to draw or paint a picture of his or her favorite part of the story. Then, help your child write a sentence under the picture, describing the scene.

15 Take turns reading aloud. Taking turns is fun and can make reading less daunting!



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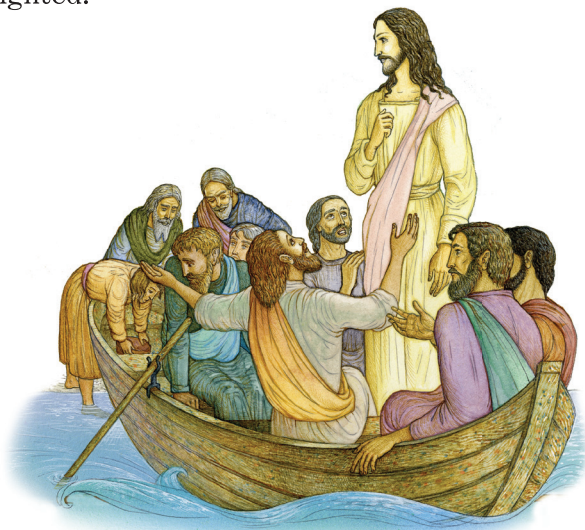
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16 Reading is a great opportunity to learn new vocabulary. Pick out new words in a story and talk about what they mean. Have your child try making up sentences with the new words.

17 Have your child describe a character and then guess which one it is.

18 Kids are like adults—we all prefer to read about things that interest us! If he or she likes dancing, for example, read a book about jazz or a ballerina.

19 Let your child be the star! Insert your child's name as the hero of the story. Your child will be delighted.



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20 Bring the story to life by acting out scenes.
Have fun with this!

21 To help your child understand new words,
create an illustrated dictionary together
featuring new words and their meanings.

22 Try acting out action words with your child!

23 Looking for a more creative way to interact
with a book? Encourage your child to create
a puppet show of the story. Create simple finger or
sock puppets, and act out scenes from the story. Don't
forget to applaud at the end!



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24 Have your child read to the dog. No kidding! Dogs are good, nonjudgmental listeners—so are stuffed animals if you don't have a pet.

25 Having trouble deciding what books to read? Think back to the books or characters you enjoyed as a child.

26 Help your child understand rhyming words or phrases by reading them aloud. Can he or she think of any additional words that rhyme? Make a list together.

27 Make flash cards of high-frequency words like “a,” “not,” and “to.”



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28 Books for beginning readers have pictures designed to help your child comprehend the story. Before you start reading, look at all the pictures. Discuss what the story might be about.

29 Talk with your child about topics in the book before you start reading. For example, if the book you are reading together is about baseball, remind your child about some of the terminology such as bases, ball, what it means to be up at bat, and to hit a home run.

30 Does your child sometimes lose his or her place? Demonstrate using your finger under the words to track where you are, especially when moving from one line to the next.



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31 Getting stuck is no fun! If your child can't read a word, look for clues in the pictures.

32 When your child gets stuck, go back to the basics! Cover up all but the first letter of the word, and move your finger to the right as your child reads each sound. Then read the word quickly together.

33 Ask your child if the word he or she read makes sense. Have your child keep reading to the end of the sentence, then go back and reread.

34 Ask your child what the first sound of the word is, and what word would make sense that starts with that sound.

35 Ask your child if he or she can spot any familiar letter patterns, like “-ight.”



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36 Once your child “solves” a hard word, have him or her reread the sentence in which the difficult word appeared. This will reinforce comprehension.

37 Books with repeated phrases are fantastic because your child can read along with you. Listen and watch for repetition or refrains, and say them aloud together. “Woof, woof!”

38 Children often become big fans of a particular character. If your child latches onto a character, encourage this enthusiasm. Read all the books you can find about that character.

39 If your child is familiar with a character, ask him or her to tell you as many facts as he can about the character’s world. Does the character have a pet? A best friend?



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40 Help your child learn the alphabet by playing “I Spy with My Little Eye” using letters. This can be done when reading books together, and also in daily life by looking at street signs, store signs, and cereal boxes.

41 Visit your library and encourage your child to pick out several books. Then, go home and read them aloud together.

42 Create a progress chart and add stickers for every book your child reads independently.

43 Encourage your child to discuss alternate endings to books. What would happen if the character made a different choice?



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44 Show your child that reading is important in everyday life by having him or her read the steps in a recipe, directions, or other instructive material. Reading impacts everyone, everyday!

45 Sign up for a library card! It teaches your child responsibility and encourages reading.

46 Ask your librarian for recommendations. Tell him or her about your child's interests and approximate reading level.

47 Put your child in charge of deciding what to read next.

48 Even as your child's reading level increases, discussing the story is still a good way to reinforce comprehension. "What will happen next?" "Why do you think the character did that?"



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49 Find a story with two main characters and lots of dialogue. Let your child choose which character he or she would like to be. Take turns reading your parts aloud.

50 Alliteration is a great way to teach words to your beginning reader because they help your child understand the sounds the letters stand for. Try classics like “she sells seashells down by the seashore” or make up your own!

51 Writing helps children read, and reading helps children write. Give your child a notebook with colorful pens to write down thoughts about books he or she has read, including whether or not he or she would recommend them to friends.

52 Does your child like to sing? Ask him or her to suggest a favorite song. Listen to the song and write the lyrics down together. Encourage your child to point out rhymes. Have your child read the lyrics back to you.



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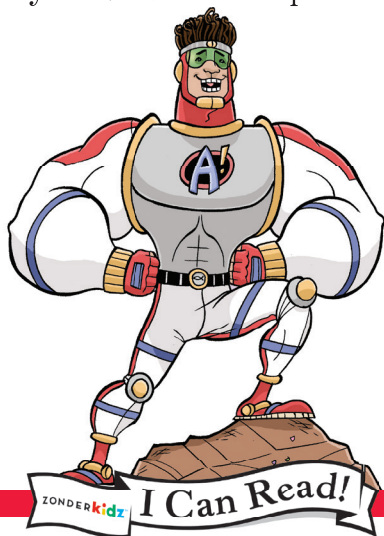
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53 Learn words about new topics! Try subjects like astronomy, earth science, history, and music.

54 Learning new words can be a fun activity at a restaurant, where it is easy to see a physical representation of the word. Try fun words like tacos, lasagna, or dumplings!

55 Help your child understand figures of speech by making a big poster together. On the left write a figure of speech like **raining cats and dogs**, and have your child illustrate it. On the right, write down the true meaning of the expression. Have your child illustrate that too!

56 Talk about onomatopoeia: words that sound like what they mean such as creak, ring-ring, or splat! Ask your child to come up with more!



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57 Play a reading game. Make your own word bingo set. Put words your child knows in a bowl. Draw words and try to match them to words on the bingo board.

58 Make a concentration game that will enhance reading: Take a set of index cards and paste pictures on half of them. Write the corresponding word on the other half of the cards. Spread out the cards facedown and have your child pair up the word cards with the matching picture cards.

59 Teach your child that stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Understanding the structure of a story will help your child identify the pace and direction of a book.

60 Encourage your child to predict the ending of the story. Was your child right? Talk about why or why not.



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61 Write new and intriguing words on a wall calendar. Each day, learn to spell them and talk about what the words mean.

62 Show your child that there are many words with similar meanings. Make a game of collecting synonyms while you are reading together.

63 For beginning readers, it's helpful to emphasize the sounds in the middle of one-syllable words. Point out words that have the same middle sound, like **pet**, **pen**, and **step**. Ask your child to find more examples of words that have the same sound.



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64 Ask your child to summarize parts of the story as you read together. If he or she has difficulty, reassure him or her that it's okay not to have all the information at once.

65 Ask your child to tell you what happened in the story in his or her own words.

66 If the book is an informative or factual one, have your child teach you what he or she learned.

67 Tickle your reader's funny bone by suggesting humorous books to read.



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68 Ask your child to name his or her favorite book character. Who is his or her least favorite character? What makes them different?

69 Discuss the setting of a book with your child. Does he or she know a place like the one in the book? If the setting is unfamiliar, talk about it. What is the desert like, for example.

70 Talk all the way through the book. Why do you think the character did that? Did that surprise you? Mastering the ability to think about the story while reading will help your child switch from a word-by-word reader to a fluent reader.

71 If your child can't summarize a story, try having him or her identify the key passages and mark them with sticky notes.



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72 Introduce your child to historical fiction. There are lots of great books for beginning readers which are often told from a child's point of view. Talk about the time period with your child before starting to read.

73 Introduce your child to the five W's to discuss what you're reading—**who**, **what**, **where**, **when**, and **why**. Take turns asking each other questions that begin with one of the five W words.

74 Explore interesting topics that come up when you read. For example, if the story is about getting a dog, plan a trip to the library and check out books about dogs.

75 Use fictional stories as a jumping off point to explore related nonfiction topics. Or flip it! Start with a nonfiction story and find a fictional companion.



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76 Talk about what parts of the book your child enjoyed the most. For example, what part was most exciting? What part was the funniest? Was there any point when the story was scary?

77 Help your beginning reader decode difficult words by discussing what is happening in the story and talking about what the word could mean.

78 Ask your child to retell the story you just read—but from another character's point of view!



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79 Write a letter to the author identifying favorite aspects of the story and perhaps suggesting possible plot changes.

80 Have your child think of alternate titles for the book you just read.

81 Learn more—many authors and characters have their own websites. Your child can read about the author, and the site might even include reading games!

82 Use interesting words in conversations with your child and build on words you've discussed in the past.



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83 Create your own book—fold pieces of paper in half and staple them to make a book. Ask your child to write sentences on each page and then illustrate the story. Don't forget to include an author biography!

84 Now have your child read his or her own words to you!

85 Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. For example, if reading about hockey, take your child to a hockey game. At the game, be sure and do more reading—look at the signs and the scoreboard. Look at the headlines in the next day's paper or online article!

86 Have words everywhere! Put reading materials around the house—bathrooms, bedrooms, family rooms, and even by the TV or computer.



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87 Be a role model. Let your child catch you enjoying reading!

88 Have your child practice reading with his or her friends. Friends can work together to figure out a word. It is social and fun for the kids!

89 Enroll your child in kids' clubs. The clubs will send out newsletters with loads of pictures and words.

90 To help your child become a fluent reader, encourage him or her to reread favorite stories. The repetition will help him or her gain skill as a reader.



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91 When cooking, ask your child to read the recipe to you. Your child will enjoy being your helper!

92 Run your finger under the words as you read aloud. This helps your child follow along with you.

93 Point out print elements on a page, like the title, author's name, or chapter headings. Making notes of these elements will help your child learn the basics. Say "Every book has a title, an author, and sometimes an illustrator."

94 Read aloud so your child hears what fluent reading sounds like.



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95 Celebrate the seasons! Read about snow days in winter and apples in autumn. Reading about the current season is a great way to engage a reader.

96 Using book and CD sets or ebooks allows your child to hear the words and follow along with the print.

97 Use the five finger rule to see if a book is the right reading level for your child. Ask your child to read a page from a story. Hold up a finger for every word that they get stuck on. If you get up to five fingers on a page, the book is too hard. It's okay to reach a little bit, but you don't want your young reader to be frustrated and discouraged.



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98 Celebrate success—make a fuss over your child with a hug or a special treat when he or she completes a book.

99 Be patient with your child. Learning to read is a long and rewarding process, and each child learns to read at a different rate.

100 Stay positive. Your job is to be supportive and reassuring. Reading is hard work and your encouragement goes far.



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How do you know if it's just right?

Just right books:

- provide a challenge that is achievable
- provide new learning opportunities
- teach new strategies and skills
- give just the right amount of challenge and support

Too hard books:

- don't allow children to grasp the meaning of the text
- make the reading experience laborious
- force children to read word-by-word instead of more naturally in phrases
- may create frustration for your child

There's a place for easy books! They:

- help children feel in control
- are relaxing and enjoyable
- help children practice fluency



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I Can Read! books have introduced children to the joy of reading since 1957. Featuring award-winning authors and illustrators and a fabulous cast of beloved characters, I Can Read! sets the standard for beginning readers.



Ideal for sharing with emergent readers



Simple sentences for eager new readers



High-interest stories for developing readers



Complex plots for confident readers



The perfect bridge to chapter books



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Top 5 Reasons to Choose I Can Read!:

1. Timeless characters
2. Great stories
3. Colorful illustrations
4. Easy to follow levels
5. Variety of genres

With a broad range of easily identified books to choose from, I Can Read! encourages children to discover new categories of interest and meet new friends along the way.

I Can Read! books feature:

- Adventures with enormous child appeal
- Likeable and convincing characters
- Carefully crafted words and illustrations



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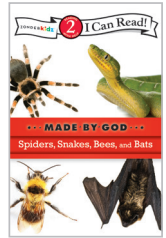
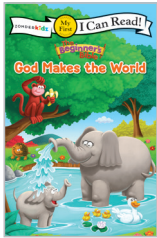
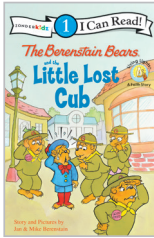
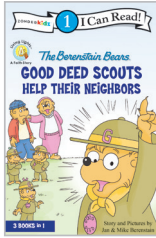
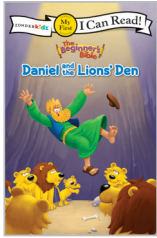
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SHARED
My
First
READING

BEGINNING
1
READING

READING
2
WITH HELP



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