

Ideas for Active Summer Learning

By: [Reading Rockets](#)



Build reading and writing into everyday activities. Some ideas to pass along: (1) watching TV with the sound off and closed captioning on, (2) reading directions for how to play a new game, or (3) helping with meals by writing up a grocery list, finding things in the grocery store, and reading the recipe aloud for mom or dad during cooking time.

Encourage writing. Encourage your students to spend some time researching and writing [community stories](#) — not only does it build research and writing skills, but helps kids develop a deeper sense of place. Keep a nature journal, create poetry, share a recipe, or keep a scrapbook of reviews of summer adventures.

Kids blog! Arrange for a safe, closed community so that your students can blog over the summer. [Edublogs](#) and [Kidblog](#) offer teachers and students free blog space and appropriate security. [Free, disposable e-mail accounts](#) are available at Mailinator. Students can create an account there, use the address long enough to establish the blog and password, and then abandon it.

Read about your world. [Newsela](#) builds nonfiction literacy and awareness of world events by providing access to hundreds of fresh news articles (you can filter by grade). Other good sources of quality nonfiction include [Time for Kids](#) online and many [children's magazines](#) offered by Cricket Media, National Geographic, and other publishers. The bloggers on [The Uncommon Corps](#) are enthusiastic champions of nonfiction literature for kids and young adults, and offer many ideas for integrating nonfiction into your reading diet.

Start a neighborhood book club with other families this summer. It's a great way to keep the summer learning social and low-key. Warmer weather can inspire some not-so-run-of-the-mill meeting places, too: a tent or picnic blanket in the backyard. If the book club catches on, it's something to continue throughout the school year. PBS Parents has a wonderful collection of [tips on how to start a club](#) and encourage great discussions.

Set up a summer listening program. Listening is an engaging way to learn, and many children love listening to books, music, stage plays, comedy routines, and other works. Point out background sounds, such as the way the peppy tune on a sound track adds fun and humor to an adventure tale. Learning to listen is particularly helpful to children with learning disabilities.

Examples of good interactive educational websites that parents and young kids can explore together. [PBS KIDS Lab](#) offers the newest educational games, activities and mobile apps, for kids Pre-K to grade 3. There are lots of other quality websites for kids — here are a few more of our favorites:

- [National Geographic Kids](#): Great nature videos, activities, games, stories, and more
- [Discovery Kids](#): Video, games and activities to explore dinosaurs, sharks, space, pets, history and more
- [Smithsonian Kids Collecting](#): how to start your own collection and see what other kids collect
- [The Last American Dinosaurs](#): from the National Museum of Natural History
- [NASA Kids Club](#): a place to play games and learn about NASA through interactive explorations
- [My Wonderful World](#): A multimedia tour of our seven continents
- [Time for Kids](#): Fun games (The Great State Race), an online weekly magazine written for kids, and news from around the world

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/get-ready-summer-ideas-teachers-share-families>